

ALAN GREEN

Edited transcript of interview with Alan Green conducted by Jaap Verdenius in 1993. BAS archives AD6/24/3/33. Transcribed by Allan Wearden, October 2020.

[0:00:00] Verdenius: Now let's sit down while we are talking. That's better, you sit there and I take that chair is that OK?

[0:00:16] (Mrs Green makes a comment, but can't pick it up, then various other comments from three people not picked up).

[0:00:58] Verdenius: When did you go to Antarctica?

Green: 1963. Aye I went on the *Shackleton* in 1963. Is that thing working is it!?

[0:01:12] Verdenius: Yes, yes its working good!

Green: Oh you can cut it out after?

[0:01:20] Verdenius: I just record what we say, we don't have to its just recording.

Green: Yes.

Green: Well I left here in September '63 from Southampton, to Montevideo, Uruguay, stayed there a week and then from there to the Falkland Islands We were kitted out in the Falkland Islands we were there two weeks. Then we went south to the Antarctic bases I went to Signy Island in the connection with the building of the new hut the biological laboratory.

[0:02:09] Verdenius: How did you get involved with the expedition?

Green: My brother's a teacher at a technical college and there was an advert in one of the papers in there and it was '*Men wanted to build biological laboratory in Antarctica. Accustomed to extreme conditions!*' And now I wrote because I had previous experience in Canada, is I think that is why I was interviewed and selected, although when I went down to London first for the interview they told me the jobs were all filled, and then a girl came out and she said 'You've interviewed and passed and everything and you'll definitely hear from them', and I did! It was very short notice, I had to go, yes.

[0:03:10] Verdenius: In Canada what did you do?

Green: Same thing building, building work, transit huts up in Copper Mine in the North West Territory, that's right in the Arctic Ocean...Beaufort Sea area, yes! That was in, that would have been 1961, the year of 1961, but then when I was home here I used to be home for maybe three or four months; I just worked locally until I went away again. And of course I worked on the satellite tracking station in the Falkland Islands as well in 1966 to '67. I came home here in 1967 and then, aye, there was a minor invasion in the Falkland when I there as well, there was a highjacked plane from Argentina and it landed in the peat - the Falkland Islands is like a huge peat bog you know! - and this highjacked plane was forced down, the pilot had a gun to his head, right besides where we were working on this foundation, and

there was 40 armed terrorists in this thing, in this plane, and about the same number of civilians! But they had folding automatic rifles in their suitcases and when the pilot was airborne, going from...I think it was Buenos Aires to Santiago, and these terrorists opened their suitcases and took their guns out in mid air and hijacked the aeroplane! And the...it landed in the peat bog and they thought they distributed leaflets and I always remember him saying in his broken English, 'We do not come as aggressors but as Liberators'! And they were very surprised that everyone spoke English and nobody spoke Spanish in the Falkland Islands, aye! And that plane was watched with these terrorists for two or three days, then they had to give themselves up! The civilians off, and then in two days they gave up and a boat came down from Argentina and it stopped three miles out in territorial waters, and they shipped these 40 terrorists out under armed guard and went on to the Argentinian boat and there was never a word spoken, they were just handed over! That was maybe '66/'67, aye '66, I got home in '67 from the Falklands - you ever heard that?

[0:06:20] Verdenius: No!

Green: In fact I've got a photograph of the hijacked plane.

Mrs Green: I've not seen it.

Green: Somebody took a photograph of the plane in the bog. I had it here, but I can't find it!

Mrs Green: I wonder where it can be because I looked all over for the photographs but that's all I could get - I did look last night. I think you won't find it there because I had them down. It's not there Alan, no? I don't know where that photograph would be? That's penguins and that's seals.

Green: I've lost some of my photographs then, I must have mislaid them I don't know where.

[0:07:06] Verdenius: Ah! When you were in the winter in Antarctica did it resemble the Arctic?

