

KEN BLAIKLOCK

Edited transcript of a recording of Ken Blaiklock interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on 22nd June 2013. BAS Archives AD6/24/1/226. Transcribed by Murray Roberts, March 2017.

[Part 1 0:00:01] Lee: This is Ken Blaiklock interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on 22nd June 2013. Ken Blaiklock Part 1.

Blaiklock: Kenneth Victor Blaiklock. Born Palmers Green, London N13 on 6/12/27.

[Part 1 0:00:21] Lee: So how old are you now?

Blaiklock: 85 ½. Closer to 86 than 85 now!

[Part 1 0:00:28] Lee: Blaiklock is not a very common name, is it?

Blaiklock: No. Especially the odd spelling. We've traced our ancestry back to Stamfordham, near Hexham. My father did a lot of family history and I followed it up, and that was long before the internet, so if you wanted to look at the church records you had to go to the place and ask the vicar. But it is a North-Eastern name. It occurs in Durham as well. The one thing I do ask is can you spell it correctly. There's no 'c' in the middle.

[Part 1 0:01:08] Lee: B L A I K L O C K

Blaiklock: Yes. I went to George Lowe's funeral and on the funeral notes - I was asked to give a little comment - and they spelled my name wrongly. But that was the printer and not Mary!

[Part 1 0:01:29] Lee: Would you say your father was an educated man?

Blaiklock: No. I think he was probably lower middle class. He was a clerk with a big pension company, and he did it for all his life. When he went in the Army he came back to this job and he went to London every day. He had his hobbies which were intense - but educated, not in the way that you mean.

[Part 1 0:02:03] Lee: What about your own education. Ken? How far did that go?

Blaiklock: I went to a grammar school, but at 17 I left. I took what is basically the equivalent to GCSE's - maybe A levels in part - but something in the middle. So my education is a classical grammar school education: Latin, Greek, French, and a bit of history and geography.

[Part 1 0:02:36] Lee: University?

Blaiklock: No.

[Part 1 0:02:41] Lee: Did you have any career plans?

Blaiklock: I was always interested in maps and mathematics, and so that's why I joined the Ordnance Survey, for two reasons. Obviously the OS is for maps of Britain, but you were promised when you were called up for National Service you would automatically join the Royal Engineers – the survey department. At that time OS was governed by – all the heads of the Ordnance Survey - military people, and that meant you weren't shoved into infantry for 2 ½ years really for no purpose. All my survey knowledge was army training. I spent 1 ½ years out of my nominal 2 ½ years just training.

[Part 1 0:03:34] Lee: So you joined the OS and then you were trained in survey...?

Blaiklock: Well the OS that I did... It was slightly unusual. I went out on the remains of the tertiary triangulation. The OS introduced a re-triangulation in the 1930's, but because of the war there were still bits left. We were junior surveyors really helping this fairly intense triangulation and that's why it so turned out I was a geodetic surveyor rather than a land surveyor. If you wanted a map of Cheshire for example you would assume a flat earth but you can't do that for a range of mountains of 150 miles. You have to take account of the spheroid, which is a bit more complicated maths.

[Part 1 0:04:20] Lee: What was the first intimation you had that there might be a place on this planet called the Antarctic?

Blaiklock: I suppose like most boys I had read Scott and Shackleton. I don't say I was intensely interested – I was really interested in travel and people who travelled, like Lawrence of Arabia, as well. But when I was in the Army, after I had qualified and my course had finished, I was posted to Germany. This was soon after the war.

[Part 1 0:04:54] Lee: The Rhineland?

Blaiklock: No, in a small spa town. It was an attractive little spa town near Hanover and our purpose was to supply the needs of any of the requirements of the British services and also the potential civil organisation that was being established. So we did all sorts of things; fixing radars; an assessment of the existing factories in Hanover which had got badly burnt.

We surveyed Heligoland after there was a huge explosion. After the war thousands of tons of explosives, and in Heligoland the cliffs were mined by tunnels, so they thought they were going to try to blow the island in half so it could never be used again. Tens of thousands of tons of explosives... It made a huge crater but it didn't actually achieve anything and we were asked to do a survey of how big it was...

[Part 1 0:06:10] Lee: Before or after?

Blaiklock: After, yes after. It was a huge crater – about a thousand feet across and three hundred feet deep, but that was the sort of job we did. We never worked when we were at our little unit. It was a fairly small one – perhaps 50 or 60 surveyors and engineers – and one day up on the notice board came a notice saying 'Volunteer surveyors wanted for the Falkland Islands'. This was in about July of 1947.

So Colin Brown, a compatriot of mine – I was an NCO and he was a Second Lieutenant – there was really very little change... It wasn't like an ordinary infantry unit. We both put our names down and completely forgot about it. Four months later we were doing surveying – oddly enough of some ski routes. The Army had a hotel which, if you didn't want to go on your leave to England, you could go to the hotel. It was run by the Army but you were as a civilian guest and in summer you went sailing and climbing and such like, and in winter you skied and they wanted some new ski runs, so just before the snow fell we did a survey and we were mostly through it when we got a call from the unit saying 'Blaiklock and Brown please return to the Unit'. They don't always tell you why, so we got in our land rover and drove about 200 miles away. When we saw the Adjutant he said:

'Oh you're going for an interview – this job you volunteered for.'

'What job's that?'

'Oh the Falkland Islands.'

Well of course before the Falklands war we had to go and look where the Falklands were exactly.

[Part 1 0:08:13] Lee: You didn't know?

Blaiklock: Well we knew it was in the South Atlantic. So we were posted to England and we were given a date to see the interviewer in Victoria Street. The lift wasn't working, and we were a bit late, so we rushed up the four flights, knocked on the door and were told to come in, and there was Surgeon Commander Edward Bingham- a very famous name as it turned out. He said:

'Come in. You are the two surveyors who want to go to the Falkland Islands Dependencies?'

I mean what are they? – Antarctica!

[Part 1 0:08:57] Lee: So it was a bit of a clanger, was it?

Blaiklock: Well no. We just wanted something different. The first question was: "You must be reasonably fit because you have obviously just rushed up the stairs and are not puffing and blowing or red in the face. You must be reasonably healthy. What's your Astro like?"

By 'Astro' he means positioning yourself by astronomical means. It's slightly different from the Navy as you're doing it for survey and you need the highest accuracy. So you do a course on it – observing the stars and the sun for latitude and longitude and azimuth.

So we said 'Well we've done it on the course but we didn't use it in Germany because they have a superb triangulation system.'

'Oh' he says 'Do you think you can drive dogs?' Typical Bingham this was! We said 'Presumably we can learn – everybody else has to.' 'OK go down to Warminster', which was the training centre, 'stay there a week; practice, especially star shots; midday suns, and the ship sails in ten days time.' And that was it.

[Part 1 0:10:17] Lee: So how did you react to this sudden news that you were going further than you thought?

Blaiklock: Well I was only 20, and I don't know how old Colin was – 21 maybe – fairly young. It sounded an interesting organisation. We knew very little about it of course, and so we arrived and got onto the *John Biscoe* – a bit horrified at the accommodation. And of course Bunny Fuchs was there. And so we sailed.

[Part 1 0:10:45] Lee: What did you make of Fuchs?

Blaiklock: I'll tell you about that later. Because it's a bigger subject really. Bunny did mention.....

[Part 1 0:10:55] Lee: First impression?

Blaiklock: First impressions. A much older man than the rest of us. Most of us were 20 -27, say. Bunny was 39 – 40 I think. So quite a different age group, you might say, but he organised the ship – because we did quite a lot of work. We helped in the galley, and helped on the ship generally. We were classified as supernumeraries. That was because they didn't want to carry a doctor. But it was quite interesting. I'd never been abroad other than to Germany. I don't think I had been anywhere else before that. And so visiting Cape Verde Islands and going down to Montevideo was quite a new experience.

Then off to the Falklands, and Bunny himself said he had been interviewed just for being just a geologist and was quite surprised to be asked to be commander for the whole of the expedition, which was quite a different job. Yes it was a very good introduction to a new world. And you met, of course, a whole range of people – as Fids are. A glaciologist, a geologist, another surveyor, diesel mech., a radio operator. And I thought this was quite interesting for me. All sorts of people who I hadn't met in my lifetime. So I then fortunately learned that surveyors mostly go to sledging bases, because that is where they were most useful. I learned that with Colin I was going to Stonington Island. The Falklands I found interesting, but again, I'd never been to a Colony. It was an unusual situation where the population of about 2000 people - I think 1500 of them in Stanley – and they had a Governor and a Col. Sec.

[Part 1 0:13:17] Lee: People say it was rather like a Scottish island?

Blaiklock: Oh it is, yes. Because we have got a cottage right up in Sutherland and it's very reminiscent of the Falklands – or the other way round.

[Part 1 0:13:29] Lee: Did you have much time there?

Blaiklock: Well usually what happens is that the Northern bases get served, but the Southern bases – like Argentine islands and Stonington – get done on the second voyage. So we all went round to Deception Island and Signy Island and we then heard that the American icebreaker was going in to retrieve Finn Ronne, and of course the Americans were there at Stonington in 1947 and so they reported fairly bad ice conditions so it was decided immediately to go back to Deception, unload the aircraft and sail immediately down, so that we could use the facility of the channel. It had to be cut for the last 10 miles or so into the bay by Stonington.

