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AN ORAL HISTORY OF BRITISH SCIENCE

John Lindgren

Interviewed by Paul Merchant

C1379/62

IMPORTANT

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National Life Stories

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref no: C1379/62

Collection title: An Oral History of British Science

Interviewee's surname: Lindgren

Title: Mr

Interviewee's forename: John

Sex: Male

Occupation: former undergraduate
geographer,
University of
Cambridge

**Date and place of
birth:** 22/8/1930, San
Francisco, US

Mother's occupation:

Father's occupation: Employee, British
American Tobacco

Dates of recording, Compact flash cards used, tracks (from – to):

4/11/11 (track 1)

Location of interview: Interviewee's home, Harston, near Cambridge, UK

Name of interviewer: Dr Paul Merchant

Type of recorder: Marantz PMD661

Recording format : 661: WAV 24 bit 48kHz

Total no. of tracks: 1 Stereo

Total Duration: 00:50:00

Additional material: Scans of photographs of 1951 fieldwork.

Copyright/Clearance:

Interviewer's comments: This is a short recording to supplement accounts of Norwegian fieldwork, 1951, provided by Dr John Glen, Mr Dick Grove and Professor John Nye.

Track 1

Can I start then by asking when and where you were born?

I was born in San Francisco in August 1930.

Could you just give me the date in August?

The 22nd of August.

And just a little of your father's life.

My father was a Norwegian and he met my mother with whom I have spent much more of my life aligned, to because I grew up really with my mother, not my father, because they were split when I was about three or four. But my father, to answer your question was Norwegian, and he was quite old when I was born 'cause he was born in 1885 and he went at a young age of about – 1910 he went out to Mongolia and initially worked for the British American Tobacco Company and covered Mongolia. And in those days it was not politically incorrect, he was encouraging the Mongols to smoke. And while he was out there my – he, at a much later time, in 1928, he met my mother who'd gone out as a young undergrad – well, young postgraduate from Cambridge. She went out to Mongolia also to do some studies and they met and they did an expedition or two together and got married and produced me in 1930, yeah.

[01:42]

What was your mother's postgraduate study?

She was in psychology and anthropology and Chinese, she did. She was a very bright woman; she did the Chinese tripes, which was a two year study, in one year, and got a second but she got a first in everything else she did. She was very blue stocking and very bright.

And what did your father study? Did your father –?

No, he was, erm ... came from a farming family and he was on – he might have studied agriculture at school but I don't actually have any record exactly of that because he became – he went to sea fairly early on in his life.

[02:40]

What memories do you have of the teaching of science, including geography, at your school?

At my secondary school, which was a school, Stowe, in Buckingham, and the – well, science generally – this was immediately after the war and the schools then had a great deal of difficulty filling the roles for their teachers 'cause most of their regular teachers were off at the war. So the – to be kind, the teaching was varied and in the time when I was there, '44 to '49, some of the old masters – some of the pre-war masters were coming back and the – in pure science we had physics and chemistry from one man who – and the results in our, what was then in those days called the school certificate, were not very good and then we came back the next term, I'd better not say his name, was not there. There was a wonderful biologist who – he taught us all about trees and how to dissect frogs but they – but I didn't take biology in my school cert.

[04:15]

Erm, and moving onto geography there was to me a great teacher called Harry Kinvig who ran a very good and interesting course in geography and I passed my exams, which I'm sure is thanks to Harry Kinvig.

What was the nature and extent of fieldwork at Stowe geography?

In those days there was almost no fieldwork at all. We made the odd trip but – which would have been really a trip to an industrial place, which was the Raleigh bicycle works in Nottingham, which was about my only exposure at that date to what industry was like. But I think – yes, we're talking about '48, '49, there wasn't a lot of money

in the school and getting things organised and making trips for us was not within their either budget or imagination, I don't know which was the inhibiting factor but there were – there was very little fieldwork.

