

STIRLING ALDRIDGE (MOSSIE)

Edited transcript of filmed interview with Stirling Aldridge (Mossie) conducted by Jack Tolson at Holbury, near Southampton. BAS archives AD6/24/1/221. Transcribed by Allan Wearden in January, 2018.

Stirling Aldridge [Mossie] Marine department. Bosun on RRS John Biscoe and Bransfield.

[0:00:00] Aldridge: I'm Stirling Aldridge I was born in the Falkland Islands, everybody knows me as Moss, Mossie Aldridge born in the Falklands on the 27th of September 1947. I'm now getting this done at Robbie Peck's house in Southampton, Holbury in Southampton.

[0:00:31] Tolson: Hi Mossie!

Aldridge: Hi Jack!

[0:00:34] Tolson: Can we just go back to your early days, childhood days in the Falkland Islands? Just tell me about your family background, brothers and sisters, parents?

Aldridge: Like I said I was born in the Falklands Islands, lived in Stanley. The upbringing of my life was very, very good. My mother done most of it because I lost my dad when I think I was about six months old. I went to school in Stanley and think I started school when I about four and a half years of age, had a very good upbringing very, very nice. Mother was very hard but a good woman, and then I went to school in Stanley till I was twelve years of age, and then my mother said to me one day 'I've got you a job son, do you want to go?', and before I could say 'No', I was on the flight next day! So I went to a place called Port San Carlos and went there as house boy for a start, then I went navy and riding horses, shearing the sheep, cutting peat, all the hard things!

[0:01:47] Tolson: So your life was set to be farming?

Aldridge: Oh no! No, no my life was set to be a seaman. No we were chatting about different things in Falklands there and in Port San Carlos one day, me and a bloke called Pat Lee, he now lives in Southampton, and he said 'You know what are you going to do with your life?', I said 'I'd like to go to sea', and he said 'Ah you won't'! And yes, I went to sea, I went on the *AES* - it was one the Falkland Island Company ships come out with supplies - and went on there for about a year and a half and then I transferred to the *Darwin*, HMS (sic) *Darwin* [Note: should be RMS], done a year and half on her then transferred from her to the *Biscoe*, the *John Biscoe* in 1967/68 season.

[0:02:39] Tolson: As a child growing up in Stanley - if we can drop back to then - what was it like, a bleak desolate place or sunshine in a child's mind, sunshine all the time?

Aldridge: Desperate! No, it was cold we had, when we were at school we used to have a sledging week every year as guaranteed snow! And as kid we loved it, but the weather wasn't all that good like it is now, but as a child we loved it, sleighing on the hills we loved it, doing all those naughty things as boys do, you know!

[0:03:18] Tolson: And as a child what were your sort of horizons to what you might do, when young men or big boys was it really only sheep farming or farming?

Aldridge: Yes, it was yes. I mean out in the camps horse or sheep farming yes, full stop, sheep farming!

[0:03:36] Tolson: That's all you really thought you might be doing?

Aldridge: Yes. I mean we were tractor driving and more years you go, more things you do, you qualify in tractor driving, qualify in this, qualify in that, but I decided sheep farming wasn't my cup of tea really! 'Course I had back problems as well so that didn't help.

[0:04:03] Tolson: You knew all about BAS ships probably from childhood because you would have seen them, the *Shackleton*, and the *Biscoe* coming in?

Aldridge: Yes, that's right!

[0:04:12] Tolson: So you joined in Stanley the *John Biscoe*?

Aldridge: No I joined the *Biscoe* in Monte[video]. What had happened that time we were in dry dock, can't remember what we was in there for, get the propeller fixed or something that had been smashed by the ice? And one of my mates called Delano Jennings, who was named Dinks, lovely chap, and his wife was coming down from UK, so his brother come around and said 'Well is there anyone wants to swap jobs with Dinks on the *Biscoe*?' So my hand went up and so me and Delano Jennings, Dinks, we swapped jobs, and that's how I come on the *Biscoe*!

[0:05:03] Tolson: And you then went back to the UK?

Aldridge: Yes!

[0:05:07] Tolson: And rather like Robbie it must have been amazing, such a big city?

Aldridge: Oh absolutely scary! Very scary, then when I thought 'Well, can't drive', that was scary but you get on with it and you've got to live like everybody, so we just got on with it.

[0:05:38] Tolson: You were, well I don't know, a junior ordinary seaman?

Aldridge: Yeah one of the JOS, that's junior ordinary seaman, SOS senior ordinary seaman, DHU deck hand uncertified then I became an EH and then an AB until I got the bosun job.

[0:06:01] Tolson: So those few months of the summer of the refit time in the UK summer, you were presumably left to fend for yourselves, no on board living was there?

Aldridge: No that's right. When I very first joined the *Biscoe* we used to come into Southampton, then we used to stay on board a couple of weeks and as the years went on, it was just Southampton, stuff off ashore and you're on your own! But in the summer in Southampton or wherever, I used to take up other jobs working on building sites doing all

sorts, and working on a couple of little ships as well around Southampton, I won't tell you what I done, bit embarrassing, but yeah it was lovely!

[0:06:55] Tolson: And a few weeks before the time to sail in the autumn, back on board and prepare the ship?

Aldridge: That's right yeah, clean her up repair the ship while the dockies loading then we'd be away again for another eight months!

[0:07:09] Tolson: Then of course you'd have an intake on sailing day of the famous Fids?

Aldridge: Oh yes, oh yes the Fids, yeah, tremendous people, various tremendous people with what they had to do. Of course when we got to know them on the ships they would work with us chipping, painting whatever and then we would get to their bases and then get all their supplies ashore and then asked to go ashore, and have a drink, fantastic!

[0:07:42] Tolson: Sailing down the Atlantic your first trip heading south by now, plenty to do repairing the ship [Aldridge: Absolutely!] painting, preparation of cargo?

Aldridge: Yeah in the tropics, we used to chipping and paint, rope splicing and wire splicing and getting ready for the season.

[0:08:09] Tolson: Who was, do you remember the senior officers on your early trips?

Aldridge: Yeah my early trips on the *John Biscoe* it was, the captain was Captain Woodfield, I can't really remember who was Chief Mate, it's going back some years now, no I can't remember who, but all good lads, all good lads!

[0:08:36] Tolson: Tom, Tom Woodfield was a fixture of course in all of our minds.

Aldridge: Oh absolutely, absolutely yes. Yes I remember when I joined the *Biscoe* I was down in the crew's quarters, and Captain Woodfield shouted me 'Aldridge', and I said 'Yes Woodfield!', and he said 'Can I see you in my cabin please?' So I went his cabin and he said, 'My name is, you address me as Captain', and I said 'You address me as Mr Aldridge or Moss or Stirling!' But everything blew over and it was fine, lucky!

[0:09:15] Tolson: What was it like when you came back into Stanley again?

