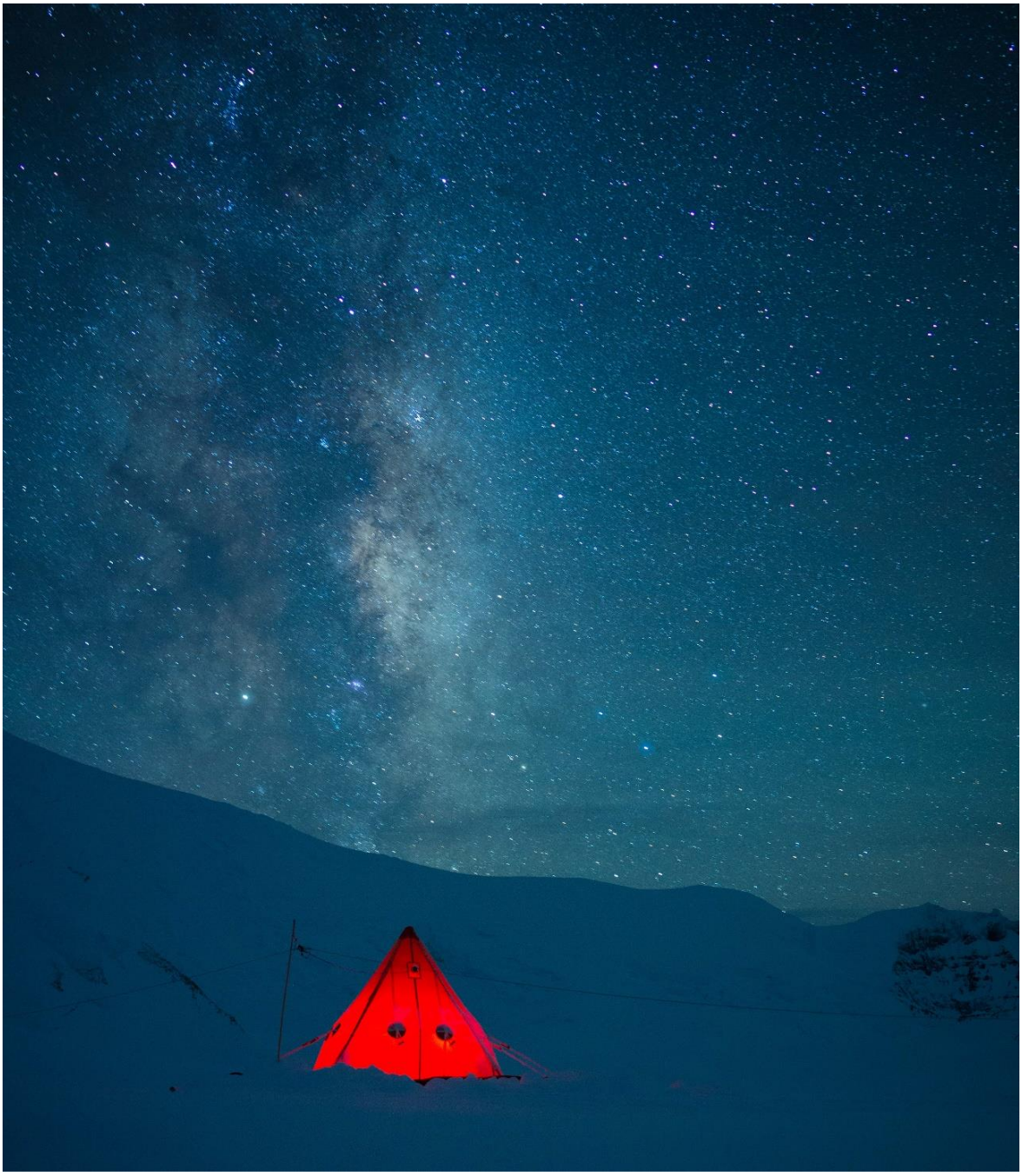
Working as a BAS Field Guide

Working as a Field Guide for BAS is a unique and unforgettable experience. While BAS employ a wide range of professions to enable deep-field science, the Field Guide role is one of the most challenging and varied. It offers the greatest opportunities for travel and freedom within the organisation. With this freedom comes responsibility. Working as a Field Guide involves a lot of demanding work but is extremely rewarding.

The following is a brief overview of various aspects of life as a Field Guide. It should provide a better understanding of what to expect for those interested in the role.



Pyramid tent under the Milky Way during a winter trip. Mount Bouvier Camp, Adelaide Island. Photo: Neil Brown

BAS Field Guides work at one or more of the following Research Stations. Each station is unique and offers a different experience.

Rothera Research Station:

Field Guides do their initial training at Rothera. New Field Guides will almost certainly spend their first winter season here. It's an incredible location with good access to glaciers and mountains, allowing Field Guides to deliver recreation and training to BAS scientists and staff. It's also Field Guide HQ, where most field equipment is prepped and where most field parties do their Antarctic training prior to deployment into the field.

Rothera as seen from Reptile Ridge. Photo: Ian Hey

Follow these links for a virtual tour and more information about Rothera Research Station:

Rothera Research Station - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

Rothera - Virtual Tour (bas.ac.uk)

Halley VI Research Station:

There is usually one or two Field Guides stationed at Halley during the summer season. Amongst other tasks, Field Guides at Halley oversee staff training, travel around the Brunt Ice Shelf to assist scientists in their research and find suitable locations/routes for ship relief. As with all ice shelves, the Brunt is a serious place. Field Guides need to be proficient in BAS field techniques and maintain a conservative approach to risk.

Photo: Tom Sylvester

Follow this link for more information about Halley IV Research Station:

Halley VI Research Station - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

Signy Research Station:

BAS bases a Field Guide at Signy every summer to manage safe travel across the islands ice cap and to assist scientists in their research. Given its location, Signy is a haven for wildlife and most of the research focuses on this.

Follow this link for more information about Signy Research Station:

Signy Research Station - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

Ny-Alesund Research Station:

BAS offer occasional opportunities for Field Guides to work in the Arctic as well. The Field Guides primary role at Ny-Alesund is to facilitate scientific research using skidoo, boat, and foot travel to access field sites. Field Guides also support the general running of the station.

Follow the links below for more information about Ny-Alesund Research Station:

UK Arctic Research Station - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

Arctic - Virtual Tour

Field Guide Training

New Field Guides will complete their initial training in the UK before deployment to Rothera. This training includes a Field Guide induction week, PPE inspection, ski maintenance, sewing, medical training, sea survival and a 10-day Pre-Deployment course. It takes a long time to become a good Field Guide! The UK based training is just the first step in learning the skills and techniques unique to BAS and Antarctica.

Follow this link for more information about Pre-Deployment training.

Antarctic Pre-Deployment training - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

On arrival at Rothera new Field Guides begin their training in earnest with an intense 3-week course. This is delivered by the Lead Field Guides and includes personal polar management, medical training, comms training, meteorological training, vehicle training, working around aircraft, Antarctic navigation, Field camping, linked skidoo travel, crevasse avoidance and rescue, equipment maintenance, SAR response and field admin. There are many new skills to learn, and it can be quite daunting at first. The training continues throughout the year and throughout a Field Guides career. There is always more to learn!

New Field Guides learning how to travel safely through glaciated terrain using linked skidoos. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Learning how to safely approach and assess crevassed areas. Photo: Iain Rudkin

Learning how to safely deal with bogged down skidoos. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Being familiar with the workings of a Nansen sledge is essential for safe Antarctic travel. Here a new Field Guide is applying the rope brakes for a descent into Sunnyside Bowl, Trident area. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Travelling between campsites. The sledge on the left contains the full camp setup while the sledge on the right contains backup survival equipment. Photo: Miriam Willis

New Field Guides learning how to safely assess a route through McCallums pass on Adelaide Island. In this case leaving the skidoos to probe on foot. Picts Peak in the background. Photo: Tom Sylvester

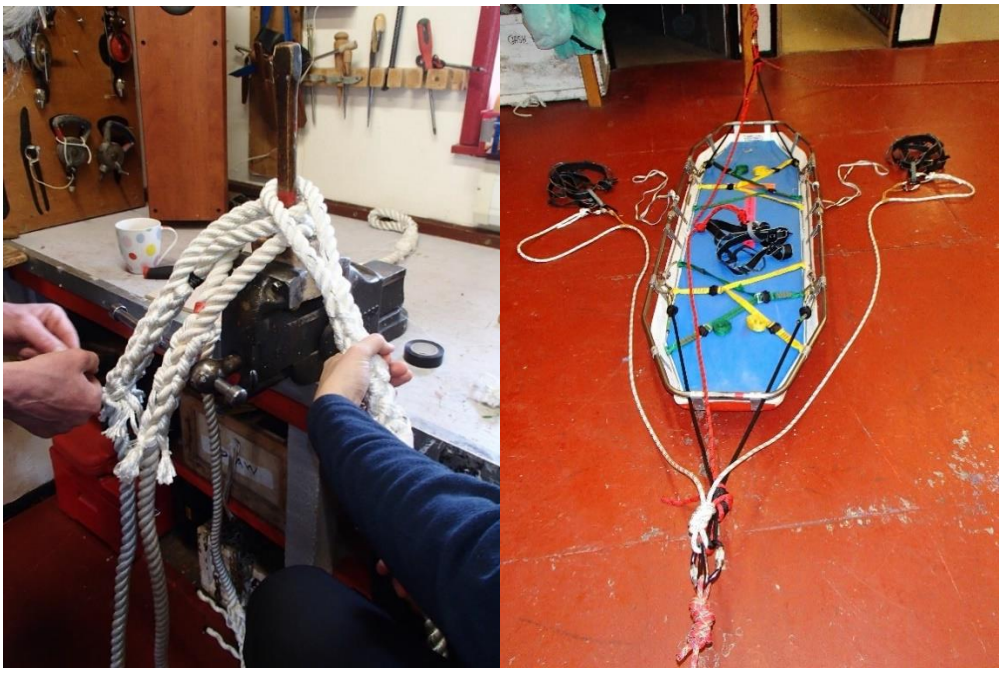
New Field Guides on the far side of McCallums Pass during initial training at Rothera. It is essential that Field Guides work together and bond to form a strong team. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Learning how to set up and manage a field camp. Photos: Tom Sylvester

Field living is enjoyable but tough. Field Guides need to be meticulously organised to keep themselves and their scientists safe and comfortable.

New Field Guides training on Reptile Ridge in preparation for delivering recreation trips. Photo: Mark Scales

New Field Guides learning how to repair a Nansen Sledge. Photo: Tom Sylvester



Left: Splicing is just one of many skills Field Guides must learn to do their jobs. Right: SAR stretcher familiarisation. Photos: Tom Sylvester

Field Guides need to be slick at crevasses rescue techniques. You can’t practice it enough! Photo: Miriam Willis

Becoming familiar with BAS field equipment takes time. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Delivering Staff Training

Many of the scientists and base staff you will work with may never have been in a cold environment before. Field Guides train staff in Antarctic survival skills and field techniques; from how to use polar clothing through to crevasse rescue techniques, linked skidoo travel through to field camping. Field Guides also train a team of SAR assistants to help in the event of an emergency in the field.

Teaching crevasse rescue techniques to wintering staff. Photos: Tom Sylvester

Training wintering staff in the use of the BAS tent box system. Photo: Neil Spencer

In order to travel safely across the ice skidoos are linked together and a full camping system is pulled on a Nansen sledge. Scientists and wintering staff are trained by Field Guides in linked skidoo travel techniques.

The following video was taken during a linked skidoo trip on Adelaide Island.