What was the content of physical geography within the classroom that you remember at this time?

It was mostly based on a book by I think Lake, who was – and so we – I think at the end of school I could tell you how coral islands were formed and the main features of mountains and earthquakes and the basic stuff from the textbooks, but the Lake – Lake's book was the text book that we – that I can remember now.

And could you tell me about your experience of physics at Stowe, the content of it and your response to it, enjoyment of it?

I'm afraid the answer really is no, I can't [laughs] because the – I didn't take it for school cert, I only took chemistry of the sciences, I'm not really inclined that way very much. And I didn't get involved in physics I think probably because in the previous year I hadn't shown any great aptitude for it. And I wasn't at that stage showing great academic promise, and I think they rather limited the amount of subjects I was going to take. So I only took seven, which these days people seem to take a dozen or more. And, erm, and chemistry was one of those seven which I failed, along with three quarters of the whole class [laughs].

[07:23]

Could you say why you went on to do geography at Cambridge; why geography?

Firstly I suppose because I seemed to be good at it, and was interested in it, and I – because I'd travelled a bit in my life I knew that the world was round, etc, and I found it interesting. I liked Mr Kinvig as a teacher who I had been exposed to in my school cert days. And one aspect there which I regret now is that I had to choose between geography and history, and I chose geography. But I don't know to what extent that choice faces children today but that is a regrettable one but I know that you can't have

your every single combination and schools can't cope with that kind of thing. But I've heard it – one of my children also ran into that problem later. I had travelled a little bit and was interested, and I guess when it came to what was I going to read to try and get into university it was one which I felt I was most likely to pass.

[08:52]

And so you went up to Cambridge in what year?

'49.

And are you able to say something about the status of geography at Cambridge in the time that you were there in relation to other subjects, how the subject of geography was viewed by perhaps students taking other subjects or your sense of its identity?

[Laughs] That's – I've never thought of this at all. Er ... I went to Trinity College because that was the college that I had some connection with, or my previous generation had some connection with, but they had very few geographers there. It wasn't considered one of Trinity's subjects, and therefore within the college we were an unusual bunch of maybe in my year only five of us. And we were surrounded by historians and mathematicians and more academically inclined people. So within the college I would say the geography was not one of the subjects which the college would have been particularly proud of or felt that they were leading the field. And Trinity does lead the field in many subjects in the world; I don't think geography would be one of them. Within the university maybe a little bit of a flavour of that but much less so. There were some colleges; St Catherine's for instance was very strong on geographers, and it was probably the specialist – or one of the special subjects that they encouraged. I think in those days we were a subject yet really to grow into significant stature probably. But that is a view given in 2011 of an opinion hardly developed in 1950 [laughs] and so –

And to what extent was it thought of as scientific in relation to –?

We were classified as scientists and the significance of that to me I'm afraid only meant we didn't have to wear a gown to lectures, that was all.

[11:47]

Did you get any sense of how students studying physics viewed geography?

No, I had no – I can't remember any physicists on my social network.

Thank you. Could you give us a sense of the content of the course, the geography undergraduate geography course?

Right. We had four separate areas; there was physical geography, there was historical geography, economic geography and survey, which was very scientific in a way. I mean it was very devoted to very specific notions, and that was kind of off on a left wing and rather specialised and not many people did it. The – Vaughan Lewis was the leading man in physical, an elderly lady called Mitchell was the historical geography, and Gus Caesar was very well known and very popular too with the economic geography then.

[12:52]

And could you describe geography fieldwork? A sketch of the different kinds of fieldwork that you were involved in, in your undergraduate course, before I go on to ask you specifically about the Norwegian.