In fact we were a bit late because the American base was closed. The icebreaker had got into open water. I don't know who arranged it – probably Bunny – he managed to ask them if they could find some reason for going back into Stonington, so they cut a channel for us and we didn't get completely to the base – about 1 ½ miles away, I suppose, and this was the first time I saw dogs. Duggie Mason came. He was the surveyor going out and it was very impressive to see a sledge with 9 dogs, and then being carried as cargo back to the base. I don't know about Colin, but it really was an eye opener for me.

[Part 1 0:15:24] I found Stonington – like all bases – fairly hard work, of course, but I wasn't the youngest, but I was one of the younger ones. British bases nearly always have people that have been there a year before, which gives great continuity. I think it is almost unique to Antarctic bases. I know the Belgians and the Poles and the Americans, I think, have everybody coming out and a brand new lot coming in. So there's a much better continuity of experience passed on and because I was under age – under 21 – I was only allowed to volunteer for one year. About six months later I thought.... I began to realise you need to learn a hell of a lot. Not only the surveying, but how to live in the coldest sort of climate. So I volunteered for another year. I asked if I could stay on for another year, and I had to ask my parents (laughs) because I was under 21! It sounds silly these days, doesn't it? But of course we did some sledging. Bernard Stonehouse was there and of course come the next year – the next summer we could see that the ship wasn't going to get in. We went to the top of Millerand Island and could see probably 40 miles of solid sea ice.

[Part 1 0:17:10] So it looked as if the ship wasn't going to get in to relieve us – and of course it didn't. We later heard that – this is where I get insulting – the ship's captain of the *John Biscoe*, then was a chap called Harry Kirkwood. He had been on the *Discovery* and thought FIDS was a very lowly type of survey. He was very very cautious. We learned through the radio that he came down on the west of Adelaide Island which was about 100 miles away, and turned back. He didn't really make any effort. It wouldn't have mattered. We knew he couldn't do it but he got the nickname Harry Plywood. Because, we said, that's what he thinks the bow was made of. And the second year of course was the most productive for me. And the two years were very enjoyable. But because of the problems, the next year it had to be ensured that the people got out because some had spent 3 years there. I think it was the first time that people had spent 3 years at a base continuously.

[Part 1 0:18:32] Lee: Was there much tension about all that? People were fearful that they wouldn't get away?

Blaiklock: Not at the time that the first relief didn't get in. My first year – their second year. We did hear plans from the Governor later on that they were going to make every effort by having aircraft available – a sea plane and such like. And we had plenty of food of course. All the bases are equipped for this type of incident. There was no shortage apart from few things like matches and light bulbs, and dog pemmican – but nothing of any consequence. But the first year with Bernard we did quite an interesting survey in the North...

[Part 1 0:19:22] Lee: Bernard Stonehouse?

Blaiklock: Bernard Stonehouse, yes. We found the emperor penguin rookery on the Dion Islands. I think at the time – I think I am right that it was only the third one known. There was the classic one that Cherry Garrard found – I can't remember the name of the place – I think there was one known in Australia, but the Dion Islands, although a very small one, was the third one. So the second year the ice never really went out. We had very good sledging ice to the seaward. Bunny of course was interested. I say Bunny Fuchs – everybody knows Bunny Fuchs – was concentrating to the South, so Colin and most of the survey team went southwards. Bernard, myself and the other part of the team went northwards, and we had hoped to get through the Gullet, which is a narrow channel between Adelaide Island and the mainland. But there was too much current and the sea ice could not be travelled on, so we went southwards to the Dion Islands.

The second year the plans were that Bunny went South again. We were known as the 'lost eleven'. We weren't lost. This is where I got not much feeling for some journalists later on; because at relief time there was a chap – I can't remember his name now. The implied truths that give the wrong impression. 'We made radio contact with the Lost Eleven – they were alive.' Well yes of course we were, we had been sending met. 3 times a day for the last 2 years! You know what I mean. It wasn't untrue, but.....

[Part 1 0:21:16] Lee: It was sensationalist...

Blaiklock: So we didn't think much of that.

[Part 1 0:21:23] Lee: You didn't consider yourselves lost then – or stranded?

Blaiklock: No of course not. We had plenty of food and fuel. The only difference was that Bunny decided to have what was called a 'Quiet Room'. We had the usual arrangement with Fids in those days, where the bunks were around the main living room and there was really nowhere you could get away from the hubbub of base life. So Bunny turned one of the rooms outside in the science block into a quiet room. No music. You went there really if you wanted to read by yourself. Because there are tensions and arguments and, as David Dalgliesh used to say, when things were a little hectic – often two people would be arguing and everybody would just disappear. I remember David Dalgliesh saying 'I'm going to see Weddy.' - one of his dogs. You knew whatever else happened on the base the dogs would always welcome you.

The second year was unusual in the sense it was decided that Bernard, although he was a qualified biologist, wanted to do study on the emperor penguins, so we actually sledged over the sea ice to the Dions – straight over – out into Marguerite Bay. It could never be done, I'm sure, unless you had exceptional ice conditions and we sledged everything out there and he studied Emperor penguins when they lay their eggs in the winter time.

[Part 1 0:23:04] Lee: Were you with him at that time?

Blaiklock: No. I went out with him but we actually went up to the Faure Islands to do a bit of survey. These are islands even further out into Marguerite Bay. We were a bit shaken when we got there to see the open water beyond so we hurried back. There were three people there. I think it was Bernard, David Dalgleish and the aircraft engineer, because the plane was left in Deception Island and we never got the plane. We had an aircraft engineer and a pilot but no plane. So Dave Jones who was on his third year went out there, and I think they were very successful. Of course Bernard was looking at the embryos of the emperor penguins, so he would cull a certain number take the embryos out and of course you got cooked emperor scrambled egg. We put it in a cocoa tin and sent it back to base, so we had scrambled Emperor penguins egg.

[Part 1 0:24:11] Lee: Let me ask you a bit about your colleagues. Tell me more about David Dalgleish. What sort of a guy was he? How did he get on?

Blaiklock: He, of course was a naval officer – a bit formal and pompous. The big advantage we had, of course, was we all came out together. So the whole base - for any reunions – the whole base was there. Because usually it is only half a base because the other people are doing their second year. So it was unusual. He later went on to *HMS Britannia* – the Royal Yacht. We'd have a meeting and David would come in and chitchat and say 'yesterday I was dancing with the Duchess of York'. 'Come off it David', we used to say. He was very formal and a bit conscious that there were people out of his class socially – including me of course.

[Part 1 0:25:17] Lee: Lower down you mean?

Blaiklock: Lower down, yes. But he was a good doctor and it didn't really make much difference.

[Part 1 0:25:28] Lee: Was Ray Adie with you?

Blaiklock: Yes, Ray Adie was there because the previous year they had sledged down from Hope Bay and, of course that year Douggie Mason had sledged right down to the Filchner shelf ice. It was probably the peak of dog sledging of two teams.

[Part 1 0:25:46] Lee: How was Ray Adie on base? I've heard accounts of his work at Birmingham later.

Blaiklock: He wasn't quite the most popular geologist. Again, a bit formal, but he was an interesting person. He was a bit...He'd come along and say 'Ken I'll get you a pair of skis. I've chosen a special pair.' You'd know exactly that they were just the same old ones as everyone else. A bit pompous that way. I found everybody in the main was very very helpful. I don't want to criticise people in that sense.

[Part 1 0:26:34] Lee: Kevin Walton?

Blaiklock: Kevin went out as I came in. I knew Kevin later when I went sailing with him and of course I heard what Dave Jones and Bernard and Terry Randle who had been with him the previous year said. They considered Kevin, again, a bit of maverick, I think. Always thinking that his design was much better than anyone else's. He was an interesting man as well.

[Part 1 0:27:12] Lee: The survey works that you were doing– were you making good progress? Were you actually surveying virgin territory?

Blaiklock: There was some virgin territory. Much of it had been done by BGLE, of course. The second year we went round what appeared to be a peninsula on the BGLE map and we found a channel filled with just a little bit of shelf ice. So that is now Blaiklock Island – because it wasn't an island before.

[Part 1 0:27:41]: Did you name it?

Blaiklock: Not personally. Naming places is slightly funny because when you come back surveyors have 5 or 6 months putting all their data together – plotting it up and checking everything. Then you go to Brian Roberts who was in the Foreign Office involved in place names. You have to decide what place names you need. It's not just scattering names. Basically a lot of places aren't named because of history or geology. They must have names. It's very difficult to get names that are descriptive. I think that there are about seven Penguin Islands and you don't want to name another one. Things like Snow Hill Island give some sort of description, but it's very difficult to get descriptive ones that are good. Seal Nunataks, for instance. Why are they called Seal Nunataks? I don't want to know that. They are on the Larsen shelf ice. Although they are actually Islands they look like nunataks because the Larsen shelf ice is a few hundred feet high. They look like seals on the sea ice. There are very few names that you can think of – Rambow Bluff is one. Remember the old navy warships pre 1914 war. Their bow was like that. The bow was not like this, but like that. It's called a Rambow. So Rambow Bluff is such like.

[Part 1 0:29:18] Lee: So how did Blaiklock Island get its name?

Blaiklock: Well, of course what usually get put on are the names of the people on the base. So there's a Bernard glacier and a Blaiklock Island, a Jones Channel – and such like. You don't actually propose them yourself but Brian Roberts says 'You'll get your place name.'

[Part 1 0:29:39] Lee: So did you wind up surveying your own island then?

