

ALAN MCMANUS ('Big Mac')

Edited transcript of a recording of Alan McManus conducted by Chris Eldon Lee at the Marguerite Bay reunion in Bowness-on-Windermere on 7th November 2009.
Transcribed by Andy Smith, 28th February 2010.

Track 1 [0:00:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is Alan McManus, recorded at the Marguerite Bay reunion in Bowness-on-Windermere by Chris Eldon Lee on the 7th of November 2009.*

Track 1 [0:00:13] Alan McManus: Name: Alan McManus. Born 1949 in Bristol.

Track 1 [0:00:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *And your education, Alan?*

Track 1 [0:00:19] Alan McManus: Secondary modern school. I failed my Eleven-plus, went to Charborough Road Secondary Modern School, left at sixteen, and decided to become a chef, and got a job, got a position as an apprentice. Served four years, gaining my City and Guilds. That then became my trade, as such. Then, I wanted to travel.

Track 1 [0:00:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *Yes?*

Track 1 [0:00:50] Alan McManus: So I started looking around for a job in catering that would take me wherever I wanted. I just wanted to travel and see the World. It actually runs on to my employment... Because of that, my employment with BAS was actually by accident.

Track 1 [0:01:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was the story?*

Track 1 [0:01:10] Alan McManus: I was looking around for a job. Obviously I wanted to travel and I was reading the... going through the Situations Vacant in the *Catering Times* and seeing what they were advertising, and there were two jobs that caught my eye. One was for the British Antarctic Survey and one was for a cook on a BP tanker. So I wrote off. BP came back and said 'No thank you'; BAS came back and said 'Yes, we will interview you.'

Track 1 [0:01:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *How old were you at that point?*

Track 1 [0:01:41] Alan McManus: I was just under twenty-one. So I wasn't actually twenty-one – another four or five months to go.

Track 1 [0:01:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *So about 1970?*

Track 1 [0:01:53] Alan McManus: Early 1970; around that period. Late '69/ early '70 I started applying for the jobs.

Track 1 [0:01:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember the interview?*

Track 1 [0:02:01] Alan McManus: Vaguely. It was Bill Sloman; I remember it was Bill Sloman.

Track 1 [0:02:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *Still? In 1970?*

Track 1 [0:02:09] Alan McManus: Yes. In 1969/70 Bill was still around then. I remember Bill Sloman having the interview, up in London, back of Victoria station. I did know the name of the street. It was in the offices at the top of the building; the small offices. Attending the interview, and I can say that up to that time I didn't have any real interest in the Antarctic at all. It wasn't one of my boyhood dreams. I had heard of Scott from school, and Shackleton, taught in history lessons, but it wasn't a thing that really appealed to me then, at a younger age. But when they offered the interview I went there and afterwards they offered me the job. I decided to take it, and it changed my life.

Track 1 [0:03:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was the interview rigorous?*

Track 1 [0:03:05] Alan McManus: Not really. I didn't think so. In fact, I remember walking out and thinking "Well, they didn't seem that interested in me" and thinking "Maybe I'm not the right type. I haven't got the job". But I was offered the job. To me it was just basically a chat. Obviously at that age I had not had many interviews for jobs or anything like that but really it was... Once I brought all my City & Guilds qualifications and certificates and educational information and all that sort of thing. That was all presented. They read through that. Then it was just really a chat.

Track 1 [0:03:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *In retrospect, do you think they were "sussing you out" psychologically?*

Track 1 [0:03:50] Alan McManus: I would think so, yes. Yes, just to get to know you through an informal chat. When you look back on it, or think about it, getting to see if you are the right type of person, or the type of person who would be OK to go down South. Because as far as my academic and trade qualifications were concerned, they were OK; there was nothing wrong with those. That's what I would assume nowadays is: they were just seeing if you were the right type.

Track 1 [0:04:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *Yes. You said it changed your life. Elaborate.*

Track 1 [0:04:29] Alan McManus: Elaborate on that was the fact that, as I said before, it never occurred to me. I didn't have a burning ambition to follow in the footsteps of Scott or Shackleton, or anything like that, but it opened up a totally new way of life that I knew nothing about. To a great extent I fell in love with that, and, as you can see from my history, I carried on doing it for quite a few years, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Track 2 [0:04:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *When you say opening up, what do you mean? How did that happen?*

Track 2 [0:04:56] Alan McManus: Well, opening up in the fact that I had never met the type of people or the range of people that BAS employ. As far as I was concerned, I was just a failed eleven-plus person who had been to secondary modern school and that was it. I had never met university degree students before, anybody like that. I had the typical working-class opinion of what that type of person was, and what type of

life they had. But like all these things, it was a pre-conceived opinion and it was wrong. I suppose it changed me into the way that you accept people for what they are and not what they appear to be or what your pre-conceived ideas of them are.

Track 2 [0:05:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you had no problem brushing shoulders with Cambridge graduates?*

Track 2 [0:05:43] Alan McManus: No. Initially, possibly. They gave me the job in... it would have been August 1970. We had the Cambridge Conference that week up there. I was the kid from a council estate in Bristol who was going up and staying in a Cambridge University college. That was a bit daunting, but once you are there and you start mixing with everybody, you realise that they are just normal people, just ordinary everyday people. Nothing weird or wonderful about them, they were no different from me; no different from anybody else. It changed my life and opened my eyes, and gave me that different attitude to carry through life. You accept people for what they are.

Track 2 [0:06:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *If you weren't a scholar of the Antarctic before you went to that college... was it Girton College you went to?*

Track 2 [0:06:36] Alan McManus: Yes, on the induction course.

Track 2 [0:06:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *Having just been on one of those myself, they are extremely informative.*

Track 2 [0:06:45] Alan McManus: Oh yes.

Track 2 [0:06:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you must have learned a heck of a lot?*

Track 2 [0:06:47] Alan McManus: I learned a heck of a lot in a very quick time, and there were times when I was completely overwhelmed by most of it. I remember thinking 'What the hell have I let myself in for?' But I did. I suppose I had that... I wanted to travel. I wanted to go away to places. It never occurred to me the Antarctic before but it suddenly did when I started learning about it. It suddenly did start appealing to me. I started thinking 'This could be very good', as it turned out.

