

BAS CLUB



NEWSLETTER No 37

Summer 1997

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Cover: Winter sports - Signy 1980; Credit Ken Richard

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EDITORIAL

As another Antarctic summer season comes to an end with the return of the ice and Midwinter approaching fast it is time for our "Spring" Newsletter. Recently returned HQ staff can brief us with the news and those Fids who have returned from doing their winter stint ought to be able to give us their experiences too. We have the official BAS News included here for you but for the extra tales the best way is to meet those who know. A reunion is a good opportunity and these are being arranged for you our members so do try and support them. Your Committee works hard for you at organising these in different locations to allow Fids from different regions to attend and to give them a varied yearly character. Due to time constraints this Newsletter will be received by our members after the 1997 Reunion but you were all given prior notice in December 1997 and a form provided. As the take up was low by June 1st we did consider having to mail you all again which was not what we had planned-however we decided against this and have to accept that Fids are always good on the action but reluctant on the paperwork! Good evidence of this has been on the news even this week with the report of ex-Fids trying to achieve their second go at the unsupported crossing of the Arctic. They made it to the North Pole. Well done Dave Mitchell (ex-Faraday) and Dr Steve Martin (ex-South Georgia). If Fids can get to the Poles we hope some of them can get to the reunions. That of 1998 will be quite an expedition as we are planning to have it in Scotland-a region that has missed out in our geographical moving of the reunion around the country.

We are sure the turn-out for the Signy 50th Reunion will be excellent. If you are a Signy Fid you should have now been mailed but if you are one who has not received anything or know of another likewise then do contact the organisers - Ken Richard and Martin Davey - for more details find the box advert.

We hope this Newsletter offers something for you all and with the usual items we start our feature on "Antarctic Sports". Please add your articles for the next issue on this theme or on anything you feel you would like to contribute-by 1st October. We are pleased Dave Burkett has put down the hammer and taken up the pen for the account of Port Lockroy as it stands now-50 years on!

Once again I must thank Hoc Baldock for her magnificent support in preparing the Newsletter and also John Bawden for his time in 'thinning' the BAS

News. Also thanks go to the other contributors particularly for the obituary of Peter Forster and also for the Fid letters. It is these that make the Newsletter special and valuable to other Fids.

BAS has seen quite a few changes in recent years, particularly in Antarctica, and several key personnel who have seen these changes through are now taking retirement. Barry Heywood, Paul Whiteman, Dave Hill, Mary Sutton and Bill Block spring to mind. They are also BAS Club members and we wish them a very happy and active retirement (and anyone we have missed). We are also sorry to hear of the death of Captain Nick Barker - former Captain of HMS Endurance- at a critical period - and who had also been a former member of the Club.

Those of you who did respond to the Reunion booking-thank you. By the time all our members read this more may wish they had attended the Midwinter's **Day 1997 Reunion** in Ely - but those of us who did will have had a very good time with old colleagues in a very interesting old city. Do start thinking of next year **now**. Today is Midsummer/Midwinter Winter Day as I finally complete this Newsletter and deliver it to the printer on my way to Ely. We hope you enjoy it. Have a very good summer/winter depending in which hemisphere you are in.

Ken Richard -Editor

PENGUIN (FID) NEWS

OBITUARIES

John Cheal- Signy 1950-51 and Base Leader in 1951.

John was born in Formosa, now known as Taiwan, in 1922 and came to England with his parents in 1929. John's father, who had been a missionary doctor with the English Presbyterian Mission, had a general practice in Eastleigh and John attended a prep school in Southampton. He then went to Monkton Combe school, near Bath.

Leaving school at 17, John worked in a bank for about two years before joining the Royal Navy in 1942, where he served as a Leading Coder in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Arctic. John was wounded during the liberation of Antwerp in 1944 and spent three months in hospital with multiple small shaped wounds.

On discharge from the Navy in 1946, John returned to the bank but in 1948 got a job with the Ordnance Survey working in the Field of Triangulation. In 1949 he joined the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey and went to the Antarctic for two years carrying out weather observations and surveys. Much of his travel was done with two nine-dog teams sledging on sea ice and glaciers.

He had two 9-dog teams at Signy, transferred from Marguerite Bay when that base was closed and transferred to Hope Bay in 1952. He managed about seven weeks sledging in the winter.

On the way home via South Georgia, he transferred to Duncan Carse's South Georgia Survey for a man-haul trip. The journey was cut short because of the loss of one tent and most of the food and equipment, due to the worst hurricane ever recorded in South Georgia.

On returning to England, John worked with Hunting Surveys of Borehamwood and during the next few years was engaged in surveys in Jordan, Syria, Iraq (Kirkuk and the Kurdish Mountains) and Qatr. For four months in 1956-57, John again worked in the Antarctic using a small ship and helicopter to get around. He was very honoured to have a geographical

feature named after him. Because of his work in the Antarctic, a point at the western end of the South Orkneys some 800 miles SE of the Falkland Islands, had been named 'Cheal Point'.

However, the travelling life was not compatible with raising a family and so in 1960 John decided to settle down to office work and live in Bricket Wood with his wife Joan and two daughters, Caroline and Frances, who are all active in community affairs.

John was the Hon Secretary of the Bricket Wood Ratepayers' Association for seven years and also served on the St Albans Rural District Council. He has been a Governor of Townsend (C of E) School and Pro-Warden of St Lukes Church, Bricket Wood when it was a daughter church of Holy Trinity Church, Frogmore, in the 1970s.

John contracted Parkinsons Disease in 1976 and had to retire early.

While in the Falkland Islands John surveyed the site of the school at Goose Green, where 2 Para had their battle 30 years later.

In the early 1960s he collaborated with Joe Farman in producing the first FIDS Club Newsletter.

(taken from Bricketts Wood Residents Report Sept 1996)

Peter Forster: Stonington 1958-died
November 1996

**A few words for Peter from Norman Leppard
2 December 1996**

It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that this great, craggy, man is not going to be with us any more.

Peter built enduring friendships - and that is why we are all here today - to remember and give thanks for all that he meant to us - both as a family man, and as a great friend.

Peter had a presence, partly cultivated I suspect on an apparent laid-back attitude, which ensured acknowledgement in any group. But beneath that casual approach was a man who was re-assuring and resourceful, selfless, enduring, creative and kind.

He was talented too, with a craftsman's eye and hand and a wholesome sense of humour that lightened and enriched his company. Above all, he revelled in dramatic, wild, unspoilt country.

All these attributes wholly fitted his chosen surveying career, which started in the summer of 1957 when he joined FIDS and I gave him his initial training before he went off to the Stonington Island base in the Antarctic. There he met Peter Gibbs, who recalls that "...over the next year we had the greatest adventure of our lives". An adventure which lasted right through his life - in the Caribbean, teaching for a while at NELP, Bermuda and Albania. His very last surveying in July this year, fittingly with Peter Gibbs, was in Musandam amongst the wild beauty of the Khavers.

Peter's artistic talents were many; he wrote exceedingly well and descriptively. His contributions on huskies in the recently published *Of Dogs and Men* paint vivid pictures of those wonderful creatures.