Blaiklock: Yes. They've even put a hut there and it's called Blaiklock hut. This was after I left Stonington, and I heard about Blaiklock hut so I sent a telegram to the Governor saying "I was wondering whether I ought to charge you rent for putting a hut on my island" and he realised it was a bit of a leg pull and said " Oh yes. Quite willingly, but of course you must remember you've got to pay capital gains tax and income tax, and we shall start charging you." He knew it was just a game and it was just amusing tittle tattle.

[Part 1 0:30:27] Lee: What else stands out in your memory of those two years at Stonington?

Blaiklock: How immature I was! How much I learned, and how close friendships I made. And it was so interesting that I decided that if I had the chance I'd go down again.

[Part 1 0:30:52] Lee: Were there any scary or tricky moments during those first two years?

Blaiklock: The scary moments I've mentioned were elsewhere. We had a little fire.

[Part 1 0:31:12] Lee: A fire?

Blaiklock: Yes. You realise how scary that can be, and of course, during that time two at Hope Bay were killed by fire. Bill Sladen was camping at the rookery and came back to find the base ablaze and couldn't rescue his two buddies, because all the rest of the party were off station.

[Part 1 0:31:53] Lee: You were very aware of the dangers of fire?

Blaiklock: Oh yes. And when we got a fire in the little bathroom it was panic stations of course.

[Part 1 0:32:01] Lee: How was it dealt with?

Blaiklock: Oh it was a minor one, fortunately. The stove pipe went through the roof and it started charring the ceiling, but it wasn't huge. When we heard about Hope bay we realised if there had been a high wind and a real fire.... This is the problem. It catches so quickly because nearly all the base is wood and with high winds nothing stops it. No, not really scary. It was a bit tricky on the thin ice in the Gullet and also a sledge went in on the Dion Islands.

[Part 1 0:32:49] Lee: So when the time came for you to leave Stonington after your two years, what were your thoughts? Were you glad to get out, or desperate to go back?

Blaiklock: Well, yes I was desperate to go back, which I managed to do, of course. I think you look forward to seeing green colours, vegetation, girls and family and such like. In fact the first impressions when you get to the Falklands are how green it is. Of course it isn't actually green at all, it's like the Scottish moors – it's a dirty greeny brown. Also how hard the pavements are because you're so used to walking on softer surfaces. A very enjoyable two years.

[Part 1 0:33:40] Lee: So how do you go about actually orchestrating a return? To Hope Bay in 1952?

Blaiklock: Well, we bought out two teams of dogs. We had a lot of dogs and some of them went to other bases, but we bought out two teams because they were scheduled for the 1951 Festival of Britain. This was the 1951 centenary of the 1851 exhibition, which was so successful. In 1951 there was the Dome of Discovery and in it there was a polar section. They planned to have a mock up of a base – which they did – but they also had a theatre where the idea was to practice with a dog team, so ,of course, obviously the dogs went into quarantine at Edenbridge and two of us helped run the dogs. We used a made up sledge around the field. The day came when they were out of quarantine and they went to the Festival of Britain.

[Part 1 0:34:54] Lee: Describe the show? If I was a member of the audience what would I see?

Blaiklock: The first one would be Quinton Riley who was with the British Graham Land Expedition, giving a little talk introducing the subject. Then there would be a bit of film shown on the screen, and then there would be the live performance. The audience was in the circle and we were underneath on the stage. There was a very good background of icebergs and bergy bits as scenery, and they had a wind machine, and the surface was obviously concrete, but on the top was sawdust with chalk and it looked very effective. The plan was that the two performers drove the dogs out from underneath onto the stage at the end of a day, and picketed them. The wind machine was getting louder and louder and throwing polystyrene at us. It looked very effective and then we erected the tent. The inside man got inside and the outside man performed in this semi gale – handing boxes in. Obviously we practised before the Festival was opened. We had a scene director – a theatre director...

[Part 1 0:36:33] Lee: Do you know who it was?

Blaiklock: I could find out, but I don't remember. I've still got the Festival of Britain book. It was chaos of course, the dogs were fighting and going on in the wrong place and he said 'It's hopeless. We'll never achieve this. We'll cancel the whole lot.' We said 'Well hold on, the dogs are quick at learning', and by another 4 or 5 days we had got it off pat. Obviously we couldn't bang in a picket to picket the dogs, so we had a karabiner and we knew just exactly where it was and as the dog team came round they knew exactly where it was and they just stopped so you could clip them on

[Part 1 0:37:16] Lee: So did the dogs not mind this then, compared to the real thing?

Blaiklock: They - in the warmth – they do moult quite a lot. So we groomed them and there's nothing better than chalk to clean a dog's coat. They looked beautiful. The performance took 20 – 25 minutes and we ran an hourly show so we had half an hour waiting for the next one. So we would groom the dogs and often because of the summer we often sat outside. We wore anoraks and trousers, but had virtually nothing underneath, as it was too hot.

[Part 1 0:38:03] Lee: Were you speaking or was there a commentary over this?

Blaiklock: There was a commentary. We didn't speak anything. We were the action people. We performed. The only remarkable thing was Pat Toynbee. He was sitting outside. The Dome of Discovery had buttresses – little enclaves – and he was there sleeping and we put a notice 'Genuine Antarctic Explorer'. He couldn't make out why everyone was staring at him and laughing, until he saw the notice.

[Part 1 0:38:41] Lee: As far as you were concerned you were only doing what you did in real life on the stage?

Blaiklock: On a stage, yes. The photographs they took do look very good. You had to be told that they were on a stage...

[Part 1 0:38:53] Lee: I've seen a photograph of some Fids skiing down the Strand with huskies. I think it was the Strand – a London street. At any rate there was a London bus in the background. Was that you?

Blaiklock: No I didn't ski.

[Part 1 0:39:10] Lee: Not ski – sledge.

Blaiklock: We used to exercise the dogs. The routine was that there were two teams. The morning team, who cleaned up the dog pens, exercised the dogs around the site and of course there was Waterloo Bridge just there. There were always crowds of people looking at us. It might be that.

[Part 1 0:39:32] Lee No, there was definitely a photograph of husky team with a sledge.

Blaiklock: We had a sledge. But it wasn't a proper sledge.....

[Part 1 0:39:39] Lee: Did it go down the road?

Blaiklock: The roads in the Festival grounds, yes, but not a public road, no. I suspect it was a superimposition.

[Part 1 0:39:49] Lee: No, no it was real. It was before the days of superimposition

Blaiklock: Well it wasn't us. We had an amused audience on Waterloo Bridge every day, and then they did – starting at 10.00 – the first three shows by 12.00. Then the second team came in and did from 1 o'clock until 9 o'clock, and then put the dogs away. No I think it was 10 o'clock.

[Part 1 0:40:19] Lee: 10 pm?

Blaiklock: Yes. We had to take the dogs by pairs to the kennels which were underneath. And the other team – because we had two teams – knew they were going to be fed, so there was a great uproar across the whole of the Festival grounds. We were running the dogs back and putting them in the kennels. We were running 7 dog teams, I think, and we were feeding them horsemeat. That was quite an amusing incident as we had quite a crowd of people again watching us feeding the dogs.

[Part 1 0:40:58] Lee: So the public really went for this, did they?

Blaiklock: Oh Yes. It was a pity they didn't build a bigger one. There were always queues. It was very disappointing really. For the 3 o'clock show they would be queuing at 2 o'clock. It was very full every time. In fact I remember one time I went out to a Mum with a small boy and he was crying and asked what the matter was. 'Well he won't see the dogs.' We weren't supposed to, but we said 'so long as you say nothing and do nothing don't move.' We had this wall here, and there was an entrance. 'Stand here against the wall and don't move.' The young boy really loved it because we got him to stroke the dogs.

[Part 1 0:41:53] Lee: Tell me about swapping that for the real thing back at Hope Bay the following year.

Blaiklock: Like most people you think 'What's going to happen now?' We were quite a long time, I think, and I heard from Bunny that they were hoping to open Hope Bay, so I volunteered again.

[Part 1 0:42:16] Lee: They were going to reopen it weren't they?

Blaiklock: Rebuild it yes.

[Part 1 0:42:21] Lee: Did you have to be re interviewed for that job or were you just offered it?

Blaiklock: No, just offered it. Hope Bay was slightly different in the sense that the Argentine base was built at the bottom there – near the sea, and we arrived in the *John Biscoe* and started unloading. All the goods were transported in a scow – a motor boat. The ship can't tie up anywhere and there were a number of Argentine ships one of which had a very small gun turret. They had a machine gun firing live ammunition which we could hear hitting over the scow into the North East glacier face.

[Part 1 0:43:22] Lee: These were warning shots?

Blaiklock: Well when we landed there were very few people – Frank, myself and a few others – and we had seen them all around for about 300 yards up the snow bank. There were troops, all in polar white gear, armed, and three - clearly officers - arrived with side arms like revolvers in their harnesses, and in Spanish, they told us that we were invading Argentine Antarctica. Frank Elliott had warned us when this firing started that we were to have verbal protests, but no opposition or any other action.

When we landed of course they spoke..... we were saying that we were on British Antarctic Territory and had every right to be there and they were the invaders. Then the three officers pulled out their revolvers and cocked them. Whether they were loaded or not we didn't test.

[Part 1 0:44:41] Lee: Did they point them at you?

Blaiklock: Oh yes. The difficulty was the language. We ended with fractured French. But the intention was clear. So we were clearly ordered - you know. So we got in their boat and they took us to the *Biscoe* and hid all the arms and we climbed aboard. After that, it is assumed, the Captain – Bill Johnson – presumably sent a CW message (Morse code) telling the situation, and the Governor, Sir Miles Clifford, colloquially known as 'Ginger Geoff' . We don't know what action he took. Formally, of course, he should have informed the Foreign Office, but Ginger Geoff wasn't that sort of man. There was a British frigate in – I think it might be *Bovey Bay* but I don't remember....