Green: Yes I did think of the resemblance but it seemed to me there was far more snow and ice in Antarctica, and very remote compared with the Canadian Arctic. In the Canadian Arctic there is also Eskimo, all sorts of Eskimo settlements, Indians, in Antarctica nothing, it's just desolate miles and miles of ice! And penguins and seals hundreds of penguins, millions of penguins, on some of the bases and if you went through penguin rookery they'd be pecking, at your feet all of the time, quite sore, aye.

[0:08:16] Verdenius: And you went to Signy and was there a hut at that time?

Green: An old whaler's hut, I think that's the one that they were using. We slept in it at first but there was a British base there where we had to. There was Rolls Royce generators we put in for new light and a new biological laboratory. There was divers and weathermen and quite a lot of biologists at that place because there was great bird sanctuary, all the Antarctic seabirds, skuas...the big ones albatrosses and that sort they nested there on Signy. It was very nice island Signy, aye.

[0:09:09] Verdenius: Nice?

Green: Oh aye very, yeah, a beautiful little island, aye. But the buildings all were close to the shoreline, built on exposed rock on the shoreline. But everything had to be done by hand, you dug your foundations by hand everything had to be manhandled, it was quite difficult at times!

[0:09:42] Verdenius: Did you dig the foundations by hand?

Green: Aye with shovels and picks for the holes down for the bases. That took about six months, five months maybe, and then when I came home there was some stayed behind finishing it inside. But we moved in and slept in there within a couple of months I suppose, then the following year I came home and the following year I went back and went to Deception Island, this time for a new hut there, and that was built at Deception Island is a volcanic island and it just resembled a giant ash pit with natural pumice, and we didn't have to carry gravel for our fondu cement there, everything was just - fondu cement is fresh water and gravel, this pumice dust, and this is the concrete, and it was very good. I tested it, a good natural mix that was in Deception Island.

[0:11:03] Verdenius: Did you stay there...summer and winter?

Green: No I didn't stay the winter, no just, I was what they called a summer visitor, a builder! My main part of the builders, there was about six of us and we used to get the building up. I could have stayed but I didn't really want to overwinter, I'd rather come home, aye. Deception would have been alright but some of the bases during the winter they got, Halley Bay I don't think they have any daylight in the winter there, stuck, and some of the huts are underground I believe, under the ice! And every year they build one on the top and it sinks, sinking all the time.

[0:11:59] Verdenius: Did you know about the volcano?

Green: No, for then I was home and I saw it. I didn't even know it at the time for I and happened to look down, I was down I was working in England and I was in a pub one night and there was a *National Geographic* magazine - do you know this *National Geographic*? -I think it was an American one under the table, and I happened to look down and I saw 'Island Explodes'! And I knew before I picked it up what it was because I'd put up this hut there, and this lad with me, because we were all joiners, because I remember them my brother-in-law was with me, and there was about four of us, and I picked up this magazine and I held it up and I said 'None of you here are going to believe this', I said, 'But I had to do with the erection of the British hut in this place!' and they all said 'Pull the other leg!' and I said 'Well bloody true!' and it was true! And it's one of those things, the way they picked this up nobody believed me but it was perfectly true. They believed it later because I'd got proof. It's funny, wasn't it a coincidence!

[0:13:15] Verdenius: Did you also go back after the eruption?

Green: No I haven't been back since, no. I don't think it's been, it's a weather station that more than anything, although I believe it was a whaling station at one time. But you see it used occasionally bubble & boil and there was always sulphur fumes oozing up out of this, like a huge ash pit, and in 1928 they had to beat a hasty retreat from there in 1928 because the sea started to boil, and they said it was blistering the paint on their ships and they had to get out of there. But it has erupted in the past but the last time it erupted there was bases on the island, but I don't think they've had a base there since, no.

[0:14:11] Verdenius: The time that you were there could you feel there was a volcano?