Right, the – fieldwork, we did fieldwork in year one. We did a lot of survey out – there was practical work, which we went out measuring, using bicycle wheels very crudely but then we also worked with theodolites and made maps, so that was – that was outside fieldwork. And there was – you couldn't really do outside historical. Outside physical, we did of course which is the subject we're coming to later, which is the work on glaciers. Economic, we had a – a summer which was also in 1951 which Gus Caesar and Ron Peel, who went on to be professor of geography in Bristol I believe, ran a course – they ran a get together up in Durham where we visited many

different aspects of the industrial world you might say. We visited a shipyard; we went down a coalmine, where I was on my twenty-first birthday. We visited a Consett iron and steelworks, and we visited a ICI plant, I think at Bellingham, I can't remember, it wasn't Bellingham, it was something like that. And we also visited physical features; looked at Hadrian's Wall and some of the work done by rivers up in the Durham area but it was mostly on the economic side. And for somebody who had, as I had, a moderately sheltered background 'cause I hadn't done military service or anything, I found it very eye opening and this was a very good education. And we weren't working there, we were observing of course, whereas when we were doing a survey or working in the glacier that was more work.

[15:297]

And could you tell me about the relative balance of male and female undergraduates in your year?

Well, in my time there was only Girton and Newnham as lady's colleges, so there weren't all that many. I would say ... oh, eight or ten to one male to female, there were probably – yes, I will stay with the ... eight to one and – but on field trips there seemed to be a few more [laughs] yes. On our field trip to Durham, that was probably about two to one only, so – but in thinking around in the classrooms I should think it – sorry, but I'm thinking maybe my eight to one's a bit exaggerated. I think it might be nearer to five to one but it'd be interesting to know the actual fact.

Yes.

I was mostly male oriented in those days but as the – my four years went by that orientation changed [laughs].

Yes, could you say something of the relations between the male and female geographers, informal and –?

The – they were good and active. The geography department was a very social department where everybody – not everybody but the general trend was to be

sociable, to get together, to go out to coffees together. The field trips were – everybody seemed to know each other and I think a lot of friendships were formed, I mean in – I was more cradle snatching. In my fourth year I met this freshman girl but that was – that eventually ended up we got engaged but that – not while I was up at Cambridge but I would say it was a very social department and the relationship between the sexes, I would say, was normal. Normal for the time.

Meaning?

Meaning that these days people of my generation assume they're all hopping into bed with each other but at that time one didn't, or I didn't [laughs]. I don't think all that many people did, we were all very ... a) naïve and b) reserved to a degree. I think that reserve that one had then has sort of evaporated these days way down into early middle school days now.

[18:31]

And were there parts of the geography course that were considered more male or more female than others? Was there a –?

I stayed on at fourth year for complicated career reasons to do just survey. There were maybe a dozen or fifteen of us doing survey in a four year course, and there were no females on that, that I can remember. Erm ... historical geography would have had more – would have had a higher proportion of women than men.

Why's that?

That's not – not the men, sorry. There were a higher proportion than in the other subjects. Now why? That's a good question. Erm ... I don't know, maybe what they learned at school, they probably all learned history at school and in those days probably not many girls studied economics at school. But I would say there would have been a leaning – the girls would have gone proportionately more maybe for history than the other two and not hardly at all for survey. I'm sure there were some surveyors in previous and later years but not many.

[20:08]

Could you tell me about the origin of the 1951 Norwegian fieldwork, by which I mean how you were –? Could you remember as much detail as you can about how you were invited to take part?

Right, erm ... I think I was approached by Vaughan Lewis, who was my tutor and director of studies, and so I was closer to him maybe than other students, and he was a Trinity man. And so I can't remember the discussion, whether it was over a coffee or in the – outside the lecture room or where but it was – the idea was floated and I think two or three of us decided let's do this. And it was something which I'd never been to Norway before, nor any of the others, it was a challenge to respond to 'cause he – Vaughan Lewis would have promoted it as an opportunity to see a little bit of the world and do something. And I think there was an element of helping out because we knew it was poor John McCall although I don't think at that time I hardly knew the guy, I probably knew what he looked like but that was about it. And so it was – it was very informal, the arrangement; it wasn't something that we were submitting an application to do or anything like that. It was just by word of mouth and would you like to, etc, and I'll send you the details, etc.

And when then he said would you like to, what did you say? Would you like to, what? What were you told was involved?

I can't remember [laughs] like that; it would have been come and help. I'm sure digging on a – working on a glacier in Norway would have been all the description one wanted. I suspect I wouldn't have asked very much [laughs] because it sounded something worth doing.

And so can you tell the story of going there and starting from there?

Right. We were given dates and we were given tickets for the boat. We took a train up to Newcastle where we caught a boat over and sailed to Oslo. I can't remember anything about the boat journey. I'd made boat journeys before so it wasn't that novel

for me but the fact I don't remember means that nobody was seasick or anything. And then we were in Oslo very little, hardly any time at all. I have family over there and I didn't have a chance to see them. We then boarded the train and went up north to a place whose name I've forgotten, I think it was Lom. And then took another train on a branch line heading west where we disembarked and then cars met us, driven by some Norwegians who took us up a track maybe ten miles to a place called Spiterstulen which was really a hostel in a valley at the foot of the mountains. And there we would have spent a night and been taken the next day by, I think, one of the local Norwegians up to the camp, which was about a two hour hike up the mountain, probably carrying provisions. Everybody who went up the track took provisions, usually potatoes or something or cans of some food, and then we would have arrived.

[24:41]

Now just three of us on – just arriving then, three of us travelled together, but others would have been arriving in the day before, the day after, because we tended to be on for a week. And then when a week was up we would then leave. I went over with Ivor Evans and Steve Nelson, and I think Roy Wood was there; it was a day out. No, I think Roy Wood and Steve Nelson was a day out, and that was the four Trinity men on this trip. So when we got there we –I can't remember the arrival, we just arrived, it's a long time ago [laughs]. And no doubt that would have been it for the day and then we would be in shifts digging in the glacier.

[25:44]

Could you describe what was –? I know it's a long time ago but whatever you have of the process of the digging, so if you could describe exactly what you did.

When we arrived there was already a tunnel which had been started I think in previous years. And the – I think we were the second shift, if you like, digging, helping John McCall who was doing research work there, helping him with his tunnel, and we were finishing off straightening up the tunnel which had changed shape a little bit over the previous winter and then continuing on into the – into the body of the glacier. We had pickaxes and we would chip away at the roof and the front, at the front, and make sure

it was the right height, and it was a good height because I don't remember being desperately inconvenienced, and I'm tall, erm, and wide enough, it was a good tunnel. It was just pickaxe works and taking the fallen ice out and putting it outside the mouth of the tunnel, and it – our tunnel, when we were there, wasn't more than, I'm totally going on memory, I'd say maybe twenty feet in when we were there. So we didn't have too far to drag the fallen ice out.

Did you have any sense of how much further you had to go or ...?

No, we were just – we knew we were a shift and we would do our work and we knew that it would be going on beyond, but I'm – we didn't have too much interest in what research was going on, we were the labour and it was a summer project and we were the diggers, the grunts.

And who was directing you in how and –?

John McCall was the leader, it was his research work and he would organise the shifts and eating times and lead us socially in the evening. We'd have a lot of sing songs and that was about all we had to do, there was no television and nobody had mobile phones, nobody had anything. There may have been some cards but I don't remember them, there probably were.

[28:22]

Do you remember how it felt to dig, you know, this? I don't know, something about the temperature or the feeling of it.

No, I – I can sense now thinking about it, the pickaxe hitting the ice and it coming away in slices and chips. I can sense the effect of the pickaxe on the ice, and it would come away as I say in thin chips rather than great big chips, in our bit of the glacier, maybe that changed when you got further in. But it was just steady work and we kept at it, we were all – nobody told us about trade union times or anything like that [laughs].