[Part 1 0:46:06] Lee: *Burghead Bay*.

Blaiklock: He apparently said: ' As representative of the Queen I order you to sail immediately to Hope Bay', which they did. The Argentines must have sent out a tug out, or a lighter, into the strait between Hope Bay and Joinville Island, because about an hour before they came in they all scuttled away and disappeared. It was very impressive because the *Burghead Bay* came in with all four turrets raised, all the men in anti-flash gear, and you could see it was a very impressive show of force. Whether they could actually have done something doesn't matter, because the ships had gone. So we managed to land as usual, but it was a very impressive sight.

[Part 1 0:47:10] Lee: Were you concerned by this?

Blaiklock: Not when the *Burghead Bay* came, no.

[Part 1 0:47:17] Lee: Before that happened when you had a gun being pointed up your nostrils?

Blaiklock: Yes, I know one person was shaking a bit, but most of the others realised it was a show of force. I don't think the Argentines would have actually shot us, but we didn't wait to find out. So we built the hut much higher up than previously

[Part 1 0:47:47] Lee: The *Burghead Bay* stayed for a while to help didn't they?

Blaiklock: Not very long. There were a number of ships visited and I can't always remember, but I think it was the *Burghead Bay* that came and gave us 12 bottles of Bermuda Rum. We had Navy rum as an issue, but it is an acquired taste in my mind. But this rum was more like Bacardi. It was a beautiful smooth bit of alcohol which was very welcome. I don't think they stayed very long.

[Part 1 0:48:26:] Lee: I've been told that they left because King George VI died and that the Governor had to get back to Stanley.

Blaiklock: I can't remember that. We were there to build the base.

[Part 1 0:48:43] Lee: George Marsh was your base leader wasn't he.

Blaiklock: That's right

[Part 1 0:48:45] Lee: How was he as a base leader?

Blaiklock: We used to call him Mr Mitty – is it? – There was character on radio who dreamed of doing things in his mind.

[Part 1 0:49:02] Lee: Walter Mitty.

Blaiklock: Walter Mitty, Yes. When we were sledging we used to say 'Oh Walter Mitty is in his dreams' George Marsh was a good leader – a very jolly person. And the base was as well. I don't know whether I have been lucky or it's the norm. Very rarely have I, or anybody, had any problems with the other people. I think most Fids – and I still think right now – realise when wintering they cannot get away. They've got to live with the situation and therefore you temper your outbursts because you know it will bring tension. I think one of the other Fids was asked what he liked most and he said 'When I come home I can speak my mind and it doesn't matter' I think that most people do realise that you've got to live together and it usually leads to a happy base. I've never really had problems in that way.

[Part 1 0:50:19] Lee: Were you getting worthwhile surveying work done from Hope Bay?

Blaiklock: Yes. Remember, all of our work was exploratory survey; compass and sledge wheel controlled by astronomical position. Not exactly high quality. There was some plane tabling and some triangulation schemes, but that was usually very local. There was plenty of survey to do because the weather in Hope Bay and that part of the continent is pretty unsettled. Usually I would estimate that any ten days you spent 4 days lying up for bad weather. On the plateau you sometimes spent 9 days out of 10. But I personally didn't go on the plateau. So we went down to the Larson shelf ice and did quite a lot of survey and the next year – I stayed 2 years – at the end of the year we had an unusual survey. Hope Bay peninsula is right up at the top here and alongside it about 10 miles away is Joinville Island found by d'Urville I think in the 1870's. But we could never get to it because there was never sea ice there. So it was agreed that the ship would take us there with 2 dog teams and 4 men and survey the island. Julian Taylor - a compatriot of ours - had just come straight down as a physiologist studying dogs, and he jumped from the ship onto the sledge and went sledging before he had even touched Antarctica. And it was very successful, so that was the peak thing of having the survey of Joinville Island. So that was 52 – 54.

[Part 1 0:52:44] Lee: And then you came out of the Antarctic again, I guess?

Blaiklock: Well, in 1955 – very early in 1955 January it was – they decided they wanted to set up two new bases, one of which hopefully was to be Stonington Island. They asked me if I would go as operations manager, with the two teams, and set up the new bases in 1955, leaving in January on the *Norsel*, which was the ship used by the British North Greenland Expedition. It was a Norwegian sealer. Leaving in January was very very late, but fortunately the ice was not too bad. Charles Swithinbank will know that food on the *Norsel* is not of the highest quality and he advised us to take lots of tins of food. I thought salt pork in barrels on deck went out with Nelson, but that's what the *Norsel* had. The food was appalling. The bread was always mouldy, and so I took my own toaster. Toasted mouldy bread is slightly better than raw mouldy bread. But we survived.

[Part 1 0:54:19] Calling at Montevideo the first thing most Fids want is steak, eggs and chips. Not the Norwegians. They wanted fish. The Captain was a very good sealer. He had been up in the Arctic a lot. A very quiet man. One of the new Fids was violently sea sick for many, many days such that by the time we were getting close to Brazil – we had no doctor – we contemplated going ashore because he was not eating and vomiting blood as well. We were getting rather concerned. The captain knew about it but said 'send him up to me', and he forced fed him raw salt herring. He said 'That'll cure him', and it did! After he got sea sick again, he started eating ravenously. I was very impressed with the Captain. He was a very pleasant man.

We went down and set up the new base at the southern part of Adelaide Island [editor – should be Anvers Island], and the next one, of course was Stonington Island. That was the plan. But with the ice we couldn't get to Stonington. We couldn't even get to the Debenham Islands. I think very spitefully the Argentines had used the Debenham Islands base. The British Graham Land Expedition base built it in 1935. When we sledged there in 1948 just to see it, it was in beautiful condition. You could have walked in and occupied the base in 5 hours. But they pulled it to bits and then built it again and made a shambles. But we couldn't get closer than 2 miles to it and Stonington Island was another 8 miles on, so we knew we couldn't get to Stonington. So 2 or 3 of us skied in and had the usual idiotic protest exchange, and then bottles of whisky were exchanged and the party rolled. Yet it was logical to build the base somewhere.

Derek Searle, who was a surveyor, was a friend of mine and he and I did some astro practice before we went South. It was he who I shared a cabin with. I had a more special cabin behind the bridge. Derek was my compatriot and we had brought lots of tins of goodies. After dinner of poor Fiskeboller,- which is 98% potato and 2% fish as far as I can make out - all boiled. We used to go and enjoy our tins of peaches and such like. Derek was the surveyor who was basically going to Stonington. He wasn't the leader that time, he was the leader next year. So we found an island which looked as though it might have been useful to sledge from, because it would get the sea ice – Horseshoe Island. I did think they had rather poor ice but that's just Nature – you can't change that.

[Part 1 0:58:06] Lee: So you set up the hut there did you?

Blaiklock: Yes we set up the hut. The *Norsel* managed to get almost to the beach. There was a steep cliff here and the *Norsel's* bow was almost on the beach, so that unloading was very quick because we only had 100 yards to go lowering stores into a boat – so it was very quick. They got most of the foundations and started building before we left. I sent the *Norsel* off to catch some seals. By that time we went back to Anvers Island, as it was called, they had nearly finished the hut. They were OK and then we went to the Argentine Islands and picked up Ralph Lenton who had been there as Carpenter and Radio Operator and such like. We had been advised by the Hydrographic Office earlier that if we had any spare time we should do certain work – some triangulation and some astro. So we had this ship as a sort of exploratory toy – as you might say – so we went where we wanted to and we did quite a lot of work in an area that was very poorly surveyed. The Governor sent us a message saying to the Captain 'Please don't run out of fuel. Are you OK'. The captain said: 'I've got enough fuel to get to Norway'. He was a very amusing man. So we went back to Stanley. Ralph went back on the *John Biscoe* and I continued on the *Norsel*. The Governor said 'I'd like you to call at South Georgia.' 'Oh yes. What for?' 'We're deporting someone for criminal – minor crime'.

[Part 1 1:00:24] Lee: Who were you deporting?

Blaiklock: Oh I can't remember his name. It was somebody probably making illegal gin or methylated spirits. I don't know what his crime was but he wasn't the most savoury of characters and so he slept with the crew and I still had the most comfortable cabin on board. It was a passage and I did some work looking at the survey results, but it was fairly lonely as I was the only one on board. To relieve the boredom of sailing all the way up to London I managed to persuade the Captain that we should call at Saint Helena to pick up some fresh fruit and veg. You have to anchor at Saint Helena and we saw a boat come out and I and the Captain went ashore, leaving the first mate in charge. St Helena is really a plateau with a little shore basin 200 or 300 steps up. He said the Governor invites you to tour the island and we had his car at the top of the plain. So we climbed up there. The man who came was a mixture of Indian and English, I suppose. He always spoke very good English. I don't know what the altitude is – it's quite high up. It's more like southern England. Except, of course, it's got unusual vegetation. And of course it's got Napoleon's house. So we went around it and had a very enjoyable ride around St Helena and we went back to the Governor for lunch and rode a famous tortoise, reputedly 200 years old. A very enjoyable stay, and then we went off back to England and the police were waiting for my passenger.

[Part 1 1:02:00:39] Lee: Let's pause Ken and do some more in a moment.

[Part 2 0:00:02] Lee: This is Ken Blaiklock interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on 22nd June 2013. Ken Blaiklock Part 2.