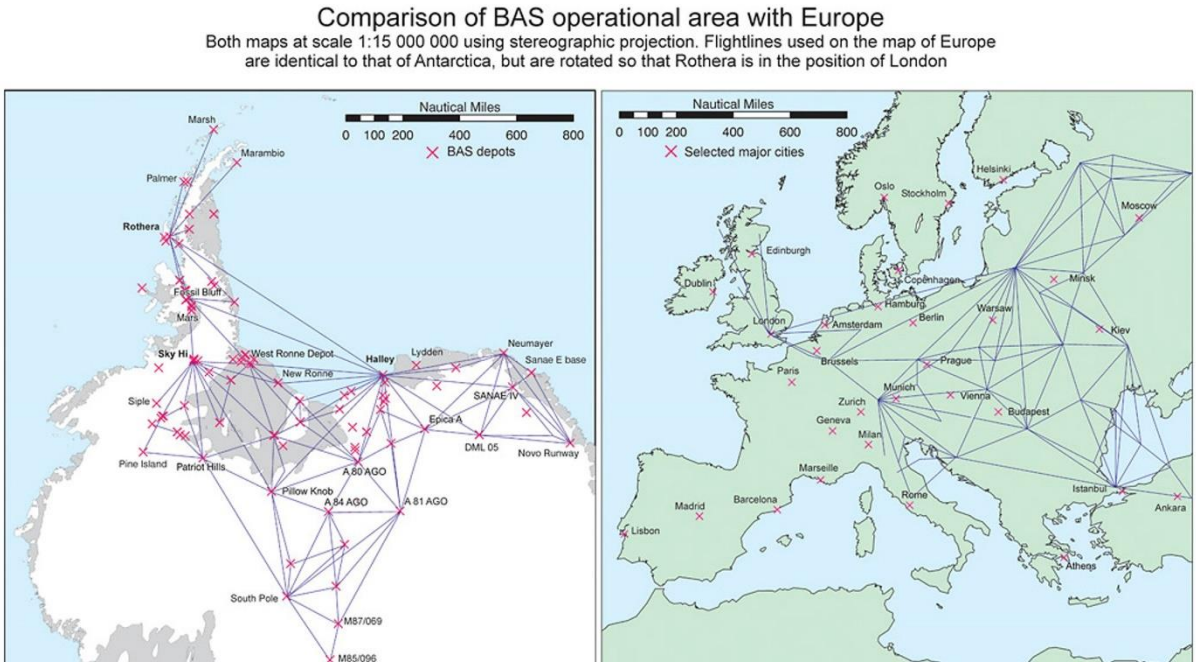
https://youtu.be/BczHrpUaFLE

A staff field camp training weekend on the Brunt Ice Shelf. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Field Work:

Field Guides may be deployed across a huge area and can expect to travel around the continent dealing with various tasks. Plans can change at short notice due to weather and operational issues, so being well organised and flexible are essential attributes for Field work.

New Field Guides can expect to spend their first summer season working on easier field tasks such as instrument raising, depot work, simple science projects and managing field operating hubs such as Sky Blu. Once they have completed a full summer and a winter, Field Guides will have accumulated more experience and can be tasked with more complex fieldwork.



The Field Guide operational area is vast!

Science projects:

BAS employ Field Guides to act as safety managers on deep field science projects. These projects vary hugely in terms of duration, location, tasks, and size. All involve keeping people safe and working efficiently in extreme environments.

Typical deep field science projects include:

- Hot water drilling to collect data and samples from the ice, bedrock, and ocean.
- Use of seismic and radar to help understand glaciology and bed/rock interface.
- Ice core drilling to ascertain historical make-up of the atmosphere.
- Geological sampling.
- Penguin and other wildlife studies.
- Instrument arrays placed over large areas to gather a wide range of data.

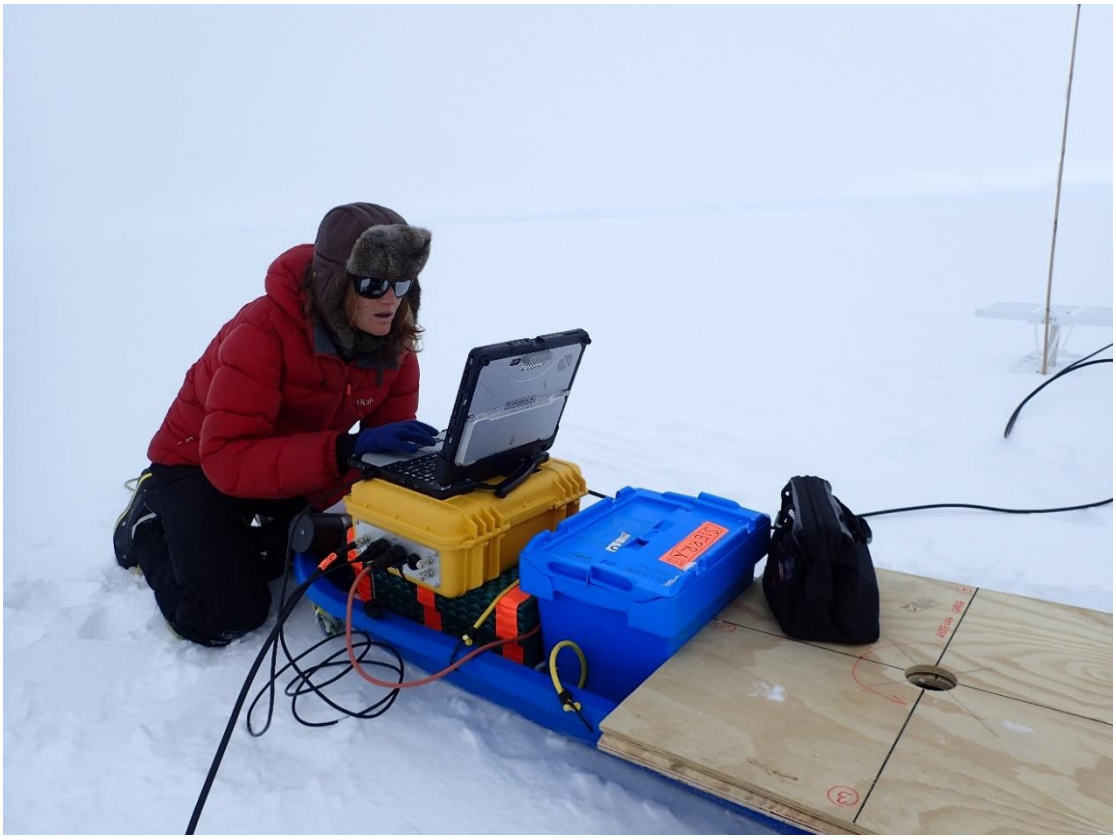
Many science projects supported by BAS have been years in development and the costs run into the millions. A Field Guide's professionalism and safety oversite plays a key role in ensuring these projects are successful.

Follow this link for more information about BAS science teams and projects.

Science teams - British Antarctic Survey (bas.ac.uk)

All field projects require significant preparation prior to deployment to the field. This includes training the project staff in appropriate field safety and meticulously organising and checking field and science equipment.

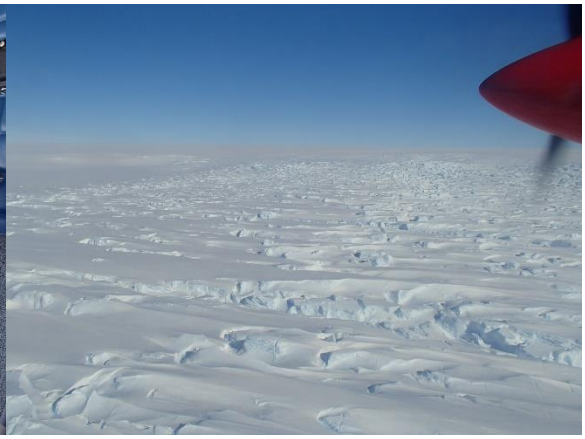
Kit prepped and ready to fly for a small static field project. Photo: Tom Sylvester



Checking science equipment at Rothera prior to field deployment. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Kit being loaded into a Twin Otter ready for deployment to the field. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Once the Twin Otter(s) have been loaded with the equipment it is time to deploy into the field. Field Guides assist pilots in choosing appropriate landing sites by visually assessing the ice from the air.



Left: Co-piloting a Twin Otter is common for Field Guides as the pilots need help assessing potential landing sites. One of many incredible experiences! Photo: Ollie Smith

Right: Ground to avoid! Photo: Tom Sylvester

Once safely on the ground Field Guides take the lead in pitching camp and establishing comms with Rothera. The planes will not leave until this has happened. Field camps will vary in size depending upon the project.

A small static field camp.

Campsite on the remote and volcanic Zavodovski Island during a penguin survey project. Photo: Ian Hey

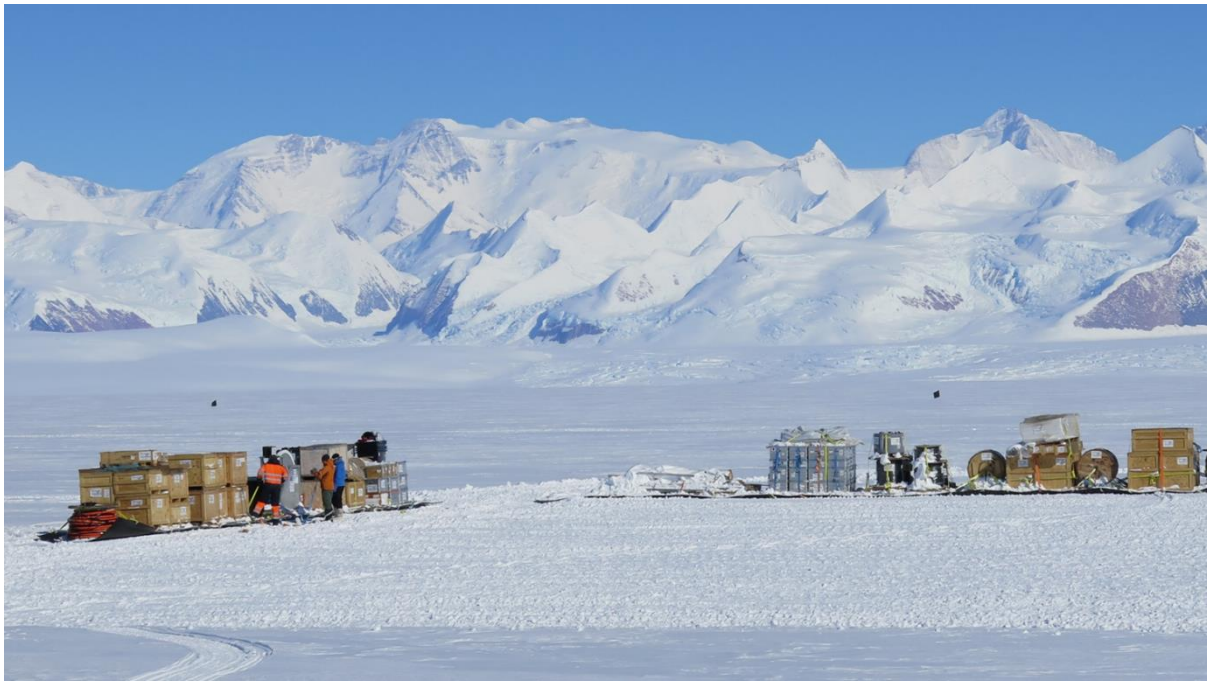
A larger field camp near the Beamish Mountains. The Pyramid tents are used for sleeping and eating and the large Weather haven tent is used for science work.

A camp for eight people. One of the pyramid tents is being used as a toilet tent. Field camps are arranged so that everything is in line at 90 degrees to the wind. This prevents drifting. Field Guides need to be very organised and methodical when setting up field camps. Making certain to do it right at the beginning will save much heartache down the line!

A much bigger camp. More than one Field Guide would usually manage this.

Once camp is established the Twin Otter(s) will depart and the science can begin. Field Guides are primarily responsible for safety and need to always make conservative and reasoned judgements regarding science work. Once happy with safety, Field Guides will assist scientists in their work. This will vary depending upon the project. Inevitably there will be a lot of equipment to handle, and Field Guides need to make sure they are looking after themselves as well as those around them.

Twin Otter departing an established field camp.



