

AD6/24/1/177

**WALTER & ZOFIA NURSE**

**Edited transcript of interview with Walter and Zofia Nurse  
conducted by Chris Eldon Lee on 6th July 2012 in Cambridge.  
Transcribed by Simon Taylor on 19th December 2012.**

[00:00:00] Lee:

This is Walter and Zofia Nurse recorded by Chris Eldon Lee on the sixth of July two thousand and twelve.

[00:00:08] Lee:

Walter and Zofia Nurse.

[00:00:11] Walter Nurse:

My name is Walter Nurse. I was born in Liverpool on the seventh of May nineteen forty-eight.

[00:00:18] Lee:

So how old are you now, Walter?

[00:00:20] Walter Nurse:

I'm sixty-four now.

[00:00:22] Lee:

And your lovely wife?

[00:00:24] Zofia Nurse:

My name is Zofia Nurse. I was born on the twenty-first of April nineteen fifty in Szczecin, Poland.

[00:00:36] Lee:

And what is your nick-name. What are you known as?

[00:00:39] Zofia Nurse:

My nick-name – friendly name, for friends – Zosha.

[00:00:43] Lee:

Zosha. OK. I'll talk to Walter first, and come back to you.

When you left school, what sort of career were you looking for, Walter?

[00:00:51] Walter Nurse:

From quite an early age I always wanted to be an electrician. That was my goal. I got an apprenticeship with the local electricity board. They were electricity boards then. They were owned by the government. Served my time with them. The company's policy at that time was: when you came out of your time, (or when you finished your apprenticeship), to leave, go and get some work experience in other jobs, other places, and if at some future date you had been a good lad, or a good girl, they would take you back. So, I finished my time nineteen sixty-nine. I went to work for the alarm company Chubbs, putting burglar alarms in. Ended up as a bank engineer for them, because of my electrical background. Then I set up my own business. I worked for myself for nearly four years. That went on to work for a company called Lamb and Watt. They were a major wine and spirit makers. They weren't bottlers – they actually made the stuff – and it was from there that I joined BAS.

[00:01:59] Lee:

Wal, what was your first knowledge that a place like the Antarctic might exist?

[00:02:03] Walter Nurse:

Well, I suppose really from newspaper clippings, articles, maybe little bits, at that time. There wasn't very much on the television and cinemas then. It was always one of them places that you'd think 'Wow, would I give my eye teeth to go and work there?', but how does a lad from Liverpool apply for a job in the Antarctic? But it was always one of those places in 'one day, maybe'.

[00:02:31] Lee:

Had you been inspired by something?

[00:02:33] Walter Nurse:

Well, I always liked travel. Always liked travel. Before I went South I travelled all over Europe, under my own steam. And I always fancied going to Greenland. But at that time there was no travel arrangement – no way to go to Greenland. And to go to the Antarctic there were no travel ships, no holiday people going South. So it was a case of when this advertisement appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* you'd think 'Oh, maybe . . . maybe . . .'

[00:03:11] Lee:

So had you read about Shackleton and Scott?

[00:03:13] Walter Nurse:

Oh yes.

[00:03:14] Lee:

And seen a film?

[00:03:15] Walter Nurse:

Well. I'd seen both Shackleton's original film, *South*, and the snippets of Scott. I mean, being heretic, Shackleton for me was the more heroic of the two. Scott, I think, was a very heroic man, and what they did scientifically was fantastic. Maybe with hindsight, or looking at other people, maybe he'd have got back to his winter quarters. But, of the two, Shackleton was always the better, for me.

[00:03:56] Lee:

So what year did you apply?

[00:03:57] Walter Nurse:

Nineteen seventy-six. The early part of seventy-six. I seen the advertisement, and . . . in, actually . . . even there's a story behind the advertisement. I seen the advertisement in the paper, and at that time I was working for Lamb and Watts, and I said to my engineer, a guy called Alan Graham, 'I'd love to do something like that' and Alan said 'Why don't you apply for it?' and I said 'Alan, I've got a City and Guilds T4' and I said 'I haven't got a degree' and I said 'I'm sure they won't take anybody like me'. And he badgered me and badgered me and badgered me, until in the end I said 'I'll apply'. I applied, and got the job, much to my amazement.

[00:04:38] Lee:

What do you remember about the interview?

[00:03:40] Walter Nurse:

Well, rather an amusing thing. Sadly Jim Conroy's not with us any more, but being a Liverpudlian, Jim said (there was him, there was Eric Salmon and Ricky Chinn on the interview panel), and Jim said 'Why do you want to go to the Antarctic?' and I said to him (why, to this day, I don't know) there 'I've always had a thing about nuns, Jim, and penguins are the next best thing'. [*laughter from C, and W*] So, it must have tickled somebody's chords, because they gave me the job.

[00:05:11] Lee:

I've not heard that before. Do you remember, was it a tough interview, or was it just a foregone conclusion?

[00:05:15] Walter Nurse:

No. It was very informal, or I felt it was very informal. When we'd finished with, or when I'd finished with . . . Ricky . . . (brain's gone dead) . . . the other two, they said go and have a cup of coffee, and so we went into the restaurant – in the old BAS headquarters then – and this chap came up and said 'Ah, hello, who are you?' I told somebody who I was and he said 'Are you on your own?'. So I was. Actually, I was with my Dad (Dad had brought me down), and we was there chatting away, and then I found out, later, that this person who had been chatting to me in the restaurant was in fact the Permanent Base Commander for South Georgia. [*laughter*] So whether that was a part of the interview or not, I don't know.

[00:06:07] Lee:

Did you want to go to South Georgia? – because it's not quite the Antarctic.

[00:06:10] Walter Nurse:

No. To be honest, I didn't know much at all about South Georgia, other than the fact that Shackleton was buried there. And it wasn't until we came down to Cambridge, and we had a full week here, going through what you were going to wear, where you were going, who was going, meeting all the other people and so on, that we got to know who was going to what bases, and South Georgia at that time, I don't know whether it still has, but it had the reputation of being the Banana Belt Republic. Which is probably in some periods of time rightly deserved, but other periods of time – pretty close to antarctic down there, but . . . beautiful island – absolutely beautiful island, and I would go again, tomorrow.

[00:06:59] Lee:

Shall we talk to the missus?

[00:07:00] Walter Nurse:

Yep, by all means.

[00:07:01] Lee:

Tell me about what you did, when you left school.