Blaiklock: Well, of course while I was on the *Norsel* in 1955 I heard about Bunny's plans for TAE, so I immediately sent him a message saying 'Don't forget me!'

[Part 2 0:00:23] Lee: So you asked him rather than the other way round?

Blaiklock: No, I asked him not to forget me. So when I got back, of course, I had quite a lot of work to do at the Directorate of Overseas Survey, but Bunny invited me to be the leader of the advance party. The purpose really was to build the base. So in the preparation up to the leaving on the ship I really wasn't involved very much, because I had quite a lot of work at the DOS, so it was only just before the ship sailed that I really got to know everybody who was coming. But again, the ship sailed and on board were not only Bunny – I'm thinking of Antarctic people – but Ralph Lenton, who I mentioned earlier was with the advance party, and myself. Also Roy Homard who had been on the British North Greenland Expedition, so he had polar experience in the North. So on the advance party there were three people who had past experience. Bunny's idea was to get a member of the Commonwealth who could send representatives. Hannas La Grange, the South African – he was on the advance party, but George Lowe was the New Zealander, John Stephenson was the Australian. Canada declined, partly because it coincided with the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and they had so much work to do in the North that they couldn't spare anyone. So Canada wasn't represented, which was slightly sad. As well as that there were British people; George Marsh who was my base leader at Hope Bay and another surveyor whose name I've forgotten.

[Part 2 0:02:40] Lee: And your purpose was to establish base camp?

Blaiklock: The main purpose was to build a hut.

[Part 2 0:02:48] Lee: South of Halley?

Blaiklock: Yes. Well we didn't know at the time. When we got to South Georgia, where the aircraft were constructed – the small aircraft – we sailed south and for the first period we had a very easy passage into the Weddell Sea. Now the Weddell Sea had been first penetrated by Weddell in eighteen something or other, and he was the farthest south, nearly almost due South. Most of the later people, like Bruce and Shackleton, had gone a bit farther east and hit the coast of Antarctica quite a long way north east of Halley. But of course we went too far west, - in hindsight it's clear what we should have done - and we got stuck. We were stuck there for over a month, I think before we could be released, because we had to go northward again to get out of it and then come round. The Halley Bay base was organised by the Royal Society and the *Tottan* got to Halley Bay before we did, even though she left 10 days later. There was some consideration as to whether we should build Shackleton at Halley Bay, but Bunny and two others flew inland and, as proved later, it was chaotic and almost impassable, even for dog sledges. I don't know how many years it took to find a route, but it was a long time wasn't it.

[Part 2 0:04:34] Lee: The route was found in 1960 I suppose?

Blaiklock: Yes, and this was 1957, so you see Halley Bay was further north and the idea was to get further south. So Bunny continued on in the hope that we would find something on the Filchner ice shelf.

[Part 2 0:04:56] Lee: He was determined to go as far south as possible?

Blaiklock: Obviously, because it shortened the journey. The chances are that often the shelf ice has better inland access than land ice, and we found, of course, the site for Shackleton Base, but we were over a month late. There was a bit of a panic to get everything unloaded – 400 or 500 tons of stuff – and get us established. I had chosen a site about 1 ½ miles inland and the stores were starting to be taken up there. Most of the stores were put on what is called bay ice. It's sea ice which has been there for a number of years and is a bit thicker and tougher than ordinary sea ice. On one of the flights when I was flying inland, just to see what the surfaces were like, with Gordon Haslop, we were told to turn back because the actual ocean, where the *Theron* was, was starting to freeze over and the skipper was very concerned. So they left the 8 of us in a fairly precarious state because they had to get out of the Weddell Sea.

[Part 2 0:06:32] Lee: Fuchs went back on the ship, did he, leaving you in charge?

Blaiklock: that's right, yes.

[Part 2 0:06:36] Lee: With half a hut?

Blaiklock: Well the hut was all in pieces – no hut at all. We had a box about the size of this room which we used as a house to start off with, which was the crate which the Sno-Cat came in. We were only eight people and it's amazing how little labour you have. When the ship left, three of us who had been down before, and, I suspect, the others, knew we were going to have a hard winter, but we didn't realise how hard it was going to be, really. We started work. Two people generally were bringing stores up from the pile on the bay ice. Two people were doing the cooking and cleaning and such like with the dogs. Two people were starting on the base and foundations of the hut and two people were on just general maintenance of the vehicles. So you see we started the hut and over the next few weeks we brought up all the food; all the hut except for a few pieces; a limited amount of fuel and various other items. But in mid March, I think it was, we had appalling weather. A blizzard lasting 8 days – or was it 5 days. I can't remember but it was very long. We just lived in the Sno-Cat box. We used the Sno-Cat crate as a living place, but we actually camped in tents.

[Part 2 0:08:27] After the blizzard we started work again, and two of us – Tony Stewart and myself went down to look at the sea. Fortunately we had brought the dogs up beforehand. We could see a water sky – which is an indication that some of the sea ice had gone out, and when we got there most of the stores had disappeared. There were 40 gallon drums, perched like that on the edge... Most of the fuel – and there was a lot of fuel because the vehicles use a vast amount – and all the upper air met gear, and some of the building gear and various other bits and pieces were lost. With some dismay I came back and told the others. I said we could go and stay with the Argentines – there was a base about 50 miles away – or, I don't know whether there was an American base there or not. I can't remember. But basically, I said, really we want to try and continue on. The only thing we thought of, in hindsight, I should have brought more fuel up. We had 3 gallons a day, we worked out, for cooking, lighting and heating. It was a minimum but just about adequate.

[Part 2 0:10:10] We had started building the hut and would continue doing so. Of course the temperatures now – once you get past March you're into the start of winter – were getting lower and the daylight was getting shorter, because we were well South of the Antarctic Circle. We got some of the panels on the hut and in one of the blizzards it filled with snow. We don't know how much but we estimated 80 tons of very hard packed drift snow. So a lot of our time was spent in just digging out the hut. As well as continuing to build it. We also dug tunnels to keep the dogs in.. The temperatures in the tents were pretty grim. Again, looking back, I think we can clearly say it was the hardest and most difficult year in modern times of any party. It's not as bad as, say, Raymond Priestley's one on Inexpressible Island, or various other people who have been marooned, but it was a very tough one.

[Part 2 0:11:26] Lee: Because of the lack of fuel?

Blaiklock: Not so much the lack of fuel. We couldn't heat the hut in any case so the fuel was manageable. We had enough fuel for heating the tents, lighting and cooking. So it wasn't the lack of fuel, it was the low temperatures.

[Part 2 0:11:44] Lee: Unexpectedly low?

Blaiklock : No. I mean those latitudes do get low temperatures. Minus 65 in the tents – and we were in tents. Minus 65 in a normal hut – although very unpleasant outside – in a hut you usually have a bit higher temperature.

[Part 2 0:12:02] Lee: But was it in the plan to have the hut finished in time for winter? Or was that never going to happen?

Blaiklock: If we'd been a month earlier we would have finished it.

[Part2 0:12:10] Lee: So the reason it was a bad winter was because the ship was late?

Blaiklock: Yes that's right. If the ship had got there in January we would not only have had the TAE people but we would have had all the crew as well, to help. Clearly they would have got all the stores up onto the land ice.

[Part 2 0:12:28] Lee: So the mistake that caused all the problems was getting stuck?

Blaiklock: Getting stuck, yes. Again, in hindsight we should have gone a bit further East, but even the next year the *Magga Dan* got stuck going further East. It was the delay that caused the main problems. And it was a very grim winter, but we were very busy – there was always work to do – and in the end we finished the hut; we had done some exploratory survey; we started Met going very early and I think we had achieved all that could have been expected of us. I think that the best achievement was that the members of the advance party carried out all that was required of them under extreme conditions.

We did start living in the hut. Only in a small portion of it. It still had to be heated by wood. But we got everything fixed. The hut wasn't completely finished. There were still odd things, but when the Magga Dan came in they were soon completed. The second year, of course, was completely different for me. The plan had been for Harold Lister who was on the British North Greenland, to establish a plateau hut, well inland at about 3,500 feet up and 300 miles inland to study glaciology. The requirements were all flown in by aircraft and John and I and Hal spent a very pleasant winter there. It was a comfortable little hut with two good companions. The only incident that happened was we often had to wait for the aircraft to bring more stores in so we were waiting for things to do to build it. We'd nearly completed the hut when Gordon flew in on a beautiful day

[Part 2 0:15:02] Lee: Gordon?

Blaklock: Gordon Haslop the pilot came in with the Otter and another load, quite early in the day and said 'it's a brilliant day I reckon I can do another flight'. Two flights – it was the only time it was achieved. So John Stephenson asked Bunny if he could visit the Whichaway nunataks which were about 30 miles North of us to do some geology, because he was actually a geologist more than a glaciologist. Bunny said 'yes' so we bundled in; a standard tent; a little sledge; 2 gallons of fuel – which was normal for sledging - and a 10 day box of food, and landed at the Whichaways expecting to be about 2 or 3 hours there. So we put up the tent and had a cup of tea and immediately dashed out. The arrangement had been that we had a radio which could listen to transmissions from the base, but we couldn't transmit back. So they told us the news and we acted on that.

[Part 2 0:16:06] At 6 o'clock they said the weather is deteriorating a bit so there won't be a second flight – so you wait. By the fourth day of bad weather – we were having bad weather as well – we were a bit concerned and I decided we had better go on half rations. It was still quite cold, but half rations inside a tent don't really affect you too much. We were getting a bit of frost bite, but nothing severe. By the eighth day we only had four days food left and I was getting a bit concerned. You know objectively that the best thing to do is to stay where you are, because your food will last longer. But you never know when the plane is coming. It still might come in 20 days time and you're dead.

