

## GORDON (DOC) BOWRA

Edited transcript of a recording of Gordon Bowra interviewed by Chris Eldon Lee at his home at Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire on 21st September 2010. Transcribed by Andy Smith, 25th March 2011.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is Gordon Bowra interviewed at his home at Upton-by-Chester in Cheshire by Chris Eldon Lee on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2010. Gordon Bowra, Part One.*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:15] Gordon Bowra: Gordon Trevor Bowra and place of birth: London, 28/06/1936.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you are seventy...?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:32] Gordon Bowra: 74 now.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *And looking quite well on it.*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:37] Gordon Bowra: Oh. I have got a couple of stents in.[laughs] I blame the fat. I got addicted to fat when I was in the Antarctic, I am sure.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *How do you mean?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:53] Gordon Bowra: Butter, fat, cheese.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you explain why that happened?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:00:58] Gordon Bowra: Well, on dog journeys the amount of food you needed to maintain your weight tended to be about 5000 calories, plus or minus, and the only way you get that amount of calories in is to have a lot of fat, which is why the diet has tins of fat in the form of butter and cheese. If you want more calories, you add more butter, and I have always loved cheese and biscuits, so there you go.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:01:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you genuinely think because of your interest in butter in the '60s, this has shaped the rest of your life medically.*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:01:49] Gordon Bowra: Ha. It probably has, but if you think in terms of during the war, things like bread and dripping were the norm, if you could. So I have always liked peanut butter, fat, ordinary butter.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:02:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this passion for butter and cheese unique to you and was it something that other Fids felt the same way?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:02:18] Gordon Bowra: I do not know. I never talked to anybody about it really.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:02:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *That is what these interviews are for. So did you become compulsive? Did you start stealing butter or bargaining with your mates?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:02:31] Gordon Bowra: Oh no. You saw the Fid food boxes. I do not know how much they have changed over the years. When we had them. Because I am talking about the 1960s, the early '60s. But what they did contain, I think (I cannot really remember) it was probably about near 5000 calories a day, 4800 or something. I really cannot remember. You can get that information no doubt.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did I read somewhere that in fact butter became kind of a prized item, that people used to swap it or deal with it?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:19] Gordon Bowra: Well if you know, the only reason it was swapped: People travelling in Muskegs would not need as many calories but they were taking the same food boxes. If you were with the dogs, you wanted more. Alan Etchells always said we stripped their food boxes of butter.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you would go and pillage the Muskeg food boxes? Literally?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:52] Gordon Bowra: Yes. On the journey.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *In the field?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:57] Gordon Bowra: Yes, in the field.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:03:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this a cause of amusement or tension?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:04:00] Gordon Bowra: Apparently to Alan it was a cause of amusement. No I do not think so. They did not finish their boxes. They did not eat everything there was in them.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:04:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *So in the mid 60's perhaps, BAS had not got to the point of considering designing food boxes for the work to be done with them?*

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:04:17] Gordon Bowra: Oh I am sure they did, because there were not very many... I mean Halley Bay was, at that time, really the only base that had any tractor travel I think. I know there were Muskegs elsewhere but I think they were mainly base tractors, not expedition vehicles. We used them as expedition vehicles but basically they were just tractors.

Disc 1, Track 1 [0:04:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what was in fact happening was that they had a standard food box, issued to sledging teams and the same box went to the Muskegs. Despite the fact that the men did not need so much fat.*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:04:57] Gordon Bowra: That is right. Absolutely right.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:04:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *It could have been worse. You could have been addicted to seal blubber, couldn't you?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:05:01] Gordon Bowra: Well you could have been. I do not think any us, only the dogs, got that way. The dogs would go for the blubber; they would, yes.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:05:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Because they needed it?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:05:12] Gordon Bowra: I presume so.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:05:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *Let us go back then to earlier in your life. Tell me a bit about your background, your childhood, your education.*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:05:21] Gordon Bowra: I was brought up in... We were evacuated . We lived in Edgware. My father was evacuated to Ashted in Surrey during the war, and so we lived in Surrey, Ashted. The office he worked for (he worked for the Coal Board, what was then National Coal Board), the office he worked at in London remained intact throughout the war. The one that he worked at in Surrey had eight sticks of bombs across it eventually at the end of the war, and my school, my primary school was blown flat by a doodle-bug, absolutely – nobody killed because it was just after everybody went home. So we did have things happening around us and my collection of shrapnel was extensive.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:06:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *As a child, you would have been how old then, roughly?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:06:31] Gordon Bowra: Well as a child, in 1939 I would have been 4 and I was at primary school basically.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:06:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *How do you think you reacted to it being blown up, at the age of 4?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:06:51] Gordon Bowra: I do not know. We missed about a week of the end of the summer term, and they had it all up and running again with prefabs at the start of the autumn term. I remember being rather put out about that. [laughs] I thought we would get a bit longer.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:07:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *I suppose my question is because, talking to Fids who have narrow squeaks, it sometimes changes the way they view things in the future. Perhaps at the age of 4 you were too young to adjust your thinking.*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:07:27] Gordon Bowra: Absolutely. Well I would be later than that; it would be '44, wouldn't it, and I would have been 8. Yes I would have been about 8, wouldn't I?

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:07:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *But you don't think it changed your view of...*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:07:42] Gordon Bowra: No. They were just doodle-bugs, and I mean our house had some blast injuries from the V2s, one of the rockets, which fell about half a mile away, but still got blast injuries on the house.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:04] Chris Eldon Lee: *I mean the Blitz definitely had an impact on the psychology of a generation didn't it? People feeling as though they were lucky to be alive.*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:11] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. I do not think we think about that. I mean we were children.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Is Bowra an English name entirely?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:19] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, absolutely. Very much so.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *How far back does it go?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:08:22] Gordon Bowra: 1645, where there was a chirourgeon called, now what was his name? Thomas Bowra I think it was, Thomas Bowra, and it was really Sussex/ Surrey/ Kent borders. It is a long-established name. The early Bowras, I think, were – there is a book about them – smugglers. Smugglers from the Kent coast, I think, taking 'baccy and brandy up to London no doubt.

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:09:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *When do you think you began to start thinking about entering a medical profession? Were you that way inclined as a child or did it come much later?*

Disc 1, Track 2 [0:09:19] Gordon Bowra: Well it obviously came from school. I had what I regard as very interesting schooldays. I was a day boy at school in a boarding school, and that was Epsom College. Epsom College in Epsom tended to be a medical school. Most of the pupils there went on to become doctors, so you became ingrained.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:09:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *So was Epsom chosen because you were thinking already...?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:10:02] Gordon Bowra: No it was because it was up the road, 3 miles up the road.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:10:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *So there was a certain amount of 'indoctorination' was there?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:10:10] Gordon Bowra: No. Apart from the original surgeon, who started the name as Bowra, it was not part of our family. I had no family connection with doctors, none at all. My interest probably was in animals, so veterinary could have been part of my training. But I worked in a racing stables in Epsom during the holidays and after seeing racehorses, I never wanted to go into veterinary again.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:10:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *When do you think your interest in the Antarctic was first sparked? What was your first impression?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:11:03] Gordon Bowra: Oh probably when I read some of the books around, probably when I was about 12. I read some of the original adventure books then but from the point of view of when I was already qualified, that was... I had been on duty, I had been up for a very long time when I had been working in Eastbourne

(St Marys Hospital, Eastbourne) and I came into the coffee room, the common room, and there happened to be a film on at the time. I had my cup of coffee and there happened to be a film on and it was by Neil Orr about dog sledging. I did not know what to do. I had done my 6 months in surgery and also as a physician, I knew the next step had been arranged. What I did not know was what I was going to do after that. No way I wanted to do midwifery or anything like that, and I did not know what to do after that. National Service had just finished. We were about a year after National Service had finished so that was not part of my outlook, obviously, which it would have been a couple of years before. I just saw this film of Neil Orr with dog sledging, and I thought 'That's interesting.' So I got in touch with the Survey; or I tried to get in touch with Vivian Fuchs at that time and that was when it all started.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *It seems slightly odd that that film should be being shown in hospital.*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:21] Gordon Bowra: Yes, absolutely.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *You never got to the bottom of it?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:24] Gordon Bowra: No, it was just on.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *On TV?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:26] Gordon Bowra: On TV. It was on TV. The TV was on, as it often was in the corner where the cup of coffee was, and you just slumped down.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *This would be nineteen sixty...?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:43] Gordon Bowra: That would have been probably '61. Yes, '61. '60 or '61.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Does Neil know that he inspired you to go?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:13:57] Gordon Bowra: I do not know. I have talked to him a lot, before that when we worked at the Physiology Laboratory at... I forget.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *It doesn't matter. Don't worry about it.*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:24] Gordon Bowra: So I knew Neil well. I even went sailing with him at one time.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *So let us just look at this. You actually wrote to Fuchs himself?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:36] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *I presume you got a reply?*

Disc 1, Track 3 [0:14:39] Gordon Bowra: I cannot remember about that but obviously I must have done because when he talked he said 'Go away and do some things.' So I went away and walked up and down Leadenhall Street; I got myself a berth on a boat going to South Africa.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:14:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Sorry, let us just backtrack slightly. Did you ever get an interview with him (Fuchs)?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:14:59] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember anything of it?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:04] Gordon Bowra: No.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. But the consequence was that you had to...?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:07] Gordon Bowra: The consequence was: I mean apart from the fact I would go away and do something. So I must have had a formal interview but I really cannot remember that, but there will have been a representative of the Foreign Office I think, and probably Bill Sloman I expect.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *When he said 'Go away and do something', what do you think he meant?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:33] Gordon Bowra: Oh anything, you know.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *What, because you were not old enough?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:37] Gordon Bowra: No. It was the wrong time of year. It was probably early on, February or something. The boats do not go until...

