

PAUL BURTON

Edited transcript of a recording of Paul Burton interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 12th July 2013. BAS Archives AD6/24/1/230. Transcribed by Andy Smith, 16 September 2015.

[Part 1 0:00:00] Lee: This is Paul Burton, interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee, on the 12th of July 2013. Paul Burton Part 1.

Burton: My name is Paul Burton. Place of birth: Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

[Part 1 0:00:15] Lee: When?

Burton: 18th of the 9th, '48.

[Part 1 0:00:20] Lee: So how old are you now?

Burton: 64. One of the young ones!

[Part 1 0:00:24] Lee: You're a young one, yeah. Would you say that your Dad was an educated man?

Burton: No, not by a long way.

[Part 1 0:00:33] Lee: What did he do?

Burton: He was a miner, a hard working miner. Drank hard, smoked hard, and just looked after his family.

[Part 1 0:00:44] Lee: So were you raised in a fairly small house?

Burton: Yes. Well we moved actually. We moved two or three times, but the first house I remember living in was a council house. And then we moved to ... it was a private rented house which was virtually two down, three up, and we had a bathroom!

[Part 1 0:01:08] Lee: With hot water?

Burton: Yes, hot water, and an inside toilet. So it was amazing, in those days.

[Part 1 0:01:15] Lee: So how come young Paul didn't follow his dad down the pit?

Burton: My Dad said 'You can do whatever you want when you leave school, but you are not going down the pit', and in those days, I think to go down the pit I would have earned £5 a week. An apprenticeship was something like £2 a week, but the pit was out. 'Do what you want, but no pit.'

[Part 1 0:01:37] Lee: Can you understand why he said that?

Burton: Yes, in lots of ways, yes. He knew nothing else in his day when he left school. His father was a miner, his grandfather, his great great grandfather was a

miner. But I think he just probably wanted to give an opportunity to his son. I had three sisters and he made sure they all went into reasonable jobs.

[Part 1 0:02:05] Lee: So what reasonable job did you go into?

Burton: Well when I left school I started off as a joiner, and did joining for three months, and bitterly complained when I came home at night, saying 'I'm not learning anything. He's not showing me anything.' At the time there used to be a joiner company (one man band) and then a small plumbing company, he was a plumbing electrician, and a builder, and they did ... Because toilets had come into Barnsley, into ... We were having inside toilets, and we were building bathrooms, converting bedrooms into bathrooms and putting toilets and bathrooms in. The actual plumbing company, when he knew I had left the joiner, said come and work for him. So that's how I started at plumbing.

[Part 1 0:02:53] Lee: And so did you train on the job, so to speak? Or did you go to night school?

Burton: I went to night school. I trained ... I did an apprenticeship, and it was four days plumbing, well 4½ days because in them days we worked Saturday morning. One day at college which cost me; I lost two shillings a week for going. I did that for two years and then I did four nights a week in my own part.

[Part 1 0:03:22] Lee: Four nights a week? In ...?

Burton: At college. I went for four nights a week after the first two years.

[Part 1 0:03:30] Lee: I never realised plumbing was so complicated.

Burton: Well I did a City & Guilds, and then I did what they called in them days, it was a full tech, which was mainly plumbing and construction.

[Part 1 0:03:44] Lee: Did you take to it, this gentle art of managing water?

Burton: Yes. I enjoyed it. I think what I did enjoy, I enjoyed working in people's homes, and to a certain extent I lived a very ... almost a sheltered childhood. The company I worked for went into quite what I used to say was posh houses. They weren't terraced houses and we did a lot of good quality work, and the chap who I did my apprenticeship with, Frank Kelsey, he broke his back. He fell off a three-storey building, couldn't drive a car, so we had a motorbike and a huge box, wooden box at the side, and that's what we used to put the cast iron baths in to take them to people's homes.

[Part 1 0:04:37] Burton: So it was a company with a difference, and every day was a blessing to Frank because in his eyes he had died more than once, and I think I learned my patience and my thoughts to life, from Frank Kelsey. I was in Scouting. His two sons were in Scouting. Frank had been involved in Scouting. So there was an element ... I always remember what he said to me one time. He said 'Paul, what you know would fill a postage stamp; what you don't know would fill twenty.' And that's the philosophy of Frank.

[Part 1 0:05:22] Lee: When did you feel you first began to know that there was a place called the Antarctic?

Burton: Quite strange really because I always enjoyed geography at school. I knew where the Antarctic was but virtually knew nothing about it. I had two pals (there were three of us): Steve Wormald and Rod Pashley were both Fids and we actually bought an old Ford Anglia – a bit of a banger and we were going to have it done up and we were going to go climbing in the Alps. Rod Pashley and Steve Wormald, I'd heard them speak about the Antarctic. They wanted to do something and I had always had the spirit of adventure in me.

[Part 1 0:06:09] Burton: All my school pals, they didn't do anything. I used to do judo; they were football mad I think, to a certain extent, and I have never had any interest in football. I never have. I can always remember taking my son to a football match in Leeds to watch Leeds versus I think it was Manchester, and found ourselves sat in the Manchester side, shouting for Leeds. So it just proved what I know about football. But we all applied, unbeknown to each other and we all went. So it was an interesting thing. It may sound silly but I think the Antarctic was the making of me.

[Part 1 0:06:53] Lee: How do you mean?

Burton: Well it gave me opportunity to travel; it gave me the opportunity to see places I had never thought I would ever see. And I think I quickly learned when I set off and got onto the ship, that there was a lot of people there far more educated and clever than I was. And I enjoyed being around people who I could learn things from and the experience that they'd got when I had little experience.

[Part 1 0:07:23] Lee: Are you talking about scientists or ...?

Burton: Both. Scientists and support staff. Having a local boy, came from a local town, and to a certain extent I think, almost narrow-minded. And I think it broadened my horizon.

[Part 1 0:07:38] Lee: So what made you apply then? Because did you see an advert, or ...?

Burton: Yes, I saw an advert. In fact it was Frank Kelsey, the plumber, who gave me the advert and he said 'Look at this. Have you seen this?' And I thought 'Well, that's for me.' And I can always remember travelling down to London. I think I had been to London before but it were only once with school. And even catching a train down to London was almost like a major thing. I can remember when I got to – because it was in Gillingham Street in those days. I think it was Prue who was the secretary. She said to me [posh voice] 'Have you come far?' I said 'I have come down from Barnsley, Yorkshire.' 'And what time did you set off?' 'Oh about six this morning.' 'Oh you poor dear!' I just thought 'Absolutely fantastic.' It was silly things like that that really ... I wanted to do things and I knew I wanted to do things but it was a case of what do you do and how do you go about it.

[Part 1 0:08:43] Lee: So it wasn't really that you wanted to go to the Antarctic? It was just that you wanted to go somewhere?

Burton: I wanted to go somewhere and do something.

[Part 1 0:08:49] Lee: And did the advert say 'Plumber wanted'?

Burton: It said Builder. No I didn't apply for a plumbing job; I applied for a building job. It just said 'Builders required.'

[Part 1 0:08:57] Lee: Were you qualified?

Burton: As a builder? I can get away with anything, and have done for many years really.

[Part 1 0:09:05] Lee: So there was no problem with Frank then, when you got the job?

Burton: No no. Frank didn't own the company. Rainer Fothergill owned the company and both Rainer and Frank were just over the moon. They just thought it was a golden opportunity, for somebody they knew wanted to (a) learn a skill and then (b) put it into practice. But when you say 'Was I qualified for building?', working for a small company you did many many things. But I wasn't frightened of going. I wasn't frightened of actually doing enough, learning new skills as well.

[Part 1 0:09:46] Lee: This was big news in Barnsley, wasn't it?

Burton: It was big in our local newspaper, what was it called? *The Chronicle. The Local Chronicle.* It said 'Local Boy Makes Good.' [Laughs] How drastic! Yes, and I've still got that cutting somewhere today.

[Part 1 0:10:03] Lee: And how about your mining dad? How did he feel about you were going to the white stuff rather than the black stuff?

Burton: It was interesting really, because when I ... Actually I was filling an application form in, and my mum had said to him ... But he was a man of very few words, but what he said had to go and it had to happen, and he was a man that ... I can remember my mum got herself a job, as a home help. Her home help used to cost me a fortune because she'd scrounge a bit of carpet from one old man and give it to an old lady who had got nothing. It was a case of 'Paul will move it. If he can't move it in the car he can move it on a wheel barrow'. She begged and stealed and borrowed from one place to give to somebody else. But when he came home from the pit, it was a case of dinner had to be on the table and Mum was home to look after the kids and look after Dad as far as food, and look after the house. He obviously got to know I were filling a form in and he just walked past me and he said 'It's no good filling that in. You are not going.' I said 'Why?' 'You're not going there. Too far.' And that was it. Never another word. I thought 'There's no point in challenging it. I might as well just sign the form.'

[Part 1 0:11:24] Lee: So what happened when you got the job?

Burton: Oh he was thrilled to bits. He'd go to his local club and go to the pub and 'My lad's gone to the Antarctic.'

[Part 1 0:11:32] Lee: A complete turnaround?

Burton: Oh yes. So thrilled and so over the moon, but to me ...

[Part 1 0:11:38] Lee: It's a good job you ignored him, isn't it?

Burton: It is, yes.

[Part 1 0:11:44] Lee: What do you recall about the interview?

Burton: Well I was interviewed by Bill Sloman, and I can't remember a great deal about Bill Sloman but I've always admired Bill Sloman for what he did, what he knew, how he made judgement. I can remember him coming on to the base and he knew everybody's name; everybody, he knew them. Obviously he'd done his homework before he actually arrived on the base, and he'd probably have his little box with a photograph and our name, and what we did.

[Part 1 0:12:14] Lee: A card index? He did a famous card index?

Burton: Yes, a man of many skills and many talents. And I suppose I wasn't the first but he made a judgement based on what was in front of him, I think, more than actually what was filled in in a form.

[Part 1 0:12:31] Lee: So, looking back on it, would you say that it was more important that you looked as though you would fit in than your ability to build to a certain specification?

Burton: Yes, definitely, and I find that with a lot of people who were down there. You could question their ability for doing the job, but as a person, they were right for the job.

[Part 1 0:12:52] Lee: And that was down to Sloman?

Burton: Yes. I think so, yes, and even to Eric Salmon afterward, because Eric Salmon's skills and how he did things was very similar. I think BAS was an old boy network, if you can call it that, but sometimes it wasn't what you knew, it was who you knew. I can remember once I had been and been accepted, you'd to go through and have you teeth checked and things like that, and I was having great problems getting my teeth checked, and phoned BAS and Bill Sloman came on the phone and just said 'Just one moment, Paul.' A few seconds later he came back and said: such and such a date, such and such a street, in London. 'Just put your expenses in and we shall all be done.' And I just thought 'That man's done it again, hasn't he?' And I can remember going for the medical, to see was it Surgeon Colonel Haskard¹; I think it was.

¹ Hayward. Sir Cosmo Haskard was the Falkland Islands Governor.

[Part 1 0:13:49] Lee: In Harley Street?

Burton: Harley Street, yes. Well when I came home and told my mum I had been to Harley Street, 'Ah, my son has been to Harley Street.' All I can remember from the medical is 'Drop your trousers. Bend down. Fine, you are all right.' And that was it. He just tapped the chest and I think that was about it. Again I think it was another old boy network.

[Part 1 0:14:18] Lee: Did you get the impression then that FIDS was a well-respected, well-heeled organisation, or was it very much a Cinderella organisation?

Burton: No I got the impression very strongly it was a well-run, well equipped organisation.

[Part 1 0:14:36] Lee: This was in 19 sixty ...?

Burton: Eight. I first went South in '68. October the 8th 1968.

[Part 1 0:14:44] Lee: You were a bit young, weren't you, to join BAS?

Burton: Yes, quite young. Well in '68 I was 19 – no 20 sorry – 20 when we sailed, and I went to South Georgia and was supposed to have been in South Georgia for 12 months. Because we went to South Georgia. South Georgia then had the remnants from the whaling. There was a Falkland Island family there. He had lived on the Falklands for 28 years and we were going in to turn it into a research station ready for the following year, for it to become a fully-fledged research station. And virtually we were kicking them off and we ran into problems and a gentleman called Coleman who ran South Georgia with a rod of iron – he was like the Officer in Charge. Everybody worshipped him for whatever reason it was; he ran it with a rod of iron, But there was a policeman, a customs man. The old whaling station was closed but we found ourselves in a situation where they were losing their livelihood and they were returning to wherever: Falklands, England, after many many years' service. So the atmosphere was a bit hard for us.

[Part 1 0:16:09] Lee: You were not welcome?