[Part 2 0:17:10] So I decided to start walking - man hauling. We had a tent; this rather immature sledge; four days food and half a gallon of petrol. The temperatures were in the minus 40's, but the wind was fairly strong. Fortunately I had taken a bearing when I was at South Ice. We couldn't see the nunataks but on our way I had taken a bearing so I knew the bearing to come back on. But the problem with two-man hauling is that if one man stumbles you stop. Scott had, say, five. If one man stumbles the four can continue on, until the fifth man comes in, but not with two. I felt that we weren't quite getting our 8 miles a day, which is what we required. On the 12th day I thought we were perhaps – out of the 32 miles – I estimated we were perhaps 20 something.

On that evening – the 12th night - it was a beautiful evening, calm, brilliant sunshine, and I said to John – because John had never sledged before – so this was a fairly harsh baptism. I said to John ‘If the plane doesn’t come tomorrow we will abandon the tent and take our sleeping bags and ski’, because that was the only hope we ever had of getting back. We had no food. The last bit of food was one rather fatty rasher of bacon and a biscuit, and - I don’t know - a cupful of fuel. You just plan to do that. You don’t think of the consequences. Fortunately, of course, the plane came. After a couple of flights it took quite a long time to find us because a tent is quite a small thing really. We got on board. John had a fair amount of frost bite – not serious, but painful. And he was sent back to Shackleton and all was well. With hindsight, 20 years later one realises that it was a damned close thing really.

[Part 2 0:19:33] Lee: That was a close call was it?

Blaiklock: It was pretty close. I realise now it was as close as I got to being dead. The problem was not doing the next few miles. It was when we couldn’t see the Whichaways, and all of South Ice was an odd mast or two and a little chimney. So it might have been quite difficult to find it. I spent a very happy six months at South Ice.

[Part 2 0:20:05] Lee: Just to get my facts right – that was the base that was the starting point for the TAE, was it?

Blaiklock: Well no. Shackleton was obviously the starting point. Because all the vehicles were at Shackleton.

[Part 2 0:20:16] Lee: So what was South Ice? That was the first stop?

Blaiklock: One of the main stops, yes. But there was trouble long before that. When I was flown back to base the plan was for the vehicles to have an advanced journey distance unknown, but hopefully getting to South Ice. Meanwhile the aircraft flew four of us into the Shackleton Mountains for survey and geology. One may well ask what attracts a surveyor there? It’s impossible now, but in the 1950’s you could discover a range of mountains like the Shackletons, 150 miles long, that had never been seen before. You start literally with just a blank piece of paper. Not many surveyors have had the luck to do that. Right from the very start you have got to position everything. So that’s the interest at that time.

[Part 2 0:21:20] Lee: So this was – for want of a better phrase – filling in time before the Transantarctic Expedition began?

Blaiklock: Well yes, before the journey began. The TAE started from when the advance party was there.

[Part 2 0:21:34] lee: Were you involved with the actual journey?

Blaiklock: Oh yes, of course, I travelled right across.

[Part 2 0:21:39] Lee: You did the whole transit?

Blaiklock: Virtually all of it. For some reason I’ll tell you, the last bit I didn’t.

[Part 2 0:21:45] Lee: So how many people were actually in that party?

Blaiklock: Well all of us! All of us – the base was left empty. The only four people who were left – one might say – were the four RAF people, and they flew the Otter all the way across to McMurdo. There was no ship planned to visit Shackleton again to pick anybody up. Everybody had to leave. This advanced vehicle journey found terrible trouble at the Recovery Glacier and took much longer to get through than the plan. The journey started with everybody from Shackleton. There were the 4 Sno-Cats and 3 Weasels. That's a menagerie of odd animals - 4 cats , 3 Weasels, a Bombardier, and all the men. The dogs had actually been flown to South Ice, so they started their journey from South Ice.

[Part 2 0:22:54] Lee: What do you remember of that departure? What were your spirits like?

Blaiklock: Chaotic! Chaotic but we were really on our way. There was no turning back. It was all looking ahead. The first part of the journey over the lower part of the shelf ice was not much problem. It was when we were getting on to the land ice that the trouble started. Especially across the Recovery Glacier where the vehicles were breaking into crevasses. Again if we had been a month earlier the crevasses would have been bridged more securely and the first one the Cat just seemed to lean over a bit above great hole, but it took a long time to learn how to get it out. The final one - the worst one – was where the Cat was perched with one rear pontoon on one edge of the crevasse and the other two pontoons perched on the other side. With the hole underneath.

[Part 2 0:24:05] You felt that whichever way you pulled it, it was going to go down. You can't hang a Sno-Cat on a bit of wire. This is the advantage of dogs. It's why I am a dog man. First of all, all the dogs are ahead of you – 30 feet away, all on individual strands of rope. If a dog falls down a crevasse all the others scatter – so you immediately stop so you're probably 10 metres away from the crevasse itself, and it's fairly easy to pull a dog up. Because he weighs 50, 80 or 100 lbs and you can usually get a dog up and as the harnesses are made to fit the dogs they don't slip out of the harness. But a 4 ton Cat is a bit of a different kettle of fish.

[Part 2 0:24:52] Lee: How did you get it back?

Blaiklock: Well when I saw it I thought 'Oh well we are down to 3 Cats'. I thought there was no way, but David Pratt and the engineer had devised – planned beforehand so it was all experimental – David Pratt had worked out that what we'd need was some support, and we had long aluminium ladders on the Sno-cat sledges . We fitted them underneath the pontoons, which were half hanging down, cut into the edges of the glacier crevasse wall in a ledge, with wires to stop them from jumping out. The crevasses were ellipse shaped, wide in places, but narrow somewhere else, so you could find a place where the Cats could go safely. So we got 2 Cats on one side – southwards – the way we were going, and one Cat in the crevasse and one behind as an anchor. David was in charge and told the 2 front Cats to slowly pull forward. The Sno-Cat pontoons fell onto the bridges and the rear Cat was just holding the bridges in, to help if they fell. The bridges started tilting – or one bridge at least did. David shouted to the two 'Pull pull pull'. Up it climbed and got out. It was a very good rescue. Jolly hard, but very successful.

[Part 2 0:26:38] Lee: Generally speaking was it quite tedious?

Blaiklock: The journey? Oh yes. It was tedious. I mean for a surveyor, all he did was measure baro heights and doing the astro. There wasn't much survey as such. I mean I'm guiding the vehicles to go South. The South Pole is quite an easy place to get to. Wherever you start it's always South! Most geologists and surveyors and glaciologists like the mountains of course, doing a much more useful survey.

[Part 2 0:27:17] Lee: Did Fuchs lead the way all the way?

Blaiklock: Yes. Again in hindsight and he was not only the leader but the deputy leader as well. Bunny led by example. It would have been more simple to have at least had a deputy leader at the back. The most dangerous place was the first cat, and the second most dangerous place was the last Cat. As the vehicles start going over a crevasse bridge they start knocking bits of snow off, so if the first one falls in or gets across, number 2 and 3 get across and number 4 is likely to fall in.

[Part 2 0:27:59] Lee; Were you in a fairly high state of tension for much of the time in case something like that happened?

Blaiklock: Well, In the very bad crevasses we prodded meticulously mile after mile to find where the crevasses were. You can nearly always find a place where these elipsed crevasses are safe but you didn't want to go on the wide part. Yes it was very tedious. We were doing 2 or 3 miles a day. It takes a long time to keep on prodding for crevasses. Once we reached the Whichaways and South Ice we were pretty certain that the crevasses wouldn't be a problem – and they weren't. So when we reached South Ice John and I took over the dogs. Vehicles always take much longer to get ready, where a dog team can be ready in 5 minutes.

[Part 2 0:29:00] We'd flown over by air so we knew there were no crevasses, but from the air you can't really tell what the surface is like. So the plan was that John and I left early, ahead of the vehicles – before the vehicles left South Ice, because they did some maintenance and all sorts of things, and we sledged with fairly light loads over what were very heavy sastrugi. Sastrugi are wind cut surfaces and they can be quite high and bumpy. Dog sledges can bend, and the dogs can manage. But for vehicles, towing 2 ton sledges, they have to be very careful that they don't smash the sledges. So they were very slow, but were slowly catching us up. The difficulty, often is to manoeuvre around these sastrugi without going off course, so what we did was to build snow cairns. It's not like snow here – it's very compact and you use a saw to cut blocks and they stand out quite clearly and you can see them 5 miles away.

[Part 2 0:30:22] Lee: So you were leaving a trail of these cairns?

Blaiklock: That's right.

[Part 2 0:30:25] Lee: From which you can project your forward direction.

Blaiklock: That's right. So the Cats didn't need to worry what distance they were travelling. They could see where they were supposed to be heading and if they diverted they could get on line again. So they were useful. Slowly, of course, they were catching us up. I don't know how many days, 5 or 6 days. On the 6th day they would catch us up. So we built a rather special cairn. We built Snowhenge as we called it. Three pillars and a little one along the top. We used to leave rude messages 'Don't pass go.' 'Don't collect 200.' 'Only 960 miles to go.' When they caught us up the sastrugi were getting better, so we could keep up with the vehicles fairly easily.

