

GORDON STOCK

Edited transcript of interview with Gordon Stock conducted by Chris Eldon Lee on 13th September, 2013. BAS archives AD6/24/1/232. Transcribed by Allen Wearden in May, 2019.

[Part 1 0:00:00] Lee: This is Gordon Stock interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 13th of September 2013. Gordon Stock part 1.

Stock: My name is Gordon Stock, date of birth is the 23rd of August 1926. I was born in a village called Finchingfield in Essex.

[Part 1 0:00:23] Lee: And how old are you now?

Stock: I'm 87 now.

[Part 1 0:00:28] Lee: You've just had a birthday by the looks of things?

Stock: I've had a birthday in August, yeah just over 87.

[Part 1 0:00:33] Lee: Would you say your father was an educated man?

Stock: Not all that educated, no!

[Part 1 0:00:36] Lee: Tell me about him.

Stock: He worked with his father who had a farm in Finchingfield called Stocks Farm and we left Finchingfield in 1933, and he started a building firm and he was a builder in Frinton-on-Sea in Essex until he died in about, I can't remember the date, but he died in about 1966/65. My mother also, she was the daughter of Mr Sullans who owned the village stores in Finchingfield; he ran a butcher's shop in Finchingfield, a taxi firm, and he was the only petrol pump in the village! Which you have to use by pumping with your hand backwards and forwards per gallon, switch it over, drain it into the car, fill it up again, and it took a long, long time to fill your car up! [Laughter] But that was my mother's side and she died with me in my own house when I was in St Albans, she died in about 1982/83 I can't remember the dates, I should do but I can't.

[Part 1 0:02:11] Lee: How was your education was it the local primary school?

Stock: My education wasn't that good, my father always used to tell his friends 'I'm not going to have any trouble with my son's education because he'll probably be in borstal'!
[Laughter]

[Part 1 0:02:23] Lee: Were you a terror!?

Stock: Probably! [laughter] No I was one of the boys; I think we used to play on the cliffs at Frinton and they were subjected to subsidence, and often we'd get into trouble and getting covered in mud!

[Part 1 0:02:40] Lee: So you were an outdoor boy were you?

Stock: I was yes, very much so yes.

[Part 1 0:02:43] Lee: A tom boy?

Stock: I wasn't a tom boy no, but I was an outdoor boy, yes.

[Part 1 0:02:48] Lee: So what was your secondary school?

Stock: My secondary school was in Gloucestershire because I was evacuated to Gloucestershire during the war, and we only had I think two or three days per week. We shared schooling with the local boys because there wasn't enough teachers or schools to go round to take all the children. And that was Merton College in Stonehouse in Gloucestershire or Kings Langley actually, but I lived in Stonehouse.

[Part 1 0:00:03:25] Lee: And university or college?

Stock: No I didn't go there no, never went there no. I did some work after various educational I did a Pitman's course, for shorthand and typing. I've done several meteorological courses with the Air Ministry and that's about all, I've done quite a bit after school age.

[Part 1 0:03:53] Lee: Did you have a career in mind at the end of your schooling?

Stock: Yes, I always wanted to be an accountant and that was what I wanted to be and when I volunteered for the navy I volunteered as a writer, but within two or three weeks of joining the navy as a writer they re-graded me as a telegraphist because all the writers were taken over by the Wrens! [laughter] So they didn't have men pushing pens they got the girls to do it! So I was then trained as a telegraphist in Scotland at the Marconi School in Scotland, in Dundee.

[Part 1 0:04:31] Lee: Had you shown any aptitude for that kind of work previously?

Stock: No-no I hadn't. Well I was in the Boy Scouts obviously as most boys were in those days and we did semaphore signalling that sort of thing, and I quite enjoyed that so it may have been that, but it wasn't my choice - I was told 'You're going to be a telegraphist' so that was that! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:04:53] Lee: There was a war on wasn't there!

Stock: Yes it was during the war, yes!

[Part 1 0:05:00] Lee: You joined in '43 is that right, the Royal Navy?

Stock: Yes I joined in '43 yes.

[Part 1 0:05:07] Lee: Conscripted or?

Stock: No I volunteered! I volunteered because my brother-in-law was killed in a raid on Heligoland, and I said to my sister 'I vow to you that I shall avenge his death! And that is why I volunteered for the navy, to try to just do my part.

[Part 1 0:05:29] Lee: What did you mean when you said that?

Stock: What did I mean?

[Part 1 0:05:34] Lee: Did you mean find a German?

Stock: Well I meant I was very fond of him, my sister's husband, very, very fond and I was very upset when we heard that he had been killed, and I vowed then that I would try and avenge his death!

[Part 1 0:05:51] Lee: By fighting?

Stock: By fighting by joining the services, yeah.

[Part 1 0:05:55] Lee: What led you to the Royal Navy?

Stock: My father was upset, in fact he came to. I was sent to the naval training base at Ganges in Ipswich and he came over there after I'd volunteered to try and get me released! But they said 'No-no, he's sighed the papers and he's old enough. I'm afraid he's in the navy'! But my father was most upset that I did join the navy!

[Part 1 0:06:19] Lee: Why?

Stock: I don't know why, [Lee: yeah], maybe he didn't want to lose another son.

[Part 1 0:06:24] Lee: Well quite! So why did you chose that branch of the forces rather than anything else?

Stock: Ah, I was always very keen on the navy.

[Part 1 0:06:36] Lee: Can you remember why?

Stock: I cannot remember why no. No I think naval history was more important to me than any other history.

[Part 1 0:06:49] Lee: Trafalgar and that?

Stock: Yes, all that yes.

[Part 1 0:06:53] Lee: Spanish Armada?

Stock: That's right all that, yes, yes! Which we're still trying to fight. [laughter] We're going to have another one in Gibraltar soon!

[Part 1 0:07:01] Lee: Well it looks like that way doesn't it? Did you enjoy the navy?

Stock: Yes I think I did, yes I enjoyed my training. I didn't have many ships I served only on about two or three different ships, in fact it was a good thing I didn't have a ship because if I'd had a ship I wouldn't have gone to the Antarctic! Because how I got on to the expedition, I was in the Commodore's office in Chatham waiting to be posted to a ship, I was working in the Commodore's office and once I went in with some mail he said 'Stock, have you heard

about Scott?' I said 'Yes sir, he went across the pole in the Antarctic'! He said 'Would you like to do that?' I said 'Oh yeah I'd love it, sir!' He said 'Right, well go and see the chief purser, get a railway ticket, go up to Admiralty, go and see Commander Bingham and be on your best behaviour!' So off I went and that's how I joined, I got selected by Bingham. There were lots of other applicants but I was lucky!

[Part 1 0:08:13] Lee: Let's just backtrack slightly, [Stock: Yes], had you, when do you think you first knew the place called the Antarctic existed, had you read about Scott?

Stock: Oh yes, yes I had, and Amundsen, and I was very, very interested in geography had always been quite strong with me, I've always been interested in geography and I was quite impressed with, and I could never work out why they took donkeys instead of ponies, I mean ponies instead of!

[Part 1 0:08:49] Lee: Of dogs!

Stock: Dogs, but that's history as well.

[Part 1 0:08:54] Lee: Yeah, so when the CO said 'Would you like to go to the Antarctic?' why did you say 'Yes'?

Stock: Well that was, well that's not an opportunity that many people would be offered, I was thrilled, really thrilled! And when I got the letter to say I'd been accepted and that I going to be going on such and such a date I was more than excited, terribly thrilled!

[Part 1 0:09:21] Lee: So tell me a bit about the interview then with Bingham, do you remember anything about that day?

Stock: No, I think that there were various people round the table like psychologists and probably a few educationists.

[Part 1 0:09:40] Lee: Were you, being psyched out?

Stock: Yes we were, definitely yes, oh yes!

[Part 1 0:09:43] Lee: How was that done?

Stock: Well I think mainly by being asked questions about what you did and what you'd done previously and what you hoped to do in the future, and why, as you just said, why did you what to go down there, you had to give a reason for that.

[Part 1 0:10:00] Lee: And the reason was the adventure?

Stock: The reason was that it was a thrill a thrilling adventure yes, chance of a life time!

[Part 1 0:10:09] Lee: Why do think the CO recommended Stock for this opportunity?

Stock: Well he'd had a letter from Admiralty asking him to select people for interview I think it went to all the naval depots, Portsmouth and Chatham, Greenock, went to all the

Commanders asking for volunteers. And they had hundreds of applicants as you can imagine so I was very, very lucky!

[Part 1 0:10:42] Lee: So he mentioned it to you as if he thought perhaps you'd make a good?

Stock: He probably thought I'd never heard of him! [Laughter] No I was very lucky!

[Part 1 0:10:51] Lee: Yeah, tell me about then what happened after the interview, you got a letter presumably saying?

Stock: Yes I got a letter to say that I'd been selected.

[Part 1 0:11:02] Lee: And your father had been reluctant to let you join the Royal Navy?

Stock: Oh he was thrilled about that though!

[Part 1 0:11:06] Lee: Oh was he?

Stock: Oh, yes he was!

[Part 1 0:11:08] Lee: Oh, why was that?

Stock: Yes he went round telling everybody, yes he was very pleased. Yes, I got a letter and then the letter said to report to the Admiralty on such and such a date. Passports were issued, we had to sign the Secret Service Act (sic), because in those days we didn't want anybody to know we were going down there!

[Part 1 0:11:31] Lee: Well your dad had taken care of that!

Stock: Sorry?

[Part 1 0:11:33] Lee: Your dad had told everybody hadn't he!?

Stock: Well yes I think he had but he didn't know what I was going to be doing.

[Part 1 0:11:41] Lee: Oh I see I beg your pardon.

Stock: But I forget what I was going to say now?

[Part 1 0:11:45] Lee: You had to sign the Official Secrets Act?

Stock: Yes we signed that, and then we, I turned up at the Admiralty, we were taken out Northolt and we were flown in an old Dakota down to Newquay. That evening we left Newquay for Lisbon which we thought was absolutely marvellous! There was terrific thunder storm as we were landing but to see all the lights after the darkness of England to all the lights was absolutely marvellous. Anyway we stayed there for two or three days in a place called Estoril just outside Lisbon and then we joined a merchant ship, one of the Blue Funnel liners.

[Part 1 0:12:29] Lee: Oh right!

Stock: Blue Funnel it was it was?

[Part 1 0:12:33] Lee: Don't worry Gordon.

Stock: I can't remember the name of the ship, anyway we went from Lisbon to Pernambuco which is now Recife, and from Recife we went down to Rio de Janeiro where we met up with the boys from Canada with the dogs and transferred to *Trepassey*. And from the *Trepassey* we went down to Montevideo and stayed there a few days, from Montevideo down to the Falkland Islands. On the way we had one mishap, there were storing bedding and mattresses and various things in the funnel circuit and they all caught fire so we had a fire on the ship! Which was quite terrible at the time, but anyway we managed to put it out, but something went wrong with the engines and we had, I think it was *HMS Sparrow*, she took us in tow to the Falklands! And was repaired down there and I was, this was just before Christmas in 1945 and I was lucky I spent Christmas in the Falkland Islands, as some of the lads were sent off to the Antarctic straight away! But I was kept back for, with others, and we went down after Christmas. So we had a nice Christmas in the Falkland Islands, and eventually we went down and I went down first of all to Port Lockroy, base A, and I liked Port Lockroy, a very small island we were on not much bigger than a football pitch but the house was probably one of the most comfortable of all of the bases we stayed in, I stayed in anyway. And in those days I was still a telegraphist so of course I was able to speak to other people by Morse code, we didn't have any telephonic communications in those days. So I was lucky I could talk to people outside, but unfortunately the other three lads couldn't so I had to tell them all the time what was going on!

[Part 1 0:14:55] Lee: Again let me take you back a little bit. [Stock: Yes] How did your mother feel about our Gordon going off so far?

Stock: I think she was a little bit nervous about it all, but my father had always said to me, 'What do you want to do lad, is see the world at someone else's expense'! [Laughter] I shall never forget him saying that, and my mother I think she just thought, 'Well if that's what he wants to do let him do it', yes!

[Part 1 0:15:37] Lee: She wasn't concerned about the dangers?

Stock: No because they didn't realise what it was. I didn't realise what it was, it wasn't until we got going we really knew what we'd be doing, I had no idea that I'd be living in a small hut with three other people for a year, no idea at all!

[Part 1 0:15:53] Lee: So you weren't very well briefed?

Stock: No we weren't!

[Part 1 0:15:56] Lee: Were you trained at all?

Stock: No, oh no, no training!

[Part 1 0:16:00] Lee: No crevasse rescue training?

Stock: No nothing like that.

[Part 1 0:16:03] Lee: No skiing?

Stock: No, no, we learned the hard way with skiing, buckling our knees and ankles!

[Laughter]

[Part 1 0:16:12] Lee: And the journey south on the boat that was the first time, was that the first time you'd been, no you'd been in the navy so you'd been on a ship before?

Stock: I had yes.

[Part 1 0:16:21] Lee: And how did that compare to like being a Royal Navy ship?

Stock: Well we were very lucky I think. This ship was called the *Empire Might*, I can't remember, anyway whatever it was I was very lucky because in those days passenger/cargo ships were allowed to take up to 12 passengers, if they had more than that they had to take a doctor onboard as well. So we had accommodation of what was for fare paying passengers on this transporter. But a funny little thing happened when we were in Lisbon before we set sail. Although I'd had been in the navy - you won't believe this but they were taking out huge pieces of granite for building the new city in Santos just outside Rio! - and I'd gone to bed in my bunk in the cabin and the ship was rolling from side to side every now and again, it was rolling over and rolling back and I became very ill, and I'd got to get some fresh air and I dashed outside thinking that the sea was quite rough, and we were still in the harbour!