Track 2 [0:07:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *What did they tell you about the kind of equipment and the kitchen facilities you would be working with?*

Track 2 [0:07:22] Alan McManus: Not a great deal: basic information of, you know, it's a coal-fired Aga-type stove.

Track 2 [0:07:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *This was South Georgia you were going to?*

Track 2 [0:07:32] Alan McManus: Yes, South Georgia first of all. We were given... They had all the several cooks together. There was myself, Ian Bury, (who was the other guy? Chris?), they were going to Halley Bay. There was Mervyn who was going to Signy. And they were all brought together. We were given a general chat about what's on base, but it was towards the more southern bases, not South Georgia, where they were using the coal-fires Agas. But at South Georgia it was all electrical; they

had a large generators; they had electric ovens, electric stoves, all this sort of thing. So that was a pleasant surprise when I arrived there, that I wouldn't be... But then one of the jobs I had when I was serving my apprenticeship was working in the old George Hotel in Bristol, on College Green, and when I first went there, their stoves were still coal-fired. They did change them while I was there; ripped them all out and put new gas ones in. But when I first went there, you had to stoke the fires up in the morning to get the ranges going. They were big ranges, coal-fired ranges, so it did not worry me in particular. We knew, we were told that we would have limited facilities, and I did wonder at the time, when we were told virtually everything... there was very little fresh food apart from a small bit during the summer. Everything would be tinned or dried. I did wonder then, well not too seriously. You're young 'I know, I can deal with it' When you did actually arrive there, you are looking at your stores and thinking: 'Well, yes. It's all good stuff, but it's all tinned; it's all processed.' It's very difficult to make tinned and processed food varied. Tinned stewed steak tastes like tinned stewed steak whatever you do with it. And corned beef ('One thousand and one recipes for corned beef') or Spam or something like that, pork luncheon meat. The list sounds good. We were given copies of your stores list and everything, and on paper it's dozens of different types of tinned meats, but actually they all taste the same.

Track 3 [0:09:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *So were you culinarily challenged?*

Track 3 [0:09:59] Alan McManus: Definitely, definitely.

Track 3 [0:10:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *After the George in Bristol, which is a fairly high-falutin' place?*

Track 3 [0:10:05] Alan McManus: Yes, very culinarily challenged. Like I say, it was a challenge to start with, and I was thinking: the first few weeks you are churning it out, you are doing the cooking, you are getting things done. But then, after you have run through that initial repertoire of recipes you've got, your clientele is captive. It's not like a restaurant where they might come in and eat with you once a month. Now they are eating three meals a day from you. Getting the variety in there is a very difficult thing.

Track 3 [0:10:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you develop any technique for doing that? Perhaps to make it appear more varied than it really was?*

Track 3 [0:10:47] Alan McManus: You tried to, but it was typically British. The major spice we had was a tin of curry powder – your bog-standard British curry powder – and that was it. And your range of dried herbs and spices was very limited, being British. You know, your mixed herbs, your sage, your thyme and your parsley, and that was it. No spices; the odd bit of Cayenne pepper or something like this, but nothing else.

Track 3 [0:11:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Sauces?*

Track 3 [0:11:27] Alan McManus: Sauces were your typical brown sauce, tomato sauce, Worcester sauce. That was it.

Track 3 [0:11:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *I was thinking more of things like pasta sauce.*

Track 3 [0:11:39] Alan McManus: Pasta sauce? Oh, no. Nothing like that. Those didn't exist then.

Track 3 [0:11:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *Loyd Grossman?*

Track 3 [0:11:44] Alan McManus: No, no, nothing like that at all. We were still, as far as the rations were concerned, in the fifties. The list of rations and the variety of rations had not changed for years. It was basically exactly what it was in the forties and fifties.

Track 3 [0:12:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *You had no control over the supply list?*

Track 3 [0:12:04] Alan McManus: No, none at all. We could put suggestions forward. I remember Ricky Chinn came up to me after the first summer and said: 'Have you got anything you would like to add to the list? Not saying you will get it.' But I think they went round doing that. It was typically conservative British. If enough people asked for it, you would eventually get it, somewhere down the line. I think they went round a lot of the cooks that were already down there, putting suggestions, and if the same thing came up, year after year after year, then after two or three years it would be included on the ration list.

Track 3 [0:12:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *You laughed when I mentioned pasta.*

Track 3 [0:12:47] Alan McManus: [laughs] Pasta? Apart from Heinz tinned spaghetti, we had pasta there, just the short lengths of ordinary pasta, dried, spaghetti, and that was it. I don't think there was any other type or variety of pasta. Just plain spaghetti. And Heinz tinned spaghetti and that was it.

Track 3 [0:13:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Rice?*

Track 3 [0:13:09] Alan McManus: We had rice, but very little rice. It was a very small proportion of the overall carbohydrate and starch content of the listings. When I say it was fifties and sixties British. Then, a pasta sauce would have been considered exotic.

Track 3 [0:13:36] Chris Eldon Lee: *Had the word "nutrition" crossed the minds of these people?*

Track 3 [0:13:41] Alan McManus: Yes, it had. Oh yes, it was a reasonably well-balanced diet. There were no problems with scurvy or anything like this. It was a high calorific diet, simply because we were doing a lot of work, physical work. Even on base the guys needed three and a half to four thousand calories a day. A lot of them were out in the cold, obviously, and we were doing the physical jobs, as opposed to today. Just take the days of the relief, unloading the ship. Everything had to be done by hand. So, you had five tons of stores to come ashore. You were there just picking up five tons of boxes and shifting them by hand. General work around the base was always a lot more physical. It was done by hand, not by machines.

Track 3 [0:14:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *All the food was arriving that way wasn't it? That must have been a nervous time for you,*

Track 3 [0:14:39] Alan McManus: Extremely nervous.

Track 3 [0:14:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *because there are numerous stories of stores that weren't actually unloaded or were sent to the wrong place.*

Track 3 [0:14:45] Alan McManus: Sent to the wrong place, or lost, or put aside. We had the usual panic. My usual panic was getting all the, what you might call the perishables, even though they were tinned. But things like tinned fruit, tinned veg, getting it inside and stored away before it got frozen, even during the summer. Obviously further south if you left it out overnight you could get it frozen. Only -1°C, -2°C, something like that, but it would be enough then to damage... If you get tinned fruit frozen, you open it up, you have got a thick mush inside, instead of segments of fruit, or you get tinned baked beans, you've got a baked bean sauce comes out of it, not baked beans. So if jars of tomato sauce freeze, break, you lose it when it falls out.