His woodcarvings are really sensitive expressions of shape and form and are a lasting memory of his creative art.

He also wrote poetry and amongst his Antarctic papers there was one which he wrote when South:

Don't come to find a beauty,
Lest it be a thought within you.
Don't hope this lifeless icy land will hold

One tenth the love and mystery
You'll find within a flower.
Life's the soul of beauty, not this cold.

A moving piece which is fascinating, living, awful, splendid and yet indifferent.

It was typical of Peter that, right through to the end, there was never any grumble or complaint about his illness, although he obviously was suffering. He lived his life to the full, enjoying the company he was in and each and every occasion. Only a short while ago he was up in the caravan in North Wales, his retreat to the wild when home, walking up to 2500 feet with Chris Brading. What spirit and determination.

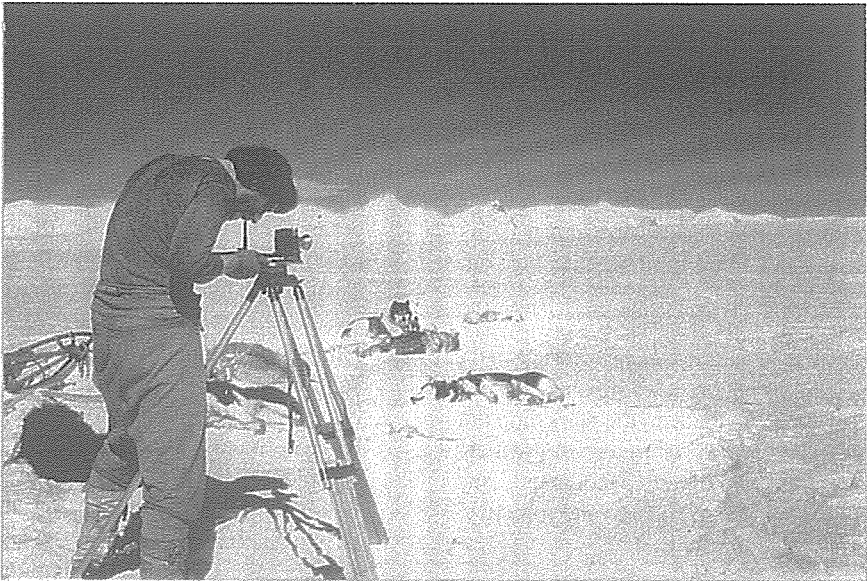
We all now have our cherished memories of Peter and his many happy days. He was a man, perhaps, who was destined to wander and roam, but who had a huge heart for those he loved.

We will miss him.

In Memory of Peter Forster by Pete Gibbs

Pete died in a London hospital in the week ending 22 November 1996. Apparently fit within recent days, he had gone in for a routine check on cancer for which he had been treated over two years before. His memory is ever present and to keep it so I have selected four photographs to remind us of his character: resourceful, selfless, enduring, creative and kind; talented with craftsman's eye and hand and a wholesome sense of humour that lightened and enriched those in his company.

Many will have been influenced by his life but gladly I can claim great fortune in having Pete as one of my closest colleagues since 8 March 1958 when we landed at Stonington Island and with four others dug the ice out of the old hut and over the next year had the greatest adventure of our lives. I never thought about it at the time but reading parts of my diary again, we encountered together moments when we faced a risky predicament. One such was waking to his shouting FIRE PETE! We had been battling for 48 hours to save the tent on Positillion Rock in Neny Fjord - our only manhaul excursion together as the dogs were confined to base on feed trials. The only snow left on the rock that had not been blown off was a pedestal over the sides of which the flaps of the tent were going mad. Our tent space was reduced to a



square metre in which, exhausted with the battle, and with our slender faith in the tent holding to its lashing to a 'deadman' pair of crampons in the snow, we sat and dozed off to sleep with the primus going. When he awoke just in time and shouted, it had fallen over and my bag cover was alight. It was smothered in the nick of time and we joked about the possible consequences of lighting the tent to keep warm. To Pete, incidents like this were provided for experience in the rich fabric of life.

The best tribute I can pay to Pete as a person is to say that if I wanted company for when the going is tough I would ask him first. He made light of difficulties. But equally, if I wanted company to relax in I would seek his.

The first photo shows his smiling sun-tanned face framed by the tent door thoroughly enjoying his breakfast porridge with its dollops of butter. He loved his food; but typical of his self denial he went three days without his ration, six weeks into the summer journey, when Henry Wyatt and I were getting ravenous, so that we three could have a double ration on Christmas day 1958. Besides that, each of us produced a Christmas pudding from the sleeping bag. What a memorable meal!

The second photo is a survey scene down South, beautiful day, no windproofs on, he is stooped over his photo-clinometer, which he made in the workshop out of pieces of alloy plate. It served as a most practical means of mapping from photograph panoramas. This reminds me of Pete the innovator and practical surveyor.

Pete made many trips to our Mill of Fortune, Perthshire. On his visits to us he would willingly be put to practical use. So many will remember him for his craft and wood-working skills. One of these barn rooms was called after him. He helped panel it in Scottish larch. It provided the rough comfort he was fond of. But he also liked his comforts and I am reminded of one evening we spent together at a 5-star hotel in Wimbledon, where I was an official guest at a conference, and had telephoned him to have supper with me. After the meal his car would not start and it was late. I said "pretend you are invited to the conference and stay the night". He needed no persuasion. In the morning he left by an unofficial exit which set the fire alarm off.

The third photo is taken this past July, at the head of Khawr Habalayn in the Musandam where he had come out to help me put in photogrammetric control for some village sites I was plotting. He revelled in the dramatic wild unspoilt scenery, where the Khawrs (like fjords) literally bubbled with shoals of fish and dolphins and the mountains rose precipitously up to heights of 5000 feet; a landscape much like Grahamland without its coating of ice.

I feel particularly privileged that his first and last survey job was with me and both in environments of pristine landscape.

Peter Gibbs
8 December 1996

Peter Forster by Chris Brading

Peter Forster who died in November was one of my closest friends. Peter Gibbs, his great friend and sledging companion at Stonington has written a very comprehensive appreciation of their time on FIDS together and Peter's subsequent career as a surveyor. I would like to add a few memories of my own.

I first met Peter at the Directorate of Overseas Survey at Tolworth after returning from FIDS, where we were both working up our survey results. During those halcyon months we climbed, kayaked and skied together. After FIDS we did several weeks as volunteer mountaineering instructors at the Plas y Brenin outdoor pursuits centre at Capel Curig in North Wales. We did a lot of camping and were always looking at cottages beyond our financial reach. Peter eventually solved our problem by charming a rabid Welsh Nationalist farmer to allow us to put an old caravan on his land right in the centre of Snowdonia. We spent many happy occasions there before our jobs took us both abroad. From then on it was used less frequently and very little over the last ten years as Peter was working in Bermuda. Peter loved Snowdonia and particularly the view from the van cross the valley to Cnicht.

