

MIKE GODSAL

**Interviewed by Chris Eldon-Lee at Fairford, Glos., on 28.01.13. BAS Archives
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Part 1.

My name is Michael Godsall and I was born in Sevenoaks in Kent on the 19th of April, 1936.

[Part 1 0:00:19] Lee: So you're now 50, 60 ...?

Godsall: 76.

[Part 1 0:00:23] Lee: 76!

Godsall: Yeah.

[Part 1 0:00:24] Lee: I was going to give you 10 years just there.

Godsall: Somebody did the other day actually. It surprised me enormously.

[Part 1 0:00:32] Lee: Would you say your father was an educated man?

Godsall: Yes, I think so.

[Part 1 0:00:36] Lee: What was he doing ?

Godsall: He was a Lloyd's underwriter but he was in the first war and was considerably older than my mother and died in 1947 at the age of 69. Yes, thereabouts.

[Part 1 0:00:52] Lee: So your education was... what was your education like then? He made a point of making sure you were well brought up, did he?

Godsall: Oh, I think so, yes. I was the youngest of four, so I sort of followed in the tracks of the others really and went to prep school and public school.

[Part 1 0:01:09] Lee: Which one?

Godsal: Eton.

[Part 1 0:01:11] Lee: Oh, yes, right, yes.

Godsal: And then did my national service in the army, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and then after that went up to Cambridge and eventually, after six years, qualified as a veterinary surgeon there.

[Part 1 0:01:25] Lee: Do you remember what it was that made you want to be a vet?

Godsal: Well originally I was going to do estate management at Cambridge. With interviews and things I got a place at Cambridge to read estate management and then, when I was about 17, I didn't think there was a suitable estate to run and so I thought it would be sensible to become a veterinary surgeon and I had a very good uncle, he was a splendid chap. He'd been an amateur jockey when he was young and he was all for it and he really persuaded me that it really was a very good thing to be.

[Part 1 0:01:56] Lee: It's a very long training session, isn't it?

Godsal: Six years at Cambridge but then you do a three year degree, ordinary natural science degree on the way, which is a good thing to have done.

[Part 1 0:02:11] Lee: So what was your first inkling there might be somewhere on this planet called the Antarctic?

Godsal: I'd always been interested in slightly far away things and very much a country lover anyway, and not that there's much country down there anyway, but at least it's uninhabited and unexplored or relatively so. So it's always slightly appealed to me and Scott, of course, I was always interested in as a schoolboy. Then when I heard at Cambridge - one of the advantages of being in your final year, at the end of lectures you hear about odd jobs that are going. I can't remember which lecture it was, there was a job going in the Antarctic and I immediately showed interest. Only three of us did. One was a chap I became a partner with, in practice with a long time, and the other one heard that the sea was likely to be rough off the tip of South America and he gave up straight away. So that left two of us and it wasn't really a contest because the other chap was married anyway and there was no question of him being allowed to go. So there was me, more or less appointed after a brief interview with

[Part 1 0:03:24] Lee: So was this what other people called 'Bill Sloman's milkround' ? Was he coming round the universities ?

Godsal: I honestly don't know. I think there'd always been a slight tie-up between the Scott Polar Research and Cambridge University Veterinary School and any sort of veterinary problems that happened down South they referred to Tony Palmer, I think, who was a neurologist but obviously (had) all the contacts and so on. I think he was responsible for deciding it and of course Martin Holdgate, the biologist, was very much in favour of sending a vet down when I went, mainly to put the dogs down, the old and decrepit ones and the ones that are no use any further. Rather than the poor base people having to go out and shoot them in the back of the head, which was the way they'd always had to do it previously.

[Part 1 0:04:17] Lee: Let's come to that in a little while. Let's see, let's get there first.

Godsal: Yes, alright.

[Part 1 0:04:21] Lee: We haven't got you past the equator yet. The fact that SPRI and the college where you were learning to be a vet were next door to one another, was that instrumental, do you think?

Godsal: Yes, I think it is, yes. There's certainly a tie-up between one end of Cambridge and the other.

[Part 1 0:04:36] Lee: And did you apply to go South more or less straight away after qualification?

Godsal: I got a job as a house surgeon at the Vet School first and the University were very generous and told me that I could take time off for as long as I was away and keep my job open, which was remarkably generous of them. I think it probably wouldn't happen nowadays.

[Part 1 0:04:56] Lee: Do you remember the interview at all?

Godsal: With Fuchs, yes I do. It was just a very pleasant chat actually and I don't remember anything testing at all. It was a very pleasant chat and I was told that my main job would be to put dogs down and would I be felt able to get on with the people who'd been driving the dogs for years and I said, 'Well, you know, one does learn to get on with owners as well as the animals'. I didn't think it was going to be a problem and subsequently it wasn't.

[Part 1 0:05:39] Lee: What did you make of Sir Vivian, or Vivian as he probably was then still?

Godsal: Oh, an impressive character without a shadow of doubt.

[Part 1 0:05:45] Lee: How do you mean?

Godsal: I think probably more from what one'd learnt about him before you met him , but he was very pleasant actually. I didn't have any hold-ups at all. I went away thinking that we'd had a thoroughly enjoyable chat anyway.

[Part 1 0:06:07] Lee: Were you not at all concerned by learning that the job was going to be largely euthanasia?

Godsal: It was largely exploratory anyway because no vet had been down there before and so I didn't know what I was going to find but I had been told. Martin Holdgate had said there there were dogs that were old and should be destroyed. And as far as disease or anything like that was concerned, I had no idea what I was going to find, which was all rather fun. And subsequently it was jolly interesting actually.

[Part 1 0:06:44] Lee: So you hadn't specialised in dogs or even huskies prior?

Godsal: No. I done, as a house surgeon between June and September, I done a lot of anaesthesia which was the sort of house surgeon's job. I anaesthetised everything. So I did feel pretty confident about that, but I didn't have x-ray machines. I did write round to a lot of the drugs firms. I wrote to May and Baker and Glaxo and all the rest of it. Got an enormous quantity of drugs which they gave you, which was terrific. Some of them were unlicensed and they wanted to hear how they worked. This sort of thing, and some of them didn't work at all. There was one particular sedative which was absolutely useless. It no more sedated a husky than a bar of soap really.

[Part 1 0:07:36] Lee: How much did you learn or realise at that time about what led up to the first vet being appointed because the dogs had been used in the Antarctic for 20-odd years until a vet turned up?

Godsal: Indeed, yes. I certainly knew that the dogs were a pretty fit load of dogs from enquiries at Cambridge and they'd had very few problems. There were one or two things. They thought they had ringworm at one stage but they were a remarkably fit lot of dogs considering the conditions they live in. It was interesting to find, you know, that they were so good and fit.

[Part 1 0:08:23] Lee: I was thinking also of the politics that got you down there. Some years prior to your appointment there had been a move by Raymond Priestley to well, he had been approached perhaps about sending a vet down South. It took nearly a decade for it to happen.

Godsal: I don't think I was aware of that actually. I assumed that Martin Holdgate was more or less the instigator of it. I don't know.

[Part 1 0:08:51] Lee: Oh well. I'll show you something later on.

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:08:54] Lee: So , how did you get South?

Godsal: I went on the *Shackleton*, on the train with about three bits of luggage and 18 months later came back with 17 separate pieces of luggage and I'd no idea how.

[Part 1 0:09:06] Lee: Some of it presumably was samples, was it?

Godsal: Yes, samples and bits and pieces. Went off by train to Southampton and got on the ship and saw the new hut at Signy was lying on the jetty and there were the usual ructions with the stevedores who refused to lift this and lift that. I was given the hospital cabin because there wasn't a doctor on board and it was a wonderful demarcation dispute. They wanted to put an electric cable through from one cabin through the hospital, sort of consulting room bit, into another . So they had to get the carpenter first to drill through the wooden panel, then they had to get the metalworker to come and drill through the bulkhead, then the carpenter had to come back to get through the wood the other side, then the decorator come back and touch up. Unbelievable, but eventually we got off. *Shackleton* was a lovely happy ship actually. It was great fun. Thoroughly enjoyed it.

