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**Retirement of John Bawden, Institute Secretary. Presentation speech made by the Director, David Drewry.**

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**Part 1 (A)**

David Drewry : [recording starts mid-sentence] a member of BAS, someone who has really made an outstanding contribution to the success and effectiveness and the development of the Survey over just about twenty years. That person, of course, as we all know is John Bawden. Now I know that occasions like this can be very stressful. Some would say they can be even as stressful as working in Admin Division. But, nevertheless, I just intend on this occasion to do really nothing other than just outline some of the areas where I think John [recording stops] .. unduly.

John Bawden : I'll believe it when it happens.

David Drewry : First of all, we have to have the mandatory biographical sketch and, as many of you will know, and there are indeed one or two people here who will recall this personally, John joined BAS in 1971. His previous experience had been with the Nature Conservancy, Department of Education and the Treasury. Now at that time, 1971, BAS was located at Gillingham Street in London and the then Director was Sir Vivian Fuchs. And we're also very pleased that on this occasion, one or two of the people who were with John in Gillingham Street, who have also retired from the Survey, are here. We've got Anne Todd, we've got Bill Sloman – it's very nice to see you here indeed.

John Bawden : Hear, hear. Thank you.

David Drewry : Right, well subsequently of course, from joining in 1971, John went on to occupy various positions in BAS. He became the Finance Officer in succession to Eric Salmon in 1974 and then of course he moved to Cambridge. And I should say he was in the vanguard of those who moved to Cambridge, prior to the relocation of BAS, first of all in All Saints Passage in the downtown area, and then on to site here at High Cross.

Now, in 1978, when Bill Sloman retired, John became the Institute Secretary, or as we now term it, Head of Administration, and that's a post that John has held with enormous flair and enormous enthusiasm as well for the job since that time. And this of course was later recognised by his temporary, then substantive, promotion to Grade 6.

Well, in the four years that I have been associated and been able to work very closely with John, I can confirm everything that has been said about him. And it's true, let's face it! Of course, I do refer to the positive and superlative issues that have come to bear on John's excellent period as heading up BAS Administration. But let me tell you another side, and that is that some of you, I hope maybe more than I could put numbers to, have actually

experienced going South with John, and you will know that he is indeed a delightful travelling companion. And away from the pressures of BAS HQ he is almost human!

Now, I am told that on one journey South, he arrived in Rio and was subsequently, before joining the ship, making the usual perambulations on the Copacabana, where numerous of the shoe-shine urchins that you find were pestering him like mad to polish his shoes. Well, some of you may know, he declined the offer of these ragamuffins. Then some of the more organised ones have companions further down the way, who have brought to a high art the ability of flicking a disgusting glutinous mixture of grease and unmentionable filth with an air of alacrity onto the shoes of the passers-by. And in this case, John was caught not just once, but twice, within a hundred yards by these guys and to this day, I am told by the people who were there, they didn't know whether of course at that time being a Finance Officer they were trying to work out whether John would recognise the shoe-shine as value for money, or whether they are the largest shoes they had ever been set foot on the Copacabana beach and they were really pointing out the need for a shoe-shine, or, as the less charitable members of the Bransfield's crew commented, that these antics actually improved the appearance of John's shoes in the first place.

However, I was delighted to travel South with John this last season and I think that I'm pretty certain that he enjoyed his valedictory tour as well. I'm certain that he enjoyed sleeping on the top bunk, with his nose pressed against the ceiling pipes of HMS Endurance. I know for certain that he enjoyed the six-and-a-half hour flight from Rothera to Halley without ear defenders. I know that he enjoyed being swung out over the bow of Bransfield in a rope cage onto the ice, well, just onto the ice anyway. He also enjoyed the flight from Halley to Rothera, without ear defenders again, for six-and-a-half hours and I know that he also enjoyed going from Rothera to Marsh for about four hours without ear defenders. And finally, he enjoyed this last trip, running the gauntlet of Montezuma's Revenge in Punta Arenas. So I'm pretty well convinced that he had a good trip this last season.

Well, as many of you know who have worked for BAS for some little time, John has been one of the most loyal, stalwart and dependable of people and he has always put the interests of BAS and his division uppermost and striven to achieve the very best for the Survey. He's put in long hours and has encountered many difficult problems which he has solved, and I'm certain that I speak for my predecessors that we could not have wanted for a better and more reliable member of staff and latterly as Head of Administration. And as aside, of course, that BAS has grown, the multifarious tasks have grown in enormity. But equally well, John has grown with those problems and his considerable abilities to manage our resources most effectively has been the hallmark of his time as Head of Administration. And, of course, we know that he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of our operations, from which we have all benefited very much, and I can speak very personally of that, having come in four years ago to BAS as a new boy.