[Laughter] And they were loading these lumps of granite and as the crane went over the side and lifted it over so the ship was swaying from side to side with these large lumps of granite on. I didn't live that down I'm afraid! [Laughter]

[Part 1 0:18:09] Lee: But tell me more about this fire on the *Trepassey* in the funnel, what do you remember?

Stock: Well I remember people shouting because quite a small ship so could hear easily, but everyone shouting and there was lots of smoke but it wasn't a serious fire. The heat from the funnel itself and all the mattresses and bedding were around it and all the other tarpaulins that they kept it in, because the funnel was quite big but the actual hot pipe was actually [Lee: the exhaust] was very small, so they had began to smoulder, there was no flame it was just a smouldering thing, but it was quite frightening!

[Part 1 0:18:54] Tell me more why it frightening?

Stock: Well I thought the ship was going to go down!!? There's always that danger!

[Part 1 0:19:04] Lee: And was it all hands to tackle the blaze?

Stock: Oh yes, but we had a Norwegian crew and they were excellent, really excellent!

[Part 1 0:19:11] Lee: Did the Fids help?

Stock: Oh yes, yes, well we threw everything overboard of course!

[Part 1 0:19:17] Lee: Well I was going to ask that, yes, all mattresses went?

Stock: Everything went overboard yeah.

[Part 1 0:19:22] Lee: So did that have repercussions later when you were trying to bed down?

Stock: I don't think so I can't?

[Part 1 0:19:29] Lee: No it's a long time ago!

Stock: We weren't interested in the logistics but I don't think it did. They obviously got replacements from somewhere.

[Part 1 0:19:38] Lee: Tell me about Fort/Port Stanley in 1945, [Stock: yes] what was that like?

Stock: I liked Port Stanley, quite a cute little place really, and of course we were very lucky we had accommodation in the Colonial Secretary's house because he wasn't there at the time, and we had to cook for ourselves so we got used to each other, got to know each other. And the Falkland Islanders made us more than welcome and we went out, as I say Geoff Hattersley-Smith was quite a keen horseman, so we did quite a bit of going out on horseback.

[Part 1 0:20:29] Lee: Who else was in your team?

Stock: Mike, his father was a doctor in Selsey Bill, and I went down there and stayed with them when we came back some time, Mike Harvey, Michael Harvey, there was he and one and two Falkland Islanders, Frank was the cook and a chap called Peck was the sort of handyman, he did it well. All the bases had a Falkland Islander handyman, they called them handymen but they did all, they were quite often good carpenters.

[Part 1 0:21:14] Lee: You're talking about now the team that went to Port Lockroy?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:21:18] Lee: Yeah, so there were four of you?

Stock: Just four of us yeah.

[Part 1 0:21:21] Lee: So you had Christmas on Stanley?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:21:24] Lee: So were there celebrations?

Stock: Oh yes, oh yes, and what they do there is they don't have turkey, but they kill a cow in calf and they have the unborn calf as their festive meal, and it was very delicious! I suppose it's veal is it really?

[Part 1 0:21:46] Lee: I think so yeah.

Stock: They made a fuss of all this, yes quite good!

[Part 1 0:21:52] Lee: Was there a ceremony of some kind?

Stock: Oh yes, yes, yes!

[Part 1 0:21:55] Lee: What do you recall?

Stock: Yeah, I recall one incident on the island I can't remember if it was the first time I was there or the second, I think it was probably the first time, Dr Sladen.

[Part 1 0:22:15] Lee: Bill Sladen?

Stock: Bill Sladen, no not Dr Sladen, our Bill Sladen he wasn't, there was another, Dr Sladen was the doctor on the island.

[Part 1 0:22:23] Lee: Dr Slessor?

Stock: No Slessor was part of the expedition, this Dr Sladen was a resident doctor in the Falklands! It so happened that he took up a practice in Frinton-on-Sea after he left the Falklands, so that was strange! Anyway he invited us all round to dinner one evening and he said 'Stock do you like prunes?' and I said 'Oh yes I like prunes!' so he gave me prunes and custard and during the evening I felt violently ill and they sent for him, 'Stock is very ill, he's running a high temperature and he's terrible!' Well he had a motor bike and a sidecar which was like that table, it wasn't a normal sidecar it was just a flat thing, that was his ambulance! [laughter] So he put me there, took me to hospital, pumped my stomach out and do you know what the rascal had done? He's soaked the prunes in gin [laughter] so he really upset me, he nearly killed me I think! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:23:34] Lee: And the ambulance was a motor bike with a stretcher attached?

Stock: Yes that was amazing to see, I think there were maybe two or three cars, the governor had a car, the chap that ran the grocery store he had a car but I think they were only two or three cars. Dr Slessor didn't and was no ambulance of course, well they may have been but I don't know. Anyway he took me, he used the sidecar as a stretcher it was purposely built, had straps and everything on it – no, I shall never forget that! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:24:09] Lee: So you ended up in the hospital I guess? [Stock: Sorry?] You ended up in the hospital there?

Stock: Oh just overnight yes, I think just as a precaution, but I was ill, very ill!

[Part 1 0:24:23] Lee: Were there any races around Christmas, horse races?

Stock: Yes there were, yes oh yes, they had horse races on the course yes, and we all went to that course.

[Part 1 0:24:33] Lee: Any Fids take part?

Stock: I think they did yes, yeah they did.

[Part 1 0:24:37] Lee: Hattersley-Smith?

Stock: Oh I think he probably did, he would have done yes. But they don't have saddles they just put a sheepskin over the horse's back and sit on the sheepskin. They can't make out how we had stirrups and reins, an entirely different way of riding a horse out there than back here in England!

[Part 1 0:25:00] Lee: And would everybody go to watch I guess?

Stock: Oh yes, yes, and then later, on the second year, the racecourse we turned that into to a landing strip for the Auster, which then became an ambulance airplane, air ambulance, and I was the first passenger in that plane, because I helped Vic Spenser, he was the pilot. I helped him to put the Auster together because obviously it went out as a kit, and we put it together, weren't quite sure whether we'd connected all the wires up right or not so he said 'You're coming with me!' [Laughter] So the first flight we took, well I say flight we didn't we just ran up and down the runway to make sure everything was in order, then came the big takeoff and off we went, now that was quite exciting!

[Part 1 0:25:51] Lee: And that was built in the Falklands?

Stock: Yes, well we assembled it in the Falklands, it was in a crate in kit form, like flat pack.

[Part 1 0:26:00] Lee: Yeah, had you any previous experience of that?

Stock: Oh no, no, I think the first time I flew was at Clacton-on-Sea at an air rally when you paid £5 and went up for 10 minutes! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:26:19] Lee: But you had no experience of building that kind of thing?

Stock: Oh no. Mind you we had all the instructions supplied by I don't know is it De Havilland who make Austers I can't remember? [Note: Auster is the name of the manufacturer]. But the instructions are fairly well there you know, put this wire there and make this and do that, it was quite easy to do it, except the wires had to go all the way down the fuselage to the tail and that sometimes was a bit tricky getting it to the end of the plane!

[Part 1 0:26:48] Lee: So it must have been a bit of a heart stopping moment when you tried to fly this thing?

Stock: That's right!

[Part 1 0:26:52] Lee: That you'd just built!

Stock: Yeah, well Vic was an experienced pilot in fact he stayed out there for two or three years I think.

[Part 1 0:27:00] Lee: Anyhow the time came for you to head further south? [Stock: Yes] How did you, on what did you sail to Port Lockroy on?

Stock: I went down on the *Trepassey*.

[Part 1 0:27:08] Lee: That continued its journey did it?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:27:14] Lee: And you wintered at Lockroy in 1946?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:27:19] Lee: And so were you, the hut was already open wasn't it?

Stock: Oh yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:27:23] Lee: Were you still part of Operation Tabarin then?

Stock: No, we started off as Operation Tabarin but during our first stay in the Falklands we were re-designated to FIDS and the Foreign Office had handed it over to the Colonial Office.

[Lee: Right] The Foreign Office ran it as Operation Tabarin I think and then the Colonial Office took it over as FIDS.

[Part 1 0:27:52] Lee: But you were still a naval rating I guess were you?

Stock: No, no, I got a special release from the navy.

[Part 1 0:27:59] Lee: Temporary or permanent?

Stock: Temporary. [Lee: right] I had to go to HMS *Discovery* on the Thames to get my release when I came back, but it didn't make any difference to my pension, it didn't count the time I was in the Antarctic, I'm always annoyed about that! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:28:21] Lee: Right, so you were transferred from the navy to FIDS?

Stock: Yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:28:25] Lee: So FIDS were paying your salary?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:28:27] Lee: At their rate?

Stock: That's right.

[Part 1 0:28:30] Lee: Rather than the rather higher?

Stock: Rather than at navy rate, yes.

[Part 1 0:28:33] Lee: Yeah. Although in the Antarctic you had nothing to spend your money on I guess!

Stock: No, although they did charge us for sending telegrams I think!

[Part 1 0:28:41] Lee: OK, tell me about what met your eyes when you sailed towards Port Lockroy.

Stock: Well the enormity of the ice itself, the mountains, the mountains were absolutely magnificent, mind you going down the sea was pretty rough! And as I say although I was in the navy I wasn't a good sailor and it was very, very rough across the Drake Passage, but the first sighting of the Antarctic ice itself and the ice bergs was just something you had to see, you can't imagine it! The scenery is absolutely magnificent and the sky at night some of the colours in the sky just magnificent, lovely!

[Part 1 0:29:37] Lee: And the stars?

Stock: And the stars and the moon, when I was at Deception Island you could, a full moon, you could actually read the newspapers without glasses the moon was that bright, not the small print but you could read the headlines. And the moon with the naked eye you could see the mountains on the moon, with binoculars or telescope fantastic!

[Part 1 0:30:08] Lee: The atmosphere, the earth's atmosphere, was a lot cleaner [Stock: yes] then than now, but was that because it was cleaner in those days or was it because you were in the Antarctic? What was the clarity down to, was it clear?

Stock: No, I don't go along with this warming climate change, I think it's a cycle every 11 years. With the Earth's movement in conjunction with the sun and the moon the climate obviously changes, and it comes in cycles and people forget that 11 years ago, it was just as bad as it is this year or just as hot this year as it was 11 years ago, not exactly 11 years but the cycle about that, so I believe anyway!

[Part 1 0:31:07] Lee: But I was thinking about the clarity of the air that struck me about the Antarctic, the clarity of the air.

Stock: That's right.

[Part 1 0:31:12] Lee: Particularly.

Stock: Well there's no pollution is there really? And of course there's not many wind direction taking polluted air from the equator to the southern regions it's more or less the winds are going towards and around the equator they don't flow towards the poles, they flow away from the poles because the colder air is always going to the warmer so there's really not any polluted air going towards the Antarctic.

[Part 1 0:31:45] Lee: So that impressed you straight away?

Stock: Oh yes, very impressed yes.

[Part 1 0:31:49] Lee: What about the accommodation?

Stock: Well the accommodation was OK, because as you just said it was occupied before we got there, so I think we had to get into other peoples beds, I can't recollect, we took our own fresh bedding! But the big things about it there was no heating, well we had a coal burning stove in the middle of the hut no electric light, no sanitation, this is what people can't understand of how you could live a whole year with no running water! No electricity, you

couldn't have a bath, well you could if you liked to spend all day melting snow down to make enough water for a bath you were lucky! So we had a bath about once every two months I think! [Laughter] And the first year I was there of at Port Lockroy we had a cook from the Falkland Islands, er Frank, I can't remember his surname, Frank, and he was a very good cook but he did nothing but cook! So we didn't cook for ourselves, but after that Bingham decided 'No, we are not having this, everybody is going to take a share of the cooking', so we did a month of cook duty then the other chaps had a, you did another month so that was OK as I learned to cook! [Laughter] So I'm a very good cook now! [Laughter]

[Part 1 0:33:27] Again you learnt on the job!

Stock: Oh yes, oh yes, I'd no idea. I think I could boil an egg that was about as much as I could do!

[Part 1 0:33:36] Lee: Were there some early disasters then on the table?

Stock: Quite possibly, especially trying to make bread. Making bread was very, very difficult - sometimes it came out like rock and other times it came out like glue! [Laughter] But we were, well I was never very successful at bread making.

[Part 1 0:33:57] Lee: Is that largely because of the unreliability of the oven?

Stock: And the temperature, yes, or we didn't get the yeast to rise up right because you couldn't get the yeast to rise because it was cold, and if you put it in the oven to try and warm it up then it got too hot and turned into a gooey mess!

[Part 1 0:34:14] Lee: So was anybody able to make bread properly?

Stock: Oh yes, Frank could make bread, yeah, and Dick Burd was good, unfortunately he was killed down there but Dick Burd was good bread maker.

[Part 1 0:34:28] Lee: What happened to him?

Stock: He was burnt in the fire at Hope Bay! And I recall telling a story of the fire at Hope Bay - sorry this is going to go on a little further.

[Part 1 0:34:46] Lee: That's alright!

