

ARTHUR MANSFIELD

Transcript of a recording of Arthur Mansfield interviewed via Skype by Chris Eldon Lee 28th May 2013. BAS archives number AD6/24/1/218: Transcribed by Sue Jack

[Part 1 0:00:00.1] Lee: This is Arthur Mansfield interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee via Skype on 28th May 2013

Mansfield: Arthur Mansfield. I was born in Wandsworth in London in 1926 the 29th March

[Part 1 0:00:24.5] Lee: So you are now...

Mansfield: Eighty seven

[Part 1 0:00:26.3] Lee: Would you say your father had been an educated man?

Mansfield: No

[Part 1 0:00:31.5] Lee: What did he do?

Mansfield: My father served in the First World War and when he came out he'd been in the Royal Engineers and he got into communications, and when he came out he joined the General Post Office as a telephone linesman and really, that was his basic career and he was self schooled from that time onwards. He attended night schools to improve his abilities, and he eventually ran, I think, a fairly successful team which, of all things, put up telephone lines. And that was quite adventurous in the days when the lines going over places like Shap Fell in the Pennines would get covered in frozen rime and come crashing to the ground. So he always enjoyed these adventures being sent with his team to repair the damage. That was his career until the second World War and he was called up in fact several days before the war began and spent the whole war in North Africa and Italy doing the same job; communications. But essentially the external communications such as telephone lines and so on.

[Part 1 0:02:10.9] Lee: If it hadn't been for chaps like your dad we would not be speaking now would we?

Mansfield: I suppose so, yes.

[Part 1 0:02:17.5] Lee: It's a very thin wandering line that comes to Betton Strange in Shropshire I can tell you, ha ha!

Mansfield: Ha Ha

[Part 1 0:02:22.5] Lee: What about your education Arthur? What kind of schooling did you have?

Mansfield: I suppose I was a bright little fellow at elementary school and managed to get a place at Rutlish School in Merton in Surrey which was an extremely good Grammar School and so I spent seven years there and at the end of that time I managed to get another scholarship to Cambridge this time. I went to study Agriculture but when I went for my interview the Dean of Agriculture (who was a namesake) said, 'We don't want people like you, our course is basically for people who have a stake in the land. But, (so he said) what's your real interest?' And I said, 'Well, zoology,' and he said, "Well, I'll speak to the County Authorities who awarded the scholarship and tell them that you'll be doing natural science for three years and if they want to continue your studies after then, well, so be it." So that was how I got to Cambridge! And that was where I met Dick Laws by the way, who became my great college friend.

[Part 1 0:04:03.6] Lee: Was he influential in your life at that point, at university?

Mansfield: Insofar as he gave me a taste for the great outdoors and we spent two summers climbing in the Isle of Skye which was great fun: and we either lived in Youth Hostels or in a small tent, but we had a third college friend with us. So I guess his school had been evacuated to the Lake District during the war and so he was very knowledgeable about hill climbing and so on. So I got very enthused about life in the open air and when we finished our college degrees he was a first class student: and in those days, which was before the end of the war, people with first class honours degrees could get deferment from the military, which Dick did of course, by joining FIDS and going down to the South Orkneys. But I was not a first class scholar, so they called me up for the Navy and I spent three years there.

[Part 1 0:05:49.0] Lee: Can I ask you what sort of chap the young Dick Laws was? I met him in recent years: what was he like as a young man?

Mansfield: Oh, absolutely fine. As I say, we got on famously and we both played on the first fifteen Rugby team, but I think he spent more time in the Summer months studying whilst I was quite happy to sit in an 'Eights' and row on the Cam! But, yes, he was a good hard working student in every respect and fun to be with.

[Part 1 0:06:36.5] Lee: Did you suspect he might become a leader of men?

Mansfield: I don't know really: maybe you know. In an unexpressed way we probably thought we all might be! But, I don't recall marking him out for future leadership but he obviously had that potential.

[Part 1 0:07:05.1] Lee: Tell me about your Navy years? This was just after the war wasn't it? Are there any particular memories you have from that period in National Service?

Mansfield: The interesting thing to start with was that when we went before an interview board one of the interviewers was an Instructor Captain in the Navy who happened to have very close associations with St Catharines, and I being a student from there said "Oh well, we'll take you in the Instructor Branch." So I said, 'Fine' and it turned out that you could either be trained as a meteorological forecaster or you could learn to be a navigator and teach Midshipmen how to take star charts and so on. So he said, "What do you want to do?" and so I said, 'Well' (having an interest in aviation I thought I could get near the Fleet Air Arm, as it then was, by being a weather forecaster), so I said, 'I'll happily train to be a Met man'. So that's how I ended up getting the training which was a good solid three months, and then instead of being sent to, say, a Naval Air Station or a Carrier they sent me out to the Naval Headquarters in Ceylon (where they had a small team to provide the East Indies Fleet with weather forecasts) which was a bit tricky in those days, because we really didn't get the kind of information that people get these days with satellite pictures and all of that sort of thing.

[Part1 0:09:15.5] Lee: So how accurate do you think you could be then all those years ago?

Mansfield: The main thing was to try and forecast where the Inter-tropical Front was between the various Monsoons and you could only do this on the basis of a few reports from ships, which weren't that many in the Indian Ocean at that time and also many land stations in India, a few in Africa and some in the Far East, but really not very much at that time: it was 1948 and '49 after all, and I think the military had been packing up much of their stuff around the Empire if I can put it in those words. Anyway it was instructive and I enjoyed it, but I was sent back after two years because they decided to wrap up the Headquarters there in Trincomalee in Ceylon and I came back to England and I ended up at a Naval Air Station in Northern Ireland and that has an interest for us because at the Naval Hospital there was none other than Surgeon Commander Ted Bingham.

[Part 1 0:10:56.7] Lee: Oh, yes.

Mansfield: And we all know about him! So I met him and he said "Ah! You must read my book" and produced a copy of John Rymill's 'Southern Lights'. Have you read that by the way? That was about the British Graham Land Expedition before the War.

[Part 1 0:11:19.9] Lee: I think I read it many many years ago.

Mansfield: Anyway there's an account of his work in there and he was one of the principal people there. But I read his book and I said I had been interested in joining FIDS because Dick had written me from Cambridge anyway, where he was writing up his work on elephant seals at Signy Island and he said, "Why don't you join FIDS and come South and we can do things together?" He was returning to South Georgia to complete the elephant seal work and I had no particular future in mind at that time so I said 'Fine' and went with FIDS to South Georgia for a year and then to the South Orkneys for another year.

[Part 1 0:12:51.3] Lee: What do you think was the first inkling you had that there might be a place called the Antarctic? Your first contact with that continent? Reading about it? Or...?

Mansfield: Oh Yes, and where would one have probably read about Scott more than any other thing but I think that whetted my appetite for just going and seeing other places and far off lands, and the Antarctic certainly appealed to me because of, I guess in a way, the open air experience in climbing in the mountains in Skye was one thing and then of course, no – I'm jumping the gun there aren't I? I suppose in the early days at school one read about Scott and I know there was some film footage which was shown at school and there's that marvellous book by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, 'The Worst Journey in the World'. I think that made quite an impression on me as well.

[Part 1 0:14:19.0] Lee: I'm surprised that didn't put you off because it is the worst journey in the world and of course Scott never came back.