[00:07:06] Zofia Nurse:

After school, at the time in Poland, to go to university you need to pass entry exams, and I applied to go to Academy of Agriculture and Institute of Fisheries, and at the time that was the only faculty in Poland that was of that direction of studies, and, the same, because that was the only faculty in Poland they only took sixty students, and only twelve women, or twelve girls. So you can imagine the competition to get a place on the courses. I was unsuccessful for the first time, and because at the time was very state-control to obtain a place at university, and everything was engineering by the state, that you need to obtain certain points for everything. So, because I was short of two points to gain the entry I work

for six months in fish factory, as a worker, so next year when I went again for the exam I obtained the extra points to help me pass the exam, and second time I was lucky, I pass all my exam plus the points by working, and I gain a place, which . . . that was nineteen sixty-nine.

[00:09:28] Lee:

Why did you want to go into that kind of work – that kind of study?

[00:09:31] Zofia Nurse:

Actually I didn't. That was sort of second choice. Originally, really, I wanted to study law. But to study law I would need to go to another city, and at the time, because my parents own a bakery (a very small, privately-owned bakery) I wouldn't get any help from the state, as grant, place to live, nothing. So, not to burden my parents, I pick a place, or choice a place, in Stettin, so I can live at my parents' home, and just travel locally to this place. But soon as I started the course I was really, really very interesting and progress to finish.

[00:09:49] And at the time, in Poland, my study took five years. For the first two years everybody was doing the same courses, and then after second year we split, and I choose marine food technology and the rest of my friends, mostly the boys, took oceanography. And after five years I need to do thesis for my MSc and in Institute of Marine Food Technology and Professor Edward Kolakowski and when I finish, which took whole year, he ask me to stay as assistant researcher, and I started work in institute in nineteen seventy-four, and then was part of all sort of work, scientific work, in our institute. I must say that Professor Edward Kolakowski was very advance thinker for those times. Amongst all our work we were involved in actually production of fish sausages and fish hamburgers.

[00:12:42] Lee:

Is that 'fish, comma, sausages'?

[00:12:45] Zofia Nurse:

No, no, no! Actually made out of . . .

[00:12:47] Lee:

Fish? Sausage made of fish?

[00:12:48] Zofia Nurse:

Ja. Which was not so good, really, but I must say the hamburgers were really, really, good and actually they went into mass production, that later a fish factory in Swinoujscie where we did all our research, introduced full production of this product and went into the market.

[00:13:18] Lee:

That doesn't sound like the prelude to a trip to the Antarctic. How did you . . . ?

[00:13:22] Zofia Nurse:

No. Because my professor was very, sort of, I would say he went to all sort of . . . like on a scientific trip, he went to Japan, Denmark, he came to England (actually he went to Scotland) to do his own research, and he also, of course, very involved with other institution in Poland, and there was a sea academy in Gdynia. There was rivalry between these two institution, I must say.

[00:14:11] Lee:

Rivalry?

[00:14:13] Zofia Nurse:

Rivalry. And he get to know that there was going to be second antarctic expedition on research ship *Profesor Siedlecki* [*sounds like 'Shidletski' - transcriber*] and later I find out that he did a battle for me to join the expedition, because what I was researching, my part of research in the institute, was to looking in solubility of proteins in water and in sodium chloride and that was a way to look into krill and antarctic fish using that method to find out how much you can extract soluble protein from krill and antarctic fish.

[00:15:23] Lee:

So the idea was to try and draw, from krill, human food, food that you could eat?

[00:15:27] Zofia Nurse:

Ja.

[00:15:28] Lee:

Did that happen?

[00:15:29] Zofia Nurse:

No, because of the enzymes. Because the enzymes, there was such a short time from the moment the krill hit the deck of the ship to get the process to . . . [*lost for the right words*]

[00:16:01] Lee:

Was the problem they decomposed too quickly?

[00:16:05] Zofia Nurse:

Decompose too quickly. Ja, too quickly. So I think they look more into industrial use, in paint, in military use, . . .

[00:16:22] Lee:

This is work you were doing?

[00:16:23] Zofia Nurse:

Yep. No, no, no, I didn't – only in food.

[00:16:29] Lee:

How much did you know about the Antarctic? Had you read about the British heroes?

[00:16:33] Zofia Nurse:

Well, again, I loved to – before I came to England I loved . . . I read a lot of books, and all, you know – right across, historic books and novels, and one of the books that I was very interesting was about polar explorers, but I wasn't so much interesting in Scott and Shackleton, but Amundsen! I don't know, maybe because, again, in Poland at the time we had . . . everything was state control, so any publication, any information on the radio or TV, was very restricted, and anything that we could find in reading magazines or books again everything was very controlled so maybe because of that the books available for reading were maybe very, you know . . . they directed the way you could read them.

[00:17:54] Lee:

So would people in Poland in the seventies not really know about Captain Scott?

[00:18:00] Zofia Nurse:

I couldn't tell definitely.

[00:18:10] Lee:  
What made you want to go to the Antarctic?

[00:18:13] Zofia Nurse:  
Was really my professor that said that this is opportunity and there were going another three girls, 'cos I think at the time as far as I can tell we were the first girls who were allowed to go to sea, because one of the things that I was interesting before I applied to Academy of Agriculture – to join the Navy as well. But of course, girls were not allowed. So my professor, because he find out that girls were allowed to go, and he find one place for me.

[00:19:08] Lee:  
What happened in Poland to allow that change to take place, to allow women to go South?

[00:19:14] Zofia Nurse:  
I think probably the major, main reason that they allowed the girls to go because was a research ship, *Profesor Siedlecki*, and they wouldn't allow on any ordinary fishing trawler or anything like that.

[00:19:38] Lee:  
So it was your specialist, specialty knowledge that qualified you to go.

[00:19:44] Zofia Nurse:  
Yes.

[00:19:48] Lee:  
Because as you know it was another twenty years before British women went South.

[00:19:49] Lee:  
What kind of work did you find yourself doing when you got to South Georgia, Walter?

[00:19:54] Walter Nurse:  
Well, the official title was Base Electrical Officer – a rather fancy way of saying 'an electrician'. Really, if you can imagine, everything from generating it to using it, from the generator on the diesel going in one end and it coming out the thirteen-amp plug on the other end, everything in between. When you first arrive, you look at this base, and you think 'What have I let myself in for?'

[00:20:21] Lee:  
This is on South Georgia itself?

[00:20:22] Walter Nurse:  
Yes.

[00:20:23] Lee:  
Not King Edward Point? We are talking about South Georgia itself?

[00:20:28] Walter Nurse:  
South Georgia itself. Yep. And after about two-three months – it's normal. It's a huge responsibility. But it's a responsibility you don't feel is a responsibility until you look back at it, and you realise just what was involved in what you were doing, or what you were expected to do, but . . . I also, for me sins, was nominated to be the Base Fire Officer. Well, somebody has to be the base fire officer, so I was the base fire officer.