Some projects require a lot of equipment. Mount Vinson visible in the background. Photo: Nick Gillett

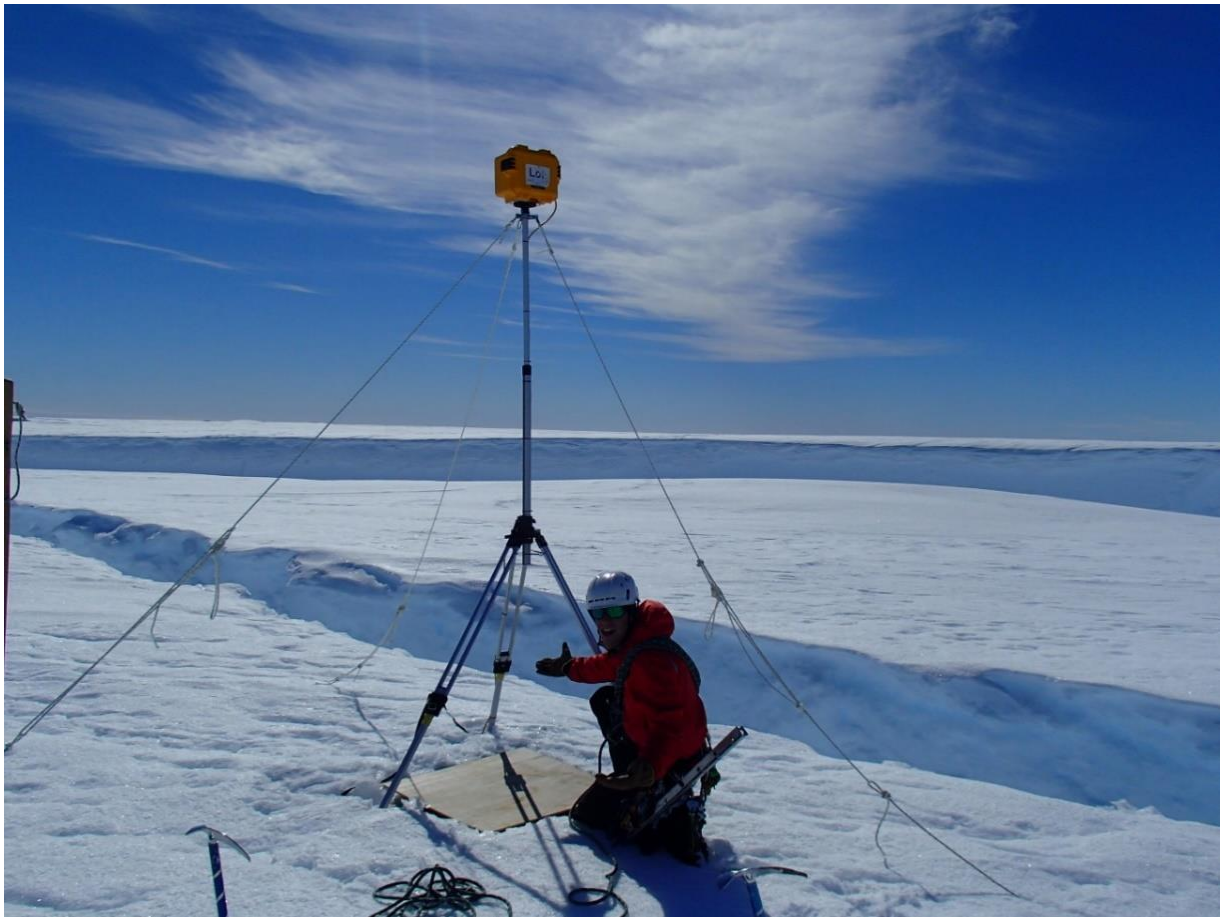
Hot water drilling rig on the joint UK/German FISS project on the Ronne Filchner Ice shelf. Photo: Nick Gillett

Radar Survey on the Filchner Ice Sheet

Visiting and raising an instrument site on the iSTAR traverse (visible in the background)

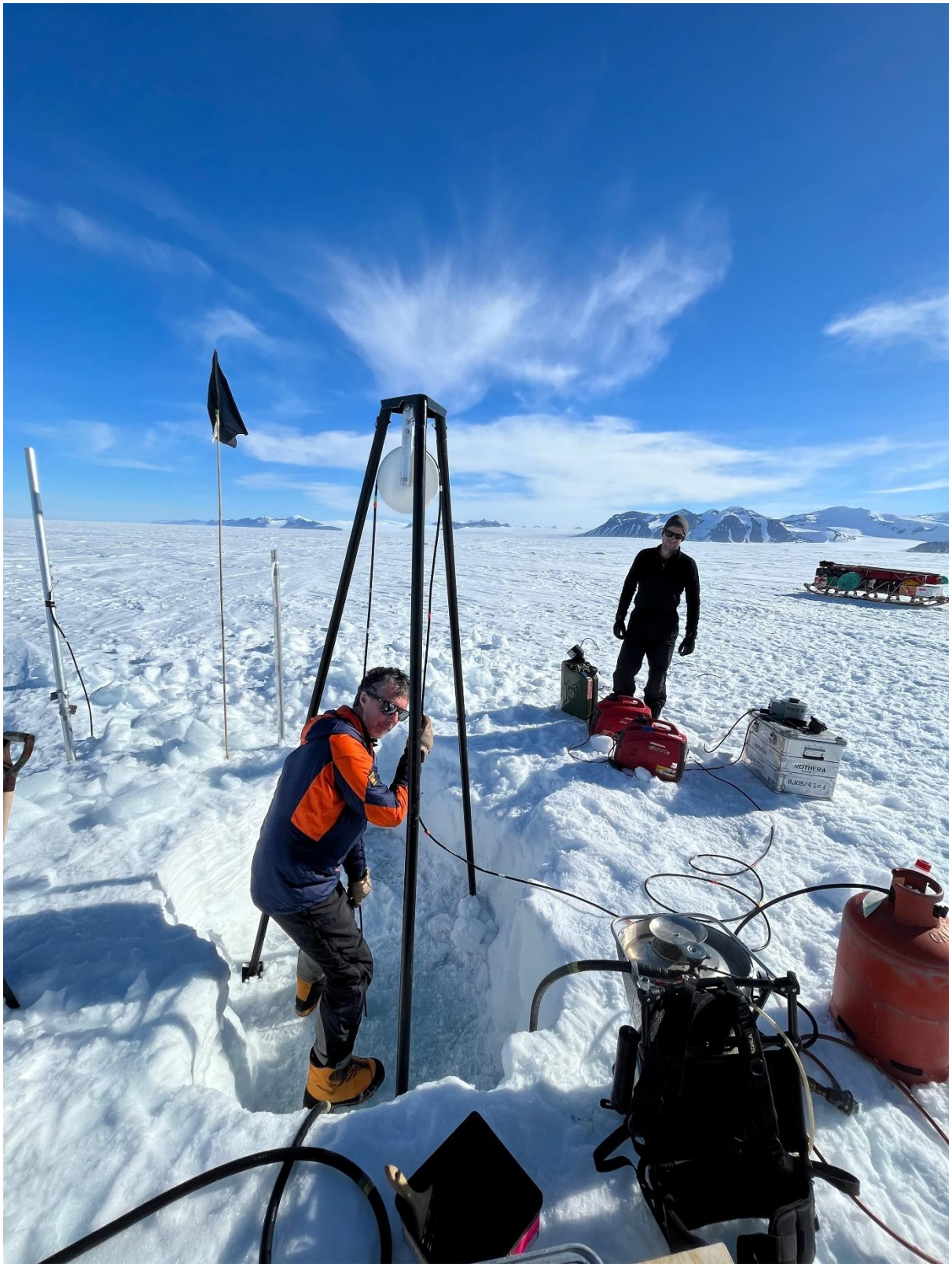
Reoccupying 1950’s survey locations with modern GPS equipment to update mapping. Photo: James Wake

Field Guide helping scientists set up for ice core drilling on King George IV Sound. Photo: Alison Banwell



Carefully helping a scientist install a camera at the tip of a large crevasse to determine propagation. Pic: Tom Sylvester

A science project with a lot of equipment.



Science in full swing near Fossil Bluff. Photo: Alison Banwell

Skidoo travel on Adelaide Island looking across towards the Arrowsmith Peninsula.

A drill rig set up on a large-scale multiyear deep field project. Photo: Nick Gillett

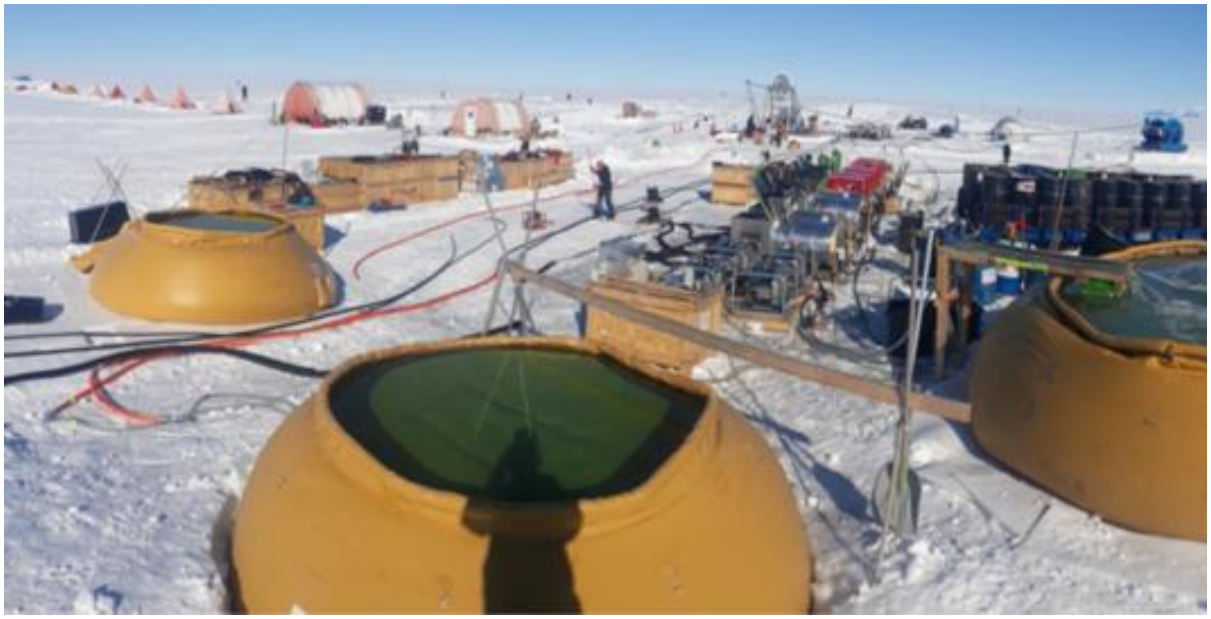
Collecting radar data in the flat white on the iSTAR project

ESA Scientists working with a Mars drill prototype on Coal Nunatak. Photo: Tom Sylvester