Green: Oh yes, oh you could see it man! It used to steam this sulphur out of the water, used to be warm the salt water and you could taste the sulphur in it, and on certain days we used to call them fumaroles, fumes and you could actually see it like steam. You never used to say 'The bloody place is going to blow some day', and it did! And it wasn't totally a surprise like, really the scientists were half expecting something of the kind, but I think it erupted in the middle of the night this rumble, and the staff had to run and try and get cover of some sort from this red hot rocks raining down on them, and they said they were going six or seven miles in the air and coming down about 40 miles from the epicentre, do they call it, OK about 40 miles away! And I don't know how they got them out in the end, possibly taken out by helicopter from a ship lying 20 or 30 miles off the coast. There was an Argentinian base and a Chilean base on that island at that time, yes.

[0:15:48] Verdenius: Did you meet any Argentinians?

Green: Yes, yes they used to, I never went to their base, about 14 miles from our base, and on a Sunday they used to walk over this, well, mountain or come up by boat. Oh yes we saw them quite a lot yes, aye, Argentinians and Chileans, they was no trouble or nothing like that then. There was this discordant in Argentina and this war and this Falkland Island thing, I mean it didn't affect us or anything like that.

[0:16:38] Verdenius: What did you do when you were there, when you went to visit?

Green: Oh nothing, just stayed in had a coffee and say 'Hello'. Some of them couldn't speak English of course and then... it was just a day out for them, just a trip out on a Sunday when they weren't working, they'd come up, they walked across, it was quite a walk, 14 mile across this terrain, but sometimes they'd come by boat, motorboat, sometimes. I've got photographs of that somewhere as well but I don't know where I stuck them away. We looked last night and can't find them. At Signy Island that hut Sir Vivian Fuchs come down on the, and there was black stone laid on it - I'd show you a photograph, but I've a photograph somewhere of the builders and Sir Vivian Fuchs took a photograph. There's a stone, [sounds of looking for photos] here, that's Sir Vivian Fuchs himself, that's the stone they made. It's lettered 'This stone was laid by Sir Vivian Fuchs'. I don't know if our names are on it or not but that was a bit of a minor celebration.

[0:18:32] Verdenius: You don't know what it said?

Green: I think it said 'This stone was laid in the foundations by Sir Vivian Fuchs'...I forget what else it said. No, you can read it!

[0:19:02] Verdenius: Was it a special stone?

Green: Well it was made....what date is it 1963, 1964? I can see that, 'British Antarctic Survey...this stone laid by Sir Vivian Fuchs', etc, 'This stone laid by Sir Vivian Fuchs'. I don't what is it, I don't know what it is but it's the 16th something, 1964, and that was laid in the foundation of the building That's the steelwork and fibreglass sections, they are bolted on to this. That was quite a bit of work the steelwork because we'd to dig everything by hand.

[0:20:18] Verdenius: Was it cold?

Green: Well this was during in their summer. I would say it's similar to our winter here.

[0:20:27] Verdenius: Right.

Green: You could occasionally get days like this, but I used to think they were here during the Antarctic summer when we did the building. It was quite cold just like a winter here, the winters got very cold! But away I don't know about this one but some of the places go below 40, 50 below zero.

[0:20:52] Verdenius: Did you always work with your bare hands?

Green: No, no, no, usually gloves, you'd special clothes if you needed it to keep you warm. You see you'd to work in all kinds of weather to get this up during the period, you couldn't stop because it was cold, rain and snowing, you'd got to get the thing completed in time, yes!

[0:20:19] Verdenius: So did you see Sir Vivian Fuchs often?

Green: Oh I went to conference in Cambridge once and we had a party at his house in Cambridge. Oh yes I didn't talk with him much but I knew him well enough to say 'Hello' to and all that. Oh aye, a very pleasant man Sir Vivian Fuchs!

[0:21:49] Verdenius: Any other base members when you were there at Deception Island?

Green: Well we all got on very well with one another, oh yes you had to. It used to be you were supposed to have a certain natural before you went down there because you'd to live close to one another, aye, you couldn't have rows and things like that, no! You'd very even temperaments, nothing upset you I suppose.

[0:22:33] Verdenius: And how did you go to...did you have spare time?