[00:21:03] And before I went South I had taken the Radio Amateurs Examination, and was very interested in amateur radio. And within about nine months of us arriving on the base one of our radio operators was brought out (he had some personal problems) which left us with one Radio Op., and of course you can't run a Base with one radio operator. So Martin (Martin Baker, who became the Winter Base Commander the second year we were there) and myself stood in for the Radio Op., so at least he got some time off. It . . . grossly unfair to expect this guy to (Mal Dry, his name) – to expect Mal to be at the radio twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

[00:21:47] Lee:  
Were you learning Morse from scratch, then?

[00:21:49] Walter Nurse:  
From, really from scratch, yep. Mal was putting things into the teleprinter and sort of saying 'Read that', and 'Read this', and 'Read that'. We fudged our way through, did Martin and I. [*laughter*]. I'll not say that we were very good at it but we fudged our way through.

[00:22:06] Lee:  
Fid Bodge, was it?

[00:22:07] Walter Nurse:  
That sums it up exactly. It was a Fid Bodge.

[00:22:10] Lee:  
Was the electrical instalment at South Georgia almost dangerous? Was it? Or just primitive?

[00:22:17] Walter Nurse:  
No, neither really. Just large. I mean, most households in the UK will use about three thousand kilowatts of electricity in a year (give or take a little bit). We were using three thousand kilowatts a day. [*misuse of 'kilowatts' - should be 'kilowatt-hours'. (note from transcriber).*] So you were running three hundred and sixty-five times the average household use. We had to take these readings every day. But underground cables were a cause for concern. We had a problem, I was saying we had a problem – there was an awareness that one of the main cables feeding Shackleton House was rising to the surface. At one point it actually showed on the surface, and the outer skin of the cable was abraded, and we were very aware of this cable, that was being open to the elements but we did the test on it and everything like that – electrically it was OK, but we were very aware that at any time it could have gone 'pop'. It didn't, not while I was there, and now Shackleton House is gone, of course, but – no, it wasn't dangerous. It was no more dangerous than anywhere else you would be working on. The biggest danger really is yourself, because you're on your own. If you're working in a company where there's two, three, four, five of you – 'I've never come across such a . . . has anybody got any knowledge of this, or knowledge of that?' When you're on your own, you're on your own. You're digging every bit of information you can out of your brain, you got all your old books, you got . . . that's the hard bit.

[00:23:55] Lee:  
Were you short of spares?

[00:23:55] Walter Nurse:  
No. Surprisingly we were very well serviced for spares. We didn't have . . . anything like main cables, we had nothing like that, but ordinary cable for domestic use, doing wiring round the houses, sockets, switchgear, switches, light fittings, bulbs, that sort of thing we were quite well off with, and we had quite a lot of spares for the generators. Our gennies

were Scania Dell generators, and we had quite a lot of spares there for . . . ‘touch wood’ – and never used while I was there – but we did have quite a lot of spares on Base.

[00:24:36] Lee:

Did you see your role as . . . merely as keeping it going, or were you trying to improve, sort of thing?

[00:24:42] Walter Nurse:

Oh, no. When I went down Mick (Mick Pawley who was the Permanent Base Commander at the time) said it was the done thing for everybody who went south (went down to his base, anyway) to carry out one program, or one project, for the base. I carried out quite a lot of work on installing the fire alarm in the house – in Shackleton House. Was never fully completed because it was a big job, but that was something, that you’d try to advance the quality of the life on the base. Sometimes it’s quality that nobody sees. A lot of things are hidden – you put a socket on the wall, you plug your kettle in, the kettle boils, but nobody sees the bit of cable that goes to the socket, but I think everybody, everybody, that was south had that goal, that you would try to do something for the base, the other lads – you were on your own. You know, if you didn’t look after yourself nobody else looked after you.

[00:25:44] Lee:

So you tried to leave it a better base, really.

[00:25:46] Walter Nurse:

Oh yes. I think without any doubt that was the attitude of everybody.

[00:25:52] Lee:

There was a change of name, wasn’t there, at some point?

[00:25:56] Walter Nurse:

Yup.

[00:25:57] Lee:

There was some confusion over it.

[00:25:58] Walter Nurse:

Well – no. There was no confusion. King Edward Point is King Edward Point is King Edward Point, will always be King Edward Point. The silly Antarctic Names people wanted to change its name from King Edward Point to Grytviken. Grytviken is a whaling station. King Edward Point is King Edward Point and our base was on King Edward Point. Sorry but, Antarctic Place Names Committee, but to me it will always be K.E.P. – King Edward Point.

[00:26:24] Lee:

Was it vaguely comfortable?

[00:26:25] Walter Nurse:

Oh, the base was a five star hotel compared to most bases. The house, Shackleton House was originally built by the Stanley Government for the Whalers. Apparently (from what we understand anyway) the whalers were complaining bitterly that were paying so much taxes through the Falkland Islands and they were getting nothing back from Stanley, and the Falkland Island Government built Shackleton House as a hospital for the whalers. And, from – again, what I understand it was never used in real seriousness, and when BAS took the base over obviously Shackleton House was the house they used, because it was – it had facilities

for Wet Labs, a huge dining room, rooms upstairs, all modern facilities, central heating. The only downfall was, of course, the building was made of Structaply (plywood) and that eventually, really, led to its downfall. It just rotted.

[00:27:31] Lee:

Were there any scary moments, or near misses?

[00:27:37] Walter Nurse:

Over in Grytviken we did have a fire at one point. Surprisingly, of all things the Electrical Workshop in Grytviken was what caught it. We had a little hydro station there that was installed by the whalers, which we used to use for lighting the Kino, which we'd turned into a sports hall. We lost all that when the fire happened. So that was quite a scary moment at the time, because had we not put the fire out at the time (which we did, quite successfully) there was a possibility that the whole base – the whole of Grytviken, not the Base, which I stress again was at King Edward Point, not Grytviken – there is a possibility that the whole of Grytviken could have gone up in . . .

[00:28:23] Lee:

So how was the fire dealt with?

[00:28:27] Walter Nurse:

On our base, at K.E.P., we had small Coventry Climax water pumps, high pressure fire pumps, and as soon as we knew that there was a fire over at Grytviken (it was within probably twenty minutes we were alerted) we took the two pumps over in the base launch *Albatros*, set them up on the jetty and we put the hoses round the side and we hit the fire from the back. At one point I was actually holding a hose inside with somebody playing a hose on me so I didn't burn. But we managed to put it out and in the mean time of course everybody else came round the cove from the base (only takes about ten minutes, quarter of an hour at a fair trot), and we had everybody on the base damping down and putting out. We could have lost, for posterity, the whole base, really. There was thousands of gallons of whale oil still in the tanks and all that, the houses were tinder dry and they're all made of wood so it wouldn't have taken very much spark to hit the Kino, hit the Church, hit the Manager's House and there'd have been no South Georgia Government now and no Museum, and [*interrupted*]

[00:29:45] Lee:

So were you aware that your main task was to keep the flames away from the oil?

