

**JOHN SMITH AND JOHN THORNE**

Edited transcript of an interview of John Smith and John Thorne recorded at the BAS Club reunion, Cardiff by Chris Eldon Lee on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2010  
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**AD6\_24\_1\_81\_1 Smith\_John\_&\_Thorne\_John Part 1**

[Part 1 00:00:00]

Lee: This is John Smith and John Thorne recorded at the BAS Club reunion, Cardiff by Chris Eldon Lee on the 13th June 2010. John Smith and John Thorne:

Smith: John Smith 03 of March 1934

[Part 1 00:00:21]

Lee: And you were born in ?

Smith: Blackheath

[Part 1 00:00:24]

Lee: And we're here today, if I might, to talk about your time at Detaile which is just the winter of '57-'58 is that right?

Smith: That's right, yes.

[Part 1 00:00:34]

Lee: Can you give me a little thumbnail sketch of the base you arrived at, what was it like?

Smith: It was so different, I had been at Deception Island for the year before that and when I first came down we came down via the Falklands then up to South Georgia, seeing the wonders of the landscape there, and then going down to Signy and of course seeing Coronation Island and that's what it was all about and seeing the, as I say, the incredible view of Coronation. Then we went over to Hope Bay and I thought ' This is marvellous' and then of course I knew I was going to Deception but I didn't really know much about Deception and when we went in on a very grey day into Deception seeing the volcanic ash, it was a sad sight but of course the magic of the place became very evident in our year there.

[Part 1 00:02:09]

Thorne: John Thorne, born 12<sup>th</sup> November 1928, born in Thornton Heath in Surrey, from there moved up via Streatham, Brixton, Stockwell, through the war, sitting in the Blitz and things before being evacuated up to Lancashire, came back down from there, [*inaudible*] flying into London at that time and I joined the Army about a fortnight after VE Day. I joined the Indian Army. I spent just over twelve months at Caterham barracks on all the basic training then went to OCTU down at Maresfield and three days before I was commissioned the Indian Army ceased to exist because Mountbatten divided India and Pakistan, so from there I was transferred to the Queen's Royal

Regiment and then moved out to Egypt, they were not in Egypt so they offered me the choice of staying in the Canal Zone with the Royal Fusiliers, going to Palestine with the Palestine Police or going to East Africa. I said East Africa instantly I think and they said 'Right , that's the Somalia Gendarmerie' and I went to the Somalia Gendarmerie as a Second Lieutenant with a native infantry company up on the Ethiopian border doing long distance foot patrols protecting the border, dealing with Shifta who were coming in raiding cattle and stuff and the final thing we did there was to war reparations and we rounded up 750 camels and a vast amount of money, I've never seen so much money, which was then divided up among the helpful tribes people, people who had helped us during the campaign there. Came back down from there and back to U.K. and was demobbed.

[ Part 1. 00:03:50]

Lee: How did you end up in FIDS then?

Thorne: How did I end up. Well coming back my big thing then was to go into road haulage on what was to be the Capetown to Cairo road, which again was one of these things just as they got it started and the groundnut scheme was going under way, they decided that aircraft could fly up and down to Capetown far quicker than a lorry going up and down a road so the road never started. I was going through college at that time as a mechanical engineer working in a garage part time and weekends and holidays and started rowing, started rowing in Thames skiffs, doing all sorts of things, going off walking in the Lakes, climbing, doing some climbing courses and then got a job with Sir George Godfrey who made the turbo compressors, the turbine and compressor people for many years, but my job was the test engineer on the air conditioning units for the big aircraft, the passenger aircraft and the V bomber fleet, so I was reading met instruments all day long.

[Part 1 00:05:09]

My brother -in -law went to Norway with British Schools Exploring Society as the first non service leader, was a teacher, and for many years he did, led a Millfield expedition to Norway and I went with him as an assistant and about a year after that I was at work , my rigger came in said ' There's a job for you in the paper today' . It was the old News Chronicle and we found a copy in somewhere, well I think in one of the power houses in the factory because we had three power stations and got the paper, went up to the office, told the girl to stop doing any of this other work we were on, write a letter and I applied for the job as a General Assistant/Mountaineer, General Assistant / Handyman and an Ionospheric Assistant but I'm sorry I don't know what it is.

[Part 1. 00:06:07]

Lee: So you applied for three jobs in fact?

Thorne: So I applied for all three jobs.

Lee: And which one did you get?

[ Part 1 00:06:11 ]

Thorne: I didn't get any of them. I was interviewed by Frank Elliot and I must admit I don't think there was anyone else there, I can't remember anyone else being there other than Frank and as we talked he said 'Well the work you're doing is all the instruments associated with met 'and it is, I was reading all the instruments every few minutes. So he said 'Answer is, go to Stanmore, do a short

course, become a meteorologist for met. assistant.' Nothing happened, didn't hear anything then and that was about June or July, didn't hear anything until about October and I 'phoned up and they said there's a signal on the way to you, a telegram on the way to you and that night I got it. A three page telegram which was a contract to go as a Met. observer with FIDS, sailing on the 12th November, my birthday, a very distinctive day for Antarctic stuff that is by the way, and I was to go as a fully trained Met. observer. Another page to answer the contract on and sign the details which I did and Bingo, got on board the *Andes* on the 12<sup>th</sup> September, er 12<sup>th</sup> November, anniversary of the day they found Scott, Wilson and Bowers and the anniversary of the day Ross sailed from Tasmania, seen off by Fitzroy.

[Part 1 00:07:40 ]

Lee: We are here today to talk about your time at Detaille the two of you, John Thorne and John Smith but you arrived first, you arrived there, you were part of the...

Thorne: I'm of the original setup.

[Part 1 00:07:51]

Lee: Yes. So when you sailed in for the very first time, describe the scene you saw.

Thorne: Well we had about three days going up and down and we'd obviously been out in Martha Strait because we'd crossed the circle twice and that we could only have done by going out that far North Adelaide way. We looked at all sorts of things but everywhere was restricted, they could not spot a landing at any point and we came in onto Detaille, a series of snowy covered humps fairly low down in the water, Andressen quite a bit higher on one side, Liard out the other side, much higher but it looked as though you could get a landing and a party went ashore and I know it included Tom Murphy who was our base leader /surveyor but I'm not sure who the others were, there were ship's officers and people to look at the landing site and came back and said ' Yes, it goes, it's alright, there's room to put a building, there is room to land, there is ...' etc, etc but we then had the usual Base W weather, 36 hours waiting for the wind to stop. And then we started unloading 23rd Feb, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, yes.

[ Part 1 00:09:12 ]

Lee: In 50 ?

Thorne: In 56

[Part 1 00:09:16]

Lee: There was some debate as to where to put the hut wasn't there?