Track 4 [0:15:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *These things happen?*

Track 4 [0:15:34] Alan McManus: These things have happened. Not a great deal, but... My priority was to get all what I would call the freezable damage goods inside and sorted out. But then the other stuff, like the cases and cases of tinned flour, dehydrated cabbage, dried potato and all these sort of things, dehydrated stuff could then stay out, were actually stored outside. Put up on a rack, and just left there. And they got covered over with snow, and you went and dug out your week's supply or month's supply at a time and bring it into the base. Because the bases were quite limited on indoor storage. You could only have the indoor storage for the perishable things, things that would be damaged by freezing. The tinned stuff would be damaged by freezing. All the dried ingredients would be put on a rack outside and just left. Left in its wooden crates. Then you got out, break open the wooden crate, and get it in.

Track 4 [0:16:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you have any catering crises in your time down there?*

Track 4 [0:16:37] Alan McManus: What do you mean by crises? Failures on my part or...? [laughs]

Track 4 [0:16:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *You can confess to those if you wish.*

Track 4 [0:16:45] Alan McManus: There were a few. There have been; obviously, over a number of years I made one or two cockups.

Track 4 [0:16:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *Such as?*

Track 4 [0:16:51] Alan McManus: Things like going to make the bread and forgetting about it. Something would go wrong and I would put the bread in the oven. Someone would say 'Can you give me a hand?' Yes, go and give them a hand. Half an hour later: 'Christ, the bread is still in the bloody oven!' Run back and there's smoke coming out of it, and there's clouds coming out of it. 'Oh, God!' and you can't just nip down the shop, you've got to start the whole cycle off again, and make some more bread, by hand because you did not have the machines or anything like that. It wasn't

until I got to Rothera that we actually had a machine, a mixing machine, where you could make bread. Everything else had to be... all before it was done by hand. Just get a big bowl out and start mixing. And there were times that, using the coal-fired Agas... Everybody seems to love Agas nowadays, but I hate the damn things!

Track 4 [0:17:52] Chris Eldon Lee: *Uneven?*

Track 4 [0:17:56] Alan McManus: Uneven, totally uneven, and of course the weather can affect them greatly. You can have a wind blowing and the thing is roaring away and is glowing red-hot, and you are desperately trying to stop it getting any hotter. You don't cook something in there – you put something in the oven; the outside is burnt and the inside is stone cold. Or, you get things like at Adelaide; we sometimes used to get temperature inversions, where you get that layer of cold air, when the thing just would not draw. A layer of cold air would come down off the plateau and just sit over the end of the base, so there would be no upward conduction; the thing would not draw, and it would be stone cold. So you couldn't cook anything. It would take half an hour to boil a kettle of water for the tea. So then it was a case of getting the primuses out and making something. You know, you get there, the stove is stone cold, and you've got half an hour to get lunch for a dozen people. Yes, the things used to drive me mad. Other things like that, where the nightwatchman, who was a bit lax in his job, and his job was to keep the coal fires burning overnight, keep them going well. Would be a bit lax or would get side-tracked by something. You get up in the morning to cook breakfast and the stove is stone cold. So, yes, I am not a fan of Agas, definitively not.

Track 4 [0:19:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *My next question was 'Was it ever boring?' but it sounds like it never was boring.*

Track 4 [0:19:26] Alan McManus: I was never bored. That is one of the classic questions we seem to get from everybody who has never been there, They say 'Well what do you do? Were you bored?' What we had to do, we spent most of our time during the winter, I wouldn't say just surviving but living. Doing the jobs, the physical stuff that needed to be done to keep yourself going. Things like snowblocking to get your water. Sorting through stores. When you have had a couple of days 'blow', and I'd got to go and get a box of flour out because I am out of flour in the kitchen, and it would take me an hour to find it and dig it out, because it is all covered by several feet of snow. There was always something to do, and someone always needed a hand to do their job as well.

Track 5 [0:20:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *You did seven winters. Is that right or is it more?*

Track 5 [0:20:25] Alan McManus: Seven. Seven winters.

Track 5 [0:20:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Are you the man who has done the most winters in the Antarctic?*

Track 5 [0:20:29] Alan McManus: No. There is Kenn Back. I think Kenn has done eight.

Track 5 [0:20:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *Seven is quite a lot though.*

Track 5 [0:20:38] Alan McManus: Seven is a lot, yes.

Track 5 [0:20:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *Why?*

Track 5 [0:20:43] Alan McManus: *Why?* The simple answer is I was enjoying myself. I enjoyed it; I thoroughly loved it. I did the first two and a half year stint. Then I was back, and the second time I went down, I had done the two and a half year stint: the first year at South Georgia and the second year at Argentine Islands. I had gone back. I don't think I had any, at that stage... It was always at the back of my mind that I would like to go down again, but at the time I did not think that quickly. What happened was I went up to see... By the time the Office had – they were still in London; they were in the process of building the Cambridge headquarters... I went up to visit a couple of guys I had been in Argentine Islands with. They were in London. They were going into the Office and I just happened to accompany them in there. I went in there and I think it was Eric Salmon who had become the Personnel Officer then. He said 'Hello' and he just looked and said 'Do you want to go back down South this year?' I thought for a few minutes. I didn't have a job; I was still bumming around, having a break as I had just got back. I had got back in the spring and this was the end of summer. And I said 'Yes, all right. Yes, might as well. Why not?' So he said 'OK. We will sent you back down to South Georgia'.

Track 5 [0:22:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *Your seven winters spanned eleven years, so how much did BAS and your working conditions change in those eleven years?*

Track 5 [0:22:30] Alan McManus: A hell of a lot. As far as the catering was concerned. Because, the first time I went into Argentine Islands it was the classic old-fashioned base to leaving Rothera in '82/'83 summer. There it changed totally. The accommodation was a lot better; the living conditions were a lot better. At Rothera we had central heating; we had an adequate power supply. I did not have to keep on asking the generator mechanic if I could turn on the chip fryer, or something like that. In the kitchen we had electric stoves; we had all the modern electrical gadgets that you would associate with a normal kitchen, having to feed, during the summer, thirty, thirty-five, forty personnel.