And can you remember what you were saying about the work while you were doing it to your fellow miners?

No, can't remember any conversation or anything. I think we just got on with it.

And how many people in each shift?

I think in shift, I think no more than two or three doing different things.

So did you stay with your Trinity group or was it mixed?

... Yeah, I'm sorry.

That's all right. And having got the – having chipped off these slim, thin slices, how did you –? How precisely did you collect them up and take them out at the time?

Well, as they fell to the ground we would have – we must have had a container we would have shovelled them into and dragged them out. But again, I can't remember. It's awful [laughs].

[30:25]

Do you remember any discussion or in fact work on a little sort of cauldron off the side of the tunnel, a kind of ice laboratory that was also dug? I don't know if that was discussed at the time that you –

No, no.

And what sorts of things did you do when you were off shift?

I think probably slept a lot. It was quite hard work, I mean we didn't shirk and we were all young and enthusiastic and one didn't in those days, shirk, one just got on with it. Certainly I don't remember going for any long walks at all, we might go – we went once or twice to look at views but that was only a matter of a few hundred yards.

Certainly didn't make any, or I didn't, others might have, but I don't remember anybody making any great trips. And then ... yeah, then that – I think Ivor Evans and I, we ended our time. They said, right, that's it and then so off you go, and so we went down to Spiterstulen a day early but we had to wait for Roy who was coming the next day, so we must have been staggered a little bit in our timing. And, erm, so, yeah, I remember we went down to Spiterstulen and there was nothing to do there. So actually on our last day there we weren't working but we had nothing else to do, so we loaded the rucksacks and took the potatoes back up to the camp just to help out. There was nothing else to do down at the base camp either. I think it was a camp, local Norwegian hikers used it as their base and would go off and do their summer walking and things like that. And then the next day Roy Wood came down and joined us, the three of us, we walked the ten miles down to the railway station and took the train back. Again, no time in Oslo or – I can't remember again anything about the sea journey. I have over there somewhere the names of the boats we were on but we went back and separated when we took trains to our homes.

[32:38]

Were there any female undergraduates helping?

No.

Why do you think that was? Is there an obvious reason why that's –?

I guess the work, it – we could pick more ice because of our size than they could and they wouldn't have been as strong. We didn't have any sort of front row forward types among our lady undergraduates, so I don't think – they probably weren't even asked for that kind of reason, yeah.

[33:14]

And can you remember what the academics were doing? You say that you were digging the tunnel and not taking much interest in the research which, not surprising given the context of how you were asked and so on, but what were the –?

Well, John McCall was there running the camp and it was his basic research we were working on behalf of, and I'm sure he was liaising with. I don't remember any of the senior faculty of the department visiting during our week. And they probably only wanted to come maybe at the beginning and the end, I would have thought they wouldn't be much – maybe once in the middle but I guess it probably went on for several weeks, we were just one shift. I think we were in – it was fairly early on. I have a feeling it was June and I guess it probably would have gone on through August with the different, five or six different, people every week.

Was John McCall then the only –? I know he was a research student but was he the only senior academic you remember being on the site at the time or not?

That's the only one I remember. He was a memorable guy, he was just a super guy, charismatic and he was older than us and he led us in – I think we sort of played games and things which he would initiate. Something Vaughan Lewis used to do socially too, he'd have people to his house and make us do all sorts of games which I still show the grandchildren, puzzles.

What –?

Oh, well, you can lay some books on the table and you think of one on the floor and you think of one of the books and you point to this one, that one, the other one, and somebody says, yes, that's it, and how do you know? And you never tell them the secret but it's quite a simple secret [laughs].

Is it the one where someone's been sort of briefed and they remain in the room and –

Oh – yes.

Give you a signal?

Yes, that's it, yeah. And so where you point to the – on the book indicates whether that's the one or not. I'm afraid there's a – you know, it's sixty years [laughs].

[35:40]

Could you describe any relations with local people while on the field?

There was almost none. No, there was – there were Norwegians running the Spiterstulen hostel at the bottom of the hill – hill, mountain, and we would have seen them on our day off or the odd day we had at the end, but otherwise there was none. There was no time. We didn't do any tourism, when we finished we went straight back home and so we had almost none there, which was – there were – a group visited us. I can remember these girls came up for something, I think it was a day trip for them, but that was all. And I don't really remember, I seem to remember they were very young and I don't think they spoke English and I have a smattering of Swedish which is good enough for Norway but it wouldn't have been – they were probably a distraction more than anything.

Do you remember anything of the interaction between the undergraduate geographers and those Norwegian girls?

No, no, I don't, it's total – it wasn't significant. And yet I took those photographs of it, so they must have been a distraction to some degree, it was a change from the normal daily routine, they came up. But my first thought was they came to help but I'm not sure they did, I think we more or less did our own – did our own cooking and washing up and took turns to –

[37:30]

Could you describe the camp please?

There were – apart from our own little tents in which we slept there were two sizeable square tents and those were in which we cooked and ate and met. And in the evenings we would meet in the big tent. I think the others possibly – John McCall slept in the other big tent and there was probably – the equipment was kept there because there were tools and everything had to be put away every night and that kind of equipment.

The digging tools were the only ones we were interested in but I'm sure he had other equipment, measuring things.

And can you describe then the evenings in the big tent that you met in? You've mentioned sing songs.

Yes, we often had sing songs. *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* I can remember is, 'The birds and the bees and the cigarette trees, and the soda water fountain, lemonade springs and the bluebird sings on big rock candy mountain'. But they could sing, I can't sing [laughs].

And what of the sort of eating and drinking in the evenings, what –?

I can remember potatoes [laughs] were very much part of the diet. I don't remember anything horrid and I don't remember anything wonderful. I think we just got on and ate what was produced. We took it in turns cooking but we weren't given a great variety of things to cook, so that was the vegetables and some meat. I can't remember too much, I don't think – know what we had for dessert, I think we had some chocolate bars and it was – it was not an odd – we ate okay and I – whether we had a drink or not and ... God, hmm, I should have contacted Steve or somebody to ask him what we had to drink. I'm sure we must have had a beer or two but they're all – everything we had had to be brought up the mountain in rucksacks on the back of people, so we – there wasn't an over plentiful supply of anything.

And do you remember any discomfort at all, you were in a –?

It was summer but it was 2,000 metres up, it must have been quite chilly at night but we had sweaters and I'm sure our sleeping bags were – they weren't on Dunlopillo mattresses but they were adequate. I don't remember anybody having rocks in their back or anything awful. We got by with camping and, no, I think it rained one day and we all got a bit wet but I don't remember any discomfort. It was – it was a fun get together, you know, guys together and I look back on it as a pleasurable experience. There was certainly no hardship or any feeling of, gee I was a nice to do

that, kind of thing. It was more the feeling they were nice guys to let me do it, you know.

[41:15]

And at the time you left – so you'd done your contribution out there, what did the tunnel look like from the outside in your mind's eye as you picture it? So you've finished your digging work there, what did it look like from the outside?

That ... my mind's eye is now quite mixed with having seen the photos you've shown me and now your photos have now replaced whatever little I had. I probably had a backward look over my shoulder at the tunnel and said, okay, goodbye tunnel, without any great feeling of fondness, nor I don't think of any great feeling of hate either, it was a job and it was a job, the – I remember the camp and us all being together more than the tunnel, the tunnel just got us there. [Telephone rings]. Oh, Margaret will answer that.

[42:19]

Thank you. And any memories you have of – I know that they weren't all this particular field trip but – and they were demonstrators at the time that you were an undergraduate, but any memories you have of Jean Clark as she would have been then, and Dick Grove?

Not at that time, particularly, we just remember they were around the department and part of the department scene. Erm, pleasant, sociable – my wife remembers Jean because she was a Girtonian. Dick wasn't Trinity, I can't remember where he was, he went on to become deputy master at Downing and very kindly gave us dinner one night in the hall there a few years ago but – and we remembered – Dick came and stayed with us in Kenya in Nairobi in 1969. He was going to do some research of the Rift Valley with Andrew Goudie from Oxford, and so we saw him just for that day or two when they were with us. But that was all and I have seen them on and off afterwards and we're – but as we were working and I was working in Africa all my working career really and so might have bumped into them in Cambridge once or

twice when we were back but we weren't around to be social. And when we came back Jean just about – at that time she died sadly, much too young.

[44:01]

And what could you tell us about Vaughan Lewis that you think might not be known from perhaps an obituary or published account? Things that you saw him in that you think you might have privileged access to this tutor.

I remember, no – he was my director of studies, he kept my nose to the ground, I mean adequately. I remember him as mostly from the – his sociability and his developing fellowship or comradeship among the students. He'd have groups of us to teas, not, you know, several times, at least once or twice a year and we'd get to know Mrs Lewis at the home. And as I said earlier, he had games there and we'd all participate and have a good time and it was a very happy department from that point of view. And you felt that people were there trying to help you, they weren't bossing you around. Professor Steers was new to the department, he – Debenham, I think, had retired the year just before I went up. He was a remarkable man, Frank Debenham, we'd been on – I had met him because my mother knew him, so she was – knew a lot of those people and he'd been of course on one of Scott's trips so he was – brought a lot to the table. But Professor Steers had just started and he was a physical geographer, took us on a field trip to Blakeney. I remember him standing in a boat rather like Washington crossing the Delaware as we crossed from one bank to some little island to look at what the waves were doing to the sea.

Yes do you remember –

Can't tell you what the waves were doing to the sea [laughs] but –

Do you remember any –

What they were doing to the sand I mean – sorry?

Do you remember any more about that fieldwork? He was well known as somebody who worked on the coast.

Yeah. He took us up to Blakeney which is north Norfolk – well, it's your county. And, erm ... we looked at coastal features with him. I think that's the only field trip I remember that he ran. That would have been my third year because I did physical and economic in my – for my degree. No, I can't remember any others of his. I mentioned Caesar's fieldwork up – field trip up in Durham and there were no, nothing – I didn't do history in my last year at all, so historical geography, so didn't do that.

[47:26]

And survey, I went on the survey camp at the end of the year to Blythburgh near Southwold, and that was quite fun.

I think that you helped.

Yes, I –

Some academics and –

They said, John, come away with us, this is just – Jackson and Williams, they were the leaders on that, and we did various surveying exercises during the day but they had their own little research study going on. So they said, John, come along with us off to the coast, we need you to help us. And, yes sir, yes sir, please sir. And we did – we didn't call them Bill and, I can't remember Jackson's first name, anyway Newnham and Best. But – so when we got there they said, right, we're doing levels, here's this pole which we use for levelling, which is the same pole that you see the county surveyors doing when they're looking at roads. And please walk into the water ten metres, or ten yards of course it was then, so I did that and held it upright so they could use their theodolite from some position they marked. And they said, now go back another ten yards [laughs]. I did this about three times 'til I was almost up to my neck, and it was quite cold although it was July, but to me any water is cold and I never swam in the sea, North Sea, again after that [laughs]. And so they had their free

labour, but I passed my exam, so it was worth it. They were good too but I did a fourth year just doing survey and so I saw a lot of them, and then they were good. Quite, I think, eminent in their field of survey 'cause they would – their course produced people for the Colonial Survey, and funny enough I was working in Dar Es Salaam, Tanganyika in September to December and one weekend three of my mates on the survey course had joined the British Colonial Survey. We were all on the beach together, so it was a happenstance, it was good fun.

[End of Track 1]