Thorne: There was a certain amount of debate about it but I really think, when you look at that place, that island, if you were going to use that island that was really the one site because it was the site that at that point was fairly clear of snow so you could see the rock base where you would put your gear and all things of that kind.

[Part 1 00:09:43]

Lee: What sort of..what sort of hut did you erect?

Thorne: Bolton and Paul prefab, so the concrete piers went in then you put down your floor bearers, into the floor bearers you put your hardboard and then your insulation layer and then two layers of tongue and groove boarding and on that you erected the framework and worked up boarding it and going.

[ Part 1 00:10:12]

Lee: So John Smith, when you arrived a year later what was before your eyes when you sailed into the bay?

Smith: A very attractive proposition, with the hut completed and a very comfortable base indeed and so it was, yes it was, all the work had been done. I can't really remember having to do anything really as far as the hut was concerned, it was very shortly getting out in the field so basically all that work had been done and of course they'd done already a lot of sledging so that year was an incredibly effective year although they had problems but Oh yes it was a welcoming sight. Particularly after in some ways Deception, but Deception was very good in the end but it was good to go down the whole of the peninsula and then arrive at W, yes.

[Part 1 00:11:08]

Lee: How sophisticated was the met equipment?

Smith: Sorry?

Lee: How sophisticated was the met equipment by then ?

Smith: It was all in place, the er we star.. well I can't remember if I went straight on met when I got there because I don't think I was there very long before we went over to the mainland but everything was there, the met tower was there, the anemometer and the screen of course, Stevenson screen all set up and the met room inside with the barograph and the ... everything was there, all in place, all done.

Thorne: We'd actually started doing met ops in the last day of June ready for the International Geophysical Year.

[Part 1 00:11:53]

Lee: So was Detaille designed to cover the IGY ?

Thorne: I think it, I think if you look at the history it really was, it was one of the many in fill places to build up this network of stations, that it was put in for met, surveying and geology of that area because the surveying of that area was very vague.

[Part 1 00:12:16]

Lee: And you did some surveying the first year ?

Thorne: We did some. They went up as far as Cape Rey on the sea ice, the surveyors having a look to see if there was any way they could get up onto the plateau from there. They came back and Tom Miller... Ron Miller, Tom, no not Tom, Tom stayed I think, Mike Orford and Hedley Wright I think were the three who went over and found a way up from what is now, was the Orford Cliff rescue hut, refuge hut, over the top and down onto the glacier and you could see it looked as though he'd found the glacier. They came back from that, changed party, so it was Mike Orford, Tom Murphy, the two surveyors, and Ron Miller as the mountaineer who then went back and pushed their way right up onto the plateau on what is now the Murphy Glacier.

[ Part 1 00:13:17 ]

Lee: So part of your brief was to do the surveying.

Thorne: That was to get the surveying in by geographical and the geologist, Hedley Wright, interesting character, he did a certain amount on that sort of mainland cliff, he then went round a part of the bottom, south end, of the fjord and had a fairly rough time and then I went out with him to Hanusse Bay and the history then comes that I never got back from that one until *HMS Protector* arrived with its helicopter.

[ Part 1 00:13:55]

Lee: Well let's talk about that now, we'll come back to John Smith in another few minutes time. Tell me about this story about Hanusse Bay and then what happened.

Thorne: We went out to Hanusse Bay, Hedley Wright and myself, end of September, I think that's right, quick check, yes, we went out on the 25th September and we went to Roux Island, crossed into Hanusse Bay to the Bennett Islands, didn't get much further, conditions were absolutely atrocious, deep, wet snow lay up after lay up after lay up, lots of wind but we then plodded across not as far as the most westerly of the Bennetts and went south down and I got the channel names wrong because we didn't have them on.. given them names on the original map, the Tickle Channel and Gunnel Channel but we went down Tickle Channel as far as what is now the Gullet, known as the Gullet and where we ran into broken ice and sea water.

[Part 1 00:15:12]

Thorne: We came up, back up from there following the coastline up, had a long lay up, a three day lay up but luckily got a big seal so we fed all the dogs because poor old Yap, who was the great lead dog, had cracked up completely, he only had these little short legs and real deep wet snow, he couldn't cope and three days of that and then we moved on and old Yap went back into the lead, he said I'm the lead dog I'm going back and we romped along with the dogs absolutely marvellous after this big blow. Worked our way back, decided that instead of going north round Roux Island we would go through the channel between Roux and the Arrowsmith Peninsula. So we went past the points there and the point which now bears my name. Got a geological sample from there. As we went through the channel far end we were being iced up, we were on a compass course just pushing round. As we got through, we started crossing cracks in the ice and then it was absolutely black.

[Part 1 00:16:24]

Thorne: I can still see this black wall in front of us and as we got closer to it we realised it was just a big big sea running out in front of us, very rough, very choppy and we forked tight round close to Roux Island and ran up an ice ramp to where we had got a food depot. That night it blew up 80 odd knots and the ice ramp disappeared. Three days later the dinghy came over with Ron Miller and Dave Moore, Dave Moore the radio operator. They took two of the dogs, started off back, they'd come over in absolute flat calm, within, they only stayed with us twenty minutes, thirty minutes at the most, set off back, as they poked their nose out and got out into the wind there it was, the wind was back blowing hard. They got swamped, both of them, well Ron Miller quotes it as the worst half hour of his life, Dave Moore said 'I owe my life to Ron on that day ' and I've got that in their letters to me but they came back and got back to us in a pretty shaken state. Luckily, Tom Murphy insisted on them taking survival kit so they had a mountain tent and sleeping bags and they moved in and camped.

[Part 1 00:17:55]

Thorne: The pack started to consolidate at the beginning of November and on about, I think it was somewhere, I might have it, yea, on the 9th of November, Hedley and Ron actually ski'd back, Ron used my skis and Hedley had his, and they ski'd back to base but they signalled to us not to attempt it because the dogs would have straight lined it as soon as they heard the dogs and would have gone straight through all the breaking stuff. So we stayed and they told us there was a ship coming. In fact we heard Gene, Gene Donnelly, the operator at Y talking to his party and he told Moore that our base couldn't get through to us so they used to signal us with an Aldis lamp, and the helicopter came in on the 10th and that is one of those great classics.

[ Part 1 00:18:58 ]

Lee When you got back to base was there any discussion about what happened, what went wrong and how it could be avoided again?

Thorne: I think, without a doubt, we all looked at it very hard and we came to the conclusion that what we said to do with the dinghy as a back up emergency was perfectly good play but I don't think we had got used to the vagaries of the weather in Lallemand Fjord.

[Part 1 00:19:25 ]

Lee: Mmm O.K. When you arrived John you had a few little problems with Denis Goldring didn't you ?

