

Celebrating 150 years of Bedford College, founded 1849,
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Ms Sukey Cameron
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~~7 July 2000~~ 9 January 2000 (!)

Dear Sukey,

I recently spoke to David Tatham and he suggested that a short piece for the FIA newsletter might be suitable in terms of evidence of my recent Shackleton Trust field trip to the Falklands. He also suggested that a photograph might be useful to include of me in the Islands. What I have done at this stage is to write a 500 word article just outlining some of things that I did in December 1999. I am quite happy to amend or to concentrate on other aspects of my research if that is what is required. Please, therefore, do feel free to ask for changes or additions. I can supply a photograph when I have my film developed. I will be giving my receipts to David Tatham when I see him on Thursday in Ledbury.

With best wishes,

Klaus

Klaus Dodds



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Researching Post-Conflict Falklands

With the generous assistance of the Shackleton Trust, I travelled to the Falklands in order to carry out research on how the Islands have changed since the 1982 conflict. My research trip of December 1999 was my fifth visit to the Islands since May 1997. This is an important point given that social research in the Falklands can only be carried out once a researcher has built up a measure of trust with the community. On this occasion, I found Islanders ready and willing to be interviewed on the condition that confidentiality was strictly respected. Any future work that I publish on the Falklands will respect this undertaking.

Over the course of my research visit, I carried out interviews with Islanders living in Stanley and Camp (both East and West Falkland). The purpose of the research was to investigate attitudes towards change, and inevitably most attention was devoted towards the implications of the 14th July Agreement and the decision to withdraw restrictions on Argentine passport holders entering the Falklands, as well as concern over illegal fishing in the South Atlantic. On the question of the former, I found that most Islanders supported the removal of the restrictions but were concerned that an effective agreement with Argentina over fishing should be secured. What I found interesting was that many Islanders who were old enough to remember the '1970s' were concerned that history might repeat itself in terms of either the shopping behaviour of Argentine visitors or perhaps inappropriate gestures relating to sovereignty. It was quite striking that young people (regardless of gender) appeared very anxious at the removal of the restrictions on Argentine passport holders. One reason might be is that many recalled their vivid and troubling memories as children of the Argentine occupation of 1982. As a researcher, one has an obligation to treat these recollections with care and respect and most of my interviews revealed some very thoughtful approaches to change and development.

Looking ahead, most Islanders were confident of the future and recognised that securing fishing licensing sources was central to their prosperity and security. Most people were relieved that the oil licensing process has proceeded slowly but were nonetheless keen to witness further exploratory development. The presence of two Councillors at the 14th July Agreement meetings was seen by most of my interviewees as a positive sign that the authority of the Falkland Island Government was being increasingly respected by both Argentine and British governments. While it is too early to judge the 14th July Agreement, I felt that Islanders remained resolute in their desire to see the principle of self-determination respected and many expressed the hope that a full and friendly

relationship with Argentina would materialise. The key proviso, of course, is that Argentina drops its claim to the Falkland Islands.

The research visit was very productive and I owe a debt of gratitude to all those Islanders who agreed to talk to me. I hope to write up my research in the form of a book on post-conflict Falklands and to have it published in 2002.

Klaus Dodds (Royal Holloway, University of London).