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *November?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:48] Gordon Bowra: That is right.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *So did he offer you a place?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:51] Gordon Bowra: At that time? Do you know, I honestly cannot remember.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. That is fair enough.*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:57] Gordon Bowra: But I think they were interested in having doctors.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:15:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *What did you go away and do?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:16:03] Gordon Bowra: I went as Ship's Surgeon on the *SS City of Pretoria*.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:16:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *You just walked on to the ship and offered your services?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:16:11] Gordon Bowra: No. I went down Leadenhall Street. Got to Ellerman & Bucknall Lines, it was. I actually tried all the various shipping agents which in those days you could, down Leadenhall Street. It was not unusual, because I had friends who qualified, who had also got on the boats as well. One was going out to New Zealand I think and, you know, it was a journey: one set of Articles, Deep Sea Articles.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:16:52] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about your time on the Pretoria.*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:16:55] Gordon Bowra: *The City of Pretoria?* It was not a very long time. It was glorious. Up to that time I had been working in hospitals and I had never known that there was anything outside solid work, seven days a week. This was a glorious 'holiday' for me, if you like, on the *City of Pretoria* which was a cargo ship; it carried 12 passengers and just went out to Beira eventually, Portuguese East Africa, Lourenço Marques and Beira. I clearly saw at that point: we went out half empty and came back laden to the gunwales, so to speak. At that time the gap between export and import appeared very clearly.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:04] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you required to do any doctoring on this...?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:08] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. I was employed as a Ship's Surgeon.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember what you did?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:13] Gordon Bowra: No. I probably would not tell you if I did remember. I do remember a couple of things, yes but I won't...

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *What sort of things, without breaking patient confidence?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:26] Gordon Bowra: No, no, no.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:27] Chris Eldon Lee: *You cannot talk about it?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:27] Gordon Bowra: No.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *Fair enough.*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:29] Gordon Bowra: But it was not very onerous, as far as I was concerned, on the medical side.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well that was a point I was going to make. Presumably you were dealing largely with young fit people.*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:18:37] Gordon Bowra: No, no. We are talking about people who paid a lot of money to go out to South Africa at that time, and they were mostly elderly obviously. They were all elderly I think. I knew of some people in South Africa and I managed to actually go to see them, and to see a couple of game parks and things like that, while I was there, while we were in port in Durban. So I managed to combine an awful lot of pleasure with a little business.

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:19:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *But the allure of the Antarctic was strong enough not to make you want to carry on sailing the warm seas?*

Disc 1, Track 4 [0:19:40] Gordon Bowra: No, I was offered a job in South Africa but at that time I did not wish to go to South Africa. I would not have lived there. I would not have liked to live there.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:19:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *Right, because of the racial problems?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:19:59] Gordon Bowra: No, a whole series of other things. I mean there were problems. The people that I went to see was a manager of a sugar plantation, a Tongaat sugar plantation, which was a really huge place but there were the problems of Africa at that time, it seemed to me, between English and Boer and indigenous African. They were separate problems.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:20:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Let us just recap a little bit about what it was. You had read books about Scott and Amundsen, Shackleton.*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:20:46] Gordon Bowra: Scott and Shackleton and Amundsen, yes.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:20:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK, but what in the end was it tipped the balance to make you want to apply to FIDS?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:20:53] Gordon Bowra: I do not know. It was different. I liked the idea of dog sledging; I liked the idea of that, and as I say, I don't know what the film was but it was presumably a half-hour film and it was presumably from Hope Bay, and it was that that actually made me want to go South, yes, really. It seemed a good idea at the time – the usual thing – it seemed a good idea.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:21:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *You would be amazed at the number of Fids that say that.*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:21:32] Gordon Bowra: Well life was like that at that time. I mean I had some very interesting times when I was at school because we were in the Combined Cadet Force at school and that meant that I did a lot of flying while I was at school. The only way of travelling at that time was to get somebody to pay the ticket. You could not go; I think it was about £12 you were allowed to take out of the country, something like that, and it was not common to go abroad, apart from if you were in the Forces. A lot of my friends had very interesting times while they were in the Forces; they learned all sorts of things. Some of them went and learned Russian at Cambridge or whatever. One man spent his whole time skiing, and then broke his leg just before the Olympics. But it was quite common to... Most of my friends had a lot

of interesting things but that was when they were doing National Service as either a two-year or three-year commission.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you saw it as a ticket to travel?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:10] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Jolly good. Tell me about, then, the journey South. What do you remember? What ship were you on? Did it leave on time? Was there the usual delay?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:24] Gordon Bowra: Well I remember, yes the one thing I do remember: it was the *Kista Dan* and this was the hired ship. I remember walking on to the quay at Southampton and seeing the *Queen Mary* (or *Queen Elizabeth*, I cannot remember which one) in the distance, and then not seeing anything on the quay where just a couple of sticks coming up.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *A couple of masts?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:52] Gordon Bowra: A couple of masts, and then we looked down, and there was the *Kista*.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was she like to sail in?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:23:58] Gordon Bowra: Obviously very much smaller. Being at that time, obviously being used to being on the *City of Pretoria*. Obviously a lot smaller, and a diesel ship rather than a steam turbine (the one I went on was a steam turbine). Yes, she was smaller.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:24:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *Comfortable?*

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:24:26] Gordon Bowra: I think we were quite comfortable, yes, but it was a very much smaller... The whole thing was very much smaller than I had been used to on the *City of Pretoria*.

Disc 1, Track 5 [0:24:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were engaged to be a doctor, I guess, so that would be a variety of skills from surgery to GP, to nurse and so on, maybe with a bit of animal husbandry too?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:24:56] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:24:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you get to choose the equipment you took with you, and if so, what did you take?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:25:03] Gordon Bowra: Any research that was done, you took the equipment with you, but the actual medical supplies were part of base issue, of which there was a list. Some were quite extraordinary things, I thought, for the South but on the whole it was set for you really.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:25:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was extraordinary?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:25:43] Gordon Bowra: Well I think there was an Athlete's Foot powder and things like that, which for the Antarctic seemed to me to be a little bit extraordinary, I thought.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:25:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *And what, in time to come, did you discover was missing? Were there things that were not supplied?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:26:59] Gordon Bowra: I really cannot think about that, to be honest. I cannot remember.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:26:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK, that's fine.*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:26:15] Gordon Bowra: The actual medicines apart from antibiotics were not really part of our... They were not used as much. I really cannot remember very much about them.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:26:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *Don't worry about it. You mentioned a research programme. Did you actually have one to take with you?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:26:45] Gordon Bowra: I did, but not very successfully because I could not really get it to work. What I wanted to do was to measure the microclimate of hands. It was basically a Wheatstone bridge idea and I could not get the continuous recorder to work properly, so that was rather sad as far as I was concerned.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:27:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *It would not work because it was broken or because the conditions were cold?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:27:21] Gordon Bowra: No. It was in the early days of continuous recording things and it was recording small changes in resistance across knitted gloves which my girlfriend knitted, or my current girlfriend knitted at the time.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:27:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what was the thinking behind that? Why did you choose to want to research that?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:27:46] Gordon Bowra: Well, we wanted to know whether you adapted to cold or whether you just got used to being cold, what the circulation was like. I would not like to think back to that at the moment because I cannot remember to be honest.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:28:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Is this the kind of work that Ian Hampton later picked up?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:28:21] Gordon Bowra: Well Ian was doing some different... I cannot even remember what Ian was doing and I cannot remember what Neil was doing, or had done because Neil by that time would have come back from Hope Bay and they were writing up their things at Hampstead, at the laboratories in Hampstead, and I cannot honestly remember what they were doing at all.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:28:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Had you also hoped or did you later on decide to do some work on the dogs as well?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:00] Gordon Bowra: That was entirely... That was something that grew when my original project fell by the wayside.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you elaborate a little bit?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:19] Gordon Bowra: Well what I did was measure the rectal temperatures of the huskies. They were out on the spans in all weathers, down to -50 odd. So I thought: did they adapt to the temperature? Did they drop their body temperatures? They actually did, statistically.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *In a controlled way?*

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:41] Gordon Bowra: Yes, it was, but I mean it was interesting just to measure the core temperatures of the dogs.

Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *And the long term value of that was what, would you say?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:29:57] Gordon Bowra: I think they tried to put the dogs in; they took them inside at a later stage I think, but I do not know exactly.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *But you were trying to establish that the dogs were perfectly healthy in very cold conditions?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:20] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. That is right.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *It wasn't distressful for them.*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:22] Gordon Bowra: No, not apparently.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was having a thermometer shoved up your bum distressful for the dogs?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:27] Gordon Bowra: No not as far as I am aware, no. They always liked a bit of attention.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *At either end?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:34] Gordon Bowra: At either end, yes. It did require two people. One to hold a dog and one... Yes.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *How did your colleagues react to this rather unusual [?? inaudible]?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:46] Gordon Bowra: They thought it was unusual.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. When you were embarking, did you know where you were going to end up? Did you know you were going to go to Halley?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:30:55] Gordon Bowra: Well I did when we were embarking, but earlier on I thought I would go to a base that was dog sledging, i.e. down the Peninsula, Marguerite Bay or somewhere of that nature. But at the time there was not a lot of travel from Halley Bay. The routes had only just been discovered over the Dawson-Lambton Glacier, over what then became known as the Bob-Pi crossing.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:31:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you know where that name came from?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:31:41] Gordon Bowra: Yes, it was Pi Jarman and Bob somebody. I have actually forgotten the name. [Transcriber comment: It was Bob Lee and Pi Jarman. Andy Smith]. But Bob, Pi that is basically what they were called. The original Bob-Pi Crossing, that they went up onto the inland ice was nowhere near where we found a way over. But they went over by dogs; we were taking tractors over.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *We may come to that a bit later on, but before I just leave that particular topic: In one of the base reports for the years you were there, the Base Commander, Base Leader as it were then, said that the Bob-Pi Crossing demanded respect.*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:34] Gordon Bowra: Yes!

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you know why he would have said that?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:37] Gordon Bowra: I will show you a picture of why I said that, later on.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *Give me a word picture now.*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:41] Gordon Bowra: Well a 'keg went down a crevasse, the first time they went out. There was a lot of crevasses – a very jumbled area.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:32:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *Dangerous territory?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:00] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, very.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you there when the Muskeg went down?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:06] Gordon Bowra: No I was not. We were going with the dogs, but I have pictures.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:13] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you saw it?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:15] Gordon Bowra: In pictures, yes.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *Oh I see. Thank you. Photographs later on. We will come to that perhaps in the second part of the interview. What were the medical duties you were required to do, in the end? I mentioned earlier about Fids being fairly young and fairly fit, so the demands upon doctors were not that great (for their medical skills) I suspect, or am I wrong?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:33:39] Gordon Bowra: Probably not, from medical skills, although people really did have some very difficult things to deal with over the years. Not myself but... I spent, I suppose, more doing dentistry, at the time I was there; and the dentist, who went down to the Peninsula, spent his time doing medicine. We obviously got it the wrong way round.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *Had you been trained in dentistry?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:25] Gordon Bowra: Yes. Well we went to the dental hospital to be shown the basics, shall we say.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *This was specific training because you were going South?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:34] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, absolutely.

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you take to it?*

Disc 1, Track 7 [0:34:39] Gordon Bowra: No, but I did have some interesting periods when I was on the... I had to take a molar out of a stoker on the *City of Pretoria*. Now this was a steam turbine ship, so the stoker was not a small fellow, and his hands gave me help in pulling out the offending molar. [laughs] It was funny.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:35:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *I have got a note here from Alan Etchells about you having to attend to a bad tooth of one of your colleague Fids. I will tell you what it says and you can perhaps elaborate on it. 'After a couple of hours of trying to get this tooth sorted, he gave up and asked the patient to come back the next day after he had had time to check the book.'*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:35:49] Gordon Bowra: I cannot remember a thing about it.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:35:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *You can't? OK, but presumably you did have a library of sorts down there to refer to?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:35:58] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. I cannot even remember how much we... No, I really cannot remember.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *And the dentist on the other side of the Peninsula, were you able to consult with him on radio?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:11] Gordon Bowra: Not at that time, no. Radio was very primitive at that time. We did have radio scheds with other bases, and there clearly

must have been communication with what was in those days London, but it was much more difficult than it is today.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you really were left to your own devices?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:51] Gordon Bowra: You were absolutely on your own, yes.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was that OK? Were you comfortable with that, or did you feel at all vulnerable?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:36:58] Gordon Bowra: It was just part of the thing. You went away; it was just part of the life at that time. There wasn't much help around I think.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:37:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was the norm?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:37:11] Gordon Bowra: Mmm.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:37:13] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. When you arrived at Halley, what were your impressions of it, because it was not in the best of conditions?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:37:20] Gordon Bowra: No, I mean it was just there. It was a completely different sort of base to that which would have been on land. You could not put anything down because it would disappear, so therefore all the dumps of stuff you unloaded from the ship would have to be well marked, because if you dropped something in the snow, it would just disappear. Everything had to be marked.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Because of accumulation of snow?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:03] Gordon Bowra: Accumulation of snow, yes, or not necessarily accumulation but blowing snow, because of wind.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *So if you lost something in a blizzard, that was the end of that, was it?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:16] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, absolutely.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:19] Chris Eldon Lee: *What about the buildings, Gordon?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:38:21] Gordon Bowra: Well the buildings were, well, underground. You approached them through a shaft, down a ladder in other words, and although you could see where a building was, because of chimneys, you could not necessarily see anything of the building itself. I cannot remember my original impressions of the base. It was just there; that was what it was, and there was a whole series of aerials or wires or shafts – things just sticking up out of the snow.

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:39:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *When you got down into the buildings, were they falling apart?*

Disc 1, Track 8 [0:39:29] Gordon Bowra: The original building was. The original building was the IGY hut, which was put up during the International Geophysical Year, which was about 1958 I think, and we were '62. [Transcriber comment: Actually the IGY hut was erected in early 1956 by the IGYE Advance Party, ready for the start of the IGY in mid-1957. Andy Smith] Or was it '63?

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:39:56] Chris Eldon Lee: '63.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:39:57] Gordon Bowra: So it had been there for a few years, and that was about 45 foot underground, and that was twisted. If you can think of a chimney 45 foot high with a shear on it, it was like that rather than straight.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:40:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *Out of right angles?*

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:40:25] Gordon Bowra: Yes, and the pressure of ice had had a very large effect on the building itself. Now the main living hut was at about 15 foot, I think, down, and that was a hut that went down and there were problems in building that hut. It was meant to be the ground storey of a two-storey hut but the bolts did not go to the same base as the hut did, and as a result it had been very much cobbled together by the builders that built it at the time. Interesting thing where the bits don't go to the same base.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:41:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did it leak?*

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:41:26] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. As you were warm you got a cave above the building itself but water used to come in, and that water would be variable, but we usually caught it in string. It used to run along strings into a bucket or something like that which used to be emptied every now and again – old food tins, as far as I remember.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:42:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *How was it to live like that, because you were spending a lot of time, particularly in the winter, underground, in unreliable circumstances, shall we say? You are a doctor; did it affect people, psychologically?*

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:42:19] Gordon Bowra: I do not know. There were 24 of us there and there were probably about 7 or 8 people who spent most of their time outside. There were others that spent their time inside, and there were obviously the in-betweeners. I was definitely one of the outside people. Quite apart from the dogs (they had to be fed and things like that) there were always jobs around the base. Yes there were outside people, and I was one of them.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:43:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you notice any claustrophobia or depression because of the living underground?*

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:43:16] Gordon Bowra: No I don't think it had anything to do with that. I do not know that people were particularly depressed. There were periods where the odd individual... There were real problems with one or two individuals, but I do not necessarily think that... The place was different; we were different to I think the other bases. If we had had views, if we could look out of the window and could see a

mountain or something like that, it would be very different, but we weren't so life just took on a... We became used to it.

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:44:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was there anything that could be done to help anybody who began to feel unhappy about their circumstances?*

Disc 1, Track 9 [0:44:11] Gordon Bowra: No, people used to... It was very much a community, not a series of individuals. There was a very good self-support. We were a self-supported community of people, they were all different types; everybody was a different type of person. There were people that had been down there before: the Base Leader and in fact the next Base Leader as well had been down to the Antarctic before. Although everybody was individualistic, it was a very close community the first year, I think.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:45:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *So are you saying that prevented people from becoming depressed, or that helped them if they did become depressed?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:45:22] Gordon Bowra: You had a ridiculous sense of humour, and even in the most adversity it came through I think.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:45:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you remember examples of ridiculousness?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:45:45] Gordon Bowra: You would be working at the bottom of a shaft somewhere and a bloke would come falling down and get up and walk away. It was not unusual; it was always the same bloke. [laughs] Different shafts but he would always fall down. There were some scrapes. I think it was very amusing. For a lot of us the sense of humour was very high.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:46:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *It is a long winter, isn't it? You did two of them.*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:46:26] Gordon Bowra: Yes, but the time went, just disappeared so quickly because you were so busy doing things for, trying to alter things for the summer journeys. Time did not drag; that was not part of the problem at all, well at least not for me. It might have done for some people but not for me.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *I gather there was quite a serious card school.*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:08] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. The first year was absolutely: when I say serious card school, there were probably every night at least three tables, so that is 12 people involved in bridge.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you play?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:30] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. Oh absolutely, yes.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this played for money?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:35] Gordon Bowra: Oh no.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:36] Chris Eldon Lee: *You did not have any money?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:47:38] Gordon Bowra: Presumably we were getting paid. I cannot remember what it was. The pay was different for different people. You got I think it was £450 a year, and I think you got £50 if you had a degree, and if you had a double degree you got £200.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *What I meant was you had no coins with which to gamble.*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:11] Gordon Bowra: No, nothing at all.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:13] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about the attempts to make a card table.*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:15] Gordon Bowra: Yes I made a card table.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *Where did you make it?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:23] Gordon Bowra: In the lower hut, the IGY hut. There was one problem with this, and that was getting it out, up through the hatches. The legs rather exceeded the width of the... There was a problem, as no doubt Alan has told you, there was a problem in getting the table up into the upper hut.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:52] Chris Eldon Lee: *How was the problem solved?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:56] Gordon Bowra: I cannot remember. We probably took the legs off again.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *But you managed to solve the problem?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:01] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. There was no problem we could not solve apart from light bulbs. I do not think we ever solved the problem of lack of light bulbs.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you elaborate on that?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:12] Gordon Bowra: Most things you could make. Somebody had some idea of how to make whatever it was you thought you required. Fids were very inventive people.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *But the wooden light bulb had defeated you, had it?*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:32] Gordon Bowra: [Laughs] Absolutely.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *So at some point you got this Gordon Bowra table in the main hut.*

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:41] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, absolutely. That was a card table. Still there no doubt it was, as it floated out to sea I expect.