[Part 1 00:19:27]

Smith: That was a pickle a lot later on because we went over to the mainland, to the refuge and this was with Denis Goldring. What we.. basically there were four of us there, Jim Madell, Angus Erskine and of course Denis and myself and to begin with it was a matter of training dogs before.. Angus wanted to take a film, make a film of training dogs which he then did. But the idea was to, of course, do the survey and to go up to the plateau and to find any rock exposure for Denis and, I suppose, for.. how long were we there, for 3 or 4 months on the mainland and we established a baseline, Jim and Angus established a baseline for the triangulation, the map making in that area and then of course going to various peaks and prominent points round about to do the round of angles to create the map as they did in those days, times have changed somewhat these days, but we had like you did, a lot of

very bad weather, a lot of lying up and I think, at that time, people didn't really realise the state of ice.

[Part 1 00:21:03]

Smith: We hadn't enough records of what was likely to happen and the vicissitudes of, of course, Marguerite Bay and with us on two occasions, certainly with yours that was a terrible occasion, we didn't realise, you know, the potential for the break up that obviously happened. But anyway we sledged up to the plateau and relayed a lot of stuff, I don't know how many times we sort of had to go backwards and forwards to get up to the top there but we did eventually get up there and established quite a big depot right up on the top of the Avery Plateau and then the idea was for Angus and Jim to go south and Denis and myself were then to, again, go to any rock exposures up there, which.. we had one perfect day. On the route up there, just before we got to the plateau, we had temperatures of minus 29, which was quite cool, but on that day, when we split up after establishing the depot, Denis and I went a bit to the north and found one or two rock exposures there by Castle Peak and thought what a marvellous, marvellous time that was, it was absolutely *[inaudible]* and you could look right down the Murphy Glacier, you could see Adelaide in the distance, quite something.

[Part 1 00:22:32]

Smith: But that night things changed somewhat, it was a howler and it blew solidly for seven days and we were getting a bit worried because, although we had depots laid down below us, we were running out of man food and dog food. We hadn't expected quite so long lie up and of course we had the depot not too far away up on top and we had one down below but during the blizzard, and Angus records that time as being one of the worst experiences of his life as far as Polar exploration went, because he was on the British North Greenland Expedition, what he hadn't catered for, hadn't experienced, was the incredible snow accumulation that happened. So after seven days, oh that's right, one of the dogs pupped and of course all were dead, that was a very sad happening but Denis and I, during that time, I think we were playing Battleships, remember that game?

Thorne: Yes, I've got a note of you playing Battleships

[Part 1 00:23:46]

Smith: And reading Dickens, it was quite incredible. Anyway, fortunately the wind abated and we saw the moon and that was the time we knew we could get moving so we broke camp early and then set down the glacier but we hadn't catered for the deep snow and even though we were going down a steep slope the dogs couldn't, they disappeared under the snow and so I had to go ahead breaking some sort of trail, even with skis it was up to my knees. It was an absolutely incredible accumulation and we became worried because the days were getting quite short and we knew it was quite a way to go, we knew where it was or almost roughly where it was, and it then was getting dark and it was a situation which you had to do something.

[Part 1 00:24:46]

Smith: We couldn't have gone on with all the sledge load we had, we were going far too slow, we just couldn't get to the point where we knew the depot was and so what was the only thing to do in this situation is to quickly put the tent up and obviously everything upright and simply go ahead with the dogs, light loaded to get the stuff from the depot. When we got down to where the depot should be and saw nothing and of course it's getting dark. So I said to Denis the only thing we can do is to, grid, go across the area and we just couldn't see anything and then I saw the top of the titanium pole sticking out that much, about an inch of pole so we... I can't remember the sequence of events here exactly but what we did, we managed to get some dog food out and then we thought we've got to get back to the

camp and we started to go back and the wind got up and of course with that soft snow just couldn't see a thing and so the only thing to do in that situation as far as we were concerned was to, basically, stay there. At least we had food and we could dig a snow hole and we dug a snow hole, it was very comfortable in there, and then we suddenly realised, just because all the drift was happening, we were getting blocked in and that wouldn't work.

[Part 1 00:26:20]

Smith: So we thought well the only thing to do, because it wasn't too low a temperature, we thought well we'll just have a hole each alongside each other and we would simply count right through the night and if he stopped counting I then carried on but if he didn't you woke the other one up and so this was the pattern of the night. But we had dog food to eat, there was man food there as well but we couldn't get to it at that time. The second night we got to it but, we had two nights there, the second night we had a much better system, we got skis across and we, I can't remember what we put over but we, we were better off but we couldn't still make the journey up to the camp site but then it all abated and we got back to the camp and it was alright but of course you remember the force of the wind that had done this deed to us.

[Part 1 00:27:25 ]

Thorne: I was recording here, I'd been on the night met., of the first night which was, according to me, was I think was the 25th May, that's right 25<sup>th</sup> - 26th May, and I have recorded very high wind speeds going up. In the day, when Bill McDowell took over as met. that day, we had the fantastic weather, southerly gale, northerly hurricane with gusts to 100 mile...100 knots, I shouldn't have said miles an hour, then a southerly gale with gusts up to 60 knots, overcast or cloudy showers, snow showers, drift, but the barometer fell 170 points in three hours and then rose 102 in three hours and I got up at 1 o'clock after being woken by Mac telling me the stores outside were all being blown away and I went out and re-stacked them after lunch and my comment was 'Oh it's only a gale' a typical, fairly typical. But what was interesting was when I look at them, I have got Denis' notes of what happened to the two of them up on the top, we I think were in a genuine cyclone but ours was funnelled because of the shape of the glacier, of the fjord, whereas they up on the glacier were really on the outskirts and getting this incredible dump of snow, they were really getting it and I know from John Killingbeck, working out on Adelaide, the opposite way, they often got an accumulation of similar depths over that site so it looks as though this was the dump on the edge of the cyclone's rotation.

[Part 1 00:29:19 ]

Lee: So whilst John Smith and Denis were in their snow holes, was there anything you, John Thorne on the base....

Thorne: Had no idea, we had no idea where they were.

Lee: No radio communication.?

Thorne: No radio communication.

[Part 1 00:29:31]

Lee: No radio ?



Thorne: We had 68 sets, ex army man packs, which did not really work very well the first year but I cannot understand by the end of the second year they were working so marvellously I don't know how we managed to have them working so well as it were. We did get strange signals with them later on. But I think on this sort of thing we knew that they were having a rough time but there absolutely nothing that we could do.