Mansfield: Yes

[Part 1 0:14:25.9] Lee: Had you actually then already thought about going to the Antarctic or was it really Dick and/or Ted who put the thought into your mind?

Mansfield: No. I think it was Dick quite honesty. And when we left Cambridge I knew he was going off to the South and we maintained contact and I got these marvellous letters from him and that really encouraged me to go South when I got the opportunity.

[Part 1 0:15:03.3] Lee: So he was writing to you and describing to you his situation and his work was he?

Mansfield: Yes. Yes. He described his work on elephant seals and said he was going back but would I like to join him at South Georgia? We didn't do too much together there because I was a Met observer, and also a forecaster later on, and he was out with the sealers, but we did do some work on seals together. But when he went back to England, I went down to Signy... He had left me his notes on seals and birds and so on, and encouraged me to do some biological work. So I chose the Weddell seal as something to work on and that of course really supplied me with my future career.

[Part 1 0:16:20.1] Lee: Let's come back to the zoology shortly if I may. We have to get you to the Antarctic first and the first stumbling block would have been the interview I expect. Do you recall that at all?

Mansfield: Yes, as I said, I remember the interviewers were rather grand looking

gentlemen in their various uniforms. I think there was a fairly high ranking officer from each service and they were picking out people they thought would have particular aptitudes for their particular service. As I said, it so happened that one of the people on board was, I think, an Honorary Fellow at one time of St Catharine's, or he may even have been at St. Catharine's just after the end of the War. Anyway he was the one who said "We'll take you in the Instructor Branch." Really, I had no particular talents for any of the other services. I would have joined the Air Force at the drop of a hat, but I only wanted to fly and unfortunately I had rather poor eyesight so that put the lid on that one. But I had a lot of experience at school, we had a very fine cadet force and I certainly, had I been taken into the army, would have applied to be in one of the front line infantry regiments probably, because I was well trained to do that. But no, the Navy got me!

[Part 1 0:18:35.9] Lee: Did you have to do an interview for FIDS on top of that, later on?

Mansfield: Oh yes

[Part 1 0:18:41.5] Lee: What was that like?

Mansfield: I'm just trying to think who interviewed me. I suppose it was Bunny Fuchs.

[Part 1 0:18:47.5] Lee: It would be that early, wouldn't it? Crown agents I expect.

Mansfield: That's right, yes. As I said, I had this recommendation from Ted Bingham. I don't know if he put in a word for me or what, but I don't recall anything remarkable in the interview, except they said "We'll have you"!

[Part 1 0:19:10.5] Lee: Ha Ha! Do you think it was a fairly foregone conclusion then? And it was a gentlemen's agreement almost before you started?

Mansfield: It may well have been, but I certainly think I had a reasonable background for joining FIDS anyway, and of course, I was an experienced weather observer and forecaster.

[Part 1 0:19:34.6] Lee: They were in short supply weren't they, at that time?

Mansfield: They are the people they really wanted at that time because I think the grand days of survey and sighting were waning a bit, so the accent I think was on the Met side at that time.
So there was no problem I think in getting taken on.

[Part 1 0:20:05.6] Lee: Tell me about the journey South, Arthur. Do you remember the ship?

Mansfield: Yes. It was a Biscoe – the first Biscoe.

[Part 1 0:20:15.1] Lee: The old wooden one?

Mansfield: Yes the wooden one.

[Part 1 0:20:17.2] Lee: What was she like to sail in?

Mansfield: Even though I was in the Navy I wasn't a particularly good sailor and when we ran into very bad weather, of course, I retreated to my bunk and that was that. She was pretty OK, she was heavily laden of course, and I didn't think she was an unworthy vessel. I think she did the job she was qualified to do extremely well.

[Part 1 0:20:50.7] Lee: Did you stop off on the way?

Mansfield: We stopped briefly in the Cape Verde Islands and also we stopped at

Montevideo for a couple of days I think, and then down to Port Stanley of course.

[Part 1 0:21:12.1] Lee: What was Stanley like in the early '50's?

Mansfield: A very small place. Almost like a big English village in a way. We weren't in Stanley for all that length of time anyway and some of it was spent loading stores on the ship and so on, so I don't recall that there was much going on at that time, for we were in some ways members of the crew at that time helping to store the ship.

[Part 1 0:22:04.5] Lee: Was it the regular procedure for new Fids to meet the Governor at that point? Were you interviewed by Miles Clifford?

Mansfield: I don't think...we must have met him, but I don't recall an interview as such. He may have got together a group of us new people and perhaps given us a pep talk or something. I really don't remember. The only thing I remember of him of course was in that later episode to do with the Argentine harassment of our people at Hope Bay.

[Part 1 0:22:55.9] Lee: Let's talk about that then because you were heading South for the first time when the ship stumbled upon that. Was that right?

Mansfield: No. That was the second time.

[Part 1 0:23:06.7] Lee: Second year?

Mansfield: Yeh. I'd been at South Georgia and was waiting in Stanley over the Christmas period to go to Signy and then it was going to be a round about trip and then we, as I say in my notes here, we got the information from the Base that the Argentine Navy had come into the harbour where they were putting up the new Base hut at Hope Bay and had made it quite clear that the people were to stop doing what they were doing. Which is when the Governor intervened. It so happened that the Burghead Bay (a frigate from the West Indies) was on station around the Falklands at that time: she was in Stanley; so the Governor went aboard and took all us Fids who were going round to some of the other Bases and we headed South for a couple of days in, I remember, really very unpleasant stormy weather, and of course when we got to Hope Bay the Governor delivered his protest and the Argentine gunboat promptly up-anchored and took off and was never seen again!

[Part 1 0:24:53.8] Lee: What do you remember of what you were told about that on the way South? Were you being briefed as to what to do? Were you being armed or taught how to use weapons?

Mansfield: No! There was no indication I think that the Argentines would take any action against Britain over the Falklands or the Dependencies. I think that was perhaps the first overt signs that something unpleasant might happen in the future.

[Part 1 0:25:31.4] Lee: So the Burghead trip was a show of strength rather than an offensive?

Mansfield: I suspect the Navy must have been more aware of what might possibly go on in the next while. I mean we had no idea of that, but I think in fact there's been a Naval presence down there since that time. I'm not sure whether there was any problem requiring the Navy's presence before that time.

[Part 1 0:26:16.6] Lee: But you were not heading South expecting to be in a fight and it was a symbolic presence rather than an Action Stations presence?

Mansfield: I remember as we steamed into Hope Bay that all the guns on the frigate were trained on this Naval gun boat and the Chief Petty Officer (Gunnery Officer) was all excited going to see some action at last! But of course it never [transpired!]

[Part 1 0:26:58.8] Lee: Were you nervous, do you remember?

Mansfield: No. I don't think so. As I recall.

[Part 1 0:27:05.7] Lee: It's just that all these poor innocent civilian Fids being shipped down South with guns bristling – it all sounds a bit dodgy?

Mansfield: No. I think it was muted. And anyway, it was that one incident. There have been many more of course since. After that for a while I don't think there was any display of strength by the Argentine Navy. We on the Burghead Bay stayed and joined the people from the Biscoe who were putting up the Base hut at 'D' which had burnt down in 1948 or '49 and so that was why the Biscoe was there, and for a fair while. So during that time which was February 1952, King George VI had died and of course there was a signal sent to the Governor on board the Burghead Bay and he said "I must return to the Falklands". So what to do with all these Fids who were going round the other bases? Anyway, we all got back on board again and the ship went back to Stanley and it was a while before I got from Stanley to Signy.