Burton: We were not welcome at all.

[Part 1 0:16:12] Lee: Because you were intruders, or you were part of this process of change?

Burton: We were part of a process of change, but at the same time that 12 months was very quickly reduced to 6 months because of the atmosphere. So I only technically did a summer in '68, and then came home.

[Part 1 0:16:30] Lee: Can you remember how that decision was reached, that you should come out early?

Burton: It wasn't decided, I think, in South Georgia; it was decided back at London and on the Falklands, with the information that Dave Hill (commonly known as

Fanny) ... He was the chap in charge. He was reporting back. Things like the toothpaste and the writing materials and bits and bobs which were all free, we had to pay for them. They wouldn't let us have them. BAS supplied them and they were on South Georgia but just to be awkward, they wanted to charge us import duty on them, and things like that. So I think we worked the summer and then at the end of the season it was decided that we would ... Well there was two of us returned back to England out of a team of four.

[Part 1 0:17:25] Burton: Dave Hill went on to Adelaide, one chap he was supposed to go down to Halley and one of them was homesick anyway; and he went home early. So what happened: as the, I think it was the *Perla Dan*, came out of Halley, Dave Hill got on that and went down to Adelaide. Golly (John Gallsworthy) stayed with myself and finished off the bits and bobs and I think that's when I really learned what the Antarctic was about, because Golly was a character and a half and a great a guy. Him and myself, we just clicked. We worked hard and we had time off to explore the island and did things what Fids generally do.

[Part 1 0:18:11] Lee: This resentment towards you from the Government establishment; who was there before you?

Burton: The Falkland Island Government really.

[Part 1 0:18:19] Lee: So it wasn't particularly personal against the individuals, it was resentment that BAS was taking over?

Burton: Yes, yes. Like I say, some people had lived there for 20-odd years. They had obviously been back to the UK or back to the Falklands, but they were losing a nice situation, and Coleman, he had a palace on legs. His was a wonderful building. Whatever was going to happen to him I don't know, but he was losing the authority that he had got. He was a commander-in-chief down there.

[Part 1 0:18:57] Lee: So was the establishment of a BAS base at South Georgia, was that part of the thinking was to get rid of the old guard? Had they become difficult to deal with?

Burton: What I know and what I can remember, it was a case of their jobs had come to an end and the Falkland Islands Government ...

[Part 1 0:19:15] Lee: Because the whaling had stopped?

Burton: The whaling had stopped. It had stopped a few years previously, so there was nothing for them. So it was just a continuation of ... British Antarctic Survey I presume getting another base in South Georgia – a northern base. And as it worked out, they did quite a lot of research there in one form or another.

[Part 1 0:19:39] Lee: Did you have any plumbing problems in South Georgia? According to Dad Etchells, there was a problem because you sent for supplies which were metric, but Shackleton House was imperial.

Burton: No, that was the greenhouse. I thought that was the greenhouse, where the bricks ...

[Part 1 0:19:54] Lee: Tell me the story.

Burton: They were going to build a greenhouse.

[Part 1 0:19:58] Lee: At South Georgia?

Burton: At South Georgia and the bricks came in one year and there wasn't time to build the greenhouse and there wasn't enough bricks. So the following year they brought more bricks and then it got in the process of being built. We set one corner up and another bricklayer set another corner up and when we came together it didn't meet. One was imperial bricks and one was metric bricks. But I don't remember anything about plumbing. I can remember getting wet through one time, doing some plumbing at South ...

[Part 1 0:20:33] Lee: How did you solve the brick problem?

Burton: To be perfectly frank I don't know and I don't think the greenhouse lasted long at South Georgia.

[Part 1 0:20:44] Lee: So how far down the road did you get with fitting out Shackleton House as a new BAS HQ?

Burton: What we were doing, we went in primarily to put an aerial up outside. We actually erected the aerial and then ... Shackleton House originally was on stilts and they were putting wet labs in. So we had to actually put, fill in between the stilts and put floors in.

[Part 1 0:21:17] Lee: So you were adding a basement, effectively?

Burton: Yes yes, and then we actually put a staircase from outside in, as a fire escape. So there were lots of constructional type work, getting it ready. I did very little plumbing as what I can remember. As I say, I didn't go down as the plumber to do much and I think in lots of ways it was just a case of getting it ready. The following year there was a couple of builders went in to actually modernise it and do things to it.

[Part 1 0:21:49] Lee: So you were doing preparatory work?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:21:51] Lee: And then you were pulled out because of the atmosphere?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:21:55] Lee: So had you finished the work you were supposed to do, when the call came to leave?

Burton: Most of it, yes. We got the aerial up and got the staircase in and some of the parts that we were filling in between. There was obviously lots and lots of ... because we had a lot of outbuildings and the generators were poor generators, so there were new generators going in so the following year, when Dad Etchells went in, Golly went in. I think Fanny went in actually, as the cook. And there were many other people went in. So that's when the volume of the work started, once the people had left. I went back there the following year to go to Halley, but I had three months back in South Georgia.

[Part 1 0:22:38] Lee: To finish off?

Burton: Well in lots of ways I got a bit of a revenge in a case of: they kicked us off; I went back and saw them off the base. I thought 'Well, up yours, mate!'

[Part 1 0:22:48] Lee: It was like that, was it?

Burton: It was pretty bad. To be perfectly honest, it was quite interesting because as a team of people, they were fantastic people, lovely, but as a band of people who were losing their jobs, losing their occupations and losing their homes, it was a sad affair, and I felt quite sorry for them.

[Part 1 0:23:14] Lee: What did you make of South Georgia as a place to be? Because you explored it with Golly (Gallsworthy)?

Burton: Beautiful, absolutely beautiful. I would love to have wintered actually, so see what it was like in winter. But it was nice to explore, to see the remnants of the whaling stations. You see in my day there was Tolsen, the Norwegian. He was still there maintaining the whaling station because he thought the whaling was going to restart again. You walked into some of the bunkrooms and it was like a ghost town. There was plates and cups and saucers, with food still on them. It was a ghost town.

[Part 1 0:23:58] Lee: They had left overnight?

Burton: Just left overnight, yes.

[Part 1 0:23:59] Lee: Do you remember a particular incident, going out in the field with Gallsworthy? A particularly good day? A particularly bad day? No? Sorry don't worry if you haven't. Don't worry.

Burton: We had many good days, going out.

[Part 1 0:24:14] Lee: Such as?

Burton: Just exploring the island. Just going round the penguin colony and just sliding down the slopes. It was beautiful weather and it was what I always wanted in the sense that I suppose the remoteness of it, and to a certain extent, it's not all that remote. But it was because I had been nowhere else in that sense. Oh the mountains; they were almost so close, but untouchable.

[Part 1 0:24:50] Lee: Mount ...?

Burton: Paget, and from all our bedrooms you got the full view of that. Even at night, after you had finished work, just to walk round to the whaling station and walk through the whaling station, you could imagine what the whalers did and what they felt like. Stories Tolsen used to say about them, because there was no drinking on the whaling station. At every opportunity they would use potato peelings and make booze. Tolsen used to say that he could remember one time it lasted a fortnight. They locked themselves in, did the whalers, into whatever it was, the building, and literally drank and drank and drank.

[Part 1 0:25:36] Lee: A fourteen day binge?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:25:38] Lee: Were you part of this?

Burton: No no, that's where the whalers had gone.

[Part 1 0:25:41] Lee: But you had alcohol, presumably?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:25:44] Lee: So was there fraternisation? Black market?

Burton: No not really, and to be honest, I have never been a drinker. I didn't bother in them days.

[Part 1 0:25:57] Lee: I think you left a girlfriend behind, didn't you?

Burton: In England? Well it wasn't a girlfriend as such. It was just a ... It was quite interesting because her parents were very protective of her, and she could only play with certain people. They allowed me to go round and play with her and we grew up in lots of ways. My mum knew her mum and things like that and they bought a shop and they had moved from where they originally lived to this shop. In those days you could buy furniture which was primed but not painted and they bought this new bedroom furniture in for when they moved to the shop. She'd had this bedroom furniture painted pink and the story goes that she wrote 'Today I have painted my drawers pink, and when you come home I will show you them.' Of course she got known down there as 'Pink Drawers'. [Laughs]

[Part 1 0:27:00] Lee: This was the 200 words?

Burton: Yes. How it got out was: the 200 words in and 200 words out, it got mentioned in that. When you are in the field, people like to listen to each other's radio scheds.

[Part 1 0:27:15] Lee: Wasn't there a pancake story as well?

Burton: Yes, Pancake Day, yes.

[Part 1 0:27:24] Lee: What was that?

Burton: I can't remember it properly. I've forgotten.

[Part 1 0:27:30] Lee: 'Today is Pancake Day and I thought of you.'

Burton: That's right. 'Today is Pancake Day and I thought of you.' Yes. Oh dear, some fantastic quotes!

[Part 1 0:27:41] Lee: And when you were building the greenhouse, did you not come into a slight conflict with Golly, Gallsworthy, about it?

Burton: I always remember Golly chasing me round somewhere and I think he painted my backside with something. Was that right?

[Part 1 0:27:57] Lee: 'During the building of the greenhouse, I was up a ladder' and you painted his legs. 'In the ensuing chase I managed to paint a rather fetching decoration on the bum Paul's trousers.'

Burton: Yes, that's right. I can always remember one time when we were putting the staircase ... There was a chappie who was like a handyman for when the Government, when the people from South Georgia were there, and he stayed on to help us because there were certain things on the island we didn't know: where the main valves were and things like that. So BAS employed him to stay; and when we all left at the end of the 6 months, he came out with us. We were putting the staircase in and we had actually cut out from outside, holes for the staircase to fit in. I forgot his name actually but he came and he put his feet, or his boots, through these two holes and Golly looked at me and I kept him talking and Golly nailed his foot through his boot end and when he came to move, he couldn't shift. It was just silly little things like that which made the day and just typical Golly.

[Part 1 0:29:14] Lee: Well there seems to be a lot more practical joking done in your presence than generally speaking than average.

Burton: Oh right.

[Part 1 0:29:22] Lee: Unless I am just hearing about them.

Burton: Oh dear. Life's too short to be miserable, isn't it?

[Part 1 0:29:28] Lee: Especially in the Antarctic. So when you were pulled out of South Georgia, after the first six months, did you come home?

Burton: I came home, yes.

[Part 1 0:29:36] Lee: How was that? An unexpected return?

Burton: Yes, it was, and I felt disappointed because I had gone for 12 months. I suppose you almost feel like you have let yourself down, let your family down and particularly let British Antarctic Survey down.

[Part 1 0:29:52] Lee: It wasn't your fault, was it?

Burton: No, it wasn't my fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It was just a situation that occurred. The Survey didn't ...

[Part 1 0:29:58] Lee: So what did BAS do about you, this spare man back in Britain?

Burton: I can remember Bill Sloman either speaking with him, or making contact with me. He just said 'Don't worry, you can go down again.' And he said 'Don't worry about being paid. We will look after that.' And I was paid for those months that I was at home.

[Part 1 0:30:17] Lee: So you had a summer at home on the ...?

Burton: Yes, just enjoyed myself and being paid for it. Again I just thought 'How can somebody just take me to one side and just say "Don't worry, we will sort them."' And typical Bill Sloman again. The following year, or the following October or November, I went down on the *Biscoe*.

[Part 1 0:30:40] Lee: So that was the second spell at South Georgia?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:40:44] Lee: And then you were moved on to Halley?

Burton: Well I went down on the *Biscoe* and did a few months at South Georgia waiting for the *Perla Dan* to come down, bringing all the Fids down that went to Halley, and then caught it at South Georgia and then went on to Halley on the *Perla Dan*.

[Part 1 0:31:02] Lee: So you had effectively been posted to Halley?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:31:04] Lee: For a year and a half, or ...?

Burton: Yes, one winter, so it's effectively ... yes.

[Part 1 0:31:08] Lee: What did you make of Halley when you got there? It was a very different kettle of fish?

Burton: Yes. I can always remember a gentleman, Pete Clarkson. He was the BC and he came on board, because once the ship ties alongside, it invites all the Fids from the base to breakfast and they have whatever they want. I can remember, as I say, Pete Clarkson coming on board, introducing himself and speaking to all these new Fids and saying 'This is not Blackpool and this is not Blackpool promenade. So you have got to look after yourself; you have got to be aware of safety.' And I just thought 'This is certainly not Blackpool.'

[Part 1 0:31:51] Lee: Were you a bit mortified by that environment?

Burton: Well again I think the spirit of adventure clicked in and I just thought 'Where have I come to? Absolutely fantastic.' And then catching a vehicle that travelled two miles an hour up to the base, and going onto the base, and looking round. I just thought 'This is what I want. This is the life for me.'

