

KEITH GAINNEY

Edited transcript of a recording of Keith Gainey interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on 21st June 2013. BAS Archives AD6/24/1/222. Transcribed by Andy Smith, 8th October 2014.

[0:00:00] Lee: This is Keith Gainey, interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee, on the 21st of June 2013.

Gainey: It's Keith John Gainey, South Elmsall.

[0:00:13] Lee: Where's that?

Gainey: It's South E L M S A double L in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which was South Yorkshire. It's between Barnsley, Doncaster and Wakefield.

[0:00:26] Lee: And what's your date of birth?

Gainey: 5/2/44.

[0:00:28] Lee: So you are now ...

Gainey: 69.

[0:00:32] Lee: 69? Every Fid has to think about that for a minute because they still think of themselves as being young men.

Gainey: I think we have that theory. Since we come in here When did I start coming in? Because I worked overseas for a long long time. I come back about seven or eight years ago. I started to bring my wife and she was amazed at how fit the older fellows were. Some of them are older than me because I am probably a younger one. And I say 'Well, it's easy.' We were immune from bugs, and I believe that that two years you spend has made you look healthier and fitter. We still walk around, eighty-odd year olds and those over-sixties, and I think it is true when you see everybody; they don't look their age.

[0:01:28] Lee: No they don't.

Gainey: And I think it is because of that environment – a theory.

[0:01:36] Lee: The other thing they were immune from from two years of course was women, wasn't it?

Gainey: Yes, apart from talking on the ... You get messages through the ...

[0:01:48] Lee: Perhaps best not to mention that to the wife though.

Gainey: No I wasn't married then. There was only one married person there on the two years I was there. That was 'Pop'¹, the ionosphericist my second year.

[0:02:05] Lee: Did it make a difference, do you think?

Gainey: No. I don't think I've ever thought about it, to tell you the truth.

[0:02:14] Lee: Would you say your father was an educated man?

Gainey: No.

[0:02:20] Lee: What was he?

Gainey: A miner, a coal miner. He was the eldest of eight.

[0:02:26] Lee: So by rights then, you should have followed him into the pit, shouldn't you?

Gainey: I wasn't allowed.

[0:02:32] Lee: Why not?

Gainey: Dad didn't want it. The villages we were in, South Elmsall and South Kirby, were in the middle of the mining villages. I was the oldest of eight. I started at grammar school and I started my A levels in physics and maths. And by that time the four eldest were at the grammar school and we struggled, and my Dad said 'You are not to ... I don't want you to go down the pit.' So the alternative was the Services. That was the only alternative. In them days, the 60s, you either went in the Army or you went down the pit in our villages. I elected for the Air Force.

[0:03:14] Lee: Why?

Gainey: I didn't want the Army. Actually I elected for the Navy first, for a scholarship, because I had gone to the headmaster and I said I wanted to leave, which he didn't want to. He thought I should have gone to university. And I said 'I am leaving because it is necessary.' And I applied for the Navy and it came back: I couldn't get a scholarship for the Navy because I wore glasses so I couldn't be an officer in those days. So I then applied for an apprenticeship to the Air Force, which I did, an apprenticeship in radio. But I was one of the last 15 that was double trade. We did radar and communications and that's why we went to the BAS, because BAS asked the Air Force for air radio fitters to do the meteorology side, because we were two trades and you needed it, and they couldn't get the met men to go. So the one before me was Air Force; I was Air Force; the one after me were Air Force.

[0:04:26] Lee: So you were a secondment, were you?

Gainey: Yes.

¹ Peter Pitts.

[0:04:31] Lee: And taking with you the two trades: one Of radar and telecommunications?

Gainey: Because they needed it with the radar.

[0:04:38] Lee: For the sondes?

Gainey: Yes, the Wind-Finder. But you needed it for the rest of the stuff in the met office, which was the radios and the Cintel, which was a valve computer. And we had the instrumentation, the Met Office instruments.

[0:04:57] Lee: Tell me about this valve computer. What was it called?

Gainey: The Rank Cintel? [Laughs.] We had to go on a course, to the Met Office, in Bracknell, on it.

[0:05:07] Lee: What did it do?

Gainey: It just took the signals from the radio sonde and converted them onto the graph. So it took the radio signals, took the radio signals out of it, put it through the valve system, converted it into digital, do you see, and then put it onto graphs. But it was like ... Your wardrobe there is a third of the size. There was two of them. If one failed, you had got a backup, as we are talking now. But the width of them was about three times your wardrobe. That was what the size of them was.

[0:05:46] Lee: And you took this to the Antarctic?

Gainey: It was there when I went. BAS had got it down there. Halley I had the Rank Cintel in and we transferred it to Halley II.

[0:06:00] Lee: That must have been some job.

Gainey: We got it in a day, and we didn't lose a balloon flight. We shifted it out of Halley I, up the shafts, got it on a sledge up to Halley II, into Halley II met office and I got it working for the next day's balloon flight.

[0:06:24] Lee: That's quite an achievement, isn't it?

Gainey: Well I thought it was quite good. We really worked well, the lads. There was only four of us, the met men. And the other one was 'WF-2'².

[0:06:35] Lee: Right. I have seen references to that but tell me about WF-2.

Gainey: Well WF-1 was grey and it was knocking on a bit, but WF-2 was brought down on the *Perla*³ and it was white and it had air conditioning! And of course it had been brought from Singapore and it was white and blue with the air conditioning on. So I took the air conditioning off.

² The WF-2 Wind Finder radar system. Pronounced Woof-2.

³ The *Perla Dan* supply ship chartered by BAS for the Halley Bay relief.

[0:07:01] Lee: And what did the WFs do?

Gainey: It tracks the balloon. It is a radar system; it tracks the balloon.

[0:07:08] Lee: So it's a more modern version of the one you talked about earlier?

Gainey: No, Rank Cintel is ... The Cintel is radio.

[0:07:16] Lee: Right.

Gainey: The WF windfinder is radar. It's got a radar dish and sends radar beams out. When the balloon goes up, it had an aluminium trefoil on the bottom which reflected the radar beams, and that's how you tracked it. So you tracked that on your radar, and you took measurements of the elevation and the degrees, every minute, with a met man sat next to you. Then you went in and you plotted that along with the information. So every time we had a balloon flight, we had to sit and plot the route that it went and how high it went.

[0:07:58] Lee: And do these two machines talk to each other?

Gainey: No. They are completely separate, completely separate. The Cintel only spoke to the wireless communication, because the radiosonde had a little wireless, battery operated thing, and it transmitted about the humidity, the pressure, the temperature as it went up. That was modulated radio frequency like we talk on the radio. That was picked up by a normal radio, short wave radio. So we had aerials outside picking that one up, so that transmitted. And then in addition to that we had the trefoil aluminium which reflected the radar. So you had got two separate systems. And from the two, they used both informations to plot the balloon.