Green: Mostly on a Sunday, we didn't do much on a Sunday unless it was necessary. The day some of them went climbing and skiing but I didn't do that. Some of them liked going to dogs and sledges, there was huskies and sledges. In fact they've still got them and the last letter I got they're thinking of doing away with the dogs. The men don't want this, they want to keep the dogs. But you know how many dogs did it say in that letter? There's about a 100 dogs yet down there on the different bases...huskies of course. BAS may not like them as

they can go out in their time off with the dogs and their dog teams, aye. But of when's there's dogs they've got to be fed and you've got shoot seals, they're fed the seal meat and it just annoys some of the biologists. I'm think these, they don't want the seals being shot to feed dogs, because there's no need for the dogs and there's no need to shoot seals, but the base members they don't want this they want to keep these dogs. You're recording this are you!?

[0:24:15] Verdenius: Yes! And I'm, just recording this is I mean it's a statement [Green: Aye.] I do this for the recording.

Green: And then you sort everything out?

[0:24:29] Verdenius: And I just sort things out and then to talk to my director when I get home. I can tell to my director what I heard but I better let him hear some of the tape so that he can know how people speak, what they actually said.

Green: Well I could mention before I went back once there was an Antarctic tragedy with a Snowcat going into a crevasse and the doctor and two assistants were crushed to death! And one chap, I think it was Ian Ross from Aberdeen, had to make his way own back to base. It was a miracle how he managed to get back. Now that was in, that must have been 1964 or '65? but you'd find this out through their records of the Snowcat going into the crevasse. Then I was at Adelaide Island, we put in, built a jetty there for off-loading a concrete rig as far out into the sea as possible. There was a year after I left there the wireless operator and the carpenter that was left to finish everything, they set out once, one day, with a dog team. They were a day away from the base and it blew up a severe storm and gale and they were both lost, frozen to death, and the dogs! And they didn't know where they were going, there was no instructions, but eventually they found them both, everything frozen solid these two lads and the dogs! Because I believed it gusted up 140mph and it blew for three days and they just didn't even had time to go for shelter, this wind got up suddenly they didn't even had time to dig a hole for themselves. It was two or three days before they found them.

[0:26:44] Verdenius: Did you see it?

Green: No, no but I was working in the Falkland Islands when the news came in, but I was mates with one of them. In fact he happened to be Scots, he came from Peebles somewhere down there, Innerleithen I think. Tom Allan, his name was Tom Allan, but he was I think he carpenter/joiner but in this country I think he also did ski instructing, things like that. But he was lost down there so that was five people that died actually that I knew or had met or worked with, so that was five in three years!

[0:27:33] Verdenius: Did that surprise you?

Green: It did! Because it can be very dangerous, because we was warned all the time from the higher authorities to watch what we were doing, especially for climbing those ice mountains, you couldn't stop them. Oh I never did much of that but some them did! Another thing was going out on the sea ice and you could drop through the ice and everything, soft ice, but I've known a sledge to drop right through the ice, a motorised sledge, and all

struggling to get it out but it wasn't very funny at the time! You were warned about that, the sea ice, especially near that volcanic island now, you made it soft spots which didn't freeze properly and your sledge would plop right down. We lost a scow once at Deception with a load of gravel at Deception, it was overloaded and it sunk to the bottom and they had to put a diver down and it was an extreme depth and they never got it up! There was a few tons, bags of building materials in it, it was overloaded. It was attached to the motorboat and a wave come and...I saw it just and minutes before there would been a heap of blocks went down the main channel this scow, a motorised boat, because on the main ship they hauled it in with derricks and it just dropped out of sight! It belonged to the *Biscoe* and they never saw it again, and then sent somebody down but they said it was at such a depth and it was close inshore but couldn't even get down to it, said it must have been under the vortex of where this volcano was, maybe the water went down 1,000s of feet. They never saw it again anyway!

[0:29:41] Verdenius: Did yourself been in dangerous situations?