Disc 1, Track 10 [0:49:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you miss the fact that it was an all-male society? Did you miss the other gender?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:49:59] Gordon Bowra: I do not really think that you did. Some people may have done, but it was very much a physical environment: humping boxes around, cutting up seal meat, humping seals around, catching them. No it was very much a physical environment and I think we were possibly too busy. I do not know. Some people won't have been because everybody had different jobs to do and a lot of people became involved in jobs that were nothing to do with them but required doing. Digging out supplies or digging out the drums of fuel, bringing them from the dumps, in some ways becoming involved in the maintenance of tractors, and things like that.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:51:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *So when you signed up to be a doctor, did they explain that you would be doing lots of other things too?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:51:40] Gordon Bowra: No, I do not think so.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:51:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well you kind of guessed, I guess?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:51:44] Gordon Bowra: Absolutely. No I do not think we considered that.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:51:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you take to the physical work?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:00] Gordon Bowra: Yes, very much so.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you did not object?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:03] Gordon Bowra: No, absolutely not.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *I guess it was all hands to the pumps, wasn't it?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:07] Gordon Bowra: Absolutely.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *So would women have fitted in to '60s Fiddery?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:11] Gordon Bowra: Probably not. I think it was a bit rough, to be honest. We were still in the days of, what shall I say? The post-war days. I think of sealing wax and string. Everything was... You were 'make do and mending' at that time, with what you had. You knew what you had. Right!

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *But even the scientists, in your era, were doing physical work as well?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:52:52] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. I went out with a geologist. Well you have got to carry his rocks. Someone has got to do it, but I was very lucky in actually spending a lot of time off base and I say lucky, because we did think it was an absolute privilege to be in areas that nobody had ever been to before, to climb every little bit of rock that was there, that nobody had ever climbed before. There were some lovely days, apart from the days spent lying up with a howling gale.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:53:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *I will ask you about that in the second half of the interview, if I may, so in a few minutes time. I have got a couple more thoughts to ask you before we stop for a cup of tea. There was a chap called Doug Finlayson; does that name mean anything?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:54:14] Gordon Bowra: I know Douggie, yes.

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:54:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *'My enduring memory of Gordon was him screaming when we were in the process of euthenasing the cat Strom from South Georgia.'* *Is this something that stays in your mind?*

Disc 1, Track 11 [0:54:25] Gordon Bowra: Well I can remember it. He never did anything to help. Yes, poor old Strom, who had a problem. We did not know what it was, but he was clearly paralysed; his back legs were paralysed. We did not know why; we had got no idea why, and we really felt that it was cruel to allow him to continue. I have forgotten even how we put him down.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:55:04] Chris Eldon Lee: *A big dose of morphine?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:55:08] Gordon Bowra: Yes, we injected him with something like that but he got hold of my hand and hung on, and put his teeth right the way through.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:55:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you open him up afterwards?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:55:32] Gordon Bowra: Yes we did and we reckoned what he had done: he suffered from what can only be described as a hairball except it was not hair it was straw and we think he had got them from the paint store, and so he had a hairball in his stomach from the paint store and it may very well have been lead paint that he had swallowed and therefore it was lead poisoning that had finally caused his paralysis.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you find any wood shavings in there as well?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:11] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, wood shavings in the...

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *In the straw?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:15] Gordon Bowra: Well, or straw, wood shavings, that sort of thing. I cannot remember exactly what it was.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:22] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this at Halley or was this at South Georgia?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:24] Gordon Bowra: Oh no, this was at Halley Bay.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *The cat came from?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:29] Gordon Bowra: The cat came as a cat was part of the base cat. Was it Strom or was it Kista? I really cannot remember actually. Anyway we had a cat.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was a Halley cat?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:44] Gordon Bowra: Yes, it was a Halley cat.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. I gather you also had some responsibility for stamps, did you? Was that correct.*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:50] Gordon Bowra: Oh I think everybody helped with stamping the mail.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:56:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you postmaster?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:02] Gordon Bowra: No, the Base Leader would be Postmaster, whether it was Maurice or Dudley, but yes we all helped. I certainly did and I presume others did as well. In fact I remember I got a letter not that long ago, a letter I had written to somebody that posted magazines and things down there. I never realised I had written a letter to him, but that was published in a philatelic magazine, which I have got. But I just do not remember. I cannot remember that.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *Would this be somebody called E Jagger?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:47] Gordon Bowra: Yes, that was the one, yes.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *December 1964, in the Polar Post, September 2009.*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:54] Gordon Bowra: Yes, that is right.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK, so your letters come back to haunt you.*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:57:57] Gordon Bowra: Letters come back to haunt me. Yes, I never realised, I did not think anybody could understand doctors' writing.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:58:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *Shall we take a break, and then we will come back and do some more?*

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:58:09] Gordon Bowra: Yes. OK.

Disc 1, Track 12 [0:58:10] [End of Part One]

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is Gordon Bowra interviewed at his home at Upton-by-Chester in Cheshire by Chris Eldon Lee on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2010. Gordon Bowra, Part Two.*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *Let us look at the first year then, 1963. I have got in front of me, Gordon, the base reports for the station of those two years that you were there, and part of what they were trying to do was to do with the ionospherics. This may not be your territory, but I gather there were quite a few problems with the ionospheric research. Were you aware of that?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:36] Gordon Bowra: Only sort of by the way. I do not know why; I did not know why, or how they were trying to solve it, but I know there were problems with most things, really.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well one of the points that I was going to ask you about was the quality of equipment issued to Halley, which seems to have been perhaps a bit substandard compared to that which was being issued to the west coast bases. Is that something that you [?? inaudible]?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:09] Gordon Bowra: I cannot answer that because I have no idea. I would have thought it was the same but I have not got a clue. That certainly never came up, as far as we were concerned.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:19] Chris Eldon Lee: *But the conditions you were in were somewhat harsher than the west coast?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:24] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely. The Banana Belts of high temperatures, going positive. We did not have that.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:35] Chris Eldon Lee: *Should you not have had better equipment?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:37] Gordon Bowra: Are you talking of clothing?

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *Everything, yes.*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:01:41] Gordon Bowra: I cannot answer that. We were in a period, as I say, it was still post-war; it was still 'make do and mend'. The radios we had I think were Army 68 sets, or something like that. We were trying to use them over 300 miles but they were normally used for talking over 6 or 7 miles. We tried to make things work, and that included everything. We really were using things outside their normal, what they would do, and that included some of the things that went down. We had some motor toboggans came down, called Eliasons. Because of the frequency of their breakdown, they became known as Elsans. While they might have forecast the future, and being mechanical dogs: they were not it. There was no way they were going to take over from the dogs, but the eventual Ski-dogs: that was a different kettle of fish, I think, but we did not have any.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:03:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you had to go through the pain of the Eliason in order to reach the success of the Ski-doo?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:03:12] Gordon Bowra: Yes, I think so. We also had a, I have forgotten what it was called, basically a Gypsy Moth Major engine on skis which was said to do 100 mph over Canadian lakes, and said to have a payload of 2000 lbs. But it could not take the conditions of the area and very rapidly became Base Leader's transport, I think. [Transcriber comment: It was called the Lansing Snowplane. Andy Smith]

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:03:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *And didn't go anywhere?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:03:55] Gordon Bowra: No, it never went anywhere.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:03:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *That was because of major design faults, or they used the wrong engine?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:04:01] Gordon Bowra: Again, it was I think more experimental. I think there were two: one on the Peninsula (I do not know what happened to that). We do not know what really happened but it was not useful as far as travelling... The one things that were good travellers were the Muskegs, and they were extremely good apart from in deep soft snow.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:04:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *They were modified quite a bit, weren't they?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:04:36] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely.