[Part 1 0:32:19] Lee: Really?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:32:21] Lee: Were you not a bit fazed by having to live underground?

Burton: Yes, I was. Not fazed but I just thought 'I wonder how we are going to cope with this.' One thing I knew, but I didn't think about, was the darkness, the actual 24-hour day. It never registered. Although it was there in the back of my head, it never registered until somebody said 'I wonder what it's like in winter.' And somebody said 'Dark!' The funniest thing was that we were being shown round and we went into the drying room, and there was a bra hanging on the washing line and I thought 'Oh my God, what's here?' because in those days there was no women at all. It's just a trick that Fids did when they used to hang a pair of women's pants and a bra in the drying room for new Fids.

[Part 1 0:33:17] Lee: I wouldn't like to say where they got them from.

Burton: But what I did, I was supposed to go for two years at Halley but I transferred after the first year because I just wanted to see as much as I could.

[Part 1 0:33:34] Lee: OK. Let's just talk a bit more about Halley, then. What sort of work were you doing there? Not much plumbing, I guess?

Burton: No, not a lot of plumbing; just a few odd repairs, but again I went down as a builder. It was mainly to do maintenance of the building. It was being crushed. The ice was crushing the buildings because when they originally built, they built it on top, on the surface, and then snow just accumulates and ...

[Part 1 0:34:03] Lee: Was this Halley ...?

Burton: 'Grillage Village².'

[Part 1 0:34:06] Lee: Right. So you were trying to fight back the ice, were you?

Burton: Fight back the ice, yes.

[Part 1 0:34:12] Lee: How did you go about doing that?

Burton: I use to climb, repair ... Well two things really. Take out the roof trusses and put new roof trusses in, or strengthen roof trusses. So I was permanently on my back

² Halley II.

in the loft space repairing, or I was outside, laid on the building outside, breaking ice away, stopping it from putting pressure on to the building.

[Part 1 0:34:40] Lee: It sounds a bit like coal mining?

Burton: Well it was a bit like coal mining in lots of ways. In fact at one time I'd have thought 'I could have got £5 a week for this.' [Laughs] But actually it was interesting because it wasn't until many months later ... You do things; Health & Safety wasn't a major issue. You obviously take care of yourself, but it's not like today. But I didn't realise that the building itself was actually only on the four corners and the main runs. The actual building: it was a chasm underneath in some cases 45 foot deep.

[Part 1 0:35:20] Lee: It was over a void?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:35:21] Lee: How was the void created?

Burton: It had just melted away. It was almost ... When I found out, I thought 'Good God, I could have ...' Anybody, there was often maybe one or two or all three of us.

[Part 1 0:35:37] Lee: So you were concerned you might have rolled off the roof and gone straight down into the crevasse.

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:35:41] Lee: Were you also concerned about whether the hut would collapse into this hole?

Burton: No. Once I found out, yes. But you knew the corners were fairly solid; it was just the middle, and we only found out because we took the floorboards up, I think it was in the lounge, because there was a problem with some floorboards breaking or whatever it was. Almost a scary situation.

[Part 1 0:36:13] Lee: Well a couple of rotten floorboards and you could have lost somebody down ...

Burton: Oh yeah.

[Part 1 0:36:17] Lee: It was like that, was it?

Burton: Yes, easily.

[Part 1 0:36:19] Lee: Was anything done about that?

Burton: No because we just made, in my report I mentioned it and we made people aware of it, but 'Don't dance on the floorboards.' [Laughs] Or you might lose somebody.

[Part 1 0:36:34] Lee: That's the first time somebody has mentioned that.

Burton: They were massive crevasses; not crevasses but holes.

[Part 1 0:36:40] Lee: Pits?

Burton: Pits, yes.

[Part 1 0:36:41] Lee: Pits, underneath the hut? And there was no strengthening done?

Burton: No, none at all. They weren't all like that. It was mainly the lounge. The biggest problem was: the insulation of the buildings was so poor. In fact in those days they didn't think about it and the heat that was in the buildings just escaped. I never took any floorboards up in the two bedrooms. It was mainly the kitchen and the lounge and I daren't go in the generator shed and look under there. Because the generators vibrating all the time, I daren't think what would happen there. But part of the work I did was just extending the actual shafts to get into and out of the building and the shaft to take all the rubbish and bring things into the building.

[Part 1 0:37:34] Lee: You mean as the building sank, you had to ...

Burton: As it gets more and more snow on top of it, you extend the shafts upwards.

[Part 1 0:37:42] Lee: Yes. When you were hacking away at this ice above the roof of the hut, what did you do with it? How did you get rid of it?

Burton: Well that's how we found out where it was going, because you could hear it going down beside the building.

[Part 1 0:37:56] Lee: Into the chasm?

Burton: Yes, and at one point I thought 'Well, we are hacking all this off. Where is it going?' That made the investigation go down the sides of the building.

[Part 1 0:38:04] Lee: You went down on a rope, did you?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:38:07] Lee: You did?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:38:07] Lee: Tell me about that.

Burton: Well you wonder where all the ice you are hacking off is going and because what happened: it seemed to during daytime, any melt that occurred would fall down and disappear. Overnight the melt would freeze and put pressure onto the roof trusses and that's what you would hear cracking, moaning and groaning. One day I thought 'I had better go and check what is happening, Where's the ice going?' I went down on a rope, down the side, and found to my surprise, it was quite a big chasm at the side and you could walk down the side of the building. And then I suddenly thought 'What's

that?’ and noticed quite a hole and thought ‘Well I will have to investigate that.’ Then something happened in the lounge and somebody went through a floorboard or something, And so I had to start taking floorboards up, or doing something in the lounge. I think it was either the lounge or the actual radio..., because there was the lounge, I think the BC’s office, and then the radio shack, and I think it might have been in the radio shack.

[Part 1 0:39:18] Lee: And there was never any discussion about abandoning the base because it was too dangerous?

Burton: No, it was never ...

[Part 1 0:39:24] Lee: Was it dangerous?

Burton: No I don’t think it was dangerous as in the sense that the building would give way, because it looked fairly firm on the four corners and the lengths and sides of the building. It was mainly in the middle of the building there was this chasm.

[Part 1 0:39:38] Lee: Where the heat had done the most melting?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:39:42] Lee: Gosh! Thank you very much. That’s really interesting. I have not come across that before. Did you get out much at Halley?

Burton: Yes, I was very fortunate. I went out with Dave Peel who was a glaciologist. He was collecting snow samples. Myself, Steve Bean, Dave Peel, a chappie called Gonk (Dave Hoy) and one other – Mark Vallance.

[Part 1 0:40:08] Lee: Were these dog trips or tractor?

Burton: No this was by tractor, tracked him about by vehicle. We prepared ... He had, I think they were stainless steel containers and every so often we stopped, put complete white overalls on, face mask, cap, gloves, little things, dug this pit with stainless steel shovels, took snow samples and then they were all wrapped up. Dave, we had got one of these fellows, he felt the cold and he would wear every conceivable bit of clothing he could get, but kneel all day long on the snow and handle it with no gloves on. He would wrap it in tin foil; then we moved it to these stainless steel containers and it all came back to England.

[Part 1 0:41:01] Lee: What was the point?

Burton: They were looking for, I think, the atomic layer. It was a programme ongoing, which Dave Peel ...

[Part 1 0:41:08] Lee: The atomic layer?

Burton: Atomic bomb.

[Part 1 0:41:11] Lee: You mean 1944-45?

Burton: Yes, and it was all connected.

[Part 1 0:41:18] Lee: So he was looking for radioactive particles, in the snow?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:41:20] Lee: And therefore taking pure samples?

Burton: Yes. I think we did that every 50 kilometres, we dug this pit. I think it was 2 metres square, 2 metres deep. As I remember we got so far and we had to turn back because we just hit this massive, massive crevasse field. I can't remember if we were supposed to go on or we had actually reached the point, but we hit this massive crevasse field and everywhere we went there was crevasses.

[Part 1 0:41:53] Lee: Did you ever hear the results of, what was the scientist called?

Burton: Dave Peel. No I never read a paper; I saw a paper, and I think probably more to my bad management because I went from Halley, as I said, on to Adelaide and went on to do other things. And I often think I would like to have followed that through.

[Part 1 0:42:20] Lee: Was it two winters at Halley?

Burton: No, just one winter.

[Part 1 0:42:22] Lee: One winter, OK.

Burton: And then one winter at Adelaide.

[Part 1 0:42:29] Lee: How was the transfer to Adelaide arranged?

Burton: I think they got invited either to apply to move to another base, or you went to your BC and said 'I would like to move on.' And I can't remember how it came about, but I knew if I had the opportunity, I wanted to move on to see more of the Antarctic. But in those days, very few people moved from Halley to Grahamland and it was almost 'Neither the two shall meet!' because it was the ship. They used to hire the *Perla Dan* and before that I think the *Magga Dan* or *Kista Dan*, so Halley men went straight from England, straight down to Halley and then straight back. And on the way home, if they were fortunate to go picking people up and dropping things off ... but the *Perla* was hired and I think it used to be a hundred days hire per year. So that's why it went straight down and straight back.

[Part 1 0:43:32] Lee: So there was a thousand miles divide, both physically and socially?

Burton: Oh yes, and with other things as well, like dogs. Because I think Grahamland used to think 'Men at Halley are not doggy men. They don't do field trips with dogs. All they do is follow tractors. Tractors go out in the field and dogs just follow the tractors.'

[Part 1 0:43:50] Lee: How did you break that convention, to get transferred to Adelaide Island?

Burton: Well, as I say, you just applied, and I felt quite fortunate and quite pleased that I got the opportunity, and just went as a builder again, continuing building or maintenance, to Adelaide. But came out and before I could get down to Adelaide, came out of Halley, called back at Halley on the way out, went to Signy, and stayed at Signy for a while. I did some work on Signy with a gentleman called Paul Gurling, then went back to the Falklands and got off the *Perla Dan*, waiting to be picked up by either *Shackleton* or ... No it would be *Biscoe* or *Bransfield*. I spent some time in the Falklands. I was fortunate that the *Forrest*, which was the local ship ...

[Part 1 0:44:51] Lee: ??? [incomprehensible] and the *Forrest*?

Burton: *Forrest*? I think it's *Forrest*. It's a local boat that goes collecting wool. Now when I was on the Falklands, I stayed with a lady called Margaret Hetherington, I think it was, and she was one of the three people³ who got killed in the Falkland Island War and I can remember the first morning, she said to me 'You know this is not like England, Paul. We don't have bacon, eggs, and things like that, but we have a nice breakfast. Would you like some eggs?' I said 'Oh yes please.' She said 'Would you like six or twelve?' I had never been offered six eggs before. I stayed with her and her two sons. One was the captain of or in charge of the boat; her other son worked on the boat and they go around the sheep farms on the Falklands collecting wool. I had got this time to kill and he said 'Why don't you come with us?' So I went down to see Clem. He was part of the logistics on Stanley.

[Part 1 0:45:52] Lee: Do you remember his full name⁴?

Burton: Clem? No. Clements was his surname. There was Ted Clapp and then himself. He gave me the opportunity to go on the boat and I think it was for about 5 or 6 days we went round the islands collecting wool off all the local sheep farms. I have never worked as hard in my life. They saw a young lad here who was willing to help and thought 'Let him roll the bales of wool down.' And it was just fantastic; it was just a golden opportunity and I took advantage.

[Part 1 0:46:26] Lee: The wool was baled up, was it?

Burton: All baled up, yes, and brought back to Stanley and then out. And I got the opportunity to see many local sheep farms.

[Part 1 0:46:26] Lee: You were entrusted then with a year's income, weren't you? I mean that wool was a whole year's business for that farm?

Burton: Oh very much so. Yes, and I can remember going to one farm and the people who worked on the farm, most of them were hired hands and lived in a bunk-house. I think they started at 6 in the morning. Breakfast was something like 8 o'clock and

³ The three civilians killed in the conflict were Susan Whitley, Doreen Bonner and Mary Goodwin (source BBC website).

⁴ Ray Clements, always known as Clem.

somebody held the record for eating 26 mutton chops for breakfast. [Laughs] Typical Stanley was a fantastic place. I think there was 2 miles of road, and I think there was something like 2.1 Landrovers per family. I think Stanley was what I imagined, a bit of an outpost, a typical British colony, tin-roofed buildings painted different colours. You took the opportunity, while you were there, you could buy cheap cameras, cheap radio equipment and things like that. So I ordered a camera. I think my salary from BAS was £864 per year, and then you got free food, free accommodation, free clothing, all your shaving equipment, writing equipment, toothpaste, all that was on the base and it was all free.