[00:29:49] Walter Nurse:

Really, yeah. The seat of the fire was actually upstairs where all the old light bulbs were kept. Once we found out where the fire was, we damped down from there. Within twenty minutes or half an hour the fire was, in essence, was out. But we were very aware of the oil in the tanks – very aware of the oil, except particularly a chap, and I think Bob's still with SPRI [*Spry*] – a guy called Bob Headland, very well known to everybody in BAS, Bob was very interested in the whaling station and was ultra keen on where things were and so it was with Bob's assistance and Bob's guidance really we knew that there was a lot of oil in the tanks and so, we were fairly aware that there was quite a major risk, but the major risk as it turned out wasn't a major risk, and we put it out.

[00:30:51] Lee:

In January nineteen seventy-seven you were instructed to lay some more pipes, some more hoses . . .

[00:30:56] Walter Nurse:

Oh yes! Well, quite early morning we had a call. Well, the Radio Shack had a call from the *Siedlecki* – the *Profesor Siedlecki*. We were expecting them in that morning anyway, but could they come in earlier, because for some reason they had lost all of their fresh water, and it's illegal for a ship to stay at sea without fresh water. So Mick, (up at breakfast there was Geoff Leathers and myself, Derek Hamilton and Mick) and he said could we go over to Grytviken (Gritters, as we called it) and lay on the water from Gourlay (it's the old whaling station dam) for the *Siedlecki* when she came in. So we went over to . . . as we were going over the *Siedlecki* was coming round the corner.

[00:31:43] Lee:

Did you know there were women on board?

[00:31:44] Walter Nurse:

No. And when the ship docked the gangplank came down and two ladies, much to our amazement, came down the gangplank carrying stainless steel buckets. Bear in mind our water supply was a six-inch hose coming from a multi-million gallon reservoir, sitting two hundred and fifty feet above us, so you can imagine the pressure . . . so – ‘Can I fill your bucket with my four-inch hose with its . . . ?’. Anyway, we managed to get water into these buckets and that was my downfall, I'm afraid. That was where this young lady who is now my wife for thirty-three years came onto the scene.

[00:32:23] Lee:

Zofia, so what happened on board? Why was there a problem on the ship?

[00:32:33] Zofia Nurse:

Well, to be honest, to this day I don't know how this happened. The day before we were told that we were going to Grytviken and we had, in form of a gazette on the ship – because we couldn't print it, any gazettes or anything like that, so we had a big board on the ship, and on that board was everything about South Georgia, and how beautiful is, and what to go and see and animals and everything so the expectation to see the island was very high. So we knew that our ship was due after breakfast, which was between eight and nine, so I with my friend Anya that I shared the cabin, we get up much early so we quickly wanted to get washed, have quick breakfast and be on deck and take photographs as the ship approach the island. So we get up, open ('cos our cabin had a small washbasin that we can get wash and all that) and we open the tap and this like a brown water came through. So we thought ‘Mmm, that's strange’ so we close the tap, open again, and this was, like, much thicker. So we close again and rang the Bridge to see what happen, so they said ‘Dark water, what do you mean?’. So we explain. ‘Oh! Don't open the tap! Don't open the tap!’. So, of course, we couldn't get washed, so we went on the deck and the ship was already approaching South Georgia, so . . . in the cabin . . . Before we came to South Georgia we stop the ship – went to Montevideo to buy fruit and fresh products and receive mail, and we were told that fresh fruit can be a shortage on the ship, so me and Anya, be bought a sackful of Granny Smiths and we kept the apples in buckets that Anya was, later, was going to use for her taking samples. So we quickly, soon as the ship dock we quickly emptied the buckets and went down the gangway, because we expecting that there may be a tank to get some water . . .

[00:36:04] Lee:

Is this so you could wash?

[00:36:06] Zofia Nurse:

Yeah. To take the water back to our cabin and get wash. And there it was, unknown to me, I think Walter and I think Scobie was . . .

[00:36:15] Walter Nurse:

Yes, Scobie [*Pye*] was there.

[00:36:16] Zofia Nurse:

Yeah. And they just look at us, and you know . . .

[00:36:23] Lee:

What did she look like? Long blond hair?

[00:36:25] Walter Nurse:

Bobbed hair. It's quite funny, really, because, it may sound quite so 'dah!' but, the only time in my life I've ever kept a diary was when I was South because I thought it may be the only time I ever get to go or do anything. In my diary, that morning, I wrote 'I've met this really nice Polish girl off the ship today, and one day I'm going to marry her.' So that bucket did something.

[00:36:53] [*General laughter*]

[00:36:54] Lee:

A bucket of love.

[*to Zofia*] But you didn't speak English.

[00:36:58] Zofia Nurse:

Very little.

[00:36:59] Lee:

[*to Walter*] And you didn't speak Polish.

[00:37:00] Walter Nurse:

No.

[00:37:02] Lee:

So how did you . . . ?

[00:37:03] Walter Nurse:

Well, the downfall, really, was the ship's cook, Henryk, gave me an English-Polish dictionary, and that was the downfall of both of us.

[00:37:15] Lee:

That was later, wasn't it?

[00:37:16] Walter Nurse:

Yes, that was on the second visit.

[00:37:17] Lee:

So you filled your bucket, but had you both realised at that point . . . ?

[00:37:22] Zofia Nurse:

No. What happened, because we went back on the ship and we were told – asked – by our Captain not to go to the station because this was a working station and, unless anybody was invited by a member of the station, so we just didn't go. What we did, whilst we could leave the ship, because our main reason to go to South Georgia really was for recreation, because after so many months at sea you start losing your balance and you walk like a penguin, so meeting Walter was really a bonus of the trip. So, on that day we just went for a walk, and in afternoon there was a football match – where our crew and station had a football match, and when the match finish Walter brought a tray of cut-down oranges, pieces of oranges, and the oranges were like gold for Polish people, because at the time, in Poland, the only time oranges were on sale in shops was at Christmas – only once a year, and we would hear announcement on the radio, television, that ships from Cuba would arrive at Polish port, and they were bringing oranges for Polish children. So you can imagine the queues in shops, and eventually when you reached the counter you only could have one kilo, per person, so my Mum always managed to get the oranges and she would hidden them in somewhere in Utility Room so we couldn't find them, and when come Christmas Eve, because Christmas Eve is the most celebrated day of the Christmas period, and every one of us would get an orange. So seeing oranges brought by Walter, you know . . . quite a lot of them, for us was like . . . he was like a god, you know! Where he get these oranges from?