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:04:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you tell me about that? What do you recall of that?*

Disc 2, Track 1 [0:04:49] Gordon Bowra: I cannot remember too much of the modifications. They became motor caravans, if you like, so there were sleeping berths put in the two newer ones. We had four Muskegs. The ones used for the expedition were the ones with the bigger cabs. There were all sorts of things about the heating system, which I cannot remember now, but I realise there were problems.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:05:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is pre-heating the engine?*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:05:26] Gordon Bowra: Yes, and quite interesting to see one being started with a blowlamp on the carburettor manifold. Yes.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:05:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *There was a problem with spare parts I believe?*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:05:43] Gordon Bowra: I would not know, but I do know that Barry Kraehenbuehl rebored an engine. It took him about a week for each cylinder, fitted with oversize rings. I do remember that, which I think was a very major piece of fettling, but Barry was very good at fettling. So was Dudley Jehan. Dudley was Base Leader in the second year, but the first year he was just a tractor mechanic.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:06:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well in his section of the base report for '63 he goes on to say 'The modified Muskegs have now paid dividends, but the trick is to make sure that there are lots and lots of spare parts, for every eventuality. Otherwise you become the victims of a false economy.'*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:06:47] Gordon Bowra: I would agree with that but, it is like everything: you never know what is going to go wrong.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:06:56] Chris Eldon Lee: *So did they become reliable useful tools in your time?*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:07:02] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely, yes. Oh yes, the Muskegs were, yes.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:07:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *And could you see them, even then, becoming the dominant motive transport for the Antarctic, over dogs.*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:07:14] Gordon Bowra: Yes, if you did not have other vehicles. The Muskegs were Canadian tractors. Basically they were just over-snow tractors, and if you turned them into a motor caravan, so to speak, that was an expedition vehicle, so you could actually sleep in the cabs. That meant that you could travel 24 hours a day, as we did on the way back from laying the ionospheric station, which we put 200 miles south of Bob-Pi. We travelled 24 hours and got back virtually to the crossing, in that 24 hours.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:08:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *They later of course proved to be fatal in one or two instances. There were some [?? unintelligible] later on in the Halley Bay area. Was there any sense that they had this down side to them when you were there.*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:08:31] Gordon Bowra: There was no down side to the tractors. It was a question of what you did with the tractors and how you used them. We did lose somebody on the ice but that was dogs. He was out training a dog team.

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:08:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *This was Neville Mann?*

Disc 2, Track 2 [0:08:55] Gordon Bowra: That was Neville Mann. But the year after, they lost three people in a Muskeg going down a crevasse, although they were being used differently then to the way we used them, because I believe that they were towing the dogs on sledges. Now we never did that. That would mean that you could get out to the mountains earlier, but as far as we were concerned, we went out virtually when it was light and came back when it was dark. But both the travel there and the travel back, you were travelling at the extremes of temperature; not as comfortable as summer. When the tractors went out the first time, I think it was -45.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:10:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *So because they were stretching the season shall we say, men were in the Muskegs rather than following them. Or the Muskegs were leading rather than following the dogs.*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:10:15] Gordon Bowra: Yes. Now we might think about dogs going first, but I do not know anything about that because I do not know the area concerned, but I suspect it was unknown. I suspect that they were probably travelling when there was low drift and maybe not see things.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:10:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *I think they were off course. That was the problem. When you heard about that, the year after you had been there yourself, do you remember how you felt about it. Were you surprised or frustrated that this should happen?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:10:52] Gordon Bowra: No, I was working as a casualty surgeon at that time, and got hounded by the journalists, still trying to do my job at that time. So I did not know anything about it. People were coming into the casualty and saying 'What do you know about...? Have you got any pictures of dogs, sledges and things like that?' I had a few, and they were shown I think on television, of the vehicles that were taken.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *So that incident became national news then?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:31] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *And you were bothered by journalists for your opinion?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:35] Gordon Bowra: Yes, when I was in London, Hyde Park Corner. That is easy for journalists. You can reach there from Fleet Street, can't you?

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *So was your response 'No comment'?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:47] Gordon Bowra: They wanted some pictures and I think I probably had four or five black and white pictures.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:11:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *So whilst the journalists were after the story, what was your internal feeling? I know one or two Fids were angry about how that could have happened.*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:12:09] Gordon Bowra: No, I mean things happen. The reasons behind them, I did not know enough to... You can never tell what had actually happened. I knew what crevasses were, and I knew how easy it was to get something down a crevasse. I also knew that even if you knew they were there, as happened with our accidents, it was other things that took over. For instance the bridges may be very thick, as it was when we went down with the dogs. It was a very thick bridge. There was no way; that could carry anything, except it collapsed at the same time we were on it. It was nothing to do with the thickness of the bridge, it was that the actual crevasse was opening up, I guess. It just happened. That place where Gordon Mallinson and I went down a crevasse, six months later it was an icefall not a crevasse.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:13:24] Chris Eldon Lee: *I will come to that in just a moment, but just going back to when you heard about the accident with the Muskeg. So are you saying that you were not that surprised to hear that there were fatalities?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:13:46] Gordon Bowra: No not that surprised.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:13:48] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was a risk you took?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:13:51] Gordon Bowra: Well yes. We had a death, when we were there. There were previous accidents. They were all accidents but why they occurred... You were a long way from base there. My thoughts were for the fellow left on the top. I do not see how he could cope easily, certainly by himself, and I knew what the communications were likely to be if they were using the same stuff that we were using.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:14:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *Which they were?*

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:14:32] Gordon Bowra: Basically we were out of contact for 3 months, at the time when we were out there. So I knew that there would be very great difficulties.

Disc 2, Track 3 [0:14:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *And the Neville Mann incident: that was while you were there, what do you remember of that?*

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:14:51] Gordon Bowra: My recollections are that there are two bays where Halley Bay is: Halley Bay and Emperor Bay. Emperor Bay well-named because there was a huge emperor penguin rookery. We were training dogs, and Milne Samuel ('Sam') and myself were with a full team on Emperor Bay, and Nev Mann and Gordon Mallinson had half-teams each; they had four dogs each. They were training on Halley Bay. I cannot remember exactly when it was during the year. [Transcriber comment: 15<sup>th</sup> August 1963 – Andy Smith] I do remember Sam and I saw snow coming off the high cliffs. Once you see blowing snow, you know it is blowing, so we got off the ice with the big team. By the time we got back to base, the two of us, it was doing 60 knots, so it really was blowing a howling gale. Not long after we got back, Gordon Mallinson came back, and he had not seen Nev.

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:16:57] Gordon Bowra: I remember we got a Muskeg out and we tried to go down to Halley Bay then, and at that time the visibility was appalling. I can remember being roped to the front of the Muskeg so that we would not go over the cliffs. Well we jolly nearly... We got in the wrong position and could feel that there was something wrong, but not see. By the time we got down there, of course, it was dark and we had to retreat out of it. I think two of us went out onto the ice: it was Dudley and myself. Barry Kraehenbuehl was driving the tractor. I cannot remember who else was with us. I think there were six of us, but I cannot remember that exactly, but I do know that Dudley and myself went out onto the ice, which happened to be moving, shining lights onto the ice front to see if we could see anything at all. But it very clearly became clear that there was nothing one could do on the ice at all, and we retreated from that, and that is what I remember about that. There was absolutely nothing you could do at that particular time on that day and we knew the ice was moving.

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:18:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *Moving out?*

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:18:44] Gordon Bowra: Oh, up and down.

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:18:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *Breaking up?*

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:18:46] Gordon Bowra: Well we do not know it was breaking up because it was as far as the horizon, the ice was, so we did not know that it was breaking up. We could not go to where the sea started, not that day, because it was sea ice, but this was during the spring, and sure enough, it did break up. Everything broke up and in fact that emperor penguin rookery just disappeared, so something that was 60,000-odd birds there just disappeared.

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:19:26] Chris Eldon Lee: *Perished?*

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:19:28] Gordon Bowra: We do not know; went out to sea. The birds would not perish, but the young birds would. Any youngsters that were there would perish, yes, I should think. We do not know.

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:19:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Was this an exceptional wind, or something beyond your normal experience?*

Disc 2, Track 4 [0:19:48] Gordon Bowra: Yes. Sea ice had never been out, to our knowledge, before, at that time of year. Normally sea ice would break back, right in the spring, and that would be February-ish but this was September I think (I cannot remember).

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:20:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *That does not matter; we have got notes of that. You must have discussed what might have happened to Neville. Did you come to any guesstimate about that?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:20:23] Gordon Bowra: I do not think we could make any... We know that he had four dogs. We did not know where he was. We did not know what had happened. We do not know whether he went into the water. We do not know whether he was on an ice floe. We could not speculate. He did not have a tent, I don't think. I do not know; maybe he did. When we went out we always had tents if we were going on the ice, just in case, for shelter. I cannot remember what was on the small sledges; I really cannot remember.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *But you presume that he would have perished?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:12] Gordon Bowra: Yes, but why we do not know. Or how. We have got no idea.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *So he was doing nothing wrong; it was just...?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:21] Gordon Bowra: Absolutely not, I would not have thought. I just do not know where he was, and while there were two of them on the ice together, I do not know how individualistic... They were both individualists, so I just do not know how close they were to each other, but clearly Gordon did not know where he was.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *How did that change the dynamics of the base, either permanently or temporarily? The loss of a man?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:21:50] Gordon Bowra: I find that difficult to answer, really. It was really a dreadful thing that somebody had perished alone. I think it was the loneliness of that.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:22:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did it change the way the base operated? Were there new rules or regulations brought in to avoid it from happening again, or was that not feasible?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:22:26] Gordon Bowra: To be honest I cannot remember that. We were still going to do our big journeys, and it is the big journeys where life is very much more on an edge than around the base. But I suppose there are more people around the base at a particular time and therefore things are more likely that something will happen around a base, as opposed to at a distance, but that was something we really thought. That was the reason that I went out as a doctor. We really thought that most of our problems would be over the crevassed area, and that that was where things were likely to happen.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:23:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. You touched briefly on your own crevasse experiences with Gordon Mallinson. Is that correct? In fact there were two sets of experiences: one where the dogs went down and one where you went down yourself.*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:23:31] Gordon Bowra: Yes, that is right.