[Part 1 0:48:11] Lee: At Stanley, the main recreation seems to be the pubs, and you were a non-drinker?

Burton: Yes. In my life I have only ever been drunk four times and one time was in Stanley, and I can't remember if it was when we had come back from building the slipway at Signy. I know Ian Summers who was a Falkland Islander, I actually brought him down. There was him and a chappie who worked with him, Len⁵. He was a Falkland Islander. In fact after we finished he went back to Stanley and he actually murdered his wife in the Falklands.

[Part 1 0:48:51] Lee: He murdered?

Burton: Yes, he killed his wife. I don't know why, probably a drunken rage. But I was on Stanley with Owen and we had been out and I probably just had one too many. I can remember walking down the main street of Stanley holding my shoes in my hand and saying 'Shh, you'll wake people up.' And then the following day we got pulled up in front of Ted Clapp. Somebody had stolen a totem pole, or whatever sort of totem pole it was, out of somebody's garden, and because I was drunk, I got blamed for it, and I had never seen this damned totem pole in my life.

[Part 1 0:49:43] Lee: Let me just clarify this. John Gallsworthy seems to think you got drunk when you missed the ship at Signy.

Burton: Oh that was the time after.

[Part 1 0:49:54] Lee: That was a second occasion?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:49:56] Lee: Right, that's a different story. You had better tell me this one too. This is not representative of your alcoholism, I'm sure.

Burton: No. We were on Stanley. *Bransfield* came in. I'd better repeat that. I was on the *Bransfield* and it came into Signy and we got invited to ... We had a run into Signy and I got invited (because I had been there once before and knew quite a few people there). While we were there, there were some bergy bits coming in and the boat had to leave. So it said 'Everybody get back on.' They said 'Oh it will be all

⁵ Len Minto. Just to make clear, it was Minto not Summers who killed his wife. He was convicted of murder and sent to the UK to serve his sentence.

right, Paul. It will go and anchor off somewhere. It will be all right Paul. You can stay the night.' So I actually stayed and got quite merry and somebody put me to bed, and the boat actually sailed.

[Part 1 0:50:47] Burton: I was supposed to be on the boat and it had gone. But I fell down the steps at Signy, going from top to bottom. I said 'I have broken my leg!' I can remember somebody getting hold of my legs. 'Oh there's nothing wrong with you. You will be all right.' And they put me to bed, or put me on this bit of a sleeping place and gave me a bowl at the side in case I was sick in the night. I woke up next morning, felt quite fine, got up. I thought 'There's a funny smell. What's that?' When I looked, I had actually vomited in somebody's boots. [Laughs] So probably that's what Golly is referring to.

[Part 1 0:51:30] Lee: I expect so. How did you make up the journey? How did you get where you wanted to go?

Burton: Well the *Bransfield* came back for me.

[Part 1 0:51:39] Lee: It actually came back for you?

Burton: Yes, he came back and said 'Get on this so-and-so ship right away!' I can't remember how long ago. It was a few ... It might have been a week or a few days after.

[Part 1 0:51:51] Lee: Were you in the Naughty Corner?

Burton: No, I think it was more of a laugh and a joke more than anything, but you don't want a boat coming to pick you up, do you?

[Part 1 0:52:03] Lee: No, you don't

Burton: As I say, I have been merry four times and I think three times were with FIDS.

[Part 1 0:52:18] Lee: Tell me about leaving the Falklands to go to Adelaide Island.

Burton: Well while I was on the Falklands, Clem had got this brilliant idea. I think he'd had new central heating in his house and he got this brilliant idea that there were some radiators, and a boiler, and bits and bobs and it could be incorporated into Argentine Islands and put central heating in. And he had got a plumber and there was a golden opportunity. So en route to Adelaide, I was dropped off at Argentine Islands to put this central heating system in, which was a shambles and a waste of time. It was half the things were missing. There wasn't enough piping; there wasn't enough of this; there wasn't enough of that. So it was disastrous from start to finish. But it went in. It never worked, I don't think, and then there wasn't enough time to finish it off before I was moved on to Adelaide.

[Part 1 0:53:14] Lee: Tell me about your first impression of Adelaide Island. Because it is very different from anywhere else you had been.

Burton: Oh yes. I thought 'Why have I done this? This is not the Antarctic.'

[Part 1 0:53:23] Lee: Really?

Burton: Yes. I think the remoteness or the look of it. There was a building on the surface. It was summertime. There was pebbles around; there was rock around, and I thought 'Oh dear, have I done the right thing?'

[Part 1 0:53:37] Lee: You mean it was too nice?

Burton: Yes, too nice, and to a certain extent you don't see the piedmont because you have got to go up the slope to get onto the piedmont to where the planes are. And I just felt 'I don't think I am going to enjoy this, but I am here. I had better make the most of it.' And to a certain extent, I don't think I enjoyed Adelaide base as much as I enjoyed Halley, and I felt very fortunate, at somebody else's expense, that I got the opportunity to move on. I didn't particularly enjoy the company of some of the winterers.

[Part 1 0:54:20] Lee: At Adelaide?

Burton: At Adelaide.

[Part 1 0:54:22] Lee: So it was a different feel, a different social atmosphere, was it?

Burton: Yes, different altogether.

[Part 1 0:54:26] Lee: What ...? Can you put the finger on that?

Burton: Yes. Typical, because we did experience it to a certain extent at Halley. British Antarctic Survey used to second so many military people each year and some military people fitted into FIDS and some people didn't. We had a motor mechanic at Halley who found it hard to fit in, but got used to it. We had a radio operator and I think we had one more, but at Adelaide we had an [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who went in primarily to install new generators. It was my job, to a certain extent, to help him and obviously because I was a builder, because the actual generator shed was high up on rock so (a) a ramp had to be built and they had to be hauled up the ramp. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I think to a certain extent it was myself and others who got the generators in the building and almost got them working. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The job, there was a job to be done and it had to be done. There was new generators to go in and people around helped.

[Part 1 0:55:47] Lee: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Part 1 0:55:50] Lee: [REDACTED]

Burton: [REDACTED]

[Part 1 0:55:55] Lee: All right. But the rest of the base got on together?

Burton: Oh yes. Nobody particularly enjoyed the company, to a certain extent, of the base commander. We thought it was a bit 'He's a waste of space.'

[Part 1 0:56:06] Lee: What year was this?

Burton: This was the winter of '71.

[Part 1 0:56:11] Lee: How did the base operate then, with a weak base commander?

Burton: Well I think the people who were there: there was Kenn Back. Well you can't get anybody more laid back than Kenn Back. He was a meteorologist, superb guy, absolutely superb guy. There was Adrian Apps, a meteorologist. Adrian and myself just ... There was something about Adrian that we just clicked; it was fantastic. The cook used to get upset because his soufflés didn't rise at the right time.

[Part 1 0:56:43] Lee: This isn't Wearden?

Burton: Yes. No it wasn't Allan Wearden. If Allan Wearden had have been there we would have had some fantastic meals. Allan can turn a meal out of nothing. I have never known anybody who is a fantastic cook like Allan Wearden, who never appears to be in his kitchen. He is either helping somebody doing something, but when it's mealtimes, you turn up for a meal and you just look at him and think 'Wow!' He has that knack.

[Part 1 0:57:16] Lee: So the quality of the cook is very important to the social life of the base?

Burton: Oh very much so, yes. It's work hard and eat hard. Food is very very important.

[Part 1 0:57:29] Lee: You did some sledging trips with Adrian Apps? One in particular Adrian mentions flying to the north of Adelaide Island and back to the Adelaide Island base. Was this a sledging trip you remember?

Burton: Yes I did that with Adrian. I also did it with Swithinbank.

[Part 1 0:57:45] Lee: I'll come to that in a minute. Adrian says that 'We camped in near whiteout conditions in a crevassed area. In my naivety, I was not afraid but realised the danger because Paul, with his experience, became very twitchy about getting clear of the hidden crevasses.' Do you recall that?

Burton: I do. I suppose to a certain extent Adrian had never ... Adrian moved from Argentine Islands in his first year to his second year at Adelaide and probably hadn't a great deal of outdoor experience and I was conscious that we could lose a man here if we were not careful.

[Part 1 0:58:30] Lee: So he was that naive, was he?

Burton: Yes, to a certain extent, yes. And it was his very first time out with dogs and you have to be careful. I go back to what Pete Clarkson said: 'This is not Blackpool Promenade.' And to a certain extent I laughed at the situation and though 'It's not Blackpool' but what he said was quite right, in a humorous way, and you have always got to be mindful. I like to be in situations, I wouldn't say dangerous situations but I like to be in situations where (a) you have got to think about your own life and think about others, and to a certain extent I have always been that way. It's looking after your comrades is part of what it is all about. Being a Fid and being in the Antarctic was a world of men. There's a book called I think called *The World of Men*. It was certainly about that, and it was about looking after not just yourself, looking about others. Some people used to take that serious – me for one – and others didn't. And I think it is important to look after your fellow man.

[Part 1 0:59:48] Lee: Was there a moment on that trip with Adrian Apps when you were nervous or worried?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 1 0:59:52] Lee: Tell me about that please.

Burton: Just from a point of view of survival ...

[Part 1 0:59:56] Lee: That's pretty serious.

Burton: You know in lots of ways neither of us ... I had spent a year at Halley and I had been out in the field, but again using tractors and being more than two people, there was always somebody ... There was a team of you. I enjoyed that trip but it was a team effort and quite a large team. When you go to two men, nine dogs and a sledge, that's a different situation.

[Part 1 1:00:25] Lee: Are you more exposed?

Burton: Oh I think so, far more exposed.

[Part 1 1:00:28] Lee: So what happened to make you concerned, on that expedition?

Burton: I'm struggling. I can't remember to be honest. Go on. prompt me.

[Part 1 1:00:36] Lee: Well it was to do with camping near crevasses, I think. I haven't got any more than that, I'm afraid.

Burton: I think it was just from my other experience, camping near crevasses that they are big and they are dangerous and they can fall down them. I think I was a little bit worried that if I went down, would I get out?

[Part 1 1:00:56] Lee: Because Adrian was not necessarily qualified to rescue you?

Burton: I don't know about qualified. I think probably he hadn't got the full experience. So that's what I remember.

[Part 1 1:01:07] Lee: So it's that classic situation where there is an experienced man and a rookie in the same pair partnership.

Burton: Yes, which happens a lot. It happens a lot. You always need somebody to train the other. I go back to my own apprenticeship. I was trained by somebody.

[Part 1 1:01:29] Lee: This trip with Charles Swithinbank, that was a different trip on Adelaide Island, was it?

Burton: Well it was again up to the top of the island.

[Part 1 1:01:33] Lee: Different occasion?

Burton: Different occasion and beautiful weather.

[Part 1 1:01:36] Lee: Tell me about that. Why were you going?

Burton: I think purely to be the person to drive the dog team because Charles wanted to go to the top of the island He wanted to do some work but I never saw the work. It was a romantic trip.

[Part 1 1:01:52] Lee: Farewell?

Burton: I think so, to a certain extent, but if it was a farewell trip, what a trip to do with such a gentleman. I thrived on listening to his experiences. I thrived on listening to the tales he told, but you have got to listen to him and if you don't listen, you get told to listen. And I have met him two or three times since and I just enjoyed the trip. I enjoyed the situation.

[Part 1 1:02:21] Lee: Give me a flavour of the kind of things you would be talking about, whilst you were out in the field.

Burton: Well he talked about all what he had done in the past, about his life and his family, and about my family. He was quite enthralled that I was a miner's son and wanted to go to the Antarctic, and he was enthralled that I enjoyed sledging dogs, and he just related his experiences and he wanted to cook every night, and I think 'If I did it, it would be a lot easier.' But we got there in the end and we got all the way but we had superb weather, absolutely superb. With Adrian it was bad weather all the time. It just shows how two trips can be totally different.

[Part 1 1:03:10] Lee: It's chemistry, isn't it?

Burton: Yes, it is, yes. And as much as I was with a world leading glaciologist, I didn't really know how much he knew to survive because with a lot of scientists, they know their own job but they are not very good at surviving. And I found that through many things in life. You can get an expert, but take him out of his own field and he's not the best.

[Part 1 1:03:40] Lee: How and where had you learned to survive then, because you can't have learned all this before you went South?

Burton: No, not at all. I think just watching and looking, and being in the company of people who were far greater than I was, and I have always been able to do that. I have always ... Very quickly in the Antarctic I learned to be quiet and I think to a certain extent I am probably known as a quiet one until I actually got into ... with somebody who I was used to, because there were lots of well-educated ..., far more clever than I was, and I think it was important that I learned off their backs. And that's what I did and I think to a certain extent I was ... the Antarctic was the making of me.

