

SHADRACK PODILE

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Place: Marion Island
Interviewer (Q): Dora Scott | Researcher: Antarctic Legacy Project | Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology (C•I•B) | University of Stellenbosch
Respondent (A): Shadrack Podile | Meteorologist | Marion 57, 65, 68; Gough 47, 49; SANAE 44 | 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2011

Q: So you're a meteorologist?

A: Yes.

Q: What's the weather like?

A: We had more like a high ridging in; because yesterday we had some frontal low passing through. So today, we've got nice weather. We managed to do some flying, so ... Yes, it's just cloudy; less wind – less than 10 knots, which is pretty cool for Marion.

Q: So you've been stationed at all three – you've been to Gough and Marion and SANAE.

A: Yes.

Q: And on all three you were a meteorologist?

A: All three meteorologist. Gough, the first time, I was deputy leader; then the second time around, team leader and senior met.

Q: Okay.

A: Then the other were like junior met, senior met. It was changing, on and off.

Q: Now where did your interest in the sub-Antarctic start, and the Antarctic?

A: It started when I joined the South African Weather Bureau in 1997. I met one guy at Irene, and I asked him where he was going and he said 'no, I'm going to Marion Island'; and I said 'where is that?' – and even he said, he didn't know where it was, because it was the first time he had heard about it. So then I started asking questions, and I met Mr Johan van der Merwe ...

Q: Johan van der Merwe? JR van der Merwe?

A: JR, yes.

Q: Ah, yes.

A: Then I kept applying, since '97. And finally, in 1999, they gave me a chance, and I came down in 2000 to come and see what is this place, Marion Island, all about. And then, from there, it was no turning back. Just one way.

Q: So you liked it and you just kept on coming back?

A: Yes!

- Q:** Just quickly tell me the team numbers and the years you were where ... Just so ... that you can remember.
- A:** Okay.
- Q:** You first came here to Marion, in 2000 ...
- A:** It was Marion 57. And then I went to Gough; it was Gough 47.
- Q:** And was that the same year?
- A:** Yes, the same year. It's like Marion 57 was 2000/2001; then 2001/2002 it was Gough 47; took one year break, then I went on Gough 49, 2003/2004. Then came back, straight to SANAE – 2004 to 2006; then took a one-year break; then Marion ... 65. Okay, Marion 65, 2008/2009. And now ...
- Q:** You're here again.
- A:** Marion 68.
- A:** Yes ... three Marion, two Gough, one SANAE.
- Q:** Oh, okay.
- A:** Yes, so SANAE, it was SANAE 44.
- Q:** Okay; brilliant! So you came to Marion and you also went to Gough. What did you know about Gough before you went there?
- A:** Just that it was a British Island; we lease some part of the island. And then like in terms of the weather, the UK met office is funding our radio sondes and all those things. And other than that, there are fishing vessels around, so we'll not be bored – once in a while we'll see a ship passing and the guys doing their fishing.
- Q:** Okay. And what did you know about SANAE?
- A:** Nothing. But I knew it was in Antarctica, so I thought 'cool! I'm going to Antarctica!' And then ... But other than that ... I was following ... Like there were SANAE I,II,III – so I eventually found why it came to like SANAE IV, and I saw some old videos, like when they were doing the ... I think they were building SANAE II; I think it was SANAE II; yes.
- Q:** Yes, I think that was in the Seventies maybe?
- A:** Yes; it was early years. So I saw those videos, and then, at one stage I felt like you know, Shadrack, you actually got the chance, and see SANAE III, because it was under the ice and all that.
- Q:** Ah, okay?
- A:** Because you can see the guys ... It looks cool, working in the ice and all that, but ... The thing about is, the ice ... the weight ... no; it didn't work. So I got a chance for SANAE 44 and I just took it.

Q: And that was the one on top of the ice, so it was okay?

A: Yes. Not below the ice, no.

Q: So those videos; did you see them at the Weather Bureau? Just for interest's sake ...

A: No, I think it was [at] DEAT, in Pretoria.

Q: Oh?

A: Yes, I think it was [at] DEAT, in Pretoria.

Q: So did they sort of have an introduction?

A: Yes, we went to the introduction; yes. And I think Gideon, Gideon van Zyl, in Cape Town ...

Q: Yes.

A: You can call that guy – I think he's got those video clips.

Q: Okay, that's good to know. Thank you.

A: Yes, I think ... yes.

Q: Brilliant! Okay.

A: I don't know ... It was August 2000 and ... When was it? Last year ... Yes, last year; August. He came down to Gough construction, and I saw some videos from him.

Q: Okay; that's good to know. I'm going to make a note of that. Now, describe the team preparations you had the first time you came to Marion.

A: Like in 2000?

Q: Yes.

A: I guess that things haven't changed much, but ... I can talk about like the medicals; when you do the medicals. We went to First Military Hospital for medicals. There it's like a serious, serious workout – compared to now, when you go to a normal GP. You know, he will check you, but compared to First Military, it was as if you were going to be one of those Defence Force ...

Q: Oh?

A: Yes. So they were serious, serious. And other than that, we had a chaplain Kobus de Lange, who'd do the self-development course and in those years, he gave us papers, more like a psychological test, so depending on the answers ... the way you answered, then they would determine that ...

Q: Can you go or can you not go?

A: Can you go or not ... And then, from the second trip, it didn't happen again. So what became standard ... you do fire fighting, cooking ...

- Q:** So you did that as well?
- A:** Yes. First aid ... All the trips I've been doing.
- Q:** Okay, so you can fire fight?
- A:** I can do fire fighting. Those are the ... the Air Force will only do small fires, but now, in Cape Town, yo, that was ...
- Q:** Yes, because they've since moved the training to Cape Town ...
- A:** Yes, so the fire fighting in Cape Town was more intense, more than the Air Force. But the cooking from the Air Force is much better than when you go to Pick'nPay.
- Q:** Oh, I see what you mean.
- A:** You see? So, the Air Force, we have ...
- Q:** You have to ... So you can balance; you learn different things from different places.
- A:** Yes. But now we go to Pick'nPay. They're still good, but now ... it's not more like that.
- Q:** And how does the preparation compare, from the different places? Or is it pretty much the same kind of preparations?
- A:** No, it's pretty much the same preparations.
- Q:** Did you have to make special preparations or do special things for SANAE? Do you work with the ice?
- A:** No, for SANAE we only prepared to drive the vehicles. But we're doing it ...
- Q:** Oh, the big vehicles ...
- A:** Yes, but it was on the sand, so ... just to get the hang of it: driving, scooping, and all that. But if you get to the ice, it's a different story.
- Q:** Of course! Now, on that matter, do you think that the preparation you got from DEA, the way that they prepared you, you think it helped? You think it was good enough?
- A:** Yes
- Q:** It was good?
- A:** It's like, I've done so much ... So it's pretty much the same; like 'I'm going to do this' – it's already in the system. But for the new guys, like I try to encourage them, whatever you are given, just grab it, because you'll never know ... Because some of us are still staying with the parents, you know, or you feed yourself on takeaways, and you come here, you must cook. So, you know, just learn how to cook, or ... Let's say, if you are not sure, ask questions, so that you don't have to embarrass yourself when you get here. Because people want to eat anyway, so you can't be lazy. So it's one of those things.
- Q:** What specific preparations did you have to make for your job as a metkassie? For all of the trips, because it's all the same job.