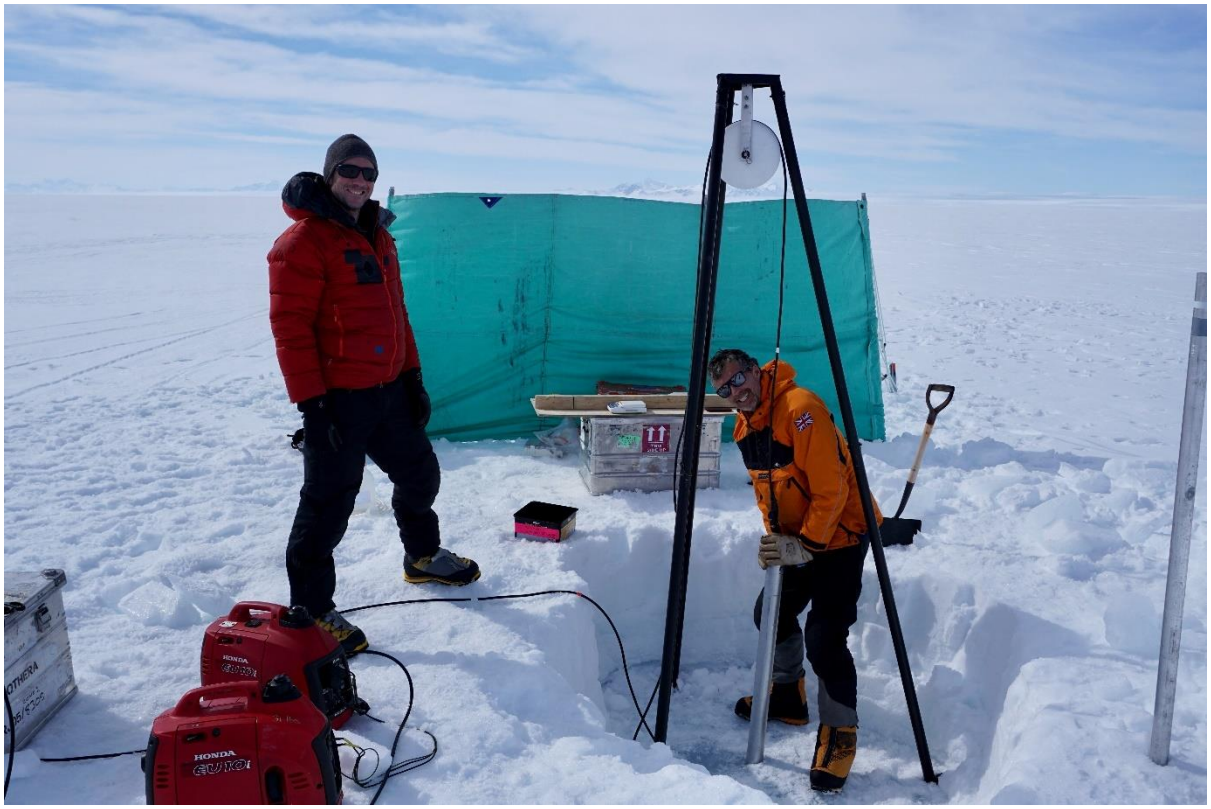

Field Guide Sarah Crowsley supporting wildlife science projects at Signy. Photos: Sarah Crowsley & Roger Stilwell



” Flubbers” of water for the hot water drill on the BEAMISH project – a lot of snow needs to be shovelled and melted to make this much water in Antarctica.

Moving camp during a small-scale deep field project.

Travelling away from camp to visit instrument sites, King George IV Sound. Photo: Alison Banwell



Small scale ice core drilling. Photo: Alison Banwell

Penguin survey project on Zavodovski Island led by Field Guide Ian Hey. Top photo: John Dickens, Left photo: Chris Kubosh, right photo: Skip Novak.

Field Guide and scientists visit an instrument site on the Brunt Ice Shelf. Photo: Tom Sylvester

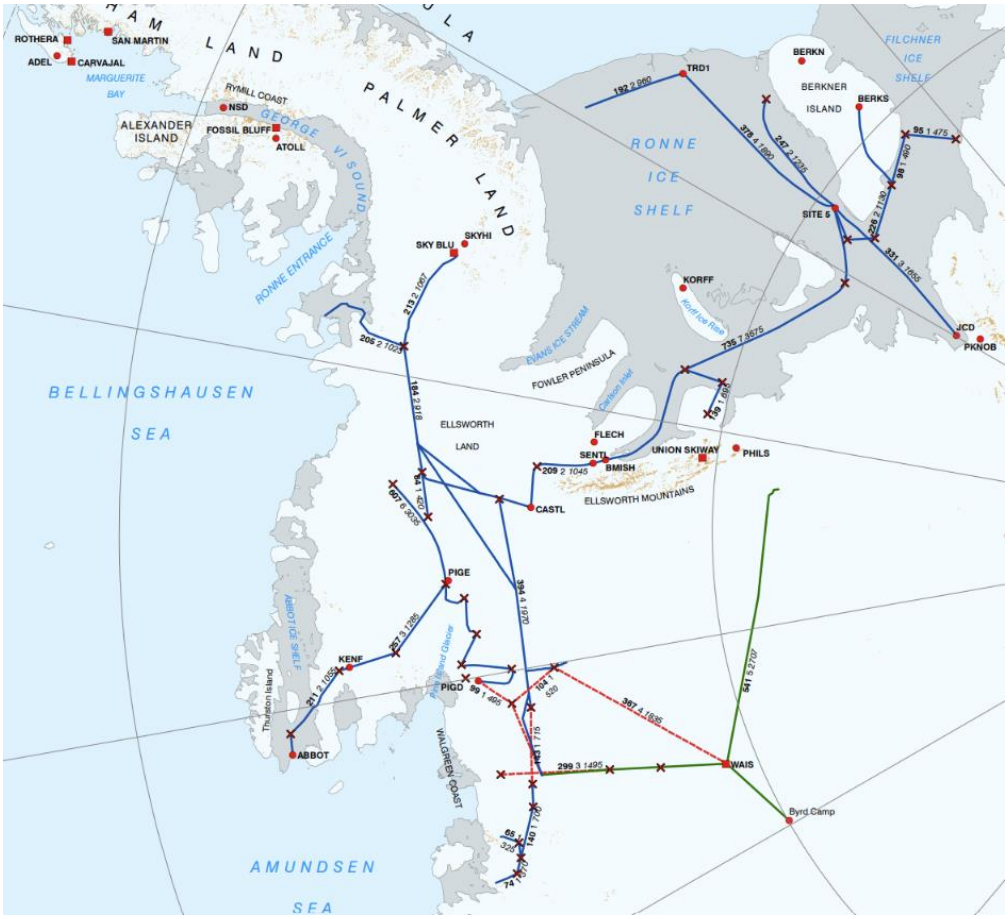
The following video was made by Field Guide Ali Rose about his field project to the Hudson Mountains.

https://youtu.be/v5K55WN0xsY

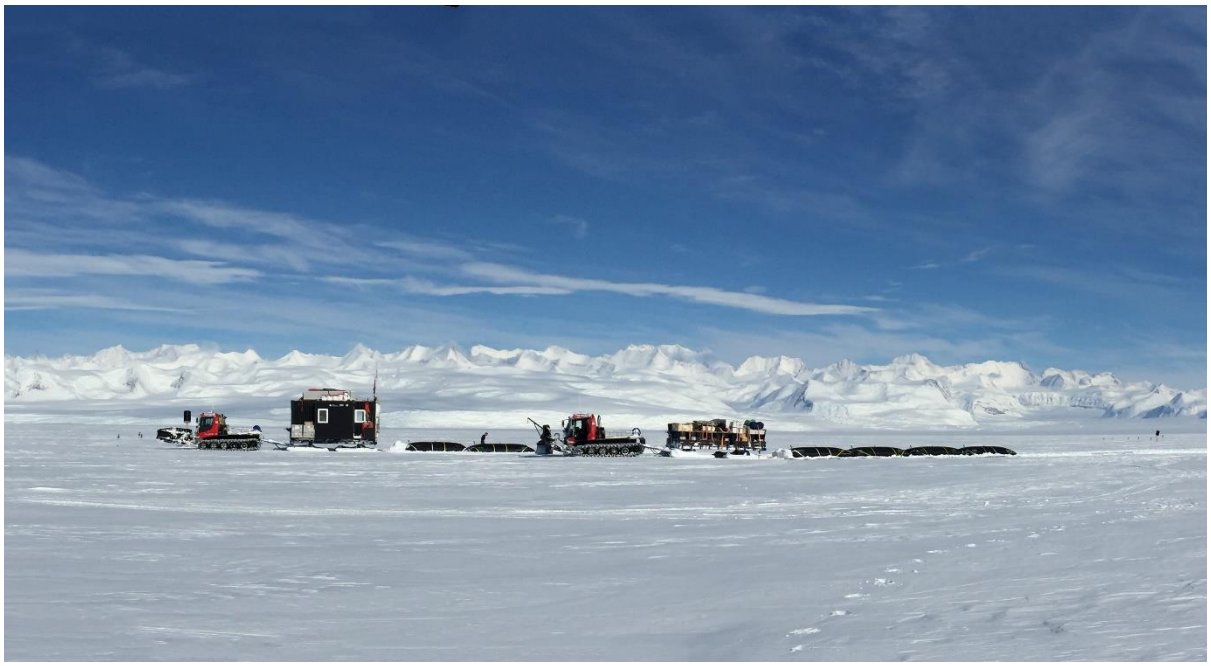
Traverse:

BAS operate a Tractor Traverse which travels thousands of kilometres around the continent every season. It supports deep field science by providing a mobile science platform and maintains fuel stocks by dragging large bladders of fuel and sledges of drums.

Field Guides act as Traverse Leaders responsible for overall safety, drive and operate Pisten-Bully's and sometimes travel ahead of the main traverse on skidoo to recce a safe route across the ice.



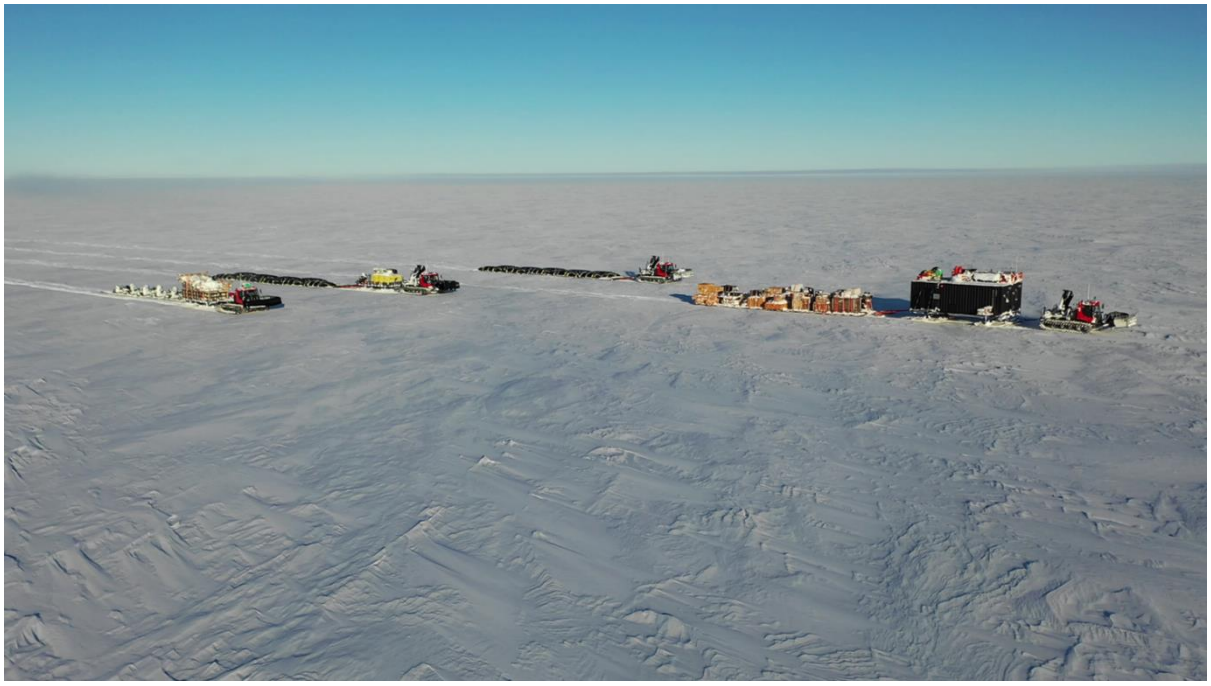
BAS Traverse routes marked in blue.



Logistics traverse on the Rutford Ice Stream. Photo: Timothy Gee

Pisten-Bully towing the living caboose through poor weather. Photo: Nick Gillett

And through good weather!



Four Pisten-Bully’s towing around 160 tonnes of fuel and equipment.

Pisten-Bully towing the living caboose, two sledges of fuel and science equipment and a fleet of skidoos.