Stock: We didn't know what had happened at Hope Bay except they had gone off the air and there was no communication from them. And I had a dream that they'd been a fire and that the base was on fire, and Dick managed to get outside and he realised that someone was missing and he went back into the fire and unfortunately perished! And his body, I dreamt was under a bunk because we had bunks with one chap underneath and one on top, Dick's body was found under the bottom bunk, under the bottom bunk, he'd obviously been crawling around and lost his way out. And when we, because I was on the ship that went in first and saw the fire and we went, we discovered where his body was!

[Part 1 0:36:03] Lee: Have you had other similar experiences?

Stock; Sometime I do I still get things like that, yes.

[Part 1 0:36:15] Lee: And you had a complete conviction this dream had a?

Stock: Yeah I wake up sometimes, even now I wake up sometimes convinced that what I've dreamt is actually true.

[Part 1 0:36:24] Lee: And generally it isn't?

Stock: Generally it isn't, yes.

[Part 1 0:36:26] Lee: So in the case of Dick Burd you went knowing where he would be?

Stock: Well not convinced no.

[Part 1 0:36:36] Lee: OK.

Stock: But it was.

[Part 1 0:36:39] Lee: But it was the first place?

Stock: But it was a revelation when we did find him, but we had to be very careful. I must admit that I was not the first person into the hut, because Slaughter, Salter he came he was the only survivor and he came down to the beach when we, well at least the shore, when we went ashore to warn us that there'd been a tragedy and he was the only survivor, and other people went to the hut. I was not the first one, I wasn't in the hut.

[Part 1 0:37:19] Lee: Would this have been in fact Bill Sladen?

Stock: No, this is Salter, Willoughby Salter! [Lee: Slater OK] I don't know what happen to Willoughby he lived up in....Yorkshire somewhere I think.

[Part 1 0:37:38] Lee: So you?

Stock: But Willoughby was the meteorologist at Hope Bay so he and I were of the same ilk.

[Part 1 0:37:48] Lee: Right, so he got there before, he wasn't based?

Stock: He had already spent the year there, yes.

[Part 1 0:37:53] Lee: Right, he was based at Hope Bay?

Stock: He was at Hope Bay, yes.

[Part 1 0:37:56] Lee: And survived the fire?

Stock: And he survived the fire and he was the only one, and his story would be worth telling because he lived alone on scraps for I can't remember how many months, before we got in there, but this was the difficulty with the expeditions, if anything happened seriously happened there was nothing that could be done for you till the ice allowed the ships into the bases! And this happened at Hope Bay and it happened at Deception Island and it happened

at Admiralty Island [Bay] so three of the bases were left with serious injuries or deaths, without anybody knowing until we arrived!

[Part 1 0:38:50] Lee: So Hope, did you get from Port Lockroy to Hope Bay that was in a ship of some sort?

Stock: Oh yes. I think on that occasion I went on the *Scoresby* I can't remember, but I think it was the *Scoresby*. I hated the *Scoresby*, [laughter] very uncomfortable!

[Part 1 0:39:10] Lee: And the decision to go was simply because you hadn't heard from them?

Stock: Oh no, we went to relieve we had a relief crew, we had a relief party!

[Part 1 0:39:18] Lee: Oh I see.

Stock: It was to relieve the party that had been there all year and the new party were on the ship ready to go, and all the stores and everything was ready to replace the base with a new party, otherwise nobody knew of the accident and the fatalities there at all!

[Part 1 0:39:39] Lee: Right. So the dream you had could not have been based on news that there had been a fire?

Stock: No.

[Part 1 0:39:48] Lee: It was purely some sort of psychic?

Stock: Coincidental yes, purely coincidental.

[Part 1 0:39:53] Lee: Psychic connection?

Stock: Yes, I'm not psychic I don't think, but would appear to be, yes.

[Part 1 0:40:02] Lee: That incident, so talk me through arriving at Hope Bay, what do you remember of the arrival there?

Stock: Well I was absolutely amazed because, as you probably know, the Antarctic suffers a lot from very, very thick fog, and we'd been sailing through this thick fog for quite a few hours and suddenly I heard the anchors drop and we couldn't see a thing, not a thing! And we slept and when I woke up next morning we were in the middle of this Hope Bay, how the captain got it there I shall never know, magnificent! I can't remember his name either the captain of the *Trepassey*/*Scoresby*, no it must have been the *Trepassey*, yeah it was the *Trepassey* it wasn't the *Scoresby*!

[Part 1 0:41:05] Lee: OK, and could you see the wrecked hut from the ship?

Stock: Not to my knowledge, no, because I think it was the hut, the base hut at....Hope Bay was some way off the shore.

[Part 1 0:41:28] Lee: So a party was put together?

Stock: Of course, I didn't know where to look anyway because I'd never been there before!

[Part 1 0:41:34] Lee: So was there a sort of landing party put together?

Stock: Oh yes!

[Part 1 0:41:37] Lee: And you volunteered?

Stock: Well no, I didn't. I don't think they asked for volunteers it was just natural for the people that were going to be relieving the others for them to go first.

[Part 1 0:41:49] Lee: Of course, yes.

Stock: I probably stayed on board ship helping to unload the cargo.

[Part 1 0:41:57] Lee: So what was the first news you got that confirmed your dream?

Stock: When they came back and said what they'd seen and where they'd found the bodies.

[Part 1 0:42:09] Lee: And did you go and see for yourself?

Stock: I did go up there yeah, but the bodies had been removed by then and I didn't actually see Dick's body!

[Part 1 0:42:16] Lee: What did you see?

Stock: Well the hut was completely, there was nothing left of it, it was absolutely ruined. We were more concerned of about Willoughby than, well not about the others leaving, but Willoughby was not in a very good state as you can imagine, he was very emotional and overcome when he was relieved by us! Because he's spent so many months on his own, it must have been a terrible time for him. No, the only time I ever volunteered for something, when we down with Bingham we wanted to get some seals to feed to the dogs so the first floe we came across with some seals on, Bingham said 'Right, we want those seals for the dogs, now whose a good marksman?' and I didn't say anything, I said 'Oh I'm not bad sir'! So he gave me a service revolver and he said 'Right' - you know how seagulls float over the tops of funnels on the ships, they just float like this he said 'Right, shoot that bird down'! I took this revolver, crash I hit this bird bang first shot 'You're in charge of the landing party, go and get those seals!' [laughter] And we did get them, that was the first seals we got for the dogs - after that we killed hundreds! [Lee: Yeah] People wouldn't like us telling that but we had to kill them for A) ourselves, and B) the dogs. It was the only meat the dogs had!

[Part 1 0:44:08] Lee: Let's go back to Port Lockroy then.

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 0:44:10] Lee: We correctly got, we got sidetracked to the Hope Bay fire.

Stock: Yeah I did.

[Part 1 0:44:16] Lee: And the tragedy of that, but tell me a bit about the more routine life at Port Lockroy, what sort of lifestyle did you adopt?

Stock: Well it was a routine. I had to get up, well I say, you got up in the morning and the first message you sent the weather, the weather report, I sent to Port Stanley on the radio, and we did that every three hours so that kept me going. I had to keep the engine going to provide the power. I had to do my duties to collect the snow or ice for our drinking water; occasionally we would go off skiing somewhere, we couldn't ski much on the island itself because it was too small, but we did have an outboard motor and we did go across to what we called the mainland, Grahamland, and ski on the glaciers up there. But that didn't last for too long because we were going out one day and the outboard propeller hit a little piece of ice and sheered it and the engine went flying into the water! So we never had a boat to use after that, except when we were rowing, so we couldn't go too far away because of the currents!

[Part 1 0:45:49] Lee: What was the hut like, was it cosy?

Stock: The hut was very comfortable. When you go there in the summer, which is quite nice, the sun was quite warm you could go about in shirt sleeves in summer, you think it was cold all year but it isn't, it's quite pleasant in the summer. But one the things that struck me, 'Why have they got all these wires?' All these wires were running this way and that way all over the house, hawser wires. But in the winter we soon found out why, you'd get a gust of a wind at 120mph or something and you could hear the wind whistling through these wires!

[Part 1 0:46:27] Lee: The cables were holding the hut down?

Stock: Yes, they were holding the hut down.

[Part 1 0:46:32] Lee: It was anchored down?

Stock: Because it was only put on these rocks!

[Part 1 0:46:34] Lee: Yeah. How were the cables anchored?

Stock: They were cemented in to the, we had pins that they drove into the rock and then were cemented in.

[Part 1 0:46:44] Lee: Did it feel secure?

Stock: Oh yes. Sometimes we got a little nervous that the thing was going to blow us away! And we had a wire from the hut to the....observation, the observatory, where the instruments were kept for temperature and pressure etc, and you hooked yourself on to this wire and let yourself out, because if you tried to walk across there without you'd get blown away to nothing! Can't imagine how strong, not a very strong wind to blow you over, actually to try and walk against a 50/60 knot wind in icy conditions is quite difficult!

[Part 1 0:47:30] Lee: So you had a harness of some sort?

Stock: Yes, just clipped ourselves on to this wire that was only when the weather was very, very bad!

[Part 1 0:47:39] Lee: Right. So the met instruments were in a different building were they?

Stock: They were in a little....?

[Part 1 0:47:45] Lee: Stevenson screen?

Stock: A little screen, yeah.

[Part 1 0:47:51] Lee: Were there any other buildings, was there an outhouse?

Stock: Yes there was an old Nissen hut, the round Nissen hut, that's where we kept all the stores, because you could imagine four men living a year go through quite a bit of food! So all the food was kept in the Nissen hut and subsequently everything got frozen, you opened a can of tinned potatoes or something it was just a mushy, they'd all frozen and broken up, nothing like a potato when you opened it up!

[Part 1 0:48:28] Lee: Were they still edible?

Stock: Oh yes they were edible alright yes, yes, but we had to ration ourselves out, at the beginning of the month we listed, you can have eight tins of potatoes, six tins of beans, four tins of tomatoes, three tins of sardines and that was your allocation for the month cooking! So we knew exactly what food was left and what we were using.

[Part 1 0:49:00] Lee: So the food sounds as though it was quite basic most of the time?

Stock: Most of it was dried. We had dried potatoes, dried beetroot, dried cabbage, dried onions, dried carrots, everything was dried except, as I say, occasionally we had tinned food. Taking a lot of tinned food down south was difficult and anyway it quite often, if you had a tin of peaches or something the juice would freeze and burst the can open so they were no good anyway! So we had dried peaches, dried prunes, dried sultanas, dates everything was dried! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:49:38] Lee: What were you cooking on?

Stock: We had an Esse stove and they were quite efficient, and when I went down to the Falkland Islands, the *Scoresby* came into thing and they had a cat on board and I liked this cat, so I tucked it under my anorak and took it ashore and they left without their cat! But this poor cat we had nowhere to put it so we had a little blanket and we put him in the bottom shelf of the Esse and he slept in there every night, the bottom shelf of the Esse to keep warm!

[Part 1 0:50:14] Lee: Did it have a name, did the cat have a name?

Stock: I can't remember, probably yes.

[Part 1 0:50:20] Lee: And was it with you for a long time?

Stock: It was with me that year, I left him there, yes.

[Part 1 0:50:24] Lee: Is that right?

Stock: He didn't like going out in the snow very much though, [laughter] he couldn't, he had to jump from one place to another!

[Part 1 0:50:36] Lee: How did the four of you get on?

Stock: Well I think very well. It's amazing actually, but little things annoy you, like the way a bloke cleans his teeth or blew his nose or ate his food, 'Oh I wish he wouldn't do that', I mean they'd say the same about me but there were little things that niggled you all the time! Occasionally you would say something, it got to you eventually, you would say 'Oh for goodness sake when you do that, do it this way'. And the other little friction was, as I said earlier on, I was able to communicate with the outside world and they weren't, they were always saying 'Well why don't you get in touch with someone and have a conversation?' which you couldn't, although I got in touch with a radio station in Hilversum in [Lee: in Holland] Holland, yeah.

[Part 1 0:51:37] Lee: I've been there actually!

Stock: Have you? I forget what it was called but I always wanted to meet the guy. But I used to send him telegraphic messages to say, because we used to listen, we had a radio we could listen to so we sent messages to this station in Hilversum and they played, and the guy used to come on and say 'And now here is the lovely Lousia or Annabelle' or who she was, 'to speak to the boys in the Antarctic'! [laughter] And quite often they sent us messages on their radio programme!

[Part 1 0:52:13] Lee: So you could hear that vocally?

Stock: Yeah, we had Marconi CW receiver like any other radio set, yeah.

[Part 1 0:52:25] Lee: And you could hear, Hilversum was the Dutch World Service I seem to remember, so but you could hear as it was like it was an ordinary radio programme?

Stock: Oh yes, yes.

[Part 1 0:52:36] Lee: Could you hear the BBC?

Stock: We could hear the BBC.

[Part 1 0:52:39] Lee: Again the World Service?

Stock: Sometimes communication was very, very difficult, we would get what we call blackouts, and here you could get no communication at all, other days it was loud and clear! Some days we were all pulling our hair, you could hardly hear at all what they were saying, communications were very difficult signal wise because of Heaviside Layer or different atmospheric!

[Part 1 0:53:08] Lee: Were they doing beastie work at that point, ionospherics, did you come across that?

Stock: I did go to....Datchet to do an ionospherics course and took the instruments down there with me, but unfortunately we didn't have strong enough power to drive them all so I wasn't able to take any measurements.

[Part 1 0:53:33] Lee: It was the first year was it?

Stock: No that was...

[Part 1 0:53:36] Lee: Later on?