[Part 1 1:04:31] Lee: You talked about organising a trip to the Alps, a climbing trip to the Alps.

Burton: Well I was again with Steve Wormald and Rod Pashley.

[Part 1 1:04:38] Lee: So was that a training ground as well?

Burton: I didn't go. It didn't happen but every weekend we used to go to the Lakes. We used to finish on a Friday, as early as we possibly could. I would run home and Wormald and Rod would go home. We would catch the train from Barnsley to Leeds and then catch the bus from Leeds to Kendal, and then we would thumb from Kendal all the way into Langdale Valley and arrive any time between midnight and 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, get us head down for a couple of hours and then on the fells and then make us way home on Sunday. I were all right Monday. I were always fairly decent Monday but Tuesday, Frank Kelsey used say to me 'We've been to the Lakes again, haven't we? It's Tuesday.'

[Part 1 1:05:28] Lee: So that was your training ground?

Burton: Yes, yes.

[Part 1 1:05:32] Lee: And that was useful in the Antarctic?

Burton: Yes. I learned off Wormald and Pashley because they had been doing it a lot longer than I had.

[Part 1 1:05:41] Lee: And where did you get your dog skills from, because again, plumbers don't normally have dogs, do they?

Burton: No. I don't know really. I had always had animals when I were younger. I'd had an allotment. My dad had an allotment so I got an allotment. We had animals and probably I just picked it up and got the flavour of it when I went down.

[Part 1 1:06:02] Lee: Did you take to the dogs and vice versa?

Burton: Yes I did, yes. In fact I made harnesses and all sorts for them. I used to embroider the names on their harnesses and ... When we were in the field I used to sew their harnesses and repair them and I'd embroider. We had cotton and bits and bobs and I would embroider. In fact I used to carry things. I suppose I have always been handy. My sewing kit – not many fellows would take a sewing kit to the Antarctic – I took a good sewing kit. I always remember at Adelaide, we had: they

were wool, heavy wool shirts, good quality wool shirts, and I used to rub mine at the back of the necks and rub them through, and I used to unpick them. I would do it for anybody and I would unpick the collar off the shirt, turn it over and re-stitch it back on to make them last longer.

[Part 1 1:07:01] Lee: I can remember there was a lovely sewing machine at Adelaide and one evening I was ... I'd unpicked the shirt, got it all ready, pinned and whatever to sew it back on, and somebody would shout 'Paul, you are wanted at the radio shack.' So I went out, found it was a false alarm, came back, 'Zzzrmmm' on the sewing machine. Looked at it and thought 'What have I done? I have sewn it back on the same way.' Unpicked it again, got it all ready. Somebody shouted 'You are wanted in the kitchen.' Went back out, came back in. 'Zzzrmmm' Obviously it was set up for, and I am still convinced to this day it was Adrian Apps. So I re-sewed my collar back on my shirt three times the same way. [Laughs]

[Part 1 1:07:51] [End of Part One]

Part 2

[Part 2 0:00:00] Lee: This is Paul Burton, interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee, on the 12th of July 2013. Paul Burton Part 2.

[Part 2 0:00:10] Lee: Whilst you were based at Adelaide Island, you had one or two unexpected situations arise, which involved you having to go to Fossil Bluff?

Burton: Yes. Unfortunately at Fossil Bluff there were two people who got injured. One broke his leg and one developed some form of I think kidney problems, O'Donovan. How it was decided I don't know but at the end of the day the Argentinians flew in. I think they had their aircraft wintered in the Antarctic and they flew down and my recollection is that there was a pilot, co-pilot, a mechanic came in to Adelaide. When he got there it was decided I would fly down with him and replace the two people.

[Part 2 0:01:10] Burton: Who put my name forward or how my name got on the list I don't know. Probably because on the base there was a cook, there was a radio operator, there was met men. A builder could be replaced or managed without. So I got the opportunity to fly down, but the pilot was very mindful that he had got this huge toolbox and an extra person so he said that the mechanic had to stay behind and the toolbox had to stay behind because he knew he was bringing two other people out.

[Part 2 0:01:46] Lee: So he was concerned about being overloaded?

Burton: Overloaded and that's all he kept saying, in broken his English 'Overload, overload.' So as far as I remember, there was a pilot, co-pilot and myself who flew down. Now I had flown down once before with BAS planes to take some equipment or take some mail down or do something. I think it was Bert Conchey I flew down with. But I didn't particularly know where it was; it was just Fossil Bluff, and it was bad weather, shocking weather and we flew down and he turned round and said 'Where is Fossil Bluff? Where is it?' I said 'I have only been once before.'

[Part 2 0:02:30] Burton: Fortunately, as we said that, there was a bit of a break in the cloud, like a hole in the cloud, and I actually saw the hut. And he just said 'Right OK' and we just 'Errrrmm' 'Where's the airstrip?' 'Well there is no airstrip.' And he just landed, and I think that is probably the most hairy thing I have done in my life. I think it was a single-engined Porter or whatever it was, a small aircraft and we landed and there were two people to get out: one with a broken leg and one seriously ill.

[Part 2 0:03:08] Lee: It was somebody called Walker had the broken leg?

Burton: Dick Walker, yes.

[Part 2 0:03:10] Lee: Dick Walker with the broken leg and O'Donovan with the stomach problem?

Burton: Yes. Well Dick Walker had been to Halley as well, and I can't remember when he went to Halley. I think it was after ... It must have been before. It must have been before⁶.

[Part 2 0:03:23] Lee: How did you get them out?

Burton: Well they were back on the base. They had managed to get them ... the two other lads who were there, Ian and ... I can't remember who that was⁷.

[Part 2 0:03:36] Lee: Don't worry.

Burton: And they got them back onto base, but in those days BAS didn't actually change their first aid kits. Once they got to base, they stayed at base. So the plaster cast they put on just was crumbling and whatever. So eventually they got them out.

[Part 2 0:03:58] Lee: Out of date you mean? The plaster was out of date?

Burton: Out of date, yes. After that, they then went on to replace the medical equipment every 12 months. I think that was the start of when they thought it was ... It proved a point. So eventually we got them into the aircraft and they flew away. Whatever happened to them after that, I do know. They went on to Argentina.

[Part 2 0:04:22] Lee: Had you been able to bring your personal box down with you to Fossil Bluff?

Burton: No. I just stayed.

[Part 2 0:04:27] Lee: And did you know how long you were going to be there for?

Burton: No, no.

[Part 2 0:04:32] Lee: So it was a real ...? You put your trust in BAS then, did you?

⁶ Dick Walker wintered at Halley in 1973.

⁷ I.H. Rose and M.R. Pearson.

Burton: Oh yes. Well, again, spirit of adventure. If you can help, you can help. And I wasn't there very long at Fossil Bluff with these two surveyors, or glaciologists, before there was an emergency went up and some dog sledge teams in the field had had a problem and tents had got blown away or whatever. So I can remember getting this There was an old thing, for better word: a caboose, a box on a sledge. I strengthened that and re-covered it and put a door on, and we got provisions into that, so we could keep going 24 hours a day. We set off to help and took equipment out with us for these dog teams in the field.

[Part 2 0:05:21] Lee: Whereabouts were they?

Burton: To be honest, and this is where I keep failing, I have forgotten.

[Part 2 0:05:25] Lee: Oh right. Somewhere in King George VI Sound?

Burton: Oh yes. When we got to them, there was other dog teams actually there as well, had gone to the rescue. But there was a chappie, ill, who was a dog team driver and I actually took his dog team and he came back with the tractors back to Fossil Bluff. So I wasn't at Fossil Bluff all that long and then took a dog team. There was two dog teams, two dog drivers and a surveyor which was Miles Mosley who unfortunately got killed in the Antarctic, and Tim Christie who was a surveyor. Again another episode to my time in the Antarctic.

[Part 2 0:06:12] Lee: One of the points you make is that you seem to have profited by other Fids' misfortunes.

Burton: I did.

[Part 2 0:06:18] Lee: Not profited but benefited.

Burton: I benefited, yes, which to a certain extent used to play heavy on my mind. I used to think 'Somebody's misfortune is my fortune.' At the end of the day I felt sorry for the people who were ill but I just took advantage of the opportunity and enjoyed every second of it. [Laughs]

[Part 2 0:06:43] Lee: Tell me about this surveyor Tim Christie who you worked for out of Stonington.

Burton: Well I met Tim in the field. He was from Stonington but I met him in the field, who was a great guy. I don't know if I should tell you this but his father was a brigadier and you know the newsletters we get. When you are in the field, the radio operator will come on and say 'I have got your newsletter from home. Do you want me to read it out?' So if you say yes, he will say 'Just move up a couple of Megs.' So as you move up, to keep the radio airwaves free, you know and you could hear everybody else who was camping, they would move up and listen. It's just news; that's what you want. He'd read Tim's newsletter out and it would be a case of, because his father was a brigadier, 'Your father has been playing croquet on the lawn with someone' or 'Been to some Army function.' or whatever.

[Part 2 0:07:43] Lee: Lord and Lady something?

Burton: Yes, it was always hierarchy, and mine would be 'Your dad's gone to the pit, on nights.' So the difference ... and then you'd got Miles Mosley. I think Miles came from Manchester, and another character. But Tim, he was just brilliant.

[Part 2 0:08:05] Lee: Did he have a nickname?

Burton: Miles or ...?

[Part 2 0:08:08] Lee: No, Tim. Was he not nicknamed Twim?

Burton: Twim, That's right.

[Part 2 0:08:12] Lee: Because of his accent.

Burton: Oh yes, he had got a very prim and proper accent.

[Part 2 0:08:17] Lee: And tell me about surveying with Tim.

Burton: Well there lies a story. He used to always wear his clothing and that, and we were using what we used to call a tellurometer, sending signals from one station to another. Paul Gurling who I got to know, he would be on another mountain we'd set off and Tim would have all his equipment and whatever, and I would be carrying the tellurometer. He would get warm; he was walking up this mountain and he would take his hat off, put it in his pocket. A couple of paces further on his hat would fall out of his pocket. I would pick that up. He would take his gloves off, put them in his pocket. A few more paces, they would fall out of his pocket. I'd pick them up and move on. By the time he got to the top of the mountain, everything he had taken off and put in his pocket, I would hand them back to him.

[Part 2 0:09:11] Burton: I would say 'Here's your hat, Here's ...' [posh voice] 'Oh thank you Paul, thank you.' So one time it was a nice day. We were setting a tellurometer up and he decided he was going to take his anorak off, pulled the anorak off and pulled it and hit the tellurometer and the tellurometer just Boing, Boing, all the way back down the mountain and he just looked at it and he just went 'Oh Fff...' and swore. And I thought 'Well if that's supposed to be swearing, it's not like I can swear.' It sounded so polite, but that's typical Tim. Yes, just a great guy, a great guy. He knew his job but Tim was a typical person who ... I don't know where he got his life skills from because sometimes his life skills and reality just didn't match; they just didn't match. But another world and another person I just enjoyed being in ... and another person I learned a lot from.

[Part 2 0:10:18] Lee: Another social strata, all of which is of course rather ironed out in the Antarctic.

Burton: Yes, it is, very much so. I can always remember Miles. When I met Miles I said to him 'I'm Paul Burton. What's your name?' He said 'Miles Mosley.' I had never heard of Mosley and I thought 'Mosley? Is he not Mossley?' So I said to him 'How do you spell it?' So he spelled it. I said 'That's not Mosely, that's Mozley.' He

says 'No, it's not.' I said 'Of course it's Mozley.' He said 'No, my mum doesn't like that.' [Laughs] A typical Yorkshireman, looking at the basics.

[Part 2 0:10:51] Lee: Yeah. Talking about basics, we need to pick up a couple of stories about you and toilets at Halley.

Burton: Oh, ho ho.

[Part 2 0:10:58] Lee: There was a turdicle?

Burton: The turdicle, the magical turdicle. Yes, it's just something that happened. It was a pit that was dug initially when they built the base. It was like a letter T upside down. I think they thought it would last for ever, but in a few years, all these men filled it. And in winter the turdicle – it was human waste – used to freeze and it used to grow like a pyramid, upside down, well like a pyramid.

[Part 2 0:11:26] Lee: A stalagmite?

Burton: Stalagmite, yes. And it was my job I suppose, as the builder, as the repairman, as the plumber, to go down and we used to go through the ... Move the – it was a 5 gallon oil can I think – move that, go down the hole in the floorboards on an electron ladder, and it was all frozen, go down with a felling axe and chop it down, chop the turdicle down. It was like a big adventure. I used to laugh because I used to say 'You can see the curry layers.'