Field Guides using Ground Penetrating Radar to find a safe route ahead of the main Traverse. Photos: Rob Grant

A drop in contrast can make glacier travel unsafe. Time to stop and pitch camp? Photo: Rob Grant

The traverse pulls a caboose used for sleeping and cooking. Photos: Rob Grant

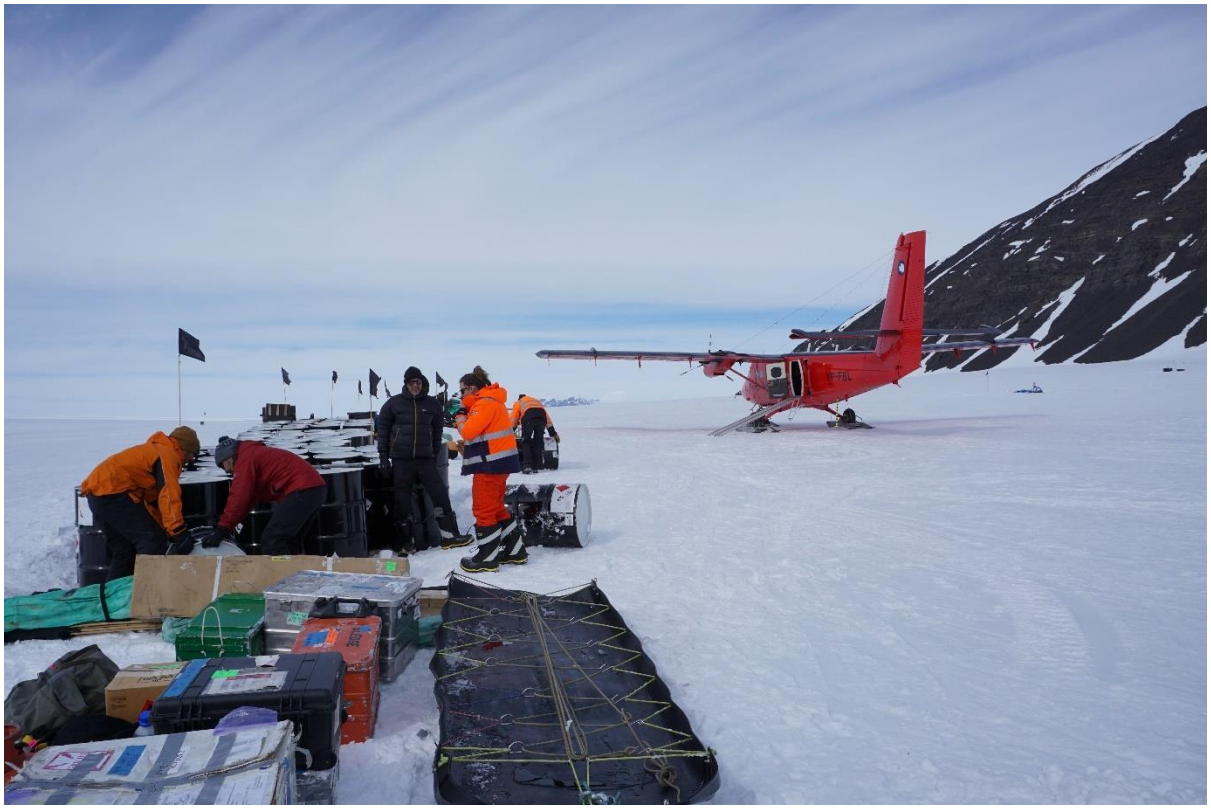
The following video was made in the 2017/18 season about time spent on the Traverse.

https://youtu.be/22sU_092OYg

Field operating hub – Fossil Bluff:

Fossil Bluff – Field Guides oversee the open-up and close-down of this forward operating hub and will inevitably spend some time there during the summer season. Fossil Bluff is situated 400km South of Rothera and used as a fuel stop for Twin Otters on their way to the deep field.

Twin Otters being refuelled and loaded at the Fossil Bluff skiway. Photo: Alison Banwell



Working with aircraft is a big part of the Field Guide role. Good organisation is essential to be efficient and safe. Photo: Alison Banwell

Bluebell Cottage with King George IV Sound beyond.

Bluebell Cottage – accommodation whilst at Fossil Bluff. Photo: Alison Banwell

Inside Bluebell Cottage. Bunk beds, kitchen and general living area.

A wide angled view looking out past the cottage onto the King George IV Sound.

Field Operating Hub – Sky Blu:

Field Guides run the day-to-day operation of our deep field logistics hub Sky Blu. Sky Blu is located 800km South of Rothera and is an essential part of our deep field operation. Field Guides oversee safety, give weather observations to aircraft, manage loads, coordinate air drops and organise the camp.

Sky Blu camp on the left with the blue ice runway right of centre.

On approach to the blue ice runway. Mount Carrera in the background. Photo: Matt Bell

Dash 7 landing on the blue ice runway

Twin Otters being refuelled and loaded with equipment on their way to the deep field.

Melon huts – sleeping accommodation at Sky Blu.

Inside a busy melon hut.

Sky Blu camp. From left to right – garage tent, living tent, toilet tent.


The living tent comprising of sofas, tables and a kitchen. Water is created using a melt tank which requires digging snow.


Sky Blu comms station for passing weather observations, talking to Rothera and speaking to inbound aircraft.

The following video was made by Field Guide Mark Chambers.

https://youtu.be/iY4uWhSd9bE

Using a snow blower to clear the blue ice runway.

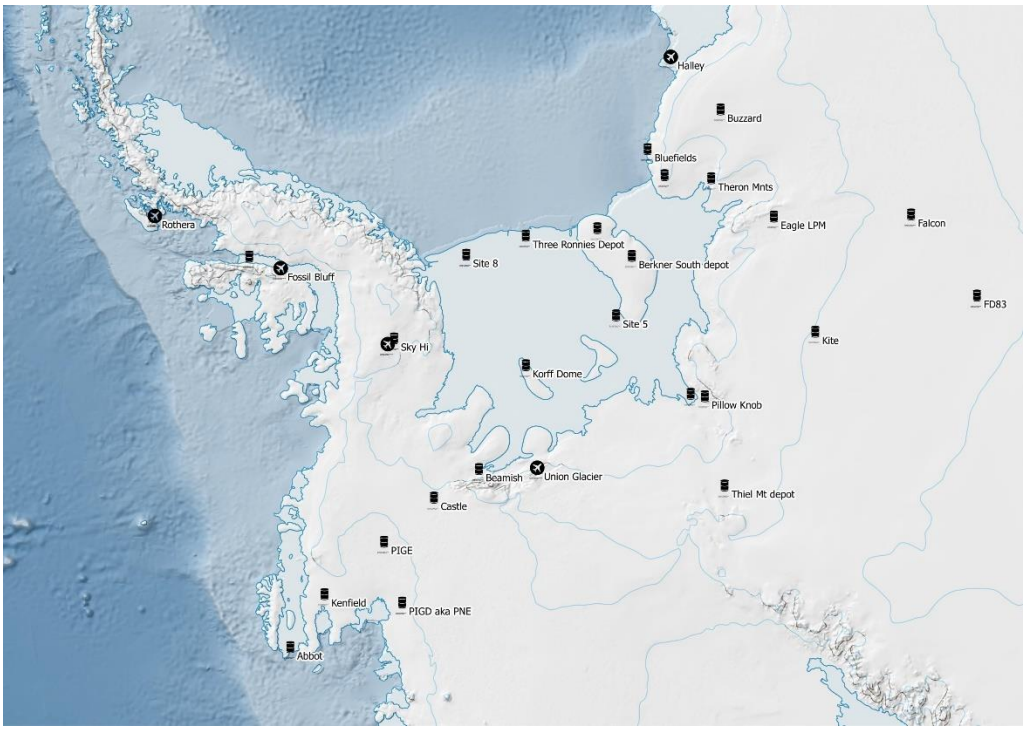
RAF airdrop mid-season.

The following video was made during an RAF airdrop to Sky Blu.

https://youtu.be/UYA2rzJL3_g

Depot work:

BAS maintain a large network of field fuel depots which allow Twin Otters to input and uplift science projects across an area larger than Europe. Field Guides help raise and stock these vital fuel depots every season. Raising fuel depots is hard physical work but absolutely essential to our deep field flying operation.



BAS field fuel depot network.

Fuel input to the Theron Mountains Depot. Pic: Tom Sylvester

Twin Otter refuelling from a field depot. Pic: Tom Sylvester

A deep field fuel depot following a successful raise. Note the drum marker standing tall. This marker drum was just visible at the snow surface when the team arrived (see extreme left of top pic)!

Digging out fuel drums is demanding work, but the result is very satisfying and allows deep field flying operations to continue across the continent.

The following video made by Scott Bryden shows a team raising the Korff deep field fuel depot.

https://youtu.be/Jh1LUSGSBd4

Relief:

The most efficient way to deliver cargo to Antarctica is by ship relief. BAS have successfully carried out ship offloads deep field at the English Coast, Ronne Ice Shelf and Abbot Ice Shelf as well as regularly resupplying Halley VI. Field Guides act as safety oversight for ship offloads on ice shelves.

Relief at Rothera

Malik Arctica Ship offload on the Brunt Ice Shelf for Halley IV relief Jan 24. Route proved and site managed by Field Guides.

Field Guide assessing ice edge on the English Coast whilst choosing an appropriate relief site.

Field Guide assessing the condition of the sea ice at a possible relief site on the English Coast.

Using an area away from the coast for storage and rest helps minimise risk during relief.

Mid relief. Assessing the ice correctly is essential due to the amount of equipment, vehicles and fuel being offloaded.

Towards the end of relief on the English Coast Jan 17. Note the vehicle tracks leading away towards the storage area shown above.

Recreation:

Boosting staff morale on an Antarctic base is important and recreation is one of the best ways to do this. Field Guides deliver recreation in the form of skiing, mountaineering and skidoo travel.

Field Guide and client enjoying Reptile Ridge, one of Rothera's local mountaineering routes. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Abseiling off Reptile Ridge as the sun sets

Ski touring in the Stokes Peaks

The ice cliffs near Rothera allow Field Guides to take staff ice climbing. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Taking people climbing on Trident Peak. Field Guides need to be experienced mountaineers and able to make conservative decisions in the mountains. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Field Guide and client approaching the ever-popular Stork Bowl for some recreational skiing. Reptile Ridge in the background with Rothera just visible. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Field Guide assessing the lip and side of Halloween Crack at Halley IV to run an ice climbing session for staff. Pic: Tom Sylvester

Climbing out of Halloween Crack. Delivering recreation for team members is essential for morale. Pic: Tom Sylvester

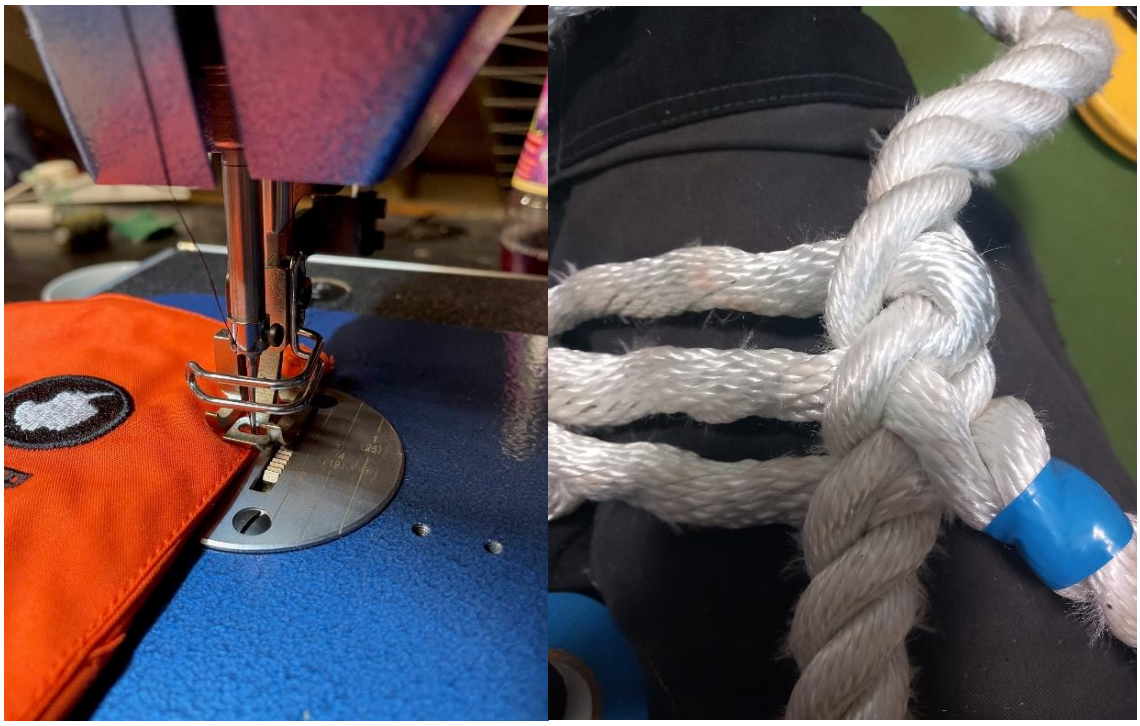
Field Equipment and base work

Every Field Guide spends time on base as well as in the field. A large part of Field Guide life is maintaining and repairing field equipment. The importance of meticulous preparation and maintenance of this equipment cannot be overstated. Sending equipment out into the field poorly serviced or in a bad state of repair has the potential to ruin a science project many years in the planning, require re-tasking of aircraft to send replacement equipment or even the potential to put lives at risk. Field Guides need to be familiar with all the equipment and know how to service it properly. It is costly and difficult to get anything to Antarctica so a reuse and recycle mentality is essential.