Track 5 [0:23:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *You had freezers too?*

Track 5 [0:23:25] Alan McManus: Yes, we had freezers, and we had fresh meat. The thing with freezers is that they are kept at a constant temperature. To keep meat for any length of time, you need to keep it at a constant temperature. Keeping joints of meat, carcasses of lamb, this sort of thing. You could do that, but you would have to burrow really deep into the ice face and it is a major job and it still would not really keep at a constant temperature. It fluctuates. It is fine at Halley Bay. When they were there they were already buried under thirty or forty feet of snow and ice, and the whole thing where they lived was a deep freeze. But where we were at Rothera, the summer temperatures could get up to +5°C, something like that, so you needed a constant deep freeze environment for them. So they brought in these couple of freezers and we started getting fresh meat, or frozen meat but to us it was fresh meat as opposed to tinned. Joint of beef; pork, chicken, bacon, all this sort of thing. It improved greatly. Just simple things like going from dried powdered egg, which was

a nightmare, horrible stuff to use in catering, to frozen egg: whole eggs which had been just put into a big container and frozen. Obviously they tasted like eggs. They worked a hell of a lot better for catering, for cooking, for making cakes and pastries. They were much more efficient for that. So it did make life a lot easier.

Track 6 [0:24:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *So did it take all the fun out of it?*

Track 6 [0:25:01] Alan McManus: No, it didn't take all the fun out of it. It made life easier, simply because it was predictable. At Rothera were getting at that stage, compared to now it was still very few people, but then to us it was thirty-five, forty, forty-five people were on base. It did make my life, my job, a lot better. We had a lot better kitchen equipment. We had basically gone from the nineteen fifties/ nineteen sixties into the seventies and eighties. It improved quite dramatically in those last few years I was there.

Track 6 [0:25:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *Let's talk a bit about those early days again. When you went South, you went on the Bransfield?*

Track 6 [0:25:45] Alan McManus: No, the *Biscoe*. On the *John Biscoe*. It would have been October 1970. It's always confusing with these years because they span summers. You still get caught out. I wintered in '71, so I would have left UK in October '70.

Track 6 [0:26:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was the year of the teleprinter, wasn't it? Did you get to use them?*

Track 6 [0:26:10] Alan McManus: Yes, they were installing the teleprinters, putting them in. At South Georgia they already had them in because it had been the government base, so they were already there. But, yes, I remember a lot of comments in records about having to put new aerials up – all sorts of different aerials – and re-erect them to cope with all the different communications technologies.

Track 6 [0:26:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *One way of supplementing your larder was to go out and shoot it.*

Track 6 [0:26:38] Alan McManus: Yes. At South Georgia, definitely. Reindeer. It was quite popular, simply because it gave us fresh meat. And we could shoot the reindeer and send them on down to the other bases, further south. Half a dozen carcasses, which gave them a large treat, to have fresh meat.

Track 6 [0:27:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *I'm surprised there were reindeer on South Georgia.*

Track 6 [0:27:05] Alan McManus: They were introduced by the Norwegian sailors in the late eighteenth century/ early nineteenth century as a supply of fresh meat, for them down there. They had the two. They had the one just over on the Barff Peninsula, which is where we took all our deer from. I can't remember the exact numbers they had over there, but there were several hundred.

Track 6 [0:27:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Had you been called upon to shoot your food before?*

Track 6 [0:27:30] Alan McManus: Yes I had. I hadn't been hunting deer or anything like that before, but as a youngster I had gone out shooting rabbits, this sort of thing. I had no compunction about it. My dad... We kept rabbits; we bred them as a source of food.

Track 6 [0:27:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *So dealing with fresh deer carcasses was...?*

Track 6 [0:27:55] Alan McManus: It was no problem with me at all. My grandad was a delivery driver for the local meat market. I was always in his truck, travelling around with him, handling bloody carcasses, this sort of thing, from a young age. And skinning and preparing rabbits with my dad. Or chickens; we used to keep chickens. We used to keep rabbits. Plucking your own chicken and drawing it was nothing new to me at all.

Track 6 [0:28:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *So how about dealing with seal? You shot an elephant seal at least once.*

Track 6 [0:28:30] Alan McManus: Yes.

Track 6 [0:28:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *And produced it on the table the next day?*

Track 6 [0:28:33] Alan McManus: Not very often. Not at South Georgia. I did at a few other places. But at South Georgia we used to shoot the seals for Halley Bay. They still had the dogs there at Halley Bay. It was easier for us than them. They had very limited seals around that area. We had thousand of seals, elephant seals, around South Georgia, around King Edward Point. So one of the jobs during the summer, just before the ship was due to go to Halley, we would shoot maybe a hundred seals, elephant seals for them. They would then load them on the ship and take them down to Halley. But elephant seals are dirty filthy smelly horrible things and at the time of year we used to do it, in January, they were out moulting, and laying in their wallows. They had been laying in their wallows for several weeks, crapping in it, pissing in it, everything. And it stank; I mean really stank. You were wading knee-deep through liquid crap, and they would not move because they were moulting. We needed them down on the beach, so the launch could come in and tow them out to the ship. Because you are talking about seals fifteen/ sixteen/ eighteen foot long, maybe weighing a ton and a half/ two tons/ two and a half tons. So we would go into the wallows, drive them down to the beach, literally whack them with bits of "two by four" – something that would never be allowed now, but just drive them. They didn't want to go because they were moulting; they didn't want to go back into the water. But we would drive them down and someone on the beach would shoot them. Then we would gut them. But after you have done that, the last thing you want to eat at the end of the day is a lump of bloody seal.

Track 7 [0:30:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *Have you cooked seal?*

Track 7 [0:30:30] Alan McManus: Oh yes, I have cooked it.

Track 7 [0:30:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me how you go about that. What marvellous recipes would you generally use?*

Track 7 [0:30:35] Alan McManus: I treated it as, literally a lump of beef. What I would do is be very careful not to get the actual piece of meat you are using tainted with any blubber. Blubber has a very distinct taste.