[Part 1 0:10:14] Lee: So were you travelling with the following year's Fids?

Godsal: Yes, yeah.

[Part 1 0:10:20] Lee: What did you make of BAS at that time? Was it a lean, efficient organisation?

Godsal: I think it seemed to be pretty impressive, actually. Mind you, I was brand new and I suppose I was frightened of having an opinion other than being impressed, I think really. No, it seemed to work pretty efficiently.

[Part 1 0:10:41] Lee: Had you formed friendships on the boat?

Godsal: Yes, certainly. Bob Burton, without a shadow of doubt, and I've still kept in touch with Christmas cards ever since with Bob. Don't see each other very often but there were many people I got to know and was very fond of. But I'm not a great keeper up with people. My wife always tells me I should have kept up with my school and university friends much more than I have. No, it was a happy time on the ship and we had things like the ship broke down of course, having just been serviced before it left. Off the Cape Verde Islands we were stuck with engine trouble for 48 hours I think. And shark fishing with a meat hook and exciting things like that. And of course being signed on in the Merchant Navy as we were, a shilling a week or whatever, we had to bump the decks with the holy stone things and that kept us all amused , and spraying each other with hoses and things in the tropics .

[Part 1 0:11:49] Lee: Were your medical skills called upon?

Godsal: Very little. I had to distribute salt tablets in the tropics to the engine room and so on. One chap, I can't remember his name, and I've never known anybody so seasick. He never got off his bunk, I don't think, the whole way. As soon as we got to Montevideo he flew home. He was terribly seasick, we fed him on dried biscuits and sips of water the whole way down. It was really quite concerning actually. I didn't know anybody could stay sick for that long.

[Part 1 0:12:32] Lee: It was a fairly common problem on these trips South, lots of people mention that.

Godsal: Really?

[Part 1 0:12:36] Lee: Being sick all the way to Montevideo or even beyond. What was Port Stanley like when you got there?

Godsal: That.... unbelievably backward. I mean it was quite an eyeopener that anybody could have a series of corrugated iron roofs. It was just as ugly as one had heard. But in many ways, there again, wonderfully friendly people because they hardly ever saw anybody. I spent a long time in the Falklands.

[Part 1 0:13:13] Lee: Well the arrival of the ship must have been quite an event I would have thought, was it?

Godsal: Oh yes. I mean there was great sort of shrieks and yells from people on the shore and think particularly the first ship down in the autumn. Well, their spring. No, they were a very entertaining lot.

[Part 1 0:13:32] Lee: Not only had there not been a vet in the Antarctic, they were fairly scarce on the Falklands, I believe.

Godsal: There wasn't one there. They had a very good agricultural chap who handled almost everything of a veterinary nature. But they didn't do any veterinary medicine. 10 percent of their ewes died by falling in ditches and they didn't worry about that. That was considered to be a perfectly normal way of losing 10 percent of your flock. I was absolutely amazed. They hardly treated anything, it was usually just had its throat cut if there was anything wrong with it.

[Part 1 0:14:07] Lee: Did you witness that?

Godsal: Yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:14:12] Lee: What's the story behind that?

Godsal: Oh, I can't remember. There was one helluva lump on it's jaw, I said I really didn't think it was going to do any good. So, the shepherd chap and they're very, very good actually, there's no doubt about it and they know exactly what they're doing and the sheep plainly didn't really feel or see much more that they would have done if they'd been shot in the head, actually.

[Part 1 0:14:44] Lee: Dispatched with a knife.

Godsal: They knew exactly what they were doing...??? [inaudible] halal exactly [laughs].

[Part 1 0:14:49] Lee: This suggests you'd been taken on then, as a vet, had you, in some capacity?

Godsal: Well, we all had to go for an interview with the Governor when we arrived and I thought he was a nice chap, Edwin Arrowsmith, and I said that I was going to be... I had the option of either going to South Georgia or staying in the Falklands and I thought there was no point in me going to South Georgia, much as I'd like to at some stage but there's nothing to do there from a veterinary point of view, so I said I'd stay in the Falklands and I'd be quite prepared to work for nothing because I was being paid by FIDS anyway. Provided of course if the Government was to pay my travelling expenses round the Falkland Islands. And of course I had a wonderful deal because there were one or two sheep stations out in the camp who wanted me. So I was flown out in the little Beaver seaplane thing and stayed with people all over the Falklands actually both before I went south to the Antarctic and after.

[Part 1 0:15:58] Lee: I have to ask you about the Governor's milk-cow.

Godsal: He had a very, probably the best friesian cow on the islands, it supplied Government House with its milk, and it calved down and got... I think it was hypomagnesemia then. It was down and shaking. I knew what it wanted. It wanted some magsel injected. So I went see the Dr Slessor who ran the hospital and said: 'I want some magsel [phonetic], please,' and he said 'Oh, yes, that's fine.' And he produced three vials of 25ml I think. They were little tiny things. Normally we're used to using about 400 cc's on a cow. But miraculously it got up anyway and it was a satisfactory outcome.

[Part 1 0:16:50] Lee: And walked away?

Godsal: And walked away, yes.

[Part 1 0:16:53] Lee: I think there's a story about cats as well, isn't there?

Godsal: There are one or two stories about cats, yes. I had quite a few cats to spay or castrate because there was nobody there. They didn't do it. Full tomcats roaming the streets of Port Stanley and there was one had just about died and I put it down. I hadn't killed it. It wasn't dying because of me and one of the Falkland islanders thought it would be a bit of a joke to put it in somebody's fish trap. And this wretched cat's body ended up all over the place. It went into different fish traps. Oh, it was hilarious actually. The locals were having a great laugh about it. Not the sort of thing one would laugh about at all in this country really.

[Part 1 0:17:54] Lee: Ivor Morgan tipped me off about having to ... he was with you when you had to go and deal with a cat-ridden house.

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:18:02] Lee: Catching a cat with a towel?

Godsal: Oh, that's right. She had nine cats, I think. Yes, he got rather scratched I believe.

[Part 1 0:18:12] Lee: Ivor did?

Godsal: Yes, because they were fairly wild, to say the least, and she wanted them castrated or spayed . One of them was fine and we spayed it. The Next one was as wild as a kite and did not take at all kindly to be handled at all, and we wrapped it up in a towel which is a sort of traditional way of holding a cat so that it can't scratch and the cat won that particular [laughs]... So I think we only managed to deal with three of them out of the nine.

[Part 1 0:18:44] Lee: If they weren't used to having vets in the Falklands, were they glad to see you or were they slightly suspicious or ...?

Godsal: The farmers I think, and the local population with the cats and the ponies and things, were I think quite pleased and were very welcoming and so on, but they were very much used to getting on without. They're remarkably sensible about most things. Farmers I think they thought they could get on perfectly well without and had done for years. And I was actually a new graduate and there wasn't a lot of grey hair about in those days. What I was very alarmed about was the incidence of hydatid disease.

[Part 1 0:19:37] Lee: In children ?

Godsal: Well, no. I did talk to Dr Slessor¹ about it and said, 'Had they ever had any human cases?' He said that they had one girl a few years previously who had to be moved up to Montevideo to be operated on. She was the first human case that they knew about. But the number of cysts in the sheep, it was unbelievable. It was certainly up to about 30 or 40 percent of all the sheep livers and lungs had hydatid cysts in. I was alarmed about this to such an extent that I wrote a letter which I took to the Permanent Secretary and I said the farmers must be told about this. And the letter was sent round to all the farmers in the Falkland Islands. But I don't think they took much notice, I'm afraid.