[Part 1 0:28:49.0] Lee: Do you have any idea why it was so important for the Governor to get back to Port Stanley?

Mansfield: No. I assume that he was obeying diplomatic protocol and going back to his seat of Government, if you like, and issuing further messages from there. So I think that was all. I didn't read anything other than that in [it].

[Part 1 0:29:22.5] Lee: All right: lets talk a bit then about your heading to South Georgia, to Grytviken. At what point did you know that you were going to be sent there rather than anywhere else?

Mansfield: Oh well. I asked to be sent there.

[Part 1 0:29:35.4] Lee: Oh I see. Why was that: because of Dick?

Mansfield: Because of Dick.

[Part 1 0:29:39.7] Lee: I see

Mansfield: And I think they were very happy in Fids that if anybody had a choice, then that made their task a little easier to decide who was going where. So I said 'I want to go to South Georgia and work with Dick Laws' and they said, "Fine. No problem, absolutely none."

[Part 1 0:30:05.6] Lee: Whaling was still very much underway then. What was it like to arrive at this whaling station?

Mansfield: We were on King Edward Point which was across the bay from Grytviken, the whaling station. And the Discovery Committee in the late 1920's and 30's had built this really very fine lab for the scientists who were working at the whaling station and so we lived there. So from the Fids point of view we had very comfortable accommodation. So that was a great bonus, but the whaling station was, for me – who'd never seen really a whale before – quite exciting. They were still taking the odd blue whale and these were enormous creatures. But they were taking mostly fin whales and a few sperm whales, but to see these giants hauled out of the water onto the ramp there and processed was really quite a spectacle and fascinating of course from the biological point of view.

[Part 1 0:31:41.8] Lee: How many Fids were there? Six – would that be right?

Mansfield: That sounds right. There was Danny Borland, the forecaster. And us new people were Jack Newing (a Falkland Islander)

[Part 1 0:32:06.1] Lee: Alan McArthur?

Mansfield: Alan McArthur! Yes, of course, and he was a new Met man. I was a new Met man [and] didn't come down until April I think, to do this kind of phase of his elephant seal work.

[Part 1 0:32:22.1] Lee: Ian Biggs?

Mansfield: Ian Biggs was a Falkland Islander and he really helped to run the Station. You know, we had central heating believe it or not! And he maintained that very well. We got our own weather messages mostly from Stanley. We read the Met code ourselves but most communications were carried out by the main radio station there which was in contact with Great Britain and so...who else? Danny Borland was the weather forecaster when I got there but he left, I think, when Dick came. Round about April of '51, I took over his job as weather forecaster, but it was very difficult to really forecast what might happen, after all the nearest weather information was from Stanley itself which was a long way away. So one got a few odd reports from the Southern Ocean but that was about it.

[Part 1 0:34:04.0] Lee: I suppose the idea was for you to try and warn Whaling ships about any potential storms. Is that the general principal?

Mansfield: Yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:34:12.2] Lee: How modern was the equipment you were using? Was it the latest technology?

Mansfield: You mean the communications equipment?

[Part 1 0:34:25.1] Lee: No. I'm thinking of the weather equipment.

Mansfield: Oh. No. I don't know how much it's changed since those days, but...you took three hour observations of temperature and pressure and got these weather forecasts in code from places like Stanley. And I think we used to get some from South Africa too. But that was about it: and one could record the wind speeds as well with a standard anemometer, but that was it. I suppose it was really quite basic stuff! One thinks now of being able to look at satellite pictures of weather formations and that would have been regarded as a piece of cake to have that kind of information available. But no such luck in those days!

[Part 1 0:35:36.8] Lee: So looking back on it then Arthur, how useful do you think you were actually being to the shipping fleets?

Mansfield: I really don't know. They asked us for a daily report so they must have felt they were some use. It may have helped them in anything they were doing locally. I might add that one of the great problems in forecasting weather in a place like South Georgia is that you've got this tremendous effect of being very close to mountainous country...after all, you've got a nine thousand foot peak, Mount Allardyce - which really comes right out of the sea in just several miles and this has an enormous effect on wind for instance, and some local weather patterns. So that was a bit tricky to work with. But I tried to put down some of my ideas on that when I wrote this scientific report on weather analysis in the Dependencies.

[Part 1 0:37:04.6] Lee: What were you recommending? What changes or improvements were you recommending?

Mansfield: At that time there was nothing other than sort of improving the number of stations that were providing the information and we didn't get any from around the rim of the continent I recall. Maybe that was just because of the bad communication problems. I mean, these days you can get the weather information from all the way round the Southern Ocean and all the continents; South Africa, South America, Australia and so on. And, as I said, with satellite pictures you can make some sense out of it all. But in those days it was just guess work as much as anything.

[Part 1 0:38:12.8] Lee: Do you remember any particularly severe periods of weather or exceptional conditions?

Mansfield: No. Living near the mountains you occasionally got unexpected and very strong winds, and very gusty too. That was very noticeable at Signy of course which was much more exposed to the weather from all directions really. And yes, I mentioned one incident where we thought, after our little greenhouse on Signy had blown away, that the Hut itself might also disappear but, incidentally the hut was wired down to the rocks but I can remember at one time seeing the rafters of the huts were vibrating up and down as the whole place shook and I think on one occasion we hung onto the rafters for a short while, but that was about the worst!

[Part 1 0:39:38.9] Lee: That was on Signy on 3rd March 1952. 85 knots according to the Base report.

Mansfield: Yes. That slamming into a small wooden hut was quite something to behold!

[Part 1 0:39:55.4] Lee: Did you fear for your lives?

Mansfield: No. The one good thing there of course was that down near the shore, away from the Base, was a very strongly built, not very large hut. This had been built by the Norwegian whalers who used to anchor their floating factory at one time in the bay there, and they kept a lot of their ammunition stored in this small shed as a safety precaution. We used it as an emergency food store and it had everything in it that we would need if the Hut blew away or burnt down and we could survive for six months. One of the initial jobs when the new supplies came in was to take out that six month's supply, put in a new six month's supply and then use the old six month's supply as our supply in the Base for the next year. So that was quite a thing to have to do, but we did it because it was an extremely useful safety device.

[Part 1 0: 41:23.7] Lee: So let's go back to Grytviken then and, once you'd done all these weather recordings you had then to presumably transmit them somehow. I guess that was by Morse, was it?

Mansfield: Yes. We took them to the radio station which was in the same complex there at Grytviken and they would send that information to Stanley and Stanley would send out an area weather forecast for a very large area of the South Atlantic.

[Part 1 0:42:08.0] Lee: How reliable were the communications in those days?

Mansfield: Oh...I think...I don't recall there was any particular problem there. This was a pretty powerful transmitting station and there were a couple of enormous antennae there, and so I think they had no trouble in getting their messages out to the world!

[Part 1 0:42:44.3] Lee: What was the social life like on South Georgia at that time? Did you rub up against the Norwegians quite a lot?

Mansfield: Oh Yes! I can remember several somewhat riotous occasions having a meal with some of the Norwegians in their quarters, and one of our great friends was one of the administrative staff: he spoke extremely good English and he became our teacher in Norwegian for a while. We would have a weekly class, half a dozen of us, and I fortunately had taken South with me a book of Norwegian grammar. So, Jon Larssen would act as school teacher and that was good, because we learned some of the vocabulary in Norwegian and some of the pronunciation which was quite good, so I found that useful later on. So that was another connection, and...