Stock: That would have been in Deception Island, [Lee: yeah] yes it must have been, yes, in Deception Island, because obviously I'd come back to go on the course in Datchet! I was interested in that though because up till then I hadn't realised there was all these various layers in the atmosphere that effected communications.

[Part 1 0:54:01] Lee: It must have been frustrating - I know we are leaping about in our chronology but it doesn't matter too much - it must have been frustrating to have gone back to Britain to do that course.

Stock: That's right.

[Part 1 0:54:12] Lee: Got back to the Antarctic and then been thwarted!

Stock: Yeah, but I was able to tell them we couldn't get it to operate. I forget what it wanted it wanted a higher power or less power or something, or a different current we were AC or they were DC or whatever it was, but it didn't work!

[Part 1 0:54:30] Lee: Tell me more about Port Lockroy, did you get out much?

Stock: Oh yes we went out quite a bit, we tried to do fishing - not very successful! And we had quite a large colony of penguins nearby, and at the time of the year when they were laying their eggs we'd go across and take a few eggs from them, take few birds with us as well because penguin breast is quite tasty! Penguin livers and hearts are quite nice on toast so we went to visit them quite often, and also we did different studies of the penguins, on how they bred and if they were the same mates each year, whether they went back to the same nest each year. And I remember on one occasion, because you were asked by various universities to do different studies, so we did and they asked us to test the colour of penguins, so we painted little, because they build their nests out of stones, they pile them up and sit on top of the stones! We painted the stones red, yellow, blue, green, pink, silver and you know which colour the penguins picked out first? And it was the silver ones, somebody was interested in that but we weren't! [laughter]

[Part 1 0:56:03] So again you were just ordinary men following scientific instruction?

Stock: Yeah, and the same with rocks. We had books on geology and rock formations and we were asked to try and find different minerals in rocks, which occasionally we'd go out and hack away at a few rocks to if we could, plenty of copper but not a lot else!

[Part 1 0:56:28] Lee: It all sounds slightly amateurish doesn't it!?

Stock: Oh yes!

[Part 1 0:56:31] Lee: It was?

Stock: Well at Port Lockroy we had no, it wasn't a scientific base, the scientific bases were Hope Bay and later on Marguerite Bay, but none of the bases were really scientific, we had ornithologists and glaciologist. Hattersley-Smith he was a glaciologist....but the rest of us were there I think to occupy the base.

[Part 1 0:57:08] Lee: And meteorology was the main function?

Stock: Ah now, yes, meteorology was, yes.

[Part 1 0:57:12] Lee: At Lockroy?

Stock: Yes, meteorology was the main function of all of all the bases, but some of the bases would have an ornithologist, some would have a glaciologist, some would have geologists, but at Port Lockroy our first year we had nothing except meteorology.

[Part 1 0:57:30] Lee: Was it interesting?

Stock: Then the other thing we had to do was, if the weather was really OK for it, was to send up these helium balloons to measure winds in the upper atmosphere, and that took some doing, standing there looking through a telescope in freezing weather!

[Part 1 0:57:48] Lee: Describe it more fully what you remember, Gordon?

Stock: Well first of all we had these huge cylinders, which I'd never used in my life before, of hydrogen, and you blew these huge balloons up filled with hydrogen and you put this little anemometer thing on the bottom of it to record the wind speed and sent it off! Then you had to try and track this through a telescope, track the movement of it, and you would call out the readings and some other guy, another guy, would be standing alongside you writing down the different readings because you couldn't do both! If you took your eyes off the thing you would lose sight of it because you can imagine it went up quite some height, and if you took your eyes off it for a moment or two you would lose sight of it, so that was another thing we had to do.

[Part 1 0:58:51] Lee: So the only way in the '40s to work how fast the balloon was moving was to plot its course on the ground, or did it send back a signal, did the anemometer send back a signal?

Stock: No it didn't send back signals, no, no!

[Part 1 0:59:01] Lee: How were you reading the anemometer?

Stock: We couldn't read it we just put it on it was on there, to mainly to stabilize the balloon.

[Part 1 0:59:14] Lee: Right, and did you recover it later on the balloon?

Stock: No. [Lee: No] There was a little message on it that if it was found, return it to the Colonial Office and you get a £5 reward or something! [laughter] But I can't recall any ever being recovered!

[Part 1 0:59:29] Lee: If you weren't taking readings sent back from the anemometer how were you able to calculating how fast the balloon was moving?

Stock: We weren't able to take the temperatures all we could do is take the wind speed.

[Part 1 0:59:44] Lee: But how would you work out what the wind speed was up there?

Stock: Well we had a chart.

[Part 1 0:59:48] Lee: I see.

Stock: The guy writing it down had a chart, so if it moved sort of 5 degrees on your...telescope those 5 degrees was equivalent to 45 mph, or moved only 1 degree it was only 15mph that was how it was done.

[Part 1 1:00:13] Lee: So you were comparing its movement to a graduated control [Stock: yes] anyhow, yeah. Were there ever any surprising weather patterns?

Stock: Yes...until recently, well two years ago when we had the tsunami I'd never connected it! But I think it was about July or August time in Port Lockroy, I don't know if you have been to Port Lockroy?

[Part 1 1:00:43] Lee: I have yes.

Stock: Well you know the Neumayer Channel is quite narrow but very deep and steep mountains. Well we were in the hut one evening or one afternoon and we heard this terrific rushing sound, and the water came down the Neumayer Channel in a huge wave, great lumps of ice and ice bergs flowing round into the other channel that ran off, forget what the was called, anyway down this narrow channel, filled the channel up then suddenly it all drained off! And where we were used to seeing 20 or 30 feet of water it was dry! The water had completely gone back out to the Neumayer Channel and all the ice bergs were running along the bottom of the thing, now that was quite frightening! And it lasted for maybe an hour or two and I got on the radio and said to Bingham 'We've had this terrific tidal wave, quite frightening!' 'Oh don't be daft, Stock' he said, 'Of course you haven't!' I said 'Well we have and all witnessed it!' He didn't believe it, but the following year when I went down to the Argentine Islands we were going to occupy the hut used by Wordie's expedition, the *Penola* expedition, and the hut wasn't there! And again I got on the radio to speak to Bingham and I said 'There's no sign of a hut here!' 'Oh don't be silly, Stock, you're in the wrong place!' I said 'I'm not sir! We've seen where the *Penola* was anchored, we've seen the anchoring place, there's a dory here, an upturned dory, and there are various other relics scattered about the island'. 'Ach you can't be in the right place'! I said 'Well we are!' Anyway the hut had been demolished, and strangely enough several metres from the water were large lumps of ice, ice bergs and how did they get there!?! So what had hit us in Port

Lockroy the year before had also hit the Argentine Islands but probably much worse because it took the hut away completely!

[Part 1 1:03:27] Lee: Yeah!

Stock: And that was a two storey building!

[Part 1 1:03:31] Lee: Oh really!

Stock: But it wasn't anchored down with wires like we were so we were lucky! Mind you we weren't threatened because the hut at Port Lockroy quite above sea level.

[Part 1 1:03:44] Lee: So when the tide went out again you said you could see the dry sea bed?

Stock: Yes!

[Part 1 1:03:50] Lee: 20 feet below!

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 1 1:03:52] Lee: How long was it like that?

Stock: Oh only a matter of seconds or minutes!

[Part 1 1:03:56] Lee: Oh right!

Stock: No it didn't stay long, it was completely 'Whoose-whoose'! It was frightening, terrifying actually, and no one believed us! [Laughter]

[Part 1 1:04:06] Lee: Was Bingham a bit like that really?

Stock: Oh yes, bit sceptical I think. To cut another story, when we had the dogs, you see we had a dog, when we went to the Argentine Islands we took some dogs with us with the purpose of breeding our own dogs down south for sledging teams. So I think we had about 12 or 15 dogs and he insisted we use this one dog to service the female dog, the bitches because it had short legs big chest [Lee: right] and that's what he wanted, he wanted dogs with big wide chests little legs for running. And I kept saying to him 'This dog's no good!' He said 'Yes it is!' I said 'No it isn't! All the dogs, all the puppies, are getting rickets we have had to kill them all!' We only had about as I say probably about 10 or 15 bitches and we only had about three successful breeds and he insisted that we kept this dog and I said 'Why can't we use one of the other dogs?' 'No!' Mind you don't like to criticize him because he was a dog expert, but!

[Part 1 1:05:29] Lee: But he also sounds a bit pedantic, doesn't he!?

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 1 1:05:34] Lee: Was that frustrating?

Stock: He was the commander he was in charge so you had to do as he told you!

[Part 1 1:05:40] Lee: One of the more common things to hear from Fids is the frustration they felt is the lack of understanding they got from HQ, but the Fids in the south often thought that the guys in Cambridge or London hadn't really any idea what was going on!

Stock: I never found that. Mind you being in communication with people was probably, as I said earlier on, did make a difference. I was able everyday to speak to someone, even if I was only using Morse code I was actually speaking to someone, and the other guys they weren't so they got a little bit frustrated I think, in fact I know they did actually! Because they used to say 'For goodness sake why don't you tell us what's going on?' and I used to say 'Well there's not much to tell you what's going on!' We could hear the news as I said earlier on, but quite often, you see they were all 12 volt batteries which you had to charge up, a bank of 12 volt batteries, and sometimes I said 'You can't listen to the radio for too long because the batteries are running down and I've got to charge them up, got to have them charged up to use the telegraphy!'

[Part 1 1:06:58] Lee: To file the Met office report.

Stock: Things like that, 'Why don't you put the radio on?' and I said 'Put it on for half an hour or so', but because they used quite a lot of power those sets, [Lee: yeah] and the other frustrating was only having a candle to read by!

[Part 1 1:07:20] Lee: No lantern!?

Stock: We had what you call Tilley lamps but we didn't have enough spare [Lee: wicks] mantles.

[Part 1 1:07:28] Lee: Mantles yeah.

Stock: Because they didn't last very long, you only had to put the lantern down with a bit of a jolt and the mantle would just burst! And that was another thing you had to do of course, was fill the Tilley lamps up every day and service those, and clean them and, well, the normal things of life that you did each day, washing up and cooking and make your bed up, doing the normal chores.

[Part 1 1:08:00] Lee: Did you, were you interested in what was happening elsewhere in the world, did the guys bother about news?

Stock: Well I think they were yes, but the first few months we were down there the Japanese, the Far East war was still on, and it wasn't till July 1945 was it that finished, so for the first part we were very interested in what was going on!

[Part 1 1:08:25] Lee: So you heard about Hiroshima?

Stock: Oh yes, yes.

[Part 1 1:08:28] Lee: And Nagasaki?

Stock: All that yes, but we were always terrified that some foreign ship might come and take us over! We were very vulnerable, we had no protection for our own safety if the Argentine ship came in, as they did when we were at Deception Island and decided that they were going to kick us out! They would have done so with ease, there is no way we could have defended ourselves, so you felt fairly vulnerable sometimes that someone was going to come round the corner and take you off!

[Part 1 1:09:08] Lee: Would you say it was a happy year at Port Lockroy?

Stock: Oh I think so yes, the two Falkland Islanders were very nice chaps.

[Part 1 1:09:16] Lee: There was no social divide, between the Blighters and Falkland Islanders?

Stock: Oh no, no!

[Part 1 1:09:25] Lee: When it came to the end of that year, what, how was the decision made about what happened next?

Stock: Well I suppose Bingham again decided where you were going and he decided that I was going down to the Argentine Islands, and as I've just said when we got there the hut wasn't there! So we did have on board the *Trepassey* timber that they were going to build another hut somewhere else and they decided that would come off. There wasn't enough of it and they had to go back to Deception Island and knock down one of the old whaling base's base huts and bring that down and complete our hut. And for several weeks I slept in the crate that the diesel generator came in, that was my base, [Laughter], while we built this hut, but I'm told it's still there, Wordie House, and the little shack where I had my radio station that's still there. But many the times I sat in there and the exhaust from, they had these little Lister petrol engines, and the exhaust would melt the snow, then when you'd finished it would cool down and freeze over and then the next time you went in everything was frozen up - you'd be sitting there sending a message and all the fumes weren't going out the exhaust at all but coming back inside the building and many a time I had to escape rather quickly through the door to get some fresh air! [Laughter] [Note: That first year the radio shack according to Gordon was a small separate hut, which was incorporated into the rest of the hut maybe the following season after he left? AW.]

[Part 1 1:11:04] Let's pause Gordon?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 1 1:11:07] Lee: And I'll change the recording.

Stock: OK. [Lee: And we'll resume] You've switched off have you?

Gordon Stock: Part 2:

[Part 2 0:00:00] Lee: This is Gordon Stock interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee on the 13th of September 2013. Gordon Stock, Part 2.

Before we continue Gordon there is one correction it was Bill Sladen who was the survivor of the fire.

Stock: Yes it was yeah.

[Part 2 0:00:19] Lee: Who was Willoughby?

Stock: Yes I'm pretty sure it was him and he was the only one wasn't he?

[Part 2 0:00:22] Lee: Yeah, who was Willoughby how have you got?

Stock: Willoughby Salter he was a meteorologist and Bill Sladen was a glaciologist or geologist wasn't he, Bill? But well no, he was the base doctor wasn't he? [Lee: Yeah] Yeah, but I think he did some glaciology or geology or something in addition. No Willoughby Salter I'm absolutely convinced now that I was wrong in what I said earlier on! He went down to Marguerite Bay and he stayed the one year and went down with, after Bingham he went down with Butler yeah. Because we're recording are we, I won't say that then! [laughter] [Note: He wintered with Bingham in 1947. AW.]