[Part 2 0:31:18] Of Course we were doing scientific observations en route. Each night we would drill a hole with a special ice drill down to, I suppose, about 10 metres. Harold Lister would look at the cores for glaciological purposes, and then in the morning Geoff Pratt, the geophysicist would put explosives in laying out a pattern of microphones basically, to record the echo – rather like an echo sounder – and the speed of the shock wave varied depending on what is underneath. So if you have got snow it travels at a different speed to rock. The snow/rock contrast shows the depth of the snow and ice above the solid rock. We did this right across. Once we were getting half way to the pole I don't know what the height was – 5 or 6 thousand feet – there was a beautiful surface for the Cats. They were doing 30 miles a day. Dog driving can do 30 miles, but at high altitude and cold weather it's very very tiring. We'd start the day an hour or two before the Cats got going. They'd catch us up early afternoon and we would drag in 2 hours later after they'd camped. It was very tiring.

[Part 2 0:32:50] Lee: Once you'd got on to the higher dome and the going was easier, were there any more problems? Did the Cats break down?

Blaiklock: Yes. Probably most of us didn't realise how much maintenance the vehicles had. There were two problems with the Cats. The pontoons were covered with bars. Not a problem but they had to be tensioned just right. If they got too loose they might jump or snap. You could only tension them tightly. You couldn't un-tension them. So you went around and I think there were 108 bars on each pontoon. You used a large grip, but you were afraid of over tensioning them and often we were told that they needed a bit more tension – so you'd go round again.

Then grease guns – imagine what a grease gun does in a 10 knot wind. The grease goes everywhere except where it's meant to. Filthy job. So dog lovers don't really like vehicles! Yes, there were certain mechanical problems, especially with the Weasels, because they were very old and in the end we ditched them all. In fact the three Weasels were better performing than the Bombardier. The Bombardier was a nice vehicle but it couldn't pull very much. The plan was when we had a load that could be distributed on the remaining vehicles, we would ditch one. So we ditched the Bombardier and about 20 miles on one of the Weasels collapsed completely, so we went back to pick up the Bombardier again. In the end, by the time we got to the pole I think the 3 Weasels and the Bombardier had been jettisoned because the Cats could carry the fuel load. The fuel load, of course, was about 90% of the cargo.

[Part 2 0:34:50] Lee: What was the spirit of the men like? You talked about the machines and the dogs – how were the men?

Blaiklock: Well, it is pretty boring I must say. But we were doing what we planned to do. It was the only way to go. There was one occasion when we heard that Ed Hillary had set off [for the Pole] with his tractors. I think we were a bit dismayed at what most of us considered a bit disloyal. He knew that he was risking everything, because the Ferguson tractors weren't designed really for high altitude. They pulled a fairly small load and he only just made the Pole before his fuel ran out. Of course he was completely dependent on the Americans to be flown out again. He had no way he could get back. There were three expeditions at Ross base; the TAE one; The IGY one which was the New Zealand Antarctic one; and Ed Hillary's plan. I've no proof that he thought about it earlier, but I suspect he had this idea long before it occurred. To my mind it was quite a great achievement, but it was slightly disloyal to Bunny. So that's why I think that most of the British TAE were not wildly happy with Ed. George Lowe was a very close friend of Ed's - an Everest climber of course - was in a very invidious position. He knew how we felt and yet he wanted to be loyal to his friend. In passing I think Ed rather had a chip on his shoulder.

[Part 2 0:37:15] Lee: How do you mean?

Blaiklock: He thought everyone was against him and he had to show himself to be the master. What I think was amazing is the work he did in - not climbing Everest - he was a very powerful climber and he was lucky, because if Ed and Tenzing had failed, George Lowe would have been the next one to try. But he then went back to Nepal and did incredible work for a very poor country. He was obviously proud of climbing Everest - who wouldn't be - but what he should be known for is his superb work in Nepal. My daughter actually married a Nepalese climber and he's worshipped as a God in Nepal for the magnificent work he's done. Healthwise, medication, teaching and such like. It really was superb.

[Part 2 0:38:19] Lee: As you approached the pole - is it true that you were the first dog team to get there since Amundsen?

Blaiklock: Yes it was.

[Part 2 0:38:26] Lee: Since 1912?

Blaiklock: Yes it was. As you approach the pole the Americans had asked us not to go on a certain longitude because they were doing glaciological research - so we veered around. The dogs of course were really excited because they could see something ahead of them. The dogs were going mad. But I thought it was proper that Bunny should be the first to go. So he was the first, but we were the first dogs to drive to the pole since Amundsen. Because Ed had recce'd the route we knew that the dogs weren't really necessary, so they were flown out. The only disadvantage of Ed was he kept very poor records of the traverse, so in places we could see the trail, but much of it was probably only a mile away but we couldn't see it.

[Part 2 0:39:30] Lee: you're talking about the journey north?

Blaiklock: Going North towards McMurdo Sound.

[Part 2 0:39:36] Lee: Was the second part of the trip as uneventful as the first?

Blaiklock: No. More eventful in one sense because, first, a major part of one of the Cats had broken. It was a plate that the pontoons swivelled on. They had to weld. Imagine welding at minus 40. It's not easy. The second one was Geoffrey Pratt used to be in the back of the Cat. Studying his records and clearly had carbon monoxide poisoning. Now we had a certain amount of oxygen, but at high altitudes the doctor was very concerned. That's the only time Bunny asked for help from the Americans, and they were superb. Two C130's came over. They didn't land but they saw us and just parachuted down oxygen bottles, which almost certainly saved Geoff's life.

[Part 2 0:40:28] Lee: Geoff?

Blaiklock: Geoff Pratt – the glaciologist. No, not the glaciologist, the geophysicist.

[Part 2 0:40:39] Lee: So he was suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning?

Blaiklock: Carbon monoxide poisoning, almost certainly, yes, which of course is a killer. We kept him alive. We had a little bit of oxygen but not nearly enough. Alan actually recommended that he be flown out, but of course the Americans didn't really want to land – and I don't blame them.

[Part 2 0:40:59] Lee: So was he an invalid for the rest of the trip?

Blaiklock: No, no, he recovered. He probably did die a bit earlier than he might have done. But, no, he did recover.

[Part 2 0:41:12] Lee: I'm conscious that we need to talk about something else as well. There's a couple more questions about this - if I may? When it was all over you went to New Zealand I think, didn't you?

Blaiklock: Yes, of course, yes.

[Part 2 0:41:25] lee: A special reception there?

Blaiklock: Oh yes!!

[Part 2 0:41:28] Lee: Lots of speeches?

Blaiklock: Oh yes. The first speech, which was quite a big one – an official one. The Governor spoke for an hour. The Mayor of Wellington spoke for an hour, and there was only half an hour left. Ed spoke for a quarter of an hour and Bunny spoke for a quarter of an hour. My next door neighbour was a New Zealander. He said ' I wish they'd bloody shut up. We don't want to hear them, we want to hear Bunny and Ed'.

[Part 2 0:41:55] Lee: Did you not end up meeting the Queen because of this?

Blaiklock: When Bunny reached Scott Base he was informed that he had been awarded a knighthood. So later on when we got back everybody got the Polar Medal. In fact I got another bar to my medal. The investiture was a private one, just Bunny being knighted and the Polar Medals being given out and then there was a little reception. Wives and girlfriends were there as well and the Queen came around talking to everybody, but not so Prince Philip. He had the four RAF people in the corner, we suspect telling blue jokes! The Queen was looking daggers at him.

[Part 2 0:42:50] Lee: Was there also a presentation at the Festival Hall?

Blaiklock: I don't know about the Festival Hall, but at the Royal Geographical Society. There was a speech and Bunny was awarded the special medal, which we all got a copy of. The expedition was still wanting more money, so the arrangement was that for the next month or so we gave talks to all sorts of people. We got all our expenses paid, but any funds went into the TAE coffers.

[Part 2 0:43:28] Lee: There is a story that at the Festival Hall Bunny was giving a lecture and afterwards the whole expedition was lined up on the stage to be introduced to the Queen. Is that correct?

Blaiklock: I can't remember it, but I'm sure it probably was.

[Part 2 0:43:44] Lee: Bunny had written all the names on his hand and then read them out in the wrong order.

Blaiklock: I think the occasion was too much of a surprise to know what we were called!

[Part 2 0:43:57] Lee: Let's just spend a few more minutes talking about working with the Belgians. How did that come about?

Blaiklock: After any expedition there are reports to write. Surveyors mostly have three or four months of work. Then we have a bit of holiday and such like. I finished my work and, as usual, was thinking about what I was going to do next. I was still single, but I had a girlfriend, and Bunny told me and David Stratton that the Belgian expedition leader had asked Bunny whether any TAE member was willing to join them – especially a dog driver. Well that fitted me like a glove. Actually he was after David Stratton first of all, but David had got married and got a job with BP, so his career was starting and he didn't want to do it. I was still playing around with the Pole so I went over to the leader and it sounded very interesting, and I joined the Belgians.

I was the only man who had been to Antarctica before. The Belgians had the system where de Gerlache, the grandson, I think, of the original de Gerlache of the first ship that wintered, had his year. Then a BAS man came down for a completely new year. As I used to say: 'in the land of the blind the one eyed man is king'. We had Tony van Autenboer who had been in Northern Norway – he was the geologist and if I asked could we be flown to the Sor Rondane - another huge range of mountains – I got what I wanted.

We had a marvellous time. A very crevasse free area. In the first year we had a winter journey. We went out in September and we didn't get back to the base until the next April – 7 months. In fact there was so much work we had done that we used to have to stop sometimes just to catch up with all our reports .It was marvellous. I did a triangulation of the whole system. When we got back to the base the second year there was a new team there, and a new base leader. Certainly the Belgian one, also being the final base I went to, was also the most enjoyable. I've never eaten so well in all my life.