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:23:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you tell me a bit more about those?*

Disc 2, Track 5 [0:23:33] Gordon Bowra: Both these crevasses were... We had some knowledge there were holes there. The top one we came down on a lovely day, and it was one dog, running wide, that pulled the whole team down, and we were just entering the crevassed area at that time. There was a flag, so the flag marked where we thought was the start of the crossing problems, but there was no individual in front of the dogs. The dogs were running. We were driving the dogs at that time, left and right, but one dog ran very wide and fell down the hole, and pulled the rest of the team after him. Did not pull the sledge in, but it was a narrow thing. The dogs went down about 90 feet and they were all on a ledge. None of them injured themselves. Gordon Mallinson abseiled down, and we pulled them all out. There were three of us on top at that time. Two sledges travelling together. We pulled them all out with no casualties amongst the dogs.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:25:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were they still on their leads, on their spans? That's not the correct phrase is it? Were they still in their harnesses?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:25:16] Gordon Bowra: Well we pulled them up in their harnesses. We did pull them up in their harnesses, so their harnesses must have held at that time. I think all but one fell down. I think we had one dog but we gradually pulled them up and none of the dogs were injured. Amazing.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:25:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *The decision to go after them, was that an easy decision to make?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:25:48] Gordon Bowra: Yes. 'Dogs down there. We want to get home. Get the dogs up.' Not a problem. [laughs]

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:25:57] Chris Eldon Lee: *The alternative was manhauling.*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:26:00] Gordon Bowra: I don't fancy manhauling, and anyway the sledges were not in good condition at that time. They were suffering from overuse. They had been out 6 months and we were returning at the end of 6 months in the field.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:26:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *And when you yourself went down, what do you remember of that particular incident? I guess it is fairly burned into your memory, I would think?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:26:28] Gordon Bowra: Well that was one where the dogs were over the crevasse.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:26:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *They had gone through it, or gone past it?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:26:40] Gordon Bowra: They had gone over it. We knew the crevasse was there. It was a very big crevasse and it was a very thick bridge. There was not a problem about the bridge giving way. It did not give way as such. It just dropped and what we remember is just falling, and the trace of the dogs was into the lip of the crevasse and held the sledge up, if you like, but all you could see was the trace. The dogs had just scattered, so they had got themselves out of their harnesses just like that. We did not see that because Gordon and I were down the crevasse. I was travelling with Gordon Mallinson at that time. The other two, Sam and Dick, suddenly just saw spare dogs knocking around, and so obviously they were somewhat taken aback.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember what was going through your mind when you came to, down the crevasse? How deep were you, and what were your feelings about it?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:12] Gordon Bowra: Well we must have been about 20-30 feet down.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *That is a long way.*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:19] Gordon Bowra: We were the length of the trace, and it was being held by the harnesses, the harnesses of the dogs. There was no dog on the end

of the harness at that time; the dogs had scattered like that, but the harnesses were holding up the sledge.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Which was down the crevasse with you?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:44] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you think your time was...?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:49] Gordon Bowra: Like that!

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *There is a photograph here that Gordon is showing me. Was your number up? Did you think your number was up at that?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:57] Gordon Bowra: No, no, we never thought that.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:28:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *What was going through you mind?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:00] Gordon Bowra: Well we wanted to get out. [laughs]. Quite simple: 'Throw us a rope. Let's get out of here.'

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *So again you were not injured?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:09] Gordon Bowra: No we were not injured. I do not think we did anything. I think we lost a ski.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *You did indeed, yes.*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:18] Gordon Bowra: I cannot remember anything else.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:21] Chris Eldon Lee: *So was it a fairly quick rescue, then?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:23] Gordon Bowra: No, it took us some time. Unload a sledge, pull it up. Quite heavy.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *So take me through the process then. You unloaded the sledge to get that out first. Is that right?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:35] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:37] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you stayed down there to do this?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:40] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Presumably they hauled the sledge up and then they hauled all the gear up?*

Disc 2, Track 6 [0:29:43] Gordon Bowra: Yes, that is right. I really cannot remember but probably the sledge was the last thing. We probably came up. All this is manual, you understand, and therefore heavy. Yes, it took us some time.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:30:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *But afterwards you were unaffected by the experience?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:30:13] Gordon Bowra: No I do not think we were affected. Well we were a bit... I cannot remember talking to Gordon about that much. Both of us had been clearly involved with, well all of us, Sam (Dick was not involved), but we had been involved with Nev's demise. It was just life. That was part of things as they were but the Dawson-Lambton Glacier was not a happy place to cross. Dick and I – I think I was with Dick when we went out – you could feel it moving down. You could feel the slabs moving as you were on them. You could feel them moving as you were going up the slope.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:31:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *So would you regard that as a lucky escape, in retrospect?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:31:15] Gordon Bowra: Oh I suppose so, yes. It has got to be hasn't it? Got to be lucky.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:31:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *Let us talk about less dramatic times. You went on two big journeys: the first one in March '63, the autumn dog journey, when you went out to the Tottan Mountains. This was with Martin Winterton; is that correct?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:31:38] Gordon Bowra: Oh that was the first one. Yes, that was in the autumn, and that was when we had Muskegs, dogs and Eliasons. I think we had the lot then, as far as I remember, and we were at different places at different times. We did not have very good weather; we had very bad weather then I remember.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember losing the dogs?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:13] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were out for 26 days. 14 of them were spent in lie-ups.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:20] Gordon Bowra: I think it usually worked out at about half the time would be spent in lie-ups, something like that.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:29] Chris Eldon Lee: *170 miles?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:31] Gordon Bowra: Is that what we did? Did we really?

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:34] Chris Eldon Lee: *There is a story about losing the dogs one day.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:38] Gordon Bowra: Yes, that is absolutely right.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:44] Gordon Bowra: Is it?

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me the story.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:47] Gordon Bowra: Well I think we had just stopped. I cannot even remember what time of day, how soon it was into our journey.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:32:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was lunchtime.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:33:00] Gordon Bowra: Oh, was it, right? Martin and I were... There was nobody else around. There were no Muskegs. We were alone as far as we were concerned. Normally you tether the sledge. I think we were putting our skis on, or off, or something. We just stopped and the dogs took off and both of us missed hanging on to the sledge. It took off by itself. Oh God, that was not a happy time.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:33:46] Chris Eldon Lee: *So what did you do about it?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:00] Gordon Bowra: Well we followed them, as quickly as we could. You could tell the tracks of the dogs. Eventually they had a fight or something like that and we came upon the sledge. I cannot remember how many miles later it was, but it was a long way.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *8 miles.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:10] Gordon Bowra: 8 miles, was it? I did not write that up. Presumably Martin did, did he?

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:16] Chris Eldon Lee: *This is a sledge report. I do not know who wrote it, sadly.*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:23] Gordon Bowra: Well, it will be Martin Winterton, because he was the dog man, and I was travelling with Martin.

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:30] Chris Eldon Lee: *He is referring to himself: 'at the same time the dogs decided to move off with Martin hanging on to the sledge' so whether he wrote about himself in his own name, I do not know. Do you know why the dogs went?*

Disc 2, Track 7 [0:34:45] Gordon Bowra: Dogs can be very skitterish and when they have been out a long time, they can be reluctant to go, if you see what I mean. No, I cannot remember why they went, I really cannot.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *It took you 3 hours to get to them. 'Fortunately the dogs had tied the trace in knots, and one of the pups had it wrapped around his leg. He was in great pain but nothing was broken. Wilfred was covered in blood and had a bad fight wound on his right cheek. Both of us were exhausted and were forced to camp straight away.'*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:28] Gordon Bowra: Well we would.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *Again, when you saw them disappear into the distance, did you imagine you would always catch them again or was there a question of doubt?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:43] Gordon Bowra: Doubt.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *Really?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:46] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:47] Chris Eldon Lee: *And if you had not caught up with them...?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:51] Gordon Bowra: Well we would have perished. It is as simple as that.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:54] Chris Eldon Lee: *Everything you had was on the sledge?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:35:56] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. Well you would have to talk to Martin about that, what he thought about it. Very interesting. Is Martin part of your [?? inaudible]