Green: No not really no. I didn't take any chances myself. In a lot of these situations happened in the winter when things were slack, you'd more time to go out on the ice and things like this. There was another one fell, he was an ornithologist he studied birds, the bird man, and I think it was Signy Island, going down to look at some kind of nest, and he slipped, he was fatally injured on the rocks as well, I don't know slipped, you see everything was always sort of half frozen and slippery and icy. Oh it could be extremely dangerous if you wanted to take a chance, but you were told not to take chances!

[0:30:57] Verdenius: So what did you do then when you had time off, you didn't go sledging?

Green: No I went for a walk in a safe place!

[0:31:06] Verdenius: Where did you go?

Green: Up...well whereas there was a list a few miles maybe for a gentle slope sort of place and we used tie one and another together with rope in case if one fell you could pull him back. Because I'll always remember once going out with Walter Dawson, a really big fat lad, a diesel mechanic/electrician, and he was leading the way, and he was a bit of a joker and I was next to him and was naïve in case anything happened, and he said to me 'Now what would you do if you saw me disappearing into a crevasse in front of you?' and I said to him 'I'd get a knife and cut the bloody rope!!' [laughter] just a joke, but we used tie one and another. You're supposed to when you go out into the snow field, tie one and another together, yeah, attach the rope in case of a rare hidden crevasses as you could slip into it covered with a fresh fall of snow. And they move you see, the glaciers they move all the time and you could unwittingly step into one of these things and if you weren't tied, they have been people lost through that same thing. Because if you stop overnight it maybe next day it's closed, bit of fresh snow is liable to cover all these crevasses...ah yes!

[0:32:58] Verdenius: When you were had to stay in the huts because it was too bad weather [Green: Aye.] was there a radio?

Green: Oh yes, radio a bit, we played a lot of cards, cribbage, whist and that navy game, uckers, with the board? Oh aye, then there was always a fully stocked library and things like that, yes. The biggest thing was in the evenings and everything was to them that overwintered and to try and keep themselves from getting bored which the boredom could be very bad if you hadn't enough to do. You had to have something to occupy your mind. [Sound of coffee being served, Green says 'Yes']

[0:33:52] Verdenius: Did you know people who got bored?

Green: I suppose it was some sort of depression, oh yes...I think it could be a depressing place. Yes it might have been worse in the winter when they were snowed in, aye.

[0:34:17] Verdenius: What was it to you, what kind of place was it?

Green: Well to me it's a place that I could never ever forget! I often lie at night and I just think about it a lot, aye. I don't think anybody that was there would ever forget about Antarctica, just something you can't believe. And you're sleeping at night and you heard this rumbles away in the distance like thunder, it was actually ice breaking up, the cliffs of ice, and ice bergs are miles in size some of them, aye 30 or 40 miles lumps of ice and they are nine tenths under the water, and they used to grind and you'd hear this rumbling in the background all the time this ice. It's a fact the ships have been iced in I think they were stuck solid for six or seven weeks on several occasions. Pack ice is on the move all of the time, it can freeze up as pack ice comes in solid there for weeks! Then it'll breakup and disappear overnight again...there's only certain periods you can get in to the more southerly bases, they're only free for a few days, few weeks each year and in some years it doesn't even free up at all! It's been known for the men to have to stay for an extra winter because they couldn't get in to get them out, but I suppose they could do it now with helicopters you see yes, aye.....But I'd like to see it again, I'd like to go back to Signy or Deception just to see it.

[0:36:26] Verdenius: Did you find it a depressing place?

Green: Aye I did to a certain extent, there's something forbidding there's something about it, well I think you could feel it could be a dangerous place but it really took it when you saw all this mountains of ice everywhere you looked! And it must have been worse in the winter, Signy in the winter when it was dark for three months that must have been depressing, 'specially if you were stuck in a hut underground somewhere, aye. Of course the Americans they have got huge airbases or something like that at places now, and in fact I've a letter here, I think it's the base at the South Pole, and there's about 1200 people on it, the Americans, and they fly in and out regularly now.

[0:37:33] Verdenius: They fly to the South Pole?

Green: Aye they, where did I put the last newsletter?

Mrs Green: Here you are dear.