Aldridge: Oh, fantastic! I mean leaving all your friends and your mates like that you went to school with, no many around now they're all gone now, all died off! But yes just going back in and going into the pubs like the Globe, you've been in there Jack, the Globe Hotel, lovely pub and the drinks are free down to the counter, it was absolutely fantastic seeing my mates and having a drink with your mates, yeah fantastic!

[0:09:50] Tolson: And then of course it was off down south!

Aldridge: Off down south again, yeah!

[0:09:55] Tolson: What was, this is now your first trip, so you're leaving a community you know very well heading south, where did you go first?

Aldridge: Well we used to sometimes - it all depends - we used to go into South Georgia first or Signy, usually it was South Georgia or Signy first, and then we the used to go down to, when we had Stonington Island, Adelaide. Adelaide, I remember many years of Adelaide with the, they called her the Ice Alley. We used to anchor there in the evenings, and these big icebergs would attack you! Yes, then we went on to, then of course when we finished with Adelaide, they done the base at Rothera and that was a better base, it didn't have the swell it didn't have the danger! But wherever we went we had to manage!

[0:10:57] Tolson: In the junior roles when you first started, junior ordinary seaman?

Aldridge: Yes.

[0:11:04] Tolson: Did you, you were learning as you went along?

Aldridge: Absolutely!

[0:11:17] What sort of feedback and push were you getting from the Bosun at the time, were they really helpful?

Aldridge: Oh very, very helpful, very good seamen. I mean the bosun when I went on there, they were called lamp trimmers as well, now they're called bosun's mates. All fantastic people and they, that's how you learn absolutely, boot up the backside, splicing and all your seamanship, if I hadn't sailed under them sorts of blokes I wouldn't know what I know now!

[0:11:52] Tolson: Did you respect that form of their discipline then towards their junior ratings?

Aldridge: Absolutely, absolutely yes. Yeah I went along with it gave a bit of it, well not saying we went along with it, we had to, but no there was no problem at all, if you're prepared to listen they're prepared to learn you!

[0:12:14] Tolson: I know that was how you, you treated yours when it was your turn!

Aldridge: Yes that's right, you learned through the seniors yes, and that's the only way we learned, and 'course we had to take our boat tickets and AB's tickets, and firefighting tickets and it was all to do with the senior people, they all helped.

[0:12:43] Tolson: What were your first [laughter] thoughts and fears when you were first put on the wheel?

Aldridge: Oh yes it was quite scary, yeah quite scary, but you learn again and going through the ice, through leads and hitting icebergs or whatever, yeah it was all good fun yeah but it was quite nerve racking for a start!

[0:13:10] Tolson: In your earlier days you'd had the great pleasure, I guess it was a great pleasure, of running around on the wreck of the *Great Britain*?

Aldridge: That's right yes, that's right we used to play on her when we was kids, and the *Lady Elizabeth* and of course over the years that got too dangerous, and they come and collected the *Great Britain* from a place called Sparrow Cove on a big pontoon, and yes we used to play on there as kids fishing over the side of her and all that, but like I say the *Lady Elizabeth* over the years it got too dangerous and I've been to see her since, they've been doing work on it, it's fantastic!

[0:13:58] Tolson: You didn't see them tow her out of Port Stanley?

Aldridge: Yes, yes I was with another bloke - think I spoke of him - Dinks Jennings who I took the job off on the *John Biscoe*, it was him and another bloke called, forget his name now, he was the underwater welder, and yes we seen her sail out yeah on this big pontoon, it was marvellous really yeah!

[0:14:33] Tolson: Getting back or forward to your junior days on the *Biscoe*, it was very much then pure cargo work or were there other things?

Aldridge: No, no pure cargo work and then as the years went on we done a bit of seismic work and that was quite boring actually for me! I used to like the regular cargo work, but we used to have a bit of that and a bit of this, and still all enjoyable very enjoyable.

[0:14:55] Tolson: How were the cargo operations carried out on the *Biscoe*, did you have a scow?

Aldridge: Oh, yes that's true we used to take all the supplies to the bases by scow and launch, we used to go there and go ashore there helping to unload it, and some stuff was quite heavy and we take drums ashore and we used to do them with they called parbuckling, with two ropes round the bow and quite hard work, but we enjoyed it!

[0:15:26] Tolson: Tell me about the setup on the *Biscoe* how many hatches you have and whether you had cranes or derricks?

Aldridge: Yeah on the *Biscoe* we had a little number 1 hatch and a number 2 hatch and number 3 at the stern end, and of course it was all done with boards, today we have graded hatches, but those days wooden boards you had to take canvas off the hatches and wedges and then fold the canvas back, and get these boards and take them out and as long as you finished and takes beams out, that was quite hard work before you started! And then if we had too much cargo to go ashore, bit uneven, we used to put two scows together and lash, but that's how we used to take the stuff ashore, yeah.

[0:16:17] Tolson: What about rolling seas and swells?

Aldridge: Oh well rolling seas and swells, you know the best little ship I was ever on was the *Biscoe*, I mean I've got to admit that she was a lovely little ship, she used to put you to sleep whereas the *Bransfield* would keep you awake! But I mean she had derricks on the *Biscoe*, she had derricks on there but it was easy worked and we had to have one derrick plumbed

over the hatch, and the other one plumbed over the side and we used to do like a two ways system, and that's the way we used to work the *Biscoe*, yeah!

[0:16:58] Tolson: Did the Fids get involved in cargo operations?

Aldridge: Oh absolutely, you couldn't stop 'em! Oh no they were marvellous, yeah they used to stick in and do what we had to do. You'd shout at them a few times, but marvellous, we all worked perfect together!

[0:17:22] Tolson: There was another aspect of your job that perhaps you enjoyed, I don't know, the sealing killing?

Aldridge: The sealing!

[0:17:28] Tolson: Tell me about sealing.

Aldridge: Yes the sealing. Here I've got a couple of photographs here I don't know if I can find, I've got to root them out, here. The sealing was done, here's one picture [shows a picture of *Biscoe* during the sealing, to Jack] of the sealing, bit sickly really but yeah I mean when I was growing up in the Falklands, I mean we had to kill everything to eat! Kill sheep, kill bullocks everything we had to do ourselves, and that's what we done with the sealing. No, they was actually shot, skinned and so forth for the dogs, for the husky dogs so it wasn't just a fun game it was another food for somebody else, but we used to have good fun, we used to be on the ice there, shirts off! And people when they saw the photographs, 'No that hot down there is it?' Well it could be when you was working on the ice!

[0:18:24] Tolson: Did you, were you on a rifle?

Aldridge: I was at the end, yeah. It takes years to get to that stage, but I did get to that stage yes. Didn't enjoy it, but another thing I was good at coming from the Falklands again, we used to do a lot of shooting out there, you know geese and so forth, so I was an old hand really at it yeah!

[0:18:50] Tolson: Whilst you were on the *Biscoe* was there also a doctor who would I think take samples, various specimens from the seals?