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:36:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Not yet, but you never know. He goes on to say 'We have been very lucky.' Now that is your third lucky escape in the last two hours, Gordon.*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:36:25] Gordon Bowra: Yes, but the other two came later. The other three came later, if you like, because of the one when Nev went out on the mun [?? phonetic] and in fact the 'Keg nearly went over the top of the ice cliff.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:36:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *Were you having a charmed life, or did you think there was more to it than that?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:37:00] Gordon Bowra: No, it is just part of normal living at that time. I mean we were young. You are invulnerable at that time, aren't you? You are young; you would do all sorts of things, wouldn't you? And yes, we were doing things that we wanted to do.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:37:23] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did your own mortality ever cross your mind?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:37:27] Gordon Bowra: Not at that time, but you must realise that actually the first six inches of going through the top of snow is exactly the same as going down thirty feet. You relive it all the time. You are aware that things can happen, but you prefer not to think about them, I think.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:37:55] Chris Eldon Lee: *It is the Battle of Britain fighter pilot mentality. Some Fids who did have a number of lucky escapes came to the conclusion that they were being looked after by a Greater Being. Did that ever cross your mind?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:08] Gordon Bowra: Not my mind, no.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *No, OK. You did not turn to religion at all?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:12] Gordon Bowra: No, not at all.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Something else from '63, if I may. 'In an effort to stop parts of the base going nocturnal, 9am was the latest anyone could lie in bed, except on Sundays', and the Base Leader goes on to recommend this for future years to make an effort to combat nocturnalism.*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:33] Gordon Bowra: Yes. You became wrapped up in what you were doing during the evening, and would go later and later I guess. When it was dark you could not tell what time of day it was, so therefore the clock... It was very easy if you were working on something, to work later and later. That did occur to one person in particular, yes.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:39:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you have any input into this decision, as a doctor? That it was bad for people, for their body clocks to become so disorientated?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:39:21] Gordon Bowra: It is bad, yes, but I was not aware of having an input. I might well have had, but I cannot remember.

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:39:31] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. But you remember the decision being taken, to be more [?? inaudible]?*

Disc 2, Track 8 [0:39:36] Gordon Bowra: I cannot actually, but it does not seem unreasonable to me. No it is important. Your meal times have got to occur, otherwise it is not fair on the cooks, if everybody is in bed. I do not think that could happen. It never happened. I cannot remember that.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *So breakfast in bed was not an option?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:09] Gordon Bowra: Absolutely not.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *There was some concern because you were underground and there were coal fires in these underground huts, there was concern about carbon monoxide.*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:17] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:18] Chris Eldon Lee: *Tell me about that, please.*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:19] Gordon Bowra: Well at certain stages we did have carbon monoxide detectors; they were glass tubes, and sometimes they were very high. To look at the chimneys, the chimneys did not go straight up, but even if they did not go straight up, the cold air could fall down the chimney when it was very cold, and you could not get the gases away. So the bottom hut in particular was subject to... In order

to have the heat in there, you had to have a – we were talking about coal fires and therefore there was a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. As far as I remember, during the second year we had to have people sleeping down there because there was not room in the other hut. I think I was one of those; I think there were five of us. I cannot really remember but I think there were five people slept in the lower hut, really because of the lack of space. We had 30 people in the second year.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:41:45] Chris Eldon Lee: *So were precautions taken of any kind?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:41:49] Gordon Bowra: Well there was always a night met. There was always somebody up, in the buildings, to make sure that things were all right as far as the fires were concerned. But yes, there is a great risk of fire underground, obviously people not escaping. There had been deaths because of fire and those were in huts that were above ground. We were underground. I cannot begin to tell you how bad it would be if there was a fire.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:28] Chris Eldon Lee: *'The carbon monoxide detector has been very useful and very accurate. It tells you just how strong your headache should be.'*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:36] Gordon Bowra: Well yes; you used to get headaches.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *From carbon monoxide?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:41] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *And that was another detector was it, the headache?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:45] Gordon Bowra: I suppose you could put it that way.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:49] Chris Eldon Lee: *So one lived with this problem?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:42:54] Gordon Bowra: Oh I think you lived with all the problems. They were problems you had to live with. I mean you altered them as much as you could, but life was not as it is today.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:43:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *So if in the IGY hut, for example, the deeper hut, fire had become a problem, would there be an escape route, or would that be 'curtains'?*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:43:21] Gordon Bowra: Well there were two escape routes. There was the shaft and there were the steps down, but carbon monoxide is heavier isn't it? Heavier than air, so it would be at the bottom, so you would have to get your nose above it. [Transcriber comment: Carbon monoxide is in fact less dense than air. Andy Smith]

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:43:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *It was a bad year for weather, wasn't it? The emperor penguins suffered; with only ten percent chicks.*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:43:51] Gordon Bowra: They just disappeared. The whole emperor colony disappeared. It came back to some extent in the Chipantodd Creeks. I think there were a few there, but the main emperor penguin colony just disappeared. It just went out to sea and never came back to Emperor Bay, as far as I am aware.

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:44:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were very short of seals and the ship had to bring extra seals for you? Only 45 seals caught that year.*

Disc 2, Track 9 [0:44:23] Gordon Bowra: Right. Well first of all we brought down another dog team so there would be more dogs, and in fact the second year they brought two more dog teams. Now I remember we took 10 elephant seals from South Georgia. That was the coldest I have ever been in the Antarctic: it happened to be in South Georgia when we were sealing for these elephant seals. Now they are about two tons each so there is a lot of seal meat with those. I do not think we ever ran out of seal meat while I was there.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:44:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *One final note about Neville Mann. 'A cairn of Tottan rock with plaques and crosses erected on First Chipantodd headland. In future years please see the words regularly.'*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:45:14] Gordon Bowra: Well the wood was from the case of an X-ray machine which came down. I cannot remember when it came down, but anyway the wood was from that. The bricks were non-magnetic bricks as far as I am concerned. I cannot remember much about that. It was beautifully carved by, probably Dudley Jehan, I suppose.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:45:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *And there was a ceremony of sorts?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:45:54] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes. I think eventually it went on a sledge, so that it could be moved around, but I have got pictures of it.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:46:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Let us move forward then to the second season, if I may Gordon, which is 1964, and the Halley Bay report from that year. This one talks about your frustrations with the hand skin temperature experiments, due mainly to instrument shortcomings.*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:46:34] Gordon Bowra: I could not get it to work, and I could not do it manually.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:46:39] Chris Eldon Lee: *Hence your frustrations. It also talks about using more bitches in the sledging season. This was proving very successful. Sledging was mainly male dog dominated.*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:46:51] Gordon Bowra: You would always have to have a bitch or a couple of bitches. I think we had a couple of bitches in each. We actually lost one bitch in the mountains, Pam. We lost that dog.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *Do you remember how?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:08] Gordon Bowra: It got free, ran off, and did not return. I do not know why. I cannot remember why. The sledge report of that trip would be done by me, so it should be possibly in there somewhere.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *It is. I have already found it. You are quite right; she did vanish.*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:37] Gordon Bowra: We did expect her back because I cannot really think...

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:42] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you hang around for her?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:44] Gordon Bowra: Yes, as far as I remember, but I cannot remember where we were, actually. In the mountains somewhere. Beautiful mountains.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:47:59] Chris Eldon Lee: *That was the year of your big trip, on which Pam was one of the dogs taking part in the Mobsters team, and this was a six month trip? To the Tottanfjella?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:14] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:15] Chris Eldon Lee: *Starting in October '63 through to April '64. What are you abiding memories of that particular expedition?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:22] Gordon Bowra: Well, the beauty of the mountains, to be honest. The beauty of this huge range of mountains, all of which was unclimbed peaks.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:38] Chris Eldon Lee: *Did you conquer any of them?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:40] Gordon Bowra: Oh yes, all of them, all bar one actually. We did not go up one.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:44] Chris Eldon Lee: *You hinted earlier about the feelings you had when you broke through virgin territory so to speak. Can you elaborate on that a bit? When you conquered mountains that had not been tried before.*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:55] Gordon Bowra: Well I do not think they were conquered. You went up the easy way.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:48:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *Well you were the first man up there.*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:49:00] Gordon Bowra: Between the four of us, yes.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:49:05] Chris Eldon Lee: *A Neil Armstrong moment was it?*

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:49:07] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely. Yes, I can remember one of them, just having been to the top of one bit of rock, and that was when Kennedy was assassinated. That was the first time we had heard any radio at all. This was the South

African radio programme. We could not believe it really. We had just come back. So you always knew where you were when Kennedy was assassinated. We also heard the Beatles for the first time, as well.