[0:08:53] Lee: So the radar system was telling you where the balloon was, and the radio was picking up the signals.

Gainey: Telling you pressure, temperature and humidity.

[0:08:59] Lee: Of the conditions around the balloon at the time?

Gainey: Yes.

[0:09:02] Lee: Pretty high tech for 1967, isn't it, in the Antarctic?

Gainey: I was surprised. [Both laugh]. Well working on the military side of course it was low tech to us, right? But to have it actually in the Antarctic was probably quite good to get it down there. Yes, low tech to us.

[0:09:27] Lee: And was it dependent on 24-hour power?

Gainey: Yes, electric power, the generators.

[0:09:33] Lee: Yes, mm, interesting. Let's go back anyway now because you are in the RAF and somehow you get seconded to the Antarctic, British Antarctic Survey.

Gainey: What happened at the Air Force is: when I did my apprenticeship, the first year, every summer they send a memorandum through to all stations saying would anybody like to volunteer, but it has to be an air radio fitter, which are limited. And I, in '64, just after the year I had left my apprenticeship, the first year out was on the V-bombers working. It came out and I applied then. Don't ask me why I wanted to go but I applied then and I was turned down.

[0:10:21] Lee: Because?

Gainey: Because obviously someone else must have got it. Then in '66 it came up again and I was at Linton on Ouse in which case the Air Force selected me to go for an interview to BAS, to see Mr Slocum.

[0:10:42] Lee: Sloman.

Gainey: Sloman, yes Sloman. Mr Sloman yes.

[0:10:46] Lee: So again it was at your choice? You weren't sent, you chose, you volunteered?

Gainey: No no, it was my choice.

[0:10:52] Lee: Why were you choosing then? Why were you wanting to go to the Antarctic?

Gainey: I don't know.

[0:10:54] Lee: What do you mean, you don't know?

Gainey: I think it is in your blood if you want to travel and if it's in your blood, you want to travel to places that other people don't. One of my mother's uncles was in the Merchant Navy, travelled round the world and I always wanted to travel and ever since, I have. Because since I left the Antarctic, I have walked most of the Libyan desert. I have worked in the Omani desert and I have been round all these places because it is what you want to do. You can't put a definitive answer to it. It's something that you feel you want to do.

[0:11:38] Lee: And the thing in common is deserts, isn't it, because the Antarctic is a desert too?

Gainey: But again there wasn't the choice of the desert. It was as a choice of going to work or where I wanted to go. It just so happens that they were the places in '74 and '78 where the oil was. That's where it is

[0:11:56] Lee: Had you learned a lot about the Antarctic?

Gainey: No.

[0:11:59] Lee: Had you seen *Scott of the Antarctic*? Had you read about Shackleton?

Gainey: No, not before I went.

[0:12:04] Lee: Oh, right. So it really was a leap in the dark?

Gainey: Yep.

[0:12:08] Lee: What did your Mum and Dad think of it?

Gainey: They were quite proud. My Dad was. I know my Dad was really proud that I had actually taken a leap to actually go to something like this. Of course it gets in the local paper.

[0:12:23] Lee: Yes, 'Our Keith'.

Gainey: Yes, my Dad was quite proud. I think my Mum was as well and I think the family still has ever since been quite pleased that I have done it, all eight of us; I have seven brothers and sisters.

[0:12:42] Lee: Tell me about the interview. What do you recall?

Gainey: Very little really.

[0:12:48] Lee: Do you think it was a foregone conclusion?

Gainey: Yes, in that respect, yes. I do. I think I was the only one that went, from the Air Force. I cannot think for the other people but only from my particular point I think I was probably the only one from the Air Force, that was actually sent. There were very few air radio fitters around, so it's not like you had got thousands to choose from, and then from all of those, you had got the ones that wanted to volunteer. And it might be then that that year I may be the only volunteer.

[0:13:27] Lee: And you were interviewed by Bill Sloman?

Gainey: Yes, and there was somebody else, a younger bloke.

[0:13:38] Lee: Johnny Green?

Gainey: He came down on the *Perla* in '69 and then came back. He came to see the base: Halley II finished. I have forgotten his name.

[0:13:57] Lee: So were you going to be on your RAF pay?

Gainey: Yes.

[0:14:03] Lee: Which was more than the ...?

Gainey: No because I paid tax. I paid tax, everything. I was still in the Services. In fact I got an extra allowance for going to the Antarctic.

[0:14:21] Lee: What, to buy woolly socks?

Gainey: That's about all it is. I don't know what it was for really, because there were certain things in the Air Force I could talk about it now. It's like if you go on embassy duties, MPs or embassy duties, they are special assignments. You get a special allowance, and you are administrated from one place which used to be Uxbridge. So for two and a half years I was told I would get this much extra money and after about six months, I think my father said something in one of the letters we get, that no money had gone into my bank. So I sent a telex off to the Air Force to ask why and they had sent it in. Then when I got home they had only paid me my basic, so I had to go into the Accounts and said 'This is what I have been told and this is what I am entitled to.' So I got it all back at the end.

[0:15:24] Lee: Did they prepare you for being in the Antarctic? Was there any training, any special training, any survival training or crevasse rescue training?

Gainey: No. The only training we had was going to Cambridge and having Sir Vivian and Raymond Priestley give us a talk, show us slide shows, and that was it. I was impressed with Priestley.

[0:15:52] Lee: Tell me about him.

Gainey: I was really ... He did a brilliant slide show and I have read all about him since because I have bought books all about it, and I was impressed with what he did, when they stayed and survived that winter while Scott was away. And they had no ... They had still got summer clothing. I thought he had done probably a better job than Scott.

[0:16:18] Lee: Hmm. Had he still got it when you saw him?

Gainey: Still got what?

[0:16:24] Lee: The charisma, the presence?

Gainey: Yes, he was quite tall (well everybody's tall to me). He is quite a tall-ish guy and he did very calm talking, I remember that. He sat with a few of us in Cambridge and just talked about it. Yes, I was quite impressed with him. Whereas Vivian of course was ... You could see Vivian was more the outgoing type. Priestley was like 'I have done it anyway!' and probably he was 'knocking on' a bit as well, and just more relaxed. But Vivian Fuchs was really trying to push the Antarctic. It was good. I felt Cambridge was good. I don't know if they still do that.

[0:17:06] Lee: Oh yes they do.

Gainey: The induction course?

[0:17:09] Lee: It's much more extensive now.

Gainey: Is it?

[0:17:11] Lee: And there is a section in Derbyshire where you throw yourself off rocky cliff faces to fight your way back up again.

Gainey: Oh is there? We had nothing, nothing.

[0:17:24] Lee: So when you got there, did you feel unprepared or did you get training when you got there?