[Part 2 0:01:08] Lee: A couple of other points, you talked about the Japanese war finishing whilst you were down there, it must have been very strange for somebody who was in the services being in the Antarctic knowing that Britain was still at war?

Stock: That's right!

[Part 2 0:01:25] Lee: How did you reconcile that, did it bother you?

Stock: Well it did because as I say we were always, not always, but we sometimes thought 'We hope that the Japanese don't come down this far'! Because I think during the war the Germans did manage to get down to Deception Island didn't they?

[Part 2 0:01:44] Lee: But that was why Operation Tabarin started and were you aware?

Stock: Yeah I was! I tell a story that either I was told or I've read or I knew.

[Part 2 0:01:56] Lee: Please tell it again!

Stock: That during the war, we were towards the end of the European war we started to supply more troops and materials to the Far East. And when our ships were rounding Cape Horn we were losing quite a few and we thought at that time that the South Africans were colluding with the Germans, and allowing Germans to use Simonstown as a base! On one occasion a Sunderland flying boat was patrolling the South Atlantic and they saw a submarine heading due south, they chased it as far as their petrol resources would allow and the submarine was still going south! They reported this back to Admiralty, where could it have been going? Well as you know there was a base by the Norwegians in Deception Island and they had big tanks there like gas tanks full of whale oil and oil! And the Germans apparently, although we partly destroyed the tanks in the early part of the war, the Germans

had apparently gone down and repaired these tanks and filled them with oil and the submarines were refuelling themselves. But before I get that far actually what happened was we were losing quite a lot of ships going round the Cape, we couldn't work how they were operating their submarines so far south. So the Admiralty decided we would route the ships down as near to the Antarctic ice as we can round to the Far East, and we were still losing ships! And this baffled them until this Sunderland came up, so they sent down a unit, expeditionary force, down to Deception Island and found the Germans were using this base to refuel their submarines! Whether it's true or not that's what I was told. So we were sent down as part of Operation Tabarin to occupy Port Lockroy and other bases.

[Part 2 0:04:34] Lee: And did you ever have to fulfil any political objectives down there, did you ever see the enemy?

Stock: We saw the Argentines we never saw the Germans, no, we never saw the Japanese, we were visited by Argentine ships quite regularly and by Chilean ships.

[Part 2 0:04:49] Lee: On a friendly basis?

Stock: Always! In fact I got into trouble with the Colonial Office or the Foreign Office, because one of the Argentine warships came into Deception Island at the same time as we had, I can't remember the name of the cruiser we had HMS *Cruiser*, and I arranged between the Argentine captain and the English captain to have a football match on the ash surface at Deception. Unknown to me a commentator of the Argentine ship relayed this back to Buenos Aires and they broadcasted it! [Laughter] And the ambassador in Buenos Aires got to know, hear, about this and informed the Colonial Office and we were colluding with the enemy so called, and I got quite a telling off! [Loud laughter] And what they didn't know was that the Argentines had a base in Deception Island as well, which was about three or four miles away from us and they had hot running water, electricity, fresh food, because they had a seaplane come down and supply them, drop fresh food to them at regular intervals. But what nobody ever did know was that every now and again we got in our little dinghy, we had an outboard motor with our dinghy, and we used to go across there and I'd spend the night there and I'd send my weather reports back to the Falkland Islands via the Argentine radio! [Laughing] Nobody ever knew that but I'm sure I would have got into dreadful trouble if found out now!

[Part 2 0:06:44] Lee: You've been rumbled! [Laughter]

Stock: But of course we couldn't say anything because we'd signed the Secrets Act!

[Part 2 0:06:52] Lee: And that was always very friendly, was there, did you have to deliver a protest letter?

Stock: Oh no it was lovely. We went and they cooked us marvellous meals, fresh roast beef and potatoes and carrots, gave us a shower, and I mean we spent the night there!

[Part 2 0:07:07] Lee: Red wine?

Stock: They never came back to us, oh yes, because we had nothing to offer! [Lee: Yeah] In fact we had a issued by the Foreign Office, we had a that if the ships came in we were to say words to the effect 'We're surprised you have entered these waters with a war ship and we'd ask you leave within 24 hours. Anything we can do to assist you we will'! So immediately they said 'Yes, 20 tons of fresh water and 150 loaves of bread' which made the whole thing absolutely ridiculous! [Laughter] But it was always friendly. In fact I've got one or two letters around the place from the captains inviting me on board to dinner.

[Part 2 0:08:07] Lee: How did you?

Stock: The *Cordova* it was, the Argentine ship was called the *Cordova*.

[Part 2 0:08:14] Lee: How did you communicate with the Argentinian did, you speak Spanish?

Stock: Very, very little but they spoke very good English!

[Part 2 0:08:20] Lee: Oh did they? OK.

Stock: In fact during most of my travelling I always found that wherever I went people always spoke English and still do.

[Part 2 0:08:33] Lee: How was the winter at Port Lockroy, I got the impression that it was a lonely experience?

Stock: The winter was very severe because, if you can remember, it would come down from the glacier, the wind would come off the glacier and bring all the snow down off the glacier on to our island, so during the winter we got often winds of in excess of 80mph! Very difficult conditions, no visibility, it got very depressing when it what we call the whiteout, when the clouds, it wasn't fog it was when the clouds came down to surface level and there was a funny sort of eerie glow and still there's no noise in the Antarctic, you don't hear anything except the odd bird and there was this eerie silence!

[Part 2 0:09:36] Lee: No contrast?

Stock: Nothing, no, and you couldn't contrast, if you walked along you had to kick the snow in front of you, so that you could see it wasn't going to go either down or straight up against a wall because you couldn't see more than five or six yards in front of you, that was depressing those days!

[Part 2 0:09:57] Lee: How did you cope with the depression?

Stock: I don't really know, probably we had a gramophone, we played records, one or two of these records must have got played over a 100 times because we had a limited addition, number of records, and we played them over and over. Some were popular and some drove the other guy absolutely nuts! 'Well I like it' he said 'Well I hate it'! [Laughter] But there you are.

[Part 2 0:10:32] Lee: So did tensions build in the midst of the winter?

Stock: Occasionally, not very often. Sometimes maybe a guy wouldn't come and sit and have a meal with you because somebody had upset him or I was upset with somebody else, just occasionally. They were never any fights or bitter arguments, no nothing like that.

[Part 2 0:10:57] Lee: So if the Base Leader never had to step in and ...?

Stock: No. There was only one occasion, this again was in Falklands, where the only liquor we had was navy rum and they were supplied in gallon stone jars and poor old Frank he took a liking to this navy rum and he...

[Part 2 0:11:20] Lee: Was this Frank Elliot?

Stock: No not Frank Elliot, Frank the cook, the Falkland Islander. [Lee: oh yes]. He took a liking to this and he used to get out of hand quite often! And I went out to this Nissan hut where these bottles/ jars were stored and smashed them all with a hammer! And I said 'Right, there's going to be no more drinking!' I wasn't very popular for several days [laughter] but it was a good move because things could have got worse!

[Part 2 0:11:52] Lee: And you saw nobody from one year?

Stock: We saw no one from the January I think it was about the 10th or 11th until the following February!

[Part 2 0:12:03] Lee: That was 13 months!

Stock: Yes, that's right and with just three other guys. It's pretty difficult really, but somehow or other we managed it! If someone had said to me earlier in life 'We're going to put you on an island with three other chaps for a year', I'd have probably said 'No, I'm not going to do that'!

[Part 2 0:12:26] Lee: So you weren't told about that when you signed up?

Stock: No, nobody would volunteer to do that I don't think.

[Part 2 0:12:33] Lee: Was it character forming?

Stock: It must have been yeah, must have been - I don't argue with anybody now! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:12:48] Lee: Let's go to....Argentine Islands. Now you had to build a new Wordie hut didn't you?

Stock: We did yes, yeah.

[Part 2 0:12:55] Lee: And there's a story of, I think about, a bottle being buried there?

Stock: That's right!

[Part 2 0:12:58] Lee: What's that about?

Stock: In the north east corner!

[Part 2 0:13:01] Lee: Tell me?

Stock: Well when we, we put down cement base to put the hut on and whilst we were laying the last lot of cement - Frank Elliot, Dicky Burd and myself - we signed this to say, I can't remember the wording, 'This house was built in so and so by so and so', and put the note in the bottle and put the bottle in the cement. And I've always wondered when they, if they eventually pull that down or it falls down whether the bottle will still be there?

[Part 2 0:13:36] Lee: I presume it is.

Stock: Yeah, well I'm told the hut is still there anyway.

[Part 2 0:13:41] Lee: So 60 years later!

Stock: Not bad because we stuffed it with, it's wood of course and it's double lined so in between was used all the packing cases, the cardboard boxes and straw and newspaper anything we could do we stuffed down for insulation, otherwise it was just two pieces of wood side by side, so it's pretty cold that house!

[Part 2 0:14:08] Lee: Was it not as salubrious as Port Lockroy?

Stock: Oh no, it was about this size about the same size of this room.

[Part 2 0:14:17] Lee: Right that's a large living room so, but not enormous!

Stock: No, so we would have, we had two bunks one above the other there, and there we had the kitchen over this end, we had (can't remember now), but as I say about this size, but we did have a separate shed with the generators in for the wireless equipment. But that was an ordeal in itself sometimes because to get out of Wordie House you had to dig yourself out of that because the snow would be way above the door! And then you had to go and dig your way across to the other hut to dig that door out to get into that! Then once you got in you started the engine and all the fumes filled the room and you'd got to get out again! [laughter]

[Part 2 0:15:20] Lee: Dickie Burd fell in at one point didn't he?

Stock: Well he was on an ice floe roping up a seal ready for us to tow it back to the base, and the ice floe capsized and he was tossed into the water and he really got severely frozen! And we took a long time and we had no medicines, we had some aspirin that's all we had.

[Part 2 0:15:45] Lee: Do you remember how you got him out?

Stock: Well we fished him, well he was able to swim a little bit but we, we were quite close anyway, we are from here to there we were waiting for him to pass the rope to us, but the thing as the seal slipped into the water the ice berg tipped over and tipped him into the water, that was the only occasion I can remember he was ill. But I did have one other experience in Wordie House and that was with the Falkland Islander, (ah, I can't remember his name), but this is a funny little story because he was, when we took the seals when we killed them and

when we took them back, we passed the rope through this jaw out this bit and we pulled them in that way, and he was fixing this putting the rope in and he got infected. I forget what they call it but it's well known seal, the seal's poisonous, their teeth or their gums, and shortly after we came back his hand came up here his arm came up here and the gland here was like a rugby ball!

[Part 2 0:17:10] Lee: Gosh!

Stock: And he was in terrific pain and we had nothing to give him. We tried to give him aspirin and that didn't really work, and got in touch with - don't forget we had no communication by voice - I got in touch with the doctor at Simonstown, a naval doctor, explained what had happened! He said 'Right, you've got to make an incision under the arm', told me what to do, he said 'Get a marker, a pen or a pencil, crayon or something make a mark where the swelling is, get a tube and stick it in there and drain it off'! I said 'But poor guy I can't knock him out'! He said 'Doesn't matter, it's the only way you're going to save him'! Over the radio earphones on Morse code, 'Right get your knife, cut down there, stick this in'! And the other guys were helping, I was telling them what he was telling me so together we did it! And he was OK, got better!

[Part 2 0:18:25] Lee: Gosh!

Stock: But that was the only time I ever had any accidents. I can't remember Dick Burd being seriously ill.

[Part 2 0:18:36] Lee: No, but you had to cut him out of his clothing?

Stock: Sorry?

[Part 2 0:18:39] Lee: You just had to cut him out of his clothing didn't you?

Stock: Oh yes, sorry, oh yes. As I say he got severely frozen, really was, and it's amazing how quickly you freeze! I used to tell a joke when we were skiing with the dogs that if you stopped to have a pee, you had to step back quietly because you could see your urine was freezing up towards your penis as you were, and so you had to quickly chop it off! But that's a joke and people believe it! [Laughter] And it nearly was as bad as that actually, it's amazing how quickly things froze!

[Part 2 0:19:18] Lee: Was the guy's name Reive....Reive?

Stock: Yes it could have been.

[Part 2 0:19:30] Lee: Yeah, the guy who...?

Stock: Yeah, I can see him, he was a very tall chap.

[Part 2 0:19:39] Lee: And he died later?

Stock: Yeah very tragic!

[Part 2 0:19:42] Lee: What happened to him?

Stock: Well when, he was still suffering a bit from this. obviously this poisoning, couldn't get rid of it all, but eventually he went from the Falkland Islands to England and he went out one night, whether he's had too much to drink or not enough or something, but going back to the ship he fell between the dock and ship and, as you know, oily water. He couldn't swim and he swallowed an awful lot of this water and unfortunately drowned! That was tragic because having saved him once and he died later on.

[Part 2 0:20:19] Lee: What was your role at Argentine Islands, what was your job?

Stock: Well I was still a telegraphist.

[Part 2 0:20:31] Lee: So wireless operator?

Stock: Yeah. Occasionally I helped Dick out with his, because we had, we used to go up not a glacier but a hill, a snowy hill, we used to go up on top of that to send off the balloons.

[Part 2 0:20:51] Lee: Oh right.