Green: I get a newsletter twice a year from the Survey.

Mrs. Green: Oh maybe it's over in that one?

Green: Is it? [Sounds of pages being turned].

Mrs. Green: I'll have a look it might be here?

Green: Christmas, 1982!

Mrs. Green: That's a long time ago! [Sounds of many pages being turned].

Green: Did I get one just a few months ago? Is that the recent one? [Lots more looking] Ah! Number 29. That's the sort of thing you get, actually that's got a bit on South Georgia, you can read if you want - you're reading it are you?

[0:39:00] Verdenius: My director also has, he gets this.

Green: Oh he gets it?

[0:39:05] Verdenius: Yeah.

Green: Oh it's very interesting, I never throw them out. This is from 1982. [more page turning] I haven't paid my subscriptions for a while! And I've got a letter here and I'm going to send £10 and they'll keep sending the newsletter. [More page turning].

Mrs Green: Did you send it?

Green: No, Dear.

Mrs Green: Oh well.

Green It's very interesting..... it just keeps you up to date.

[0:40:04] Verdenius: Did you ever want to get to the South Pole?

Green: Really no I never fancied going to Halley Bay, no. The outlying places suited me better, aye, when you went to the South Pole you had to stay. The builders that got down there, there was always building they had to stop there for 18 months, two years, you went down one year and came home the next year or two years I never fancied that at all, no! Up and down as a summer visitor as I was called suited me fine, yes.

[0:40:54] Verdenius: This about this Scottish/Shackleton expedition crossed the whole continent?

Green: No, no I wouldn't have done that, no. Now like that one just now, Fiennes and Stroud that doctor that have walked across Antarctica, no I wouldn't have done anything like that. I'm interested but I wouldn't, see they've lost 4stone, a third in their body weight. We talked that wireless operator about that lad that lived just down the road here, they only live about

15 minutes from here, they've had some contact to do with Fiennes - where is yesterday's paper?

Mrs Green: Oh I don't know.

Green: A man and his wife, he was with the Survey, Howell. [Lots sorting of papers again] I was just going to show you this.

Mrs Green: Maybe it's possible you should light the fire with all these papers!

Green: But when I was over....it's a female, Mrs Howell, they had a contract with Fiennes. But they only live 20 miles from here and she's in Chile, do you know Punta Arenas?

[0:43:06] Verdenius: Yes.

Green: In fact she's going home next week, she's in contact with him down there and they're both wireless operators, experts in communication, and all the messages are relayed from there up to here - funny isn't it all the way from Antarctica? Now they were airlifted yesterday!

[0:43:29] Verdenius: Where?

Green: Mintlaw, they live about 20 miles from here north of here both this man and his wife, both expert communicators like telegraphy.

[0:43:44] Verdenius: Do you play the violin?

Green: No, just my father played. There was two of them there, my brother plays a bit but he's got my father's gold violin. Oh I don't play, I used to. Me I'm of sort a piano player, not very good!

[0:44:13] Verdenius: Was there a piano in Antarctica?

Green: Oh no there wasn't piano at all, but I believe at one time they bought a second hand piano somewhere and they shipped it down I think it was to Signy Island? And in all that distance when they were unloading it off the boat it broke through the slings and disappeared into the sea, never seen anymore! I've told you everything this piano all this distance down to base offloading it and something broke and it disappeared into the sea, the og, went into the oggin and disappeared, never saw it again!

[0:44:49] Verdenius: It's still here!?

Green: Well it'll still be down on the bottom of the South Atlantic somewhere near the base aye, because it would have been ruined anyhow!

[0:45:01] Verdenius: For the seals!

Green: Aye plenty of seals...leopard seals they were huge!

[0:45:08] Verdenius: Did you get news from home?

Green: Aye, well every time a ship came in there were letters on it, or if there was a ship in the vicinity they would take any mail by helicopter, within 15 or 20 leagues of maybe a ship we could see somewhere they'd drop in the mail by helicopter. Every base had a post office, your mail was actually stamped on the base. In fact these stamp collectors from throughout the world wrote there for stamp editions from Antarctic bases, I've got some of them here. You'd a post office and the Base Leader franked them, stamped them, and they were worth quite a bit; in fact they brought in quite a bit of money the revenue for these stamps these Antarctic stamps, yes.