Four years ago he was diagnosed as having prostate cancer and returned to Britain for treatment. Retirement did not suit him and he was soon off again working in Albania for a year as an Ordnance Survey advisor. An inveterate wanderer he took every

opportunity to explore and wrote some fascinating essays about his travels in remote areas of the country.

Peter was the most casual, laid back person I have ever known, yet considerate, resourceful and reliable. Nothing seemed to perturb him and no problem seemed too great to overcome. A great craggy man, he seemed indestructible yet he was sensitive and artistic, which found expression in his writing and wood carving. Unconventional in many ways, he refused to conform but had the charm and presence to be accepted in any group.

In September we spent three days at the van in glorious weather. Peter was in some pain from what he described as a pulled back muscle but nevertheless we got on to the tops every day. The years rolled back and we were submerged in nostalgia, full of plans for the coming months. Peter seemed so fit and full of life that it was inconceivable that six weeks later he would be dead.

It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that he will no longer be with us. Of all my friends Peter was the one who I would have chosen to have by me when things got tough and I shall miss him greatly. He was a free spirit and loved wild places. It is appropriate that his ashes were spread on a small hill near the van with a view of Snowdon to the west and Knight to the north. His restless spirit is at peace.

Chris Brading
April 97

MEMBERS' LETTERS

A Tribute from V O'Neill (extracts from Dave Evans' original field notes) Crevasse Incident Base O 1957

The Base O (rear) Party of three, made up by D G Evans (Dave) Surveyor, G Hobbs (Graham) Geologist, and V M O'Neill (Vince) Radio Operator.

Made a journey in late August of approx 15 nautical miles in 2 x 12' clinker-built dinghies, from Danco Island, with the intention of reaching the Miethe Glacier via Andvord Bay, Waterboat Point, Paradise Harbour, Skontorp Cove, and making landfall on the

SE point of Sturm Cove. They manhauled from the point slightly uphill to reach the Piedmont, along which they sledged to the Miethe Glacier, where they eventually set up camp (Camp VI), within easy ski-ing distance of the Median Ridge.

Vince O'Neill takes up the story:

"The morning (approx 11.00 am) of 1 September 1957 was fine with little wind, as I accompanied Graham on a geology trip, initially to the Median Ridge, and perhaps beyond. We slowly ski-ed up a slight rise with Graham in the lead. We were not roped-up (which later proved to be fortunate); Graham crossed the snow bridge of a crevasse. When he was safely over I followed, but hesitated for a second to take a glimpse at the bluey depths. I heard a crack, and felt myself falling - then came a jolt, which jarred both my knees and back badly, as the snow bridge, with me 'riding' it, jammed in the taper of the crevasse. Much later, I had time to take in the beauty of the crevasse interior, which 'featured' an incredible range of blues. I was 'interred' for about 27 hours, and survived on biscuits and chocolate, which, with the extra socks which were lowered to me from above, made it more comfortable for me, then for my two colleagues topside."

Dave Evans now takes up the story vide his field diary notes:

"1 September 1957. (sic) The day. Between flags D and C [survey markers] on my return to the glacier camp site, Graham Hobbs, Geologist, hailed me from a break of slope above the few crevasses to the south of the icefall and north of the ridge end, with the words "Vince has fallen down a crevasse. It is 50 feet deep". (Or 15 feet as I thought he had called it.) I therefore headed back to Camp VI via the remaining flags. I hurried at a tiring pace to the crevasse in question on the south side of the north secondary glacier, and with 2 climbing ropes, 1 shovel, 1 ice axe, 1 packet of biscuits and 1 sling, following Graham's tracks from the point where he hailed me. On arrival at the crevasse, Graham was already underground in an attempt to reach Vince by a system of ascents, descents and traverses from the locality of the Bergschrund and the median ridge rock face, but had then reached a vertical fall. Graham returned to the surface while it was still light underground.

A rope with a foot loop and a bowline was first lowered from the place where the snow bridge

collapsed, down to Vince. Vince was trapped under 2 ice blocks and some snow and was unable to remove his skis. His two ski sticks were broken, but luckily during the descent his skis did not touch the walls of the crevasse. Vince managed to get only one boot off and out of the binding of the now irretrievable skis, and after some time and struggle he got his other foot out of the second boot, but could not retrieve the boot. The rope already lowered was used to assist Vince in the event of the collapsed snow bridge falling further into the abyss. A second rope with a functioning sling was lowered, but this ceased to function (freezing?) and darkness fell. Vince, meanwhile, had gained a little height by climbing to an ice bridge, which appeared to be an integral part of the crevasse, and was accessible and passable, which made a difference of about 10-15 feet - important, considering available rope length was at a premium. Graham and I then descended via the underground route previously found by Graham, in semi-darkness, carrying one rope. An attempt was made to persuade Vince to try to reach a point below him and along what seemed to be the snow floor. Fortunately, he did not comply, because, although we did not know at the time, it was a false bottom. Graham then attempted to abseil down; he started down, decided to come up, got stuck, then clambered out with assistance. Both of us returned to bring the other rope. On the descent portion of the route out, where I was descending in the dark, I fell and was prevented from falling further by holding on to the rope which resulted in a sprained wrist. On the return with the second rope, we found an easier route to the top of the ascent: going in was a slide on the backside, or on the stomach through a narrow hole, but with feet first to the edge of the drop. At the pitch we decided, as we were very tired, and Vince was not going to move (fortunately) plus the fact that we were getting the ropes tangled, to return to camp for food, sleep and warmth. We reached Camp VI by the light of the moon: I had only one ski stick, having lost the other when I fell underground. We had a meal of pemmican, biscuits, jam and tea and got into our bags at 0400 hours.

2 September. I made breakfast with poor (sic) porridge, then fell asleep until 0800. Graham reached the crevasse first and lowered food (chocolate biscuits, condensed milk and cigarettes) to Vince. We made nooses in the longer rope and descended to the vertical pitch with 2 harnesses, a sling with nooses tied to the noosed rope and belayed it to the ice 'bollard' in an attempt to locate another route down the crevasse near

the locality where Vince was trapped. We belayed the other rope to the same 'bollard', then tied it round my waist and held by Graham. I descended with some difficulty where the rope ladder was against the ice and where the crevasse narrowed. I left the ladder at a piece of jammed ice with safety line and ladder to spare. I traversed down, then up and along the crevasse towards Vince on his 'jammed snow' ledge, keeping my weight on the snow to my left, where it was higher. The walls of the crevasse were very smooth; this snow foothold held, but only just. Vince managed to move a little towards me where the limit of the safety line was reached (a fall would have been a long swinging arc). Then the snow foothold cracked under me, towards the centre and forward, but I moved back quickly out of danger. Between Vince and myself - probably about 15 feet - was a depression open to the right and forward of me, which would not take anyone's weight. Where this fall-in had taken place, I could see the crevasse dropping to a further 40 feet still with no bottom in sight. I decided then, that any further attempt from here should not be made until all other reasonable possibilities had been tried. I then returned on traverse, climbed the 'ladder' which had been shortened by looping further at the top, using above halfway up ice foot holes as well as the loops because of difficult manoeuvring. I took all the gear that was underground to the surface and placed it at a point above Vince. The already made-up rope ladder was tied to the safety line and some nooses were made in the ladder; then the whole was anchored around 4 skis firmly embedded in packed snow. To prevent the rope cutting too deeply into the lip of the crevasse when Vince put his weight on it, I placed an aluminium packframe on the lip. This arrangement still did not reach down far enough, therefore we suggested that Vince try to gain a further 10 feet. This he did by crawling onto an ice block which had jammed in the crevasse from the collapse of the snow bridge. The ladder was again lowered and was just long enough for Vince to get his foot into the lowest loop with some support from us topside for the first few steps - but still on a safety line. He successfully climbed out. We made haste for Camp VI, where Vince began his first meal, for some time, at 2015. After a reading of 'Juan in America', we were asleep by midnight.