The Field Guide workspace at Rothera is called Fuchs House. Click the link to see a virtual tour of Fuchs House.

Rothera - Virtual Tour (bas.ac.uk)

Field Guides become proficient at repairing Nansen sledges which are an essential part of the linked travel system. Photos: Ed Luke



Work in Fuchs House. Clockwise starting top left – A busy Fuchs Sledge store as Field Guides work on Nansen sledges that have returned from the field, Fuchs ski store with skis awaiting repair, splicing link lines together for use in the linked travel system, learning how to set up the Ground Penetrating Radar, taking apart a Tilley lamp for repair, repairing torn fabric on a garment. Photos: Ian Hey, Tom Sylvester

Fuchs house. Clockwise starting top left – A small selection of the pyramid tents stored in Fuchs, training to use one of the emergency stretchers, the Fuchs climbing wall, the Fuchs office, calibrating CO monitors ready for use in the field, testing heated blankets and vac-pac bags for SAR scenarios. Photos: Ian Hey, Tom Sylvester

Winter

New Field Guides are normally expected to over winter at Rothera. It is arguably the best experience available to a Field Guide. Spending six months in Antarctica with a small team of dedicated professionals is truly incredible and hard to describe!

Field Guides spend winter doing various tasks on base such as equipment maintenance, PPE checks, sea ice testing, preparing kit for upcoming summer projects, delivering further training to base staff, assisting with boating operations and running winter trips.

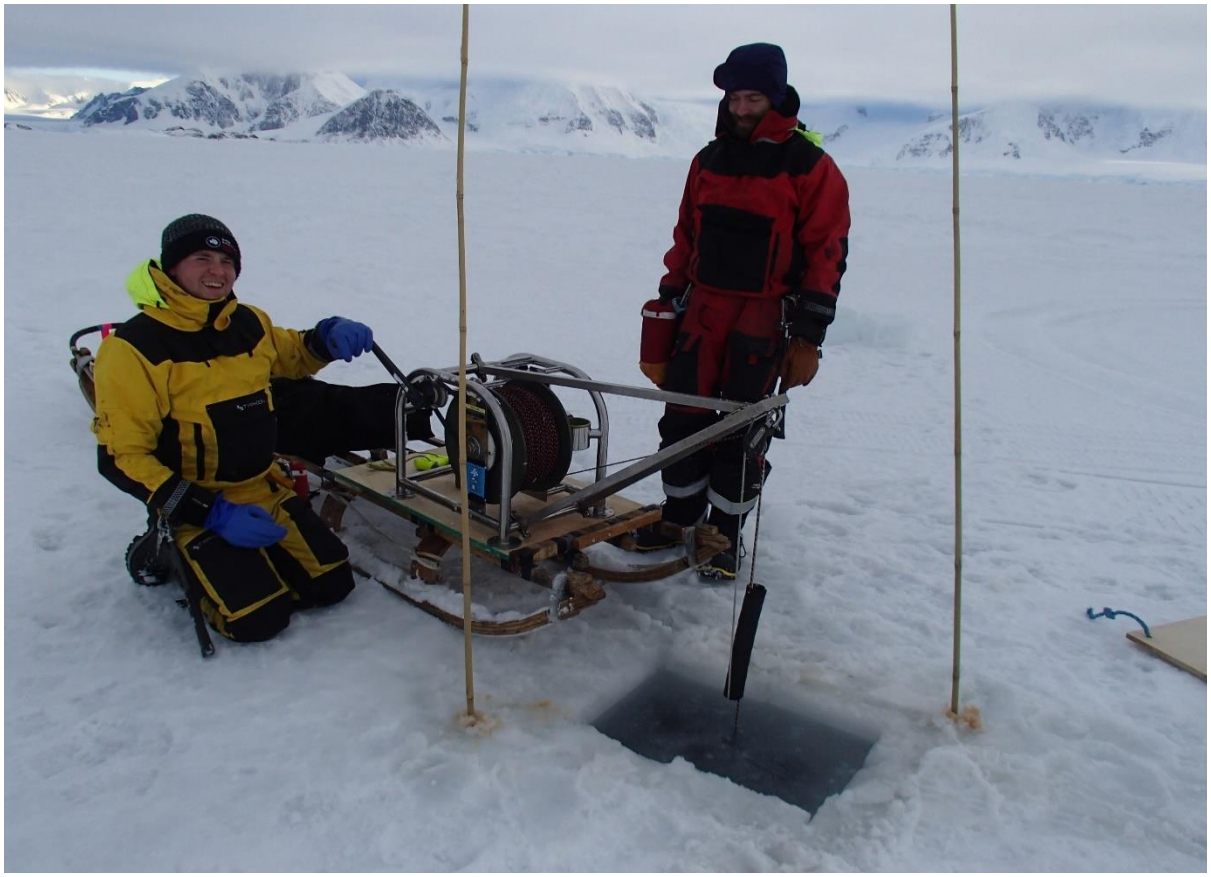
Sea Ice:

It is reasonably common for the sea to freeze around Rothera at some point during the winter. Field Guides are responsible for monitoring and testing the ice for science and recreation purposes. Sea ice travel is one of the most complex and risky activity that BAS allow and is carefully managed from BAS Cambridge as well as on site.

Field Guide Tom Lawfield drilling sea ice in North Cove. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Field Guides Julie Baum and Mark Scales drilling and measuring sea ice around Rothera Point. Photos: Tom Sylvester

Sea ice allows for unique recreation opportunities at Rothera but must be treated with care! Photos: Tom Sylvester



Field guides supporting CTD science with the Marine Biologists. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Assessing sea ice allows the marine team to continue diving operations during winter. Photo: Ed Luke

Winter trips:

All wintering staff get time away from base during the Antarctic winter. These trips vary depending on conditions and experience within the team but usually come in the form of an overland journey and field camp on Adelaide Island. These trips are essential training for Field Guides and staff. As always, Fields Guides are expected to behave in a conservative manner, operating well within their comfort zone due to the remoteness and extremely limited capacity for SAR/medical evacuation.

The remote and beautiful Myth camp, South Adelaide Island. Photos: Tom Sylvester and Ed Luke

Trogs Peak, one of 15 peaks in the Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Crevasse exploration

In particularly cold conditions the sea around Rothera will freeze. Sea ice journeys are then possible.

Doing it ‘old school’ and leaving the skidoos behind. Sledge hauling trip to Trident East. Photo: Tom Sylvester

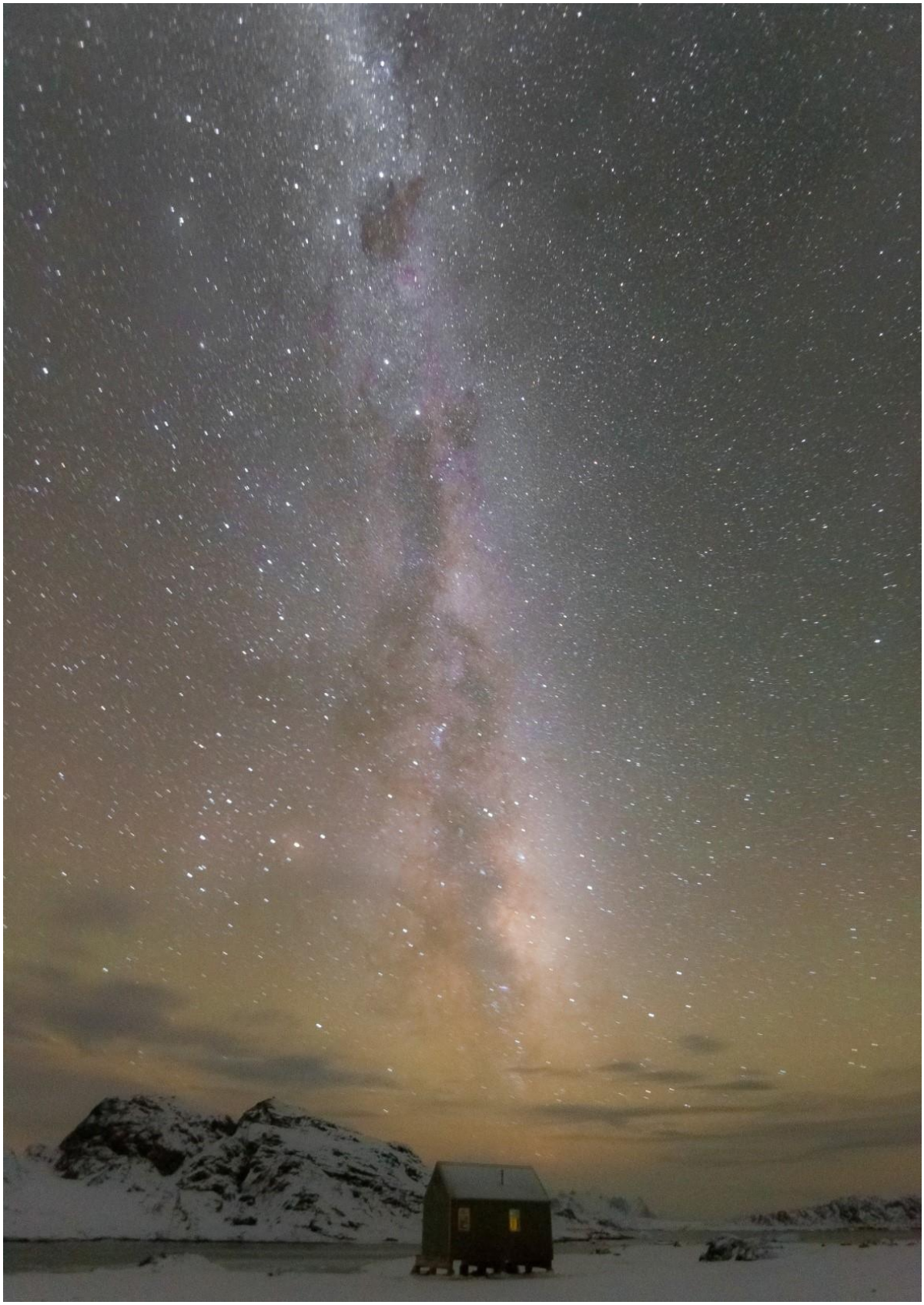
The very remote Bond Camp, North Adelaide Island. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Ascending Biff Peak from the Biff-Wolf col. A popular straightforward mountaineering route in the Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Climbing Spiritual Harmony (III), Trident Peak

Mountaineering on Adelaide Island.