[Part 1 0:20:26] Lee: Was there anything you could do practically? I mean, I don't understand the disease.

Godsal: Yes, I did. Everywhere I went , all the stations I went to I dressed the dogs and had the most alarming collection. A parasitologist's dream from the other end of the dogs. But they had a most archaic system. The slaughterhouses were usually a hut on the beach and when the sheep were slaughtered all their guts and their lungs were shoved out through a hole on to the beach, where there were dogs and seagulls and children. And that should not be allowed to happen. It's the way the dogs get infested or reinfected rather, and then they pass on the worm. It was alarming and actually when I was back at Cambridge, oh, long time later, I rung up a young doctor who was doing Phd in hydatid disease in the outlying countries, one of which included the Falkland Islands. So I'm afraid they didn't take too much notice of what I said at the time.

[Part 1 0:21:33] Lee: And you were visiting the sheep stations because Arrowsmith sent you to do that? He asked you to go?

¹ Robert Stewart **Slessor**, MB, ChB, Senior **Medical Officer**, **Falkland** Islands in the 1950's and 60's.

Godsal: I had a sort of patch on the radio because there was no competition.

[Part 1 0:21:44] Lee: Not the vet phoning !

Godsal: And anybody who felt they would be interested in having me rang in and I went out to see them. The very first place I went was Port San Carlos where the Navy ships were anchored during the war.

[Part 1 0:22:04] Lee: So, in order to try and compete against this hydatid cyst problem, were you actually recommending animals be put down?

Godsal: No, the most important thing is to worm dose the dogs.

[Part 1 0:22:18] Lee: Right.

Godsal: If everybody could be persuaded to dose the dogs at the same time, you would get rid of the disease virtually over a year or two. But I left an enormous quantity of worm dose down there which these drug firms had given me.

[Part 1 0:22:34] Lee: When you came back a year later?

Godsal: No, I came back after four months, I came back and think I really left the drugs and the letter I think on my way out.

[Part 1 0:22:49] Lee: Back to Britain?

Godsal: Yeah.

[Part 1 0:22:53] Lee: So you never quite found out what happened.

Godsal: No, no, but I gathered from it's an example of how backward they were, that the agricultural adviser chap, who is a good man actually, he had said in a report to UK in 1954 that he was worried about hydatid cysts in all the sheep and he was told by Doctor Slessor of the hospital to take it out because he didn't think the cysts were alive, which is sad actually.

[Part 1 0:23:35] Lee: Ok. At what point did you move on then from the Falklands?

Godsal: I spent about a month before I went south and moved on down south in November, I think.

[Part 1 0:23:46] Lee: And where did you go first of all?

Godsal: Left in the *Shackleton* to go to Deception and after three days we were fairly firmly stuck in the ice, and that's before Deception. *John Biscoe* came up behind us and we went alongside eventually and I was moved over, because I think the *Shackleton's* water tanks were freezing , so it had to turn back. So I then got on the *Biscoe* and went to Deception. and then from there I went to Hope Bay and then from Hope Bay to Signy and Signy back to Deception, I think. Then to Port Lockroy for Christmas I think it was, which was only a couple of days and down to Argentine Islands, then to Adelaide. Well, eventually to Adelaide and Stonington and back to Adelaide and back to yes, I can't remember exactly where I did go, and eventually back to Port Stanley.

[Part 1 0:24:59] Lee: It sounds like a very, very intensive four months.

Godsal: It was wonderful, I mean I was so lucky to have got that job. I mean it was absolutely wonderful and I met a lot of people because I met the people going in and the chaps coming out. I remember thinking how incredibly nice the people coming out are. It was a lesson for life actually. They're great... you could never carry anything without somebody coming to help you. They just sort of get on with everybody and I thought well if two years down there does that for people, what a good thing. They were really nice, helpful and great company actually. I was very impressed.

[Part 1 0:25:53] Lee: Are there any Fids or characters] you particularly remember that you've got fond memories of or .. ?

Godsal: It's difficult to pick out any one, really. John Tait I certainly remember. He was the Diesel Mech at Deception and became my sort of unofficial veterinary assistant actually. He helped me with the post-mortems and things to quite a large extent.

[Part 1 0:26:22] Lee: John Tait?

Godsal: Tait. Noel Downham obviously was a memorable chap who was in charge of the dogs at Hope Bay and went on down to Adelaide I think after that , to Stonington. Charlie Spans [phonetic] I remember, who was a South African character about five foot two. He kept us all amused. Charlie Lefevre who came out from Signy on the way back with some... was a larger than life character.

[Part 1 0:27:00] Lee: You mentioned that you met Neil Orr who passed away just recently.

Godsal: Yes. Neil Orr I went to see when he was a house surgeon or junior registrar at Richmond Hospital I think it was, because I knew he'd done quite a lot of work with the dogs and he was very, very helpful actually about telling me about the diet and what he'd done and so on and what I was to expect, really. Good man. Base Leader as well as Doctor.

[Part 1 0:27:33] Lee: So when you started to come face-to-face with the huskies, what was your kind of plan?

Godsal: Well every time I went to base we got hold of the dog man and went round the dogs and discussed them and decided what ought to be done and what shouldn't be done, which ones were past working life, which ones had problems and so on. First day's discussion really and policies were made which I didn't have a lot to say about, which ones should go and which shouldn't, because that wasn't really my business. Signy they had decided more or less that all the dogs should go because they were only ever used, well you could hardly sledge at all at Signy except for one month out of 12 because it was rock most of the time. And they were spanned out on rock, which was a pretty awful way of doing it.

[Part 1 0:28:24] Lee: Sorry, why was rock so bad?

Godsal: Well, it's sub-Antarctica and it's not as cold as the other places. It didn't do...., it was purely a biological station.

[Part 1 0:28:41] Lee: Yes. So why was it bad to span dogs on rock?

Godsal: Oh, because it was uncomfortable.

[Part 1 0:28:44] Lee: Oh I see.

Godsal: It's as simple as that. No, it was not very comfortable for them at all.

[Part 1 0:28:55] Lee: There was something called "Signy neck", I think, wasn't there?

Godsal: It rings a bell.

[Part 1 0:29:01] Lee: What did you find the dogs, what condition did you find the dogs to be in?

Godsal: Oh, they were pretty poor at Signy. They were pretty scruffy and thin and not a typically healthy dog by any means, and the people there weren't terribly interested in them. It wasn't a sort of high priority at all. They were busy doing lots of other things as well, but dogs didn't feature. They had a cat there. They tried to persuade me to put it down and eventually we decided we should ship it out to Port Stanley which I think eventually it did but the Captains of both the ships were not at all keen on having a cat on board, I gathered. So I left them to that and eventually I think they got it persuaded for somebody to take it back to Stanley.

[Part 1 0:29:57] Lee: Was there any resistance to your arrival because presumably the Fids knew why you were there and knew what you were going to do?

Godsal: I may be thick skinned but I wasn't aware of it if there was . No, I don't think there was actually. No, I didn't have any sort of embarrassments that I was aware of.

[Part 1 0:30:20] Lee: So, what was the procedure then? How did you go about culling the dogs?

Godsal: Selected a suitable shed and, with John Tait's help usually, put them down with an injection. Sedated them first and then put them down with an injection. It started off doing one or two a day and then got a bit slicker at it and ended up doing about four a day, which was quite hard work. And I did full post-mortems, I looked through all the organs and particularly the joints and the things I found which interested me most - a large proportion of the shoulders, joints and hips had arthritis to a marked extent actually. It was fairly easy to assume, I think, that it was because they pulled heavy weights and it was obviously stressing the joints and I think it probably was later on we had, Andrew Bellars and I had quite an argument with the veterinary profession, some of it, who'd come up with a hip dysplasia scheme and they said it was almost certainly hip dysplasia in the huskies, it was hereditary. But they never really answered the point that the shoulder joints were affected just as much as the hips, so I'm absolutely sure that it wasn't hip dysplasia.