[0:46:11] Verdenius: Did you get the newspaper or, let's say, the news?

Green: Well we had the radio and a wireless operator who got all the news, but newspapers had to come from home. There was always newspapers but you were a bit, you were out of touch with the daily happenings, oh yes. I remember the first time that I went away we were watching a film and away down between here and Uruguay somewhere and we were watching a film in the ship and the second mate on the boat, on the *Shackleton*, came through and he put a light on when we were watching this film and he says 'I don't know if there's any truth in this but there's a news flash come through to us on the ship that President Kennedy has been assassinated'! but I guess maybe '63, the first time I was away. So he said 'I'm waiting for further news', and he said 'The wireless operator is picking it up now', and it was. But we were halfway there when President Kennedy was assassinated, and funnily enough that night a part of the ship caught fire that same night! Now when was he assassinated, 1963? Well I remember that, I'll never forget when he his assassination because I was halfway to Antarctica when this news came in. Now this came over the wireless operator picked this up, aye!

[0:48:08] Verdenius: And when you were there could you send messages home?

Green: Yes, well you did the same thing again you could send radio telephone messages home but I never did that, but you could through the radio if you wanted like, but them that were there for a year or two they did. I mean I was only away for eight or nine months, I didn't, I used to write a letter something like that, just say - what was it? - 'Safe, well and happy and hope you are the same, Love', etc,etc! It was just something to people know you're OK which was a good idea for those that don't write. You get people that never write, just put in a few words, that was the favourite that 'Safe, well and happy, hope you are the same, Love' etc!

[0:49:04] Verdenius: That was enough?

Green: That's enough, aye, 'See you sometime'!

[0:49:08] Verdenius: And it was enough for you too?

Green: Oh aye but that was fine for somebody just talking about the weather.

[0:49:22] Verdenius: What did you find when you came home to Scotland?

Green: Well.....it's funny. Some people, like when I came home, some people didn't even know I'd been away, even up here where it had been in the paper that I'd been in Antarctica and back, and that they don't even know I've been away. You find it...you find it amazing people don't realise where you've been, to meet somebody you haven't seen for maybe two years it's 'Oh', you say 'Fine, how are you getting on?' they don't know you've been away twice to Antarctica, but that's just human nature I suppose. But things were just the same when you got home as they were when you'd been away I would say, aye.

[0:50:38] Verdenius: You were also glad?

Green: Oh aye, yes, but I mean I'm away from home a few times for four years, two years things like that, but I never intended staying anywhere, I was always intending in coming back here, aye.

[0:51:04] Verdenius: Did you like the Antarctic more than the Arctic?

Green: Aye...well I think maybe I did but I was longer in Antarctica. I only did one tour in the Arctic, Canadian Arctic, and that was Eskimo settlements and things like that, although they'd a lot in common. They'd the dog teams in the Canadian Arctic, in fact the husky dogs they had in Antarctica came from the Arctic dogs, aye. And the building was more or less the same in the Arctic, you'd permafrost the same as Antarctica and the frost never completely out of it, no. And you'd icebergs but not so much ice in the Arctic where I was, there was far more ice in Antarctica, the sea frozen solid as far as you could see. I was never far into the Canadian Arctic, no, the North Pole is stated to be the worse. Of course the North Pole isn't, it's in water, the South Pole's on land isn't it, two miles of ice, I think it's two mile, three mile thick there. The Antarctic ice shelf, Antarctic continent, is five kilometres of ice, I believe they're digging up fossils there. Have you heard of this continental drift, the continent spread? I think they got one last year somewhere, a marsupial, some sort of skeleton in Antarctica. Now at one time that part had been tropical billions, millions of years ago, yes. Lot of marine life down there, fish - that's another thing I think they are going to spoil, it was this commercial fishing there catching up all this krill which all the seals, whales everything depends on they're going to, in fact something happened to some of the penguin colonies now and the Falkland Islanders know what it is - it's not a disease its starvation! They're catching this commercial fishing now down there in the South Atlantic catching all the fish the krill that all the wildlife down there depends on for its food! For the sake of money, aye, yes!