[Part 1 0:44:12.4] Lee: How's your Norwegian these days?

Mansfield: Oh I...I can almost make sense of some of it if I try hard but I haven't

seen a Norwegian text for years... [laughs]

[Part 1 0:44:28.0] Lee: But it was a good relationship between the Brits and the Norwegians?

Mansfield: Oh yes. I think so: and there was a doctor there, and he was good at treating dental problems, and I remember he replaced a filling of mine, so that was useful too.

[Part 1 0: 44:52.8] Lee: Did you ever have any more serious injuries than that? Or illnesses?

Mansfield: Not that I recall at South Georgia.

[Part 1 0:45:06.8] Lee: There was an incident at Signy I believe? Had a case of Spekk finger?

Mansfield: Oh yes, that is quite extraordinary because I found out later, that the Norwegians knew about it: but mostly from their people working in the North, in the Arctic, and there'd been outbreaks in places in the Baltic and so on. People who had been working on seals, and whales for that matter, they would get this rather unpleasant affliction which affected usually the fingers of one hand. I had what I assumed to be the same thing. It was a rather unpleasant swelling of a finger on one hand, also this equally unpleasant enlargement of the lymph nodes in my armpit on the same side and I couldn't actually lower my arm beyond the horizontal. So I invented this pneumatic splint which was...

[Part 1 0:46:42.9] Lee: [laughs] Tell me about that...

Mansfield: That was a half inflated Met balloon and I held it under my arm and sort of tied my wrist to my waist and so I walked around for a while holding this balloon under my arm, which looked quite ridiculous, but it proved useful in the end! I think it took about two weeks for that infection eventually to disappear, but I used up all the Base supply of Penicillin, or most of it. George Marsh, who was the Doctor at Hope Bay at that time - we got in touch with him - and he advised me to use Penicillin on a daily basis but after I'd used up nearly all the supplies, said "Stop it!" and I don't think it was much use. They found eventually that this organism which they seem to have been able to isolate only responded to Tetracycline, which seems to be the standard treatment for it now but it's still there. Seals and whales somehow have this organism and if you cut your hand in dealing with them then you'd best watch out, as I found!

[Part 1 0:48:30.9] Lee: How much on South Georgia: how much biological work were you able to do with Dick Laws?

Mansfield: Not very much. Dick was away with the sealers much of the time. But across the Bay he set up a camp with a couple of pyramid tents and that was where he did some good work on the reproductive behaviour of the elephant seal. And I went across and stayed with him on the odd occasion - which meant rowing across the Bay and staying overnight in the tent with him. We dissected a few elephant seals and he wanted further information on the reproductive tracts and so on...and so I was initiated into dealing with very large mammals! Which stood me well in the future, when I worked in the Arctic and had to dissect walruses which are really very, very large animals, as well: almost as bulky as very large elephant seals.

[Part 1 0:50:16.7] Lee: So was there anything in your Zoology degree at Cambridge that came in useful at this point?

Mansfield: Yes: general biological knowledge about mammals and their reproductive habits. I mean their behaviour for example was something relatively new and Dick made great strides in reporting on that, and in fact his work on the elephant seal was seminal and I think sort of led to many other important studies...

[Part 1 0:50:59.9] Lee: This was all new science wasn't it? All unknown science?

Mansfield: Well. There had been people working in the South on seals before. Colin Bertram with the British Graham Land expedition. He worked on seals because they had to feed the dogs, so he was appointed the chief seal slaughterer and cutter up and so collected many, many samples and wrote very well on the crabeater seal, for instance and the Weddell seal and there was somebody working at the station at Grytviken before the war: a sort of more casual study of the elephant seal – not a detailed scientific study – that was Harrison Matthews, who was director of the London Zoo for a while.

[Part 1 0:52:25.5] Lee: In his report, Dick talked about you and he and Biggs on 29th March making a preliminary survey of the Dartmouth Point?

Mansfield: Yes. That's where he had this camp and studied the behaviour of the elephant seal, reproductive behaviour during the breeding season.

[Part 1 0:52:50.5] Lee: Was it exciting stuff for a young lad?

Mansfield: Great! Tremendous! Yes: worlds apart from things like being in the Military and so I enjoyed it. But, as I say, I got the taste from going to places like Skye and climbing in the mountains there. That in itself was quite new for a young lad brought up in the suburbs of London, and before that. So that was adventurous.

[Part 1 0:53:41.1] Lee: Dick makes a point that once Borland went you were less free to help him out, because of your Met duties?

Mansfield: Yes. That was a problem. In fact it was a problem at Signy of course, because there were three Met observers, and I was one of them, and when I was studying Weddell seals on the West coast I used to spend a couple of days there and come back and do my Met day and then go back again.

[Part 1 0:54:23.9] Lee: But the latter part of your Grytviken stay you were not able to do much biology at all? Was that correct?

Mansfield: Not really, no.

[Part 1 0:54:32.2] Lee: Did you go on the Reindeer Hunt?

Mansfield: Yes...I've got pictures of that. [laughs]

[Part 1 0:54:37.1] Lee: [laughs]

Mansfield: Yes: the Norwegians liked to do this and in fact our friend Jon Larssen who was the one I was telling you about who used to teach us Norwegian. He organised a hunt on one occasion and there's a picture of Ian Biggs there and Jack and I've forgotten who else. Yes! A number of us went from our place and the reindeer weren't too far away. There was a long fjord with sort of shallow exposed ground where the glacier had retreated: so there was a lot of open ground where there was enough forage for reindeers to come, and they would come down from the foothills and graze quite happily, so we were able to get a number of those which were well received at the whaling station and by us, of course!

[Part 1 0:55:51.4] Lee: Yes. You had a cook called A. Smith, who presumably rather enjoyed: I presume he appreciated having venison to play around with, did he?

Mansfield: Do you know I've thought about that – I can't remember – I can visualise him, but I can't remember his name and that was in 1952 (sorry: 1951 wasn't it?)

[Part 1 0:56:21.8] Lee: Yes: at Grytviken

Mansfield: You checked that?

[Part 1 0:56:22.6] Lee: Yeh

Mansfield: At Grytviken: yes, it was funny!

[Part 1 0:56:25.1] Lee: Dick talked about doing some skiing as well. Recreational skiing?

Lee: Yes. That was good. But in fact it was about the only way could get around if you got away from the beach and so on. Yes we did a fair amount of that, but not as much as we did at Signy of course, where we had the sea ice to ski on.

[Part1 0:56:58.7] Lee: The other point he makes is that you socialised with the Norwegians a great deal and there was more manufactured entertainment than most bases because their base was over-staffed? The Norwegian Base was over-staffed and therefore they had time to organise billiards, table tennis and also showing films?

Mansfield: I don't recall being involved in that, or even seeing a film there, come to think of it. Maybe some of the other base members did, but I don't remember.

[Part 1 0:57:39.0] Lee: But you obviously got involved in photography because you mentioned it twice already and there was a dark room at the base?

Mansfield: Yes. There had to be of course, I suppose, since it was a scientific laboratory essentially. Yes: I'm just trying to picture it now. Actually there was a bathroom there, and I think we did much of our processing in the bathroom come to think of it! [laughs] so we were reasonably well set up in that respect.