Gainey: I don't know how I felt then, Chris. I suppose coming down on the boat, with other guys, you got a bit Then we did the Falkland Islands where we loaded and offloaded and got our gear. When we got the gear it was just like in the Services when we get your uniforms, so that didn't make any difference. And then we went to Deception – Signy, Deception, down to Anvers. And we went twice into Grahamland on the *Biscoe*. We had Christmas in Potter's Cove with the *Shackleton*. So you were getting the feel of the Antarctic before I got to Halley because of the trips on the *Biscoe* going down the Peninsula. So by the time we got to Halley, I had already got some idea of the environment, say, and the clothes we had to wear because we were wearing our sweaters. So I had already got used to the clothes. So I didn't, I wasn't surprised at anything when I got to Halley.

[0:18:47] Lee: I was interested that you spent Christmas in Potter's Cove with HMS *Shackleton*⁴. Was that sheer chance?

Gainey: No it was arranged.

[0:18:55] Lee: Oh right. So you had dinner on the *Shackleton*, did you?

Gainey: No we had dinner on the *Biscoe*. They came across to the *Biscoe*, the 'Shack' crew. I got dressed up as a chef and helped to serve the dinner. I have got slides of me in my uniform. Yes we had Potters' Cove with the *Shackleton*. That was '66 Christmas.

[0:19:17] Lee: On your way down, yes. What did you make of the Falklands in the '60s?

Gainey: Nice people. We played football against them; we played cricket with them. But apart from that, the only time you mixed with them was probably at the bar which shut at ten and then you were back on the boat. I don't remember any, I can't tell you any of their names.

[0:19:54] Lee: Did you meet the Governor?

Gainey: No I didn't.

[0:19:56] Lee: You never got sent to Government House?

⁴ It was the RRS *Shackleton* (not a Royal Navy ship).

Gainey: No. We took his taxi down that we bent.

[0:20:06] Lee: You bent it?

Gainey: Yes, it was lifted off with the string nets. We lifted it off with that. It actually come round and bent a bit of the taxi for him.

[0:20:20] Lee: Were you unloading it, or ...?

Gainey: Unloading it.

[0:20:23] Lee: Was this a new one?

Gainey: Yeah, yeah. I don't know what happened to it. We unloaded that from the *Biscoe* and give it to him. But I never met him, ever.

[0:20:37] Lee: Right.

Gainey: And I can't even tell you the results of our cricket match and football match with them.

[0:20:43] Lee: Probably irrelevant.

Gainey: I know I was wicketkeeper and then goalkeeper; that's all.

[0:20:48] Lee: Right. So when you got to Halley ... Halley, I think even then, was quite different in feel to the west coast.

Gainey: Oh completely different.

[0:20:58] Lee: I mean, for a start, did you know you were going to be living underground? Was that a bit of a surprise?

Gainey: Yes, I think that was a surprise, but it didn't worry me. It didn't worry me. Halley II crew were down there, the building crew. So the off-loading was hectic, because I was trying to learn the radar, taking over from Brian Swift, and after that was finished, the balloon flight – we were helping the guys on Halley II – off-loading and building, so we had to travel up and down⁵.

[0:21:37] Lee: You brought building materials down with you on the *Perla Dan*?

Gainey: Yes, we did, because we transferred from the *Biscoe* to the *Perla* at ... I can't remember if I did it in South Georgia or whether it was in ..., (because they both went down), whether we did in in South Georgia or in the Falklands. [Pause].

[0:22:00] Lee: Don't worry.

⁵ Between Halley I, where the balloon flight took place, and Halley II.

Gainey: I think ... because I remember when we went to South Georgia, we killed a load of elephant seals to take down to Halley.

[0:22:14] Lee: Just tell me about Halley I. Was that the old IGY hut?

Gainey: Right. Yes. The old IGY hut was 60 ft down. Brian Swift before me lived in that because the middle hut wasn't being used because there was no roof on it. It was badly built. So when I took over from Brian, I still lived in the IGY hut, and my bench was also my bed, which was also my workshop. We had to climb up the Dexion ladder and then we got to the second hut (which was '62 I think)⁶ which was the one that didn't have enough spares, so there was no roof. And then we climbed up again to the third hut which was the '64 one.

[0:23:07] Lee: And then up to the surface from there?

Gainey: When we were building Halley II. The people used to come from Halley II, the builders, on a Saturday night would come down to Halley I and we would have the Saturday dinner at Halley I in the middle hut. Until one day the snow came down all over the Aga, the cooker. We couldn't cook, and Ricky Chinn said 'We had better start having it at Halley II.' So after that we travelled up to Halley II. But Halley I (middle hut) started to get really bad, so everybody that lived there, the scientists then moved into the '64 hut and then I had to shift in from the bottom one as well to '64. We lived in the attic; must have been about six or seven months in the attic of the '64 hut, before we moved to Halley II.

[0:24:08] Lee: It must have been weird to be living, working, eating and sleeping 60 foot below the surface.

Gainey: It was weird but it's hard to say how you feel. I never felt ...

[0:24:28] Lee: Claustrophobic?

Gainey: No, or there was something I shouldn't be doing. I just felt it was part of the job. This how it is and we just get on with it. Halley II is going to be built so you are going to move when this is finished and you make the best of it.

[0:24:49] Lee: You reckon you are the last man to stay down ...? You were the last man to sleep down there?

Gainey: Yes.

[0:24:55] Lee: By choice or chance?

Gainey: That was by chance because Brian Swift, the radar man before me stayed there, so when I took over, that was my bed. So I stayed there. That was just handover.

[0:25:13] Lee: Meanwhile you were building Halley II on the surface?

⁶ 1961 actually.

Gainey: Yes.

[0:25:17] Lee: How was progress on that? Was it going well?

Gainey: That went really well. After the balloon flight, if we had no problems, then we went up and helped out.

[0:25:28] Lee: As a GA?

Gainey: Yes, just as a general dogsbody. That went all right actually. They got the huts up quite well. They not only got them into shelter, yes they were sleeping in them before the winter. We had our Midwinter up there. '66⁷ Midwinter was up in Halley II and we travelled up for it from Halley I.

[0:26:02] Lee: How far apart were they?

Gainey: Four miles, roughly, yes.

[0:26:06] Lee: Oh right? Inland, further inland?

Gainey: Yes, four miles further inland. We had a drum line marking it out. We used to use the dogs sometimes though, training the dogs as well, on the skis, to go up there.

[0:26:27] Lee: So was Halley II, at that point, the latest thing in Antarctic bases?

Gainey: Probably to us, yes. [laughs] We couldn't think of anything else. I mean it was supposed to be on rafts: insulated panels you know.

[0:26:42] Lee: Was it?