[0:54:11] Verdenius: Are you worried about this?

Green: Pardon?

[0:54:14] Verdenius: Are you worried about this?

Green: I don't like it, no! And them that's in the know they know this, its bloody greed for money. Now what are you going to get, exploring for oil? That's going to be the Argentinians at war again, Argentinians claiming the sea around the Falklands, now oil rigs drilling in and between the oil and wiping out this, the fish and that krill with the fishing, the

whales depend on the krill they're going to kill off there's not going to be enough food for these penguins, seals and whales. It's happened up in Shetland with the breeding birds, the consequence, these little sand eels that the birds eat they've ruined the bird colonies, the birds were actually dying of starvation because the commercial fishing had used all these little fish to make fish meal, and that was the basic food of the birds, and thousands are dumped, the birds are actually starving! They said 'What's wrong with the birds, what's wrong with the birds?' and it was starvation, fishing for greed and money, aye. They stopped it the last two years and the birds are back, breeding back. It's obviously, just imagine boats taking thousands of tons of these small fish that feeds the sea birds or they die off, eggs don't hatch they die out, aye!

[0:56:00] Verdenius: Would you go back to Antarctica now?

Green: Aye I'd go back for one trip yes, yes, but there's little hope of that now. I'd like to go back to Signy Island or to see Deception Island, especially those two places. Mind you there was some of the them that went up and down for years and years, the odd scientists are coming and going all the time but that's their work, I think there's about 60 go down every year, 60 or 80, mostly young scientists.

[0:56:50] Verdenius: On the ships?

Green: Big boat, big ships now isn't it? *Branston (sic)* big ships now! You see the *Shackleton* and *Biscoe* were only about 1100 tons, pretty small compared with the *Bransfield* was it? 10000 tons, yes like a liner, but it was like a world cruise when you went away there! You went from here to Uruguay down to Cape Horn, Punta Arenas, the Magellan Straits, Falkland Islands and then I mean it took two months to get there and there was nothing to do just lazing about. It was like getting a world cruise and getting paid for it, aye! But I think they fly them now as well, you can fly direct to Falklands now, aye, from in fact the time of the invasion they flew the Falkland Islands plane from Kinross, that's a naval base up near Inverness way, it was the longest flight that had ever been made 10,000, 11,000 miles nonstop! From the Falkland Islands up past Aberdeen with a plane load of RAF personnel and they refuelled in mid-air twice, think it was 10,000 miles non-stop . That's some journey isn't it!?

[0:58:26] Verdenius: Sure is. OK, well thank you.

Green: Now what do you listen to?

Some interesting clips:

- Working in Stanley and a minor invasion when a highjacked Argentinian plane lands in a peat bog next to them containing 40 armed terrorists! Brought leaflets saying 'We do not come as aggressors but as liberators', couldn't understand why all the locals spoke English and not Spanish! [0:03:10]
- Digging the foundations for the biology lab at Signy by hand! [0:09:42]

- Finding out about the Deception Island eruption via a National Geographic magazine in a pub one night in England after work, and none of his workmates would believe he'd worked there! [0:11:59]
- Seeing bubbling and boiling sea while he worked at Deception in the '60s! [0:13:15]
- Commemorative stone laid by Sir Vivian Fuchs in the foundations of the new biology lab at Signy. [0:16:38]
- The loss of a scow full of building material at Deception in very deep water! [0:27:33]
- Interesting answer to the question of what he would do if his large friend Walter fell into a crevasse! [0:31:06]
- Talking about the loss of a piano during unloading stores at Signy! [0:44:13]
- Remembering where he was when Kennedy was shot, the middle of a film on the *Shackleton* between Montevideo and Stanley! [0:46:11]