[Part 1 0:31:46] Lee: Signy dogs I think at that time, were they not kind of being pensioned off elsewhere in the Antarctic?

Godsal: Yes they did actually move some out. They had four puppies there and I think two of them moved out.

[Part 1 0:32:01] Lee: I was thinking of dogs, having had an active working life elsewhere in the Antarctic, Was not Deception and Signy then kind of used as final postings for dogs.

Godsal: I don't know. It may have been.

[Part 1 0:32:14] Lee: No, I don't know either.

Godsal: No, I don't know.

[Part 1 0:32:18] Lee: What is in my head is the idea that these dogs had arthritis yet they were only being used one month in the year, which makes me think that they must have come from somewhere else. They'd had a hard working life.

Godsal: Yes. I honestly don't know too much about the movement between bases before I got there. Certainly when I was there we moved all the dogs from Hope Bay. There were three teams moved down on the *Biscoe*. I was then on the *Shackleton*, but they went down on the *Biscoe* and put off at Adelaide or Stonington, I can't remember which.

[Part 1 0:32:54] Lee: So the process of dispatching the dogs. Did the other dogs get edgy. They knew what was going on?

Godsal: No. I don't think they have that sort of reasoning. I think that's true anywhere actually. You don't do it in front of the others obviously but I don't think they really notice anything. It's often in the eye of the beholder, I think.

[Part 1 0:33:25] Lee: Before you disposed of the carcasses you say you were taking samples?

Godsal: Yes, yes. All affected joints I cut off bits and preserved them in formal saline and brought them all back and when I was writing it all up I sectioned the joints and did the histology.

[Part 1 0:33:45] Lee: Again, what comes back later in the interview. And the carcasses, how were they disposed of?

Godsal: One wouldn't be allowed to say this nowadays, but there was usually a handy crevasse somewhere and down they went.

[Part 1 0:33:58] Lee: Same as any other gash.

Godsal: Absolutely, yes, yeah. It's a horrifying thought that they have to bring everything out nowadays. There we are.

[Part 1 0:34:11] Lee: Having sorted the problem at Signy, then moved on to the next base.

Godsal: Then, yes we went up from Signy to Hope Bay and didn't do any work there. Well, there was one dog there which had entropion which is inturned eyelids which I operated on later on when it had been moved down to one of the other bases, can't remember which.

[Part 1 0:34:36] Lee: Whilst you brought that one up , can you talk about how you did that, what you did?

Godsal: General anaesthetic and you just cut underneath the bottom lid, take out a sort of wedged-shaped bit, having judged carefully how much you should take and stitch it up and again and it just turns them out. It did work very well actually on that dog, I heard later from Rod Corner [phonetic] that he'd taken the stitches out and it was looking good, so that was something...

[Part 1 0:35:06] Lee: And this condition, is this a consequence of inbreeding?

Godsal: That is a hereditary condition, yes it is. So I left urgent instructions that that dog should not be bred from. Why it should turn up in one amongst so many it's difficult to say but it is a recessive gene, I think. So it was bad luck. Otherwise the Hope Bay dogs were a complete contrast to the Signy dogs. They were beautifully fit. Of course Noel Downham had been the dog man, say no more. They were very well looked after.

[Part 1 0:35:46] Lee: So were there any indications that they also had arthritis?

Godsal: There were certainly some which he knew were old and ...

[Part 1 0:35:57] Lee: Not pulling well.

Godsal: Yes. But it was something that he would notice probably more than I would because almost invariably it was both sides, so they weren't actually lame. There was one dog called 'Garth', I think it was, at Signy, he used to scream with pain when he was pulling. But he never stopped pulling. Incredible. Well I don't know if you would call it bravery or stupidity but I mean it was remarkable, and at the post-mortem his joints were absolutely riddled with arthritis. It must have been incredibly painful but he never stopped pulling.

[Part 1 0:36:41] Lee: And so there was no policy at that time for Fids to retire dogs that seemed to be in pain?

Godsal: Oh I think yes and any that weren't actually pulling their weight they used to leave them behind or actually dispatch them, which was their way of doing it.

[Part 1 0:37:01] Lee: Martin mentions 'Garth', Martin Holdgate, at Signy. I'll quote from Martin's notes: 'At Signy some of the dogs did exhibit traits that were frowned upon, especially the loose, wooly coat which made them prone to hold lice. A huge dog named 'Garth' was an example. I did wonder about the Fids' breeding programme at that time, whether they had selected their matings carefully enough'.

Godsal: Mmmm, quite possibly true and I think actually on occasions it was the dogs that selected their mating programmes [laughs] rather than the Fids.

[Part 1 0:37:37] Lee: But did the wooly coats bother you at all? Was that something you... I guess you were there in the summer so perhaps ...

Godsal: Yes, it wasn't so obvious then but, yes, it would bother me. I can understand it being a problem actually.

[Part 1 0:37:45] Lee: And Martin does say here that ...I wasn't making it up ... 'The dogs at Signy were really reserve teams sent there partly in case of need but also I suspect as retirement home to avoid having to put them down'.

Godsal: Fair enough.

[Part 1 0:38:02] Lee: So they were dogs that had worked elsewhere and that's where their injuries had come from.

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:38:10] Lee: So this was a kind of pattern really of moving from base to base giving the dogs a thorough check-up

Godsal: Yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:38:18] Lee: And then making decisions.

Godsal: Yes, yeah,mmm, yeah.

[Part 1 0:38:22] Lee: Do you know how many dogs you did put down in the end?

Godsal: 36 huskies, 2 cats and 'Peso', the old pet dog at Argentine. Was it Argentine or Adelaide? One or the other.

[Part 1 0:38:37] Lee: I don't know.

Godsal: Yes. Because I was approached and I couldn't remember doing that one and somebody - I've got his name there but I can't remember - he rang me up and said, 'Had I any recollection of putting a pet dog down?' It must have been 45, 50 years ago. Well, 47 years because it was only a few years ago, and I couldn't remember doing it. Anyway, I looked at my diaries and found that I had. He was doing some sort of history of the pet dog in the Antarctic or something, I don't know what it was he was doing but he wanted to know the details. And I had actually put this dog down.

[Part 1 0:39:18] Lee: Did it affect you at all, Mike? I mean, did it upset you that you were having to do such a lot of dog culling?

Godsal: Ermm. As a vet you get , I won't say used to it, but you know you're doing it and it's no worse for the dog than a general anaesthetic. I got upset when two of the pups from Signy had to be put down. There were four pups there and two young pups and that is a bit, you know does seem rather wasted life but they moved two out which went south and two of them decided not to go. You don't like doing that obviously. No, I think the actual ... you know you're doing it without the animal either knowing about it or feeling anything, really.

[Part 1 0:40:12] Lee: And for good reason.

Godsal: And for good reasons, yes.

[Part 1 0:40:15] Lee: So all the time you were acquiring all these samples, it's excess baggage.

Godsal: Yes, indeed, yes.

[Part 1 0:40:23] Lee: Which you were carting round the Antarctic.

Godsal: Yeah.

[Part 1 0:40:25] Lee: What did you make of the other bases you had to visit? Do you have a particularly fond memory of any particular one?

Godsal: Argentine was a lovely place. It was a nice place for the dogs to live and so on and they were a good selection, very good healthy dogs. I didn't spend very long there, and Adelaide I got to know more by repute than anything else because then we were stuck in the ice off Adelaide for a long time and eventually anchored up on the ice cliff and ferried things up to the people on the top. Then, of course, after an awful long time the ice suddenly disappeared and we could sail down. So I was there quite a few days but by then it was getting fairly late and everybody was assuming we were either going to have to winter down there or you know, wonderful rumours on the ship [laughs] and we were going back via Punta Arenas and were going to Simonstown at one stage and we weren't going to go to Adelaide at all at one stage, and that would have been sad as I would only have seen half the number of dogs I eventually did see. That was a strong rumour at one stage because we weren't going to get further south.