A: Well, the outgoing senior met, he or she, sends the orders to Cape Town. And then you will ask for the copy and go through it and see what you've got for me. And then if there's something that is missing, then I'll let them know we need this thing, because ... I need it. And also, before I go on the island, how's the instruments? Do I need to prepare to do major installations? And all that. Like now, we need to replace that thing, the wind mast.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Yes.

Q: So you're going to have to do it now, during your year?

A: Yes. If we get one good day, one of these days, we'll put the new one ...

Q: Quick, quick?

A: No, it's a quick thing. It's not like it will spend five hours.

Q: Oh, that's good.

A: If you're prepared, one hour.

Q: Brilliant; that's good! Okay. Now you came down on the Agulhas on all the trips?

A: The Agulhas, yes.

Q: So you know the Agulhas well ...

A: (Yes.)

Q: Do you get seasick?

A: First years, I got seasick ... It depends also – if you're in a smooth riding, then I'll be fine. But once you start rolling, then ...

Q: Not so good?

A: Not so good. Then I spend the whole day in bed.

Q: Okay. And do you remember, especially the first few times, do you remember who the captain was?

A: John Klopper.

Q: John Klopper? Okay.

A: John Klopper was the first; then I sailed with ... it was John Klopper, John Klopper ... then we sailed with Kevin Tate. And I sailed with ...

Q: Did you sail with David Hall?

A: David Hall, to the ice; yes. Or even to Gough; yes.

Q: Oh, okay.

- A:** Ricky Viljoen ... What's this guy ... ? Jonathan [?]. And I've sailed with Freddie Lightfoot (*sic – Lighthelm*).
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** Yes. So pretty much that group.
- Q:** So you've had lots of captains?
- A:** Lots of captains, yes.
- Q:** Okay. You've said you've now been down many times. What do you usually do on the journey down?
- A:** We do meteorological observations on the Agulhas. We have to work on the ship. We're three metkassies and maybe two support personnel there, so between the five of us, we rotate until we get down to the island.
- Q:** Is that a 24-hour ... ?
- A:** It's 24 hours, but we work 3 hourly shifts. Every three hours, we'll do the observations and then we used to do the upper-air sondings, but now we ...
- Q:** There's no upper-air anymore?
- A:** There's no upper-air anymore, but I think, once you get more stocks available, then they will start again.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** But it's still hanging [?].
- Q:** Can you remember anything interesting, or any incident that ever happened on the ship when you were travelling on it?
- A:** All the trips are fun. Except the moods have changed from those years compared to now.
- Q:** How so?
- A:** I think, during those years, we were ... people were like socialising a lot in the bar area, compared to now. You still get people who are socialising, but most of the time they are more into the work: what are you going to do? People got laptops, they got iPods; now they are sitting there listening to music. But during those days, those things were not there. So we had to sit in the bar, watch movies ... you know.
- Q:** You had to wait for the time to pass?
- A:** Yes. And then you remember, the set-up on the Agulhas, the lounge was different to what we have now.
- Q:** Really?
- A:** Yes.

- Q:** So did they ...?
- A:** Yes, they revamped in ... I think when I went to Gough the first time, there was still the old type thing. I think when I did my second trip, that's when they ... when it was revamped.
- Q:** Oh; okay. I didn't know about that.
- A:** Yes, I will see ... I brought my slides.
- Q:** Oh, I'd love to see your slides!
- A:** I think I'll go through and see if I can't find anything.
- Q:** Yes, lovely! Brilliant. Thank you! That would be very interesting to see.
- A:** Yes. So, the Agulhas has changed; the insides have changed. The bar was not like that; now it's a nice bar.
- Q:** So now the weather people socialise differently, because the bar's different? Is that what you're saying?
- A:** No! The metkassies, we would always be there, like, together. But ... It doesn't matter – the bar's open or not open, we'll see each other and say 'come and sit'. Sometimes it's even discuss work, like I saw this happening ...
- Q:** On the ship down, now?
- A:** On the ship down, yes. Sometimes you get people who are not from the Weather Service, so then they are doing their obs, then you have to go out, explain.
- Q:** Make sure that they know what they're doing?
- A:** Yes, or you send a person up, or she comes back, or he comes back, you can explain 'I saw this and this' and then you check; 'oh, okay; it's fine'. But I see this, then next time he wants to go this way.
- Q:** Now, what were your first thoughts when you arrived at Marion that first time?
- A:** I was not sure I will survive. Because when I got here, it was cold. And then the first two days, I was working the night shifts, and the guy I was taking over from, we were from the same office.
- Q:** Oh, okay; so it was someone you knew?
- A:** Someone I knew. He said, "Heh, you know the work? If you struggle, find me in my room." I said, "Okay." Then I would work the night shift. And my second night, when I got out, the island was covered in snow. It was like snow all over.
- Q:** Oh-oh. Had you ever seen snow before?
- A:** That was the first time I'd seen the snow.
- Q:** Really?!

- A:** Yes. And I must walk all the way from the old base. The upper building was at the end of the accommodation block.
- Q:** Yes, it's far.
- A:** So I had to walk by myself to there.
- Q:** In the snow ...
- A:** In the snow. And I experienced some problems. Now I walk again,, go fetch the guy; and we walk back up. So that was my kind of training that I got. But the cold! I never thought I would survive. And then ... but it went well. By the time they left, it was like '*ag*, the Agulhas is leaving. But will I survive? And luckily we had ... we [?] in the team, so we got the support from the guys.
- Q:** That's nice.
- A:** Yes. And like Pierre Pistorius ... I think he came down before. It was his second trip, so ...
- Q:** That helped.
- A:** That also helped. He kept us in shape.
- Q:** Okay, that's good. And now, how is now, to see Marion again?
- A:** *Ag*, nice to see Marion, like '*ah*'. Even now, when people ... like you know, when they shout 'killer whales!', when we get some, people say, 'I want to stay at the base; I'm not going outside', but when there are killer whales, then they go! They go down. But now, when they shout 'killer whales!' – '*oh, okay*'. You know, because I've already seen so much.
- Q:** Yes.
- A:** So when people see things, I just relax and ... You know, whatever I missed, they are still around. I'll get those things again.
- Q:** Yes, you will.
- A:** Like a few weeks back we had ... they saw some clouds. People were going crazy ... cameras ... And I said, '*hah, okay ...*'
- Q:** '*I've seen it ...*'
- A:** Yes. No, it will come back again; I'll sleep for a change.
- Q:** And your first thoughts when you saw Gough?
- A:** When I saw Gough, it's like ... The vegetation is different. It was summer time; I think they were starting to grow.
- Q:** Oh, yes.
- A:** Yes. Because they can grow like ... I think half a metre to a metre, if I'm not wrong. And it's high. And I said, '*Ai*, I don't think I can manage this one, because I'll never ... I won't be

able to take walks, you know, to other places. But as time progressed, I was working some job, like checking the birds, the yellow-nose albatrosses, so that also kept me busy. And then from that start, walk around the island, taking walks to Gony Place and all that, just to see [?]. Gough, the winds are harsh, I'll say.