Track 7 [0:30:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Fishy?*

Track 7 [0:30:56] Alan McManus: Fishy, oily. I wouldn't say fishy but just oily, greasy, odd. Quite a nasty taste. So when we did shoot seal, I would be there, roll it over, gut it out. And the ones I was going to take meat from, I would only take the fillet steaks, just inside the rib cage. When we were doing it, be very careful not to puncture any of the internal organs, intestines or anything like that. Clean out the guts; hook them out, drag them out. I would then wash out, with a bucketful of water, any blood that was in the cavity, and then use a fresh clean knife which I hadn't used before, to bone out the fillets from inside the rib cage. That way you would not get any... Because blubber has a very strong taste, and even a small smearing of it on a lump of fillet would give it that odd flavour. So I was very careful. Then, once I had done that, I would take them back to the base. I would let them hang for a couple of days, let all the blood drip out of them. Then I would just treat them as a lump of beef: stewed, fried, roasted. A fillet from a decent sized Weddell seal is probably a bit bigger than a normal beef fillet. About a metre and four inches across. There were several recipes for seal. Most of them said: blanch it in water before you do anything with it. But I think that if the blood had dripped out of it, and it had hung, I don't think you need to do that. Give it a wipe over, sear it in a pan, stick it in a hot oven, and you get a nice bit of rare roast beef. It has got a strong flavour. If you did not know it was seal, you would probably think 'This beef tastes a bit odd. It doesn't taste right.' But you would still think it probably was beef.

Track 7 [0:33:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was it popular?*

Track 7 [0:33:27] Alan McManus: Not that popular with a lot of people. I used it occasionally. A lot of people at Rothera... I only did it occasionally because people said 'Can we try it?' By then we were getting a fair amount of fresh meat in so we were having fresh meat: frozen beef, frozen lamb, frozen pork, maybe three times a week. Three different meals; the rest would be... But at the earlier bases, at places like Argentine Islands, where we were still on the tinned rations, then yes people did want to try it. Some of them liked it and some didn't. I think it was all a matter of personal preference, like all these things. Different people's tastes; they like different things.

Track 7 [0:34:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you utilise penguins as well?*

Track 7 [0:34:26] Alan McManus: Yes, I have used penguins.

Track 7 [0:34:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *Penguins or penguin eggs, or both?*

Track 7 [0:34:30] Alan McManus: Penguins. I did that several times. There you just use the breast. It is a very coarse, dark meat and it is quite tough. I found the best way

of dealing with it was just to braise penguin breasts, onions and gravy; stick it in the oven for a couple of hours until it becomes tender. Again, it's not a very palatable meat, but it is something different – from tinned stewed steak! Tinned stewed steak or corned beef. It's a different flavour, different texture, which actually gave you something to chew. Which does make a hell of a difference after you have had week after week of tinned pap. Something to chew and something to get your teeth into. I did quite a few. I did shags, blue-eyed cormorants. They weren't very successful; they were a bit fishy and a bit oily; very oily. But, again, it was a change from tinned food.

Track 8 [0:35:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this all coming out of the Penguin Cookbook?*

Track 8 [0:35:36] Alan McManus: It was Gerry Cutland's *Fit for a Fid*. I did utilise quite a few recipes out of there. Especially because he gave quite a few recipes in there, obviously for the local animals, the penguins, the seals, the shags, all these sort of things. But also, what I found very helpful: his book for utilising the dried ingredients and the tinned ingredients, and giving some bit of variety in there. So it gave you some idea.

Track 8 [0:36:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *And penguins' eggs?*

Track 8 [0:36:11] Alan McManus: I never... I've had penguin eggs, and I've used them, but I was never really on a base where we were close enough to collect them, a vast number of them.

Track 8 [0:36:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *What about fish?*

Track 8 [0:36:23] Alan McManus: We did fish a lot at South Georgia, and we got the Notothenia. Quite often at South Georgia I would go down there and spend an afternoon at the jetty, and come back with a couple of dozen one pound/ pound and a half Notothenia. They were all head and tail, but two Notothenia would be a decent portion of fish for an evening meal per person. So, yes, I did that quite a lot. I was at Signy for a summer, and I did try krill. [laughs] You end up with a couple of hundredweight of krill, and then you end up with a little bit of this horrible fishy tasting paste which was no good. That was a waste of time.

Track 8 [0:37:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *But that's the future, isn't it, of mankind?*

Track 8 [0:37:14] Alan McManus: Oh yes. No, I didn't rate it. Definitely not. But yes, the fish, the Notothenia we used to get at South Georgia were very good. They did provide you with some nice fish, and occasionally you would get quite big one, where you could cut steaks off it.

Track 8 [0:37:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *I want to move on to other things, but is there anything else about the catering trade in the Antarctic you want to mention?*

Track 8 [0:37:36] Alan McManus: I could ramble on for quite a few hours, I think, but really it was a change, to a great extent, because you had a limited variety of things, a limited stores list. As I say, the biggest problem was putting some variety into it.

Track 8 [0:37:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you the butt of jokes?*

Track 8 [0:37:57] Alan McManus: No, I was too big! [laughs].

Track 8 [0:38:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you appreciated?*

Track 8 [0:38:03] Alan McManus: I think so. I believe I got on well with most people on bases. I think I was pretty successful; they all seemed to like my food.

Track 8 [0:38:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *Away from the kitchen duties, you were an adventurer of sorts, I think is one way of putting it. Trips and so on round the islands?*

Track 8 [0:38:27] Alan McManus: I've done a few things. I tried to fit in. Whatever base I was on, whatever activity, I liked to get out and about, and if something presented itself, then I would try and join in. At Argentine Islands we had the small sailing dinghy and the canoes. And during a nice day in the summer we would try to get out as much as possible on those. It was a rowing dinghy and I think a couple of years before I was there they had made their own mast and made their own sail, and this sort of thing. So we were able to sail it in and out of the islands. Not very far – a mile or two miles out, in amongst all the Argentine Islands. And the two canoes as well we had there, which were quite good. At South Georgia we did a fair bit of boating because we had the launches there... we were able to get over onto the Barff Peninsula and a couple of trips I did around into Cumberland West Bay, and Cumberland East Bay, this sort of thing.