[Part 1 00:30:02 ]

Smith: Going back over this experience, there was just no way you could get any further. Now, when you got a good snow surface the wind would blow and you got it crusted up and you can travel far and fast and we could have got down that particular glacier in a day but when you've got that condition, and we had days when we had soft snow and you could make maybe a quarter of a mile, half a mile and yet other days you could do thirty and that was the huge difference that, you know, happens with that sort weather.

[Part 1 00:30:45]

Thorne: This was really very similar to what we had had over in Hanusse Bay the year before. Incredible snow dumps and we made, several days, we made a quarter of a mile, half a mile for a whole day's hard, really hard slog sledging so this was one of the problems. But one thing we, if we go back just a little bit because this relates to what happened to Detaille. On the 1st of Jan '56 we were the first base that Prince Phillip visited and he came in with the Governor and the American equerry and things, we had the first game of tennis played in the Antarctic between Raymond Priestley and the American observer.

[Part 1 00:31:34 ]

Smith: Was he still well after the meal I prepared for them.?

Thorne: Well no, they had the meal after us, they went up to you afterwards, we were 1st of Jan.

Smith: Oh I see.

[Part 1 00:31:47]

Lee: The Britannia went into Deception after Detaille didn't she?

Thorne: Yes, that's right.

Lee: And that's where you prepared this rather strange meal John wasn't it, you might want to elaborate on *[inaudible]*.

[Part 1 00:31:56 ]

Smith: Well, I thought it was only a natural thing to do to sort of feed the people with the local fodder and so I thought when I...I was on... it was my turn on cook that particular week at Deception and so I thought 'Oh dear, what do I do' so I thought, well we've got to get, I went out and got a seal and penguin eggs and I thought that's what I'm going to do for the main meal. And that I did and when asked whether they would like steak and kidney pie or whether you would like seal steak and seal liver

and penguin omelette they all, except one I think, chose the, chose the local and that was an entertaining time.

[Part 1 00:32:46]

Lee: *[inaudible]* the penguins themselves

Smith: Not the penguins, no we tried penguin on occasions but really you needed a lot of curry and a lot of this and that to really somehow take away from the certain flavour of penguin which I didn't appreciate, I don't know about you John.

Thorne: I thought it was quite *[inaudible]* I had roast penguin on many occasions or fried it, yes.

Smith: But after, but after the meal I don't know the consequence of that, but we had a marvellous time on board Britannia because they then invited us on board, the Duke invited us on board, we had an incredible evening on there. In the wee small hours we were taken back ashore, but they put a film on for us and in the morning of course, the Duke, from his own pantry, sent a whole lot of fresh food ashore, whether that was the consequence of what he saw we had to have I don't know.

[ Part 1 00:33:43 ]

Lee: What happened at Detaille?

Thorne: At Detaille no. I was just in sledging gear with tent up and things to display our equipment. Prince Phillip went up, had a good look at the puppies that we had at that time and he then went up to the penguin rookery up at the beacon. We then came back in the hut for just a cup of tea and a biscuit or cakes or something of that kind.

Smith: He was incredibly interested in everything there.

Thorne: Oh, absolutely, it was a fascinating... in fact someone like Sir Raymond Priestley there was well, wonderful, with all his experience right back to the days of Scott linking it all together, absolutely it was a superb day.

Smith: And at Deception he went over to FIDASE, the aerial survey, and of course was very interested in what they had achieved with the flying at that time with the aerial photography, he showed a very keen interest in what was happening.

**End of [Part 1 00:34:39]**

**AD6\_24\_1\_81\_1 Smith\_John\_&\_Thorne\_John Part 2**

**[Part 2 00:00:00]**

Lee: Back to Detaille anyway, how did Detaille get it's name?

Thorne: Right, when we landed on it, so far as we knew it was unnamed and we landed on the first Tuesday in Lent so it was named Lent Island and in fact we moved into the hut on Easter Sunday, most of us, and we had our first meal in the hut on Easter Sunday so it was appropriate sort of name to use for that building period. When we got settled in and doing things, now I cannot remember us having having a copy of Charcot's book on base but Eric Salmon, somehow or the other, got the information, now whether he did it by radio with one of the other bases, because he'd served at several bases, but he found out that Charcot had actually named it and he'd named it as Detaille Islet, Islet not Island, and I think Islet is a correct name for it in many ways because it is a cluster and it was named after Monsieur Detaille who was a Frenchman in Punta Arenas who helped sponsor his expedition and Jason was the manager of the whaling ship in Deception.

[Part 2 00:01:24 ]

Smith: Petra last night made the point, she said " It isn't *Detail* it is Detaille and that is the correct pronunciation but I'm afraid I will still call it *Detail*, I'm sure you will.

Thorne: I think it's Anglicised.

[Part 2 00:01:41]

Lee: And the name of the hut, have BAS given that a name yet?

Thorne: Well this is one of these fascinating ones, BAS has never had this, but I have it written quite clearly in my diary, that Tom Murphy and Ron Miller carved a name board Charcot Lodge on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December '55 and I have checked with Ron Miller and he remembers doing it but doesn't know what happened to the name and I checked with Dave Moore and he knows that we named it, we certainly intended to call it that name but none of us have ever, have no knowledge, I've no knowledge what happened to that name board

[Part 2 00:02:21 ]

Smith: That's something I never knew anyway.

Thorne: No, it was something never came up in the second year, I don't think. I think if we'd put it on the hut people would have known.

Smith: Yes.

[Part 2 00:02:30 ]

Thorne: If I can just go through that little bit when John went out because they did exchange in the, sort of, the end of the first week of February and it just happened this morning that John and Ron Miller, well Ron said I don't think I've ever spoken to John, you know, John was coming in, Ron was

going out and they obviously had but very much in passing, but what happened then became critical and possibly why the base was shut down. The scow brought in a load of coal but on one of its trips bringing in a load of coal and other stores it was squashed by a piece of ice and capsized and then sunk. Now I can't remember whether they got it up as such or whether we just used the motor lifeboats from then on, we certainly used the motor lifeboats for unloading the rest of the gear but they lost something like 8 tons of coal and the result was coal stores were very short at the end of year three and there was no way could they bring coal in from the edge of the ice, and I think you recorded Denis telling you about this, so there was no way you could get that in to refuel it, the only option was to close the base without fuel. But we had that, with John and his party, the four of them, set off on the 1st March and you got back to us a few days before midwinter when we went over and collected them from the refuge when we had proved the ice was safe to travel. Angus and Jim got down to Base Y's refuge just before midwinter and they got back to us about three or four days after midwinter.

*[28<sup>th</sup> June ]*

[ Part 2 00:04:16 ]

Lee: You probably both served under Angus Erskine, what kind of chap was he John?

Smith: Oh, very able leader, he was an excellent base leader, I imagine partly from the experience he'd had in the north, yes he was very enthusiastic wasn't he John?