3 September. We breakfasted at 11.30 on tea, potatoes, biscuit and jam. Both of Vince's feet were swollen; one more so than the other; both his knees were swollen, the right knee much more than the other, and his wrists, like mine, were puffed up. Besides the

injuries we now had only 5 ski sticks between 3 of us."

End of Dave Evans' notes.

Because of foul weather, the party were tent-bound for a further four days after the crevasse rescue. They, however, still managed to carry out geological and glaciological surveys before returning to dig out the boats and outboards. Using only one dinghy, they sailed safely across Sturm Cove and Skontorp Cove to the Argentine base of Almirante Brown on 15 September, despite an overloaded and badly leaking vessel. The second dinghy and the rest of the equipment left behind on the point, were recovered at a later date.

Vince O'Neill is adamant that the trip could have had a tragic ending had it not been for his two resourceful companions, Dave Evans and Graham Hobbs who worked tirelessly; were never short of ideas, and risked their own lives - and limbs - but were successful in his rescue.

Letter from Alistair Taylor

Thanks very much to anyone connected with BAS or BAS Club who contributed to fund-raising for Elgin Cancer Support Group in 1996, in connection with running in Yukon Quest dog race. Over £1,100 was raised. The race itself, from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Whitehorse, Canada, went well, and I finished 8th from 21 starters. The dogs were a bit lighter and faster than the BAS variety, covering about 1,000 miles in 13 days, although they need more molly-coddling.

Visited Nigel Young in Alaska (Rothera, late 70s early 80s), he's doing very well, and still runs a nice-looking team of dogs.

Alistair Taylor
Halley Bay - Feb 97

Letter from Colin Bertram

I had hoped that there could appear in *Newsletter* 36 some reference to my 'book', which in fact fills the last April issue of the *Polar Record* - by the kind arrangement of John Heap. I knew that many BAS members do not take the *Record* so that its content escapes them. My writing concerns the British Graham Land Expedition of 1934-37 of which I was the Biologist. Remember that Expedition was the only

over-wintering (2 years) party from anywhere between the Wars - the link between the old heroic age and the modern. Prefaces by the Director of the SPRI and the President of the RGS set out this matter in sensible proportion. It was truly historical but rather forgotten because of the advent of World War II so soon after our return.

My writing (as one of the only 3 survivors) ought to have appeared as a separate book (with an ISBN No.) but, despite the efforts of SPRI and RGS that proved impossible; but John Heap thought of this by-pass method which is helpful indeed, but results in a sad lack of proper publicity.

There is, I believe, a chance of more proper publications via the CVP in Melbourne, Australia - I indeed hope so.

Colin Bertram
St John's College, Cambridge
5.1.97

Letter from Michael Dixon

I wrote this on Bransfield on the way home in May 1996-I then left BAS in July for a shore job as a Marine Surveyor -Still miss the sunny south though.

"Four months on *Bransfield*"

Joined *Bransfield* in Monte, still a traditional mid season stopover. As the 3rd Engineer I got busy with generators.

A short few days and we were in Stanley. Its like coming home again. The familiar waterfront, the red and green tin roofs, the Lady Elizabeth on the beach and all the other familiar landmarks.

A brief stay there, time for a browse in the shops, a swim in the pool, a few jars in the pub, and we were off into a 50 knot Easterly. Ah yes it was rather windy in Stanley, it was all one could do to cycle back to Fipass against the wind in the lowest gear!

So there we were, pitching and rolling, making 5 knots ... but on we went and next day it wasn't too bad.

Signy, that pleasant isle gave us shelter a few days later. Ashore for a walk, up the Gully, over the hill to Elephant Flats and the cemetery. Some wonderful

'monster sausages' sleeping in the weak sunshine, loud breathing noises, snorting and scratching. Quite a few Fur seal about this year too, growling and huffing at our presence.

On to Halley next and a fast passage was made due to lack of any sea ice on our route. Earlier in the season, in December, the main relief was done using Tula the cargo tender, as there was no ice to berth alongside in the creek. Now, for the second call the situation was still the same, some cargo was discharged by Tula then we went to N9.

Found an interesting little crack in the 'low shelf', with the snow level with the Officers deck. Here we stayed a few days, took some cargo and vehicles. Went for a walk on the Bondu in RBLTs. Wonderful to hear and feel the crunch under foot again. Beautiful shades and textures on the surface, highlighted by the low sun. The sound of the sea on the cliffs and the faint hiss of blown snow.

Base too far away (50 km) for any chance of a visit this time. Two years ago, I visited however and what an extraordinary base Halley 5 is. The main accom platform is the most enormous structure, elevated above the snow with a great pit underneath.

the other two buildings are 200 metres away and smaller but no less impressive. Under the surface is a network of tunnels and the most amazing Melt Tank room. A huge cavern made of Braithwaite panels.

So different to the subneven Halley 4 which cosily housed us in 84 and 85, this base with windows is a new era for Ice Shelf building. Then of course there is the Garage and now the Summer Accom building. Large units that can be towed across the snow! Whatever next.

One of the BAS Twin Otter aircraft based at Halley brought the first group of outgoing people. "What ... flying to the ship from base" ... no more of those interminable droning trips by Snowcat and Caboose along the drumline!

The weather turned after that and we had to pull out. For 3 or so days we sheltered down in Precious Bay with 50 knots and bad vis. The occasional glimpse of icecliff with blown snow cascading over. Saw the hinge and the Hayes and Dawson Lambton glaciers, destinations of good field trips in the past.

Soon as the weather cleared we returned to N9, and within a few hours, two plane loads of outgoing people were lifted on board by 'Wor Geordie' and we were away.

A quiet passage North to Signy and then Husvik on South Georgia. Beautiful as ever, the landscape glittered in the sun by day and glowed in moonlight by night.

Bird Island took a few days of our time waiting for the weather. Anchored in Elsehul, went for a trip to the beach with the hut. Dark sand covered by Fur seal pups all scampering about awkwardly like puppies with long socks on their feet. Practising their aggressive but juvenile growling and posturing. Turning and running back to the pack when the intruders did not back down. It was thrilling to walk amongst such numbers of wild animals and marvel at their antics. The cries and barking of the pups echoing round the steep slopes. There was a reminder of days past on the beach with three Trypots still ready for boiling up!