Track 8 [0:39:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you travelling on ice as well, in the winter?*

Track 8 [0:39:39] Alan McManus: We did at Argentine Islands the year I was there but it wasn't very good. It was a bit dodgy. We did try once to get over on to the Peninsula, but Penola Strait was a bit dodgy; it was always very dodgy. So we chickened out and came back.

Track 9 [0:39:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *So Health and Safety, for once, reigned supreme, did it?*

Track 9 [0:40:01] Alan McManus: Self-preservation, not Health and Safety. You stand there prodding. You are on skis, prodding the ice. 'Oh dear! It's a bit thin! Let's turn back.'

Track 9 [0:40:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was Health and Safety in the kitchen a concern, or are we talking about the days before any of that existed?*

Track 9 [0:40:20] Alan McManus: Health and Safety didn't exist. There was no such thing as Health and Safety. If I got injured in the kitchen, I tried not to do the same thing again. I admit the kitchen is a dangerous environment. You are going to get burned; you are going to get cut. Things are going to go wrong. You are going to get splashed by hot fat.

Track 9 [0:40:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *How about your leisure time? There was somebody called Rachel you formed a friendship with.*

Track 9 [0:40:45] Alan McManus: Rachel was a nice dog. Leisure time as such: Like I say, to me I didn't have leisure time, because if I wasn't working in the kitchen, I was off doing other things, and giving other people a hand. So I didn't consider I had much leisure time at all.

Track 9 [0:41:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well, walking the dog.*

Track 9 [0:41:17] Alan McManus: Walking the dog. I would go out and walk the dog, yes, but that was to exercise the dog.

Track 9 [0:41:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *Making homebrew?*

Track 9 [0:41:23] Alan McManus: Oh God! Some of the homebrew we used to make at South Georgia. Jesus! We tried everything. All sorts of stuff went into the bucket, to try and brew it up. There were quite a few we tried. I think it was Dave Burkitt started that off, I'm not certain. The dried apple worked very well. We had tins and tins of dried apple. So we thought 'Oh, shall we try and make some cider?' But we came up with this apple-tasting alcoholic drink, which I think was... quite a few runs to the toilet!

Track 9 [0:42:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *Beer must have been quite difficult; the fermenting of beer.*

Track 9 [0:42:16] Alan McManus: Yes. The best place was the generator shed, because that kept fairly warm, with the generators going all the time. It was always warm in the generator shed, so tuck a big tub, a bucket full of homebrew in the corner of the generator shed and it would just quietly ferment away itself.

Track 9 [0:42:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was it like as an end product?*

Track 9 [0:42:48] Alan McManus: Not very good. I can't really remember having a really successful one, where we thought 'Oh, we will have to do that again.' We did it again, but we would try a different recipe next time. See what else we can come out with.

Track 9 [0:43:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *It says here that you were known to drink a pint in five seconds, in your heyday.*

Track 9 [0:43:07] Alan McManus: That was in my heyday. I was very good at that. [laughs]

Track 9 [0:43:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *So that wasn't homebrew, that was...?*

Track 9 [0:43:16] Alan McManus: No, that wasn't homebrew. That would have been a can of beer or a pint of beer: or a couple of cans poured into a pint mug. Yes, I did have a reputation as a bit of a drinker.

Track 9 [0:43:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did it ever get out of control?*

Track 9 [0:43:30] Alan McManus: No. Definitely not! I wouldn't say a drunkard. I liked my drink, and on Saturday night I was quite happy to sit there and open a bottle of whisky or something. Three or four of us would sit round and spend the night drinking the whisky; bullshitting and chatting; telling stories and at two o'clock in the morning the bottle was empty, so we would go to bed.

Track 9 [0:43:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *Darts competitions? On the radio?*

Track 9 [0:44:02] Alan McManus: It happened a couple of times. At Argentine Islands and South Georgia we did it, and Signy as well.

Track 9 [0:44:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *How does it work?*

Track 9 [0:44:12] Alan McManus: Well, we had all the radio gear set up, the dartboard set up. They set the radio gear up in the bar. Technically I don't know how it was done, but they set it all up. And then it would be Signy, or Argentine Islands, or South Georgia. They would do the same at their end. Then we would play the game. Of course we would throw, the radio operator would shout out the score over the radio to whoever we were playing. We would wait a few seconds and they would come back with their score. We had to trust them.

Track 9 [0:44:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *I assume while you were downstairs in the bar, one or two of the bases would actually play the whole game of darts while still in bed?*

Track 10 [0:44:55] Alan McManus: Probably, yes. We were pretty good. I think most of the time we were honest. Unless...

Track 10 [0:45:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this a league table?*

Track 10 [0:45:04] Alan McManus: No, it was just one thing to pass an evening. I know they did chess over the radio, and this sort of thing.

Track 10 [0:45:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *There's a word here I've never seen associated with the Antarctic before in my life, which is Scalectrix, at Faraday.*

Track 10 [0:45:22] Alan McManus: I think they did have one there. It wasn't in my day.

Track 10 [0:45:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *Photographic competitions?*

Track 10 [0:45:32] Alan McManus: Mainly at South Georgia, and Argentine Islands. When I was at those two bases. Each one had its own darkroom, and that becomes one of your main obsessions during the winter, and throughout the year. The South Georgia darkroom was very very well-equipped - a nice darkroom to work in. Again it was one of those things that I had never done anything of before I went down there. I'd had my Box Brownie but that was about it, but then buying a decent camera in the Falkland Islands and learning how to develop and print my own pictures, develop my

own slides. Yes, photography was a major thing down there, all the guys buying the photographic gear. And we had quite a few good competitions in South Georgia. Obviously the scenery lent itself to it. I can't remember if I actually won any prizes. I know I've still got some of the photographs at home and I think they are pretty good.

Track 10 [0:46:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *You got visitors too, didn't you? In '71 there was a yacht called Damien.*

Track 10 [0:46:44] Alan McManus: Damien. Jerome Poncet and Gerard something.