[00:40:34] Lee:

So you didn't fall in love with Walter, you fell in love with his oranges!

[00:40:37] Zofia Nurse:

Well – to start with, yes. [*pause*] I thought he was very kind to give us oranges. And then, that evening, the station invited members of our crew to the station for a buffet and a dance, and then I sort of, we had a dance and a chat, no – try to chat, then Walter and Scobie and other ask us would we like go and see a glacier.

[00:41:14] Lee:

How did you ask them?

[00:41:17] Zofia Nurse:

There was handy people who were helping.

[00:41:20] Walter Nurse:

There was – I think some of the scientific staff – Stefan – who was the head of the . . . or the Chief Scientist on the *Siedlecki* – spoke quite good English, and through him and with a bit of Pidgin English, pointing in the direction, and photographs we said would you like to go and see a glacier, and we'll take you up tomorrow, and . . .

[00:41:40] Lee:

Is it true that the invite to the Polish ship was on the condition that they brought the women with them?

[00:41:44] Walter Nurse:

Oh absolutely! I may just interject a little. One of the things we did as a base is whenever a ship came in, whether our own ships or foreign national ships (we had quite a lot of foreign national ships in) we always said 'If you want to come over to the base please come over, on the understanding that the whole of, or a selection of the whole of the crew were invited'. A point in question there, we had a South African ship in called the *Protea*, a South African naval ship, and Mick (Mick Pawley) said to the First Officer 'We would like you to come

over to the base, we'll do a buffet for you and all, come and see our base, how we work, on the understanding that even some of your lower deck crew (who were all African), you must bring some of them. If they're not invited, none of you are invited.'

[00:42:44] Lee:  
Did that work?

[00:42:44] Walter Nurse:  
Oh yes! Yes, it did.

[00:42:46] Lee:  
And was that uncomfortable?

[00:42:46] Walter Nurse:  
Well, certainly not for us. But that was something that I know Mick felt quite strongly about.

[00:42:54] Lee:  
It's interesting, isn't it? Because generally speaking in the Antarctic national differences are forgotten about.

[00:43:01] Walter Nurse:  
They don't exist.

[00:43:01] Lee:  
So is that also true . . . was racial prejudice forgotten about – apartheid forgotten about as well?

[00:43:09] Walter Nurse:  
Yes I would say so. When they came over to our ship, or our base, yeah, absolutely.

[00:43:18] Lee:  
So the black and white were equal.

[00:43:19] Walter Nurse:  
Yep. And so they should be. And so they should be.

[00:43:22] Lee:  
It's interesting, because I've not come across that before.

[00:43:27] Walter Nurse:  
Yeah. And so they should be. But that was Mick that insisted that we would like them to come over but the invitation wasn't just for the officers, it was for somebody from each of the crew decks. So it's a little interjection, but it's quite an important one really. The other thing that we always did, as Zo said before about the ship being over at Grytviken, the only ships that used the K.E.P. jetty were the *Bransfield* and the *Biscoe* and the *Forrest*, and the *Forrest* ever came in. I think the *Forrest* came in once. The *Forrest* was the Falkland Island ship. They used our jetty. Everything else used the public jetty at Grytviken, so they kept the ships away from . . . invited round, we said please come round to the base, absolutely no problem, but the ships were tied up half a mile away.

[00:44:24] Lee:  
Well, in this case, where was the Polish ship?

[00:44:28] Walter Nurse:  
At Grytviken. At Grytviken.

[00:44:30] Lee:  
So, you got this invitation to climb a glacier the next day.

[00:44:33] Zofia Nurse:  
Yeah. We went, and . . . there is that photograph in the BAS Club . . . this one, yeah. And so, just here, I am in the middle, on this photograph, and was very interesting, this trip, because . . .

[00:45:05] Walter Nurse:  
It was up the Hodges Glacier. For all those people that know anything about South, it was Hodges Glacier and the Hodges Hut.

[00:45:11] Zofia Nurse:  
. . . because for the first time in my life I actually saw a glacier. Because before, my favourite subject, when I was in Lyceum (in secondary school) was Geography, and we learn Geology and it was always very hard to learn all the levels on glacier, how this spinned open, all that – so when I saw this glacier immediately my geography lesson just flashed in front of me, in . . . . Immediately could recognise all the levels and what their names were and so on. So was very interesting and afterwards we just went back and we sort of promised that next time when *Siedlecki* come back we will meet again.

[00:46:22] Lee:  
Were you comfortable on this glacier, or did you struggle?

[00:46:26] Zofia Nurse:  
No. On the first trip, yes, but on the second, no. No.

[00:46:32] Walter Nurse:  
You were comfortable on the first one, but not on the second.

[00:46:33] Lee:  
We'll come back to that later. OK. So you knew, when you sailed away – leaving Walter behind – you knew you were going to come back.

[00:46:39] Zofia Nurse:  
Yeah.

[00:46:41] Lee:  
[to *Walter*] Did you know?

[00:46:42] Walter Nurse:  
We had a good idea. Because normally, the ships were doing a return visit they would say to Mick, you know . . . we'll probably see you in five, six, seven weeks time, and Mick would say get us on the radio, tell us when you're coming in so we can make some arrangements or whatever.

[00:46:58] Lee:  
So you had five or six weeks to think about this lady.

[00:47:01] Walter Nurse:  
Oh, yeah.

[00:47:02] Lee:  
So you were looking forward to the return of the ship.

[00:47:05] Walter Nurse:  
Er . . . with trepidation, I suppose is the right word.

[00:47:10] Lee:  
[*to Zofia*] And how about you? I haven't still worked out when you thought that perhaps Walter was a good man.

[00:47:14] Zofia Nurse:  
I think it's just . . . don't know . . . always that feeling that, no, he . . . he's a good person. And to be honest, and as well, I sort of . . . not maybe at the time, but eventually, sort of . . . cross my mind is that maybe nothing will come out of it. Because, firstly I was from behind Iron Curtain, know from completely different system, as to say, and another thing that Walter was older than me and so I thought 'Mmm. He could have a girl friend.' And another thing is that his parents wouldn't allow for him to continue friendship with me. So there was, you know . . . I was very 'on the loose'.

[00:48:22] Lee:  
That was going through your mind . . .