Q: And the first time you saw SANAE? Your first time you saw the ice shelf and you knew you were almost there.

A: Yes, that's when you start hitting the pack ice.

Q: Yes.

A: When you start hitting the pack ice. I was night shift on that day, so ... In a few days, you lose like 24 hours now, when you can't sleep. So I worked and I checked – 'ah, there's the sun, every day. It doesn't matter ... There's the sun. I said, '*ai!*' That's another place ... We've about 24 hours sunshine, but never like witnessed or know we'd encounter something like this, so when I saw it, I said, '*now I'm in Antarctica.*'

Q: Now you know?

A: Now I know pack ice and all that. And then, when we got to the ice shelf, it was the 31st of December.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: Yes. And I couldn't like wait to get off the ice, because I think we spent like three weeks.

Q: That's a long time on the ship!

A: That's a long time on the ship, so ... We were supposed to fly the following year, but the guy at the base, he was supposed to leave for the buoy run so I'm not sleeping, because I know we're leaving tomorrow. While I'm sleeping, there was one guy, Frans Hoffman, he came to my cabin and said, 'wake up, you're flying.' I said, 'no, I'm not flying; I'm flying tomorrow. He said, 'no, you're flying now.' So I had to like take only the ...

Q: Basics ...

A: ... toiletry bag and the cold weather gear; and I left all my bags on the Agulhas, so the Agulhas had to make sure all my stuff follows me.

Q: Oh, so that you can go and get on the buoy run.

A: Yes. So I was the first to be at the base from my team. It was like fun getting to the base – 'I'm going to spend the whole year here.' But yes ...

Q: Brilliant!

A: Brilliant.

Q: Now, every time you arrive, do you spend a lot of time with the outgoing team? Especially the metkassies from the other team, do they always go around and show you what's going on? Did that happen?

- A:** Well, if it was like my first time. Like it was like when I got to, let's say Gough, the senior men, they walk with me, everyone, because we were like working together. Then SANAE, the guy ... we only met for a couple of hours when I got in, onto the base, he left. So he just dropped the bombshell; he said, 'okay, if you see this, it's 100km; 'if you don't see this, the definition is this ...' You know, contrasts and all those things ...
- Q:** Yes, quick quick?
- A:** Yes, quickly. And he left me. So I was thrown into the fire. So what I managed ... If I was not sure, I would ask one of the old guys from the team and say, 'okay, I can't see this and this', and they'd give the explanation. But now ... like when I got here on the island, co-workers were already like 'ah, Shadrack is coming'. And I was here last year in August, so I think that they already know, 'ag', that one, he knows everything.
- Q:** He knows what's going on?
- A:** *Ja*, so they pulled me off the shifts, actually. I only started working the shifts yesterday, the 24th of April.
- Q:** Ah, okay; nice. Because you know what's going on.
- A:** Because you know what's going on, so ... But it was also on the other hand like kind of boring, you know, like I'm not working. The team leader, he can't work so much, but the met office, I like to be there. So people ask me how's the weather; I say eh; go to the met office ...
- Q:** And ask them.
- A:** Ask them. I'm not working, you know. But even with the new base, I already know everything, so there was no tour, no orientation. This is what ...
- Q:** Now, what sort of stories have the outgoing team told you about their ... Because you've been everywhere, but I mean, did they ever tell you sort of stories about their experiences or the things they did that they shouldn't have done, fun stuff they did do? Or not really.
- A:** I think people, if they know there was something they were not supposed to do, usually keep it ...
- Q:** Quiet?
- A:** They must keep it quiet. But in terms of work, like seal bites or ... maybe they went hiking ... those kinds of stories, the fun ones, you're going to hear about them more; 'don't go there, there's a lot of mires – if you go there, you're going to fall into a lot of mires; walk ...' You know, they try to guide you. But anything naughty – forget it!
- Q:** Okay. Now, describe a day in the life of the metkassie. If you're working, because I know you work different shifts.

- A:** Okay. I actually start 7 o' clock in the morning. Now I'm going to use South African time, hey?
- Q:** That's fine.
- A:** So like 7 a.m.; you can wake up at seven, and then, say by 25 past 7, if you're done at the Crane Point, measuring the sea temperature. And when I'm done with the sea temperature, then visit the met camp, where we've got the Stevenson's screen and the rain gauge. So I go and do those things. If it rains, you must take the bucket, the spare bucket, for the rain, with, and then we just swop the buckets and you read the thermometers. Then you come into the office. We've got the papers that we fill in every day. So you fill in your papers just before 8 o' clock; let's say quarter to 8 – you should be finished with your observations, checking the clouds for visibility; is it raining or not raining; snow; what type of clouds do you see ...
- Q:** So it's very much dependent on what you see.
- A:** What you see, yes.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** And then from there you work hourly. That's for the day shift. We work every hour until 5 o' clock. But at half past 12, we are releasing a weather balloon, and then after sunset, we change the sunshine charts. You've seen it before?
- Q:** Not the sun chart .
- A:** Okay, I'll show you the sunshine chart now.
- Q:** Yes, that would be interesting.
- A:** Then ... Yes, that's more or less it. But in the hours ... I mean, you can do the news, you can play music, you can watch movies, you can read books. Some people prefer to register with different institutions and ...
- Q:** They study?
- A:** Then they study while they're doing their met work, you know. And then, come the night shift, you start at 8 o' clock; you knock off at 5 o' clock in the morning.
- Q:** Oh, yes.
- A:** Yes. Even, that one is not hectic like the day shift. You work at 8; then you come in at 11; you come back again at 1 o' clock. From 1 o' clock you work until 5 in the morning and then 5 o' clock you go to bed. And then, other than that, the earliest we had a buoy system, where we're monitoring the buoys, so before you go to bed, 7 o' clock, you must check you if have passes, because those times they were transmitting temperature, pressure, sea surface temperatures; all that. So you must grab that information, check it and then send it through to Pretoria.
- Q:** Okay.