[Part 2 0:46:52] Lee: Never been so..?

Blaiklock: I had never eaten so well in my life. There was a fair amount of alcohol around as well – only for the winter time.

[Part 2 0:47:03] Lee: Were you using the tried and tested survey system for the Belgians, or were there some advances?

Blaiklock: Well, no. The difference was we navigated partly by compass and traverse, but I was doing a triangulation. I measured a baseline and expanded it, and then started measuring triangles. Detailed geodetic work. So we had a network of fixed points right across much of the survey and we went back again in the second year to continue. We were also doing – unusually – we were also doing gravity measurements. Gravity is related to various things depending on height, latitude, and the density of surrounding material. There were some beautiful glaciers. My trig points were on two ridges of rock. We would do a traverse across the glacier taking gravity measurements. Because ice is less dense than the rock the gravity varies because it's relative to the density. So you can calculate the depth of the ice from what the gravity reading ought to be at that height on the glacier. There were some beautiful 'U' shaped valleys you could see. Even one where there was a bit of crevassing and you could also see the mountain underneath – so it was very interesting work doing this gravity traverse. Seven years later we went again in the summertime and we remeasured some of the stakes, so we got the movement of the glacier as well. I thought that was very interesting work.

[Part 2 0:48:54] Lee: You promised me you would tell me what you thought of Bunny Fuchs.

Blaiklock: Bunny was my mentor. I think probably if you can analyse your own titre my attitude is 'if you find the kitchen too hot you shouldn't be working there'. You have to take the rough with the smooth and you get the best job done. Bunny, I think, his limitations were:

1. He ate food to keep alive and had no interest in the quality of the food. Some of the early FIDS food could have been better designed at the non-sledging bases.
2. He would listen to your comments or advice but he didn't tell you why he might object to them and he would come out with announcement – 'This is the Plan', which hurt some people. I thought 'well if that's the ruling we must carry it out to the best of our abilities'.
3. I was quite close to him personally, but I think he was probably a slightly difficult man to get to know. It's amazing how little you know with people you spend years with. It was only when his autobiography came that I learned of his father's detention - because he was German – in World War 1. His mother was, of course English and it took a long time before they even got released and all their savings returned.

[Part 2 0:51:10] Lee: Fuchs' father was a German living in Britain? So he was rounded up was he?

Blaiklock: Yes. He was rounded up and put in the Isle of Man, I think it was. Bunny never mentioned this. I went to George Lowes's funeral and a friend said 'Could you give us a description of George Lowe?' 'Yes, he was very pleasant company, but I really don't know much about him'. You get very parochial, I think, at the bases. Much more important is 'Have we got enough dog food?' 'Have I got to do cooking in 3 weeks time?' And such like.

[Part 2 0:51:50] Lee: Your description of Fuchs reminds me of a description I read about Scott, where he was a man who was used to giving orders and nobody really questioned him very much – even if he was wrong.

Blaiklock: Yes. Bunny has more experience in what was successful. It was he who planned the TAE. It was shot down with great emphasis by Brian Roberts at the Scott Polar. Wordie was his mentor and it is reputed that when he went to Scott Polar and Brian Roberts was there, Wordie pointed out 'That's the enemy'. So there was tension amongst the top people. Bunny's plan did work. Nothing like success to show your plan's good. Bunny estimated 2000 miles in 100 days. A pretty wild guess – you might say because he had no idea what the speed would be. We actually covered 2100 miles in 99 days. You can't get much better than that. That says everything.

[Part 2 0:53:56] lee: Did he ever ball anyone out or lose his rag?

Blaiklock: A funny incident. We played a joke on him at Stonington base. Bunny, of course, was not only base leader but he was leader of the whole expedition. He used to get messages from the Governor sent by Morse code, which were sometimes confidential. We used to have a thing called a one-time pad which is almost unbreakable. It's tedious to use and normally the messages were done by 3 people. Somebody would do the subtracting, somebody would come in with the book and somebody would write it. But if it was really confidential Bunny headed it 'decode yourself'. We made up a farcical message about what to do. We were going to abandon everything and do something particularly maddening .

[Part 2 0:53:56] Lee: This was at Stonington?

Blaiklock: Stonington. Yes. And he came out red and said 'I'll bloody well tell them what I think about it - and it's going to be in plain language as well.' He was ranting and raving. I've never seen him so angry. Then he stopped - looked around – we were all trying not to laugh. 'Who thought this one up?' It was the best funny joke I have ever seen. But it was artificial in the sense that he was angry, but we had caused the anger. He wasn't angry with us.

[Part 2 0:54:27] Lee: Could he take a joke – because there was more than one?

Blaiklock: We played a number of jokes on him. We had the Boat race. He was a mad keen Cambridge man and on the World Service they broadcast it – Raymond Glendenning was a very well known commentator. We heard when it was going to be – at 3.30 – but we told Bunny it would be at 2.30. We put on our own show and Cambridge did everything wrong. A man fell in; the cox got in at the wrong end of the boat; they were catching crabs, and we finally sank the boat. Bunny was tearing his hair out. (laughs). 'What has happened?' he said.

[Part 1 0:55:06] Lee: It was a fake commentary?

Blaiklock: It was a fake commentary, yes. He had the last laugh because Cambridge won by four lengths, I think. But he played jokes on other people as well. He could take a joke.

[Part 2 0:55:20] Lee: When was your last trip South?

Blaiklock: That was in the 1990's. On the cruise ships. Bernard Stonehouse had been given a grant to study the effects of tourism on the environment. So he would be measuring the size of the moss banks and whether the penguins were being disrupted and such like. But he had no maps of a big enough scale, so he asked me to go. So I had 3 years, each about a month going down as a free holiday. I produced large scale maps. As Bernard said, going down the Neumayer Channel - one of the most beautiful channels on the west of the peninsula - 'This is the way to see Antarctica - on a comfortable ship with a gin and tonic in your hand.' I saw a lot more of the peninsula than I, and most Fids had ever seen before. The cruise ships called at all sorts of places.

[Part 2 0:56:28] Lee: Your association with the Antarctic is a long period of time, isn't it? So you must have seen a complete revolution in how things work down there.

Blaiklock: Well, I think the biggest change is in communications. Normally we got mail once a year - if we were lucky. There was no voice, telephones and sat navs. It was all done by Morse code and of course any radio operator could pick up any message you sent. They were fairly costly as well. So I think that has altered completely the perception. When I visited Scott base many years later and they had weekly telephone calls to wives, girlfriends, anything. I think sometimes it produced problems, in the sense that they weren't completely isolated. 'Tough - we'll get our messages in a year's time.' They were living partly in the proper World, and yet in Antarctica with its isolation and problems.

[Part 2 0:57:41] Lee: Living in two Worlds at once?

Blaiklock: Two Worlds at once. I don't think it gives better happiness. It obviously gives better communications all round for running the thing. The other thing of course, especially in the British ones, is that far fewer of the Fids now winter. The field parties get flown out in November or December and stay for three or four months and then get flown back - that's the geologists and glaciologists. Much more efficient but I think it's lost some of the close camaraderie and friends you made when you all stayed all winter all the time. But that's just the old fashioned fuddy-duddy's view.

[Part 2 0:58:29] Lee: And they've got women down there now.

Blaiklock: And they've got women! You've seen, of course, the BAS ...

[Part 2 0:58:36] Lee: The *BAS Club magazine*?

Blaiklock: That will be remembered for hundreds of years I think.

[Part 2 0:58:41] Lee: I must explain that the magazine was Bob Burton's final edition which has a bikini clad lady cavorting with penguins.

Blaiklock: Apparently it caused quite a hubbub because the new BAS Director, I think, is a female.

[Part 2 0:58:57] Lee: Jane Francis – she will be in October.

Blaiklock: I think she's caused a bit of agony.

[Part 2 0:59:03] Lee: I think there's been a protest note.

Blaiklock: Yes. I mean it was basically the Americans who arranged it.

[Part 2 0:59:13] Lee: It's a genuine news story. They were doing a bikini shoot in the Antarctic. A fashion shoot.

Blaiklock: That's a marvellous photo for Bob Burton to go out on his last edition as editor!

[Part 2 0:59:03] Lee: But women generally? Fuchs would never have allowed it would he?

Blaiklock: No. He would have been dead against it. I've only seen one incidence where there problems. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They disappeared in the afternoon and I suspect they had sex. That's pure supposition. The remaining [REDACTED] were very upset and they really never spoke to this man, except from necessity. He was sent to Coventry almost.

[Part 2 1:01:34] Lee: Jealousy?

Blaiklock: No. I think it upset the camaraderie of the base. I don't really know. I wasn't really influenced by it as I knew that in 3 weeks or a month's time I would be back at home with my wife. So it wasn't jealousy in that sense. Of course, I think it was an American in the Antarctic who was asked what he missed most. He said "temptation". Quite a good answer.

[Part 2 1:01:34] Lee: What do you miss most now? Do you still yearn for the Antarctic?

Blaiklock: You always think you'd just like to go back once more, but you know it won't work. You're getting old, and you get tired and I couldn't face the travelling. No, as I have commented I've had a wonderful life and have been very lucky to have been able to do it. If I was young again and I had the opportunity I'd do exactly the same. The only thing – I might have kept better diaries.

[Part 2 1:02:14] Lee: Ken, it's been a real pleasure. Thank you very much.