[00:48:23] Zofia Nurse:  
Yeah.

[00:48:26] Lee:  
So when the ship did come back, a few weeks later . . .

[00:48:31] Zofia Nurse:  
Well, a few weeks later we came back, so I maked absolutely sure that all my work is done – that I had free time. So our ship docked, and I looked through the porthole – no sign of anybody.

[00:48:54] Lee:  
Where's Wally?

[00:48:55] Zofia Nurse:  
Where's . . . where is Walter? No sign, and of course a pride kick in, so I said to meself 'Ach, don't bother! If he is not here I am not going to look for him – that's for sure!' So we, again with friends we went for a walk, down the beach. And that night our ship invited the station for a little buffet and, sort of – dance. So I said to . . . no sign of him, not a message sent, you know, that something . . . so I said 'Ach! Forget it!'. So – and on a chance that he would go to the buffet I said to my friend Anya, I said 'I'm not going'. And Anya said 'No! Come on!' – you know – 'Come!'. And I said 'No. I'm not going'. So I sat in my cabin. She was getting ready – change. And the next thing there was a knock on our cabin, so Anya opened the door and she said 'It's for you', and so I had a look, and this was one of our scientific crew, and he said 'Come to my cabin'. And I said 'No, I am not going'. And as well, we were told by our captain, as girls, (because I was the only single one, the other three girls were all married) not to go to males' cabins, because you just don't know what could

happen. So I said ‘No, I’m not going to your cabin’, and he said ‘No, come on!’ – you know – ‘just for five minutes!’ So I went, and as I opened, (he said ‘Go first! Go first!’) so as I opened his cabin door there was Walter, standing with this beautiful reindeer skin, and explained that he had a little emergency in . . . with the engines, and just couldn’t make it. And this was his apology. And I got this beautiful reindeer skin, and . . . antlers?

[00:51:44] Walter Nurse:  
And antlers.

[00:51:45] Zofia Nurse:  
And, you know, thing.

[00:51:46] Lee:  
[to *Walter*] Were you speaking a bit of Polish by then?

[00:51:48] Walter Nurse:  
Well. I thought I was speaking Polish. Whether I was actually speaking Polish or speaking gibberish I don’t really know.

[00:51:52] Zofia Nurse:  
So, we spent the evening together up in our main Mess, and then the next morn . . . they suggested . . . some – group of our crew wanted to go ski-ing, so they said ‘No problem, we will take you’. So the next morning we set off, and as we were climbing up I was . . . start being very snowy and icy, and I . . . honestly I didn’t feel safe. I was slipping, and I don’t know, I can’t go any further because I can get injured or slip and, you know, fell or something like that. So Walter said ‘That’s no problem, I will take you back’. So we went back, and on the way back we stop by the Penguin River and Walter had a little picnic, very very good coffee and, I never forget, a Blue Riband . . .

[00:53:05] Lee:  
A biscuit?

[00:53:06] Zofia Nurse:  
A biscuit. Ja. And we sat on a – blanket, and had the coffee and a biscuit and took few photographs and the next thing he said ‘Would you like to come to the station and see my room?’. So, I thought ‘Mmm . . . OK. OK.’ And our ship was due to leave at sixteen hours. Everybody need to be on board – back on board. So Walter say ‘Oh – plenty of time! Plenty of time!’. So we walk to the station, and I was, like, very anxious because I thought ‘Mmm . . . I don’t know if we . . . if that’s the right decision’. But on the way there our cook, Henry again, Henryk, was coming back, so I stop him and I said to him ‘Henryk, you must come with me’. Because I am not so sure, you know, if this is a right decision to go. And he said ‘You will be all right. You will be all right’. I said ‘No, no. You must come with me’. Anyway, he went with us, and first time I went upstairs, to see the station, and I must say was spotlessly clean. Because I had a peek into rooms and bathrooms and was absolutely . . . no, I don’t think so girls would clean any better. So Walter make quick coffee in his room and we had quick chat, and then was time for me to go. So, and from station to the ship was about, I would say, fifteen-twenty minutes walk. So I said ‘We really must go’. And Walter said ‘Ah – no worry! We will take the . . . the . . . lau . . .’

[00:55:04] Walter Nurse:  
Launch.

[00:55:07] Zofia Nurse:

Launch. So, we get to the launch, and get in, and the engine wouldn't start. Our, and we tak 'Oh! No!'. And the ship was s . . . s . . . er . . .

[00:55:22] Lee:

Siren?

[00:55:23] Zofia Nurse:

Siren, you know, for go! So, eventually the engine started, so we quickly go through the bay, quick quick goodbye and we run to the ship. The gangway was already up. So, they lowered the gangway so, quickly, you know, no support, nothing, just quickly run, run – and of course the ship immediately sail and later my boss came to me and he said 'You know, we were really really worried that you were going to stay'. [*General laughter.*]

[00:56:12] Lee:

We've only got a few minutes left, so let's . . . we must complete the story.

[00:56:17] Walter Nurse:

Yeah.

[00:56:17] Lee:

So let's fast forward a couple of . . . years?

[*to Walter*] When do you get to go to Poland?

[00:56:22] Walter Nurse:

When I came home in seventy-nine, I . . .

[00:56:24] Lee:

Two years later?

[00:56:25] Walter Nurse:

Yuh. I was two and a half years on station. I came home seventy-nine, and as soon as I came home I sent a telegram saying 'Back in the UK. Don't send any more mail south. Send it here. Can I come and see you?'

[00:56:41] Lee:

So you'd been corresponding in your pidgin . . . Pidgin Polish?

[00:56:43] Walter Nurse:

Yes. Pidgin Polish is the right word. I got all the permissions and visas and everything else, because at that time you had . . .

[00:56:53] Lee:

Going into Poland wasn't easy, was it, in the late seventies?

[00:56:55] Walter Nurse:

No. At that time . . . I went by car, so you had to have permission for the vehicle, and of course insurance for the vehicle, you'd have to purchase before you went petrol coupons, so that, you know, you went to a station you'd got petrol on coupons.

[00:57:11] Lee:

Were you driving through East Germany?

[00:57:12] Walter Nurse:

Yeah. Umm – well, actually, as it happened I didn't. I went in . . . at that time there was a ship, a ferry – a Polish ferry ran from Felixstowe directly in to Poland.

[00:57:21] Lee:

Oh, right.

[00:57:22] Walter Nurse:

And so that was the way I went in. But everything . . . you had to guarantee that you would spend X amount of pounds a day. You had to get a voucher for that. All that had to be done before they would even entertain giving you a visa. So you changed all this money, got all these vouchers, and then they said 'No'. So I went over in the beginning of April, seventy-nine. I was there a month. I came home and [to Zofia] you came in the August.