Gainey: Yes, it was put on a raft, a wooden raft: massive big wooden beams, cross-beams to take the steel stanchions or framework. And then pre-fabricated insulated panels went into it. As far as I am aware (because I wasn't a builder). Only what I can remember. That's how it was built.

[0:27:08] Lee: So it was cosier than the old one?

Gainey: Phew, far cosier, far cosier than the old one. Yes, they had the big generator sheds as well. Yeah, it was good.

[0:27:21] Lee: So when did you turn your back on Halley I?

Gainey: I think it was March '68.

[0:27:30] Lee: From then on you were wholly occupied by Halley II?

⁷ He mean 1967 Midwinter. He was not there in 1966.

Gainey: By Halley II, because we transferred ... the met office transferred up to Halley II, when we shifted up the Cintel. We left II was already functional before we did, because the priority was getting WF-2 off the boat, and that was functional because I had to get that up running and had to wire that up across to the genny shed.

[0:28:04] Lee: Were these new skills, or these were skills you brought from the RAF?

Gainey: Some were skills I brought from the Air Force, but then I used the electrician because they were higher voltage cables than what I was used to. I was more into electronics as opposed to the bigger sized cables. So it was Geoff Smith. We called Geoff 'Abdul' Smith. We called him Abdul, Geoff Smith. He was the electrician, so Geoff helped me pull the cables across and then we spliced them with a 5-gallon oil burner to solder, because we hadn't got the heat. We had to connect them halfway so we used the 5-gallon oil burner to solder the two cables together, wrapped it all up in lots of tape, and it worked. I had no problems with it. So WF-2 had to be functional before we moved the met office. So WF-1 was just abandoned. I don't know what happened to it after that. We never used it; it was just left there.

[0:29:12] Lee: Was it of no value then, to be reclaimed?

Gainey: I have no idea about that. I couldn't see anybody ever wanting it.

[0:29:21] Lee: It would be expensive to bring it back, wouldn't it?

Gainey: Yes. Well it must have been brought back.

[0:29:25] Lee: Oh right. Yes I suppose it must have done.

Gainey: It must have been brought back somewhere, scrapped somewhere. Yes, it must have been.

[0:29:36] Lee: So was life, operating the met balloons, was that much easier from the new base, or did you have a separate hut anyway for that?

Gainey: It was a completely new hut. Halley II was completely new; everything was new.

[0:29:52] Lee: Yes, but did you have a met hut as well, or were you doing it from the main building?

Gainey: We had the main building. There was an office block, which was the geophysics and the met, and we were at the end. Which of the tunnels? 1,2,3,4, 1,2,3; yes we were at the end hut and we were at the end of the hut. The balloon shed was quite a way away. You still had to go out to the balloon shed and you still had to go out to the radar. The balloon sheds were not close to the accommodation, right, and the reason for that is because of the gas. I don't think there is any difference in the actual balloon flights because you still had to do the same thing. You still had to blow the balloon up and send it off and you still had to track it.

[0:30:41] Lee: How were you inflating the balloon?

Gainey: I don't know how they did it. They used caustic soda to generate the gas. I don't know which gas it was⁸. Hydrogen?

[0:30:52] Lee: More than likely. Certainly at one time it was. So your job really was to monitor its progress and record the signals it was sending back?

Gainey: Yes, that was mine.

[0:31:03] Lee: So even when you built Halley II, that was still only a part time job really, wasn't it?

Gainey: Yes, so you helped out on other things.

[0:31:13] Lee: Did you get into the field at all?

Gainey: Yes. Back to WF-2. WF-2 came down in bits and it was at the bottom of the *Perla Dan*, at the bottom of the hold. It was last to be offloaded and the reason was we couldn't build it on base. We couldn't lift the radar dish and we could not lift the cabin onto the skis which was a big geared wheel. We couldn't lift that on base so it had to be built on the *Perla*. So it was the last thing to come off.

[0:31:56] Lee: Oh, it was constructed actually on the *Perla Dan*?

Gainey: Yes, we constructed it actually in the hold, OK? The second last to come out was the geophysics hut which was a big fibreglass hut, and then we built WF-2 and then we brought the WF-2 off. Lifted it over, with the skis, to haul it along. At that time we were about 2 miles away from the ice cliffs, the fast ice, and somebody sent down two big bridges: sleepers on two high beams, sleepers which we bridged over the tide crack. Because by the time we get in this was getting quite wide, so when we come to the IGY hut⁹, it could not go over the bridge. So we had to put sleepers across and pull the IGY across on two long sleepers. But when we got to the WF, which was the last one, it's on three skis, so you need three. We were very worried because it's not as wide as the huts. It was only just wider than the actual tide crack.

[0:33:07] Lee: Right.

Gainey: So we had Dad Etchells on an International Harvester on one side, and we had Geoff¹⁰ (one of the big met men) on the other side on a Harvester. So Dad Etchells was pulling it and Geoff (I think it was), any way the other guy was letting it out. And halfway across, one of the skis went in and we nearly lost it. But Dad was pulling, I was shouting to Dad and Dad must have realised so he started winching in quickly and Geoff started laying out quickly, and it just rolls up and came up and settled through. And we pulled it through. So we nearly lost the WF-2.

[0:34:03] Lee: [Laughs] That would have been fairly serious wouldn't it?

⁸ Caustic soda, powdered aluminium and water were mixed to generate hydrogen.

⁹ He probably means the fibreglass geomagnetics hut.

¹⁰ Probably Geoff McWilliam.

Gainey: Absolutely. But we did lose the bridge.

[0:34:11] Lee: It went down, did it?

Gainey: When we come to recover the bridge, I went down with Dad and Tony Carter¹¹, the tractor mechs, to try and get the bridge over, because you couldn't slide it because now the tide crack was nearly as wide as the bridge. Dad was trying to pull it across on the tractor and it went down and fortunately as he kept with the winch, slackening it, it uncoupled itself at the shackle and it came back. Otherwise it would have taken the tractor down. But we did lose the bridge.

[0:43:46] Lee: Right, that was a close call for Dad Etchells?

Gainey: Yes, I thought it was, definitely because it was certainly taking the tractor with him.

[0:34:57] Lee: OK, let's talk about this ... Were you involved also in sort of monitoring the results you were getting from the radar?

Gainey: When you did the radar, you are helping out on base. Now there was two of the chefs, they get bored, so I taught them to handle the radar. So I could have a day off the radar and help out cooking. So you took turns, like once a month the chef would go down and he would operate the radar and have a turn one morning; I would have a lie in bed instead of getting out. And then I'd help him out some other time.

[0:35:42] Lee: So you were learning each other's trades?

Gainey: So you learn of bit of the others.

[0:35:45] Lee: Sorry, I did ask you earlier about whether you got off base quite a lot, whether you went on any trips?

Gainey: Yeah, once. That was with Paul Coslett.