[Part 1 0:41:53] Lee: The *Biscoe* was stuck for quite a long time, wasn't it? 50 days .

Godsal: Yes, it was about 55 days I think, altogether, give or take a few miles here and there.

[Part 1 0:42:02] Lee: How do you think you would have coped with a year in the Antarctic? Would it have been ... ?

Godsal: Oh, I would have loved it [laughs] . No doubt at all. I was very happy down there, I loved it. It was just the sort of sheer beauty and the peace and quiet, even when you were on your own. No, I absolutely loved it. And the chaps down there were very good company too, actually. No, I was quite happy. I was slightly concerned I had my place at Cambridge booked to go back to the job afterwards.

[Part 1 0:42:38] Lee: The Antarctic ice doesn't read your diary, does it? A bit more about the other bases you went to then. Argentine Island and Stonington in particular. What did you find when you went to those bases amongst the dog population?

Godsal: Adelaide the dogs were in super condition and they were really working dogs and they were very good indeed, as indeed they were at Stonington. They ran a big sledging base, that was a wonderful place to sledge from and so on, because it goes straight up onto the plateau. Stonington I was only there about four days but it was memorable because I think three of the days it was cloudless skies and it was absolutely beautiful round ???[inaudible] Bay with the reflections of the mountain in the water. It was stunning. I mean it was absolutely beautiful and I can remember that scenery as long as I live, I think. The dogs were fine and the ones we did post-mortems we used the old American hut as a post-mortem room.

[Part 1 0:43:40] Lee: You did the p-m's on... well, you took the samples on location?

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:43:48] Lee: Did you ever see the dogs in action?

Godsal: Yes. I went for a short trip with Noel. That was one. And then we called in at Anvers Island and John Cheeke, I remember, his team was called the 'Komaks' [phonetic]. I don't know why I remember his rather than anyone else's, but I do. I saw him in action. I would have loved to have been able to do more. When you're calling at the bases actually you're quite busy because I'd not only got the post-mortems and things to do but there was always the unloading, you know endless amounts of Avgas and food and goodness knows what.

[Part 1 0:44:30] Lee: Oh, you got caught up in the relief work, did you?

Godsal: Oh yes, certainly, yes. [laughs]

[Part 1 0:44:41] Lee: That perhaps why... maybe that's why they chose to send the vets out there, a good pair of hands at all the reliefs. But in each case the pattern was that you would discuss with the doggyman what to do.

Godsal: Yes, yeah.

[Part 1 0:44:53] Lee: Did you give them the option of dispatching their own dogs?

Godsal: No. I don't think they would have wanted to actually anyway. They knew I was there for that job, I think as much as anything else.

[Part 1 0:45:07] Lee: So it was actually a relief for them not to have to do it.

Godsal: Yes, absolutely. It can't be much fun if you've been driving a team for a couple of years. You build up quite a relationship, I'm sure. I've never had it personally, obviously I haven't, but your lead dog particularly, it's your friend really. Or should be. I remember one time that I went on the sledge with Noel, this lead dog got thumped good and hard about three times. He wasn't too friendly on that occasion. No, I think it is a pretty special relationship.

[Part 1 0:45:53] Lee: Disciplining the dogs is always a slightly contentious issue, isn't it, because the dog handler will tell you they have to go in there and be firm , which covers a multitude of sins...

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:46:04] Lee: .. and using a thumper is a pretty violent thing to do.

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 1 0:46:10] Lee: And were you surprised at the amount of aggression ?

Godsal: I don't think I was surprised actually and they are very tough dogs. They're not like pets. The Antarctic ones are very friendly, over-friendly. That's why you're likely to get knocked over by them jumping up and saying hello. When I was at Cambridge later on, I went up to the Arctic, to Labrador, because it seemed a good idea to do some comparative work. The Eskimo dogs are not at all the same character.

[Part 1 0:46:46] Lee: In what way?

Godsal: Well, they're not so friendly or domesticated. You wouldn't trust them anywhere near how you trust the Antarctic dogs. Because the English dogs were treated by English people who have a much more of a friendly approach to dogs than the Eskimo does because they used to a lot of the Eskimos turned their dogs loose in the summer because they were of no use (during that time) and they would have to feed for themselves. They had just about six or eight weeks before I got to Labrador, they'd had a child eaten by a pack of huskies. But it's not surprising if they're not fed. You can't blame the dog really.

[Part 1 0:47:31] Lee: It's a slight dog's leg, if you'll excuse the expression. In the mid-'90's when it was decided that there should be no more dogs in the Antarctic. They'd already been thinned out quite a lot by then but the final dog run I think was 1994, and rather than have those dogs put down in a glare of publicity, BAS arranged to have them all shipped up to Hudson Bay, where they didn't really thrive and in fact they gradually popped their clogs one by one. Is that something you might have kind of imagined would happen, having worked in both environments?

Godsal: I think it's something you might have feared would happen, I think possibly. But it's like sort of like going down to the Antarctic with people with the common cold on the ship. I remember this happened at Deception when we arrived. Quite a lot of us had a cold which we'd brought from Stanley or somewhere. The chaps on the base were absolutely mortified by this and they were absolutely crippled because they were totally

[Part 1 0:48:31] Lee: Germ free.

Godsal: Well their immunity was nil against the common cold, so they got it far worse than normal people do in big population and I rather think possibly the same had happened to the dogs when you bring them out open to anything they're likely to catch. I don't know, that's supposition.

[Part 1 0:48:53] Lee: So they would be vulnerable to disease.

Godsal: Yeah.

[Part 1 0:48:58] Lee: But also vulnerable to a less caring environment if the northern dogs were being left to their own devices in the summer. Whereas in the Antarctic they were fed all the time.

Godsal: Yes. Possible, I don't know, but sad that they did all eventually....

[Part 1 0:49:17] Lee: Three survived.

Godsal: Yes, yes, which is not very many out of , I don't know, how many they brought out?

[Part 1 0:49:24] Lee: 16, 18, that kind of I'm not quite sure. You also did some positive work on a dog called ... I don't know what he was called actually. The dog had a bone stuck in it somewhere.

Godsal: That's right, yes. That was 'Coll'.

[Part 1 0:49:40] Lee: 'Coll'?

Godsal: Yeah, who was a greedy dog at the best of times. He got a lump of seal bone stuck in his small intestine and it was fairly obvious he had, although I hadn't got an X-ray machine, he was vomiting one end and not passing anything the other, so you know there's a hold-up somewhere in the middle, and he was very relaxed dog and actually you could feel with your fingers . And I knew perfectly well that what it was because I could feel this bone by palpating his sides. I gave him a jolly good dose of liquid paraffin one night and said, 'If he hadn't done anything by the morning, well we have to open him up'. He did nothing overnight, so...

[Part 1 0:50:31] Lee: No number two.

Godsal: This was on the *Biscoe*, I think, at the time and cleaned out the crew's mess or something, not our end of the ship, [laughs], and Sandy Muir, who was a doctor, he was anaesthetist and he had ideas that he'd do the anaesthetics and - who was the other chap? - Rice, I think he's another doctor I think, Tim Rice. Anyway, I can't remember off hand. But they did the anaesthetic and I opened him up but, being an anaesthetist he thought he'd give him a pre-med of a bit of pethidine and just a smidgeon of thiopentone and maintain it with pethidine and ether. It seemed a very good idea and he said he was an anaesthetist so, fine, he'd know what to do. So we let him free with his jar of ether and with a mask, this was, so in no time it got into the air conditioning system on the ship. There was a rather embarrassing smell of ether all the way round the ship. It was nothing too serious.

[Part 1 0: 51:51] Lee: People weren't dropping.