Thorne: Oh I found him just such a great guy the whole time.

Smith: He gave a lot of confidence, yes.

Thorne: So confident, we had so much confidence in what we were doing based on his experience because a bit later in the year again we had this odd situation when John and I, we came in, John came back and shortly after that they did, starting off in late August, the middle of August, we started going off and getting the survey stations built up, cairns built and things ready for the measurements, a big new base line, which we did and then they all shot off in different directions and John and I were left together on base to run it and we ran it for 28 days.

[Part 2 00:05:24 ]

Smith: That was doing met. night and day and we were doing it every three hours weren't we for IGY

Thorne: Every three hours all the whole time. So we were sort of shift on shift off feeding each other and whatever and we still talked to each other for a reasonably good relationship but then Denis went off with Ossie Connochie, the radio op. and they went up to go to Darbel Bay and they had been gone only a few days when we had a big gale and the ice broke up behind them. Then we got into the situation, we still had groups whizzing around in all directions but Jim Madell and Bill Mc Dowell set off to go up onto the plateau following the route that John and Co had done in the autumn which was the route that Ron Miller and Co had found the first year. I don't know what happened, I've never found out what happened, according to Henry Wyatt's notes, which I've got, they went up and went along the top and everything else but they couldn't have done from the time I know what they did, how many days that they came back in and nothing was ever said about what had happened but the result was, they obviously talked to Angus, Angus and Jim would have talked together, but it finished up then that Angus and I decided, it was Angus' decision, that we would become a rescue party and go up onto the plateau, north along the plateau, find a way down a glacier, out to the Darbel Islands and recover

them and that's what we did.

[Part 2 00:07:14 ]

Smith: Yes, when the ice first broke up we had a message from SecFids saying prepare the dinghy to go up to effect rescue or whatever.

Thorne: And we had a 12 foot pram dinghy.

Smith: And that was the katabatic winds piling in to the sea around there, it would have been, I mean yours was..theirs was a hazardous journey going over to you, to go up into Darbel Bay would have been, you know, absolutely impossible but...

[Part 2 00:07:46]

Thorne: The sort of local knowledge came in very late. So Angus and I went and we had the most incredible journey, it really was absolutely wonderful. We went up the glacier and almost at the point where John and Denis had been stuck in the snow hole we had a lay up there, temperatures down, certainly way down, probably minus 30 but with a forty knot wind which gives you a wind chill of about minus 90 and then we got through that, got up on the plateau and romped along the plateau as far as what was then called the West Balch glacier now known as the Erskine and we looked down this and Angus had seen some of the aerial photos from the days when he was at Deception and he looked down and reckoned it and we could see the Darbel Islands in front of us and it looked as though it would go so we went for it and we had a tremendous run down that glacier.

[Part 2 00:08:50]

Thorne: We had a long lay up in amongst a maze of crevasses 'til we could see what we were doing but once we were through that we went down until we hit what was mist or fog, fog actually the top of it, and we stopped in this fog and as we stopped there, all the dogs, which normally would just lie straight down, were all sitting up, ears pricked up and obviously excited by something and Angus and I picketed the dogs and we started to probe our way down what seemed a very steep slope, suddenly found ourselves down on sea ice with seals in front of us and so, from there we ran down the next day and got a seal and fed the dogs with seal. We went down, on the ice, went a few miles along, found what is now called Phantom Point, we called it Ghost Point because it loomed up out of the mist and then we went out to the Darbel Islands and found Ossie and Denis sitting in their tent, I'm not sure what they were waiting for they didn't have enough rations to last but they wouldn't eat pemmican, they were eating seal all the time there.

*[ Note. Message to SecFids W/162/57 states that there was a depot with two months supplies on the Darbel Islands ]*

[Part 2 00:09:58 ]

Smith: Just reflecting back to that time when that sea ice went out we had obviously no radio contact even though Ossie was the wireless operator. those days were so different and to have that feeling that, literally, they were lost because as far as we could see, the sea ice had broken right up to the Biscoe Islands and so your journey up there you didn't know until you were looking down into Darbel Bay that the ice was still there, that they were indeed there. Times have changed so much, but there was no

contact was there?

[Part 2 00:10:38 ]

Thorne: No, no contact.

Smith: Found them alive and well and well fed.

Thorne: We found them well, we brought them back, we did astro fixes to fix various bits, we climbed the north branch of the Erskine glacier coming out. I described it , I know, in my diary as sledge mountaineering with dogs because I actually had a mountaineering type belay on for the front of the dog team at one point to hold them to just keep them in position it was so steep. But we got out, we came along the plateau, Angus and I went on and climbed Castle Peak where Ossie and Denis.... but while we were up on that plateau Ossie got one of these 68 sets, officially the range is five miles, but with an aerial which he worked out all the harmonics on the aerial, being a good radio Op., and joined all the wires appropriately stuck on ski poles and he worked Port Stanley with this set from the top of the plateau on Morse key and told them what was doing so *[inaudible]* but then Ossie and Denis came down to the refuge hut to find the ice was broken up and no way they could get back. Angus and I did Castle Peak and a few other little bits then came back to the Murphy glacier and John said you could have got down it in a day, we came down it in a day. We just raced down there at a gallop most of the time, most impressive, beautiful and we were stuck then at the refuge and that was November and the ship got to us in February so we were in the garden shed for most of that time.

[ Part 2 00:12:18 ]

Lee: Is this the Orford Cliff you're talking about?

Thorne: The Orford Cliff rescue...refuge.

[Part 2 00:12:22]

Lee: Had you run out of food?

Thorne: We had food, we were running tight by the time the ship got to us, we were just starting to run a bit tight. We had food, dog food for only about another ten days.

[Part 2 00:12:35]

Lee: You see these near misses, for want of a better phrase, was there any ever... was there ever anything announced afterwards about what went wrong and what could be done about it, I mean Angus Erskine was *[inaudible]* at one or two bases, the base leaders leave notes for next year's team so I can't imagine he didn't hold some sort of inquest.

Thorne: Oh Angus, Angus certainly did it and Angus put in a recommendation they closed the base, it was too dangerous.

[Part 2 00:13:00]

Lee: Right. Do you think otherwise John, do you agree with that?

Smith: I suppose I do in a way, at that time it was a difficult situation. Just reflecting while they were at the refuge my question to them when they came back, did you have any problem with the waves that you can get there because there was one night when, or one day Denis and I were in... we'd been out two or three days before when the sea ice had formed and I'd taken soundings around the refuge while the ice was there and then of course it all broke up and so we knew we were going to have to wait a lot longer to get back to base. But during the day, just after the ice broke up we were in the refuge and there was a tremendous crash and I went to the door, opened the door and I was looking down at the area that I had sounded the day or two before through the ice and I could see the bottom and another wave coming in and I said Denis, hold on, and we had another great crash as the wave hit us but we were alright, the dogs were all obviously very wet and after that we took all our stuff up to the top and camped above the refuge because obviously it was a freak event, probably an iceberg turning turtle or calving. Some people said well it could have been activity from the Chilean earthquakes or something, I don't know but it was a worrying time and I didn't feel comfortable ever again in that refuge but you have no experience of that at all?

[ Part 2 00:14:54 ]

Thorne: We had one where we actually had a wave as a result of something capsizing, berg capsizing where the wave came up onto the rocks on which the hut was sitting and when the poor dogs got extremely wet and did not like having a bath where they were sitting but some moved on to a different spot but that was the only time we had it.

[Part 2 00:15:16 ]

Lee: Was Detaille a particularly exposed base, were you more open to the ocean than others?

Thorne: I think it was.... if you look at the normal construction geologically, historically fjords being cut, they tend to have a deep bit and then rise at the mouth of them to a set of shallows and I think this was it, we had Liard and Andressen on two sides and this hump which was probably, many would have said, was a moraine but in fact in our case it would be volcanic anyway making this shallow patch right in the entrance of the fjord but with the katabatic winds there, funneling down it comes down, especially the Roux side, it came down much more strongly on the Roux side than it did over on the Andressen side.

[ Part 2 00:16:04 ]

Lee: Did the hut vibrate ?

Thorne: It sung, the guy wires sang when it came to *[inaudible]*, certainly I know Ray Cooper, who was our diesel mech. in year one who was helping out on met. nights, he got blown away one night, I got blown away from the met. screen and at that time we had twenty dogs just south of the met. screen and I landed in amongst the dogs and sort of crawled until I recognised the dog and then knew where it was on the dog span and could then work my way back to crawl back to the hut.

[Part 2 00:16:42 ]

Lee: John Smith:

Smith: Well, I remember, I think I was on cook at the time, and Henry was doing experiments with the dogs and the, how, what's the best food for them and he was doing the trial where one set of dogs were having this new dog food called Nutrican, I think he also had a team with pemmican and then one being fed on seal meat. So he would go out and collect the faeces and be able to work out what was the most efficient sort of food. On this particular day it was blowing a howler again and Henry said ' I'm just going out to sort out the dogs' and he didn't come back in for some time and when he came back in it was an apparition because he was sort of all coated in ice and what he had done, there was a penguin approaching one of the spans of the dogs and of course that would interfere with his experiments with dog feeding and so he chased the penguin. And he chased the penguin, which went over the cliff and Henry followed, over the cliff into the water and very luckily got back but mm, did you see him when he came back?

[ Part 2 00:18:02 ]

Thorne: Yes, I've got this noted on my diary and I've also got Henry's notes of it happening as well but the thing that was lucky was Henry was a whitewater canoeist before he came south and so he'd canoed slaloms and canoed *[inaudible]* so was used to being into water suddenly which I think was a great help for him, he knew straight away if he didn't *[inaudible]* get out and there was a crack in the cliff at that point which he got into and scrambled out.

Smith: But did Henry made his own canoe down there, and on one occasion he was telling us about the way he could roll a canoe so we thought Well Henry, please do that for us and we went up onto the ice cliff and looked down at Henry down below and Henry O.K.? and so Henry rolled the canoe dutifully and I took a photograph, 'Didn't get that one Henry do you mind ' *[Laughter]* I think it was the third time he said 'That's enough' but oh he was a character.

[ Part 2 00:19:08 ]

Lee: Considering the amount of dogs you were working with obviously he wasn't *[inaudible]* you had quite a few at first and some were moved to Hope Bay, is that right?

Thorne: Well we took twenty...originally we had twenty dogs from Hope Bay.

[Part 2 00:19:21]

Lee: From Hope Bay?

Thorne: From Hope Bay we had twenty dogs and to that we bred on so on the first year there were just nine members of one team which were boys and a scraggy team which was Hedley Wright's team. By the time Angus got there we had got quite a lot more dogs bred and we had got some teams and we, literally they were called at that time, the Boys and the Girls. Well the Girls name developed and became the Ladies and is one of the names of the teams commemorated on the memorial and the other one in year three became.....



Smith: Counties, The Counties.

Thorne: The Counties, which Jim Madell ran, with Beds and Herts in it and the other one I can't quite...

[Part 2 00:20:12 ]

Smith: I'm not quite sure which county Jakie would come under within the Counties team but never mind.

Thorne: We had odd ones like that but at least there was a name that came up as The Counties.

[Part 2 00:20:20]

Lee: And who was Bodger?

Thorne: Bodger, there were three brothers from Hope Bay, Bodger, Flook and Rufus, Daily Mail cartoon, back page of the Daily Mail for many, many years and these three dogs and Rufus was a big, white, like a sheep, real shaggy coated husky, weighed 140 pounds and he was the lead dog of that group and he was lost in a crevasse accident with Tom and Ron and Mike Orford when they were going up the Murphy glacier the first time. They went down a crevasse, they got him out, they were trying to get the other dogs out and he got loose and fell down with that and he couldn't be saved and that was it and then Bodger became the lead dog and what a superb dog.

[Part 2 00:12:13 ]

Smith: Terrible dog!

Thorne: Absolutely.

[Part 2 00:21:14]

Lee: Why so John, John Smith:

Smith: Well just he had so much character, I mean John knows more about it than me but certainly we sledged obviously, with Bodger, up in our time there but he was just a magnificent dog and mmm... but the tales you have to tell of him sensing a crevasse for example.

Thorne: When we were going down the Erskine glacier, we were going down and it was pretty poor, very poor visibility really and we were trying to work out what to do and Bodger was going down quite happily and suddenly he jinked right and then left and jumped and got... we went across a very wide open crack and as soon as he got to the other side and his team was behind him he just lay down. And he stayed there and we looked at each other having crossed this very wide gap and sort of very carefully got the ice chisel to start probing around. And then there was another crevasse just in front of him [*inaudible*], in fact we camped on an isolated block for that time. But then again when we were doing some filming on the way towards survey out from the refuge in November we were running along the top out towards, I think, Alpha Nunatak one of those bits [*inaudible*] and we were going there and we got amongst, again, one or two crevasses and Bodger just went down. We looked at each

other and said ‘Why has he stopped?’ and we’d go forward and there you would see a slight depression in the ground of a snow bridge, not a very good snow bridge at that time of year and at this crossing you suddenly realised, mmm Thank you for stopping Bodger.

[Part 2 00:23:03 ]

Smith: I can remember Alpha and putting my feet through on quite a few occasions there but of course the dogs would be pulling the sledge and you’d soon be across it but ah...

[Part 2 00:23:16]

Lee: Did you ever come to any conclusions as to how these dogs were doing this John, how did the dogs know what was ahead of them?

Smith: Beyond me I...

Thorne: I think in some ways it becomes their instinct, I think they are slightly.. they’re lower to the ground and they get a different aspect of it but you see you had the situation of the three guys being killed in the tractor accident at Halley using that latest radar for finding things like that, it doesn’t always work and certainly Bodger went down crevasses as well but there were occasions where it did work.

[Part 2 00:23:52]

Lee: Tell me about Ossie.

Thorne: Ossie?

Lee: Do have any memories about him?

Thorne: Ossie and I went down on the ship together and when we got down Ossie was quite a character, he was much older than most of us, I think, that were coming down. He’d been a ship’s officer, a mate on board ships during the war [*inaudible*] he became a radio op, he’d been....

Smith: *Andes, Andes*, he was on the *Andes*, sorry.

Thorne: Yes, on the *Andes*, we went down on the *Andes* but he’d been in the Merchant Navy and been torpedoed three times during the war so he’d seen the whole lot but as a result he tended to hit the bottle fairly hard at times. But the classic one was just before midwinter, we’d just got John and Denis back I think from the refuge or we got them back the next day, it was just about that time, but Mac, Bill McDowell, decided to do a pilot balloon so he and I filled the balloon in the workshop, where we filled them, carried it through the hut, as we went through the balloon popped so we went back, filled another one, we came through, Ossie was on cook in the kitchen saw us coming through, thought it was a Midwinter decoration and stubbed it with his cigarette. On which there was a very large explosion and the windows got blown open, Ossie lost his eyebrows, hair, had his hands singed rather badly and he said ‘I thought you were making decorations’

Smith: You only had to fill a party balloon after that and he’d start to shake.

[Part 2 00:25:35]

Lee: What was his proper name, his real name?

Smith: Ossie Connochie?

Lee: Connochie, is Ossie...

Thorne: Ossie Connochie.

[Part 2 00:25:45]

Lee: Is Ossie short for Oswald or *[inaudible]*

Thorne: (*inaudible*) Oswald I'm not sure if he had... but he was always Ossie but he... there was no doubt about it, when we were going down he got extremely drunk a couple of times on the ship and there was a strong feeling he should be shipped back home. But I had been with him then for about three weeks and I think this guy's got a lot going for him as well I'm thinking that Oh no, I think he come onto base alcohol won't be so freely available, although he always seemed to find enough.

Smith: He did and there was a problem because he smoked a lot as well and so you really had to be very wary and you really kept an eye open because he could nod off and it would be very dangerous

[ Part 2 00:26:37 ]

Lee: The other character in your team seems to be [REDACTED], John Thorne, you go ahead about him.

Thorne: Well [REDACTED], our [REDACTED] on year one, quite a character, he and Tom Murphy did not hit it off at all, he explained to Tom in no uncertain way that how to Tom ought to be doing his job and when we came back from having been stranded out on Roux Island it had reached the point where, if Tom suggested or said anything to [REDACTED] would not take any notice of it, he would not talk to Tom and communication was done by Tom sending a signal to Stanley who sent the signal to [REDACTED] who answered with a signal to Stanley which came back to Tom. The only person he was talking to on base was me and I had been with him six weeks, over six weeks, and we could still talk to each other. [REDACTED]

[part 2 00:28:14]

Smith: Denis was very good, absolutely lovely person, very committed to his profession and he's since carried on in the same way hasn't he?

Thorne: Yes, absolutely.

Smith: But going back to Ossie very briefly, in spite of the problems, you know, the surveillance that had to be there with Ossie, he was a very able wireless operator and of course he taught all of us how to use the set on base and to be able to be fairly competent in actually doing radio scheds. which was , you know, a very commendable thing but that was the nature of the set up in those days, that there was that interdependence which was something of a great value, great value.

[Part 2 00:29:04]

Thorne: We were totally dependent on each other and so we all backed each other the whole time. I think the only other person with that sort of thing then was Frank Oliver.

Smith: Yes was a bit of a character.

Thorne: And he was alone in so many ways and I couldn't understand why he stayed down, I cannot understand why stayed, O.K, he got what he wanted, he went out sledging a lot in the third year but he was just not interested in his job as a diesel mech. mmm..and things like when he was on cook, he would cook a meal, and it was pretty awful, set it on the table, and walk out so we had scrambled egg parties every night at about midnight, all of us wanted to get to the stove and start cooking something.

[ Part 2 00:29:48 ]

Smith: I mean there was some sadness, I've no doubt, in relationships but he had bagpipes. He did try it on us in the hut but that wasn't acceptable but he used to go out to the dogs and he would play it to the dogs and he would get the dogs participating, howling away you know it was quite something to witness but Frank was certainly a little bit different.

[Part 2 00:30:14]

Lee: Would you say Frank *[inaudible]* a degree of friction at Detaille as to how... compared to other bases?

Thorne: I think there was far less friction in Detaille than what I saw when I landed at Admiralty Bay we did not see any of the base members for the first twenty four hours and we'd been going backwards and forwards from the ship, post and all stuff, they just didn't come, they didn't come down and talk to us and it was a bit like that at Argentine Islands when we went in there they didn't come out which was rare and *[inaudible]* and I thought the people who, I know it was a small base, five man base at Admiralty Bay at that time, I think they had a fairly tough time together. I think they were so much on top of each other, five of them in this rather grotty hut, I think they were having a hard time.

( Part 2 00:31:09 )

Smith: And if you're not doing field work, you're not out then what....

Thorne: What a difference that makes, yes. Henry puts notes about people suffering, I know in my diary I said everyone's got baseitis or we've all been bitten by the tsetse fly and got sleeping sickness and nobody got up, we were bored, couldn't get on, couldn't get out to doing things and you run out of doing all the little jobs.

[Part 2 00:31:34]

Lee: That was the, it was the spectacular nature of Detaille and the variety of work and...

Smith: Oh it was , a lot of purpose there, a lot was achieved, alright, a lot of time when you reflect on it, the lying up on journeys because at times it would be, you know, seven days, as I say, on top there in the tent, you can't do anything. You're just waiting for the relief of the wind to abate and to get on with it but it was a very good base in so many ways.

[ Part 2 00:32:09 ]

Lee: So was it inevitable that Detaille had such a short shelf life?

Thorne: I think it was. By the end of the year three, because they'd had such superb sea ice in year three, the geology was totally covered by Denis, the surveying, all the main points were in although they put in some more and they did some longer rays linking with other bases but I think the main work that you could do in that area was done, all you could do was put an automatic weather station on there if you wanted it but with the upgrading around everywhere, because Adelaide was going in, you were covering that area in a different way and I think Detaille then really was surplus to requirement.

Lee: *[inaudible]*

Thorne: When it was ?

Lee: Closed.

Thorne: No, Denis was the only one at that time.

Lee: You've been back since this haven't you, in the year 2000 you made a pilgrimage back to Detaille Island?

( Part 2 00:33:13 )

Smith: That was quite something *[inaudible]* on the Merlin cruise and after missing quite a few of the bases we didn't have any idea that was get in to W and it was absolutely magical. We were going along by Liard there and suddenly from the bridge ' John Smith, John Pape, come to the bridge' and they took us in in the Zodiacs, they took us in. We went through the pack ice back to the base and it was quite something to go ashore there and, yes. We didn't have long though because the wind was getting up and the northerly set of the wind with the pack ice that was there, obviously they read it as well as I did, I knew what had happened in the past, that would pack very quickly together and it would have been difficult and the *Elova* would have had to wait some while to get us back but it was magical to go in there. I'm sorry that the others couldn't get in there but it was something of great substance.

( Part 2 00:34:23 )

Thorne: I was lucky when we went down in 2007 it was absolutely clear, the landing area at that time but I couldn't recognise the site. What I knew as a series of snow domes rising to the Beacon, it was mud and rock with patches of snow, there was so little snow compared with what I had seen over the

years before, but we went in and people on the trip by then knew that I had been there and so they gave me the honour of being the first in on the first boat and the first person to land to be greeted by a fur seal who refused to move out of the way so I had quite a problem to dodge round him, and I then talked a bit about the hut before we went in. Went into the hut and I'd only got down talking, I think we'd got to about the bedroom door, the bunk room door, and I'd just got there and there was a shout for me ' John there's a letter for you ' and it was a letter from John Killingbeck who'd been there two days before with a cruise ship and left me a letter, they hadn't intended to go there but it was open so they went. But I spent two and a half hours there back on the base in the hut and looking at it. Absolutely magical time there, magical, and just remembering so much of what's happened.

[Part 2 00:35:53]

Lee: Was the guitar still there?

Thorne: I don't know, I'd be a bit, I can't remember, I can remember a pair of long johns hanging at the side, don't know whose they were but it was the long johns and an old army greatcoat was there. But there were skis on racks and ski boots on the shelves, things that I'd help put up but my cupboard, which in the past always used to have stacks of boxes of chocolate in the bottom of it, was completely filled with bottles of salad cream which someone had tidied up or changed the system, so things like that. I was upset in some ways by the amount that had been trashed by various people but I have actually, since then, met the skipper of a yacht who had been in there and spent a half an hour or so chatting with him and seen other people and the numbers who now go to Detaille is just unbelievable.

[Part 2 00:36:48]

Lee: John Smith:

Smith: And going into the kitchen and seeing the stove there, seeing the water tank which we used to go out and cut blocks of snow and put them into that and looking at the floor, which we used to keep very clean and polished in the summertime, all broken up as a sort of jigsaw puzzle where all the linoleum had broken up. In the winter, if you tried to clean it and put any water on it, you had a skating rink. Temperature in there in the hut at head height you were probably getting on for, I suppose, seventy or eighty degrees and your floor about minus something or other *[interrupted]*

[ Part 2 00:37:30 ]

Thorne: Many occasions, yes

[ Part 2 00:37:33 ]

Lee: There are times too *[inaudible]*?

Thorne: Well preserve, I think. I think that's really the way. It would be preserve the fabric of the building by repairing and rubberoiding on the roof, replacing broken windows and doorways that are not so good. It's got one addition since we originally erected it which is the snow porch on the north door which I put on because we had problems in the drift, times of drift, we were getting lots of drift in the corridor so I put a snow porch on there at the beginning of the second year. Other than that it is virtually original as we did it but so much has been removed by persons unknown, some of it by persons we do know, cases of people returning stuff to the right places. But if you go back a bit further

you said about problems and problems we'd *[inaudible]*, a lot of the foodstuff that we were given in year one was ex Royal Marine stuff that had been sent down about five years before, had not been used by the Marines, had been left stacked in the open in Port Stanley and was then shipped to us as new. Lots of times our sledging rations the box looked absolutely perfect, when you opened it, your whole twelve days, ten days rations for two men would be rotten on biscuits, the tins of butter were quite often rancid...

[Part 2 00:39:12]

Smith: Absolutely rancid, yes.

Thorne: And this caused a problem and also on some of the general base supplies, a lot of stuff, especially the dried milk powder and that, we were way way below what we should have had as the result of that stock and I did a very big report on it for FIDS and they received it extremely well and made, you know, made efforts to replace. But obviously coal, the loss of the coal was never reported and that was never replaced as a result.

[ Part 2 00:39:45 ]

Smith: In the second year I had to do, in fact, food didn't I.?

Thorne: You did the food, you took over from me.

Smith: And that was not easy because of, although you had the right sort of complements you should have had, you didn't have it all and it was difficult and basically, on any base, you had two year's supply but we were certainly found wanting weren't we.

Thorne: Oh yes, yes there were some *[inaudible]*

Smith: But we did have local fare of course, we did have the occasional seal, we certainly had plenty of penguin eggs and penguins, if we wanted the penguins.

Thorne: You had, you had a lot more eggs of course at Deception than we ever had down...

[Part 2 00:40:21]

Smith: Did you ever use the, what do they call the stuff to preserve the eggs?

Thorne: No.

Smith: mmm

Thorne: Isinglass, no.

Smith: Isinglass, that's the one...

Thorne: No we never kept the penguin eggs.

Lee: It's been a real pleasure John and John, thank you very much indeed *[inaudible]*

**End [ Part 2 00:40:36]**

Extracts:- Part 1

Thorne, job application.	[Part 1 00:05:09]
Hut Site selection.	[Part 1 00:07:51]
First year sledging	[Part 1 00:12:16]
Thorne / Hedley Wright	
Hanusse Bay journey	[Part 1 00:13:55]
Smith plateau journey	[Part 1 00:19:27]
Snow hole lay up	[Part 1 00:26:20]
Duke of Edinburgh visit	[Part 1 00:30:45]
Smith meal for the Royal Yacht	[Part 1 00:32:50]

Part 2

Detaille Naming	[Part 2 00:00:00]
Hut Name	[Part 2 00:01:41]
Loss of coal	[Part 2 00:02:30]
Journey to Darbel Bay	[Part 2 00:07:46]
Tide surge	[Part 2 00:13:00]
Henry Wyatt in the water	[Part 2 00:16:42]
Dog teams	[Part 2 00:19:21]
Detaille revisited	[Part 2 00:33:13]