Track 10 [0:46:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *What's the story?*

Track 10 [0:46:56] Alan McManus: Suddenly this thing appeared around King Edward Point, this yacht with a stumpy little mast. We put the launch out, set the launch up and off we went and towed them in. They were two Frenchmen who had been touring. Well they had gone from France up to Greenland, down the coast of America, down the coast of South America and coming down to Antarctica. I think they were heading for South Africa, via Antarctica, South Georgia. They had been capsized, actually pitched end over end and it had snapped their mast. They managed to survive; the boat was a mess inside. Everything was smashed and broken. They had a small coal-burning stove inside to heat the boat and that had gone flying across and coal had mixed with seawater and they were in dire straits. They managed to jury-rig the boom; the whole boom was parted from the mast. I think they had spent something like three or four days off Cumberland West Bay. Because it was jury-rigged, they had to wait for the wind. They were just backward and forward until the wind changed and they were able to come into Cumberland East Bay. They were in a right mess, so obviously we helped out as much as we could. We repaired their boat, repaired their mast, cleaned it out, reprovisioned them. They were there for a good three or four weeks I think. Then they went off to... They set sail again. We sorted them all out. Two very good lads. They then set sail for South Africa and made it. Well obviously made it and then Jerome came down a few years later with a much bigger boat and lived in the Falkland Islands, and chartered a bigger boat out for trips down to Antarctica and made a... He's not there now, but he made himself quite a good living for quite a few years, and actually wintered in Antarctica. Pulled the boat up in Marguerite Bay, off Jenny Island somewhere, and wintered with the boat in there.

Track 10 [0:49:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *And you were getting visits from Russian fishing vessels and research vessels too.*

Track 10 [0:49:31] Alan McManus: Russian fishing vessels. Oh God! That was horrendous. Well not horrendous, but you didn't half have a hangover when they left. They were very nice people. They would invite us on the boat. Vodka after vodka after vodka. And we would invite them back to Shackleton House for a party. One time we had had a party there. It was one of the mixture of scientific research vessels and fishing vessels. I think it was one of the fishing vessels; we invited them up for a party, and of course we were giving them the whisky, the booze, the beer, and they were getting ready to sail. This was about midnight/ one o'clock in the morning. A couple of them were pretty damn drunk; so were we, and the ship was berthed around at Grytviken. So we were going to hitch the trailer up to the back of the tractor, and

they would all sit on the trailer and we would drive then round to save them walking. The bosun was getting a bit agitated because the ship wanted to sail but these blokes still wanted to carry on drinking. So there were a few arguments, and then fish started flying. This bosun was a big bloke and he just whacked them: dragged them outside and whacked them, threw them on the trailer. Went back in, got another one, whacked him, threw him on the trailer. Then there were about half a dozen; they were zonked out. So then we took them back round to the ship. They loaded the drunks and the unconscious ones back on the ship and they sailed off the next day – well a few hours later. That was quite impressive, watching this bosun do this. They were good. We used to swap them. The fishing vessels, they used to give us tins and tins of fish. They would call it caviar but when we opened it, it looked like cod steaks. It wasn't caviar. But they would offer us caviar in exchange for a bottle of whisky. When we opened it, it was cod steaks.

Track 11 [0:51:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *You did get out into the field a fair bit, didn't you? I think you took every opportunity you could get to go out.*

Track 11 [0:51:46] Alan McManus: Every opportunity I could get, yes.

Track 11 [0:51:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *With either dog sledges or skidoos.*

Track 11 [0:51:49] Alan McManus: Yes. That was when I was at Adelaide. Fortunately I had a very good year, that 1975. Dog Holden was there as a GA and I went out with him several times and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Track 11 [0:52:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were in the cross-over time between dogs and skidoos. You must have got caught up in the debate about which was best.*

Track 11 [0:52:10] Alan McManus: Yes, oh yes. '75 at Adelaide. So they had shut Stonington and culled the dogs 1974/75 summer. So we had the four remaining teams at Adelaide that winter. It was the first time I had been on a base with dogs permanently there. Safe to say that all the GAs were dog men, so the argument was always in favour of dogs. But they were good. They knew they had to work with the skidoos, so they tried to work out the best and safest way of doing it, for their own safety and the scientists' safety. But they would always be dog men. There is no way you can convert from being a dog man to a skidoo man.

Track 11 [0:53:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you have an early brush with the skidoos, yourself?*

Track 11 [0:53:04] Alan McManus: Not then, because I went out with Dog, with the dogs, and I was then a committed dog man.

Track 11 [0:53:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was there a 24-day trip with Dog Holden?*

Track 11 [0:53:19] Alan McManus: Yes. That was my first major... I remember going out with Brian Sheldon and Tony Lipscomb before Midwinter. We went up on the Island. It was my training, introduction to dog sledging. And then after Midwinter, August/ September time, I went out with Dog. We went all the way from Adelaide

around to Rothera, across the Square Peninsula, all around. That was a thoroughly enjoyable trip.

Track 11 [0:53:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *It all went smoothly?*

Track 11 [0:53:52] Alan McManus: Yes, Apart from the first day out, being a complete novice, I lost my glove, lost my mitts. So Dog had to stop the sledge. We were going along and we were in pretty deep soft, heavy snow. It was the second day. We had gone out the first day, camped that night, got up the second day, started going off again. And it was heavy going. The weather wasn't very good but it was deep soft snow. I think we had gone about three or four miles. Suddenly I said 'Sorry, Dog. I am the complete novice. I have lost my gloves.' Somehow they had dropped off. They had gone, and Dog had to stop, unload the sledge, turn round and go back until he found them, and then come back again. So I wasn't very popular. He was good about it; didn't swear at me, but you could tell he was obviously a bit pissed off though.

Track 12 [0:54:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you ever fear for your life down there, at all? Was there anything which made you think perhaps your days were numbered – or minutes were numbered?*

Track 12 [0:55:01] Alan McManus: Nothing immediately... There were a couple of times when I thought 'I'm pushing my luck here.'

Track 12 [0:55:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Such as?*

Track 12 [0:55:10] Alan McManus: One time – it would have been '77/'78 summer – we had just had the winter at Rothera, building Rothera main base, and the previous summer we had shut down Adelaide base and evacuated it. But they had left the generators there in the generator shed. For some reason, Cambridge wanted one of the generators taken out of the shed, taken down to the jetty, and the ship would pick it up later on in the year. So it would have been Dave Fletcher, who was the base commander, operations manager at the time, said to me (because my replacement cook had flown in for the summer), he said 'Would you mind taking a couple of guys round to Adelaide from Rothera, and getting the generator out and down on the jetty?' I jumped at the chance to get out. This was by skidoo. So three of us went round there. It was an uneventful trip. We spent a week at Adelaide, got the generator out, got it down on the jetty, and just left it there for the ship to pick up, and came back. And coming back, coming down the Shambles Glacier. Obviously at that time (we were now into January) it was about the worst possible time to travel on there. Bridges were weak, bridges were broken, it was warm, hadn't thawed. And picking our way down there, with me being in the lead, as the supposedly experienced person, there were a few times there when I was crossing myself and praying that I was doing the right thing. That was probably about the worst one.