Godsal: No, no. No, no, no, nothing like that but it was quite a noticeable smell. But, anyway, the operation all went very well. We pulled out a little bit of bone and stitched him up and he did very well indeed actually, and we just took out all the stitches after about 10 days and he was fighting a neighbouring dog for a piece of seal meat and burst his stitches open again, so I had to stitch him up again under local anaesthetic that time, just the skin that was. Then I had to move on from that particular bit and I think we left him on the base then because he was on the ship at the time. I gathered that he went on very well. That was the end of that.

[Part 1 0:52:42] Lee: Again, were you called upon to do any human medicine?

Godsal: Yes. Two occasions I had to assist with an anaesthetic. One was Ken Back who had dislocated his thumb and Rod Corner said, 'Would I be able to help with the anaesthetic?'. Actually, it was the exactly the same anaesthetic machine, a little thing called a 'Fluotech', which I'd be using as a house surgeon at Cambridge. Exactly the same machine, so I knew about how to turn that on and off and so on. This wonderful kit they had down there, anaesthetising people in emergencies and its detailed instructions about three breaths at such and such and five breaths at another strength and then you turn it up. It was fine, it all worked fairly well actually and he came round and was perfectly and his thumb had clicked back into place.

[Part 1 0:53:40] Lee: And the second one?

Godsal: The second was, now, gosh, am I going to forget his name? I could tell you if I look in my book but I can't remember his name now but it was done on the way back from... no. It was done further south anyway. We were in the scow and it was swinging about trying to get it back on the ship, the *Biscoe*. And he got his arm stuck between the cabin on the scow and the ship and I thought for one ghastly moment he had crushed his chest but he'd just broken his wrist. There

wasn't a doctor about at the time and we thought we'd better try and get him back to.... it must have been Adelaide, I think. Anyway, the ice thickened up again and we were met by the Navy. They were a Navy launch and there was a doctor on that, so they came on board and again they said, 'Could I help with the anaesthetic?' , which I did, turned the dial thing. Poor old chap. I knew his name this morning.

[Part 1 0: 55:07] Lee: We can look it up.

Godsal: Yeah. Anyway, the anaesthetic was fine but it unfortunately set it about half an inch out and when he got back to Port Stanley he had to have it re-done, which was sad. So that was as far as I went with human anaesthetics. I think far enough probably.

[Part 1 0:55:31] Lee: What were your impressions then on leaving the Antarctic? Were you sorry to have to go or were you desperate to get away back to the UK?

Godsal: Oh, sad to leave, certainly. As I said the people coming out were so nice. Fred Gibbs, who had been the dog man at Adelaide, I think, most impressive chap and a very likeable chap. And then, of course, I came back to the Falklands and had another month there, which persuaded me to forget about the Antarctic for a month or so and then came back on the *Shackleton* again, I think. I had a memory of only moving ships initially and ending up on the *Biscoe* but when I read my diary I'd moved backwards and forwards carrying all this kit from one ship to another. It's terrible how things disappear from one's memory.

[Part 1 0:56:30] Lee: They merge, do they?

Godsal: 49 years now.

[Part 1 0: 56:35] Lee: Yes. Let's just pause for a minute whilst I change my tape and my little disc and then I've got a few more questions to ask you, if that's alright.

Godsal: Yep.

Part 2.

[Part 2 0:00:10] Lee: You found the name of the Fid who broke his wrist.

Godsal: Yes, it was Ron Tindall and there were four of us getting onto the launch when it was still on the ship and swinging about on a derrick's just letting it down and he got his arm stuck between the canopy of the launch and the side of the ship, and that was that.

[Part 2 0:00:38] Lee: That was the accident?

Godsal: Yeah

[Part 2 0:00:39] Lee: There was another condition which the dogs apparently displayed. This is from a note by Bob Burton. That they had eye injuries from dust, windblown dust. Was that some of them blind?

Godsal: Yes, particularly at Deception where it's volcanic ash and you get corneal ulcers. They were quite common there actually and you end up with a corneal opacity if they're not treated. I did do a couple of those, I think. Cauterise the ulcer with silver nitrate or something and it heals over.

[Part 2 0:01:16] Lee: And Tony Palmer, in a paper here, talked about Sir Raymond Priestley being a person who instigated the idea of vets going South.

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 2 0:01:26] Lee: It was a few years before you actually went off, so it did take about seven or eight years for you to actually get a vet going down South. He was asked to write a manual for the veterinary care of huskies in 1957 which was a 30-page booklet. Did you ever come across that?

Godsal: No, I don't think I did.

[Part 2 0:01:44] Lee: It was supposed to be on every base.

Godsal: Yes. They had quite a lot of drugs and stuff on the bases actually, which had been sent down on spec, I think.

[Part 2 0:01:58] Lee: When you got back to Britain with all your samples, what happened next?

Godsal: I arrived at Southampton, as I said , with 17 separate pieces of luggage. They were sort of cardboard boxes and things and goodness knows what it all was but I had to get a taxi from there to home in Kent because there was no way I could get on a train with that lot, so I got a taxi

and took a taxi all the way down. I was a bit upset my family hadn't met me to be honest. They were obviously very busy. Then went back up to Cambridge and resumed my job as a house surgeon, which was actually a very busy day job, really. But it did leave me time to do quite a lot of work with microscopes and sections and all the rest of it and then, that was in 1964, then in Christmas time a chap who was in my year, John Parker, rang up and said, 'How was I fixed, could I go and do a locum?'. He'd put his plate up from nothing in Wendover in Buckinghamshire, which is a very brave thing to do. In fact, he'd only just qualified just over a year. He said he'd got jaundice and 'Could I go and run the practice for him?' I left home on Boxing Day and went down and ran his practice for a week. Then went back to Cambridge and carried on as a house surgeon and then come April he rang again and said he was very desperately overworked and could I go and join him, so I did.

[Part 2 0:03:49] As soon as I got to join him in April, he got mumps which actually was a very good thing because, although he's two and a half years younger than me and hadn't done his national service, he had the great benefit of a bald head at the age of 23 and everybody thought he was old and experienced. In fact, as I say, he was two and a half years younger than me but people used to say they had to make do with the young vet, which was me. [laughs]. So that's how the practice got off the ground.

[Part 2 0:04:16] Lee: Quite like a scene from *All Creatures Great and Small*, isn't it?

Godsal: Yeah, yes.

[Part 2 0:04:19] Lee: Can we just go back a bit to the work you were doing in the lab when you got back to Cambridge?

Godsal: Yes.

[Part 2 0:04:25] Lee: When you were studying the samples you brought back, was there any more information that came from those samples?

Godsal: Not really more, just confirmation of the extent of the arthritis and so on. I did do quite a lot of work on the sections and stained them all. It was ... it's difficult to remember exactly. I must have spent my time working quite hard on it, and I did quite a lot of reading as well, the background to arthritis in humans as well as dogs. And actually I went to a chap in Belgium to see if there had been any arthritis in dogs that pulled carts in the streets of Belgium, which they were still allowed to do. The dogs in England weren't allowed to pull things. I had this contact up in Labrador as well and that was an interesting collaboration there actually. Managed to find a veterinarian who worked at the American Air Force base at Goose Bay and went to stay with

him for a fortnight. He was very brazen. He'd just go up to the Eskimos and say 'Can I have your dogs?'. We put down about half a dozen I think up there.

[Part 2 0:05:49] Lee: And he was finding similar...?

Godsal: Very similar, not as bad, but similar and the same joints affected.

[Part 2 0:05:57] Lee: Should we have been surprised that the dogs were suffering from the workloads they were having to...?

Godsal: I think if you consider that, I think on a good surface, a nine-dog team would pull something like 1200 lbs weight, they're pulling almost twice their body weight and really I don't think any joint should be expected to put up with that for very long quite honestly. It's a terrific stress on the joints.

[Part 2 0:06:26] Lee: But this wasn't cruelty from the early Fids, it was just .. they just didn't know?