Aldridge: That's right yes he used to. I remember one seal there when we opened his belly up and took everything out it was all bubbly! I was quite interested in these sort of things and the doctor grabbed me and said 'Keep away from that!' - they were going to put the whole thing over the side because it's cancer! So that was the end of that seal, straight over the side. Then you had to be careful cutting your hands or cutting yourself because the seals had many, many diseases, and some of them was killers! So we used to seal we'd have big buckets of disinfectant outside the doors and we used to have to wipe our shoes and boots, hands before we went into the accommodation because of the diseases!

[0:19:48] Tolson: Then the *Biscoe*'s deck was loaded with the seals?

Aldridge: The seals and you could have them on two or three days and they was nasty, horrible the smell! And you could hear the dogs barking miles away because they could smell it, but that wasn't a very nice job really it was a bit smelly. But that's our job we've got to get on with it and get it done. 'Course now they've done away with all the dogs all the machinery the lads are lucky they haven't to do that!

[0:20:21] Tolson: So it was pretty gruesome place too?

Aldridge: Excuse me I'll just have a drink of water!

[0:20:32] Tolson: Did you ever go south to Halley on the *Biscoe*?

Aldridge: Not on the *Biscoe* [Tolson: No?] no we never went there, I've got a funny feeling the *Biscoe* had been to Halley once, I think she had a bit of a job getting out!

[0:20:44] Tolson: She has been once, certainly.

Aldridge: But no, I never went Halley on the *Biscoe*, no!

[0:20:53] Tolson: How did you find it, the interdepartmental relations, you know the deck crowd the engine crowd with the Fids and the officers?

Aldridge: Fantastic, you just mingle in and that's it, you just make a relationship with people, so you don't notice it being done, anyway it's just a natural thing. I mean going away for eight months of the year you have to live with people, and you've got to get on with people and that's what we done!

[0:21:30] Tolson: There was, I think there was always a pretty high percentage of Falkland Islanders on the, amongst the crew at least weren't there?

Aldridge: Oh yes, I think at one stage on the *Biscoe*, I'm talking about on deck now, mostly Falkland Islanders at one stage, that's going back years. And at one stage we had all sorts of people, Scousers, Scots, Wales the Welsh people and they were all lovely people, but like I say again you just had to get on. A couple used to sail with us and the first port of call, they was off flown home because they couldn't handle it, which I could understand!

[0:22:12] Tolson: Do you recall the sort of the methods of selection, because don't think it was ever as it might be now for commercial ships and stuff, you'd go to an office, I mean it was largely done on board, even rolling down to the ship and asking for an interview?

Aldridge: That's right yeah. I mean a lot of the lads come on the ship as it was sort of word of mouth. I got a lot of the lads jobs on there because I knew them and they was good lads because you knew em! And but yes, you used to have lads coming down and then you'd say to the mate now and again 'I don't think we'll take him', because three weeks' work and 'Bye', you could tell what people was like, but then again maybe the mate would turn around and say 'Well we've got to give people a chance!' And sometime that was wrong, eight months away in the Antarctic not very nice when someone goes off their head or drinks too much and, you know!

[0:23:22] Tolson: How quickly did you come up the ranks, from being a JOS you worked your way up?

Aldridge: Yes, like I say, I joined the *Biscoe* in 1967/68 season and then I went, I was on the *Biscoe* ten years and three years of that I was bosun, so that's how long it takes you to come up through the ranks, some people don't even get there! But it all depends how long you want to stay around for, or you know what you want in life, I wanted to go the full hog!  
[laughter]

[00:24:07] Tolson: Did you do much marine biology on the *Biscoe*, marine biological work?

Aldridge: Not a lot, it did happen, but not a lot. We used to bring people down they'd do an odd job here and there, but not a lot until some years after, then they started bringing that out. We sort of had labs on the ship and everyone used to work in the labs and they used to do all sorts yeah, but that was later.

[0:24:37] Tolson: So the early OPP stuff that was when you were putting trawls over the side of the ship, that was in its infancy when you were still on the *Biscoe*?

Aldridge: That's right yes. Yes we used to do that quite a bit like taking samples off the bottom, and I remember one day we was doing explosives and that was taking samples off the bottom as well, and when they put one of the detonators out a sea gull landed on it as it went up, so amazing things you seen! But I wasn't really interested in that side of it, on that side it was quite boring to me, but you had to go along with it which we did!

[0:25:26] Tolson: What bases did you enjoy working at and others that you fear working at?

Aldridge: Oh yes Signy, I loved Signy Island and South Georgia fantastic, Adelaide Island no! It was too big a swell there and I remember one occasion when we was trying to put a Snowcat I think it was, Snowcat something like that ashore and we attempted it in the scow, put him on the scow and when we got to the jetty, and I mean the jetty was up there one minute and down there the next minute, so we give up! But one of the officers through the night thought, 'Oh right', got a couple of lads out, thought they'd sneak him ashore and they lost it at the end of the jetty! And when the divers went down to see what would happen, and I mean that vehicle was like a pancake! So I mean you learn, you've got to learn quick and I think after that I mean that was terrible unloading, when you had cases or anything like that you had to wait for the swell to come up, then pick it up and put it on the jetty, yeah it was horrifying yeah. I was pleased when we seen the back of that place!

[0:26:37] Tolson: When you were a bosun did you delegate who would be where?

Aldridge: Oh absolutely, oh absolutely yes, oh yes! You used to get used to who could do what, and they get your critical places, like the crane. When the ship was rolling you used to think to yourself, 'You'll put him up there or him up there', yeah you knew exactly who to put where!

[0:27:03] Tolson: The same with Fids or did they tend to be either in hold or on the base?



Aldridge: What?

[0:27:09] Tolson: The Fids?

Aldridge: The Fids, well yeah most of 'em was on the bases, when we got to the bases, it would all depend where we was going. When we was going down and we went to bases before the Fids got off at their base, they used to help us, take cargo ashore to that base, when we got to their base they was ashore then and so then we was just supplying the goods to them.

[0:27:41] Tolson: Your last, I suppose your last *Biscoe* trip would have been just prior to the big refit?

Aldridge: Yeah that's correct yeah. Yeah, coming home to that big refit and I asked a question 'Was we getting paid?' or 'When we went back would we still get paid as normal?!' And they said 'No, virtually you're on your own while we do the refit', and I thought, I thought twice about that, I thought to myself 'How can somebody after you've been some years working tell you, you aren't getting paid?' So I spoke to the captain about it at the time, and he said 'If it was up to me Moss I'd certainly be paying you! But it's not up to me,' he said, 'It's up to the firm'. So they virtually turned that down so I left, I left British Antarctic Survey(!), and went on to other ships in Southampton, and they got called cable ships, I didn't like those ships. I mean, I like going to sea and alongsides the quay most of the time! And one day I thought to myself 'What am I going to do?' and I looked in the paper and I see the *Bransfield* was in, so I rang the *Bransfield* up and the skipper answered and I said, 'Is there any jobs going?' and he said 'Yeah, come down and see me', and that was Nick Beer, lovely chap, and I went down and had a chat with him and he said 'We've got a chap coming down from Liverpool called Johnson, and he's coming down for the bosun job, but if his face don't fit or he don't want the job will you take bosun?' and I said 'Yeah I will take bosun', then he turned around and 'The only other job we've got on here is bosun's mate', and I thought 'Oh God yes, give me it!' So he said 'Right, you can have the bosun's mate job, but you'll take bosun if Ted Johnson we don't like him or he don't like us!' And that's how I joined BAS again, never missed a season, it was the same season. So yeah I joined the *Bransfield*, lovely!