Stock: Because otherwise if we tried to send them off down below they would just go across and hit the mountain and burst! So we used to get as high as we could to get them a good start. In Port Lockroy that didn't matter so much because we weren't too close to the mountains but in the Argentine Islands we had quite a big cliff right alongside us.

[Part 2 0:21:19] Lee: What else do you recall of your year at Argentine of any consequence, at Argentine Islands?

Stock: Just looking after the dogs, the dogs were beautiful they were very friendly dogs!

[Part 2 0:21:27] Lee: So you did some sledging?

Stock: No, we didn't have a sledge, we did have a sledge but we only used to carry the dead seals back and forwards, and we used the dogs for that, but we did a lot of skiing pleasure skiing mind you. So I got quite good at skiing, in fact later on when I went to South Georgia I took part in a slalom and came 5th [Laughter] out of about a 100 and something, so I was quite pleased with that, but anyway that's further on. But no, Argentine Islands was quite interesting. But Frank stayed the summer then he went back. We had, young Peck came down from, he came and joined us so there was still just the four of us at Argentine Islands for the year as well.

[Part 2 0:22:23] Lee: So would you exercise the dogs all the same?

Stock: Oh yes, oh yes, both mostly they were tethered because they would fight among themselves so you had to be careful of that.

[Part 2 0:22:36] Lee: It's strange to be breeding dogs and have no sledges to take them?

Stock: Well we were breeding them to send them down further south to sledging parties that was the idea, it didn't, I gather that the Argentine Islands have been quite successful with their breeding, not the Argentine Islands but Marguerite Bay, they've been quite successful.

[Part 2 0:23:00] Lee: Yeah.

Stock: But we weren't! We were never able to send any dogs further south.

[Part 2 0:23:11] Lee: So you'd signed up to do two years hadn't you?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 2 0:23:15] Lee: And the second year came to an end on Argentine Islands?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 2 0:23:18] Lee: What was the thinking around then in what were you to do next?

Stock: Well I think it was Butler said that I'd done quite a lot of the work for meteorology, 'Why don't you take up meteorology?' asked what I was going to do, so I said 'OK'. The Colonial Office arranged for me to go on to a meteorological course at the Air Ministry which I did, and having done that he said 'Well would you like to go back down as a meteorologist?' so I said 'Yeah, that's fine, OK', so that's how I got on my second journey.

[Part 2 0:24:00] Lee: So did that meteorological course take a whole year back in the UK?

Stock: Well I did that and I think that was the time that I went to Datchet and did the ionospherics course as well.

[Part 2 0:24:10] Lee: OK!

Stock: And....

[Part 2 0:24:14] Lee: So you're still being paid by FIDS?

Stock: Oh yes, oh yes as far as I remember. [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:24:24] Lee: Were you discharged from the navy then at this point?

Stock: That's when I went back to *Discovery* and got my discharge papers, yes, but I didn't get my civvy suit! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:24:39] Lee: How was it to come back for a year, knowing you were likely to go again, you had a couple of years?

Stock: As I say I quite enjoyed it. I'd been happy down there and what else was I going to do, in other words I'd no idea - I was going to become an accountant and I think it was the, not persuasion, but the way Butler put it to me, 'Well why don't you go down again as a meteorologist?' And so I thought 'Yeah, OK I'll do that'.

[Part 2 0:25:20] Lee: Did you adapt to meteorology quite readily?

Stock: Oh yeah I loved it, yeah loved it. In fact I was still doing it till quite recently.
[Laughter]

[Part 2 0:25:27] Lee: On an amateur basis, yeah?

Stock: No, I mean I was when I came back from the last year in the Falklands, I went almost straight away to Rhodesia as it then was as a meteorologist, but in the meantime then I had taken a senior forecaster's course at Stanmore, the Air Ministry at Stanmore, and went out to Rhodesia as a meteorologist, and I spent nearly 20 years in Africa as a meteorologist so it's only a few years ago that I gave it up! [Laughter] I say a few years ago it was about 1970 I think! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:26:14] Lee: OK, so you were appointed having done that additional training in England, you were appointed again to FIDS, and you were sent down to Deception Island and they asked you to be Base Leader?

Stock: That's right yes.

[Part 2 0:26:28] Lee: Was that a surprise?

Stock: In a way yes, well it was an accident! [Laughter] It was an accident, yes, because Danny Borland was the meteorologist and he was an Air Ministry meteorologist before he went down there, and he was designated Base Leader when we started and he came down for a month or so, and Sir Miles Clifford decided that the Falkland Islands themselves could do with another meteorologist! So he was sent back or taken back to the Falklands and that left me in charge of Deception Island, that was the only reason I was the Base Leader! Because then I was probably the second in command as it were, but there again we only had Jimmy Knox, he was the telegraphist, and two Falkland Islanders, so just four of us. But during that summer we had something like 30 guys staying with us - we had hydrological survey and a naval survey, we had some army unit doing something down there, we had a couple of universities studying glaciology, and Deception Island was a volcanic island and so we had...volcanologists studying the island as well. So we had quite a party in the summer and then they went back and left just the four of us!

[Part 2 0:28:04] Lee: Did you experience any volcanic activity?

Stock: Yes, we did, yes.

[Part 2 0:28:07] Lee: Tell me about that, Gordon?

Stock: There was one. When it was the evening again we heard this rumbling, we didn't feel much but we heard a rumbling and then we did feel a few shakes! And we began to get a bit anxious so the four of us decided we were too close to the water's edge. So we decided to pack up a few things, some sleeping bags and kit bags, and we went further up the mountain and spent the night up there, but it only lasted maybe an hour or a couple of hours, it wasn't very long, but it was quite frightening! And we did see a lot of movement in the water we saw lots, lots of what do they call these geyser things coming out of the sea?!

[Part 2 0:29:03] Lee: Geysers!

Stock: Geysers yeah, and the whole time there part of the water in Deception Island doesn't freeze over because of the volcanic activity keeps the water warm, and in fact we used to and have our toilet/bath in the sea, take a bar of soap [laughter] which didn't lather in sea as salt water, and splash around in the sea because really it was quite warm! [Lee: Yeah] But you stank when you came out because of all the sulphur!

[Part 2 0:29:38] Lee: Oh yes! What do you think you achieved in that year at Deception Island?

Stock: Not a lot! There again it was the same sort of routine sending off balloons each day to measure the winds, taking observations every three hours, take your turn at cooking every month, collecting snow and ice. Wherever we could we collected ice from ice berg, we'd go off in the boat and chip away at an ice berg because the ice from the ice bergs would melt much quicker and give you more water, than trying to melt snow down. Melting snow's a terrible job because the snow's so powdery there that you need a shed nearly as full of this to make a bucketful of water!

[Part 2 0:30:32] Lee: So you saw the job again, it was more the politics of being there rather than any serious worthwhile, [Stock: yes that's right] scientific research?

Stock: And we did get a couple of Argentine ships came in and I remember one was called the *Cordoiva*, we had a Chilean ship come in there as well but they weren't so friendly - the Argentines were the Chileans weren't so friendly to us.

[Part 2 0:30:58] Lee: Do you know why?

Stock: I don't know why, no. I think they wanted - the Argentines had got a base there and we'd got a base there and I think they wanted one there as well, but!

[Part 2 0:31:08] Lee: Which later happened of course!

Stock: Yes, yeah.

[Part 2 0:31:13] Lee: I've got a report from Miles Clifford here.

Stock: Oh yes?

[Part 2 0:31:16] Lee: Its note at the end of your base journal, you wrote a base journal for Deception Island in 1949 and this is what Clifford has to say, I think tongue in cheek! 'Stock seems to have spent most of his time writing reports, many well presented and informative and on the whole useful, [Stock: Laughter], but I now understand why so little work was done around the base - Knox has far too much time on amateur band'!

Stock: That's right he did, yes! Oh is that it, oh yeah! I can't remember writing a lot.

[Part 2 0:31:56] Lee: Well your report, your base journal is quite substantial actually!

Stock: Oh!

[Part 2 0:32:00] Lee: For Deception Island.

Stock: But you see this was the thing, I was lucky in a way because Knox, Jim Knox wasn't it, yeah Jim, he had VP8A, that was his amateur call sign, [Lee: yeah] and being able to use Morse code myself I could sometimes get in touch with people from all over the world using his call sign!

[Part 2 0:32:31] Lee: Oh right!

Stock: I don't think the governor liked that too much!

[Part 2 0:32:34] Lee: So who were you talking to?

Stock: Well various amateur radio, they have a club where they try and get in touch with as many people around the world as they can, and these guys would say 'Oh I've just got in touch with someone from Tokyo'! 'Oh I've never done that before', and the next night he'd say 'I've been in touch with a guy in New Zealand and I've been in touch with a guy from South America'! They get in touch with people all over the world these.....oh thank god, gosh I'm not going to show my daughter that, she'll say that's typical of you, dad!?! But I mean work around the base, what could you do around the base?

[Part 2 0:33:17] Lee: Well the main occupation according to the report written by you at the end of that season, and its signed by you Gordon, [Stock: Oh!] in December 1949: I'll read you a couple of extracts.... is that alright?

Stock: Yes, oh yes, yes go on!

[Part 2 0:33:32] Lee: The main occupation of this base in 1949 has been meteorological observations. We started off taking nine daily observations, and we tried to train another member of the base in meteorology but that was not successful! In May I selected two spots on the beach in Whaler's Bay and commenced in taking daily temperatures of the hot springs. Previous meteorologists have stated that these springs affect the local weather and I wanted to find out to what extent, but in the end we had to abandon the readings. However monthly graphs show an interesting curve and the affect of the hot springs on local weather is negligible!

Stock: Oh yes.

[Part 2 0:34:14] Lee: So you were trying to establish whether [Stock: yes] the springs were changing the microclimate?

Stock: That's right, and I was also trying to find out whether the temperatures were increasing or decreasing but that probably was something I was asked to do by one of the universities probably.

[Part 2 0:34:29] Lee: Yeah. Was that then, was the idea if the temperatures were getting warmed there might be some activity about?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 2 0:34:36] Lee: It was like a warning?

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:34:39] Lee: Like an early warning system?

Stock: Well it has since I've been down there it has erupted hasn't it?

[Part 2 0:34:44] Lee: Yeah several times!

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:34:46] Lee: And destroyed the base!

Stock: Yeah, oh did it? I didn't know that.

[Part 2 0:34:50] Lee: '60s in the mid '60s [Stock: Oh] the lava flow went straight through the base!

Stock: So we were lucky!

[Part 2 0:34:55] Lee: Yeah.

Stock: Yeah, as I say it was quite frightening, it was strange to hear but not feel any tremor so it was all underneath, it was rumbling but it wasn't shaking the top surface! We could hear quite loud rumbling or bangings or whatever it was, and that was frightening thing because you couldn't see any physical activity anywhere, there was nothing, the water wasn't shooting up not all the time, but it did eventually have these occasional spurts! But that was the frightening thing about it was the noise, thinking that the noise was getting louder and louder and thinking that it was going to suddenly erupt, that's what we were afraid of but we moved out of the hut and went up the hill!

[Part 2 0:35:54] Lee: You were in effect sitting on top of a volcano!

Stock: We were!

[Part 2 0:35:56] Lee: Because a volcanic cone.

Stock: That's right yes. Oh yeah we were right in the centre of the base of the....volcano, yeah!

[Part 2 0:36:10] Lee: So did you...?

Stock: I can't remember writing those things! [laughter]

[Part 2 0:36:13] Lee: Did that make you nervous then?

Stock: Oh very yes, oh yes, really frightening! To one extent we were holding each other's hands, it might sound daft but there was some sort of comfort in knowing you're as frightened as I am! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:36:29] Lee: You talked a little bit about limited biological work, 'No detailed study of birds, penguins or seal's was made but notes were being made on their presence and activities. Peck ringed several Cape Pigeons before their migration and as they returned he captured them and inspected them for rings but to date none have been found' [Stock: no]. So you were ringing pigeons to fly away and they came back, ones that came back didn't have [Stock: yeah] certainly by November. 'And on the radio front the base has been radio control station during the year keeping three daily schedules with all the bases and radio Falklands, Knox has been very proficient and has maintained the equipment very well. I relieved him of his wireless duties every fourth week when he had to be cook', and you mention the 100 contacts with other countries! And you also observed the pack ice in the Bransfield Straits?

Stock: Yeah, we went out we used to up to the top of the rim of the volcano, and report on the ice conditions. That would be more less so they could plan on when to come down, so it was just one part of the year, we didn't do it all the time there was obviously no point in doing it all year because was just frozen over anyway!

[Part 2 0:37:57] Lee: 'Very good health has been enjoyed by all during the year, the doctor's advice being sought only on two occasions, firstly when Richards complained of internal piles'.

Stock: [Laughing] Oh I remember that. Oh God we had to put these suppositories, that was most embarrassing! [Still laughing!]

[Part 2 0:38:15] Lee: Go on.

Stock: We had to put theses suppositories up his backside every two or three hours!

[Part 2 0:38:22] Lee: Did they work?

Stock: Oh yeah they worked alright, yeah!

[Part 2 0:38:27] Lee: And the doctor was instructing you on what to do by Morse?

Stock: Yes, that's right.

[Part 2 0:38:34] Lee: 'And then everybody else had inflammation around the anus. For the inflammation we were instructed to apply golden eye ointment'. [Loud laughter]

Stock: I remember that, yeah! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:38:47] Lee: 'We were all troubled by this especially when perspiring'. [More laughter]. There's a bit more here about Knox's cut finger.....'Vitamin C tablets were taken regularly but vitamin B laconic acid were not taken because it brought on a rash'.