[00:57:53] Lee:

[to Zofia] Just as difficult for you to come to England, I should think.

[00:57:57] Zofia Nurse:

Very. Very. At the time there was big restriction. You need apply to British Embassy in Warsaw and on the application form you need to give all your details of travel, how you going to get to great Britain, where, what day, what time, where you staying, and if you stay in hotels you need to have a certain amount of pounds per day. The only . . . they didn't require any money if you had invitation from a British citizen. And when you sent all this application, after a few months they will send you a promise of a visa, and that mean that didn't say that they will give you the visa, and of course by the time you booked your passage, you purchase tickets, you change money, everything, so if you, later they . . . when you send the passport to them, and they say sorry you have no visa, you lose all the expense.

[00:59:25] Lee:

Financially, your risk was greater.

[00:59:27] Zofia Nurse:

Greater than . . . oh, yes. Oh yes. Yeah. So . . .

[00:59:33] Lee:

Did you buy a one way ticket, or a return?

[00:59:34] Zofia Nurse:

Oh, no! Return tickets.

[00:59:35] Lee:

Did you use the second half?

[00:59:36] Zofia Nurse:

No. [*laughter from Chris*] Because, really unknown to me, and that's is the truth, I didn't know that Walter arrange everything for us to get married, because . . .

[00:59:57] Lee:

Phww! You can't trust these Liverpool lads.

[00:59:58] Zofia Nurse:  
 . . . because, at the time Walter was going back as a Station Co . . .

[01:00:10] Walter Nurse:  
 Well, hopefully I would have gone back to South Georgia. Dad Etchells . . . That was the plan . . .

[01:00:13] Lee:  
 Was that Plan B?

[01:00:15] Walter Nurse:  
 Well, originally that was Plan A, but Plan A very quickly became Plan B, 'came Plan C, 'came . . . but that was already in the pipeline and they'd said ('they' being BAS) that there was a position for me South, maybe not South G, but there would be a position South. And I would be going back end of September-October, but . . . didn't happen.

[01:00:35] Lee:  
 Because, Plan A was to get married?

[01:00:38] Walter Nurse:  
 Plan A . . . We got married instead.

[01:00:39] Zofia Nurse:  
 And at the time I was going to start my Ph.D. work as well – and when I arrived and I . . . for me very important was a family, and . . . Aha! When . . . that's very quickly – when I was on the ship – on the same ferry that Walter came – there was . . . I couldn't get a cabin space, so I was on the reclining chair and . . . before I board the ship my sister met a friend whose husband was Chief Officer on that ferry, so she quickly say 'Can your husband organise something for my sister?', so she said 'Wait and see. I see what I can do for you'. Anyway, later he said 'Just wait in the main area of the ferry, and I will let you know what . . . if I can get you a cabin'. And so I wait quite late, and eventually he came to me and he said that a Polish family travelling back to England from holiday agreed to give me a bed in the cabin . . . this was very very nice family from London, from Slough, and I got very friendly with that family, and was saying that going to England on visit, and all that, and this lady say to me – she said everything depend on if the family . . .

[01:02:37] Lee:  
 . . . accept you.

[01:02:38] Zofia Nurse:  
 Accept you. And she said . . .

[01:02:39] Lee:  
 Walter's family?

[01:02:40] Zofia Nurse:  
 Walter's family. And she said if at the port will be just Walter waiting for you, mean that family don't like – won't like you, but if with Walter will be his Mum and Dad you will be all right. [*Laughter from Chris*] So, and when the ferry docked and I was in the queue from non-British people and . . . I must say I was very nicely dressed, you know, very Western sort of style of dress, and the immigration officers were coming up to me and they say 'Go into that queue!' and I said 'I'm sorry but I can't 'cos' – you know . . . 'Oh! Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!' Anyway, eventually I was last in this queue, going through Immigration Officers, and

eventually when I came out, which . . . they were worried that I didn't arrive, as I ope . . . 'cos there was very secluded, you know, everything was so closed up that you couldn't see any arrivals, and there was this massive door, and when I opened the door there was Walter with flowers and Mum and Dad so I thought 'Ah! I think I am all right!'. [*laughter*]

[01:04:09] Lee:  
[*to Walter*] At what point did you – go on one knee?

[01:04:14] Walter Nurse:  
To be very honest, before I left Poland in the May I'd said 'Will you marry me?' – I would ask Mum and Dad . . .

[01:04:23] Lee:  
Your Mum and Dad?

[01:04:24] Walter Nurse:  
No. Her Mum and Dad – Zo's mum and dad, and they'd sort of said 'Well . . . if that's what she wants to do, then . . .', 'cos obviously – a big upheaval for both families . . . and, to me, being quite honest, when I left Poland coming home, in the May, I left me wife behind.

[01:04:49] Lee:  
Mmm.

[01:04:49] Walter Nurse:  
I know that may sound . . . but, really and truly, when I came home . . . I'd left part of me in Poland. So it was natural when I came home and put the house together and put everything together that we could.  
[*to Zofia*] So when you came, you . . .

[01:05:03] Zofia Nurse:  
Yep.

[01:05:04] Lee:  
This was to Liverpool?

[01:05:07] Walter and Zofia Nurse:  
Yes.

[01:05:09] Lee:  
How were the Beatles?

[01:05:10] Walter Nurse:  
Oh, yeah. [*laughter*] And I knew them intimately. [*more laughter*]

[01:05:14] Lee:  
The way you do.

[01:05:17] Walter Nurse:  
And Zo came on the eighteenth of August, and we were married by special licence on the first of September.

[01:05:23] Lee:  
Where?

[01:05:24] Walter Nurse:

In Kirkby [*sounds like 'Kirby'*]. In St Martin's Church in Kirkby. Very fortunately I knew the vicar, and Nick was very very helpful. He opened . . .

[01:05:38] Lee:

Mick Pawley?

[01:05:39] Walter Nurse:

No.

[01:05:40] Lee:

The Vicar?

[01:05:41] Walter Nurse:

The Vicar. Nick Edwards. He opened a lot of doors, that we could have opened, but it would have taken longer. Nick said do this, do this, do this, get them to contact me, and he shortened what would have been probably six to eight weeks down to a fortnight.

[01:06:03] Lee:

Liverpool has a long tradition of, (I've worked there as well) of being an international port and therefore international marriages are not that unusual in Liverpool. Did that help?