[0:29:58] Tolson: That was 79/80?

Aldridge: Yes!

[0:30:01] Tolson: Going from little *Biscoe* to bigger *Bransfield* what happened?

Aldridge: Oh scary, quite scary yes! See I'd have preferred the bosun's mate's job than the bosun's job on a strange ship, different people, and yes I mean she was a lot easier ship to work you had cranes instead of derricks, you had a crane forward and speed crane aft and you had what they call MacGregor hatches. I always say 'Put a bit of cotton on it and pull it and the hatch is open', that's how easy it was!

[0:30:43] Tolson: Was it for you a very big learning curve, all the equipment?

Aldridge: Sorry?

[0:30:46] Tolson: Was all the equipment a very big learning curve for you?

Aldridge: Oh no, no I just fell into place. It was different ship but the same job, a little bit different but no, about the same yes, yeah about the same, bigger ship bigger crew, yes, very much the same yeah!

[0:31:12] Tolson: And of course the cargo work operations, because the *Bransfield* was very much the cargo workhorse, must have pleased you enormously?

Aldridge: Oh absolutely satisfied that's right yeah, but more of a dangerous working ship. I would put it to some of the bases, like Bird Island, and you had that big swell there, and you had that big ponder ball, the weight that used to bring the cable down, when that started swinging with the scow on the end it was nerve racking, very nerve racking, yet nobody got hurt, marvellous!

[0:31:50] Tolson: That's what so amazing we all say the same thing now [Aldridge: Yeah] been incredibly lucky or careful!?

Aldridge: That's right yes. We had no bad accidents at all, a few bruises and a couple of broken fingers perhaps that was about all, yeah!

[0:32:11] Tolson: What injuries did you get as a matter of interest?

Aldridge: No I never got no injuries no, I was alright yeah, I got a - yes I got one, [Tolson: A seal hook through my foot!] one time I had a seal hook through my foot! That was a big story really because I was down in the scow and we was hooking these seals around, put 'em in place, so everything was all even and as my foot slipped off one seal one of the lads was coming down with a hook and went right through my foot! And then we had a bloke called Mick Pawley, he was a Base Commander, he'd been round the Antarctic for quite a while at that time, and he said to me 'We'll have to operate on that!' And he said to me 'We'll have to give you, we've got nothing we can give you but a bottle of rum!' So I thought 'That's fine', but I think he drank the rum and went to sleep and that was the end of that! After that we was doing, taking some drums ashore and the same bloke that put the hook through my foot, it wasn't meant no, no way that it was meant, he was down there trying to get this drum in place his toes was underneath the drum, and I said 'I'll put them in place' and I jumped down on to the drum to sink it in, right on his feet! And he said to me 'That's a payback!' and I said 'No, no, I would never do that!' It just happened at the time and that's what it looked like, but that's the only serious injury I had really I think.

[0:33:40] Tolson: When you were, when you went bosun on either ship because you went bosun finally on the *Bransfield* too, and you were bosun on the *Biscoe*?

Aldridge: That's right.

[0:33:54] Tolson: What was your take on being fair with the crowd, how did you play your position of control, I mean did you treat the crew harsh or did you work with them?

Aldridge: No I very much worked with them. I mean it was a few crew now and again you had to get a little bit harder, then now and again they would be a bit harder on you as well! But no, no I think I treated the lads and the Fids and everybody else very good, yeah, and they was all fair to me. I mean my opinion really if you're fair to somebody they'll be fair to you! and that's the way I played it. A couple of times I got away with a few things, but I mean I got away with it! Yeah, going ashore and having a few drinks and having an argument from two weeks before, because you couldn't have a fight because you're on the ship and you know and little things like that happen!

[0:35:10] Tolson: When you did go as bosun on the *Bransfield* was that a natural progression? Did the bosun leave or retire?

Aldridge: No, I went on the, I was bosun on the *Biscoe* when a bloke called Pat Crockford flew to the UK. What happened he was a bloke called, can't remember his name now he was from the Isle of Wight, they called him Kojak, real big man! And they had an argument, him and Pat Crockford, they went ashore arguing in the boat, went ashore went into the Globe had a good night's drinking everybody was all mates, and when they come back to the ship one of the officers said 'Come up for a nightcap', and they went up there, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And of course he flew home then and Pat stopped and everything, he flew down again. Then I took the full bosun job the next year, but I remember saying to Derek Penny, I used to say to him 'I'm different bosun to Pat Crockford, don't try anything with me!' And anyhow I gave him a hard time a couple of times and he said to me one day 'I'll be pleased when Pat Crockford comes back Moss!' And I was said 'Why's that?', he said 'When he comes on this ship I'm going to go down kiss his feet' and say 'Pat it's so good to have you back'. I thought 'Ok, that's very nice'. When Pat come aboard I got Derek to do that and he did do it! That's the sort of thing you was up against, you had your good times you had your bad times and I think mostly good times! You had some worrying times and some worrying times but majority was good times, I think you tend to forget about the hard, bad times and just keep the good times in your mind, majority was good times!

[0:37:24] Tolson: What about good times ashore on the bases?

Aldridge: Yeah, oh yeah of course a few stories there, a few stories there. I mean we used to go ashore at Signy, we'd no problems at Signy we used to have quite a few drinks with them, we got to know them like seamen coming down. So we went ashore, we used to go ashore but one night it was base called Argentine Islands and we used to put the ropes ashore we did at Signy, and they used to pull the hawsers aboard and we used to pump fuel ashore. Well this night, one of the launch men which was Randy, Randall Macrae, lovely bloke, one of my good mates! I'm afraid he's not with us no more but he was the launch driver and we had another bloke called Bill Watson, I've got a picture of him here somewhere if I can find it in a moment - no I can't find that picture I've got so many pictures here I can't him! Yes here they are. I don't know if anybody recognizes him here, sorry for the noise [note: Shows a

photo to Jack] here's the bloke called Bill Watson with Dinks, and when we was on the *Biscoe*, that's going back some years(!) but, anyway him and Randall went off, went ashore in a boat and when they got ashore the lads from the base said 'Well come on have a party!' And they went up for just a couple of drinks and they got paralytic, absolutely paralytic! 'Course we'd got no boat so the old man more or less said 'Well we can get a lifeboat down'. Well I thought 'That's too much working 10 o'clock at night', so I decided to shin across the ropes from Biscoe to shore and of course as I got halfway across on the ropes they started sagging, and I thought 'Oh no, what's going to happen here?' But anyway I made it and I went and whipped round to the base there, walked in and Randy had had quite a few drinks and he looked at me and he said 'How did you get here?' [laughter!] And I had to get the boat which was a bit of a hassle with Randy trying to take over the boat, but yeah we got back and it was great, but it was good nervous times, absolutely yeah!