Stock: Yes, that's right.

[Part 2 0:39:14] Lee: Half an hour after taking them that's slightly odd?

Stock: They did yeah.

[Part 2 0:39:22] Lee: So you didn't take them?

Stock: No.

[Part 2 0:39:27] Lee: What sort of a rash was it?

Stock: I can't remember!

[Part 2 0:39:30] Lee: OK!

Stock: Do you know I can't remember that! It was probably something to do with, possibly to do with bathing in this sulphuric acid, or in this sulphur, could be that I think. Never turned up, nobody ever mentioned it but it could have been that, now I come to think of it, because we went down and had a bath in the water, that was the only we could clean our bodies, but we did come out stinking of sulphur, because it was quite sulphuric that water!

[Part 2 0:40:02] Lee: Oh right, so the inflammation around the anus could be the sulphur?

Stock: It could be yes, and that's why they put the golden eye ointment on because that was the only ointment we had! He said 'What have you got, have you got Vaseline?' 'No, we haven't got that or this, we have got some eye ointment', 'Oh that'll do!' [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:40:20] Lee: There's quite a bit about clothing which generally speaking seemed to be quite good.

Stock: Yes it was it, well it was mainly army issue [Lee: yeah] well it was all army issue.

[Part 2 0:40:30] Lee: Yeah, and a bit about the food was good but it was monotonous?

Stock: Yes.

[Part 2 0:40:32] Lee: And you didn't drink much alcohol?

Stock: Well no, that would have been dangerous I think?

[Part 2 0:40:37] Lee: That was Base Leader instruction was it?

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:40:40] Lee: From you?

Stock: Yeah. As I say I smashed all the rum at Port Lockroy! They did, young Peck did once try and make, well he did make it actually, he made some sort of what the Irish call 'poteen', where you boil potato peelings or potatoes with some sultanas and currants...and a bit of yeast, and put them in these earthenware jars and sealed it up with wire, let them ferment for

about two or three months and then when it became ready to try to see if it was OK, it had become a bit alcoholic? Cut the wire, held the basin, get a bowl - a hand basin- over the cut the wire and 'Whizz' it all shot up. Oh God, it was a enough to have two people holding it down to stop it shooting up! Anyway they declared that was quite good beer but I'd don't think I enjoyed it!

[Part 2 0:41:47] Lee: Is this the sort of activity that HQ would not be troubled with?

Stock: I think so.

[Part 2 0:41:49] Lee: You didn't bother to mention it etc?

Stock: No, we didn't, and I hope it's not in there either.

[Part 2 0:41:52] Lee: No it isn't. OK. Fire precautions, you were very, every base was worried about fire wasn't it?

Stock: We were yes. Well obviously wooden huts and coal burning stoves in the middle with a pipe going up through the roof which was wooden! Quite, and that was the heating, and then we had the Esse cooker for, [Lee: food], but that was another difficult thing was the coal, or we had some called fernodd [phonetic – could be Phurnacite], which was something like little coal briquettes and that would get absolutely solid like rock! And you had to smash that up before you could put it on the stove and then it would be sort of wet with ice, be icy, you put that on the stove and you put the stove out, so you had to get it really dry before you put it back on!

[Part 2 0:42:56] Lee: You complain about high fuel consumption and yet the hut, Biscoe House, was very large and sometimes cold!

Stock: That's right!

[Part 2 0:43:09] Lee: And how much diesel oil was being used because of the amateur radio bands being operated?

Stock: Yeah that's true, I had to tell him off about that sometimes! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:43:19] Lee: And then 'Would it be possible to supply milk on a yearly basis?' you ask, what's your problem with milk?

Stock: Well we had dried milk, what they called Klim wasn't it, yes the American Klim, it was all powdered milk we had no fresh milk at all, never.

[Part 2 0:43:36] Lee: No.

Stock: The Argentines did when we were at Lockroy, [note: he means Deception AW.] go over there and have a cup of tea and have some milk in it!

[Part 2 0:43:45] Lee: How come they had milk?

Stock: Well had this what they called the Kingfisher sea plane and used to roar in through the narrows, come down there and we'd see him go down to the Argentine base and he'd literally drop sacks and sacks of vegetables and meat, and mail and all sorts, he'd just drop it on the ice and they'd go out and collect it! Then he'd fly back, he never landed, never landed straight back to Ushuaia or wherever it was.

{Part 2:00:44:18] Lee: So they could do that because they were nearer to their homeland?

Stock: That's right they could do it but we couldn't, our nearest point was South Africa.

[Part 2 0:44:28] Lee: Yeah. Now there's a final point. Most base reports would send some recommendations and your main recommendation was that 'Fids be told what they are, should be told what they are expected to supply for themselves whilst on the bases. Items such as handkerchiefs, slippers, razors, fountain pens, watches, I'm sure this will be appreciated by all, as when one first starts off for the Dependencies very doubtful of what to and what not to bring. So in my first year we only had white washing soap and hard red soap, my second year I ordered a personal supply of face soap, my third year I purchased a large quantity of Palmolive, and imagine my surprise on arriving at Deception and finding Lux, Cussons Imperial Leather, John Knights Castile and so on! [Laughter] Another word of warning always take two watches in case one breaks!

Stock: That's right yeah.

[Part 2 0:45:27] Lee: Do you think they took any notice?

Stock: I wasn't able to find out, [laughter] but talking about supplies like that, the first year at Port Lockroy, after two or three weeks we ran out of sugar, they didn't send it we only had the sugar that was left over from the party before, and in our supply they sent no sugar! And as you can see I have got a very sweet tooth, [Lee: yeah] but they did send us large tins of boiled sweets, so every time I made a cup of tea I took two boiled sweets into the cup as well! [Laughter]

[Part 2 0:46:09] Lee: Survival tactics! Let's just talk a little bit about your final year, because you were transferred from Deception to South Georgia [Stock: yes] in 1950 and again you were Base Leader despite what Miles Clifford wrote about you, [laughter] you must have been deemed something of a success! Tell me more about South Georgia, what was that like because very different from before?

Stock: Oh absolutely yes, yes it was civilisation! [Laughter] We lived on what they call the Point so we didn't have...very close contact with the Norwegians or the Swedes but we did go across, they had cinema there, they sometimes had live music. They organised winter sports - as I said one year I took part in their slalom which I think was about a 10 or 15 mile course round the island.

[Part 2 0:47:01] Lee: You came 4th I think?

Stock: And I came I came 4th, I thought it was 5, it was 4th was it? But I've got a little cup somewhere, I don't know where it is, but I was so pleased to be presented with this and so were the Norwegians they couldn't believe it! That this young Englishman as I was then had beaten a lot of their good skiers, but the interesting thing I found with their winter sports was the actual ski jumps which I gather is still there.

[Part 2 0:47:28] Lee: At Grytviken?

Stock: At Grytviken yes.

[Part 2 0:47:32] Lee: Did you do that?

Stock: I daren't, I tried it for about 12 feet I think! [Laughter] But they used to do about 60 to 80 feet long traffic jumpers, it really was fantastic, that was good entertainment! But no it wasn't really an Antarctic expedition as such it was more, it was a civilised place to be. I did attend Shackleton's grave fairly regularly and I recently read a report where his number two, his body has been taken from South Africa and has been interned with.

[Part 2 0:48:07] Lee: His ashes, Frank Wild?

Stock: Yeah, yeah.

[Part 2 0:48:10] Lee: Frank Wild I think his ashes have been interned there.

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:48:17] Lee: Yeah. So the winter Olympics there, not the winter Olympics the winter games, were they a major feature, was it properly organised?

Stock: Oh yes, oh yes, they went on for two or three weeks, yeah, competitions against one another and they were some really excellent skiers the Norwegians and the Swedes, yeah.

[Part 2 0:48:38] Lee: Were FIDS HQ aware of this and did they mind?

Stock: Oh yes I think so, yeah I think so.

[Part 2 0:48:44] Lee: It was encouraged was it?

Stock: Oh yes, yeah, but the manager at Grytviken and his wife occasionally would invite me over to dinner so that was quite a pleasurable evening, and then we had the...we had... what his position would be called the Falkland Island Magistrate on the island and he and his wife would invite us round for a meal. And there was policeman there as well and his wife, so it was more of a civilised life than living just four of you in a small hut for a year. It was much more of an organised civilised life!

[Part 2 0:49:37] Lee: Which did you prefer, solitude and serenity of the real Antarctic or the banana belt!?

Stock: It's difficult to explain why one thinks living alone is nice, but I did enjoy it...I enjoyed Deception Island although we frightened at times! I did enjoy Deception Island....no

I think I enjoyed all of them actually, I can't say which one I enjoyed more than the other. But more less you could cut South Georgia out of it as an expedition because it wasn't, it was just a base!

[Part 2 0:50:23] Lee: But the weather station that would have been in full swing wouldn't it?

Stock: Oh yeah, and I did start a forecast service for the whaling fleets and we had one particular incident there, I don't know if I'm going on too much?

[Part 2 0:50:37] Lee: No you're not, carry on Gordon!

Stock: We had a whaling captain come over, because there's great competition because they get a bonus for all the whales they catch, and the captain shares it amongst his crew. This captain came in one evening or one afternoon and he said 'Right you, I'm warning you, you tell me what you're telling the other captains', and I didn't know what he was on about. 'I know what your game is. He says he's paying you so can tell him where there's no fog, no high winds and where the best weather is! You're telling us where there's fog and rough winds and rough seas, now come on, how much is he, paying you?! Couldn't convince him we weren't being paid he was really nasty, really nasty!

[Part 2 0:51:31] Lee: You're English, you were inscrutable weren't you?

Stock: I know that's right. I tried to tell him that but he wouldn't believe it! [Laughing] No, that was one, I'll never forget because I was really trembling, I thought he was going to throttle me, but he wouldn't believe it we weren't telling this one skipper, because he apparently was having a run of success, he was coming back with six or eight whales and the other guys were coming back with only one or two!

[Part 2 0:52:01] Lee: I wonder why?

Stock: But when we were there they brought the whales back into Grytviken, but now or later after, we were there they had the factory ships out with the catchers so the catchers never came back, they just went backwards and forwards between the supply ship and unloaded their whales there and refuelled from the supply ship. So they were out at sea all the time so they never or seldom came back into Grytviken.

[Part 2 0:52:31] Lee: So Grytviken must have been a pretty terrible place then?

Stock: Yeah.

[Part 2 0:52:35] Lee: In your time?

Stock: Yeah. Well we used to get quite excited because they came, well within a few feet of our hut, with the whales clipped up either side of them and tow them back out, they used chain them up to either side of their boat and bring them in. And we used to be able cheer up whether the guy had got six or eight whales or if he'd only got one or two! But that was the big point I think because they got bonuses, the skippers, for how many whales they caught

and this was why this particular captain was having a bad time, he thought 'Something wrong here'!

[Part 2 0:53:13] Lee: All the today would be deemed as barbaric wouldn't it!?

Stock: Yes!

[Part 2 0:53:16] Lee: How did it feel at the time?

Stock: Threatening, he really was threatening!

[Part 2 0:53:19] Lee: No I mean, yeah?

Stock: Whaling, yes you mean whaling?

[Part 2 0:53:23] Lee: The actual taking of whales from the ocean?

Stock: I never got the opportunity to go off on a whaling thing, because obviously I had to do the meteorological observations, but young Peck he went off on one and he really enjoyed it, and he said it was quite thrilling! But I don't know if whether I'd enjoy harpooning a whale. You've seen these harpoons have you? Well there about that long and have got big steel spikes on them that goes into the whale and then when it hits the whale there's an explosion and the springs come out! So they tow it back in, it is barbaric! I don't know how they kill them these days but its limited catching anyway isn't it? It's mainly done by the Japanese now, I don't think Grytviken or...?

[Part 2 0:54:10] Lee: There's no whale activity at Grytviken today.

Stock: No.

[Part 2 0:54:13] Lee: No, but I was wondering just describe the scene as you go into Grytviken, the scene around the plan was it, what met your eye?

Stock: Well as you come into the island we're on the Point, all our buildings are on the Point, then further down the bay was the whaling station and the only way to get to the whaling station was by boat. For us to go by boat to the whaling station or when we got the very low tides when we got the neap tides we could just go round under the ice, and get round by foot. But we got caught out once we went round and an avalanche and we got smothered in it, we weren't covered in it but we were knocked over by it! So that was a rather tricky thing to do, so mainly we went by boat so we didn't go over very often, because we as a party didn't have a boat but the magistrate had one (I can't remember his name).

[Part 2 0:55:15] Lee: Oh don't worry about that. [Stock: no] Was it repulsive?

Stock: No, I don't think so, no.

[Part 2 0:55:23] Lee: I mean you wouldn't want to spend a day in an abattoir would you, I guess it's the equivalent of an abattoir?

Stock: We went over to watch what they do, they call it the flensing where they take off all the blubber first and then that goes down into...big boilers, and then the meat is hacked off, cut off and dried for fertilizer or animal feed or something. Then there's a certain thing they use for cosmetics, I think one of the glands, but we went to see that. It's quite a bloody scene, interesting because it's something you have never seen before! And some these whales are 60 feet long, huge, and it takes them quite a long while to finish slicing one up.

[Part 2 0:56:17] Lee: Were the Norwegians of a certain type of man, were they a wild west type of men?