Of course, times have not always been good and we know that in the late 1970's, BAS was on a severely declining budget and it was really through John's firm, prudent but always fair management that BAS was still able to achieve a very high quality programme in Antarctica. So the success of BAS in recent years and our enviable reputation owe much, probably much more than we can specifically identify, to the untiring and unstinting effort and the determination of John Bawden.

Well, if we have only just returned from our trip South, I should recall an incident resulting from John's third visit to the Antarctic in 1974. A few days after returning back to the United Kingdom, a signal was sent from the Bransfield which, and it remains on the file, reads as follows: "From Bransfield to London, for Bawden. On clearing out your cabin, discovered four raspberry whips, three blackcurrant tarts, two cherry flans and a partly consumed marmite muffin. Do you wish them manifested and boarded to you as cargo, or shall you collect them in person at Southampton?"

Well, there are several other messages that are associated with that and I was trying for the life of me to try to find one that was John's response to this, and only after some fairly heavy searching did I suddenly realise that one particular tel was the response, but it was written in typical Admin-speak and it went : "Bransfield, from Bawden. Approval granted to write-off obsolete items listed. Please inform Catering Officer that small sum set aside for replacements to made be available for me on arrival Southampton".

Well, I can vouch for John's sweet tooth and I'm going to return to him the bar of Bournville chocolate [lots of laughter] that he left on the Bransfield on his last trip. So there you are, John [much laughter].

Now, I think behind every successful individual there is also somebody else who is successful and usually in a very supportive role. And it's no surprise that with John's ability as a gastronomic taster, that Sheila his wife has been equally successful, not only in supporting John, but in her catering business, and those of us who were privileged yesterday to have a sampler of the fare that Sheila has been producing, all I can say is that are we still going to recognise John as his tall, slim self once he is well into this particularly culinary retirement, which I am sure he is going to be inveigled into and I believe there is no support for the rumour that he is going to be exchanging his golf ball for tea balls later on.

Anyway, Sheila has supported John over many years and I'm absolutely delighted, as all of us are, that she is able to come today to this retirement occasion.

So John, your friends and colleagues have wished to mark this retirement in a special way, and we want to do that by giving you a small gift. There are many people who have contributed to this who can't be here today. They come from people on the ships, from the Biscoe, and from the Bransfield. They come from people at Newcastle, standing by the James Clark Ross. They come from the bases, from Bird Island, from Signy, from Faraday, from Rothera, from Halley 4 and Halley 5. They come from the Falkland Islands. There are many people who have wanted to mark this occasion. So really, on behalf of all of us I want to extend to you our very best wishes for a successful, productive and above all enjoyable, stress-free retirement.

We'll do this by numbers, John. First of all, your small card.

John Bawden: Oh, excellent, excellent. [opening presents and card].

David Drewry : And then, John, we have a small gift for you. I hope it will give you pleasure in your retirement. And there is an accompanying item, another small accompanying item, which is just here.

John Bawden : This feels as though it might be that Signy rock that we brought back [laughter]. [opening present]. Oh, tremendous. Oh, this is wonderful, really marvellous. Thank you very much indeed.

David Drewry : Before we go on, John, I think we've got to, we've got something for Sheila. I think, if Jane [Goswell, Director's Secretary] is here [clapping].

John Bawden : [unwrapping sounds]. Oh, more of the same. That really is fantastic.

Sheila Bawden : John, you've got to pick it up.

David Drewry : Well, John, I've got a few telegrams here that have come. I'm not going to read them all out, but they've come from bases and from other people. There is just one from the Biscoe, which a little bit I think is appropriate. And it says "Like so many positions reps over the years, this one comes from down in the Antarctic, to remember your retirement. The Survey goes on from rags to riches, you may ask which is the worse of the two evils. However, we reflect that had it not been in part for your services, this, your last position report from the Biscoe may not have existed". And that's the Biscoe doing the Bransfield's final tour down the Peninsula, entirely unexpected. So, John, I'll leave you those to read in due course.

John Bawden : Thank you very, very much. [laughter]. This looks so generous to me that I guess somebody might have had to put out an RTP2 [laughter]. First of all, I'd like to thank David for those kind words and it's super to see Bill and Anne and Nigel here. Thank you very much for coming.

David was right when he said that I have been with BAS for almost twenty years and that's the longest period that I've been in any particular government department or institute. I came to BAS in 1971 and that was after a period of secondment to a number of various government departments and institutes, with the intention of finding a somewhat more exciting and challenging job. I remember going to my interview with Sir Vivian Fuchs, and as I came out of the lift the first person I saw was Bill Sloman, who I knew from [inaudible] days. I was taken in to see Sir Vivian Fuchs for this interview. That lasted about 45 minutes and as it was quite clear that the interview was coming to an end, I thought "Well, it's about time to get up and go. Probably he'll report back to NERC and NERC will take several months before they make a decision and I might know some time later whether I've got the job or not". So as I got up to go, Bunny Fuchs said to me, "Well, do you want the job, or don't you want the job?". [laughter] So I said, "Yes, I'd like the job". So he said, "Well, you've got it". So I thought that was quite a refreshing start to come to BAS [laughter].