[Part 2 0:11:57] Lee: On the curry night?

Burton: [Laughs] And in summer it would just all melt down. There was never no smell or anything like that. I suppose being a plumber I am used to seeing that situation but some chaps couldn't cope with the thought of going down and the thought of whatever it was. It just didn't bother me. It was just another job.

[Part 2 0:12:20] Lee: Did it never fill up completely?

Burton: It did. Well it was filling up. It didn't actually come level with the floor but it was filling up and I kept saying 'It is not going to last.' So then it was decided we would dig another toilet behind.

[Part 2 0:12:39] Lee: Start again?

Burton: Start again, yes. So we took the back of the toilet out and dug another one, and that could have been quite a dangerous situation because the intention was to dig it, but it was setting up some form of a pulley system to get rid of the snow we dug. So it had to be brought up into the toilet, through the toilet, through the tunnel of the building to the far end, to the gash ramp and then taken out and dispersed onto the snow outside. So it was a major issue and unfortunately one time – I'm not sure I ought to say this but – I got up, came out, and I think it was because I wanted to go to the toilet and decided I would be lowered down in a bit of a bucket. I got inside the bucket and the bucket turned upside down and I fell down and I think it was about 4 metres. Fortunately I just missed a pickaxe which had been actually dropped into the

snow, and one piece was sticking up, of the pickaxe. Another 12 inch and I could have been implanted⁸ onto a pickaxe. I think that was probably the nearest thing to danger.

[Part 2 0:14:02] Lee: Did you ever fear for your life in the Antarctic? Were you ever in a situation where you thought you might not come out.

Burton: Well I suppose it's things like that pass through your mind. When you are in the field and you are crossing crevasses and things like that, but some crevasses are small; some crevasses are huge. I think one of the scary ones as well, what I can remember, was with the tractors at Halley. I was out with Dave Peel, because those were huge. But you learn to move on, don't you? I think there's other Fids been in far scarier positions.

[Part 2 0:14:38] Lee: And what about situations that made you laugh out loud?

Burton: Oh lots of them. I wasn't there but I can always remember listening to it. I think it was the radio operator on Argentine Islands, his girlfriend had packed in with him and she had sent him this 'Dear John'. He was like a ham person with radio; he talked to other stations. And she wrote in this letter that she was packing him in because 'love wasn't a basis of marriage and they had nothing in common except each other'. So she called it a day with him. I wasn't there but I thought that was quite funny.

[Part 2 0:15:30] Lee: Miles Mosley was asking the radio operator about Interflora.

Burton: Yes. Miles, in his naiveté, shall we say, had sent some flowers to his mum or to someone and then realised that they were going away on holiday. So he phoned the radio operator – I think it was Adelaide he phoned – not phoned but used the radio – and he said to the radio op, 'What happens to flowers when they are delivered by Interflora and there is nobody there to receive them?' It went all quiet and suddenly this voice came back and said 'They die.' [Laughs]

[Part 2 0:16:14] Lee: I was amazed. You are not the first person who has mentioned sending flowers. I was amazed that you could in the Antarctic actually send flowers to an address in Britain. How did you go about it?

Burton: I think you sent your message to the radio operator and then I think they went to Stanley and I think it was Interflora then, because I always remember Dave Peel, because Dave Peel was a married man when he came down and he remembered his wife's birthday or anniversary or whatever and sent her some orchids.

[Part 2 0:16:40] Lee: Gosh.

Burton: And then got told by newsletter or whatever 'Thank you for the orchid.' He thought he was sending a lot of orchids because he had spent an arm and a leg, and she got one! In them days probably £10 which was a lot of money; and she got one orchid.

⁸ or impaled perhaps.

[Part 2 0:17:02] Lee: Ten quid? The money would just be taken out of your account?

Burton: Taken out of your account, yes.

[Part 2 0:17:07] Lee: OK. Were there many Dear John letters? If so, how did the base get together and support the victim?

Burton: I don't know if it was on Adelaide or on Argentine Islands but there was a 'ching stick' somewhere and I remember seeing this ching stick.

[Part 2 0:17:23] Lee: A what?

Burton: Ching. When a chap got a Dear John, there was this ... they called it a ching stick. What it was: it was an old boot with a broom handle in it and the boot was filled with concrete, and then nailed to the broom handle was all beer bottle tops. As you banged it, it went 'Ching, ching.'

[Part 2 0:17:48] Lee: A percussion instrument?

Burton: Yes. And they used to put this girlfriend's photograph on the dartboard and then you get the darts and obviously by this time you are worse for wear of drink and you would 'kill' her with the darts. You would throw the darts at her photograph and you would kill her. Then you'd to put the ching stick under your arm or against your arm like a gun, this boot, and then you had to run and hit the dartboard and knock seven bells out of this girlfriend you had just had. And quite a few of them who were drunk, the story goes that the ching stick had hit them that hard, like the reaction from firing a gun, and it had catapulted her miles down the middle of the base.

[Part 2 0:18:39] Lee: Was there ever an occasion of a more sensitive approach to the poor chap?

Burton: Not really. It was 'tough luck, mate'.

[Part 2 0:18:48] Lee: Well yes, I suppose so. At South Georgia you played around with a flag mast, I'm told?

Burton: Ricky Chinn. How sad. We lost a good man when we lost Ricky Chinn.

[Part 2 0:19:04] Lee: He was base commander at the time at South Georgia?

Burton: Oh yes. He had been base commander at Halley Bay, South Georgia. That was the summer when I ... back that was in '69. I thought I was a person of traditions but he liked the flag to go up at a certain time in the morning and come down at a certain time at night. One day somebody hadn't put the flag up and he wasn't a happy chappie, shall we say. So I volunteered to go and put the flag up and I took his windproof trousers. I don't know if you have ever seen any windproof trousers; they are orange or a bright colour. So I actually fastened his windproof trousers to the thing and I hoisted not the flag but his windproof trousers and it was a windy day and they

were blowing in the wind. Superb. Well when he saw them, oh did he go mad?
[Laughs] I got a good roasting.

[Part 2 0:20:05] Lee: What? A serious one?

Burton: No. Ricky could give you a serious telling off and then next minute he was your best pal. That's the nature of what he was.

[Part 2 0:20:13] Lee: Did you have to replace them with the proper ...?

Burton: I was told to go and take them down and put the flag up. And then there was another time. Sorry, I am butting in but there was another time. We used to have smoko. This is again at South Georgia. Because the building was on stilts, you could go down under the stilts which was a door entrance, and I think there was a boiler house and there was like a drying room. There were these heating pipes that went round and we used to go in there, take us boots off, take us windproofs and whatever we were wearing, before we went upstairs into the room, to keep the place clean and tidy and it dried your equipment.

[Part 2 0:20:58] Burton: So smoko time, we all went into the drying room, took boots off, and we used to actually drop us windproofs, and step out of them, out of us boots and out of us windproofs, so we could step back into them. One day I thought 'We will have a bit of a laugh here.' So I tied everybody's boots together. I can't remember if I tied them together or round the pipes. There was Golly, there was Dad, there was Fanny⁹. There was quite a few of us. And of course we all rushed down because I said 'Come on. We have got to get back to work.' We rushed into the boiler house, stepped in, and of course went no further and there was a big pile of Fids on ... Did I pay for that? Did I pay for that?

[Part 2 0:21:41] Lee: In what way was the recompense ...?

Burton: Oh they got back in other ways. One meant finding something. I were right down at the jetty and somebody said I had to go up to see Ricky Chinn up at the house. When I went to Ricky, Ricky had obviously been told and kept me waiting, or kept me hanging round and it was fun. Just people getting their own back.

[Part 2 0:22:01] Lee: This sort of humour that we are talking about, is the stuff you read about in boys' books about boys' schools, wasn't it?

Burton: Oh yes.

[Part 2 0:22:10] Lee: Dormitory 'japes in the dorm'.

Burton: Typical but it was clean fun and it was good fun.

[Part 2 0:22:16] Lee: And was humour vital, humour important?

Burton: Oh yes. A laugh a day makes you feel better.

⁹ Golly Gallsworthy, Dad Etchells and Fanny Hill.

[Part 2 0:22:23] Lee: What happened at the end of your period at Adelaide Island? You were there for a year?

Burton: Yes, and I came out and I went into South America. What I did, I got off. When it came out of Adelaide, it would call at different places on the way back, on its way back to England. I got off the ship in Montevideo, spent seven months in South America, just roaming South America, and then re-caught the ship back in Montevideo. That's not as easy as it sounds because you had to be in contact with the agent, BAS's agent in Montevideo, saying 'When is the ship coming?' [Foreign accent] 'Ah, no problem, no problem. Mañana, mañana' And you would think 'Am I going to miss this ship or what?' I can remember I was in Santiago, Chile, and I phoned and I wasn't the best with Spanish and he wasn't the best with English and it was a case of 'It's coming in tomorrow.' And I had to get from Santiago, Chile, over to Montevideo. So I had to get through Chile, over the Andes, through Argentina, into Montevideo in 24 hours, and fortunately I did it.

[Part 2 0:23:39] Lee: On the surface?

Burton: Oh yes, on the buses, coaches. And going over the Andes was fantastic.

[Part 2 0:23:48] Lee: Tell me.

Burton: Oh well the Spanish is 'Muy lindo.' Beautiful. It was absolutely fantastic, and it was around about the time when the rugby players' plane. Can you remember they made a film and a book¹⁰. They ate each other. The plane came down and to survive they had to eat human flesh. It was round about that time. I didn't know until I actually read the book.

[Part 2 0:24:23] Lee: That would have been a separate sailing? You got off the boat on one trip and picked it up again on a later trip?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 2 0:24:29] Lee: So a separate sailing. Not the same sailing as ...?

Burton: No. When I got off, the ship ...

[Part 2 0:24:36] Lee: Did a round trip?

Burton: Yes, went back to England, refurbished, reequipped and came back down, going for the summer season, and I re-caught it and went back. Actually when I caught it, it was going back to Halley to rebuild Halley.

[Part 2 0:24:50] Lee: So did you do that?

Burton: Yes. I had organised for me to go back before I got off.

¹⁰ The book was *Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors*, by Paul Read (1974)

[Part 2 0:24:54] Lee: Right, so you did another season at Halley?

Burton: Another summer.

[Part 2 0:24:59] Lee: Building Halley III?

Burton: Halley III yes, in the Armco.

[Part 2 0:25:04] Lee: How was that?

Burton: It was a good season. It was hard work: it was 12-hour shifts you know. What happened: the boat went down anchored alongside and I think we did 12-hour shifts and literally built the Armco, put the buildings inside. Big Al was the chap in charge of the programme.

[Part 2 0:25:28] Lee: Al Smith?

Burton: Al Smith.

[Part 2 0:25:31] Lee: Was it hard work? Was it difficult?

Burton: Life's what you make it, isn't it? I suppose anybody would say working in the Antarctic was difficult. You are working with the conditions; you are working with what's there, but to a certain extent you just get on with it.

[Part 2 0:25:48] Lee: This design that Alan Smith produced was quite revolutionary.

Burton: Oh yes.

[Part 2 0:25:54] Lee: So you were doing something brand new?

Burton: Yes. One of the good things on it ... I'm not quite sure if it proved a success or not but we built the Armco and then we used pulverised fuel ash – it was just clinker – and we laid that inside the Armco and bedded it down to get a level surface, because the Armco is like an egg.

[Part 2 0:26:17] Lee: Yes. Made of steel?

Burton: Made of steel, corrugated. So we got the pulverised fuel ash, which was all pre-bagged, got that in, and then put timbers on top of that, and then built the sectional buildings inside the Armco. I can't remember how many buildings there were but we built the generator shed quite a way from the main living and offices and scientific laboratory accommodation, purely from the point of view of safety. It vibrated and if it went, it was all right.

[Part 2 0:26:52] Lee: So it was almost like an underground High Street, was it?

Burton: Oh yes, all connected with tunnels. And again, we played hard; we worked hard but we had good fun and we had some silly times. I can remember getting the ... I think we had to lift a crane off the ship and there was a few hairy moments. It almost

went into the sea. It scraped the side of the ship and I think the ship was white and got red marks from the crane. It was life. I can't remember what we did and we didn't do, but we'd a short time to build the base. As I say, it was 12 on, 12 off. I think we used to come back to the ship and sleep on the ship. But I can remember one time on the ship, the ice cliffs gave way. I was on board. It was a bit of a scary moment. I think we were in bed, or watching a film or something. The boat itself is tied alongside and there's obviously crew watching for danger all the time. It flattened the actual bulkhead¹¹ of the ship, walking down the sides. It flattened some of that, came through a couple of portholes.