[0:39:44] Tolson: Yes, not all bases weren't quite so easy to get to were they?

Aldridge: No they weren't. No some bases, especially in the launch and the scow, it was you'd got rocks everywhere!

[0:39:52] Tolson: Adelaide ever seldom a kind place!?

Aldridge: Oh Berg Alley they called that place yeah, absolutely Iceberg Alley. I remember I was on watch at that base and the captain, I was up on the bridge on my own and the captain would say to me, 'If an ice berg comes in too close, think it's going to attack us, call me!' So this night, this iceberg, oh huge iceberg was coming in and I thought to myself 'What do I do here? No I'll leave it, wait for it coming again', and I thought so I thought I better go and get him, Captain Cole that was, and I thought 'I better go and wake him and say', but as I got up to his cabin the old man got out and said 'Bit late now Moss!' [laughter!] But that's what you was up against, and then of course we left. Stonington was another funny place, only a little hut there, but I remember, no it might have been Mick Pawley again, can't remember now. They brought the sledges out to the ship 'cause we was alongsides the ice and can't remember if it was Mick Pawley or one of the lads, anyway he fell through the ice and his dogs was laughing at him virtually, and when he got out he was so annoyed! But then they used to whip them, because you had to be quite cruel because they was huskies, for them to do what you wanted them to do. But anyway we got rid of that place and then they made a base at that place called Rothera. That was a lovely, lovely base and is still going, and we used to tie up to the rocks there and put fuel ashore and while we was putting fuel ashore we used to put cargo ashore as well. When the tide went out a bit we had to come off because of the rocks! But that was a scary moment at Rothera. We used to go out to little place called Jenny Island to anchor for the night because it was too deep at Rothera and on the way out this night we went aground! And we stuck about 8 holes in the ship and that was the end of that Antarctic trip, and you know we had to come into Stanley then bring her back to UK!

[0:42:10] Tolson: So tell me about how did that actually pan out, the ship went home for a refit?

Aldridge: Well what actually happened I was actually in the bar at the time and they were waiting for it to drop anchor or whatever, and it was like hitting a mountain we went over it and then hit her again, so we was stuck there and then all of a sudden she slid off! And we thought 'Oh what's going to happen here?', but we had what they call double bottomed tanks and that's what saved her! If it was just a single skin, well if it had been a single skin I'm sure we would have been down like that, the double bottom saved her!

[0:42:47] Tolson: So did you have to do some sort of survey around the ship?

Aldridge: Yeah we had, oh what was the name of that navy ship now?

[0:43:01] Tolson: Holloway?

Aldridge: No! Anyway they had the navy, the navy divers went down and inspected it off the *Endurance*! The navy divers went down and surveyed it and then they ended up coming back with us to Stanley and then had a big survey, and said 'Well we can't no farther than the ice we better come home', and that was the end of that season!

[0:43:28] Tolson: Was that a particularly scary time?

Aldridge: It was, yeah it was really. I mean the ship was like that coming down, [Mossie describes a big list with his hands!] as she went over and you think she doesn't seem to want to stop going over! And then she came back up again but yes that was a scary time yes, yes you just didn't know what was going to happen!

[0:43:49] Tolson: That was Captain Cole?

Aldridge: Captain Cole yes, yes.

[0:43:52] Tolson: How was he dealing with the situation?

Aldridge: Well he dealt very good with the situation, oh yes, he was one of the best skippers. But yes I think we was more nervous than he was I think maybe, but yeah he took the situation very good, very, very well done, yeah.

[0:44:21] Tolson: You have sailed with quite a few captains, Captain Woodfield?

Aldridge: Yes Captain Woodfield.

[0:44:31] Tolson: Captain Turnbull, did you?

Aldridge: No I didn't sail with Captain Turnbull, I worked with him when he was doing a bit of a survey in Southampton, he was actually surveying the *John Biscoe's* lifeboats, and that's the year they condemned those lifeboats and got fibreglass boats! But I was with Captain Turnbull, Frosty, they called him Frosty, and I met his wife, oh a few years ago now, at a home my wife was working, and I said to her 'How did your husband get the name Frosty?' And she said 'Well you've only got to look at him, luv, haven't you!' [laughter!] Which she was a very, very jolly lady yeah, but he was a good man, a very good man.

[0:45:14] Tolson: Of all the captains you actually have sailed with, Captain Woodfield, Captain Lawrence?

Aldridge: Captain Cole, Captain Chris Elliot.

[0:45:24] Tolson: Captain Elliot, they all had something different about them. What was their individual strengths, what did you?

Aldridge: I remember when Chris Elliot was skipper on the *Biscoe* we went into a place called Bellingshausen, and that was one side was Chilean and other side was - can't remember what the other side was. But we went in there and I think the captain took the wrong bay I think and as we was going in, and all these people were running in backwards up the beach and we went aground there! And we had to unload the ship to lighten the ship, and when we were loading all the stuff back on the ship, we were so many barrels of beer missing, understandable! [laughter] But no, all the captains, yeah, were different I think but they was all, they all knew their job I mean. I think Captain Cole was one of the old hands anyway and Stuart Lawrence he was a great bloke was Stuart Lawrence, he was a good bloke yeah! And Captain Malcolm Phelps was like a dad to us, and I remember one of the lad's dad died, we was at South Georgia and he took up over the mountain to get him away from it, and very nice old boy yeah! And I can show you Captain Phelps when the *John Biscoe* retired, that's Captain Phelps and the *John Biscoe* when they retired. [Mossie, shows Jack magazines' photos of the *Biscoe* on her return from her final voyage].

[0:47:14] Tolson: Excellent!

Aldridge: Very lovely gentleman, he's in my eyes he was a gentleman not just a skipper he was a dad to us, you know lovely, lovely chap and they was all lovely!

[0:47:24] Tolson: Yeah, perhaps Tom Woodfield would you say he was of the older school of amongst all of them?

Aldridge: Oh absolutely yes, yes he was, yeah you had to be very careful what you said. Yes I think he was one going back to the old captains definite yes, you know what was said was done and if you didn't do it look out!

[0:47:50] Tolson: Apart from calling him Woodfield did you make any other *faux pas* with him, any other mistakes?

Aldridge: No, no I did not, I'm sure I did when I was younger I was one of the boys, but no I don't think it wasn't too bad or I wouldn't have been there! And I think to myself the length of time I was with British Antarctic Survey, and accidents we had was absolutely crazy really, no accidents no you know in 24 years!

[0:48:27] Tolson: Halley Bay was particularly potentially a dangerous place to be?