Into the Zodiacs again and a quick zoom through Bird Sound past the breakers brought us to the cove where Bird Island base is. We were shown around the site and the buildings (new store building) and then had to call it a day. We sailed for the Falklands.

Great to be back home in Stanley, for three days.

Surely it will be calm on departure? Nope, steep head seas greeted us when we turned the corner and made our heading SW. All the way across the Passage to the Peninsula we had rough seas.

RN vessel *Endurance* made a rendezvous with us by helicopter, and picked up our VIP, for a jolly? Returned three hours later...

On to Faraday, or Vernadsky as it is now named by the operators, Ukraine. Some cargo for them. Weather bad, no room in the anchorage for all the icebergs parked. Weather generally dull for the Lemaire Channel too.

Next out to sea to pick up Roberto's Buoys. Oceanographic instrument clusters on bottom anchorages deployed for an Italian Institute last year. He was thrilled to be able to report to his people that both Buoys were recovered.

Rothera was our final visit on this leg and after a delayed arrival due to high winds we berthed alongside Biscoe Wharf. Once again all credit to the BC and the team here, they always have a great welcome for the ship and company. A slide show opened the week's evening entertainment with skiing, walking, snorkelling, wildlife, skidoo trips, all being on the activities list.

I played at being a Fid again, taking in the atmosphere on base, the scenery, the crisp air, the sights, smells and sounds, carrying boxes, having tea and cakes looking out the window, chatting and catching up on news with the lads we knew from last year. Good to see the Gash and Scrubout routines still in place, long may they continue.

Come time to leave, the first winter snow had already carpeted Rothera Pt in whiteness, the departing summer lads and two year winterers made their happy and sad farewells. We heard "Send us a letter or two", "see you next year...", "never"! As the ship pulled away sounding the whistle, the scene aglow with red smoke flares, the little group remaining, an excellent team of lads looked forward to the coming winter. A good Rothera departure.

On our way back to Stanley, we picked up the team from Pt Lockroy, and the team and hut from Portal Pt (destined for the museum at Stanley), ... the hut that is!

Back alongside at FIPASS, rather than heading for Monte, we learnt that our presence was required at Signy. The flagship had suffered failure of the big crane and was unable to lift the Tender (17 ton) back on board after Signy final relief. We were able to lift it for them and Rockhopper is now on the Helideck.

Monte came and went quickly, now we are nearing the Channel after another successful season.

Bransfield did the business, and I can say that at Halley, Bird Island and Rothera the spirit of Fids is alive and well this winter.

Mike Dixon, Halley 4, 1984-85.

Ireland

9 Dec 96

Letter from Harry E Agger

I have been following with interest the correspondence relating to visiting (or rather, returning to) Antarctica

as a simple tourist and I should like to add my two cents worth.

I recently returned to Antarctica after an absence of 35 years. I would like to say that I enjoyed the experience immensely ... I would **like** to say that but it wouldn't be telling the truth. I'm not sorry that I went on the trip but I believe that I would have had a much better time on a larger and/or more comfortable vessel. I travelled with a company called Marine Expeditions out of Toronto, Canada who use chartered Russian research vessels for their cruises. I chose the extended Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica voyage which lasted about 23 days from Miami back to Miami with 18 days actually on board the R/V *Akademik Shuleykin*. The round trip from Ushuaia back to Ushuaia was 3336 nautical miles, of which I was sick about 3000 miles of it. (Well not really, but it sure seemed like that at times!). The *Akademik Shuleykin* wasn't as comfortable as the *John Biscoe* in the late fifties. I spent most of the time on board in my bunk wondering if I would actually feel even worse than I was feeling if I removed my anti-motion-sickness wrist bands.

The R/V *Akademik Shuleykin* is an ice-strengthened vessel about the same size as the *Biscoe* with a length of 71.5m and a cruising speed of about 12 knots (with both engines running). She was not a pretty sight to see when we first caught sight of her in Ushuaia as she appeared to have had close contact with any number of obstacles and was liberally covered in rust. Although she had been purportedly converted from a research vessel the conversion was by no means complete; (Marine Expeditions lists three vessels of the same size as the *Shuleykin* and in addition another vessel of length 100m the *Alla Tarasova*, which although built in 1974 had been completely refurbished in 1992 and two others of length 117m; perhaps these vessels have a higher degree of cruise conversion). Most of the cabins were small and of the one-up, one-down variety with about half of them equipped with toilet, wash basin and shower. There were the inevitable plumbing glitches of course but fortunately there were no **major** problems during the cruise. We had to stagger our meal times with those of the crew since the dining rooms were too small to accommodate everybody at the same time. The bar held about a dozen at a pinch, a small library adjacent to one of the dining rooms seated about four and the only room big enough to accommodate all the passengers at the same time was a dingy below-decks laboratory equipped with

uncomfortable metal folding chairs which did not make one too keen on staying around for the staff presentations. We had an open bridge policy (which is common amongst nearly all of the cruise operators) and the bridge was a popular gathering point whenever one felt well enough to venture out and about. The officers and crew were all Russian (or Ukrainian or Belarussian etc) and a few of them spoke a reasonably understandable form of English. We had two cooks, one Canadian and the other Argentinean and they did a fairly commendable job with the raw materials they were provided although most of the food was a little 'different'.

It wasn't all bad news though ... in 18 days we made 15 Zodiac landings and they were all interesting. In Grytviken I met with Ben Hodges who, together with a couple of other ex-Fids (I think) was working on fixing up on the roof of the Whaler's Chapel. At Admiralty Bay at the Polish Research Station Arctowski I chatted with Bernard Stonehouse and Ken Blaiklock who were engaged in a project to determine the impact of tourism in the area. We were exceptionally fortunate in both the weather and the relatively calm sea conditions **most** of the time. We were able to make a landing on Elephant Island which apparently very few of the tourist vessels manage to do and everybody got to make a continent landing at Neko Bay. I also now have a more extensive visual record of Antarctica as I shot about a dozen rolls of film (I would estimate that I was a little more conservative than most in film consumption) and a little over two hours of video. I was a little surprised about the distances we usually had to cover in the Zodiacs. Maybe my memory doesn't serve me too well nowadays but I would have sworn that Bill Johnston used to anchor the *Biscoe* a helluva lot closer to shore than the master of the Shuleykin did. A few of our landings were cancelled because of the sea conditions where we were anchored and some other Zodiac loadings were a bit hairy. However, the Zodiac drivers instilled confidence so there was never any serious problems. I would have taken wagers that we would not go through Neptune's Bellows into Whaler's Bay but I would have lost. An interesting question was raised concerning all the old buildings and artefacts there: "is this an historic site or is it garbage?". Incidentally does anyone have any info about the Otter rotting away in and around the aircraft hangar? Was this the original Otter from the 1960's?