[Part 1 0:58:21.5] Lee: Generally speaking do you think you were well fed? Venison or no venison?!

Mansfield: Very well fed! On occasion we would get whale meat of course, from the whaling station. Which is splendid stuff to eat if you like protein in large quantities. Yes, I can certainly remember the skiing activity at [indistinct] Pasco, the whaling station, and they had built a ski jump there, and it was fascinating to watch these guys come hurtling down on the mountainside and leap over the jump and soar through the air. I do remember on occasion where one of the people on the station (probably the manager) had a small dog, and on this occasion the small dog trotted out and was right in the middle of the ski track landing area as this guy came hurtling down the slope and it was too late! I mean there was nothing we could do. We watched as he sailed over the jump and he saw that there was a little dog standing in the way there, and as soon as he hit the snow he did a broadside. Well, he twisted his skis broadside and went all the way down the slope broadside with his skis and stopped just before he reached the little dog! Otherwise he would have gone straight through it probably and killed it! But I thought, 'Wow! I wonder if one could ever learn to ski as well as that.'

[Part 1 1:00:22.2] Lee: [laughs] When it came towards the time to leave South Georgia what was your thinking - what were your plans?

Mansfield: I knew I wanted to go to Signy because Dick had said, "Well, if you go there you can study the Weddell seal and there are lots of seabirds which we still don't know all that much about." On the way down before I ever got to South Georgia, we went round some of the bases and stopped at Signy, (it was the last stop before we got to South Georgia), and of course I met Bill Sladen there. Bill said he'd done all this work on penguins and what he'd love would be some panoramic shots of certain breeding areas and so I said I would be quite delighted to do that. So there was another reason for doing that, and Dick had also said, "Well what I'd like from Signy is counts of elephant seals at various beaches throughout the season, throughout the open water season, and do you think you could do that?" So I

developed a plan for that one.

[Part 1 1:02:12.7] Lee: [Talks over Mansfield] This is Arthur Mansfield interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee via Skype on 28th May 2013 – Arthur Mansfield Part 1

Mansfield: So I had a lot of work to do and I thought this was all very well worthwhile as well as what I could do for myself, and so I was very happy to go to Signy.

[Part 1 1:02:27.3] Lee: OK Lets talk about that in detail in a moment or two's time. Shall we just take a short break?

ARTHUR MANSFIELD PART 2

AD/6/24/1/218 Arthur Mansfield 2

[Part 2 0:00:00.4] Lee: This is Arthur Mansfield interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee via Skype on 28th May 2013: Arthur Mansfield Part 2

[Part 2 0:00:12.3] Lee: Lets talk now if we can in some detail about your year at Signy. The most interesting factor from my point of view is that you suddenly became Base Leader? What extra responsibilities did you take on board when you became Base Leader at Signy?

Mansfield: Apart from making sure that the weather observations were done and sent out on time I personally took on the duty of supply, if you like. I did that at South Georgia, by the way. I took over all of the food supplies and equipment and made sure that side of things ran smoothly, as I did at Signy. The Met Observers knew their job so they got on with that without any fuss, as did the radio operator and diesel mechanic, but I don't recall any particular problems in getting people to perform their own particular functions and to carry out others on behalf of the rest of us. Cooking, for instance. This was a thing that we shared and once every five weeks you spent a week as cook and doing in fact your other job as well as you could in between making meals for the rest of us. I got out of that at one point when I was working on the Weddell seal by suggesting to the others that I did a double turn of cooking earlier in the season then I would miss a turn later on when I was doing the sealing work: and all agreed that this was fine. So other than that everyone pitched in as far as I remember to the best of their abilities. There was no particular hanging around doing nothing whilst others did all the hard work. I think everyone joined FIDS with that in mind or they soon developed that mind set anyway. We were a team...

[Part 2 0:03:11.4] Lee: So all this really gave you a bit more time at Signy to do your zoological work then? Can you expand a little along the kind of work you were doing with the Weddell seals?

Mansfield: I first of all looked at their local behaviour, you know [indistinct] haul outs and when they had their pups and how long they suckled their pups for, and this sort of basic biological stuff, and then we needed seal meat for the dogs, and a bit for ourselves, so I shot a fair number of Weddell seals. A job, by the way, I didn't particularly like doing, even though Dick had taught me well on the elephant seal, and I did it readily, but they are beautiful animals and I hesitated to do that. And of course I wanted a series of female reproductive organs from the time that they pupped until the pup had been weaned; and of course when you kill a female seal with a two day old pup, then you've got to kill the pup as well, which can't survive without its mother. So that was something that always struck me hard, but you can't find these things out unless you do that kind of thing. Yes: I've always felt bad about killing large animals, but there you are: and I did get some good data and of course we used the seals for feeding the dogs. We had fourteen I think to start with and then a number of dogs got added to the population but not many, curiously. The rate of survival of the husky pups was very, very low.

[Part 2 0:05:34.6] Lee: Why was the seal research essential in your mind?

Mansfield: (Pause)...Well, the elephant seal work of course was. Dick (I mean) the final result of his work in South Georgia was to solve the basic problem of what's the size of the population and how does it grow and how much of it can we usefully exploit? So that was the basis of his work, but of course he did a much more extensive coverage and had an enormous number of samples from the catch of the whaling station. No, mine was I suppose in a way serendipity if you like. I was intrigued by these animals and I wanted to know more about them. I don't think it was essential if you like from the point of view of the survey or the seal population or what...

[Part 2 0:06:55.2] Lee: But it was essential in understanding how the Weddell seals operated, their life cycle and so on?

Mansfield: Yes. I wanted to expand on what we had known from the information that Colin Bertram, for instance, wrote in one of his reports of...

[Part 2 0:07:16.7] Lee: What happened to the samples then, if you took the female seal through its reproductive cycle, did you keep samples in glass jars? What happened?

Mansfield: Yes. I had no formal statement about whether I could or could not do biological work. I mean I wasn't employed as a biologist. So in fact, I needed a certain amount of material to preserve specimens and I was fortunately able to get some of the surplus that Dick had at South Georgia and take it with me to the South Orkneys. So I was able to preserve things like ovaries and parts of the uterus in the females and that would enable me to get useful information. Yes: it required pickling in jars of special preservative and getting them back to England for analysis.

[Part 2 0:08:47.2] Lee: What other species did you look at? I gather you did some work on prions and sheathbills?

Mansfield: Yes. Have you been to Signy by the way?

[Part 2 0:08:58.0] Lee: Sadly not – no...

Mansfield: Well behind the old Base Hut there were crags going up fairly sharply and there were nests of snow petrels, Cape pigeons, and the ones that intrigued me were the dove prions – lovely blue and grey plumage and much like our British jays by the way...that kind of blue and silver and so on: and when they were in their nests in rock crevices and in scree slopes and so on, you could hear this lovely cooing sound which is why of course they gave the name dove prion. So that was very nice to hear them making their song in the 'evenings' after the sun had gone. But there wasn't that much darkness at that time of year anyway at the latitude of Signy.

[Part 2 0:10:21.0] Lee: And again you were just monitoring their year cycle?

Mansfield: Yes, we banded as many as we could. We marked their nests and banded them and I got some returns but I gather that people like Lance Tickell who have worked subsequently on some of these birds have found quite a lot of useful information about their lifespan and their return to their traditional nesting site and so on and so forth – just fascinating stuff – to a biologist anyway!

[Part 2 0:11:08:9] Lee: And the sheathbills again: was that to monitor their life cycle to see what they did with themselves?

Mansfield: They of course took off – all of them – and you never saw them for months. But where did the sheathbills go, since they're not essentially oceanic birds? It was nice to mark them and we used a lot of the bird bands that Bill Sladen had left behind, and as far as I know, we used up every one that we could lay our hands on!

We did the same for skuas as well, wondering if these populations were well established because of their effect, those two species, and their effect on the penguin colonies. They were pretty avid predators, they would swoop in and the skuas, particularly, would pluck off a newborn chick. The sheathbills are remarkable at aggravating the penguins so they forget their egg for a moment and the sheathbill would come in and stab an egg with its bill and fly off with this huge egg stuck on its bill! So they were quite serious predators too, although there were lots of penguins, I must say...

[Part 2 0:12:50.9] Lee: [Chuckles] The prion work seems to have been done, in part at least, in the dark, after darkfall?

Mansfield: Yes, we would search with flashlights if it got really dark, say it was clouded over, and around midnight. We would search them out with flashlights and they would again be in their rock burrows or just at the entrance, so we were able to band quite a lot of them quite easily. I haven't been able to lay my hands on the reports of some on these species that have been written subsequently, but you've probably looked at them or had access to them, so I'm a bit rusty on this.

[Part 2 0:13:50.3] Lee: Don't worry about that. How much difference did having the dogs available to you make to your routine at Signy compared to South Georgia?

Mansfield: Well, South Georgia of course they weren't our responsibility. They were the responsibility of the Magistrate and they were waiting there to be taken to the Norwegian/British/Swedish Antarctic Expedition but that, for some reason, fell through, and so they were there for the winter, but it was the Magistrate's responsibility. That was Ken Priaulx Butler who was at Stonington I think in 1956 and '5, so we didn't have much to do with the dogs. At Signy we had, of course, a tremendous amount to do with them and I think they were a very valuable addition to the work at the Base. It kept us all busy and people could go and talk to their favourite dog if they were feeling a bit low [Chuckles] and we spent a lot of time, not only feeding them and looking after them, but exercising them too. We weren't able to gather more than a small team. I think we had a five dog team, mostly of young pups, and they worked very well eventually, and we used those for hauling the seal meat back to Base from where we'd shot them on the ice. There was a haul-out of elephant seals across the Bay where we killed seals in the open water season just before freeze-up and then [we] cut them up in pieces and brought them back during the winter. So that was a use for dogs, but everybody, I think, liked having them around. We would use some of them for ski-joring: where you hook a long line onto a harness and take your ski poles in one hand and the line in the other and go off with the dogs. And that was very successful - I enjoyed doing that.

[Part 2 0:16:36.4] Lee: How far afield could you get with your dogs and sledges?

Mansfield: Well: we went across at Signy, to Normanna Strait and to...

[Part 2 0:16:49.0] Lee: Coronation Island?

Mansfield: To Coronation Island and we did a number of trips like that. That was all potentially a bit dangerous because there were currents under the ice sort of making it weak in places. Although I think we only had a few occasions where the sled broke through the ice, or one of the dogs, but not to drag down the whole team, and I used a five dog team to go back and forwards across the island and do my work on the Weddell seals on the West Coast: I set up a camp there.

[Part 2 0:17:37.2] Lee: Was it a steep learning curve to handle a five-dog team? I guess you had never done that kind of thing before?

Mansfield: No, No... I guess we had to learn the hard way!

[Part 2 0:17:46.9] Lee: [Chuckles] and when the sea ice went out you took to the pram?

Mansfield: Yes.

[Part 2 0:17:55.0] Lee: How successful was boating?

Mansfield: Well...we had an old Seagull 2HP motor which was a means of propulsion, but it was reasonably dependent: I don't remember we ever got stuck. It was the sort of thing that was chancy and you daren't take it without a good pair of oars in case you got really stuck. And we set up a small supply of food across the Strait on Coronation Island just in case we ever did get stuck, and I'm not sure whether we had a small radio that we could carry with us. I don't think we did actually - [I] can't remember.

[Part 2 0:18:53.9] Lee: Did you ever have any scary moments with dogs or boats?

Mansfield: No I can't recall any particularly. No, we were pretty careful and apart from crossing to Coronation we didn't stray far away from the coast at any time. There was no real reason to do so anyway.

[Part 2 0:19:36.0] Lee: I think you had some trouble with the diesel engines in your year at Signy didn't you?

Mansfield: Yes. I remember one of the problems was they were extremely difficult to start if you don't have the right starting fluid, which is basically Ether and you can give a diesel engine a squirt of Ether - even at very low temperatures - and the thing will bang and crack and then take off and work. But, unfortunately I was in charge of stores and I realise this that we looked in all the right boxes for a supply of starting fluid which was in spray cans, but there was no sign of it in the appropriate boxes, and it didn't come to light until well after the deep freeze of Winter. So Tony Wilson, who was diesel mechanic at this time, he invented this system of soaking a rod wrapped with canvas, I think, and then soaked in methylated spirit and then put [it] underneath the air intake of the diesel, so that when you started winding it round and round and round and round, the air would be sucked in with a flame from this sort of burning torch and that seemed to work out quite satisfactorily and, so far as I know, that was the only problem that I recall. Maybe we had problems with bearings...

[Part 2 0:21:55.1] Lee: A shortage of lubricating oil, which resulted in some strict economy of use in the later part of the year, of the generators?

Mansfield: Ah: that I don't remember.

[Part 2 0:22:06.7] Lee: OK

Mansfield: What report was that, by the way, you were reading from?

[Part 2 0:22:11.8] Lee: "General Base Report, 1952, Part 2 Summary continued"...

Mansfield: Oh. Well, I wrote the Base Report.

[Part 2 0:22:21.4] Lee: [laughs]

Mansfield: I certainly don't recall that! Was it a...

[Part 2 0:22:26.0] Lee: Well, just out of interest: it is sixty years ago, don't worry! [Quotes] "The shortage of lubricating oil has resulted in our exercising strict economy in the use of the generators in the latter part of the year. I would re-emphasise the need for a larger supply of oil consistent with a generous supply of diesel fuel. No new lubricating oil could be spared for the Seagull outboard motor this season, but a quantity of oil that had been contaminated with diesel fuel was used with great success."

Mansfield: And that report really came from me?

[Part 2 0:22:55.8] Lee: Yes, you're A W Mansfield. It says here...

Mansfield: Oh! It's not in a message to FID - to Stanley, is it?

[Part 2 0:23:07.5] Lee: No. It's a typed Base Report, end of the year Base Report. "General Base Report: Part 2". [pause] Don't worry about it, you've given me the answer that I needed, which is absolutely fine.

Mansfield: I've just got Parts 3 & 4 but I don't remember Part 2...

[Part 2 0:23:25.4] Lee: [laughs]

Mansfield: Anyway...

[Part 2 0:23:26.5] Lee: Let me ask you about something else if I may. I have a couple more questions Arthur and then I think we can probably start wrapping it up.

Mansfield: Yep

[Part 2 0:23:32.7] Lee: Tell me about the water supply, because that was also a bit tricky at times and some of your colleagues had to, kind of, invent a new supply?