Stock: Oh, no I don't think so no!

[Part 2 0:56:27] Lee: What were they like?

Stock: Didn't have much contact with them actually because they were busy, and as I say we were divorced from them, we were on the Point and they were some distance away from us, so only if we went over to the cinema, just went to the cinema and then back again we didn't socialise with them as such. Just the odd occasion when.....the manager would invite us over for dinner, he didn't invite the whole group just me!

[Part 2 0:57:02] Lee: Why was that?

Stock: Well I suppose he couldn't invite everybody, [laughter] I don't know. And somebody had to stay behind you see, that was one of the main things about being a meteorologist, that you'd couldn't leave the base for more than a couple of hours because you had to do an observation every three hours! So whilst the other guys used to go off trying to do fishing trips or off skiing you had to stay behind because you to do your, and in my case not all the base could do that but in my case I could do a weather report and then transmit in by radio anyway because I could use the radio. But the other guys they were meteorologists but they weren't telegraphists so two of them had to stay behind! That was one of the drawbacks was that you, your time was limited in between readings and we did it from 6 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock at night!

[Part 2 0:58:07] Lee: You were never, how can I put this, you were never tempted to make it up once or twice!?

Stock: Oh no, no.

[Part 2 0:58:12] Lee: No.

Stock: The only occasion we did that as I say we went to the Argentine Islands [note: he means the Argentine base at Deception. AW] we still did the observations but nobody knew they were coming over the Argentine airways instead of ours, maybe the chap in the Falkland Islands could tell by the signal, 'But there's something wrong with his signal today, it's different', because every signal is different to the other. He might have recognized how I sent my Morse because I gave the guy my reading he would send it, I didn't use his, there's something wrong with old Stocky today because he's shaking his hand or something!

[Part 2 0:58:46] Lee: Well they say that every man, every operator, had a key signature?

Stock: Yeah that's right

[Part 2 0:58:51] Lee: Style on the key?

Stock: That's true they do yes.

[Part 2 0:58:56] Lee: There was a scary incident that I need you to tell me about, Gordon.

Stock: Oh?

[Part 2 0:58:58] Lee: At Base F, going up a hill with three dogs?

Stock: Oh yes that one! Well that's quite nasty. This again was the Argentine Islands and as I say we didn't have sledges but we were supposed to breed and train the dogs for sledging. And one of the things Dick Burd, Dick Burd and myself, made a harness, we had sledging harnesses anyway, dog harnesses, so we had these three dogs running with me and this particular dog was, he was great and he used to help me up the hill at the side of glacier and when I got to the top I'd release the dogs and have a nice ski down. And on this occasion I happened to hit a crevasse and fell through and two of the dogs went back to the base and one fellow, as I say I was really attached to this dog, he stayed with me some time!

[Part 2 1:00:05] Lee: You were down a crevasse were you?

Stock: I went down, not far, but I was lucky because as you know crevasses they sort of split and I got on this ledge I was only about maybe eight or ten feet, if that, only a few feet below the surface, but unable to get out! Anyway the two dogs came back, 'That's funny, where's Stocky?' And they took no notice of it at first just thought 'Ah well he's probably just running around with the one dog, no something's wrong', and as they came out and as they came up the glacier they could see the dog sitting at the top of this crevasse. Now if that dog had got back they wouldn't have known where I was, I'd have still be there today! So I owe my life to that dog!

[Part 2 1:00:57] Lee: And the dog was called Socky?

Stock: Do you know it's on the tip of my tongue and I can't remember what it was called, what did you say it was called?

[Part 2 1:01:07] Lee: Sooty or Socky, no?

Stock: I know he was a black and white quite a tall dog and that's the dog I wanted to breed with but Bingham wouldn't allow me! He was a very strong powerful dog - now what was he called? No sorry I can't remember it, no can't remember.

[Part 2 1:01:28] Lee: So that was your lucky escape?

Stock: Yes it was!

[Part 2 1:01:31] Lee: Most Fids have one and that was yours.

Stock: My daughter won't believe that, she won't believe it, she'd say 'Dad, the dog wouldn't have stayed there that long'. Well it did, it wouldn't have done!

[Part 2 1:01:45] Lee: There are parallel incidents from other Fids. I heard that, not that story [Stock: yeah] but I've heard stories of a similar kind [Stock: yes] but a dog has protected its [Stock: that's right] master in the Antarctic!

Stock: They were really, really good dogs!

[Part 2 1:02:03] Lee: When you, at the end of your fourth year then it was time to come home, I guess that was it. You'd had enough or were you sorry to leave?

Stock: Yeah I was sorry to leave in a way, but when I came back from South Georgia I went round to dinner with Sir Miles Clifford who was the Falkland Islands Governor in my first term down there not later. And I was having dinner with him and I think he had a flat in North West London somewhere, can't remember where. Anyway he said 'What are you going to do with yourself now, Stock?' and I said 'Oh I don't know sir, I might buy little country pub somewhere, or a post office', and he said 'For goodness sake all you chaps think you can run pubs or run post offices, why don't you do something useful!?' And I said 'Well I might like to join Lloyds if I could'! You know, the shipping agent, because meteorology and shipping was still with me I said 'I'd like to join Lloyds', and he said 'Oh you've got to be rich to join Lloyds'! So I said 'Oh dear'! So he said 'What about the Stock Exchange?' and I said these words 'I don't know anything at all about the Stock Exchange'! And he said 'Stocky, nobody does'! [Laughter] He said 'But I have friends in the Stock Exchange, one called Sebag Montefiore, I'll arrange for you to go and see him which I did, I got on with him he got on with me and I joined Joseph Sebag and Company as it was then, and that would have been in 1970/71, '71 probably, and I was there.

[Part 2 1:04:05] Lee: '70-'71?

Stock: '71 was it probably, yeah.

[Part 2 1:04:09] Lee: 20 years after you got back?

Stock: Oh no, sorry, I'm getting mixed up with the, oh no there's a lot I've missed out 20 years!

[Part 2 1:04:21] Lee: When did you have dinner with [Stock: sorry] Miles Clifford?

Stock: I must correct myself, when I left South Georgia I went back to England and I was still with the Colonial Office, see I was still being paid by the Colonial Office. And they sent me to Northern Rhodesia that then was several years after Northern Rhodesia it became federated with Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, and I wasn't keen on that! And nor too was the Colonial Office, so I was re-posted to Kenya. Now I was in Nairobi for five years as a meteorologist, all this and they got their independence, so I was posted to Tanganyika which is now Tanzania and they got independence! And I was sent to Uganda [laughter] and they got independence, all this was a period of 20 odd years, so there were two guys that I was

with because I was in charge of the whole of East Africa at that time, the whole of the East African Meteorological Department. And two of the four forecasters that I had working for there they both went to United Nations in Geneva, and they were graduates and I wasn't, so they got posts in United Nations in Geneva. But I was in touch with them, I went out to Geneva and met them and they said 'Why don't you join the United Nations?' And I said 'Well, no I haven't got a degree and I haven't got the qualifications!' 'Yes you have' he said, 'You've got all the experience'. Anyway they put me in touch whoever I needed to be in touch with and I got a post to Khartoum with the United Nations! And I spent five years in Khartoum which I loved, came back from Khartoum that's when I met... Miles Clifford! And he said what are going to do and I told him, and I joined the Stock Exchange and I was in the Stock Exchange till.....1994/95 about that time.

[Part 2 1:06:53] Lee: You retired?

Stock: I retired then, but Joseph Sebag as a company ceased trading and I joined another company which I'm still in touch with Walker-Crips and so I was, I don't know.

[Part 2 1:07:12] Lee: There's a note here saying you own part of the *Discovery*?

Stock: Yes that's right, the gimbals or timbals or whatever they are. When she was moved, where was she moved to?

[Part 2 1:07:30] Lee: Dundee.

Stock: Dundee that's right, Dundee, she was moved from London to Dundee and they appealed for funds and I donated some money which apparently purchased, at the side of the compass, the big...

[Part 2 1:07:49] Lee: Compass!

Stock: Compass yeah.

[Part 2 1:07:51] Lee: It's the cradle isn't it?

Stock: Two magnetic balls I purchased one of those!

[Part 2 1:07:57] Lee: [Laughing] One of them?

Stock: One of them, maybe two, I don't know, anyway I donated some money and I'm told that's what the money was used for!

[Part 2 1:08:05] Lee: Yeah.

Stock: But is the other ship in Dundee is that the *Crecy*?

[Part 2 1:08:08] Lee: I don't know.

Stock: Oh you don't know, no.

[Part 2 1:08:13] Lee: I don't know, no, bearing in mind how much globe-trotting you've done in your life, how do the Antarctic years rate?

Stock: Oh great, memories are beginning to fade as you can see.

[Part 2 1:08:25] Lee: But you've done very well!

Stock: Of what we did and how we passed from one day to another it was strictly routine, wake up have your breakfast, go and do an observation, wash some clothes, get some ice in, help do this, take another observation, do something else, see this was, as I was saying earlier on, this was the difficulty with my life down there that every three hours whilst I was telegraphist I had to send the message up to the Falkland Islands. Or sometimes to Rugby, no not Rugby where the big radio station used to be in England if I couldn't get through to the Falklands I'd send it straight back to the Air Ministry in.....?

[Part 2 1:09:18] Lee: Daventry?

Stock: Daventry that's right, Daventry, so every three hours either way as a telegraphist or a meteorologist and sometimes both as I say sometimes I'd go and do the meteorology observation and then get on the radio to send it off! So my time was limited during the day to what I could do!

[Part 2 1:09:41] Lee: But in the terms of being somewhere how does the Antarctic rate in your life?

Stock: It's an entirely different life altogether, it really is. Now since I've enjoyed going all over the world my bowls, I took up bowls in about '92 and I've been to, well most places. I've be to America, Canada, Australia twice, New Zealand, I did around the world trip went Bali and South Africa three or four times, Zimbabwe and Zambia, Portugal and Spain, I've done about 12 world tours bowling! And I'm off on another one in October, next month I'm going bowling in Portugal and in March I'm going to Spain and Portugal bowling for England in Spain and Portugal for three weeks, so I still do a lot of bowling!

[Part 2 1:10:54] Lee: You never tried bowling in...?

Stock: Playing tomorrow!

[Part 2 1:10:57] Lee: You never tried bowling in the Antarctic?

Stock: [Laughing] With snow, yeah we did! [Laughter] Because we used to roll these up and run the along the snow and the dogs would chase them! So that was a form of bowling to see who could get the dog to run the furthest, but the dogs used to love that, make a snow ball and it along the snow and they'd run after it! [laughter]

[Part 2 1:11:17] Lee: Gordon, it's been wonderful, thank you so much!

Stock: Yeah, I'm sorry I've gone on and on!

[Part 2 1:11:21] Lee: You haven't!

Some interesting clips:

- Being selected by Ted Bingham to join Operation Tabarin at Admiralty interview. [Part 1 0:07:01]
- The interesting trip south via Newquay, Portugal and Brazil. [Part 1 0:11:45]
- Feeling very seasick while still in harbour, although a sailor. [Part 1 0:16:21]
- The ambulance in Port Stanley which was on a motor bike. [Part 1 0:23:34]
- Helping to build the Falklands first aircraft and the first flight. [Part 1 0:25:00]
- The Hope Bay fire, but rather a confused account, a better account contained in *Ice and Men* pages 112-114. [Part 1 0:36:39]
- Gordon's first experience of sealing. [Part 1 0:42:16]
- Stealing a ship's cat that lived at Port Lockroy for the season, sleeping in the cool oven of the cooker. [Part 1 0:49:38]
- Having record request being played for them at Lockroy by the Dutch World Service over the radio. [Part 1 0:51:37]
- The process of sending up Met balloons of that time. [Part 1 0:57:48]
- The tsunami in the winter of 1946 taking all the water out of the bay for several minutes and probably took out the BGLE hut at Argentine Islands, which they couldn't find the next season. [Part 1 1:00:43]
- Trying to breed from the dogs. [Part 1 1:04:06]
- The story of maybe how Operation Tabarin started. [Part 2 0:01:56]
- The UK playing Argentina at football at Deception which was broadcast live back to Buenos Aires. [Part 2 0:04:49]
- Destroying the stock of rum at Port Lockroy! [Part 2 0:11:20]
- Building the new base hut at Argentine Islands. [Part 2 0:13:01]
- Dick Burd joining the Antarctic swimming club! And then the treatment of the seal infection of another base member. [Part 2 0:15:45]
- Taking over as Base Leader at Deception Island. [Part 2 0:26:28]
- Lot of radio ham contacts. [Part 2 0:32:34]
- Lots of volcanic activity at Deception and living and coping with it. [Part 2 0:34:55]
- The treatment of internal piles! And treating inflamed anuses with golden eye ointment, all via the radio! [Part 2 0:37:57]
- Now Base Leader at South Georgia and coming 5th in a round the island ski race against over a 100 Norwegian and Swedish whalers. [Part 2 0:47:01]
- Starting weather forecasts for the whalers, and some problems it caused. [Part 2 0:50:37]
- Falling into a crevasse at the Argentine Islands and being saved by a dog. [Part 2 1:00:05]
- Having dinner with Miles Clifford and encouraged to join the Stock Exchange. [Part 2 1:02:03]
- Working as a meteorologist in Africa for 20 years and being becoming the head meteorologist for East Africa. [Part 2 1:04:21]
- Playing bowls for England all over the world. [Part 2 1:09:41]