- A:** Yes. But technology, everything, paged, so you never received anyone, so [..?] years; not yet. Maybe [...?] the systems [...?] we're going to the sea.
- Q:** Okay, but you don't need to do it now?
- A:** No, we don't need to do it now. But if I can get the PC with the programmes, [...?], I can.
- Q:** Okay, then you can monitor ...
- A:** I can monitor, yes.
- Q:** Okay. And that's the same for all three places?
- A:** SANAE works differently.
- Q:** How does SANAE work?
- A:** SANAE, there's only one metkassie. So he works ... It's GMT; he works from 6 in the morning until 2 o'clock, and then he stops. Then he comes again 8 o'clock in the evening; then he's finished. That's Monday to Friday. He's going to wake up on Saturday morning, at 6 GMT; then he do the reading; then he's finished for the weekend, until Monday morning.
- Q:** Oh, okay; that's nice.
- A:** Yes. SANAE is nice. Whereas Marion ... Marion and Gough, you work.
- Q:** Busier ...
- A:** And if you're a senior met, you're always ready for problems. If the junior met is not from the Weather Service, he or she must come ...
- Q:** To you?
- A:** Must come; 'Wake up, I've got a problem, so you must wake up!' If there's a problem, you must come – 'okay, it's this'. You must explain; you must listen; he or she must write down. You will say, 'if that problem comes again, you can't wake me again for the same problem. I will wake up for different problems, but not the same problem every time.
- Q:** That's not nice, no. Now what are the challenges of living on an island?
- A:** You tend to meet different people from all walks of life.
- Q:** That's true ...
- A:** There are some people who are like lazy ... yes, lazy. They want people to clean after them, and all those things. So in my experience, I've tried to speak to the guys. Like, I've done so many trips, and I only know a few things that can destroy the team.
- Q:** What are they?
- A:** People don't clean up after themselves. People drink coffee; they eat; they leave the place lying around.

Q: And they don't clean.

A: They don't clean. Those things. They kill the team. If you are having fun, like now, with the old ... I refer to the old base ...

Q: Yes, that's fine.

A: People are having fun, but at a certain time, people are now starting to go and sleep; they are still continuing.

Q: Making noise ...

A: Making noise, yes. Things like that, they tear the team up. At the end, we'll call each other in a meeting, say okay, after this time, can people lower down their music and all that. And at the end, some people will not like it, then they can cause some friction in the team. And there are some people who don't want to be told 'don't do this'. Once you tell them this, then it's like you're bigheaded, or something like that. Then ... (they) just do those things.

Q: So that's the kind of thing that influences the team?

A: It influences the team, yes. And not being also part of the team. You know, people must try to be one unit in this place. If you try to pull out and you want to be by yourself ...

Q: It's also not going to work ...

A: That's not going to work. Twelve months is too long by yourself.

Q: Yes, it's true. And what are the challenges of living on Antarctica?

A: Antarctica is like ... you're confined in one space for all that time. So Antarctica is so dangerous; you can't just ... like 'I'm going out', 'cause you don't know where you're walking, if you're going to walk into a crevasse; or you can get caught in a storm and get lost – you can die easily. So you need to be careful when you're in Antarctica. And you stay in one place, seeing every person every day ... It will drive you crazy. That is the truth. And you will find that there's one or two people who you are not getting along with in the base; you must see that person every day. And SANAE was built in such a way that you can't avoid that person – if you walk in the passage, you will cross paths. So you need to be someone who is actually very strong. To be in Antarctica, you must be very strong – emotionally, mentally. It can break you.

Q: So, if I understand you, you're saying that the biggest challenge in living in these remote bases is getting on with people?

A: Getting on with people. ... Politics ...

Q: Personal politics?

A: Even like normal politics. You know, they kill the team. You know, even like racial issues ... Now it's one of my mottos in a team, I don't want people to bring their issues, like race

issues, into the team. Because those are the other things that kill the team itself. I've experienced it, and it was ... just not on. And the worst part was in Antarctica, [...?].

Q: Yes, and you're stuck there ...

A: You're stuck there. You can't go anywhere. Here I can ... Marion, I can go to Kildalkey – seven days; clear my head and come back. Antarctica, you'll be in the base; there's nowhere to go. No, it's not ...

Q: Interesting. Okay, that was the bad stuff ... Are there any other things that you can think of that's bad for the team? Let me rephrase that: how important do you think it is for a team to do things together?

A: You know, before we leave the country, we do things together – we do team training; we go shopping together; we can go to restaurants together. On the ship, we stick together. When we get to the island, or we get to Antarctica, it's still the same – we stick together. But then, when you get there, you'll find that whoever you're taking over from, if he's got the wrong mentality, then it's easy for him to poison the incoming member.

Q: Oh, I see ...

A: Then you can say it's one of your guys, but he doesn't look sharp; you must look after him. But then, already he's putting a wrong mind into that person, bad ideas, so that person would start like changing – 'ah, Shadrack ...'; 'ah, okay' ... And in the end it splits the team. Team efforts; team work can make the team work.

Q: Okay. And do you think, for example, having social things, like doing social things together, do you think that's important to keep the team together.

A: *Ja*, it's very important. If you've got birthdays, [...?] birthdays ... If we decide today we're in the base; come on, let's drink. Nobody's doing anything; let's have some, a few *dops*, people drink *dops*. You want to play the games; you play games, let's play games. If you don't know how to play the games, come and play the games; we'll teach you how to play the games. When I came down here, I didn't know how to play pool ...

Q: Oh?!

A: Yes; but now I can play pool, you see. So, participate in whatever's happening with the team. If one of the guys wants to go and weigh the seals, or check the birds, come along; if you're free, go along. Then you are bonding with a person. And, at the end, he or she can say 'hey, I worked with Shadrack; he's a nice guy; *wharra-wharra* ... And at the end, now what is happening? Now he's transferring what he saw about you to the other guys. So I think, if you'll be ... only send like positive things, then that is good. Each individual must be positive when you come here, you know. You don't need like stereotypes, like 'that's not my job; I'm not going to go there. That's when they get into you and they start fighting with other people. So usually when I'm on Marion or Gough, go out there as often as possible.