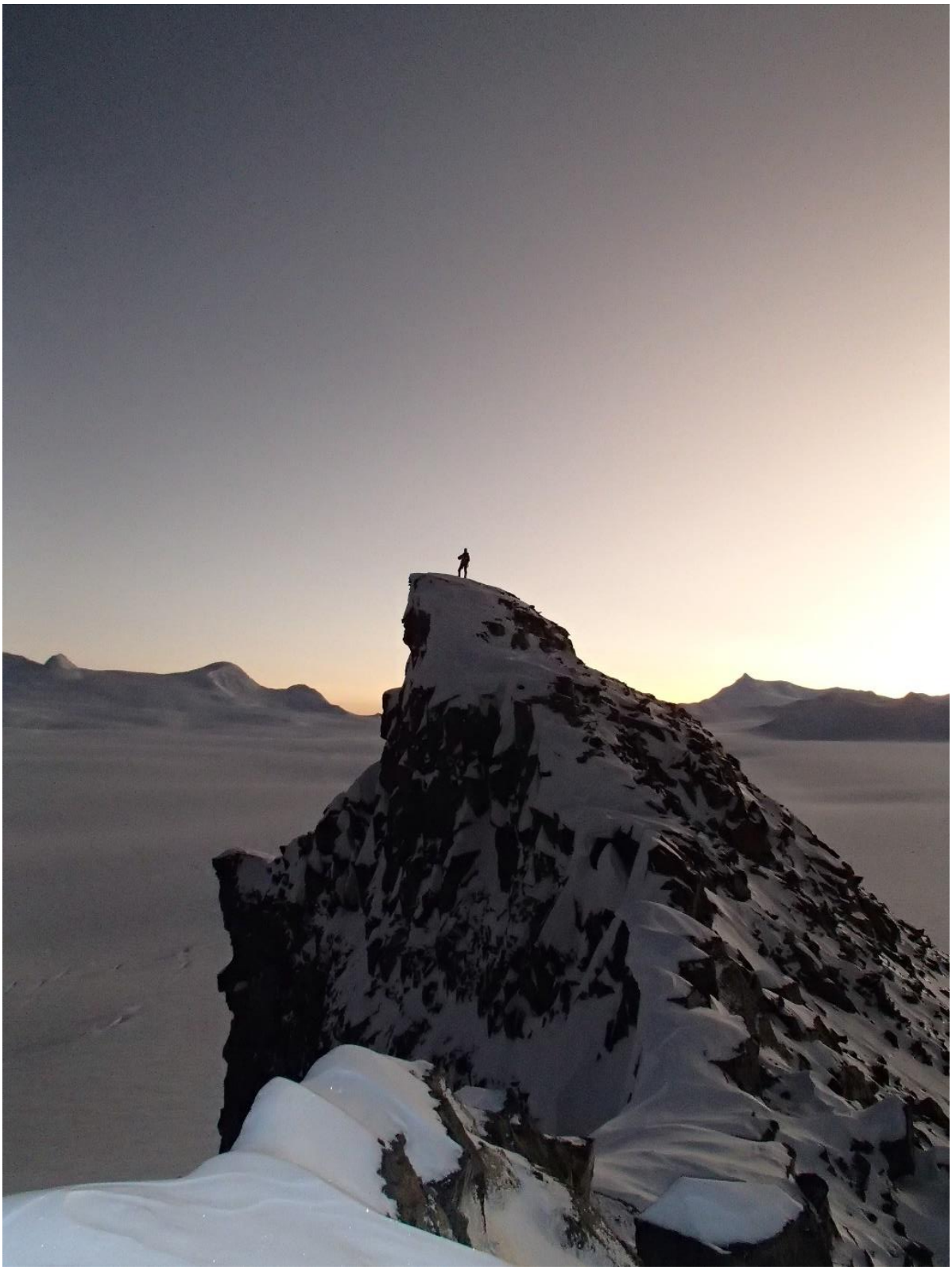
Ski Touring on the Stork Peaks close to Rothera.



Spending a few nights at Lagoon Hut.

A party returning to camp after climbing Myth (the smaller peak on the left). Photo: Tom Sylvester

Myth camp. Photo: Ali Rose



Field Guide Blair Fyffe on the summit of Orca’s subsidiary peak. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Field Guide Matthew Shepherd on the summit of Biff, Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Exploring the Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Crevasse exploration near Nicholson Peak. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Descending off Merlin Peak in the Stokes Range. Photo: Zac Priestley

N2 Peak. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Looking North towards Mount Reeves.

Looking over to Mouse Peak from the summit of Max, Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Mixed climbing on Reptile Ridge close to Rothera.

Mountaineering on Adelaide Island.

Orca Peak seen from the summit of North Stork. Photo: Tom Sylvester

On the approach to Merlin Peak, Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

Crevasse exploration near N2 Peak. Photo: Zac Priestley

Mountaineering in the Stokes Peaks

Descending from Wendy Peak, Stokes Range. Photo: Tom Sylvester

The Aurora Australis seen during mid-winter from Rothera Point. Photo: Neil Brown

The end of a day's Ski touring on Mount Bouvier. Photo: Steve Windross

Digging

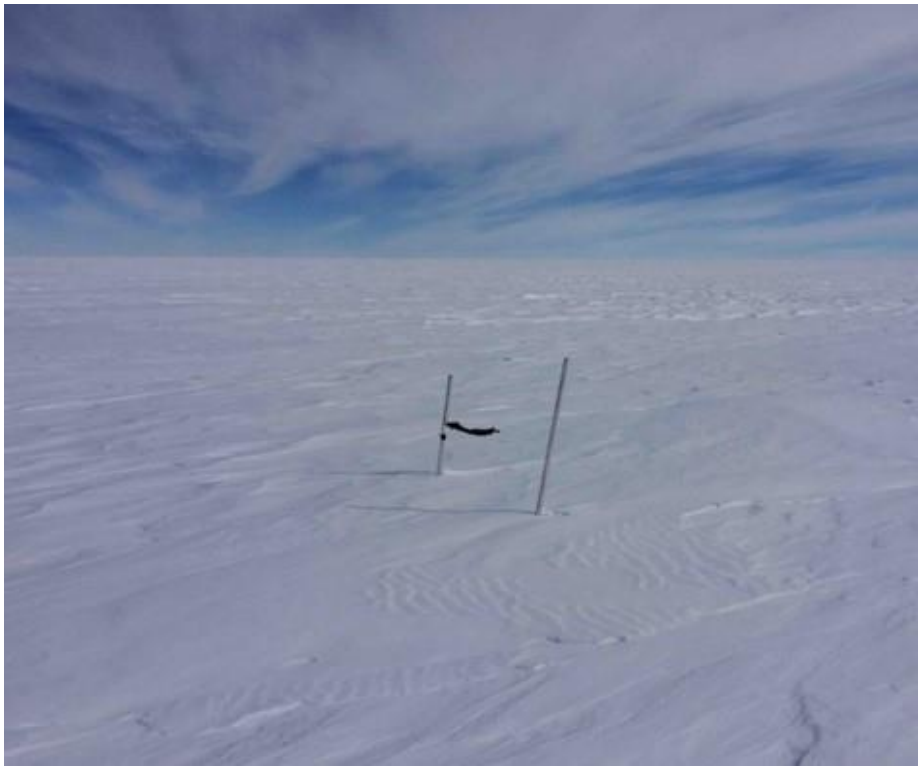
Field Guides need to dig a lot of snow, whether for raising a depot, digging out a tent after a storm, or just trying to get into a building on base. Good technique and careful management of themselves and others is essential to success.

Field Guides digging out skidoos after having learned a lesson in where to park! Photo: Matthew Etheridge

Digging up a buried instrument on the Ronne Ice Shelf. Only the very top was showing through the snow when we arrived. Photos: Tom Sylvester

The result…Pic: Tom Sylvester

A large stash of equipment partially buried following a storm. Photo: Nick Gillett



Arrival at an instrument site on the Ronne Ice Shelf. This was quite hard to locate due to the marker flag being damaged.

The subsequent hole! Photos: Tom Sylvester

Environment:

Weather:

Antarctica can be brutal at times. Field Guides need to be able to look after themselves and others and make conservative decisions regarding risk.

Managing a camp in a storm requires care and forward planning.

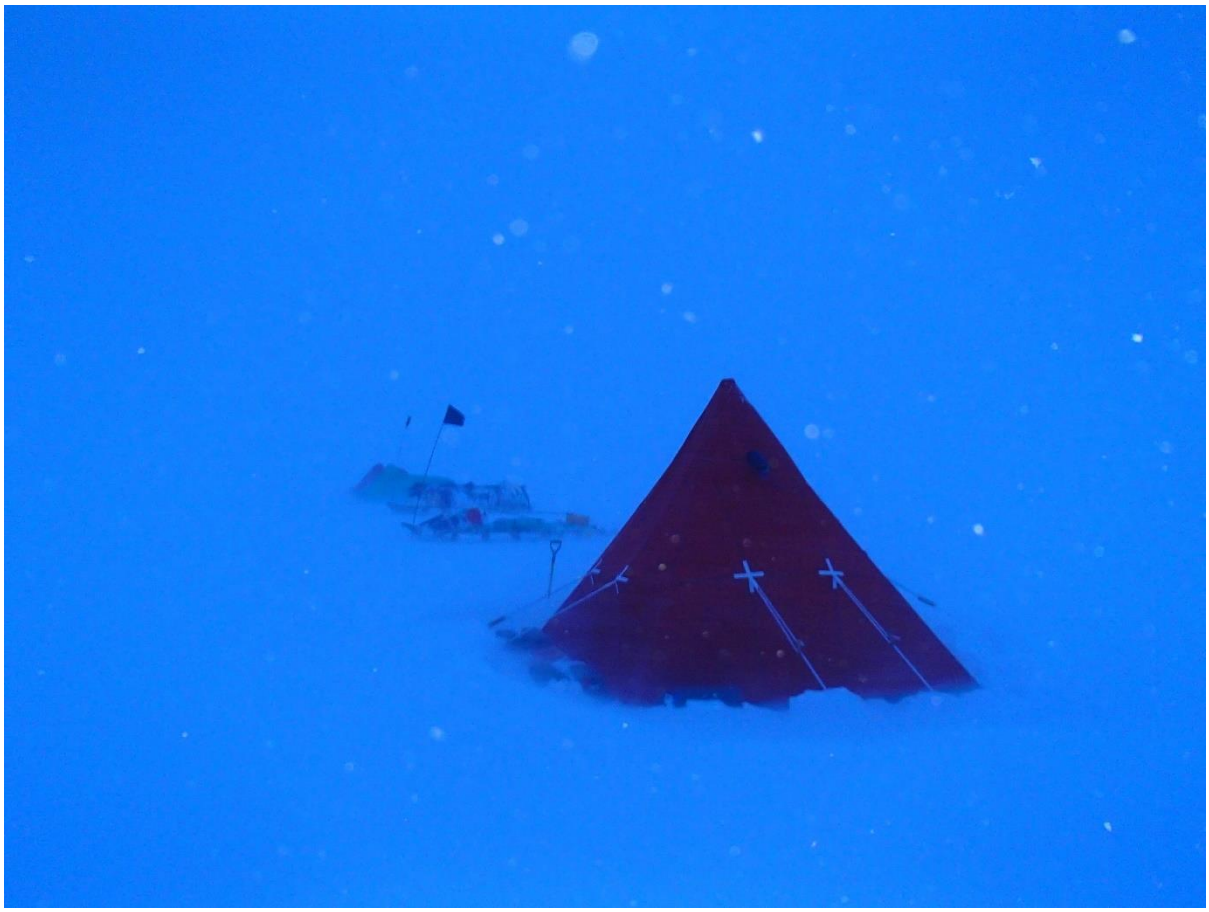
Storm on Zavodovski Island. Photo: Ian Hey

White out conditions are common and lead to nil contrast making it impossible to see crevasses or other hazards.

Intense sunlight can cause damage to skin, eyes and equipment. Always wear sunscreen and sunglasses!