I'm in an exciting and challenging job and living for that, I certainly haven't been proven wrong. I very quickly became attuned to the ethos of BAS, it's lack of bureaucracy, certainly the first ten years and, notably, its friendliness. I haven't been in any other organisation where everybody's so extremely friendly. At that time, it was indeed a far cry from central government and what a breath of fresh air I thought BAS was in my early days. I still do, I hasten to add. I'm also just delighted to see Bill's ..... [inaudible]. Nice to see you, Bill.

I enjoyed a very short but very happy time at Gillingham Street, with Sir Vivian Fuchs as Director. In 1973, I began what turned out to be an excellent working relationship with Dick

Laws, over fourteen years and I've been fortunate indeed to have continued such a good relationship over the last four years, working closely with David.

I've had the pleasure of working with three Directors, needless to say each very different in their own way and perhaps that has added an extra spice to life. I've had the very great privilege to be one of the relatively few people to visit the Antarctic and, indeed, on a number of occasions. In fact, I can confirm from this last trip that it is never too late to add to the Tick List. After my visit to Antarctica in 1974, I made my first visit to Fossil Bluff in a geological field party only some two months ago. As David said, I also had the pleasure of a Rothera/Halley flight and in necessitous circumstances, a return flight. However, unlike some others who I won't mention today, I don't regard myself as a tick merchant. Perhaps I should add at this stage that Sheila has also been very pleased for me to go off for weeks at a time to other parts of the world. In fact, on one occasion, without letting her know too far in advance, circumstances dictated that I arrived home some 7-10 days early, which completely shattered her social calendar on my return. So I hesitate to come back early these days.

I've also been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel to the many other parts of the world for meetings and seminars, for which I've been very grateful.

I've certainly got many memorable experiences of BAS. Two that come to mind are being hove-to for thirty-six hours in the Red Passage on my first trip South. I must confess that was my first time of being at sea and I really thought my time had come. And the other trip was to Rothera when, quite unexpectedly, a rock decided to jump out of the water and rip half the ship out.

But I do have a lot of happy memories. I've been always welcomed most warmly by the Fids at all the bases, it really has been tremendous and in that respect, I shall miss that very, very much. Indeed, I shall miss all the staff that have made up BAS over these twenty years.

It's always somewhat invidious to single out people for their help and assistance, but I'm going to have a go and I apologise if I miss anybody out. I must thank my section heads in my own division, both past and present and all my staff in Admin Division for their loyalty and dedication, often coping with a very heavy workload in recent years. We all know it's often very difficult to maintain enthusiasm when working long hours, week after week and particularly during the summer period when people want to take leave and at the same ensure that the BAS programme is up and running for the following season.

I've certainly valued tremendously the expertise of the Base Commanders and the ex Fids now in the permanent South, who have more often than not, in fact quite frequently given me the benefit of their expertise and their advice, which in many occasions has been hard-won over many years.

I'd like to thank the Masters, officers and crew of the Bransfield, who have always made me most welcome on board and I'm only sorry that I've not had the opportunity to sail on Biscoe, or indeed on the James Clark Ross, but perhaps somebody might bear it in mind and arrange a visitation.

Although the odds were three-to-one against, and now six-to-one against, I have enjoyed the discussions, debates and challenges of the Director's Committee and I thank my fellow Heads of Divisions and their staff for their help and understanding.

Two people I would like to thank individually. Can't really spot her here, but Elizabeth Edwards, who coped with my secretarial work for many years. And to Jane Goswell, who I was very pleased agreed to fill the vacancy, particularly as she liked to keep up her shorthand, which I am confident, though many will disagree with me, has made me more productive than I otherwise might have been with my own pc.

So I do thank everybody for their assistance over the many years, particularly those who have worked unstintingly and over very long hours to ensure the success of the BAS programme. I have had the good fortune of a satisfying, stimulating and rewarding 20 years with BAS and I can certainly vouch, not just for myself but possibly for many people here today, that there is never a dull moment.

There is one person in particular that I must thank and that's my wife.

Finally, for those who haven't met him, may I introduce Frank Curry. There you are, Frank [laughter]. I thought this was a good opportunity for those who don't know Frank or who haven't met him to know that he is the lucky chap who is going to succeed me and perhaps I should say that there is no truth in yet another BAS rumour, that Frank became grey when the Bransfield's engines stopped just north of Signy Island.

So, thank you all for your generosity. I've had a marvellous time at BAS. I'm very sorry to be leaving and the best of luck to you all. Thank you very much [applause].