- Q:** Do you get to go out a lot on SANAE?
- A:** SANAE, we only had like field trips, because before you go *mos*, you have to apply like, at the department; you need to go to ... There was one spot – I can't remember their name, but every year, each team, they drive to that place; they just come there for a few days and they come back, and then another group will go and come back. SANAE's limited. It's limited, but Marion, ah, you can go to anywhere, you know. But SANAE, now ... Before the accidents, we can go to the windscoop, play in the windscoop, but after the latest incidents, then they amend their policies and they ... their adventure departmental policy, so I'll not go to SANAE again.
- Q:** Won't you go to SANAE again?
- A:** No, no; I'll never go again.
- Q:** Is it because of their adventure policy, or also the personal politics?
- A:** No, for me, I think it will be like for adventure, because if the weather's nice, I have to be outside. Then I must go outside. [? 06:32] restricted, like only that portion, you know what I mean?
- Q:** Ah, okay; I see.
- A:** You know, so even you have a playground, you can go to the playground, but then you must be careful. You know what you're doing. So ... By that time, they were not that strict, because they knew ... if the windscoop, we could snowboard, you know. But after the incidents there, they ... Everything changed. But I always say, I saw once; never again.
- Q:** Did you go down on a mattress?
- A:** Yes, I went on a mattress! Scary part, that!
- Q:** Really?!
- A:** No, the mattress is very scary. You must remember, you come fast, *né*? It's smooth. So the higher you go ...
- Q:** ... the faster you go?
- A:** The faster you clock.
- Q:** *Jis!* How fast did you go? Can you remember?
- A:** No, me, I didn't go very fast. I think I was clocked 80-100 km/h. But there were some guys who clocked 120, 130.
- Q:** Wow; *jis!*
- A:** Yes, you know, it's one thing, a onetime thing, but you get hooked, because you have that rush ...
- Q:** Yes, that adrenaline rush to do all these crazy things.

- A:** Yes.
- Q:** Okay. Now what made living on the islands... on the ice as well, but on the islands, worthwhile? What made it fun to live there?
- A:** I think the way we, as a team, interact. Having fun together makes life easy on the island. Having the phone to call home ... makes life easy for you. And then, like, writing emails. But in the early years, we struggled a lot with the Internet, because we're sharing the lines. So during the days, Marion is connecting; at night it's Gough – Marion was disconnected. Now you are on 24 hours, even faster than compared to those years. So yes, the communication makes life easy on the island. Team work makes life easy on the island. You participate, everything's going to be easy – you won't even see the year. But if you say 'eh, I'm not doing', then you gonna have a long year, and you'll end up saying 'why am I here?' You know, when you come here, you must be clear; you must come with a clear mind: I'm going to work; I'm going to have fun.
- Q:** That's good. Do you have any animal stories ... about your interactions with the animals, either on Marion or Gough – I don't know ... I'm assuming you didn't see many animals at SANAE?
- A:** In 2000, I went to Watertunnel with Pierre Pistorius, to help him with the Fur seals. And I think it was the end of breeding season, but you've got those *gazella* seals ...
- Q:** Oh, those enormous Elephant seals?
- A:** No, the *gazellas*.
- Q:** Oh, the *gazellas* ...
- A:** Grey ones. The ones like ... ?
- Q:** Oh, okay, the Fur seals; right.
- A:** Yes. And then they said, 'no, no; if they come charging, you must just bend a stick; they will turn around ...' Hah! I bend the stick; it didn't budge. He said, 'you must turn around'. I'm not going to turn around ... Me! I must turn around. I tried ... Eventually, I turned around. The backpack ...
- Q:** Oh, yes.
- A:** And then Watertunnel, this whole bag's got holes everywhere. So when I jump, it's more like the [...?], the *blompots*.
- Q:** Yes ...
- A:** So that thing was charging me!
- Q:** Really?!
- A:** Yes! I managed to get out of danger, and I'm waiting for him, then went back. But he told me I must bend the stick ...

- Q:** It didn't work ...
- A:** It didn't work. And it went for him. He bend the stick; it didn't work. He also started running. Then I said, 'you see? I told you these things... !'
- Q:** It was a male?
- A:** It was a male, yes. If it was a female, I think it would turn around. But it was a male. So I said never, ever, again. If I go to Water Tunnel, it's to the hut; then to Grey-headed ...
- Q:** You skip Watertunnel?
- A:** I don't go to the beach. I go straight to Water Tunnel, to Grey-headed. And we also did ... We were doing some census, from Kildalkey, coming back. So I was with the same guy, Pierre, and we stopped by Archway. Then we were checking the tags and all those things. So I went into a harem and I checked the tags, and I went out. But he also walked in, and I said, 'no, don't go in there'. Then he went in, and as he turned around, one of the females went for him, but he only got like a scratch on his backside, only a scratch. But yes, it's one of those things. But personally ... Yes, it's only one scratch, from the birds, when I helped ... when I was helping ...
- Q:** Oh, the birders ...
- A:** Yes. Only like, you know, their beaks. Yes, it's painful.
- Q:** And on Gough? I know...
- A:** Gough it was Yellow-nosed albatrosses. No, they're not that hectic. I think those ones are more or less used to people, because again, you check if it's on the egg, or if it's a chick. They didn't give bother that much. And the seals ... *Ag*, I weighed some of the Fur seals; going to weigh some Fur seals the second year I was there. The first year, we didn't go, because I wasn't ... It was just one guy, Chris. The others said, 'no, I'm only here to work on the base; not to work outside', so we couldn't like go, like the two of us, to go away, because we need someone to write ...
- Q:** Oh, okay.
- A:** Someone must cash, and all those things. And also like ... high; ropes and all those things.
- Q:** Yes, it's also dangerous.
- A:** It's also dangerous compared to Marion, where you can just walk down to the beach.
- Q:** Yes, but on Gough it's a different story.
- A:** Yes, Gough was a different story; very difficult.
- Q:** Now tell me about Tristan (da Cunha).
- A:** Ah ... Tristan is just a stop-over. When we get off at Tristan, when we get a chance to get off, we just walk around the village, you know.

- Q:** How long were you there? I think it's like a 24-hour ...
- A:** Yes, 48 hours.
- Q:** Were you there for 48 hours?
- A:** Yes, but we spent time on the Agulhas, and then ...
- Q:** Oh, you slept ...
- A:** Yes, we slept on the Agulhas and then, when they start doing the cargo, you can get on the boats and then go to the island. You can walk wherever you want to, you know. But the people there are like ... Because they're like a closed community, and they're not used to seeing people, when you walk around, they just like look through their doors, windows. And people were like ... you can't just go, they should come into [...?], you know. {...?} said 'no'.
- Q:** What do you mean? Are they shy?
- A:** Yes, they are very shy. But there are some, few guys, like Jimmy Glass, Norman ... yes, I think there were like three or four guys. Like when I went down in ... the first trip, we met them and then we talked. So when we go to the island, we start doing the radio communication, then got used to each other and all that. So when I get back to there, I said, 'oh, where's Norman, and where's Jimmy?'.
- Q:** Okay, so you meet them?
- A:** Yes, I had time to meet them like now. So no longer voice to voice; face to face, you see now. Yes, they are like shy people. But Tristan is very nice. I like their chips, their homemade chips.
- Q:** Really? Oh, yes, because the make ...
- A:** They make potatoes, yes. So their chips I like.
- Q:** How do they make the chips? Do you know?
- A:** No, I can't remember. It's more like ... they cut them thin, or they ... more like they fry them, or ... no, I don't think they fry them ... But I can't remember how they do them, but they're very nice, very nice. The only thing is, you can't buy stuff from Tristan, because Tristan is in pounds ...
- Q:** Oh, yes. You have to take pounds.
- A:** Yes, but in [...?] if you've got rands, they take rands.
- Q:** Oh, okay.
- A:** But you must convert, you know.
- Q:** Oh, I see.
- A:** So there, if you want a [...?], they say 10 pounds – 10 pounds to the rand ...