Godsal: Not cruelty at all. No, possibly nowadays they wouldn't do it. But I mean it was the means of transport. When I was down there they had the first skidoo in. Reading my diary, it went chugging off like a lawnmower I said in my diary. That was 1963/64 and before that there wasn't... there was muskegs and things but there was virtually nothing for an individual to go off apart from dogs. How things have changed. You see skidoos everywhere now.

[Part 2 0:07:15] Lee: You tried to publish your results in *BAS Bulletin*.

Godsal: I did, I got quite a long way with writing it all up. I had actually by then left Cambridge and I was in practice, which was... you know, if I thought I was busy as a house surgeon, it was nothing when compared with being in practice. I never used to get home until eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night sometimes. Had evening surgery at seven. So things were very different and it was difficult actually to carry on writing it up. I had got microscopes and things in my... I was unmarried then... in my cottage. I did try quite hard but then I sent it all off up to my supervisor in Cambridge and he sent it all back saying I should do some studies of histology of normal bone.

[Part 2 0:08:04] Lee: This is Arthur Jennings, is it?

Godsal: Yeah. And I really felt I'm sorry I can't do it and it was just a bit too much. So, I'd done my BAS report of the dogs and I'd been in touch with Andrew Bellars by then.

[Part 2 0:08:18] Lee: You also tried to write it up for *BAS Bulletin* for Ray Adie, who was the Editor of *BAS Bulletin*, did you not?

Godsal: I don't remember that.

[Part 2 0:08:29] Lee: Andrew Bellars suggests that you tried to write it up in a *BAS Bulletin* but the proofs were sent back so many times by the Editor Ray Adie for really nitpicking reasons down to commas etc. 'Finally, the very patient Mike Godsal gave up and went on with his day job'. Is that not ringing any ..?

Godsal: It doesn't ring a bell. I don't rule it out because one's memory fades but I don't remember that.

[Part 2 0:08:57] Lee: Ok. But you do remember Jennings' recommendations and you kind of throwing in the towel at that point?

Godsal: Yes, I do, yes.

[Part 2 0:09:06] Lee: Then Andrew Bellars did kind of come to your rescue. What happened there?

Godsal: Well, as far as I remember, I heard that he was going and I thought 'Lucky old you' and I said , 'Well you've got to take an X-ray machine because that's one thing you will find necessary'. We had long chats about it all and off he went. I mean I was very jealous at the time. [laughs].

[Part 2 0:09:37] Lee: So he was going down to follow up your work really.

Godsal: I think yes. Yes, and he was much more interested in hereditary disease, so he did quite a lot of work on the entropion business and he got the detailed breeding of the dogs much more organised than I ever did. I think he did a lot of work on that actually.

[Part 2 0:10:01] Lee: And when he came to write up his report, he approached you.

Godsal: Yeah, and I said by all means have all my stuff and he kindly made me a joint author which was an idle way of doing it.

[Part 2 0:10:11] Lee : Presumably that's an unintentional pun, 'joint author' ?

Godsal: Yeah. How quick you are, yes. [laughs].

[Part 2 0:10:19] Lee : I thought of it last night. So when the joint paper was published a couple of years later or so, did it rock the world? Did people take notice?

Godsal: I don't think so. I don't think it did. I wasn't aware of any great...

[Part 2 0:10:43] Lee : Was that because BAS were not paying attention to finding things about their animals .

Godsal: I don't think, honestly don't know, but they did then take Bob down, Bob Bosman, as a wintering vet and there must have been some continuity between the three of us but I don't think I met him before he went actually.

[Part 2 0:11:10] Lee : But there you were clearly saying that the workloads were too great for the welfare of the dogs, were you not?

Godsal: I don't ever think I said as much. I wouldn't have discouraged using them. I was just aware of the results of using them. How could I sort of say the weight of a sledge was too much for goodness sake. If the sea-ice is flat and so on, you load it up as high as you can, don't you? I think the conditions dictate how much you put on the sort of feelings for the dogs.

[Part 2 0:11:50] Lee : So was there any consequences of your work? Did BAS adjust their procedures in any way that you are aware of?

Godsal: I don't think so particularly, except that I think that they realised that it was not sensible to keep dogs past their working life and I think that's true because as subsequently they were upsetting the ecology of seal life round the bases and so on. And I think that probably was true but now there are so many seals I gather down there now that you hardly see an ice floe without a seal on it. In those days really round for 10 miles or 15 miles round each base they were fairly few and far between.

[Part 2 0:12:35] Lee : What? They'd been bumped off to feed the dogs?

Godsal: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:12:40] Lee : There was a change though because, again according to Andrew Bellars' notes, there was a more decisive policy regarding the dogs, their breeding and their use, and that

was implemented at the stations in the '69/'70 season and it was decided that new breeding stock should be introduced from Greenland.

Godsal: Yes, I gathered they had brought some in which I think Andrew had to do with that but, as I say, he'd done a lot of work on the breeding which I hadn't done, and the possibility of in vitro diseases and so on .

[Part 2 0:13:18] Lee : Were you surprised when dogs were outlawed in the Antarctic?

Godsal: Yes I was actually. I never sort of thought that it would happen somehow but I wasn't aware of the sort of day to day goings on at the time. Looking back on it, I can understand that they would be upsetting the ecology but whether they've actually taken it too far or not, I don't know. It's a great loss from the people on the bases standpoint because the dogs are a terrific centre point of one's social life and so on. I'm sure that very, very few of the base members would have not liked having dogs there.

[Part 2 0:14:04] Lee : So you were aware of the therapy that they provided, were you ?

Godsal: Oh yes, yes,yes. Not at Signy possibly because they were spare there but certainly on the sledging bases they were part of base life. It's nice to have another species there anyway I think actually. Not going as far as the two cats and dear old 'Peso'. 'Peso 'probably contributed quite a lot to base life.

[Part 2 0:14:33] Lee : How are those humans lodged in your psyche? Do you think that that time South changed you at all in any way or was there anything you learnt from your time in the Antarctic which you've kind of used in your life since?

Godsal: You certainly learn never to forget it. It was the most wonderful time. I simply adored it. I think you do learn to be helpful. If you see somebody carrying something, it's like unloading the Avgas, you don't try and carry a barrel on your own. It was very striking on the way out that the people who'd been down there for a couple of years, they're almost on the other end of your suitcase if it was heavy. It was extraordinary how nice they were and I've tried to remember that as a lesson for life, really. I don't suppose it always happens.

[Part 2 0:15:29] Lee : This is the Fid philosophy of all mucking in together to get the job done.

Godsal: Absolutely, yes, yes. All mucking in is exactly the ...

[Part 2 0:15:40] Lee : Do you still remember the beauty of the Antarctic?

Godsal: Oh yes. It's a stunningly beautiful place. But when I've given talks to the Women's Institute and things, you say don't get the idea that it's always like this because the sun doesn't shine half as often as my slides will indicate. You don't take photographs when it's really foul weather outside.

[Part 2 0:16:05] Lee : So what happened to Mike Godsal in the rest of your veterinary career?

Godsal: Then, when I had left Cambridge I joined John Parker in practice and we had a successful practice actually. It's unbelievable how it grew. There were two of us, I think we were on our own just the two of us for about two and a half years and got an assistant, another Cambridge graduate of course.

[Part 2 0:16:32] Lee : Naturally.

Godsal: Naturally. Then we went up to four and then it's now I think there's 13 vets in the practice now, not all full-time because they have girls there now as well. Well of course there's more female graduates now than there are male.

[Part 2 0:16:56] Lee : Are you still in touch?

Godsal: With John?

[Part 2 0:16:58] Lee : With the vet, with the practice. Are you still ...?

Godsal: Oh yes. I actually take my dog back [laughs] because it's cheaper than going to the local vet I can tell you.