[0:35:57] Lee: This was a glaciological trip, then?

Gainey: Yes.

[0:35:59] Lee: With dogs?

Gainey: No. We took the skidoo and the Elsan (Eliason), which was a disaster.

[0:36:08] Lee: Why was that?

Gainey: Absolute disaster. We went out for 10 days and took 31 I think, 29 or something. I think we took a long time because we went out the same time as the tractors were going to the Tottans. So we went out with them, followed them through the Hinge Zone up to the top. That was the idea. Well first of all it was foggy. I hadn't

¹¹ John Carter ('JC').

been used to the Eliason. I got the Eliason not the skidoo. Paul took the skidoo which was the modern one. I got the old Eliason and I fell off it. Cossy saw it and he had to unhook his sledge and chase the Eliason. Fortunately it went in a circle.

[0:36:57] Lee: Oh it was running loose was it?

Gainey: It was running loose. I fell off it. It was running loose with its sledge but it went in a circle and came back so we got hold of it. It was foggy so we couldn't see it. It was weird it was. But before we got to the Hinge Zone, the tracks of the Eliason broke. So we didn't know what to do across the Hinge Zone. Dad said 'We'll take it across, with the tractors, and repair it the other side.' So we got to the other side. When the tractors left us, me and Cossy made splints out of the 45-gallon drum with a hammer and chisel, splints and holes with a file, and we screwed splinters on to the wooden frames (skids underneath) to repair it. We got it working. So that was one delay before we had even got to do glaciology. So then we went along for a few days and one morning we got out and the Eliason engine froze, just seized. So we didn't know what to do. So we were on scheds with the base, talking to the tractor mechanics, which was Sykes (Chris Sykes, the base commander, second year).

[0:38:31] Gainey: Second year, Chris Sykes the base commander, to what we were going to do with it, because all the others were out, Dad was out, they were all out. There were no tractors on base that could come. I didn't know what to do so we sat and stripped it down in the tent, and I remember I needed an Allen key to take the flywheel off. So I manufactured one out of a 6-inch nail with a file. I made an Allen key to get the flywheel off. We got it off, stripped it, cleaned it all – the sump was full of ice in the oil – put it all back together. It ran beautifully except we had a tapping noise, and we did not know what the tapping noise was. Nobody on base could tell us what the tapping noise was so we decided to leave it in case it collapsed again. So Cossy and I went with one skidoo to do the glaciologies and then we come back and picked it up and decided we would risk it towards the base. We drove it right through: down the Hinge Zone and then the tracks broke again. So they had to come out with the only tractor, and take us back on a sledge. It turned out there was nothing wrong with the engine. It's because it was so clean, the air breather was tapping. It had never been cleaned that much before. That was really good, with Cossy.

[0:39:53] Lee: Tell me about the glaciological work that you witnessed then. What was Paul Coslett doing?

Gainey: Mapping, measuring snow accumulation, snow movement; glaciological movement and mapping. That was it, triangulations. We had a tellurometer, which I handled because I could repair the tellurometer which are the radar beams between distances, measuring distances, and that's why I got a chance to go on the trip really. So we were using these to triangulate or work out distances whether things had actually moved from points that had already been done beforehand. And Paul was measuring the snow accumulations and movements.

[0:40:42] Lee: Were you actually staking the glacier to see how far it had drifted south, or whatever?

Gainey: Or looking for stakes and working out how far they had shifted from previous locations.

[0:40:54] Lee: Interesting work?

Gainey: I loved it. I loved it out in the tents. Beautiful. I thought it was fantastic. I still do. I have still got the diary. It's all on my website. I put it all on the website: the stories, everything.

[0:41:12] Lee: What's your website called?

Gainey: Pengwinge.

[0:41:16] Lee: Pengwinge?

Gainey: Yes. P E N G W I N G E [spells it out]

[0:41:22] Lee: Right. Was there any tricky moments on that trip. Any bad ???
[inaudible]?

Gainey: Yes, a couple actually. It was 24 hours sunlight so you went to sleep and just got up when you wanted to do. The sun was low so we decided to stop because we would actually take one sledge, come back, pick another one, move forward, move forward because we only had the one vehicle: the skidoo. It could not pull both sledges.

[0:41:56] Lee: Yes. So you were relaying?

Gainey: We were relaying all the time. We woke up one morning; we were about 5 ft away from a 30 ft crevasse that we hadn't seen because it was bridged. We just walked out of it and there you could see a big ... you couldn't see the night before because of the way the sun was. In the morning there it was, so we had missed that.

[0:42:19] Lee: That was a close call, was it?

Gainey: That was a close call. Then when we were on the sledge, I was on the back of the sledge and Paul was in front on the skidoo. I could see one in front that I thought was a dip, and I was trying to get Paul to stop. And I had to yank the sledge round to slow him down because he couldn't hear me shouting. So when we got off it I said 'I will go check it.' So I get the bog chisel and I am going across on the skis and I am saying 'Oh, it's safe this, Paul, This is safe Pau-au-aul!' as the pole went straight through. It wasn't that thick at the middle. So we worked out a detour from that area. We prodded an area which was safer. That's the only two.

[0:43:12] Lee: How did you get on with him, Paul?

Gainey: I still do well. We still talk just as well as over there. Every AGM¹² we sit together and have a chat, and he chats to my wife.

¹² Of the BAS Club. Keith is currently BAS Club Magazine Editor.

[0:43:25] Lee: So experiences like that field trip with him then, that formed a lifelong bond, did it?

Gainey: I think it did, yes. You have still got that bonding when you meet. You have still got that with him, as with all the guys on the base. And every base has got that bonding and you can see it at the AGMs. They get together. My wife, the first time she come and I sat with Dad and Paul and Fanny¹³ and Golly¹⁴. She had never met them before. She said 'I get the impression you have never left each other.' You just suddenly bonded again and chatted away as though you had never ... You are still friends.

[0:44:09] Lee: What's the wife's name?

Gainey: Lesley.

[0:44:13] Lee: Lesley? So how was it explaining all this to Lesley? I think one of the things about having been a Fid is that it is a shared experience which is quite difficult to explain to somebody who hasn't shared that experience. How do you go about ...?

Gainey: I wasn't married when I went down. I didn't get married until I came back. Lesley is my second wife.

[0:44:35] Lee: So you had to brief her from scratch, then really, quite late on?

Gainey: Yes, but when she got to know me, I told her I had been down to the Antarctic but by the time we had come to where Les had been (I had been working overseas). So she knew I had worked overseas; she knew I had been to Saudi, Libya, Iran, so it was just part of me when she got to know me. So she just accepted that's where I had been in my past.

[0:45:06] Lee: But do you try to explain to her what it was like to have spent those two years in the Antarctic? Do you succeed?

Gainey: No I don't bother.

[0:45:19] Lee: Because it's impossible to convey that feeling to a third party?

Gainey: No, I don't think it comes up. I think it's to Les, I have always been a guy that has wandered. I have been on my own in the deserts. It might be different if it was the only thing I'd done I suppose and she had known me from the beginning, but she knows I've travelled along and worked overseas a lot before I met her so it was just part of it.

[0:45:52] Lee: John Brotherhood, the doctor, was in Halley the time you were there. I think you were around at the time of his accident?

¹³ Dave Hill.

¹⁴ John Gallsworthy.

Gainey: John? Yes.

[0:46:01] Lee: He is here this weekend.

Gainey: Yes, I know.

[0:46:03] Lee: Have you met him already?

Gainey: No I haven't seen him but I met him last time. Two years ago he was here.

[0:46:08] Lee: What do you remember of that period?

Gainey: John went with Shirlers (Jim Shirlcliffe) on a manhauling expedition, right, and we got a whiteout, and we didn't hear from them for a day or two. And the next thing I know is they had found John and Jim but Doc John was hurt. The information I got is that he went to high level, which was Harold Wilson and the American President to fly a Hercules across from New Zealand, refuel at the South Pole, pick John up and take him to New Zealand for cas-evac¹⁵, as we call it. And that's what they did. But it was a bit funny because when we knew they were coming, nothing had ever landed there.

[0:47:08] Lee: At Halley? There had been no plane, ever?

Gainey: No, never¹⁶. So where would they fly over? They didn't know. So I think it was Dad that got the idea first. We put a row of black oil drums to mark a runway and I think it might have been Abdul (Geoff Smith) who'd come up with the idea to use cocoa. So at the beginning of the runway we put a great big cocoa arrow, massive. We used all the cocoa we had got because nobody drank cocoa. So when they came over from the air, they saw this big cocoa black arrow and then when they landed they could see the lines. And then when the guys got off, it was the same time Deception erupted, and some of the newspaper reporters on the Hercules or the Yanks thought they were at Deception Island. So we said 'No we are not. Deception is way over there.'

[0:48:06] Lee: So they were looking for a volcano, were they?

Gainey: A volcano. But they were there because they were actually evacuating John Bro and then they took him on board and just took off. They struggled to take off.

[0:48:21] Lee: Tell me about that.

Gainey: They had to put Jet Assisted bottles on it, because they are on skis and of course there is no grip. They took a long time before they got off the ground with these, four either side. They did take a long time to get off. Then the funny thing was: a few days later they came and dropped all the cocoa back to us and nobody wanted it so they dropped a load of cocoa back.

¹⁵ Casualty evacuation.

¹⁶ Not quite true. Planes from the Trans Antarctic Expedition visited Halley Bay in October 1957. See *On Floating Ice* by Joe MacDowall.

[0:48:45] Lee: In the period between John Brotherhood being found and the aeroplane arriving, what was the feeling like on the base? Were you very concerned about what was going to happen?

Gainey: I think we were all worried about John, whether he was all right because nobody knew whether he would get out or not. Yes we were definitely worried about him.

[0:49:15] Lee: At some point you must have been told 'Don't worry, the Americans are coming.'?

Gainey: Yes but it was quite quick. It was like 'They are coming now.' It wasn't like in a week's time.

[0:49:25] Lee: Yes. They were looking for a window?

Gainey: It was like 'They are on their way.' And that's what we were told and of course even then you think 'Nobody had ever been before. How are they going to find us?'

[0:49:39] Lee: How did they find you?

Gainey: I don't know how they managed but they did. But they did admit: they said if it wasn't for the cocoa, they were looking at just a white expanse. It did show them where it was. But that was Dad and Geoff 'Abdul' Smith. I think Geoff, was the instigator of the cocoa. Yes, it was good, that. Yes it was funny that because they got off and wanted to know where Deception was. What did we do with John Bro?

[0:50:13] Lee: Well you kept him fairly heavily drugged, I seem to recall.

Gainey: Yeah. I don't know who looked after him whilst he was waiting. I don't know who looked after him whilst he was waiting. I was trying to think what experiments Doc John was doing. There was three experiments on site, with the physios, the Docs did.

[0:50:49] Lee: Were you helping?

Gainey: Everything for all of them.

[0:50:53] Lee: You were a guinea pig for all three?

Gainey: Yes.

[0:50:56] Lee: Did you have a choice?

Gainey: Yes, we were asked and I said yes. What did John do? I think John did the fatness test. John did the fatness test. That was the first year. Second year we had Doc Murray¹⁷ and John Fry. The second year we ate three months diabetic food for Doc

¹⁷ Murray Roberts.

Murray and we did the teeth for John Fry. With John, we couldn't clean teeth for three days and John then sprayed and took photographs so see how much ... what sugars had accumulated on your teeth. With Doc Murray we ate the diabetic food to see what effect it had on our bodies and the beauty of that is I get a sugar tie. When we come back, the MRC give all of us a sugar tie (it's a tie with a sugar molecule on in gold braid) and I've still got that. Yes, it's a sugar tie.

[0:52:18] Lee: A Medical Research Council tie?

Gainey: Yes. It doesn't say that. It's just got this sugar molecule on.

[0:52:22] Lee: Oh right.

Gainey: So I call it my sugar tie and I mentioned it to Doc Murray last year, whether he had still got his. He said he had still got his. What I am going to do with the Newsletter is to find out if everybody has still got it, because there can only be about 16, because there were only 15 of us on it. A funny story with that one.

[0:52:45] Lee: Go on.

Gainey: When I left the Air Force, I applied for a job in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for communications at an island off the Gulf of Oman, which is a ground radar/ radio installation. And I don't like wearing ties. It's foreign and I said to my wife, the first wife, 'I am going down for this interview. I am going to put this suit on. I am going to put my sugar tie on.' She said 'What for?' I said 'Because I am going to be interviewed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office people, civil servants, and they are into schools, old school boy ...'

[0:53:25] Lee: Old school ties, yes.

Gainey: I said 'I bet you any money they ask me about my tie.' I went through all the interview. I didn't get the job because I was more airborne than ground. The last thing the guy said to me as I was going out was 'I am interested about ... What tie is that you have got on?' So I told him that it was the sugar tie, and I walked out curling myself laughing. I said to my wife 'He asked me.'

[0:53:54] Lee: Were there any teething troubles with Halley II? Did you have any initial problems to sort out?

Gainey: Not that I know of, Chris. Not that I know of. I can't think of any.

[0:54:08] Lee: Did you ever get any strange results on your weather observations, your sonde recordings? It was all as expected?

Gainey: Yes, well weather is unpredictable anyway. Yes, there was an odd few days at Halley. WF-1 went on fire once, and it was when one of the met men, I think it was 'Mac' McKerrow, one of the chefs's day. It was my day off and he went driving it, and he come and he says 'Keith, it's gone on fire.' Actually the valves had burnt on one side because of fire. I had to repair it. That was WF-1. But most things on WF-1 that went was: the drive shaft used to seize up. You had to keep greasing it but that

was the most things that ever went. That and the fire was the only maintenance problems I ever had. And WF-2, in the year I ran it, I didn't have anything.

[0:55:17] Lee: It sounds like you had a fairly smooth couple of years down there?

Gainey: I did. I did: right good, smooth. It was every day, every day in the morning. If it didn't, well you had to have another one. Sometimes it might have been three or four balloons. But most days, by midday, you had finished the met office and then it was whatever went off on base that you had to do.

[0:55:43] Lee: What was your nickname?

Gainey: Mine? Little Ball of Evil.

[0:55:47] Lee: The ball of evil?

Gainey: Yes, Chief or Little Ball of Evil. I was called Chief or Little Ball of Evil.

[0:55:54] Lee: Where did that come from?

Gainey: Well it was a bit of a stirring job, this. It was Golly and Fanny used to call me Little Ball of Evil, but the others called me Chief. I don't know why they called me Chief. When Doc Murray ... At Christmas it was Doc Murray's birthday and we always thought Doc was a bit of a stirrer, you see. So I got Golly to make him a wooden spoon with brown at the bottom, for his birthday: completely varnished, a nice wooden spoon, completely varnished with 'Happy Birthday Doctor' with the brown bit on the bottom you see. So Golly told Doc Murray what he was doing, so they made me one as well. So when Doc got his, he gave me one back, and mine has got 'The Little Ball of Evil' written on it, and that's why, because I had done that, I was called the Little Ball of Evil by Doc.

[0:56:52] Lee: They reckon you had a jokey personality?

Gainey: Yes. I always have. I was called Gags at school.

[0:56:59] Lee: Right. Was that useful in the Antarctic in a hut, confined space with lots of men?

Gainey: I don't know. I used to think that Bill Sloman had done a good job.

[0:57:13] Lee: How do you mean?

Gainey: Because we didn't have any problems with us people.

[0:57:18] Lee: So the selection process ...?

Gainey: Yeah, because when I thought afterwards 'There's 20 or 30 guys confined here for a year', because the boat ... You are confined for a year together, and the little trouble that we had on base was unbelievable. There was a few skirmishes or arguments but there was nothing major between people. I thought 'Well the selection

process has been pretty good.’ I think the whole two years, I can’t remember any real bad incident between people, which was pretty good.

[0:57:59] Lee: There is a story about a tin can, a beer/ drinks can? It doesn’t quite scan here. [Quotes] ‘Keith had to get up early for the met sched and I would hear “psst” as he opened a can of Coke or lemonade. What a gentleman! He never drank it all.’

Gainey: That must be Golly.

[0:58:23] Lee: Yes.

Gainey: He had the bunk above me.

[0:58:25] Lee: Was this a kind of antidote to the previous night’s alcohol?

Gainey: Oh just the first drink, because you are always thirsty. Because I usually get up late. I didn’t get up like I could have two cups of tea before I went on the ...

[0:58:37] Lee: Oh right, OK. You did all the wiring for the record player?

Gainey: Yes, in the new base. I also repaired his tape recorder and that was ... He had a Grundig tape recorder and there was a relay in it had gone. It was made of Paxolin¹⁸ and I took the relay apart and the two bits of Paxolin had glued and I got it all back to working again. But I spent a lot of time ... There was an old radio (1937 Marconi); it used to have a plug-in ... the wave changer was plug-in. If you wanted to change the wave band, ...

[0:59:25] Lee: Change the frequency?

Gainey: No, the wave band. You had to unplug the cord and plug another set in. And somebody had played around with it and it wasn’t working. I sorted it out in my spare time. I worked out the whole wiring diagram and re-soldered it all together and got it working. We used that. That was something to do.

[0:59:46] Lee: So were you involved in wiring the base, then, as well?

Gainey: No.

[0:59:50] Lee: That was done by contractors was it?

Gainey: Contractors? That was done by all the building guys, which had been Geoff Smith the electrician.

[0:59:59] Lee: And also you were instrumental in helping to make sure they kept in touch with field parties back at base, as a radio communication system, radar contact?

Gainey: That’s the tellurometers.

¹⁸ Trade name for a type of resin bonded paper.

[1:00:11] Lee: Oh right. Oh you use those for communication?

Gainey: Yes, the tellurometers not only just give you a radar beam, you actually had a telephone with it, so you could actually talk to each other.

[1:00:22] Lee: Down the radar?

Gainey: Down the radar beam, yes, so I repaired them. I kept them in service.

[1:00:31] Lee: Do you remember erecting a chicken wire fence on the caboose?

Gainey: No.

[1:00:37] Lee: Oh right. That was not part of the same process, keeping in touch with field parties?

Gainey: Oh Christ, yeah. That's because they wanted an aerial. Yes, as they were going, we were going to try and see whether the windfinder could pick them up. I had forgotten all about that. Golly's caboose when he went to the Tottans. I had forgotten all about that. Because not only that, yes and I put in ... I put a little aluminium aerial on top of it as well. I am pretty certain. If I look at my slides, I wonder if my slides ... I have still got them. I have got the slides. I will have to look at that.

[1:01:17] Lee: So it must be true?

Gainey: I will have to look at that. I think I also put a little aluminium tetrahedron thing on top to see if we could pick them up. To see if the windfinder ... but it couldn't because they were so low to the ground, and the snow reflection. We couldn't pick them up. The radar wouldn't do it.

[1:01:38] Lee: When you were coming to the point of leaving the Antarctic after your two years at Halley, what were your feelings? Were you glad to get out or ...?

Gainey: No.

[1:01:46] Lee: You wanted to stay, did you?

Gainey: Yes, I could have done another year, same as John Carter and Geoff Smith. I felt I had achieved something and I felt for my own benefit.

[1:02:01] Lee: What did you achieve?

Gainey: I don't know. It just felt I had done something I felt I wanted to do and I felt good about it.

[1:02:09] Lee: An achievement?

Gainey: Yes, and I felt good about it. I was glad I had been and I could have gone if I hadn't got married. My first wife, I used to tell her I would like to go back again. But I didn't because of families.

[1:02:27] Lee: And what do you think, from those Antarctic years, do you think you took forward in your life that was useful to you, perhaps when you were working in the ...

Gainey: Patience.

[1:02:39] Lee: Patience?

Gainey: Patience, a lot of patience. I come back with tons and tons of patience, right? I did you know. I still have; I have got loads of patience with everybody. It doesn't worry me what goes off.

[1:02:54] Lee: And what about practical skills? Because you went to work (as you mentioned before) in the oil industry in desert areas.