- Q:** Oh, so you have to work it out ...
- A:** You must work it out. How much is this going to cost you. And you check – ‘hey, not it’s too much; I don’t want it!’
- Q:** Okay. So you say you just walked around the village?
- A:** Yes. I just walked around, took pictures. And I went to that volcano that happened, the last one ...
- Q:** Yes, I think it was in the sixties.
- A:** In the sixties, yes; that one. We walked up to the crater there; to the old factories ... I didn’t get the chance to climb up higher, because we only had a few hours on the island.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** And we go to the potato patches ... Yes, that’s about it.
- Q:** And did you fish?
- A:** [...?], because they can’t like sit; they just go fishing, yes. It’s the only people that I’ve seen fishing. Even some of the guys that know how to fish, you know, all those things.
- Q:** You don’t know how to fish?
- A:** Fishing? No ... ! Patience ...
- Q:** Oh, you don’t have the patience to fish?
- A:** No. Those things are ... waiting ... No. We tried, but it didn’t work.
- Q:** What did you do for entertainment, when you weren’t working, on the islands and on SANAE?
- A:** SANAE is a different part ... SANAE had the puzzles, on the base, because they buy puzzles. So I was building puzzles at SANAE, watch movies ... Marion, it’s also, let’s say, sometimes watching movies or listening to music, or building puzzles. But if there’s someone going out, and I’m off, then I’m off with that person. You know, it depends on what’s happening at the time, but if the weather’s bad, they know: I’m the weather man, but I’m not going outside. If it catches me out, then it’s fine; but I’ll never leave base in bad weather.
- Q:** Oh, I see; yes.
- A:** No. And I tell them, I’m not forced; I’m not leaving. But if it’s good weather, and I have to go and help you, then I’ll go out. Yes. That’s more like it. I’m not into reading, but the last trip I did, I was introduced ... You know that book ... *Spud* ... ?
- Q:** *Spud*? Yes ... Oh, yes.
- A:** I read one book, and then ... It belongs to Petrus, the team leader, and he ...
- Q:** Petrus Kritzingner?

A: Yes. He had like, I think, two books. I read both books, like finished them; I was like 'oh, I finished two books on the island!' It's just something that I'd never done before.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: I'm more like a magazine guy, but like taking out books, I'd say 'no'. But *Spud*, somehow it got my attention.

Q: Were you also on the team with Anne and Martin?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, Anne and Martin; yes. And Greg.

Q: Yes, of course; Greg.

A: And Mashudu.

Q: Oh, yes. So it's the old team back together again?

A: It's the old team back together again, yes.

Q: Nice!

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have, especially at the beginning, the early trips you did, did you have a lot of interaction with the other bases, for example, if you're at Marion, did you have a lot of interaction with people at Gough or at SANAE?

A: Yes, it was between Gough and Marion.

Q: Okay.

A: SANAE ... [...] call at SANAE. Because you will find that, if I'm on Gough, Marion has people that I know, that were on Marion Island. Then I will call them; call that person.

Q: Okay.

A: So between Gough and Marion we were like interacting a lot, compared to Gough to SANAE or Marion to SANAE. But it changed with years, because of the technology. Starting like going down south now, because now we can only do the extension dial; no longer you have to dial the whole number.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So it's like extension 5. And then we just push it, you know.

A: Oh, yes. We used to ... If you had to dial the number, you would struggle to dial the number of another base, but now, with the extension dials, it's much quicker, and you can also Skype, and you can see that person who's speaking on the other side. We can

play games ... Before it was a cheating game, because we didn't see what is what, you know.

Q: Yes!

A: So now, we can use Skype and then the camera must face the board; no obstruction.

Q: Like when you are playing darts or whatever ... ?

A: Yes.

Q: Nice.

A: So I've had a few with SANAE when I was here the last time, in 2008. Yes, in 2008, I had a few games of darts with SANAE, but ... It was fun, but a lot of cheating, because ... Like us, we would bump the camera, and then the next team just said that's on the bull's eye, and all those things. So ... But yes, we do communicate a lot with all the other people.

Q: That's good! Now what did you do for Midwinter? Did you have parties?

A: Yes, we start by actually preparing big meals. We prepare serious meals. We dress ...

Q: Dress smart?

A: Dress smartly, yes.

Q: Suit and tie?

A: Yes ... No suits, but we dress formal, with ties and all those things. And that was ... All the time; yes. Dress formally, big meal. We try to get the whole team to be there for Midwinter. We're all sitting around the table and then having a meal together, and then later on, when you're done with your food, then you proceed to the bar ...

Q: To the bar area ...

A: Yes! But it will last ... We will sit around the table for long, you know. [...?] and me, we were drinking wine, and then ... *sommer sit*, you know, until like, they said, 'no, you've been sitting here for too long; let's move'; go to the bar and have fun also there till you're tired and then ... go to [...?].

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Yes. But I think there's only one trip, the one I did for Gough, the first time ... that one was not ... I don't remember having a Midwinter.

Q: Okay.

A: (No.) But the rest of the team, like the expeditions, definitely not there.

Q: Did you ever have a Maid Marion competition?

A: Yes, once! In 2000 ...

Q: And?

A: Ag ... It was kind of weird for a guy to wear a dress, or to do those kinds of ...

Q: Silly things?

A: Silly things. But we did it in 2000 – that was the first and the last time I did it.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Yes, the last time we... came for; the second time around, we said 'no, we don't do that anymore!' Because I heard the guys were like ... most of the time, they're out in the field, so only once a month, just to come back to the base to do Maid Marion ... So I'm not sure about this year, but we will see how it goes.

Q: Yes, you'll see how it goes ... Now what's your favourite place on Marion Island?

A: Swartkops.

Q: Swartkops? How so?

A: The view is open. Although the West Coast is open, I like it to go when it's breeding season. You get to the amphitheatre, and you get all the penguins and ... The other places, you can see ah, there are penguins, but Swartkops, it's perfect. And even now, around the bay there's enough water. You never run short of water at Swartkops, compared to like Rook's ... Cape Davis, Mixed Pickle ... I think those three places, and sometimes they run low on water.

Q: Oh.

A: So there is ... If someone is there, you must just get enough water for the guys. But Swartkops is my favourite.

Q: Nice. Good ... okay. During any of your trips, did you ever have visits from other ships or helicopters?

A: Where? On Marion, or ... ?

Q: All three.

A: Marion, in 2000, we had Aquatic [...?]. It was two ships. Aquatic [...?] was bringing some supplies, and then there was one [...?], the fisherman, got caught by the hook ...