[Part 2 0:28:18] Lee: The cliff just collapsed onto the boat.

Burton: Yes.

[Part 2 0:28:20] Lee: It broke through portholes?

Burton: Yes, yes. Fortunately the crewmen, they cut the ropes very quickly and the boat went out to sea to sort itself out and eventually slowly came back inside. But I also remember one time, we had a load of sea ice. A boat came alongside the sea ice and it all broke up. All the sea ice broke up and I think we lost a couple of sledges and had to pick men off the sea ice and take them onto the boat. So you were always mindful of that sort of danger. I can remember one time, the chap who I got on with very well: he was a beaстиeman at Halley Bay, John Nockels.

[Part 2 0:29:07] Lee: John ...?

Burton: Nockels. He was a bit of an experimenter and he used to like to make things and he was quite ingenious really. He built this grabber and we went onto the sea ice and drilled a hole in the sea ice and he used to drop this grabber effect thing down to the sea bed, scrape the sea bed and wind it up. And we were on the sea ice one time, just myself and him and a skidoo with this machine he'd developed and suddenly we hear this loud 'K-wow' and the sea ice gave way and a massive massive crack Fortunately the skidoo was on the right side of the crack. We were on the wrong side and we'd to jump, and it was probably 2 ft/ 2ft 6" gap. The sea ice was breaking up and was going out. That again could have been a hairy situation because I don't think we'd a radio. The two men, obviously on base they knew where we had gone but it would have been too late then.

[Part 2 0:30:14] Lee: As a result of all these near misses, were there any changes to procedures or regulations or rules or practices?

Burton: Yes, I suppose there are, but a lot of the near misses, unless they get reported nobody knows about them. I think we are more mindful of Health & Safety now than we have ever been. In those days I think all fellows that went to the Antarctic had got some form of spirit of adventure in them. Now, to go in the field, because it's so expensive, you have to have a reason why and a damn good programme to go.

[Part 2 0:30:48] Lee: Scientific programme?

¹¹ He probably means bulwark.

Burton: Yeah. A lot of fellows went into the field, experienced dogs, experienced tractors, just for a jolly and that's what it was about.

[Part 2 0:31:00] Lee: But do you remember any occasions where a base leader would call you all together and say 'Right, we had a close shave yesterday. This is how we do it from now on.'?

Burton: Yes, I think Dick Scoffham was a particular one at Adelaide. We had a couple of near misses with aircraft and oil barrels and things like that.

[Part 2 0:31:19] Lee: What, oil barrels left out on the landing area?

Burton: Yes. I can't remember what happened. I think somebody got hurt one time. Dick Scoffham, I'm saying he knew about Health & Safety. He was the worst one in the world, because I think he lost fingers. He lives in Canada and he has a farm in Canada. His combine harvester or whatever vehicle he was using, he never turned them off and I think he's paid his price; he's lost two or three fingers.

[Part 2 0:31:58] Lee: So did you finish working on Halley III or was that still incomplete when you came out?

Burton: No, there was builders. I think there was ... there might have been a team of three or four or five builders left to winter, to finish it off.

[Part 2 0:32:11] Lee: But you came out?

Burton: I came out. I only went in for a summer.

[Part 2 0:32:13] Lee: Did you have any plans at that point to return to the Antarctic?

Burton: A bit of yes and a bit of no. I enjoyed every second of being there and I felt ... I'd had a letter from somebody who said they had gone to Saudi, who was a plumber, and earning mega-bucks in Saudi and I thought 'Well I wouldn't mind giving that a go for a 6-month season or whatever. So I went back to UK and I can't remember what really happened but I think ... was it Bill Sloman or whatever? I got invited to join the ... There was an aircraft and a pilot, Bert Conchey, plus a surveyor Paul Gurling, loaned to the Americans and I was invited to go as a field assistant. I can't remember how it came about but when I heard I was offered the opportunity, I grabbed it with both hands. And it was a case of: we flew out to ... I don't know how the plane got down there; I just don't remember but Bert had probably flown it down from somewhere.

[Part 2 0:33:26] Lee: Did you fly into the Antarctic.

Burton: Yes, but we flew with the Americans. We flew to America. Paul and myself flew to America to meet the team who we were ... Bob Thomas, an Englishman and it was his programme and he had been to the Antarctic on FIDS (or BAS as it was) and he had gone to live in America or whatever he was doing. He was running a programme for the Americans. So whether it was him who got this programme and

this exchange, or what I was going across as, I don't know, but we went. We flew then down ... we went onto a military base, and flew from the military base down to New Zealand (in a C130 'Hercy-bird') and then to Christchurch, and then from Christchurch to McMurdo. And on McMurdo we actually worked on the Ross Ice Shelf.

[Part 2 0:34:25] Lee: Was it a different culture, the American culture?

Burton: Oh no comparison, no comparison.

[Part 2 0:34:29] Lee: Tell me about that.

Burton: Well there was three groups: there was the scientists, there was military and there was a company called Holmes & Narver, I think it was, who were the support staff. It was a bit like neither the three should meet up or integrate. The military, very much they kept themselves to themselves; the scientists kept themselves to themselves, and Holmes & Narver staff ... I always remember we had a cook, a black guy, and he used to call me 'The Honkey'. 'Hi, Honkey.' The building we slept in at McMurdo, he used to call it the Honkey Chateau.

[Part 2 0:35:16] Lee: Sounds like an Elton John track, wasn't it?

Burton: Yes. When we were out there ... What a guy? No, the living accommodation was just: they weren't tents. It was a blow-up type dormitory and the food was just – I have never had food like it. Food on BAS was: I have never complained about it but at Halley we had fresh meat once a week. There, with the Americans, you could ... it was a case of 'Help yourself but don't take too much of the ice cream.' Oh there was no comparison. One of the things I really felt strongly about was the equipment we had to go in the field with. It was virtually non-existent. In fact there is a photograph on my wall there. We used to sleep on mattresses in the field when with British Antarctic Survey we had blow-up air-beds which were far superb. Sheepskin rugs on top of them, then we would sleep on top of that, but with the Americans we had nothing. It was just Toytown. They had no concept of field party work.

[Part 2 0:36:28] Lee: Who didn't?

Burton: The Americans. It was just a case: 'you go in the field, you will only be there for a couple of hours'. But it didn't work like that. You needed some form of emergency rations. You need some form of emergency equipment. The tent we had: well in a blow it would have shredded itself, but that's all they had so it was a case of that's all we'd got.

[Part 2 0:36:49] Lee: So let me get this right then. You were going out in the field for a few hours ... therefore you didn't need much, unless of course you got stuck. In which case you had nothing?

Burton: We had nothing. We experienced that one time, Paul Gurling and myself. The idea of the programme was: we were doing about three to five drops per day where the aircraft would come in, drop us in one point. We'd do triangulation, satellite triangulation and Paul would use a theodolite and take measurements. He'd radio

again, the aircraft would come in, pick us up, move us to another position and we would do that three or four or five times a day. Now one time we were dropped off. We were there. We knew bad weather was coming in. Bad weather came in and I think we were there for about four or five days. Very little provision. We thought it was due to bad weather. When Bert eventually came back to us, there was something wrong with the satellite navigation equipment and they were actually looking for us and we didn't know that.

[Part 2 0:38:00] Lee: You were lost, were you?

Burton: We were lost virtually. Or they had lost us. We had got the radio but the radio had died down by then and we had nothing to charge the radio up with. It was Toytown equipment. The best thing about it is, or the best thing we had was the equipment that we took with us.

[Part 2 0:38:22] Lee: BAS stuff?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 2 0:38:24] Lee: So on base was fine but off base was dodgy?

Burton: Oh yes, just ...

[Part 2 0:38:28] Lee: That's very interesting. I hadn't heard that before. But were you able to protest, and say 'Hang on a second. It is too risky.'

Burton: No we just got on ...

[Part 2 0:38:38] Lee: Just got on with it?

Burton: Got on with the job. Paul's a bit like me.

[Part 2 0:38:43] Lee: This is when you were told you were due to be picked up on the Ross Ice Shelf weren't you?

Burton: That's right, yes.

[Part 2 0:38:47] Lee: So tell me a bit more detail about that process where you were expecting to be picked up and weren't.

Burton: Well as I say, we were dropped off. Bert Conchey worked for British Antarctic Survey and he knew what BAS was about because he had been down I don't know how many summers, and he knew the situation and he used to shake his head, thinking 'Dearie me, this equipment we've got is minimal.' So he would always try to pick us up when he said he did. And one time, as I say, we had been dropped off. I presume Bert had gone back to do something else with Bob Thomas. Now whether it was the actual machine on the aircraft that malfunctioned I don't know, but all we got told: the bad weather had come in. So we assumed 'Bad weather; aircraft couldn't fly.' Eventually (I think it was probably 4 or 5 or 6 days; I can't remember when) we got picked up and I said to Bert ... He was talking. He said 'Well actually

we have been looking for you' which we didn't know. Paul Gurling didn't know. And again, what made it worse was the radio. The radio was: it had gone dead. We had nothing to charge because we had only gone out eventually for three or four hours.

[Part 2 0:40:08] Lee: BAS would never allow that, would they?

Burton: Oh no, not at all.

[Part 2 0:40:13] Lee: Did that put you off the Americans, working there?

Burton: Well in one sense yes but in another sense no because they were such wonderful people and when you got back to the station where you were, you looked at the equipment that was there, you put it down to another part of life.

[Part 2 0:40:34] Lee: And you got to the South Pole with the Americans?

Burton: I was very fortunate, and I don't know how it all came about but we were at McMurdo and Paul was engaged doing something else and I asked Bob Thomas. There was an opportunity to go and I thought 'If there's an opportunity, I am going.' I asked Bob if I could go and he said 'Yes, it's only a round trip – there and back. It might be overnight. Or it might be 24 hours. It might be 12 hours. I couldn't remember.' So I got on and they were taking ... They were building a new Pole Station and they were taking ... They couldn't land. What was it? They were hoping to land, that was it. But they were taking snow blowers, taking big snow blowers in.

[Part 2 0:41:28] Burton: So we set off and when we actually ... When we got going, they would quickly know they couldn't actually land. So it was a case of: 'What are we going to do with the snow blower?' So it was decided that they would put these parachutes to this snow blower and fly in low and push it out. Well there were seven snow blowers altogether, so I think what had happened: they were flying in to drop these snow blowers for this job they were doing, for this new station. So anyway we would fly in low and they pushed this snow blower out and it would parachute down. I think they strapped seven parachutes to it. So all you hear is what's coming over the radio and what you can see. You know you are flying in low. The back of the plane, tail drops down and the military people push it out and then we continue flying.

[Part 2 0:42:24] Burton: The next thing you hear: the parachutes haven't opened and this vehicle, wherever it landed, just buried itself, never to be seen again. I could just imagine ... going through my mind I thought 'If that would have been British Antarctic Survey, it would have been me say 'Bloody hell. Where's the shovels?' And all that came over the radio was 'OK, Mac. Send the next.' And that was it. No panic; just 'Get on with it. Send it.' And that was a vast difference. I think in the first instance we wouldn't have had a snow lower but if we'd have had one, we'd have been lucky. But after that, it would have been the shovels.

[Part 2 0:43:04] Lee: So they were better resourced?

Burton: On things like that, yes, but not when it came to fieldwork.

[Part 2 0:43:08] Lee: But there was no history of field work was there?

Burton: No. They didn't do it. You know, going in the field was unknown to them really.

[Part 2 0:43:17] Lee: Was it a good move to go back with the Americans or was it a bit of a ...?

Burton: I enjoyed it. I must have flown in twice to the Pole now I think about it, because I got an opportunity ... A bit of a funny situation, there's a thing called the Minus Forties Club and to join you are invited to join and you've to strip off, only to your boots and you run round these markers (I think they were flags), supposedly at -40 starkers, and that's the way you join the Minus Forties Club. That's fine stripping off, going round the markers. You try to go back in and they have all closed the doors and you are stuck out. You can't get back in. There was about six or seven of us all did this running round the pole, or round the markers.

[Part 2 0:44:16] Lee: That was a gag they pulled again and again and again?

Burton: Oh every time 'Would you like to join the ...?' I was called Red. I got sunburned very easily. I used to go literally red, and all the Americans used to say 'Hi, Red!' and 'Where's Red?'

[Part 2 0:44:35] Lee: When that term of duty with the Americans finished, again you came back to the UK?

Burton: Yes, and I think I went again.

[Part 2 0:44:43] Lee: With the Americans?

Burton: No, with BAS.

[Part 2 0:44:48] Lee: Where to?