Gainey: Ah, none.

[1:03:02] Lee: None?

Gainey: No because I came back to the Air Force. When I came back, I came back into the Air Force and the stuff on the Air Force was far more high tech than what I had been doing down there.

[1:03:15] Lee: Were you behind?

Gainey: No. I probably kept my hand in as well anyway, but no I wasn't behind. You see the Air Force, you work on equipment and you have got the basic knowledge. Your apprenticeship is so good; the knowledge is there. If somebody had got enough basic knowledge, they don't forget it, and the basics have got to be drummed into people. And the Air Force apprenticeship drilled in your basics, and I still talk to people who don't know the basics. That's why you are making mistakes.

[1:03:54] Lee: But did the two Antarctic years actually ...? Were they useful to you later on, as it a good line on your CV, or were they just a complete diversion, deviation?

Gainey: They never helped me get another job.

[1:04:05] Lee: They didn't?

Gainey: No. They were just something I had done, because I never took forward looking for a job based on the Antarctic. When I left the Services, it was based on aeroplanes. So my first two years after the Services was working on military aircraft in Saudi Arabia, teaching their air force. And then, because of the electronics, then I went into the oil and gas on the electronics side. And then I worked in the oil and gas, I still am working in the oil and gas since then.

[1:04:41] Lee: And you were in Iran at the time of the revolution?

Gainey: Phwarr. When I first came out of the Air Force, I went to Saudi Arabia for two years, working on the military aircraft. King Faisal was stabbed, assassinated at Dhahran airport where we were – that was the King. I then went to Libya for two years and we had the Libya-Egyptian war erupt and our vehicles were taken to war because we were only 80 miles from the border on the oil site; we were in the oil and gas. And I went to Iran for the year on the oil and gas. That was the year of the revolution. So it came in threes. So I had a year in Iran and then the revolution stopped that. Then I spent eight years in Oman.

[1:05:28] Lee: So all those experiences then Keith, which ... how high do the Antarctic years rate in that quite exciting life you've led?

Gainey: Very high.

[1:05:37] Lee: Very high?

Gainey: Oh I think they were probably the best two years. As regards me as a person because I think it made me more patient in life, so that when I come and I have been working with lots of atrocious, badly managed things with the oil and gas. But I have been able to just handle it as patience. I haven't got mad at it. I think it just give me that.

[1:06:06] Lee: Are you going to need patience for editing the *BAS Club Magazine* which you are about to take over?

Gainey: Yes.

[1:06:12] Lee: Do you have any plans for it?

Gainey: None actually, because until I got the last minutes for this AGM, I didn't realise that we were trying to make it all email.

[1:06:24] Lee: Oh right. I didn't, no.

Gainey: Yes, the proposal is that because of the expense of sending it out, they are proposing to make it all email, which then changes the things I was looking at, at the printers and things. So I will just have a talk to Bob. Bob has already handed things over.

[1:06:44] Lee: Bob Burton?

Gainey: Yes, and see how it goes

[1:06:46] Lee: Do you think the content will change? I mean ...

Gainey: No, I don't think the content will change. I think I have a few ideas to try to introduce things in. Again it has come with talking to Bob last year and other people.

Once I spoke to Bob and said I would take it over, I got to thinking what could go in and Bob said 'We have got a lot more obituaries now Keith and that is the worst thing.' He said 'Yes, ' and he said 'sometimes our problem is getting stories' he said, 'but I do get them. I am looking for ideas all the time.' So then I started thinking, I went home and made some notes of things that I thought we might introduce, but again it is involving people that fits, but I don't know if it has been done in the past yet, until I got all this information from Bob.

[1:07:36] Gainey: I would like to know, and again it is talking over the dinners, Peter Clarkson was on about the results and the fossils he had done from the mountains, Tottanfjella you see. And I said 'I have done fossils. I have dug them out of the desert. I have cut jewels out and polished them because I used to do it and I am interested. I never knew you found fossils at the Tottanfjellas, so I wrote it down. I said 'Wouldn't it be a nice idea if we asked all for feedback of what happened on all these trips, so that people like myself, and the chefs and the people that didn't go in the field, found out what did happen.' So I have got that as an idea; I don't know if that has been done before.

[1:08:20] Lee: No, I don't think so.

Gainey: So I thought maybe I might sent out a thing saying 'Anybody can tell us some feedback, and just let us know in a short thousand words, what happened to your results. Were they just archived, thrown away, or what?' So that's another one I thought of. So I have been thinking over a year, since talking to Bob last year, thinking about how we can add into it. But I think the contents are going to be the same. It is going to be stories, it's going to be BAS reviews, and obituaries unfortunately you know. We can't get away from it. Eventually, 20 years' time, this might not be here. we might not have a BAS Club, because there's no young ones coming really interested in keeping it going because they don't have that camaraderie. There's a few come I know, but you need ... There's 150 here. You need another 150 from them, don't you?

[1:09:25] Lee: So in what way have Fids changed over the generations? Compare a modern day Fid to your generation. How different are they?

Gainey: When there is an explorer, an explorer. When there is something there that's not been seen before. When they go out exploring with no thought of Health & Safety, right? Doing it because it had to be done, and took all the perils and all the risks. When did that stop? And that is what I keep in my head. If we look at what I did with Cossy, and what Dad with the Tottans what we did, shut on base for a year and did, then that might have been the end of the era. But when we start having people flying in for a month here, two months there, you can't call them explorers or Fids. So there's a dividing line and I don't know what it is. It's a grey line is where you could say 'This is more true' but then look at ... You go further back, and we were not Shackletons or Scotts. We weren't them. They were more explorers than we were.

[1:10:33] Lee: Well maybe the dividing line is the introduction of the Dash-7.

Gainey: The aircraft?

[1:10:39] Lee: Mmm.

Gainey: That could fly into Halley?

[1:10:41] Lee: Just suddenly, you didn't have to winter any more.

Gainey: Yes, I think that might be a good point.

[1:10:48] Lee: And it's the wintering that bonds people.

Gainey: Yes, it's the winter that's bonding, yes, definitely.

[1:10:54] Lee: I will leave you there with that thought. Thank you very much indeed, Keith.

Gainey: It's a good thought, because we think about it. We talk about it.

[1:11:03] [End]

ENDS

Possible extracts:

- Sir Raymond Priestley remembered. [0:15:24]
- Living in the old IGY hut. [0:22:14]
- WF-2 windfinder radar nearly lost in tide crack. [0:31:56]
- Problems with the Eliason snowmobile. [0:36:57]
- Close encounters with a couple of crevasses. [0:41:22]
- The John Brotherhood incident. [0:46:08]
- The sugar tie. [0:50:56]
- Attempt to track a field caboose with a windfinder radar. [1:00:31]