Q: Oh?!

A: So ...

Q: Was that an illegal fishing vessel?

A: No, no. That was a legal one, because we got confirmation from Cape Town that this ship is coming to you; you must help these guys.

Q: Okay; because he got hurt?

A: Because he got hurt, yes. So that was the only time here. And then Gough, every three months, there's a fishing vessel.

- Q:** Of course, because it's fishing waters.
- A:** Yes. The Castle of Edinburgh, from Cape Town. So we know them.
- Q:** So they're bringing you packages and things?
- A:** Yes. You know, you forget your headphones, or you want some cd's, or you know ... You call home, package, send it to Cape Town, and then you can get your packages for Christmas.
- Q:** Ah, that's nice.
- A:** Yes. And then SANAE ... It's only in November, December – summertime, when it's flying time, you get planes refuelling, maybe at SANAE; or the weather's bad and they're on that route, and they land at SANAE and they came to overnight, wanting the weather clear so ... they go.
- Q:** Cool. Now, are there any things that you can think about, any incidents, that you like to remember, or that you like to think about? You experiences on the islands and on the ice ... ?
- A:** The only bad experience that I experienced was on the ice, with two of my team members. We got along well until ... during team training, and then, after everybody was gone, like February, everything changed completely.
- Q:** How so?
- A:** It's one of those race issues ... We were all three black guys, but they didn't like me, because me, I won't have issues with someone I've just met. You know, I'll never bring the apartheid-thing into the team, because those things, they kill the team. So they had a problem with me, because I spent all the time with the white people. So, at the end, we were not talking to each other. And then he'll cut my lines off if I'm on ...
- Q:** What (do) you think about the new base and the old base ...
- A:** Yes, we were talking about skivvy, like the cleaning part ...
- Q:** Yes. Let's just quickly retrace ... You said you don't like the skivvy?
- A:** Yes, because ... No, I do like cleaning, like doing the skivvy ...
- Q:** Yes, but the new base ...
- A:** But the new base, it's going to be hectic, because you will need to clean, and I'm not sure even they'll close, some of the block areas, or if they'll all be available. So if they're all available, then you must clean the whole base. And it's too many doors... !
- Q:** Too many doors?
- A:** Yes, like I get lost a lot! When I get to the Hub, I want to go to the VIP – sometimes, I struggle. Then I refer to the map, when I want to the VIP; now which way must I go? But

the structure itself is very nice. I like the changes anyway. The radio room – the view; the kitchen ...

Q: Smart?

A: It's very smart. The equipment in the kitchen is much better than we had downstairs. And then the recreation area, the bar and accommodation is far from each other, then people can have fun up until they feel they are tired. The gymnasium is inside, compared to the old one, where you had to go outside, so I think I can be motivated to go to gym if I feel like going. I'm not forced to go to the gym!

Q: No.

A: But yes ... No, this is ... If I have to go to that one, I [...?], because here, you can get to see the team, because ...

Q: Yes ...

A: But now, this, I have to look for someone ...

Q: So you have to make an effort to ...

A: To go and get that person. Whereas the old base, if I know mammal lab, I can check what's mammal lab, and all those things. Or if I was sitting in the lounge, they would all go past there, but here, when I'm in the middle of this, then *eish*, it's ...

Q: You're not going to see anyone ... ?

A: No. So you have to walk. You must go to this [...?] block, or to the labs, you know ... But ...

Q: So what is the best part of your year, of the year for you, on all the places?

A: The best part?

Q: Yes; whether it's weather wise, or personal – when you do something ...

A: When I finish my expedition – now I'm done; I'm going home. I want to go home being happy, having friends. I don't want to go home sad, knowing 'oh' ... When I see Dora, I say, '*eish!*' you know. I want to go home like clear, knowing I've got friends. And work wise, my work should be up to date.

Q: Yes.

A: I hate to get like emails saying my work is crappy. That's one thing. So working very hard, and then going out a lot – that will make my year.

Q: So you always try to go out as much as you can?

A: As much as I can. So I think even this year it's going to happen, because Mia, she's alone on the project. So if she has to go and do the Wanderers, the Three-headed, then she's going to need a lot of help. So if I'm available, then I'll be ...

Q: The chance to go with her?

- A:** Yes.
- Q:** Oh, nice. Did you still have fresh food on Marion and Gough?
- A:** No.
- Q:** Still only had tinned food?
- A:** Only tinned, yes.
- Q:** Tinned and frozen.
- A:** Tins and frozen. Never had fresh on the island; only SANAE.
- Q:** Oh, so you did have fresh food on SANAE?
- A:** Yes, SANAE is fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Q:** Okay. And that obviously depends on how long it lasts?
- A:** How long it lasts, yes. But you still have the frozen, and then the fresh ones. So we'll kill the fresh ones first, before we go to the deep ... ?
- Q:** The deep frozen ...
- A:** The deep frozen ones, yes.
- Q:** Okay. Now, why do you think it's important for South Africa to have a base at Marion and a base at Gough and a base at SANAE?
- A:** From what I've seen and what I've read, there's too many countries involved in science. And then weather itself, all the countries, they've got their met stations, and we all talk the same language.
- Q:** The language of weather.
- A:** The language of weather. Then you know, when you've got people sailing, they need weather. So if they're going to now sail in an unknown area, no forecast, nothing, then they can throw themselves into danger, all those things. But we're at the central point, like Marion is situated, and I do the observations, and then someone's sailing from Australia maybe to Cape Town, then they can get a forecast; they can check what the guy on Marion reported; you've got Tristan – from South America you check what is happening on our route to those places. And also you have the guys in mainland to do the forecast. Because like Gough also, send their weather from Gough ... the first one is Cape Town. And you must also take, you must [...] observations; you don't just do observations, because whatever report depends on the forecast that will be given.
- Q:** Yes, so you're saying that's it's important to make sure that the detail, the information is correct, so that other people can ...
- A:** Can be able to use it.
- Q:** To use ... Okay.