Mansfield: It was tricky towards the end of the summer. There was a little dam which the whalers had built half up the hillside and that just collected sort of run-off from the hill, and that supplied us with water after the supply of ice had gone because we used quite a lot of blocks of ice and snow as our water supply during the Winter, but yes, fresh water was short in supply: but there was also a fresh water lake across the other side of the Bay which the sealers had built, actually a pumping station there. And there was always the possibility of going across there and getting a supply, but that was a tedious job. I don't recall it ever being a serious threat to our water supply at all.

[Part 2 0:25:03.6] Lee: The report says that 'Worswick and Johnson spent much time in tapping a water supply from the low boggy ground off the South East of the Hut. This has saved many weary hours of fetching in a daily water supply.'

Mansfield : [Chuckles] Yes, Fred and Ron Worswick were up to all kinds of things like that I think!

[Part 2 0:25:26.4] Lee: Do you think you left the Signy Base a better place than you found it?

Mansfield: [Pauses] That's a tough one. Well, people were doing different kinds of things. I mean Bill Sladen for instance did an awful lot of penguin work there and Dick of course, with his elephant seal work and I suppose we probably all like to think [we] added our bit to what the Base had done. But as to the actual Base itself...

[Part 2 0:26:13.3] Lee: Yeah...

Mansfield: Well - is that what you mean, or...?

[Part 2 0:26:16.9] Lee: Well that as well, there's a new dark room. You dealt with a leaking roof....

Mansfield: I remember Tony Wilson, the radio operator, he re-did his radio room and really made quite a nice job of that. I think the darkroom (the inside anyway) was done by John O'Hare. John, of course was a FID of much experience having survived the burning down of the huts in 19, 80, no, 50...

[Part 2 0:27:02.1] Lee: 1949 at Hope Bay?

Mansfield: Sorry forty...Yeah

[Part 2 0:27:05.6] Lee: '49 at Hope Bay, yeah....

Mansfield: Yeah,

[Part 2 0:27:09.1] Lee: Yeah OK

Mansfield: So, I think John did a lot of work on that...

[Part 2 0:27:15.7] Lee: There's one intriguing note here at the very bottom which says. I would be interested to see if you can remember very much about this. "I cannot with truthfulness say that this has been a completely happy year, for there has been some friction from time to time. This has slightly marred what otherwise should have been a most pleasant stay at Signy." Do you remember the nature of the friction?

Mansfield: [Pauses] I think inevitably there has to be a little. I can't believe that any of the Bases would survive a whole year with people with widely differing experiences who would not sort of get on each other's nerves or however you would like to express it, occasionally. Yes, I must have felt there was the odd occasion of people being quite upset with someone else, but I don't think it festered because we were all too busy with what we had to do. Maybe there is a reason for why dogs are such a useful addition to a Base. Where there's a lot of work involved with them, and as I say they are companionable in a way that pets are that you can go and talk to even a husky that's chained up and perhaps relieve some of your emotions!

[Part 2 0:29:10.5] Lee: [Chuckles] Did you ever find yourself having to sort of step into any dispute, or unease or unhappiness, as Base Leader?

Mansfield: I think there was only [the] one occasion that I recall where Fred and Tony had a very strong difference of opinion. But I can't say at this time what it was about, but that was defused by the rest of us.

[Part 2 0:29:37.8] Lee: Mmm

Mansfield: I mean this is not the sort of thing that I wrote down in a personal diary if you like. But it's the sort of thing that perhaps was expected. I remember one Base member, whom I shall not name...

[Part 2 0:30:02.0] Lee: Fair enough.

Mansfield: [He] had a reputation for drinking rather too much when he was in Stanley and in fact I was warned by the Captain of the Biscoe what's happened. I think he'd been in the 'jug' in Stanley for a night so we had a habit of on Saturday night, I think, of bringing out the bottles and having a drink, and on this occasion I brought out the Gin bottle, I think it was, and I took the other members of the Base to one side and said 'Look, so-and-so has been having a problem in Stanley. I want us all to enjoy a Saturday evening drink, but I don't want so-and-so to get drunk, upon which he will become rather annoying, and in fact belligerent, and probably assault somebody.' Which is what he did, of course in Stanley, in whatever pub he was in. So everyone agreed, and if we brought the bottle out we made sure that we drank the same amount as he did and it never got to the point where he got obstreperous! But that defused that one. But on the way out, the ship called at South Georgia: they unwisely put some drink out there and he imbibed too much and promptly assaulted one of the Base members and again later on in Stanley. So I think we dealt with that one quite effectively, but it was always a shame because he did his job, and did it very well.

[Part 2 0:32:40.0] Lee: So when it came to leave the Antarctic what were your feelings Arthur? Had you had enough or were you sorry to leave?

Mansfield: Oh I think I was sorry to leave. But I knew that I was going to be able to spend a pleasant few months in Cambridge working up the material and I also had a three month stay in Harrow granted to me. That's the main Met Office station in England, in Harrow. So I went there and made use of all their archives and went there to write that paper on weather in the Dependencies. So I was looking forward to those two things, and I had no particular knowledge of where things might lead in the future.

[Part 2 0:33:53.3] Lee: Well you went on to form a long and successful career in Arctic Canada, and I'm just wondering how much those two years in the South shaped your future career?

Mansfield: Oh a tremendous amount! When I saw the opportunity of getting a scholarship to McGill to work in the North. These scholarships were put out by the Carnegie Foundation, in conjunction with the Arctic Institute of North America, and so one could apply and as long as you found a place in a university, if you had some other experience, you were fairly sure of getting a grant. So I applied to McGill and with my background and said what I wanted to do, and it turned out that McGill had a very small but very effective group who were working in Northern Canada, and that was under Max Dunbar who was the Professor of Zoology at that time. So he said "Yes, we'll take you as a graduate student." So with that I applied for one of these scholarships and got it and that enabled me to work in the North. Then of course travelling with the Inuit which I did quite extensively was easy for me because I was used to the life as it were, and used to the dogs and so I got on well with the people I worked with so that was fine. It was a great help.

[Part 2 0:35:56.0] Lee: You spent a lot longer up North than you ever did down South, but what do you feel is the difference between the two poles? Is there a spiritual or atmospheric or environmental difference that you are aware of?

Mansfield: Oh [a] tremendous environmental difference. In that the ice is there, yes, but in places where I worked like Northern Hudson's Bay where the ice goes in the Summer and you've got a long Summer season where there's no ice or snow on the land and you take to the water much more readily than you did in the South. But there was still a lot of winter travel. I started my work in the North by travelling on the sea ice for several months before I was able to start the open water work, when the ice was breaking up and going out.

[Part 2 0:37:10.8] Lee: So is it a different spirit then? Comparing the North to the South? Is there a different spirit about the place?

Mansfield: [pauses] I'm not quite sure how to reply to that one. You were working with...

[Part 2 0:37:26.7] Lee: Do you feel different in the two different environments?

Mansfield: I was working by myself for one thing, and working with the Inuit which was a new experience. I mean the first man I travelled extensively with didn't understand a word of English except "Tea"! I recall...

[Part 2 0: 37:56.8] Lee: [Chuckles]

Mansfield: But we got on famously because he understood immediately when we started shooting seals and I would take specimens from them that I knew what I was doing, so he quite happily stayed back while I did my job and when I'd finished he'd come and do his job which was to dismember the beast and then feed his huskies. And we usually travelled with a seven-dog team that seemed to be pretty well the standard there. So that was an entirely different atmosphere, then I lived in an old Hudson's Bay Company house which was no longer used when a more modern one had been built. So that was my base and again, that was different, and of course there were the people around who were responsible for the Inuit's well-being and

also were supplying them with stores. So that again was different.