Track 12 [0:56:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *But you were OK?*

Track 12 [0:57:00] Alan McManus: We were OK; no problems. We got through.

Track 12 [0:57:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *We've only got a couple of minutes left, Mac, and I just wanted to ask you about Ranulph Fiennes, and the Exploration Logistics company which you formed. What's the story there?*

Track 12 [0:57:12] Alan McManus: Ran Fiennes was doing his Transglobe, in 1980, and he was at Sanae, the South African base. I was at Rothera in that winter and we were regularly chatting to each other over the radio, and Flo Howell, who eventually went to work for Ran, was radio operator at the time. We were generally chatting, throughout the winter. So we got to know them quite well. When I came back, I was in Bristol, and Mike Jaques, who I wintered with, he had come up with the idea of setting up Exploration Logistics, a support company for field operations. But then, I think it must have been about '83, no '84, we were in the process of setting the company up. Ran Fiennes came through Bristol, and was giving one of his talks on Transglobe, trying to raise money. We thought 'Great, we will go and introduce ourselves.' because we were based in Bristol. So we went, and introduced ourselves to him after the lecture. We listened to his lecture and introduced ourselves. 'Oh, great, fantastic. Brilliant. Nice to meet you. Absolutely great. I would buy you a drink, but I'm skint. You couldn't lend me a fiver, could you?' So Mike lent him a fiver, and we never got it back. But it sounds, from what we have heard, that it's typical Ran Fiennes. He's never got any money on him. He's always bumming money of everybody else, but he's a nice bloke. He's a good guy.

Track 12 [0:58:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what happened about Exploration Logistics? Did that actually happen?*

Track 12 [0:58:49] Alan McManus: Oh yes. Exploration Logistics. Mike and I, when we got back. Mike was doing this... to earn a living, was doing this management training, team building, based on Outward Bound courses, this sort of thing. He was doing that freelance, and he was based in Bristol and I was still living in Bristol. He had a contract with Rolls Royce in Bristol. He contacted me and said 'Can you give me a hand over the weekend, help me run these courses?' So we did. We were chatting. We were both thinking more or less along the same lines. We were in our mid- to late thirties. What were we going to do for the rest of our lives? I decided then that I wasn't going back down South again. I wasn't particularly keen on returning to full-time commercial catering, but I had no other qualifications or anything. So after a while, Mike came up with this idea: 'Why don't we set ourselves up as our own company, and offer field support, because that is what we know? Both of us know that. Offer support services to commercial companies: oil, gas, mining, construction; people who work in remote far-off places.' So we did. We set it all up, got people interested, and ended up with five investors in the end; five directors of the company, and in 1986 we started the company off. Our first year's turnover was five thousand pounds, in a year. So we were desperately short of cash, but we got some more money together. I mortgaged my house up to the hilt, and the other directors did that, and we slowly started plugging away. It's a typical Catch-22 situation. 'What do we want to give you the work for? You've got no experience.' You don't get the experience unless you get the work. But we plugged away and we eventually started getting the contracts in, and I ended up, on my side of it, running field camps. One was for the oil industry, construction companies in Gabon (West Africa), running the workers' construction camps out in the jungle. I ended up two years up in Alaska, running a field camp on behalf of an Eskimo corporation, and Eskimo village up on the North

Slope which was fantastic. And slowly you built the company up, over various things. It ended up in the mid-nineties, we were getting so much work in, the company was getting so big, that I ended up as a director. I had to go into the office and become an office-based administrator, which is something I did not like one little bit. I stuck it out, and the company grew and grew, but in 2001 I was just thinking ‘This isn’t for me. I have had enough.’ I was sat in front of the computer all day long, just shifting paperwork around. I had had enough so we came to an agreement, with myself and the other directors, and they bought me out, and in 2001 I retired. Fortunately the company had grown enough by then that the buyout of my shares left me with enough money to be reasonably comfortable for the rest of my life. And the company goes on from strength to strength. I think last year the entire group, the company’s turnover was something in the region of twenty one million quid. If I had stayed there I would still be a lot richer, but I would be bored out of my skull. I would not be happy.

Track 13 [1:02:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *You have travelled a great deal. How does the Antarctic rate, as an episode in your life?*

Track 13 [1:02:52] Alan McManus: A very big one, a very very big one. There’s no doubt about it. It gave me the skills and the attitude to conduct my life and survive in all the other places I have been to: Far-eastern Russia, Siberia, Laos and Cambodia, Africa, South Africa, Alaska. If it hadn’t been for the Antarctic, then I wouldn’t have the, I suppose mental capacity and strength to be able to go and work in these places, or the desire to go and work in these places, and the love of working in wild and remote areas. Yes, it was a big influence. Those first two years in Antarctica were a big influence on my life, there’s no doubt about it. It made me what I am and what’s happened to me for the rest of my life, totally.

Track 13 [1:03:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *In what way?*

Track 13 [1:03:45] Alan McManus: Well, if it hadn’t been for the Antarctic, if I hadn’t got that job in the Antarctic. Say BP, the cook on the oil tanker; they didn’t bother writing back to me.

Track 13 [1:03:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *What I meant was, how has it changed you?*

Track 13 [1:03:58] Alan McManus: It gave me a much broader, more fair outlook on life and people. Not everybody is perfect, but most people, underneath, are pretty good. And if you put them in extreme situations, nine times out of ten you bring the best out of them.

Track 13 [1:04:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *And the Antarctic brought the best out of you?*

Track 13 [1:04:28] Alan McManus: I like to think so.

Track 13 [1:04:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *Alan, thank you.*

Track 13 [1:04:31] Alan McManus: No problem!

Track 13 [1:04:33] ENDS