[01:06:16] Walter Nurse:

To be very honest, I never really thought about it. I suppose it would help, if I think about it logically. Yes, it would help within the city, because it's quite common, to have, in inverted commas, to have 'mixed marriages'. There are, you know, a lot of Spaniards married Liverpool lads, and Chinese, and there's a huge . . . coloured communities . . . I said Chinese, there's a big community of Senegalese, a big community now, and all integrated within the city. The city, actually, is quite an integrated city. It's a . . . it's a vibrant city.

[01:07:06] Lee:

[*to Zofia*] Did you like it?

[01:07:08] Zofia Nurse:

Yes. Again, what was important to me was Walter family, that I felt that I was welcome, and specially Walter mum, not . . . later, as a mother-in-law, you . . . you know, some people are a mother-in-law – you hate it – or anything like that but she was – she is, because she is still alive, was really, really good to me, and she immediately took me as a daughter. And Walter dad, and the rest of . . . sister and brother, they all were helping and, of course, my English language wasn't good. I could understand and speak, but they never mind if I ask them please can you speak slowly, or can you repeat, or anything like that. There was never a problem.

[01:08:18] Lee:

Could you get a job?

[01:08:19] Zofia Nurse:

Not at the time. Because, after we married we lived first with Walter sister, and then we bought a house in Skelmersdale which was not so big town, where the opportunities to work were very . . . [*lost for word*]

[01:08:52] Walter Nurse:  
Limited.

[01:08:53] Zofia Nurse:  
Limited. And as well we had our two children, so they were small. We had two small children and for me to go to work and to find child care was just financially impossible.

[01:09:13] Lee:  
I have one last question which is maybe the hardest. Why did you fall in love?

[01:09:20] Walter Nurse:  
[*pause*] Who knows?

[01:09:22] Lee:  
What was it about?

[01:09:23] Walter Nurse:  
As I'm sat here, I really don't know. It was a matter of fact. It was . . . you couldn't say 'Oh, there was a great blue flash in the sky'. No. Was it the way she was dressed? No. Was it the way she . . . it was just . . . I knew immediately, from day one, that 'This is IT'.

[01:09:53] Lee:  
Zofia?

[01:09:53] Zofia Nurse:  
I think the same. 'cos I had the same . . . 'cos I wrote a diary every day.

[01:09:59] Lee:  
You kept one too?

[01:09:59] Zofia Nurse:  
Yes, every day, on the ship, yes. For every day . . .

[01:10:04] Lee:  
What did you write in your diary?

[01:10:05] Zofia Nurse:  
That I met this really really nice person and . . . the way I, after the last meeting I wrote that I think I left my heart on South Georgia. [*laughter from C*] So, I think Walter personality and the way he, you know, conduct himself and look after me and – his parents, you know, the whole bit, really.

[01:10:37] Lee:  
Have either of you had any contact with the Antarctic since?

[01:10:41] Walter Nurse:  
Only through BAS, and the BAS Club.

[01:10:43] Lee:  
You've not been back?

[01:10:44] Walter Nurse:

No. If somebody said I could go tomorrow, I would go. The unfortunate thing, I'm like . . . I – my guess is ninety-nine percent of the people in the BAS Club and who've been South before – you give them the opportunity to go they would go. The drawback is – pure cost. [pause].

[01:11:06] Lee:

It is actually South Georgia ??? [more words not clear to hear].

[01:11:06] Walter Nurse:

That sounds awfully mealy-mouthed but . . . the real drawback is . . . because of the distance involved and the specialist transport involved to get down there, the cost is totally prohibitive. Some people are very lucky and they get jobs that take them back, like from SPRI or from BAS or from – whatever, but for most people who have been South, I think . . . well every one I've ever met, they would say to you they would go again.

[01:11:43] Lee:

[to Zofia] Does Poland still have a presence in the Antarctic?

[01:11:43] Zofia Nurse:

Yes. At the time, actually (this was like a hush hush operation) . . . [laughter from Chris] . . . Poland built Arctowski station and actually our ship went there to . . . during the build, and – I didn't know at the time that they were going to do that, but when we arrive in Ad - mir - al . . .

[01:12:15] Walter Nurse:

Admiralty Bay.

[01:12:16] Zofia Nurse:

. . . Admiralty Bay there was a big cargo ship already there unloading big cabin, you know, the proper cabins and everything and they had big industrial trucks . . .

[01:12:35] Walter Nurse:

'dozers and trucks.

[01:12:36] Zofia Nurse:

. . . bulldozers that, you know, to . . . actually when we were there they built the station, and later in the later years actually my professor went with his wife, and actually they winter in the station doing research, so . . . and I still keep contact with my institute, not so much with my professor, Kolakowski, because he retired now, but my other friends, and because we started together, and now they all professors . . .

[01:13:27] Walter Nurse:

Professors now.

[01:13:27] Zofia Nurse:

. . . professors, and have their own faculty that they run, so . . . we still keep in touch . . . still in touch.

[01:13:34] Lee:

It's been a wonderful story. Thank you both, very much indeed.

[01:13:37] Walter Nurse:  
Thank you.

[01:13:37] Zofia Nurse:  
Thank you very much.

END.

Points of general interest:

[00:04:38] Interview at BAS  
 [00:07:01] Applying for university in Poland in the 1960s  
 [00:09:49] Professor Kolakowski  
 [00:12:42] Fish sausages  
 [00:13:22] Gdynia institute. R/V *Profesor Siedlecki*  
 [00:14:13] Solubility of proteins  
 [00:16:29] Censorship in Poland.  
 [00:18:13] Women going to sea  
 [00:19:49] Base Electrical Officer  
 [00:21:03] Standing in for Radio Officer  
 [00:22:17] The electrical installation. Working by yourself.  
 [00:23:55] Spares  
 [00:24:36] Improving the base  
 [00:25:52] King Edward Point and Grytviken  
 [00:26:25] Shackleton House  
 [00:27:31] Fire at Grytviken  
 [00:30:51] *Profesor Siedlecki*. Leathers. Hamilton. Pawley. Pye.  
 [00:38:20] Football match with oranges  
 [00:41:44] Visiting ships. Apartheid.  
 [00:56:53] By car to Poland in 1979  
 [00:57:53] Visiting Britain in 1979  
 [00:62:40] Immigration  
 [00:65:17] Married  
 [00:69:13] Falling in love  
 [00:71:43] Building Arktowski Station

Notes on the transcription:

I have edited out some but by no means all of the following: repetitions, words immediately corrected by the speakers, 'sort of', 'you know', etc., but in many cases I have refrained from doing so in order to try to convey some of the colour of the speech. In particular, Mr and Mrs Nurse were both given to saying things twice or more for emphasis. Most (I hope all) of the double words in this text were double on the recording.

Simon Taylor. December 2012.