Aldridge: It was Halley Bay was very, very dangerous, yeah, a few nerve racking times there, yeah. When you was walking the ice sometimes the ice was going like water, [Mossie makes shapes like waves on the film!], sometimes going like that when driving the machines.

That's shore people driving the machines of sledges of cargo taking it up to the, you could see it, machines going like that [again makes a wave shape on the film]. No, people wouldn't believe you but that's likely true and when I first went to Halley Bay they had the old base there, and that if I remember right it was 40 foot below the ground, below the ice level, and you used to go down there and you used to hear the pop rivets going bang, pop, being crushed! And that's when they decided they had to do something about it and they made a base out of plywood, everything was round and when they finished it they blew a lot of snow in with the snow blowers into the base, the new base, but it didn't completely cover the whole lot so she started sandwiching and that was the end of that base! And then they got the steel one down which they had to jack up every year, which was hard work! We used to go up there and give them a hand, but then the bad time we had when we wasn't at Halley was at South Georgia at the time and when one of the twin otters come down, and well actually knocked a chaps head off! And that was very, very sad times in them days. They said we'd have to go down from South Georgia to pick him up. Anyway it didn't happen that way, I think they buried him there! But that was a very, very sad occasion, just one of those off occasions but yeah very sad.

[0:50:21] Tolson: You never witnessed the ice cliffs collapsing on the ship did you?

Aldridge: Yes we did one time, yeah we went in one time I mean I was bosun on there for quite a while, of course Robbie Peck he was bosun on the *Bransfield* for some time as well, and we had the same, I think he had a worse one than I had, he had the gunwhales to tear apart! But we didn't have that not so much on the *Bransfield*, it was quite worrying, all that ice falling down and the ship going over, you think to yourself you know is she coming back! But yeah some scary times there yeah, yeah.

[0:51:06] Tolson: And of course you had a personally scary, very scary time with your heart?

Aldridge: That's right, yes, I suffered a heart attack. That was a lot of luck I had there as well, because we was working cargo there and the doctor come down from the base, he was coming out with us again this season, because he'd already done one year and the doctor could only do one year, and the doctor come down from the base to pick up something from the hospital. And when he come aboard the ice broke up, lucky for me, and because it was a lovely day Captain Cole said 'Well let's get the lifeboats over and we'll have a little bit of lifeboat practice,' just like it was round icebergs, lovely beautiful day, and we got the boats out and was in charge of one of the boats and we got alongsides this iceberg, and I said 'We're out of sight of the old man lets a cigarette before we start!' because I used to smoke, and I dragged this cigarette and I started coughing and coughing and I couldn't stop coughing, sweating and I thought 'What's going on here!?' Lucky Captain Cole said 'Mossie bring your boat back we are happy with you'. Brought it back, the ladder got held underneath the boat and here's me with my head underneath the water going through a heart attack and didn't realise it, head over in the water releasing this ladder, got it released and of course I'm the brakeman, so I've got to go up that ladder and the *Bransfield's* quite high! And I got up the ladder and that was about it, then Cole looked down at me, Captain Cole said to me 'God, Moss, what's wrong with you?' And I threw the walkie-talkie at him and I

said 'I'm going below', and the cook picked me up outside the galley, and how the hell I got to the galley I don't know how, I can't remember much! But it was a doctor, can't remember his surname, but his name was Rory [note: it was O'Connor] and that trip when we was unloading the cargo and everything when we first took him down there, he was helping us on deck, blooming nuisance he was, he was a nuisance getting on the cargo come out in his flip flops, we used to put him off the deck and all that! Anyway they took me to my cabin and then the doctor come down, and Rory come in and I was saying to the lads 'Open the porthole - shut the porthole' as hot, cold I remember that, then I remember sitting up and throwing myself back and that's when I died!

[0:53:26] Then of course I didn't know anything about it then, and then when I come around they put me out on to the deck, because you've got to make sure there's no steel around and they give me the defibrillator I call it the jump leads! [laughter] And then the doctor gave me that and I came around and he said 'What are you looking at?', and I said 'The light', and he said 'What do you mean, what bloody light?', and he said 'Oh God!', and I said 'Why?', and he said 'I thought you might have a lot of brain damage', and he looked over to me and he said to me 'I'm not a bad guy am I?' [laughter] And he saved my life yeah! And then they sent word out to get plane in to fly me out and it was one of the big planes, what do they call them, Hercules?! And of course when they got there they realised they couldn't fly me because of the air pressure, so I had to stay put and they took me to Port Stanley on the *Bransfield*. But that was a scary time, that was my main scary time that was yes, I never want that to happen again!

[0:54:40] Tolson: Obviously you knowing that you were going to be many days on the ship you were always conscious of the fact, that having another attack?

Aldridge: Yes, oh yes definitely bit scared to move or...!

[0:54:56] Tolson: Rory was there for the trip anyhow?

Aldridge: That right yes.

[0:54:59] Tolson: As he was coming out?

Aldridge: That's right, I was lucky really yes, yes! Any other year I suppose – no, had that been the year before taking a doctor in and coming out without a doctor, oh I think we would have still had a doctor but it got they used to fly home, they used to fly from maybe Rothera or from Halley or Punta Arenas or Montevideo or wherever .

[0:55:28] Tolson: Now one of the chief officers, [REDACTED] presumably, a year or two before then, he had some very serious medical problems?

Aldridge: And going back to mine I'm not sure which was the scariest, but obviously the *Bransfield's* bows were quite high and this day I heard some lads shouting 'Mossie, Mossie!' and I thought 'What's going on here?', and one of them opened the cabin, and I had to get hold of [REDACTED] and had to hold him down and because he was having this like, I don't really know what it was, like a fit thing, very, very nasty! And I think I got him on the floor



and I sort of went like that, and he said 'Go on you'd love to get me wouldn't you?!' And I thought I might have to knock him out because he was going mad! Anyway I said [REDACTED] no, no', because we had problems on the ship, I mean the mate used to have problems on the ship, but he was a good officer he was a very good organiser the best! And so they decided they had to put him ashore, so the only way we could put him ashore, was in a stretcher but lower him over the side of the ship and I remember lowering him down and one of the lads on there, didn't get on with [REDACTED] very good like, he said to me 'Well I'm going to drop him in a minute!', and I said 'Well if you drop [REDACTED] I'll drop you!' Well anyway we got him ashore and he says up to me 'I'm relying on you Moss', and I thought that was nice. So then they got him to UK and he passed away, sadly. I think, I don't know how long after that, I never ever seen him again! But he did pass away but that was a very, very sad time!

[0:57:27] Tolson: What would you say, is it possible even to sum up your best, your best times with BAS after so many years?

Aldridge: Oh, [with a big sigh] I think it was so many it's remembering them all!?

[0:57:49] Tolson: Did you for example going home to the Falklands, was that good for you?

Aldridge: Very, in that yes, I suppose the best I suppose like we used to go into the Falklands, time to time, see my mates, go ashore and have a drink with them and blah, blah, come back and away we used to go, but at the end of each season we used to have a dance. And we had to go up what they called the town hall, the big hall they'd call the dance hall, and we used to have to decorate that all with ship's flags and whatever and that's what we used to have on, like on a going away sort of service type thing and that was very good yeah! And that was one of the good times, yes, and of course the other good times really I mean was coming alongsides the docks in UK after eight months, you know that eight months that was a very long time and some of the lads used to say to me over the years 'Do you like that job, Moss?!', and I said to them 'Well you know 23 or 24 years I've done I must like it!' [laughter]

[0:59:02] Tolson: But you were quite lucky you had two good homes didn't you?

Aldridge: That's right yes. Yeah I had the best of both worlds I suppose yeah, yeah! But think leaving Port Stanley for the last time at the end of each season was I think one of the best times yeah, times you'd never forget.

[0:59:24] Tolson: What [laughing] we all have memories of funny events do you have any especial ones?

Aldridge: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



[1:04:02] Tolson: We must have taken him round the islands or something?

Aldridge: Yeah I can't remember that.

[1:04:08] Tolson: Yeah I remember when he was getting off the ship in Stanley harbour and he was being lowered down in the boat, and the wires got caught in his helmet, his fancy hat and ripped it off!

Aldridge: Oh no, I don't recall that that day no, but they had some good governors down there. The last one they had down there before the Falkland Island war, the Argentine war, was, (what was his name?), it was Rex Hunt I think and he sadly died since, he was very nice everybody loved him! He would be in the pubs everywhere with the lads having a drink, great gentleman yeah!

[1:04:56] Tolson: Which ship were you on when the Falklands war was?

Aldridge: *Bransfield!*

[1:04:58] Tolson: You were?

Aldridge: Yeah *Bransfield*. We was all in the - don't know if you remember the pub in Stanley called the Rose Hotel - we was all down there, good old booze up with our mates before we went another day or two in there, and one of the lads come to me and said to me 'Round the lads up we've got to set sail!' I said 'What for?', he said 'I don't know'. So round the lads up and away we went and we still didn't know, but that was what it was all about, we had to go down south as far as we could to get away from the zone! So we got out I think two days before the war started!

[1:05:34] Tolson: Were you one of the many crew who went up to see Stuart Lawrence?

Aldridge: No, his name was - he sadly died as well - his name was Gerard Johnson and he went up and demanded the old man turn the ship around as they wanted to go to the Falklands and fight!! But of course the old man wouldn't do that. I don't know, we had a little bit of excitement on the ship that day, but which I suppose you can understand, but you know it was nothing to do with it, but yes we had little occasions like that!

[1:06:10] Tolson: One of your great achievements in during the period you were still with BAS was 1986, when you were awarded the Fuchs Medal?

Aldridge: That's right yes, Sir Vivian Fuchs medal, yes that's right yes. Yeah I was awarded that up in the BAS Club and that was, yes that was lovely that was, yeah, nice night out, it was fantastic given his medal yes!

[1:06:42] Tolson: Was it a bit of a surprise?

Aldridge: Maybe I can show you that medal, maybe I can show you, [Mossie shows Jack the actual silver Fuchs medal] and that's Sir Vivian Fuchs himself, and on the back is engraved

in my name. So that was a lovely thing to be presented with definitely, yes! And he was a lovely bloke a lovely, lovely bloke yeah.

[1:07:11] Tolson: Where did you meet him?

Aldridge: I'm not too sure, I think I met him in one of the bases one time, think it might have been Signy Island I think, but he was a nice bloke yeah I remember him, nice bloke, yeah, and I was proud of that medal, yeah!

[1:07:36] Tolson: After your heart attack you had, well you did have to leave the sea staff didn't you?

Aldridge: Yeah, when I had my heart attack they got me to Port Stanley and then I had a phone call, from a doctor called Alan Milne, he was a great ship's doctor, lovely bloke, and saying to me 'We'll like to take care of you, because we know you and you know us in Aberdeen. Would you come?', and I said 'Take me where you what to, I don't care!' And I ended up in Aberdeen having the operation and so forth getting back again and got back to Southampton, yeah good.

[1:08:17] Tolson: But you couldn't go south again?

Aldridge: No. They said at one stage 'Yes, get over heart attack you'll be alright to go back', but no they then I'd gone back to sea. I failed my medical, but I went to a tribunal and I'm afraid I didn't win it, but with the coldness and what I suffered with now, now again I can understand why they wouldn't let me back! They said 'We can't let you go down there it's too cold', and I said 'Well I was born in the cold, how come I can't go back!' But no, I understand it the reasoning.

[1:08:58] Tolson: So you did get a job?

Aldridge: Yes, I went to the Department of the DSS to find me a job virtually, and I went down there and they said 'Are you fit for work?' and I said 'Yeah', and he said 'God, we don't very often hear that!', and I said 'Yeah I am fit', and he said 'We'll have to train you up and get you a job ashore', and I said 'Well the firm's taking me ashore in Southampton' and he said 'That's jolly good news!' And I went to a little place called the Reynolds Centre in Southampton and I went there and a bloke met me at the door that day, called Arthur Fisher, he was the boss there, lovely, lovely man, fantastic bloke and I met all the Sandy Loveless and Steve Hall all the bosses and I met everybody, and yes I worked there, I worked between there and a little place outside called Liphook and they had the main base up there. And I used to go up there and do a lot of rigging and splicing, the old sea times I enjoyed it. Yeah, I was doing the work there and then he come to me one time, and said 'We've got a meeting you must attend it!' And I went to this meeting because they said they couldn't, they didn't have another job to slot me in, and of course in the Reynolds Centre they had different managers for different jobs and they all got together. I went to the meeting and they three or four of them got together and said 'Right we'll pay his wages' to keep me! So that's what they done, they paid my wages to keep me, because I'm doing good work for them, deep sea moorings and all that sort of thing and I worked there for, 1990 about five or six years and

then I suffered a stroke! And I tried to keep it on my hat actually, but it took part of my leg and my lady boss, Sandy Loveless, caught me one day, and said 'You're limping bad today Moss!', and I said 'Oh am I?', she said 'No I want you to go home and don't you to come back till farther notice!' And of course they retired me from there, so that was the end of me, that's the end of my working life really, but just lucky to be here!

[1:11:23] Tolson: But 1993 you had another big award!?