- A:** Yes. It's like, you do the *goggas*, you know, you must try to be there ...
- Q:** Try to be accurate.
- A:** [...?] 'ag, it's just for ' ; no one ...
- Q:** No one's going to read it ...
- A:** That's not on, so try to be more accurate in what they're going to do.
- Q:** Okay. And you say that's for all the three bases, basically the same?
- A:** Yes. Also in Gough and Marion; SANAE is ... When they do the flying, they say they fly from Troll to Neumayer, Norwegian to the German base, they pass through SANAE, so if they have to fly into the unknown, and then they can get into a storm and they have to turn back, now they've wasted fuel and all that. Whereas if, when I'm at SANAE, I can say, 'okay, SANAE has got this'. And the forecast at the German base, you can get SANAE's weather, then you can relate the weather to ... or do the forecast for Antarctica as a whole, and then they can plan their activities during the summer time.
- Q:** What do you think is the most common mistake that people make when they think about ... When they hear you say that you've been to Marion and you've been to Gough and to SANAE, what do people think, and what do they say that is strange or interesting?
- A:** Well, the weird question, or I mean comment, is like 'what about your girlfriend?'
- Q:** Oh ...
- A:** You talk. Okay, it's not just you're going; you talk with people. If they feel they don't want ... you can't go ... Sometimes you don't have to force situations to ... you know. I must say, all the trips that I've done before, I've consulted with my girlfriend, my family. But then, when I did the last one, I told them I'm not going to go again ...
- Q:** And here you are ... ?
- A:** And here I am, again. But I hope this will be the last, the last one. But yes, you get people who will think you come here without the woman, you are crazy. But you can do so many things without the woman ... You know. You can still be here, achieve a lot; and then you stay behind, you don't get anything. So I'm not going to let some things stand in my way to gain my happiness.
- Q:** Yes.
- A:** So small things, they don't matter.
- Q:** They don't bother ... ?
- A:** Don't bother. You know, if you get the chance, then take the chance. You'll see when you get there how it's going to help; how you're going to survive, and all of this. But with the effort of the team, it's an easy place to survive, no doubt. But this is not the rehab. If you're thinking of coming for a rehab ... This is not the rehab! Okay.

- Q:** Why do you say that?
- A:** Let's say you come here and you say, 'I want to buy ... I want to quit smoking'; okay. You think, if I go there; if I buy so much, then if they're finished, they're finished. But people who buy extras, even if they don't smoke, they can buy smokes, and then [...] smokes can be exchanged for skivvies ...
- Q:** Ah ... !
- A:** This I learned. There's always ...
- Q:** Some people always make a plan!
- A:** Some people make a plan ... So you'll never even get rehabilitated on this place. Even if your booze is finished, you can still make plans to get booze from the other guys – 'I'll do your skivvy, give me six ... ' You'll do anything for anything.
- Q:** When you're desperate, you'll ...
- A:** When you're desperate, you know. So ...
- Q:** Now, what's the most enjoyable thing about being on the island? What do you ... I've touched on this, but what makes you come back?
- A:** I don't need to drive ... ! I don't need to spend! Although you do the Internet banking, but it's not hectic like when I'm back home. When you have to go, if you're off, you're off. You can work anytime you want to. Back home, if you're off ... when you're around, you're going to wake up early; there's no way you're going to spend the whole day in bed. Here, you can relax. You can... you know, do too many things.
- Q:** And is that the same for Gough as well?
- A:** Yes ... Let me see ... Gough, you can still do even the same. Like if I was here and I go to Gough, now when I get to Gough, I'm going to find something out, compared to like Marion Island. I say, '*ish*, if I was on Marion, I'd do this and this.' When I get to Gough, it's not there. When I'm on Gough and I get to Marion, I say, '*ag*, Marion is boring; Gough, I can do this and this and this; I can't do this on Marion.' You know, they always have positives and negatives, and their benefits and all those things.
- Q:** Yes. You've now been involved with the SANAP programme for more than 10 years. How has it changed? Or, has it changed? The programme, or way that they run the bases, that kind of thing?
- A:** No.
- Q:** Not? It hasn't changed?
- A:** No; it's still the same set-up.
- Q:** Okay.

- A:** You know ... The food, like when they do the ordering for the food, it's still the same. They've got their formulas that they use, and they're still using the same ...
- Q:** The same place for food?
- A:** Yes. But there's new varieties that they bring in lately. So, like the ones we've got this year, it's ... Out of the blue, you think 'ah, ...'
- Q:** Like the meat?
- A:** The meat has been like top quality for years now; for all the trips that I've been, it's been top quality. You check, like I'm from up north; I like eating *atcha*... And we've never had those things. Now, we check, there's *atcha*.
- Q:** *Lekker*.
- A:** Even different kinds of spices; different things. So they've ... like the food, they've tried to accommodate ...
- Q:** Improve ...
- A:** Improve all those things.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** And the issuing of clothes ... They've moved. During those years, there was an issue, but now they've upped their standards also.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** I mean, I'm wearing a First Ascent – that's nice; very expensive issues.
- Q:** Okay.
- A:** Yes, so we're wearing like First Ascent. So ...
- Q:** Yes, so it's more smarter issue gear.
- A:** Smarter issue, yes; everything. Like they've improved a lot in terms of their issue of clothes and all that. And the duration for ... like during ... for a take-over, it's pretty much it's still the same; still the same time ...
- Q:** Same things happen?
- A:** Yes. And team training ... They ... Now it's like ... I can say I'm feeling it now. Team training used to be in Pretoria, so I'm from Pretoria, so I didn't like worry much about sleeping at all. Now I come to team training to Cape Town. They pay you for two weeks in Cape Town; after two weeks, I must now fend for myself.
- Q:** Oy! And for how long until you get on the ship then?
- A:** Now we finished the Friday, and we had the weekend, and we were sailing on Tuesday.
- Q:** Okay, so you had to do something in Cape Town for the weekend?

- A:** Yes. So ... Because I wouldn't like get on the plane or get on a bus, go home, and come back again, you know? And Cape Town is expensive – accommodation, you know. So there are things that we suggested that they must do, like they must plan their team training so that when it ends, it ends with the ship departing maybe in a day or two, not over a weekend. Because some of us, we ...
- Q:** Yes, you don't always know people ...
- A:** (Yes.) If you're from up north and you come to Cape Town, who are you going to ask, you know. So ... Again, there's tonnes of accommodation, but they are expensive! That's the thing.
- Q:** Good. Brilliant! Is there anything else you'd like to add or say about your experiences on the ice and on the islands?
- A:** Well, on the island, when it comes to [...?], there's one thing that I forgot. There's 16-mm's– the ones we were watching yesterday ...
- Q:** Yes, the 16-mm's!
- A:** Those were my speciality!
- Q:** On the island now?
- A:** On the island, yes. If I'm working the nightshift, I'll go through the reels ...
- Q:** Really?!
- A:** And then get the whole movie, and then we had ... Fridays, it was skivvy day, so when I don't have skivvy late in the afternoon, then I put up the set-up and then we do the finger lunch-supper type thing ...
- Q:** Oh?!
- A:** Popcorn, and then we see them and start playing the 16-mm's; yes.
- Q:** Oh, brilliant!
- A:** That's one of the things that I enjoyed. Like, I think, when I watched those things, I wasn't like ... [...?] in the eighties, I wasn't watching the films at school – those were the last times I saw something like that, so I go to the movies. Now you get to Marion, 'oh, those things are here!' And then I started watching them again, check the technology now and then, out of the blue ...
- Q:** Okay; brilliant!
- A:** (Yes.)
- Q:** Okay, thank you very much. It's been very interesting.
- A:** Oh no; pleasure.
- Q:** It's been very interesting.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION