

### AV 3 Terrance Armstrong oral history interview

Tape 1 - Track 1: [00.28.44]. Harry King's [HK] introduction outlining the career of Terence Armstrong [TA] which spans the history of the Scott Polar Research Institute [SPRI]. [00.02.17] Description of TA's family history in Northern Ireland. Mention of the 'Plantation of Ulster'. His parents moved from Ulster to England before he was born. [00.04.05] Description of TA's education and early career including learning Russian at Winchester school; coming up to Cambridge in 1938 to study French and German and transferred over to Slavonic department to study Russian; joining the army; returning after the war and starting a job at SPRI. [00.08.50] Description of TA's interview at SPRI with Sir James Wordie and informal talks with Sir James, Lancelot Fleming, director of SPRI, and Brian Birley Roberts [BBR] who wanted to employ a Russian specialist. They offered him a research fellowship. [00.12.00] Description of funding for his post [00.13.10] Description of TA's research interests in the Russian Arctic mainly in the economic and social fields. He started as a linguist and ended up as a self-taught economic and social geographer. [00.14.45] Description of TA's interest in the Northern Sea-Route, which was the subject of his doctoral thesis, and research he undertook into how shipping was developing along the route. All his research was compiled from the Soviet press and so was only a portion of the truth. He has now met Russians who have told him that at least some of the things were correct. [00.19.30] Description of current work with an international committee making a detailed report on the possibility of world shipping making use of the Northern sea route. [00.21.30] Description of the difficulties of getting data from the Russians in the early days and establishing the Russian section of the SPRI library. In those days TA was also SPRI's Russian librarian and bibliographer; he tried to set aside one day a week for cataloging but got more and more behind. [00.23.21] Description of SPRI people including Douglas Blythe, editor of Polar Record, who went into the Diplomatic service; Doris Johnson, Librarian, and her Pomeranian dogs; John Elbo, Scandinavian expert with an interest in Greenland. Mention by HK of Elizabeth Rought, Secretary.

Tape 1 - Track 2: [00.28.18]. Continuation of description of John Elbo. Description of TA and Colin Bertram's uncomfortable flight over the north pole in 1952 with the Empire Air Navigation School. [00.31.25] Description of TA's voyage on the Canadian Defense Research Board icebreaker 'Labrador' through the North West Passage in 1954. His research interests having moved on to the study of sea-ice. [00.37.31] Description of difficulty in compiling an illustrated ice glossary using photographs from TA's voyage on the 'Labrador'. [00.39.57] Description of contract TA had with the Canadians to produce a study of the recording and reporting of floating sea ice. They devised a new way of portraying sea ice on maps. Mention of Charles Swithinbank and John Heap. [00.43.50] Description of SPRI in the mid-1950s including its constitution and being bought into the University. Mention of Gordon Robin becoming director; raising money for a larger building; new teaching commitments in geography tripos including 'Polar problems' run by TA and BBR. [00.51.00] Description of travel and exchanges in the late 1950s. TA persuaded A.F. Treshnikov and I.V. Maksimov to visit in 1957, signaling the reopening of relations with the Russians. [00.52.52] Description of TA and BBR's reciprocal visit to Russia in May 1956 which was a great success. Anecdotes

about parties and hangover cures.

Tape 1 - Track 3: [00.28.40]. Continuation of anecdote about hangover cures. [00.55.54] Description of relationship with Russians. Mention of his book 'Russians in the Arctic' and 'The Challenge of the Poles', by Bertrand Imbert. [00.58.33] Description of TA's involvement with the British Glaciological Society [International Glaciological Society]. Mention of Gerald Seligman and Max Perutz. [01.03.05] Description of research interests moving on to Russian colonisation. Mention of Arctic Institute in Montreal. TA's book 'Russian settlement in the North'. [01.06.40] Description of travels in Yakutia, 1967-68. Mention of visits to Verkhoyansk and Oymyakon. Anecdote about jumping into a river with Graham Rowley. [01.10.44] Description of the opening of the new Ford Foundation extension of SPRI in 1968 including story about the fire and evacuation of the building. [01.13.30] Memories of building the extension and his dealing with Peter Bicknell the architect. [01.15.00] Description of visiting the Technical library in Novosibirsk where he organised book exchanges which are still in operation today. [01.18.10] Memories of Ethel John Lindgren, the most frightening person in the Polar world! Mention of the Reindeer council of the UK and importing reindeer into Scotland. [01.22.25] Memories of John Coates, a former SPRI student, including his war service.

Tape 1 – Track 4: [00.04.08]. Continuation of memories of John Coates (JC) including work at the Foreign Office and subsequent PhD at SPRI on Komi literature; JC career at the University of East Anglia including mention of student riots. [ends with interruption by a telephone call].

Tape 2 – Track 1: [00.28.41]. In the late 1960s-early 1970s a Russian cataloguer was employed taking this responsibility away from TA [01.26.40]. Description of a sabbatical in 1970 as senior visiting scholar at the University of Alaska and connection to the 'Man in the Arctic' programme. Mention of Vic Fischer; Louis Fischer; Frank Darnell, Director of Northern Education; George Rogers, economist and collaborator of TA's book 'The Circumpolar North'. [01.31.45] Description of TA's involvement in a series of seminars which took place in Scandinavia, Alaska and Greenland to discuss with local people their particular educational needs. [01.33.10] Description of TA's involvement with the Hakluyt Society. He joined in the early sixties and became the secretary for 25 years, which he enjoyed; memories of his book "The Yermak's campaign in Siberia". [01.36.30] Description of the lack of reviews of TA's books in the Russian press, as most focus on current affairs. [00.12.05][01.37.30] Description of the establishment of the SPRI Post-graduate diploma course in October 1975, following pressure from the University to change their teaching methods. Today it is an MPhil course. Mention of Peter Speke. [01.41.50] Description of TA's honorary degree at the University of Alaska in the early 1980s and report on Arctic cultures for UNESCO. [01.43.40] Description of taking over as acting Director of SPRI for a year, which he didn't enjoy due to the pressure of finding

funding. Memories of working closely with Gordon Robin. [01.47.10] Description of retiring in 1983 after 36 years at SPRI. Russian studies are in very good hands with Piers Vitebsky (PV) who has secured funding to study the indigenous peoples of Siberia; memories of PV. [01.50.40] Description of the role his wife Iris Armstrong and their family played at SPRI and in Harston. Memories of idyllic garden parties at Harston House in the summer. [00.26.56] [cuts to silent shot of TA in his house being interviewed by HK][01.53.00 - ENDS]

Tape 2 – Track 2: [no timings on VLC – approx. 7-8 mins] Silent shot of TA in his house being interviewed by HK. [] TA's son Kevin's travels in the Arctic on Prince Patrick Island working as a cook for French-Canadian geophysicists; becoming Resolute flight controller age 18 and anecdote about Wally Herbert. [] Silent shots of HK.