My biggest disappointment was not being able to get to my old base at the Argentine Islands. I understood

from the outset that this was an unlikely prospect but getting to within 50 miles got my hopes up. Voyages later in the season or Antarctica only cruises usually manage to get down to about the area of Rothera or Stonington, I understand. The major complaint of most of the travellers was that we would have liked to have spent a lot more time ashore (we averaged about 2-3 hours per landing) especially in Port Stanley and Grytviken.

The total cost from Miami back to Miami was just over \$8000 (a last minute "fuel surcharge" of about \$200 was added which did not go down too well with most of us) and this included first class hotel accommodation for two nights in Santiago and a night in Ushuaia. A comparable voyage with a better known operator cost about \$2000 more but worth every penny in the view of someone who had been with that particular operator. The rates from Santiago back to Santiago ranged from a low of \$3350 for a triple-cabin 11 day voyage to a high of \$9590 for a suite on the 18 day cruise. The age range of the 36 passengers on board our vessel was from late 20's to mid 70's, most of them in their 50's to 60's and they came from Canada, the US, the UK and France. Roughly half of the group booked their trip through a birding organisation and possibly got a slightly better deal (they didn't have to pay the fuel surcharge for starters as their group operator picked that up).

In summary, I'm glad I decided to take the trip but rather than satisfy my desire to visit Antarctica it just whetted my appetite to return again in the near future. Next time though I shall be much smarter if a little poorer. If I can provide any additional information about the trip please feel free to contact me and certainly continue to keep all of us informed about developments in the BAS Club Newsletter.

Harry E Agger- 24 Feb 1997

Letter from Cecil Scotland

I wonder would you be interested to include the enclosed two items in the BAS Club Newsletter? My service with FIDS was from 1955-58, spending my first year at Horseshoe Island as Met Observer and my second at Signy as Base Leader/Met Observer.

What an enjoyable and fulfilling period in my life that was. I still keep in touch with some of those whom I met down South.

A year or so ago my wife Elizabeth and I were visiting Dumfries and met up with Derek and Sadie Skilling. Derek had been on Signy at the same time as me. We were discussing those days and various matters, as Fids do. Neither of us knew of the whereabouts of David McDowell who had previously lived in Jersey. I subsequently traced him to NSW, Australia and we have since kept in touch.

David reminded me of an incident which occurred on one of our survey trips to Coronation Island. I enclose a copy of David's account, which may be of interest to the readers. I sought permission from both to allow me to send it to you and they have concurred ...

"I don't know what made me think of it but I remember a trip some of us did by boat to Coronation Island before the winter set in at Signy. We were landing stores but the weather blew up and it was decided we should stay overnight with the shore party. We crammed in the tents for an uncomfortable night. The next morning the weather had eased but it was very much colder. It was decided to get going back to base without delay. However, it was so cold the outboard would not start. Derek Skilling took the outboard off the boat back onto land to try and start from an easier position. It still would not start. So in an act which I have never forgotten, he poured petrol over the engine and deliberately set fire to it. The engine then started immediately first pull. Now that was class."

Derek however suggested a cautionary note, such as they have on 'Blue Peter', along the lines of "Please get your parents to agree before trying this at home!"

The second item concerns something entirely different. In my pre-FIDS days I had a holiday in County Kerry, in SW Ireland and most enjoyable it was too. En route we came across the SOUTH POLE INN, a photograph of which is enclosed.

The proprietor in earlier days was Tom Crean, who had been a crew member on Captain Scott's *Discovery* and *Terra Nova* expeditions. Apparently there used to be a display of polar equipment, etc in the Inn.

Recently I wrote to the present occupier to establish if the Inn was still in business, which it proved to be ... so there you are, if any members find themselves thirsty in that part of the world, they might like to try a pint or two at the South Pole Inn!

(see next item and a personal visit is soon to be made there--EDITOR)

Cecil Scotland-21 Feb 1997

Extract from The Irish Times Weekend 11 January 1997

The Frozen Chosen

They call them "the frozen chosen", these mortals captivated by the Big White. Nose-numbing, bone-shuddering, finger-bleeding cold is no obstacle to them. After all, in Antarctic temperatures, nothing really dies - least of all the dreams of lost adventurers.

It was this bleak Irish January that Jariath Cunnane couldn't face. At least that's why the Mayoman says he has gone south this month with six compatriots. The mission - to photograph a few icebergs and king penguins and elephant seals, but only after he and his crew have put a pretty horrendous passage behind them.

For even now, some 80 years later, a re-creation of an epic polar rescue is still a challenge. Even with the benefit of satellite navigation and weather faxes, the Southern Ocean is still a harsh and heartless sea. Eight decades ago, the crew of the 23-foot lifeboat *James Caird*, including three Irishmen, witnessed waves the like of which they had never seen. In a mercifully untamed element a small wooden boat can still be mercilessly tossed about.

The craft this time is the 23-foot *Tom Crean*, named after the Kerry member of the 1914-1917 British Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Built last year in a shed in north Kilkenny by FAS trainees, it was launched off Tierra del Fuego in the Southern Ocean last weekend. Later this month, an Irish crew aims to sail an 800-mile route from Elephant Island to South Georgia, in a tribute to Crean, his expedition leader Sir Ernest Shackleton, Kinsale man Tim McCarthy, and the 25 other members of that original Trans-Antarctic adventure.

The sea voyage may be the most difficult, but it is not the only challenge on this trip. South Aris, as this venture is called, aims to make the same 30-mile traverse over glaciers, snowfields and south Georgian mountains which Shackleton, Crean and Frank Worsley completed in May 1916. Adrenalin fuelled

those efforts. Shackleton desperately needed to get help. He had 22 stranded crew members to think about after his ship, the *Endurance* had been crushed in pack-ice.

Widely acknowledged as one of the greatest polar survival stories, that rescue more than made up for failure to succeed with the original plan to cross the Antarctic continent. Shackleton - Kildare merchant seaman, master mariner and veteran of Scott's 1901 expedition - had led his own foray to the South Pole in 1907. He came within 97 miles of it, some 366 miles closer than previous attempts. In 1914, after Scott's death, he set out by ship from Plymouth for the southern latitudes, aiming to cross 1,800 miles from the Weddell to the Ross Sea.

This Quaker drank too much, he smoked too much, he liked the company of other men's wives; and his brother, Frank, was always suspected of involvement in the theft of the Irish crown jewels. He had a sense of humour - as reflected in a message to the Royal Geographical Society after his 1907 trip, advising it to "book the Albert Hall" and "get the King".

With him when he set out in 1914 were 27 crew - 23 Britons, an Australian, a New Zealander and two Irishmen. An Irish presence was not unusual in such latitudes. Edward Bransfield from Cork was the first man to sight the Antarctic continent, as acknowledged in the strait south of Elephant Island which bears his name. Tim McCarthy from Kinsale, Co Cork, had a brother Mortimer, who served with Scott. Tim himself was a reservist in the British navy and a ship's carpenter, who was described by one of his expedition colleagues as a "big, brave smiling golden-hearted man".