Disc 2, Track 10 [0:49:51] Chris Eldon Lee: *You picked them up on South African radio?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:49:54] Gordon Bowra: Yes, South African radio. Yes, we had been out of touch of radio for a long time at that time but we could actually pick up a South African station.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:50:08] Chris Eldon Lee: *'The object of this trip was to do a topographical, geological and biological survey of the area, as well as carry out physiological work on husky bitches'. This is the thermometer job is it, or something else?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:50:24] Gordon Bowra: Well no. This was: we did try to stop the bitches from coming on season during trips by giving them (I think it was called) megastrol acetate, as far as I remember.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:50:40] Chris Eldon Lee: *A contraceptive?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:50:41] Gordon Bowra: Contraceptive, and that worked during the period we were out because we were out for a long time and a bitch on heat is a real problem with 8 dogs. Well with two dog teams, it would be a real problem I suspect.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:00] Chris Eldon Lee: *How did you administer this?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:02] Gordon Bowra: By mouth.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:03] Chris Eldon Lee: *Right. Disguised as food?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:08] Gordon Bowra: No, just pop it down their throat.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:11] Chris Eldon Lee: *A tablet was it?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:12] Gordon Bowra: Yes, not a problem.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:14] Chris Eldon Lee: *OK. Do you know where this originated from, this idea?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:16] Gordon Bowra: It started from one of the vets, I cannot remember.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:25] Chris Eldon Lee: *Bellars?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:26] Gordon Bowra: Was it? Andrew? It might well have started from Andrew. I really just cannot remember actually.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *I am guessing.*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:34] Gordon Bowra: It is probably down in the papers somewhere, but I have forgotten.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:41] Chris Eldon Lee: *So you put the dogs on the pill for the duration of their field trip?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:47] Gordon Bowra: Yes. By their field trip, yes.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:50] Chris Eldon Lee: *And this stopped them from coming into heat?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:51] Gordon Bowra: Yes.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *Innovative idea, isn't it?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:51:54] Gordon Bowra: Seemed a good idea at the time. Like lots of things: sometimes they are good ideas; sometimes they are not. But it seemed one.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:52:02] Chris Eldon Lee: *So one of your duties was to monitor the effectiveness of this.*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:52:05] Gordon Bowra: Yes. Well they quite enjoyed it sometimes. I have some pictures of various of the bitches being fed. Oh dear.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:52:19] Chris Eldon Lee: *What else do you remember of this particular trip, Gordon?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:52:23] Gordon Bowra: I think the sense of achievement at the end of it when we got back to base, but it had been a long trip, and all the equipment that we had (by that I mean the sledges and things like that), we had one intact bridge between two sledges. They were repaired with rope and things like that. Things were wearing out. The lampwick harnesses of the dogs were... Basically, everything was worn out really. The abiding memories I suppose of unknown territory and the beauty of it, and the fact we were, I suppose, lucky to be back at base, having fallen down a couple of holes. But that was not the only things. We had incidents when we were in the mountains.

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:53:53] Chris Eldon Lee: *How do you mean?*

Disc 2, Track 11 [0:53:55] Gordon Bowra: Well we had a very big blow one place we tried to get to. Lovely, wonderful campsite with a tremendous view over everything, but it started to blow. That went on for about 6 days and we ran out of food, two of us. We had to move in the end. There were obviously crevassed regions. When you are dealing with unknown territory, you can very rapidly get yourselves into problems, and actually climbing some of the bits of rock you can find that the only way up is over or through a... You had to stick to the rock rather than the snow around it but sometimes it is not possible to do and you are either going to get up there or you are not. So I think we had some interesting moments in climbing.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:55:10] Chris Eldon Lee: *You were a doctor, not an explorer, so this was increasingly alien territory for you, wasn't it?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:55:18] Gordon Bowra: It was lovely. I thoroughly enjoyed it. As a doctor you follow the normal doctor's thought that life is all medicine. There is no life outside medicine, and suddenly I was finding there was a life outside. There were things outside medicine, and we had been brainwashed into total immersion into medicine and suddenly there is a life outside. Very interesting.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:56:06] Chris Eldon Lee: *Liberating?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:56:07] Gordon Bowra: Liberating in some ways, yes. Absolutely.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:56:12] Chris Eldon Lee: *When you are away from base for 6 months, living hand to mouth in a raggedy old tent, how does it change you? How does it change your thinking at that time?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:56:24] Gordon Bowra: I have no idea. You have to retain a sense of humour, and in fact a sense of humour is the most important thing about having a good year I think. A sense of the ridiculous. People get themselves into ridiculous situations, quite a few ridiculous situations and you have to have a sense of humour about it. If you do not, I would imagine it would be very difficult. I was very lucky. It was a wonderful time of my life, it really was. I cannot imagine without it. The fact that we still see people around, not necessarily so many from my year, but we see all sorts of people that had been in other situations, in reunions. Once you have retired, you tend to go, or at least we have tended to go to reunions. That is because we like the company: different people of all walks and professions. Some are in professions, but some not. Some are without so-called qualifications. Everybody has a job, but actually the General Assistant is the most qualified person that has ever been down there.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *Jack of all trades?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:08] Gordon Bowra: Jack of all trades, yes. Very difficult to get good General Assistants. Martin was a General Assistant (dog man).

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:17] Chris Eldon Lee: *And were you as well, in a way?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:18] Gordon Bowra: Well yes, in a way I suppose.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:20] Chris Eldon Lee: *Apart from the reunions, on a broader scale how do you feel, looking back now, your Antarctic experiences shaped or moulded you for the rest of your life?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:31] Gordon Bowra: Totally.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:32] Chris Eldon Lee: *Can you elaborate on that?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:58:33] Gordon Bowra: Well I mean I think it has totally. I think the jobs that you have taken would also be to do with occupation. Well in my case

occupation rather than pure medicine, or surgery. Some people have gone up the pure medicine and surgery; some people have gone into general practice. People like Neil Orr, who is a surgeon; other people are general practitioners. But there are more people I think that have followed into occupational medicine, having been down South. Maybe I am wrong. So, both consultants, general practitioners, but also people having to do with occupation as a part of their job, which certainly was mine.

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:59:43] Chris Eldon Lee: *What did you do next then, since you came back?*

Disc 2, Track 12 [0:59:47] Gordon Bowra: Well the first job I had was casualty surgeon at St Georges at Hyde Park Corner and then I tossed a coin. There were two jobs: one was with a lumber company in Canada. I thought if I went there, I would never come back to this country. The other was a general practice with a mate of mine (we qualified together) in Chiswick. I also met Wendy, my wife, and we landed up in general practice in Chiswick, where I was for 5 years. Then I joined the Research Department at Boots, and then we had an occupational problem, a problem with one of the processes they had. So I was with Boots for 5 years in Nottingham and then I moved to here, where I am now, and joined ICI in Runcorn. Well all over really of course; ICI had sites all over. I became involved in different things, and I suppose we were there until ICI... When I joined they had a workforce of 18,000, and when I left had a workforce of less than 8,000. I then joined the Employment Medical Advisory Service in Bootle, in Liverpool, and I was responsible for Cheshire and Merseyside, and I saw a lot of interesting things there, especially in Merseyside.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:02:07] Chris Eldon Lee: *Outside your professional life, do you think the Antarctic experience shaped the future Gordon Bowra.*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:02:19] Gordon Bowra: Oh absolutely, I think so. I do not think there is any doubt about that. I still see people that I was South with; people come and stay; or you see people that you know. It is just like you... There isn't a problem in meeting people of that era or what have you. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I think most of my friends did. There were some people I don't think that had good times down there, and I think there were some very bad years, I suspect.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:03:09] Chris Eldon Lee: *Some Fids talk about becoming more self-confident or broadening their experience of life. Some learned to cook down there and became better husbands because they were more versatile.*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:03:23] Gordon Bowra: I do not know about that. As far as cooking is concerned, I found that cooking for 30 was extremely intimidating, and I have tried never to cook since that time. I am very against cooking. For individuals, for two of you when you are sledging it is not a problem. One guy cooks one day, the other guy cooks the other day. That is not a problem, but cooking for 30: you have always made too much or not enough. [laughs] So I did not enjoy cooking for large numbers of people.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:04:01] Chris Eldon Lee: *Has your ability to solve problems, do you think that has been improved by facing the challenges of the Antarctic?*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:04:08] Gordon Bowra: I cannot really answer that. You certainly look for different things. You certainly try to solve a problem rather than... There are all sorts of Fids' bodes. It is amazing what people did, and how they got things to do.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:04:36] Chris Eldon Lee: *You are not suggesting you do this on the operating table, are you?*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:04:40] Gordon Bowra: No. Apart from minor surgery as a Casualty Officer, or as a GP, no there were no Fids bodes carried out in surgery.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:04:58] Chris Eldon Lee: *Looking back then, over the years of your life, how do you rate the Antarctic experience of those two years? Is it at the top there, or partway down your list of memories?*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:05:08] Gordon Bowra: Oh at the top. Right at the top, I suspect. The other time I really enjoyed was flying while I was at school, having flown a Spitfire once, and a Meteor, one after the other. But mainly Chipmunks. No I enjoyed it; it was a really great time of my life, I thought.

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:05:33] Chris Eldon Lee: *We will leave it there, Gordon. Thank you very much indeed.*

Disc 2, Track 13 [1:05:37] [End of Part Two]

ENDS

Snippets:

- Husky rectal temperature project. Disc 1, Track 6 [0:29:19]
- First impressions of Halley Bay. Disc 1, Track 8 [0:37:13]
- A card table and wooden light bulbs. Disc 1, Track 10 [0:48:13]
- The death of Strom, the cat. Disc 1, Track 11 [0:54:15]
- Quality of the equipment. Disc 2, Track 1 [0:00:57]
- The loss of Neville Mann. Disc 2, Track 3 [0:14:45]
- Dogs down a crevasse. Disc 2, Track 5 [0:23:33]
- Body clocks disrupted in winter. Disc 2, Track 8 [0:38:15]
- Carbon monoxide risk. Disc 2, Track 9 [0:40:19]
- Disappearance of the emperor penguin colony. Disc 2, Track 9 [0:43:44]
- Canine contraceptives. Disc 2, Track 11 [0:50:24]