[Part 2 0:17:11] Lee : Did you ever get any huskies turn up?

Godsal: I had. When I came back, when I was still at Cambridge, there was a chap called Keith Barnett who sadly died a couple of years ago. He was an expert on eyes and he used to do the work for the guide dogs for the blind, because sadly a lot of guide dogs were getting retinal atrophy and going blind themselves, which is a horrible thought. He came back from the guide dog centre at Exeter one day and he said, 'Mike, I've got just the dog for you'. So I said, 'Oh, what's that?' and he said, 'There's a beautiful looking Alaskan malamute at Exeter and it's not going to make a guide dog'. So I went all the way down to Exeter and this dog it was absolutely wonderful, beautiful thing. I've got a portrait of it upstairs. Beautiful dog, slightly bigger than a husky. They keep them in sort of hard tennis courts, you know great big compounds and there

was one or two full of labradors and then there was one with 'Lisa' in it on her own and I went up to the edge of the wire and she came running over with her tail wagging 'Awhoooo' and I thought you've got to do this, so she came back with me. She was sent down from the guide dogs for chasing cats [laughs]. But she was a character.

[Part 2 0:18:42] Lee : And you had her for some years?

Godsal: Oh, long time, yes. But she did have hip dysplasia. As a bachelor on my own in those days, to have a dog that didn't need an awful lot of exercise and couldn't jump over about 18 inches was actually an advantage and she lived until she was 11 and you know saw through me getting married and having children and so on and she was absolutely wonderful. Super dog. But she did like cats, there's no doubt about that. But I used to chain her eventually with a rope and choke chain on the end and she'd take off. I'd stand and brace myself for the tug. She learned in the end and we had cats in the same house and she was fine, actually. Wonderful dog.

[Part 2 0: 19:30] Lee: It's only a few months in the Antarctic but how do you regard that little sojourn in your life? Is it a highlight or just another episode?

Godsal: Oh, very much a highlight, yes, yes. You can't not remember things about it all the time, actually. I saw on the television last night.

[Part 2 0:19:50] Lee: Me too.

Godsal: I don't often look to see what's on BBC 4 but I'm jolly glad I saw it.

[Part 2 0:19:56] Lee: *Timeshift*.

Godsal: Absolutely, yes. You know, that brings back memories, it's great. I read about it and see ... it was a wonderful time, actually. The other time that was worth remembering was national service, which I loved. It was great. I'm very good, in those days, good at being told what to do, I think. [laughs]. It was fun, great place. And the Falklands of course. Great place, I adored that time in the Falklands. They were such nice people and I got very upset when the war was on. I think my family thought I was a frightful bore. I used to listen to every news bulletin with that chap from the Foreign Office who read at dictation speed, do you remember that?

[Part 2 0:20:53] Lee: Mmm.

Godsal: Port San Carlos was where I first was. I spent five days there. I flew in and old Cameron met me on the jetty, practising his golf swing with an umbrella. I've never forgotten it.

[Part 2 0:21:12] Lee: Who was that?

Godsal: Cameron, who owned Port San Carlos. Lovely chap, very great, very civilised chap, and I spent five days there and he was an interesting chap, actually. I'm sure he's died now, he's quite considerably older than me. That's where Alan Miller was, who was his head shepherd and he was the one, I'm told, who discovered that the landline telephone was still open to Goose Green and he managed to give them some warning on the telephone. The Argentinians caught him and gave him a pretty hard time. He died a couple of years later. It was very sad. He was only a young chap.

[Part 2 0:22:02] Lee: So you really were caught up in the Falklands war? I mean as a consumer of the media.

Godsal: I became very interested in it, yes, and I did know where they were talking about. I'd been to... I didn't actually get to Goose Green but I went to West Falkland and so on and all round the top.

[Part 2 0:22:19] Lee: Did you socialise much in the Falklands? Did you go to the dances?

Godsal: Yes, I did actually, I was surprised to see in my diary [laughs]. Yes. There was a chap called Ian Strange who was a zoologist and sort of amateur zoologist, I think. He was actually very kind and he sort of took quite a lot of interest in what I was up to. And was very interested in the wildlife and so on. I stayed with him and his wife while I was down there. There were lots of ... and the pubs were important and that lovely one on the main street, was it *The Ship*, I think it was. They heard that I was interested in penguins and so on and also that I liked penguin eggs. I think they were delicious, I love them hard boiled. They were delicious. The day before we sailed to go south, there was a box delivered to the *Shackleton*, it was a present from this pub. I hope it wasn't as a reflection for how much I'd drunk there but it could have had something to do with it. It was a box of penguin eggs, which I thought was so nice of them, quite uncalled for, but really nice. They were very nice people and, of course, the people out in the camp never saw any(body), apart from when the ship went in at the most once a week with supplies and things, they hardly ever saw anybody outside.

[Part 2 0:23:58] So they were terribly welcoming. At Port Howard on the West Falkland I had a birthday on the way out in April. They heard it was my birthday and it coincided with a shepherds' dance, which was a terrific party. They all ride in from miles around. 145,000 acres or something, this particular farm. So it's quite a way to ride in on your ponies. They made me a birthday cake. It was very, very kind. I was most impressed by it actually. There was one place at

the top end of the East Falkland where Cameron took me in a thing called the *Royal Box*. Because the wind was blowing, they couldn't fly so they thought they'd move me overland, which was a big tractor with four large wheels and a forward loader on the front, which was completely lined with sheepskins. And you would sit on this thing and then get lifted up like that. And you go off across the ... because there were no roads in those days at all. It was called the *Royal Box* because the Governor used to use it when he was fishing. He'd come up and stay with Cameron and they'd go off. But Cameron said when I was going to stay with this next chap, he said: 'I hope you enjoy your stay but he's a bachelor and he's got the worst cook in the Falkland Islands'. And so it proved. It was unbelievable how this chap put up with the food that this lady cooked for him.

[Part 2 0:25:33] Lee: Did you go the hospital?

Godsal: Did I go to it?

[Part 2 0:25:36] Lee: Mmm.

Godsal: I saw it and I had a chat with Slessor.

[Part 2 0:25:39] Lee: Yeah.

Godsal: Well several times I saw him actually. It seemed fine actually but I was a bit shocked when I heard about his advice about hydatid: 'Don't put that in this report to the UK!'. But when I was talking to him about hydatids he did sound quite interested and I got hold of the Permanent Secretary and said, 'I think you really have got to do something about this, because I know they only had one case so far but they're going to get more, without a shadow of doubt'. I gather so it's proved. I don't know the facts but it's alarming. Because if you talk to Australians and New Zealanders about how the children are brought up, they have to wash their hands after they touch a dog, and for the same reason. It's sad that more notice wasn't taken of it really.

[Part 2 0:26:44] Lee: Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Godsal: I think we've had a lovely chat. No, I don't think so, Chris, thank you.

[Part 2 0:26:55] Lee: Thank you.

Items of possible interest.

[Part 1 16:00] - Treating the Governor's freisian cow. (Only vet on the Falklands) .

[Part 1 20:00] - Uncovers massive prevalence of hydatid disease in sheep and dogs. The risk to human health ignored by the authorities.

[Part 1 29:00] - Lack of interest in dogs at Signy.

[Part 1 20:20] - Discovers large proportion of dogs with arthritis in shoulders rather than hip dysplasia. Arguments follow as to whether the condition is due to workload (arthritis) or hereditary causes (hip dysplasia).

[Part 1 35:30] - Husky 'Garth' that kept on pulling despite extreme arthritic pain.

[Part 1 41:50] - *Biscoe* stuck in the ice off Adelaide for 55 days.

[Part 1 46:50] - Comparision between treatment of Eskimo huskies and Antarctic huskies.

[Part 2 21:10] - Alan Miller, shepherd in Port San Carlos who realised landlines still active and was able to warn other settlements about the arrival of Argentinians.