Aldridge: That's right the Polar Medal. Yes I was quite surprised about it, I never thought I'd get the Polar Medal! But yes, the chief mate called me up to the office one day and said 'You've got an award coming', and I thought 'What award have I got coming?!' And he said 'Well you know you've just got the Polar Medal!' And I thought, 'Why?', and of course when I come home it's, when I got the medal, I got it in 1993 or 4 I think it was, I got the medal here, I got the medal here! [Shows Jack his Polar Medal]. That's my Polar medal lovely, lovely! And they said to me 'You have to go to Buckingham Palace'. So me and my wife, I've got a photograph of that somewhere, just so much rubbish on the table here, can't find it! [Shows Jack a photo of himself with Polar Medal]. That's one of them on the train, and I can't seem to find the other, so many photographs here there all mixed up. Anyway, never mind! And so I went to Buckingham Palace and I thought to myself 'I don't know who I'm going to meet today', I think it was supposed to be the Queen but she had other things on I suppose, and so Charles, Charles presented the medal to me and it was lovely, and when I went up to Charles, and he said to me, he said 'You're not one those that have got frozen feet?' because there was a couple of blokes down the ice prior to that I think, who had frostbitten feet, think, and lost a few toes and he said to me 'You haven't got frostbitten feet have you?' And I said 'No'. [Laughter]. But that was a lovely day that was, yeah, one the best days I ever remember honestly!

[1:13:38] Tolson: Would you love to get back to the Antarctic?

Aldridge: I'd, [long sigh], no I don't think so now, well I'd never go back working anyway, but I wouldn't want to go back working now because too many changes for me now! But I would like to take a little cruise down there, I would love to do that, because of course can't go to sea. Yeah I'd like to see the Antarctic again, yeah, bring back many memories.

[1:14:15] Tolson: Any other aspects of the career, Mossie, that particularly fills you with emotion?

Aldridge: No. I mean the time when I had to leave the sea I would never see the ship go, couldn't stand that, that would be very, very upsetting, but apart from that, no, I've just got to get on with my life, which I do, just lucky to be here talking to you! But I'm enjoying life, think that's the main thing!

[1:14:52] Tolson: Tell me where did the name 'Mossie' come from?

Aldridge: That come from Stirling Moss as far as I know. I mean I was called Mossie, oh God, a while before I started at sea, always called Mossie, always riding around on

motorbikes out on the camp on the Falklands, jumping banks with my mates jumping peat bogs, yeah, that's how I got the name, from Stirling Moss!

[1:15:18] Tolson: What about going back to the Falklands, do you go back in fact?

Aldridge: Never been back since 1990, it's quite expensive just to go backwards and forwards now but maybe one day I'll go back, but I don't know! Yes I would like to go back and see the place, trouble is all my memories have gone from there, all my best mates they have all passed on so it's not the same going down the Falklands. If you go in the Globe to see the lads, 'Hiya', because they're not there no more, or so it's my home I love it, always love it but no I don't suppose I'll ever go back, no! No, my home's in Southampton now. 'Course we've got the internet now I can speak to people out there and I know roughly what's going on and what's not going on, which is good, but apart from going back out there, maybe I will win the lottery one of these days and maybe go out there! But no, don't think I'll ever go back, no.

[1:16:29] Tolson: You had a particular hobby on ships didn't you, making ships in bottles and fantastic models?

Aldridge: That's right yeah. I done quite a few ships in bottles. You remember the bloke I was talking about earlier in the programme, Gerry JohnsonJ? He come back after doing a year at Halley Bay, come to UK found a girlfriend got married. Went back to the Falklands and they set up this hobby shop, I think she was doing like the womens' side of it and he was doing like the hobby side of it, and he come down one day and he said to me 'Mossie can you make some of those models in bottles?', and I said 'What do want them for?', and he said 'Well that's my business!', and I said 'How many do you want?', and I can't remember how many it was, about 150 I think, and I said 'I couldn't do that Gerry' and all that! And he said 'Yes you could', and away he went. So anyway I think he thought I wouldn't have done, anyway when we got back to the Falklands into to Stanley the next time a month after, he come down and he said 'Where's my models in bottles?' and I said 'Down there', and he was surprised I done them and yes, he sold all them, I think lot of them went to the American tourists I think, but yes I done a model of the *Biscoe* and I done a model of the *Bransfield*, and I done, I scaled it up double for the *Bransfield*, so I had one with *Bransfield* that size and had one that size! [Mossie scales it to Jack about two feet, then double].

[1:17:57] But I'll tell you a little story about that. I made the hull and it was so big I had to leave it in the bar on the *Biscoe*, in the bar, and one of the lads there called ██████, I don't know what his real name was, he sounded like American but he wasn't, and I went around one morning when I got up up into the bar there and the stern's that end and the bow that end, somebody had smashed it! And I thought 'Well I don't know who it is', somebody sneaked round the door and said 'That was ██████!' So I collared him next day and he said 'Well yeah, I go mad every now and again', ██████ did, just sounded like an American, and I sent him in front of the old man, he got a bit of a logging for it I think! Apart from that story I heard a little bit of a shuffle up on deck one night on the after deck of the *Biscoe*, and what happened there, and this ██████ man got a broom hitting one of the lads as he was coming

across him with the broom, so I grabbed the other broom and said 'Right let's go for it now!' So I smacked him, sent him round the capstan and said 'That's for Brummy and all that, that's for Brummy!' and when he come round the other side I said 'That's for my *Biscoe*'! [hitting actions on the film and laughter!]. So that was the end of that, yeah. So but I've still got the *Bransfield* and the *Biscoe*, yeah still got them, but yeah they was just hobbies, you've got to do something and yes I done a few and I think some years ago now, one of the Fids bought one off me, think it was a little *Biscoe* about that long, but he bought one off me I always remember that. But that's what I used to do with, a lot of people used to like drinking all the time, but don't get me wrong I like a drink but not all the time, and I took that up as a hobby.

[1:19:46] Tolson: Did Malcolm get one?

Aldridge: Yes that's right Malcolm Phelps, Captain Malcolm Phelps he got one, the *Biscoe*, and he give back to me not so long ago with some of the rigging broken but I thought to myself 'I can't do that now, I shake', but I did do it, I got it all back together again and yes I'm quite proud of those two boats yeah, yeah.

[1:20:08] Tolson: Great Mossie, thank you very much indeed!

Aldridge: Very welcome, very welcome!

[1:20:11] Tolson: Great memories!

Aldridge: Great memories thank you very much.

Interesting clips:

- Playing on the *Great Britain* as a child in Stanley. [0:13:10]
- Finding seals with cancer, during sealing. [0:18:50]
- Leaving the *Biscoe* and joining the *Bransfield*! [0:27:41]
- Getting a seal hook in his foot during sealing and a possible operation!? [0:32:11]
- Climbing over the bow line of the ship to go to retrieve the ship's launch at base F! [0:37:11]
- Ship going aground and being holed! [0:42:47]
- Meeting Captain Turnbull's wife and why he got the nickname Frosty! [0:44:31]
- Mossie's heart attack on the ship! [0:51:06]
- The First Mate's medical emergency! [0:51:06]
- Meeting Duncan Carse and a disagreement! [1:02:14]
- What happened on the *Bransfield* at the start of the Falklands War? [1:04:58]
- Being award the Fuchs Medal! [1:06:10]
- Being awarded the Polar Medal shortly after leaving BAS! [1:11:23]