As for Tom Crean from Annascaul in Co Kerry, this petty officer in the British navy was making his fourth trip to the Antarctic. His first had been with Scott on *Terra Nova* in 1902, then with Shackleton on the *Nimrod* in 1907. He was also with Scott on his ill-fated attempt on the South Pole in 1910. Such was his mettle that some believe Scott would have survived if he had chosen him for the select group making that final bid for the pole. Instead, it was Crean who found Scott's tent with three frozen bodies inside, the following spring.

Some 5,000 replied to Shackleton's advertisement for crew, but war had broken out by the time the party was

ready to weigh anchor. Two ships were due to serve as bases for the attempt: the Norwegian-built *Endurance*, which would make it to the Weddell Sea, and the *Aurora*, which was to carry another party to the Ross Sea on the other side. The British government granted £10,000 towards costs, while the main sponsor, Sir James Caird, gave Shackleton a cheque for £24,000.

But having read the order for general war mobilisation on 4 August, 1914, Shackleton did the decent thing. He offered ships, stores and men to the British admiralty. Within an hour he had his response. "Proceed" was the word, and Winston Churchill sent a telegram conveying his thanks. After all, international rivalry was fuelling wild adventure, with Africa on the detailed map, airplanes in the sky and national flags flying from both poles. Antarctica promised to be the new "El Dorado" for knowledge of it then was confined to the outer limits.

It was on 19 January, the following year, after a long journey down by South America, that the trouble began. *Endurance* was trapped in the pack-ice. For the next nine months, ship and ice and crew drifted slowly north for about a thousand miles. From March to May, the sun didn't rise. It was the Antarctic winter, and temperatures sometimes plummeted - compounded by fierce gales and blizzards - to minus 50 degrees.

On 21 November the ship finally broke up as gnarled fingers of ice smashed into its sturdy hull. By then, the crew had abandoned quarters, including the mess renamed the "Ritz Hotel". They were some 350 miles from the nearest land. Shackleton consoled his men with an extra half a sausage each for tea.

Tents, gear, dogs, sledges and three lifeboats were salvaged, along with several volumes of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and packs of playing cards, and they retreated to an ice floe. Large sums of imaginary pounds were squandered on games of poker at Ocean Camp, while the encyclopaedia had several uses. Treated with saltpetre, the pages made ideal pipe lighter and cigarette paper material. Soon the tobacco would have to be substituted with seaweed.

On 22 December they celebrated Christmas with what was to be their last decent meal for eight months: the menu was anchovies, baked beans and jugged hare. From then on, it would be seal meat - stewed, fried, fried and stewed. Worried about cracking ice, Shackleton rescued one man who had fallen into the

sea in his sleeping bag just seconds before a potential crush.

He decided to drag the lifeboats on sledges across the floe, and to put to sea. Their course: Elephant Island to the north-north-west, at the tip of the 1,000-mile finger reaching up from Antarctica towards Cape Horn. At times they were carried in the wrong direction, and thirst was the constant battle. Having abandoned the pack ice so quickly they had brought little stock.

They resorted to chewing raw seal meat. "This stayed our thirst as well as our ravenous hunger for a while", Commander Frank Worsley wrote in his famous account of the experience. It wasn't such a great idea, as mouths became more parched latterly. "Probably this was due to salt in the seals' blood".

On 15 April 1916 they beached on Elephant Island at Valentine Point - the first dry land in 16 months. Shackleton had already resolved to try to reach the Norwegian whaling station in South Georgia, 800 miles away. He spent the next few days preparing one of the lifeboats, the *James Caird* and building a camp for the 22 who would be left behind. On 24 April, even as Dublin was convulsed in the Rising, he and five others, including Crean and McCarthy set sail, steering north.

They survived gales, a near capsizing by ice, loss of their sea anchor, and a gigantic wave. They reached South Georgia's King Haakon Bay on 10 May, knowing that any search party would be looking for them back in the Weddell Sea. Exhausted, three of the six, including Shackleton and Crean, took to the mountains to cross the island. On 20 May "three terrible looking ruffians" were almost turned away from the whaling station at Stromness.

"Tedious chores, the two ship's doctors, a strumming banjo, bad jokes and, above all, trust" are what sustained the other 22 back on Elephant Island, according to one of the expedition historians, Harding Dunnett. When penguins and seals migrated, food ran short. With tears in their eyes, they were forced to eat the dogs - but within minutes found themselves discussing the consistency of the various canine meats.

They read about exotic meals from a penny recipe book, choosing a different menu each night. There were penguin fancying competitions, when stones were placed around potential "beaus". If seaweed didn't

please the pipe smokers, they tried penguin feather. However bad the whiff, it was far worse for those who did not smoke at all.

It took Shackleton four attempts to break through ice and reach them from South Georgia. The successful craft was a steam trawler loaned by the Chilean government and crewed by Chilean navy volunteers. The survivors were so exhausted that they couldn't even raise a cheer. But their leader had not lost a single man.

The expedition came home to a different world - of war, upheaval in Ireland and conscription into the armed forces. Tim McCarthy was to be one of three *Endurance* crew to lose his life in the fighting; Shackleton, who was also called up, returned to Antarctica in 1922. It was to be his last trip. He died of heart failure at the age of 47.

As for Crean, he came back from service in Archangel to marry his school pal, Ellen Herlihy. They had two daughters and opened a pub in Annascaul which they named the South Pole Inn. He shunned journalists, rarely talked of his experiences, but his eldest daughter, Mrs Mary Crean O'Brien recalls that he did have "frozen" ears. Tragically he was to die of a perforated appendix in his early 60s in 1938.

Now a grandmother herself in Tralee, Mrs Crean O'Brien (78) still regrets that she didn't pester her father more. "We were teenagers. We never asked him enough about what he had been through." But she has named her house 'Terra Nova' after her dad's first Antarctic ship.

Note from Arthur Coney

Every time a newsletter arrives it brings back memories of my stint down South.

On one occasion in particular, we spent the period of Christmas in Deception, and, as you can imagine, the booze on the base was flowing quite freely, needless to say yours truly got the worse for wear, but still managed to stagger out of the base hut about midnight to have a wee. The next thing I could remember was waking up with my arms wrapped round a husky called Manx (?) covered by two feet of snow for at least four hours, so you could say I owe them my life ... and love.

LATEST AND NOTICES

NOTICE: Members will be sad to hear that Cecil Scotland died on 28 May 1997. He was at Horseshoe and Signy in 1956-58. Obituaries will follow in the next Newsletter.

Further to BAS NEWS on the Director we regret to announce that Barry Heywood was forced to take extended leave prior to his planned retirement due to his injury. Dr David Drewry will be returning to BAS in October as Director

NEW MEMBERS & CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

See separate sheets for your convenience.
(which can be added to previous and future BAS Club Member address lists)

Deadline for
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
15th OCTOBER

More such anecdotes as in Fid letters wanted!

**SIGNY REUNION
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THE FUCHS FOUNDATION

For further information on the appeal and on the
paintings contact Dr Pamela Davis 01223
336547

The 1996 Laws Prize recipient was
Dr Alan Vaughan
for his outstanding work on the structural
evolution of the Antarctic Peninsula. The 1997
prize award is soon to be announced.