Burton: No I didn't no. The Americans must have been my last trip.

[Part 2 0:44:52] Lee: Your last turn of duty?

Burton: Yes.

[Part 2 0:44:54] Lee: Did you miss it?

Burton: Did I miss the Antarctic? Like mad. Yes. I found it extremely difficult to settle back in UK.

[Part 2 0:45:04] Lee: Why didn't you go again?

Burton: My father was ill. It was a family affair. My mum said 'Don't go.'

[Part 2 0:45:14] Lee: So in what way did you find it difficult to settle back in the UK?

Burton: This may sound a bit silly now but it was a world of men and it was a world of companionship. One of the things I learned is: Halley was a prime example. There was 26 men when I wintered at Halley, which was big numbers, but we all depended on each other, because what one man couldn't do, another man could. It's like: we'd 12 films for the year at Halley in them days and *Cat Ballou* was a prime example. It was a film which ... I've seen *Cat Ballou* at Halley 26 times.

[Part 2 0:45:55] Lee: Jane Fonda?

Burton: Yes. Jane Fonda, yes.

[Part 2 0:45:58] Lee: Don't blame you.

Burton: You could turn the sound off completely. And what one Fid knew ... If he didn't know it, someone else would step in and said a word.

[Part 2 0:46:08] Lee: Oh, you did your own sound track?

Burton: A sound track by Fids, and it was just absolutely fantastic. I always remember a funny story. There was a doctor at Halley, Ian Strange? Ian Peace I think it might have been¹². He was virtually straight out of medical school and he had got his programme to do. He asked for three volunteers to sit in the lounge with no heat on for five days in clothing like we are wearing today, cold drinks, cold food and he expected fantastic results. He went in with us and every four hours he took blood samples, and every two hours he would take heartbeat and chest and all things like that. One time it was my turn to have a stethoscope on me and he was listening, and I put my hand behind my back and I am tapping my back. He looks and he hears this noise, and I'm tapping away, and he is saying ... Then he realised what I was doing. He says [posh voice] 'Oh' and he was that cold, his teeth were chattering, 'Bloody hell, boy. You've spoilt it!' [Laughs] He did that programme, where we sat for a week, or 5 days, with cold food and cold water, and he did one where we'd just sat in – almost like a ... outside. It was under cover but outside¹³. Again I went in that with him. That was part of his programme while he was down.

[Part 2 0:47:41] Lee: And the Fids happily joined in with this?

Burton: Oh yes.

[Part 2 0:47:45] Lee: Deprivation?

Burton: Yes. He was doing something with penguins and he used to go out to the penguin colony and collect dead penguins and lug them all the way back to the base. Then he'd thaw them out and do a post-mortem on them. The stench were awful. All related to either man or whatever.

[Part 2 0:48:06] Lee: There's a story about sledges on a ramp.

¹² Iain Leith.

¹³ I believe this was in the unheated corrugated steel Armco culvert housing the standby fuel bladder (see diagram of Halley II on the Z-Fids website).

Burton: Oh yes.

[Part 2 0:48:10] Lee: Where was this? Was this at Halley?

Burton: This was at Halley. These were sledges pulled by vehicles – big sledges¹⁴. I spoke to you about military people; well Ron Gill (I think his name was), he was one of the motor mechanics who thought he was the chief motor mechanic. I think he came from the Army. He was a Warrant Officer; couldn't cope that Fids could. I think he was brought up in the military that you did your job because somebody with pips on their shoulders said 'You do that because I am telling you.' And he found it difficult that Fids did things because they enjoyed it. They wanted to do and it was part of their job anyway. Any way one time, one of these sledges had broken. It had to be welded so he brought this sledge in, somebody welded it and I had to repair some timber on it. And then there was another one, so we thought while we are there we will bring that one in, get that one done, get it thawed out, and get it done.

[Part 2 0:49:11] Burton: So we got them all done. Then the Muskeg came in, reversed down the ramp. We connected them both up and he started pulling it out. Then Ron came and started playing merry hell for some unknown reason, got all upset and went into the ... Right at the top end of the garage was a little office, a little corner; it was his office. And he went into his office, as he liked to go into his office and sit in his chair. So somebody said 'We might as well take the pin out and we will reverse this sledge back. Little did they know it was quite icy on the ramp. So they pulled the pin out. This ton sledge set off down the ramp, smashed the doors at the bottom of the garage, went straight through the full length of the garage, went through the wall of the office and just dented the chair where Ron was sat. Well he was furious, as somebody just come and said 'I bet that dented your chair, Ron, didn't it?' It could have been a dangerous situation, and you talk about narrow situations ...

[Part 2 0:50:18] Lee: Squeaks, yes.

Burton: And that was one prime example; that could have been dangerous.

[Part 2 0:50:22] Lee: Did you ever come across Sir Vivian Fuchs?

Burton: Yes, I did. When I came out of Halley, it was one of the things. I had heard about him obviously and I had read the book whatever and I was so pleased. I think it was his last trip before he took official retirement, shall we say. When we went out of Halley, we went down to the old Shackleton building where he was¹⁵. *Bransfield* put her nose in. I don't know how he got to be in the base, but whether all of us were allowed to go to the base, certain ones went down, I don't know. But I can remember helping to dig down. And the psychrometer¹⁶ for telling the wind was still working on top. Anyway we got down the base and Sir Vivian was roaming round and recognising and telling people this and telling people that and suddenly he bent down on the floor and picked a wooden joiner's mallet up and turned to me and I thought 'He don't know me from Adam.' And he said [posh voice] 'You're a chippy at

¹⁴ BAS cargo sledges.

¹⁵ In the Trans Antarctic Expedition.

¹⁶ He probably means anemometer.

Halley, aren't you? Take this.' and he gave me the wooden mallet, and that's my prize possession even to this day. I've still got my wooden mallet that came out of ...

[Part 2 0:51:45] Lee: From the IGY?

Burton: IGY, yes.

[Part 2 0:51:47] Lee: Gosh. What did you make of him as a man?

Burton: Oh, superb, superb. I haven't had a lot to do with him. I suppose in those days as well, as a builder, ... You know if you are a scientist and you have got a programme, he wants to know about the scientific programme. Whereas a builder, you are just one of a team. You just speak if you get spoken to, type thing. Oh yes, super chap.

[Part 2 0:52:10] Lee: We were talking. We got digressed; that's OK. We were talking about how you felt when you got back to the UK. You talked about the maleness of the base. Did you not miss the women at all? Did you miss ... you were there quite a lot in your young ??? [inaudible] years?

Burton: Not really, because I had never had a girlfriend as such. Steve Wormald and Rob Pashley that I palled around in Scouts with, they'd girlfriends. So I was very fortunate. I had two girlfriends because I always thought they were real good friends. No.

[Part 2 0:52:44] Lee: So when you came back then, apart from that, what was strange about being back in Britain, after ...?

Burton: Well having to pay for things as well.

[Part 2 0:52:53] Lee: As a Yorkshireman, I can see how that was upsetting, yes.

Burton: And if you wanted something, it was on base. When you come back, if you want something and you hadn't got it, you'd to go and buy it or you had got that hassle: 'Where do I go? Where do I get it?' I always remember somebody saying that the thing they experienced when they came back to England was: when they went into a pub, if there was a packet of cigarettes on the bar, they would just help themselves to a packet of cigarettes and take one out. And somebody would say 'Oi, those are mine.' Because on base, they were free, so anybody who smoked, just helped themselves to one. It were quirky little things. You got in a car and it went 40 mile an hour. Well you had been in vehicles and dogs, 2 miles an hour. You suddenly thought 'Ah, what's going off here?' It was silly little things like that.

[Part 2 0:53:46] Lee: How about greenery?

Burton: Oh well yes. I used to romance at the snow and the sky in Antarctica, especially at Halley because it's just snow and sky.

[Part 2 0:54:05] Lee: That's all there is?

Burton: That's all it is, and the sastrugi. Well if this is not sastrugi, it's as close as you can get to it.

[Part 2 0:54:13] Lee: What, crystal glass?

Burton: On my wall.

[Part 2 0:54:14] Lee: Oh the ...?

Burton: Some people call it dog turds.

[Part 2 0:54:18] Lee: Yes, it's a Spanish restaurant type of decorations on the – what's the word for it? – Snowcem?

Burton: Yes, it's Artex. It's old fashioned in lots of ways.

[Part 2 0:54:32] Lee: Patterned Artex, with swirly patterns, made with a piece of hardboard or something. Sorry we are now drifting a bit but it's almost a final point really about coming back. Was it that strange; was it that difficult?

Burton: It took a while. It wasn't strange but it took a while and I missed the comradeship. I missed the people I worked with. I just missed the good life, which I thought was a good life.

[Part 2 0:55:02] Lee: Was there anything that you brought back with you, inside you from the Antarctic, which you've used in everyday life since. I mean you set up your own business, didn't you?

Burton: I did, yes.

[Part 2 0:55:10] Lee: So were there any skills or qualities that you feel developed in the Antarctic that you've used again later in life?

Burton: Well from the bottom of my heart I think what I experienced and learned and whatever it was I brought back from the Antarctic, set the standards for whatever I have done the rest of my life. All right, I started a business; I had men working for me. We spoke about it. I met my wife through the business. I've a step-daughter who I call: she's my daughter as far as I am concerned, with two sons. They have gone into Scouting. I was a local district commissioner in Scouting for 9 or 10 years. I have taken kids abroad. Barbara only got a holiday every second year because I used to take a party of 48 kids abroad, doing outdoor pursuits and adventures. It set the scene for many many things. I will never ever stop thanking BAS for the opportunity they provided. Sorry I may be emotional here.

[Part 2 0:56:18] Lee: That's all right; you are allowed to. I have plenty of tissues.

Burton: No, they set the scene. They set the scene.

[Part 2 0:56:23] Lee: It was Frank actually, wasn't it?

Burton: Frank Kelsey, yes.

[Part 2 0:56:26] Lee: Who gave you the advert?

Burton: Yes, and unfortunately he couldn't drive a car. He was a motorbike fiend, and he died on his motorbike. He got killed on his motorbike. I often think, and I were really saddened. I don't know where I was but I was saddened I couldn't attend Bill Sloman's funeral, just to say thank you, because I thought it was down to him doing what he did, and doing his job quite right. So yes.

[Part 2 0:56:58] Lee: His life changed yours?

Burton: Oh yes, very much so. Very much so, yes.

[Part 2 0:57:01] Lee: It's been fabulous, Paul. Thank you so much.

[Part 2 0:57:06] [End of Part Two]

ENDS

Possible extracts:

- [[Part 1 0:11:44] Memories of Bill Sloman.
- [Part 1 0:19:54] The South Georgia greenhouse.
- [Part 1 0:25:57] Pink Drawers.
- [Part 1 0:31:08] 'This is not Blackpool.'
- [Part 1 0:32:21] A bra in the drying room.
- [Part 1 0:34:40] A void under the Halley hut.
- [Part 1 0:40:08] Glaciology field trip.
- [Part 1 0:43:32] Halley and Grahamland compared.
- [Part 1 0:49:56] Getting drunk and missing the ship.
- [Part 1 0:52:18] Useless central heating at Argentine Islands.
- [Part 1 1:01:29] Sledging with Charles Swwithinbank.
- [Part 1 1:06:02] Three shirt sewing attempts.
- [Part 2 0:01:46] 'Where's Fossil Bluff?'
- [Part 2 0:06:43] Tim Christie's news from home.
- [Part 2 0:08:17] Up a mountain with Tim Christie.
- [Part 2 0:10:58] The famous turdicle.
- [Part 2 0:12:39] Building a new toilet.
- [Part 2 0:15:30] Two Interflora stories.
- [Part 2 0:17:07] Dear John letters and the ching stick.
- [Part 2 0:19:04] Flying Ricky Chinn's trousers.
- [Part 2 0:20:13] The tying boots together joke.
- [Part 2 0:25:54] Building Halley III.
- [Part 2 0:26:52] Losing a crane.
- [Part 2 0:28:18] Ice cliffs collapsed on Bransfield.
- [Part 2 0:29:07] A near miss on the sea ice.
- [Part 2 0:33:26] Working with the Americans.
- [Part 2 0:36:49] Poor American field kit.
- [Part 2 0:40:34] Dropping a snow blower at the South Pole.
- [Part 2 0:43:17] The Minus Forties Club.
- [Part 2 0:45:14] Fid soundtrack to Cat Ballou.
- [Part 2 0:46:08] A cold adaptation study.
- [Part 2 0:48:10] Runaway sledges in the garage.
- [Part 2 0:50:22] Sir Vivian Fuchs and the wooden mallet.