[Part 2 0:39:29.7] Lee: When I interview Fids, my final question usually is: "How important were those years in the Antarctic in your life as a whole?" And most Fids of course, say "It was the most important time of my life". You've had a lot more experience of the Arctic, so I wonder whether your answer to that question might be different.

Mansfield: No. It wasn't the most important period, but it was a period when I gathered the experience and background that I needed in later years, so in that sense it was very important. But I guess the later years were just as important: I wouldn't say more so, but I certainly was glad that I had that experience because, as you see it lead to a different and long career which made it so successful for me.

[Part 2 0:40:42.2] Lee: It's been a marvellous couple of hours Arthur, I am very grateful to you and I've really enjoyed talking to you, so thank you very much indeed.

Possible extracts from interview with Arthur Mansfield Part 1:

- Father served in Royal Engineers in WW1 and became a Post Office telephone linesman, then spent WW2 in Africa and Italy in communications. [Part 1 0:00:31.5]
- Arthur's education: read natural sciences at Cambridge where he met Dick Laws. Dick's influence: climbing and camping in Skye. Dick joining Fids – thus avoiding National Service, whilst Arthur went into the Navy. Dick's character as a young man. [Part 1 0:02:22.5]
- Arthur's Navy years. Navy interview and training as a Met man. First posting to Ceylon 1948/49 then Naval Air Station Northern Ireland where he met Surgeon Commander Ted Bingham at the Naval Hospital. Discussing joining Fids with Ted Bingham and Dick Laws. [Part 1 0:07:05.1]
- First awareness of Antarctic. Seeing film footage at school of Scott; receiving letters from Dick Laws. [Part 1 0:12:51.3]
- Dick Law encourages Arthur to join him in South Georgia where he was working on elephant seals. Arthur chooses to work on the Weddell seal, which gives him his future career. More of his Navy interview. Arthur's Fids interview with Bunny Fuchs. [Part 1 0:15:03.3]
- Arthur's journey South on the old *Biscoe*, the wooden ship. The journey to Falkland Islands, description of Port Stanley. The Hope Bay incident. Sir Miles Clifford and the Argentinian gunboat harassment at Hope Bay 1952. Fids taken on *Burghead Bay* a frigate with Governor Sir Miles Clifford to deliver a protest. [Part 1 0:22:04.5]
- 1952 King George VI dies and all Fids return to Port Stanley on *Burghead Bay* with the Governor. [Part 1 0:27:05.7]
- Arthur requests to be sent to South Georgia to join Dick Laws at King Edward Point. Lab and accommodation described. Describes seeing whales hauled out onto ramp. [Part 1 0:29:22.5]
- Talks about the other Fids on station; Danny Borland the forecaster (whose departure left Arthur less time to help Dick Laws with his biological work); Falkland Islander Ian Biggs who ran the central heating; Alan McArthur the new Met man; Jack Newing (a Falkland Islander). Describes receiving weather messages from Stanley, reading Met code and receiving communications by radio from Great Britain. Describes making weather observations and basic equipment. Arthur recommended an increase in weather stations in his report. [Part 1 0:31:41.8]
- Exceptional weather 3rd March 1952 Signy. Describes holding on to the rafters of the hut. Describes using the Norwegian whalers hut for storage of emergency supplies. [Part 1 0:38:12.8]
- Sending weather observations from Grytviken by Morse code. Describes social life on South Georgia. Norwegian lessons from Jon Larssen. Norwegian Doctor gives him a dental filling. [Part 1 0:42:44.3]
- Arthur describes contracting Spekk finger. Invents a pneumatic splint from a met balloon. [Part 1 0:45:06.8]
- Arthur describes working with Dick Laws in South Georgia, rowing across the bay to Dartmouth

Point and staying overnight in a tent with him. Dick's work on reproductive tracts of elephant seals, learning how to dissect very large mammals, which was useful in his future career in the Arctic where he had to dissect walrus. Mentions the importance of Colin Bertram's work on crabeater and Weddell seals, also mentions Harrison Matthews working at Grytviken before the war (he became director of the London Zoo). [Part 1 0:48:30.9]

- Describes difficulty of fitting in research work on seals with Met work. [Part 1 0:52:50.5]
- The reindeer hunt on South Georgia organized by the Norwegians. Mention of cook A. Smith. [Part 1 0:54:32.2]
- Describes the photographic dark room in the bathroom. Recreational skiing on South Georgia, the incident with the dog on the ski jump. [Part 1 0:57:39.0]
- Arthur describes reasons for wanting to go to Signy after leaving South Georgia. On Dick Law's advice to study Weddell seals and seabirds; to continue Dick Law's work counting elephant seals; to take panoramic shots of penguin breeding areas for Bill Sladen.

Possible extracts from interview with Arthur Mansfield Part 2:

- Arthur is appointed Base Leader at Signy. Responsible for ensuring weather observations were done; responsibility for all supplies and equipment; responsible for the smooth running of the base and the team of people there. [Part 2 0:00:12.3]
- Scientific research work on the Weddell seal; collecting data about their reproductive organs and their life cycle; Arthur's reluctance to kill them for research and dog food; preserving specimens. [Part 2 0:03:11.4]
- Research work on birds: especially dove prions. Also Cape pigeons, sheathbills and skuas and their effect on penguin colonies. Night-time work by flashlight on the dove prions. Banding dove prions using bird bands left behind by William Sladen. [Part 2 0:08:47.2]
- Importance of the dogs. Travelling with dogs to Coronation Island and from Signy to Normanna Strait. Describes ski-joring with dogs. Using the pram boat with unreliable engine, needing oars in case they got stuck. [Part 2 0:13:50.3]
- Trouble with diesel engine, improvising with methylated spirit when starter fluid could not be found. [Part 2 0:19:36.0]
- Discussion of Arthur's 1952 Base report: shortages of lubricating oil; water supply problems and solutions, mention of Fred Johnson and Ron Worswick. [Part 2 0:21:55.1]
- Improvements made to Base during Arthur's time as leader: Tony Wilson improves the radio room; John O'Hare improves the dark room. [Part 2 0:25:26.4]
- Discussion of friction between Base members; the importance of the dogs in providing constant work and companionship as pets. Importance of ensuring safe levels of alcohol consumption on Base. [Part 2 0:27:15.7]
- Thoughts on leaving Antarctica: Spent a few months in Cambridge working up his material and three months at the Harrow Met office, where Arthur wrote his paper on the Dependencies. [Part 2 0:32:40.0]
- Arthur goes on to have a long and successful career in Arctic Canada thanks to an opportunity to go to MacGill University on a Carnegie Foundation scholarship in conjunction with the Arctic Institute of North America, starting as a post graduate student under Professor Max Dunbar. [Part 2 0:33:53.3]
- Arthur explains that his experiences as a Fid prepared him for working in the Arctic environment. His ability to shoot seals and dismember them for research impresses his Inuit guides. He describes living in an old Hudson Bay Company house. [Part 2 0:35:56.0]
- Arthur acknowledges the importance of his time as a Fid to his future career [Part 2 0:39:29.7]