Deep cold. A broken skidoo at -38 degrees C is just one of many problems you may have to help solve as a Field Guide.
Photo: Tom Sylvester

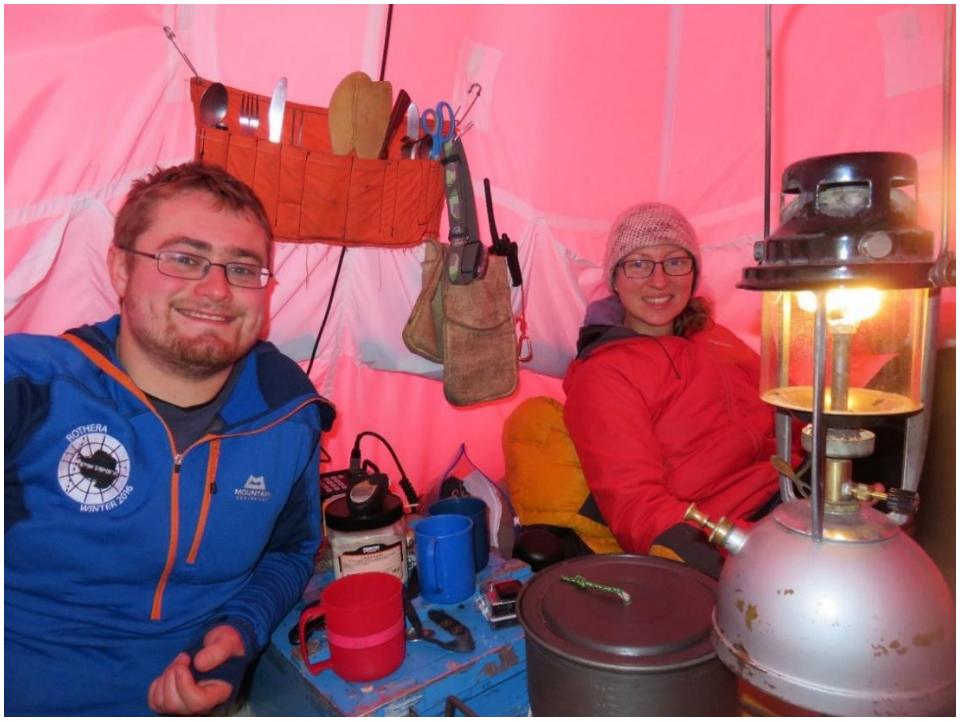
Dealing with some very cold conditions on a trip across Adelaide Island. Photo: Tom Sylvester



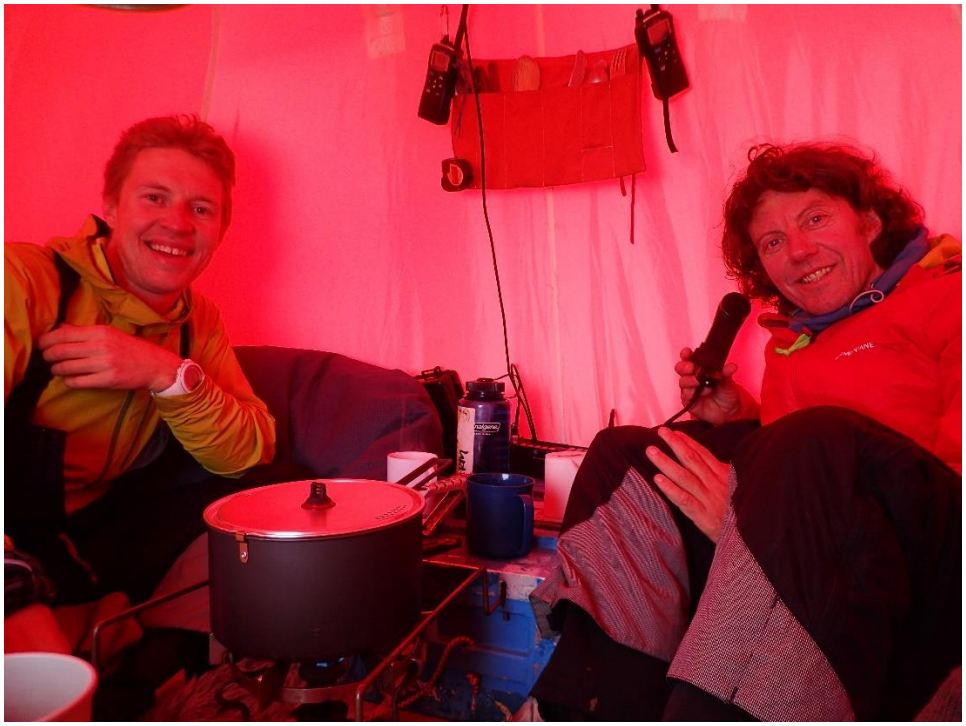
The weather can change rapidly. Always be prepared!

Lie-up:

Lie-up is the term used to describe time spent in a tent during bad weather. As a Field Guide you will inevitably spend some time in lie-up. It's a good opportunity to recover but can also be frustrating due to time pressures. Lie-up can last anything from a few hours to many weeks! Having something to do in the tent is essential. Music, books, cards and board games are all a good idea.



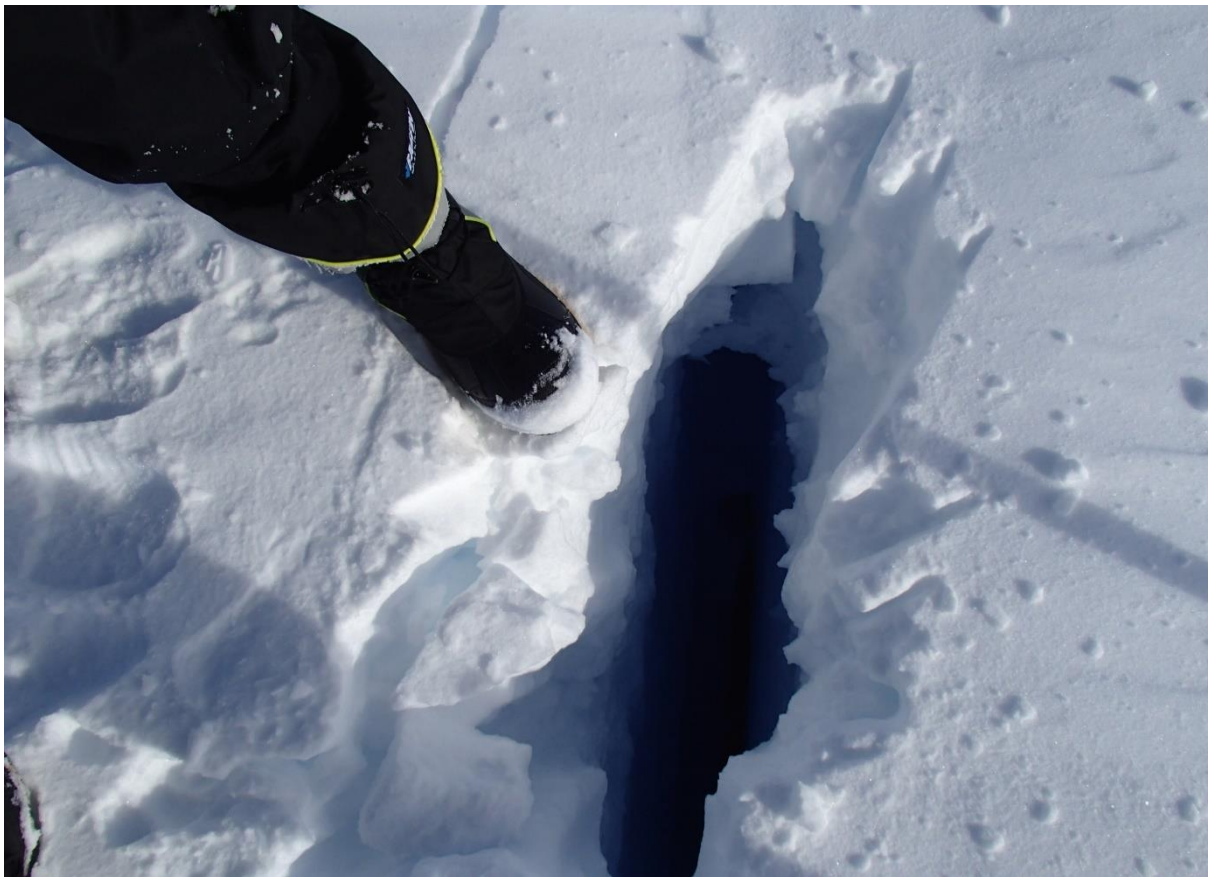
Field Guide Julie Baum with Marine Biologist Ben Robinson during lie-up. Photo: Matthew Washington



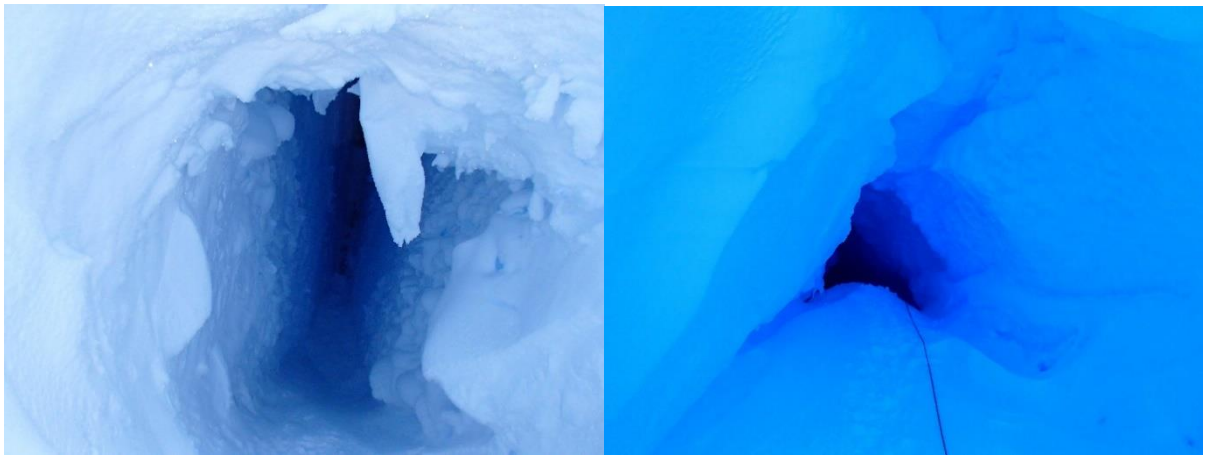
Field Guides Matthew Shepherd and Ian Hey during lie-up. Photo: Tom Sylvester

An ever-present hazard whilst working in the field, crevasses can be found anywhere in Antarctica and often in places one would not expect them to be. Antarctica does not abide by the 'normal' rules. Crevasse avoidance techniques and the ability to rescue oneself and others are essential skills for a Field Guide.

Some crevasses are visible at the surface. Photos: Tom Sylvester



And some are not! Photos: Theresa Murphy and Tom Sylvester



Crevassing in Antarctica varies in size and shape. In most circumstances Field Guides should be actively avoiding crevasses. Photos: Tom Sylvester

Just a few of the larger crevasses on the Brunt Ice Shelf near Halley IV. Chasm 1 and Halloween Crack. At least these features are visible. Many are buried just below the surface…Photos: Tom Sylvester

Working as a Field Guide for BAS can provide a rewarding career supporting important research. Many Field Guides return season after season whilst others have gone on to become Lead Field Guides, Station Leaders, Field Operations Managers and Polar Operations Directors. The Field Guide role is an excellent choice for somebody seeking an exciting and diverse career within BAS and the Polar regions.

The Field Guide role is incredibly varied. The skill set required to do the job competently is vast and takes many years to learn fully. Being an experienced mountaineer is just the start!

Every Field Guide's journey with BAS has been different and we would encourage anyone interested in the role to speak with existing Field Guides working for BAS to gain a more in-depth insight into this incredible opportunity.

We highly value our Field Guides and understand that experience in Antarctic field work is hard earned. Once Field Guides have successfully completed a contract they can look forward to many years of challenge and adventure with BAS.

Field Guides Neil Phillips and Tom Sylvester at the end of a recreation trip to Halloween Crack, Brunt Ice Shelf. Photo: Neil Spencer