ANTARTEX VILLAGE

Please note that the BAS Exhibition is still being
widely advertised as being at the Antartex Village
between Loch Lomond and Glasgow but in fact is
no longer there.

BAS NEWS

BAS ADMIN NOTICE 8/97: THE DIRECTOR

The Director sustained a partially incapacitating injury while out walking in the Falklands Islands yesterday. He was flown by helicopter to King Edward Hospital in Stanley where a broken ankle was diagnosed.

It is understood that a minor operation will be necessary which will be undertaken in the UK following his planned return on the airbridge on 29 January. The Director had intended to return to duty at HQ on 3 February. This date may have to be revised in the light of his current circumstances.

Further to Admin Notice No 8/97 staff will wish to know that the Director returned to UK on 30 January from the Falklands and was subsequently admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital for treatment.

An operation on his ankle was carried out on 31 January which is believed to have been successful. It is likely that the Director will remain in Addenbrooke's for a further 10 days recovering from the operation before returning home for longer convalescence.

Further to Admin Notice 9/97 staff will be pleased to know that the Director finally left Addenbrooke's Hospital on 22 February and is now at home in Woodhurst to which all personal communications may be sent.

The period of convalescence is not known at this stage but is likely to be several months.

BAS ADMIN NOTICE: HEAD OF AIRCRAFT ENGINEERING

Staff will be pleased to know that following open advertisement and competitive interview, Steve Parker has been appointed to the post of Head of Aircraft Engineering on a substantive basis from 1 February 1997.

BAS ADMIN NOTICE: HEAD OF AIRCRAFT AND VEHICLES SECTION

Following a NERC tawl for the above vacancy

created by the retirement of Paul Whiteman in August, the Director has confirmed the appointment of Gerry Nicholson to the post on a substantive basis from 11 November 1996.

Edited from the BAS Annual Report 1995/96

Highlights of the Year

Initiatives to broaden the user base of Antarctic science: the preparation of a geological report to inform potential bidders to the Falkland Islands Oil Licensing Round and the TSUNAMI initiative to foster greater collaboration between the insurance industry and scientists in NERC, universities and the Meteorological Office.

Development of the BAS Antarctic infrastructure: the construction programmes at Rothera and Signy research stations were substantially completed by the contractors Tilbury Douglas during the 1995/96 summer. Together with the transfer of Faraday station, this marks the completion of the major restructuring process begun in 1993.

Transfer of Faraday station to Ukraine: BAS occupied a research station on the Argentine Islands between 1947 and 1996. Faraday station was transferred to the Ukraine in February 1996 on condition that the monitoring of near-Earth space and the weather would continue. The station was renamed Vernadsky.

Antarctic conservation: BAS executed a major conservation project at Port Lockroy on behalf of the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. The station, designated as a Historic Monument under the Antarctic Treaty, was restored to the condition in which it was abandoned in 1962. Some 800 tourists visited the station during the two-month conservation work. (See article.)

Arctic responsibility: BAS assumed responsibility in September for the NERC accommodation and

laboratory facility at Ny Ålesund, Svalbard. This summer-only station is situated in a Norwegian-administered international scientific community, which at 79°N, is the most northerly settlement in the world.

Ice shelf disintegration in a warming climate: a catalogue of variation in ice shelves around the Antarctic Peninsula has been compiled from historical records, aerial photographs and satellite images. This has demonstrated that there exists a climatic limit of viability for ice shelves, and that the observed warming over the past few decades is pushing this limit south.

Physical oceanography: details of the ocean circulation under the largest Antarctic ice shelf have emerged from measurements acquired through a 825m deep access hole drilled using a hot water drill at a site 17km west of Korff Ice Rise. CTD profiles of the 500m deep seawater column were obtained during the drilling period and a string of instruments was frozen in to provide a long-term record of the water characteristics and flow.

Logistics and Operational Activities

An essential part of achieving scientific goals in the Antarctic is the provision of modern, appropriate, safe and cost-effective logistics. There has to be a close match between the needs of a range of research projects and the operational means to achieve them. Over the years BAS has developed an Antarctic logistic infrastructure predicated upon the need to be highly efficient and technically advanced. The BAS Cambridge Headquarters provides specialised facilities, archives and a data centre to meet Antarctic Treaty requirements.

The remaining elements of the construction programmes at Rothera and Signy research stations were substantially completed by the contractors Tilbury Douglas during the 1995-96 summer. This achievement, together with the transfer of Faraday research station to the Ukraine in February, marks the completion of the major restructuring process begun in 1993. BAS has invested substantially in new facilities which will benefit the research programme for many years.

A major disappointment was experienced early in the field season. It became necessary to withdraw the

Dash-7 aircraft from service because of design problems in its auxiliary fuel system. These problems proved impossible to rectify quickly and the aircraft had to return to its maintenance base in Guernsey where new systems are to be installed.

RRS *James Clark Ross* provided the platform for two highly successful BAS scientific cruises around South Georgia and in the Scotia Sea. A new instrument, an undulating oceanographic recorder was deployed effectively during this period. Together with RRS *Bransfield*, the ship provided essential logistic support to the construction programme besides its normal activities.

HMS *Endurance* undertook an oceanographic research cruise for BAS in the Ronne Entrance later in the season and provided vital support on the Antarctic Peninsula following the withdrawal of the Dash-7.

BAS executed a major conservation project at Port Lockroy on behalf of the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. The station, designated as a Historic Monument under the Antarctic Treaty, was restored to the condition in which it was abandoned in 1962. Some 800 tourists visited the station during the two-month conservation work.

Finally adding to its brief in polar logistics, BAS assumed responsibility in September for the NERC accommodation and laboratory facility at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard. This summer-only station is situated in a Norwegian-administered international scientific community, which at 79°N, is the most northerly settlement in the world.

Antarctica

The four permanent research stations, Signy (60°43'S, 45°36'W), Faraday (65°15'S, 64°16'W), Rothera (67°34'S, 66°08'W), Halley (75°36'S, 29°15'W) and the field research station Bird Island (54°00'S, 38°03'W) were manned throughout the 1995 winter. There were 55 wintering personnel; 3 at Bird Island, 9 at Faraday, 17 at Halley, 15 at Rothera and 11 at Signy. Faraday station was transferred to the Ukrainian Antarctic Research Centre in February. The newly constructed station at Signy was winterised in April and will be reopened as a summer station in November 1996. The air facilities at Fossil Bluff (71°20'S, 68°17'W) and at

Sky Ili (74° 58'S, 70° 46'W) were in constant use during the summer. However neither the air transit station at Damoy (64° 49'S, 63° 31'W) nor the facility at Husvik, South Georgia were opened.

Both BAS vessels, RRS *James Clark Ross* and RRS *Bransfield*, operated throughout the season. RRS *James Clark Ross* undertook a NERC oceanographic programme, the Atlantic Meridional Transect (AMT) during both her southbound and northbound passages. She provided early input of personnel and materials for Tilbury Douglas into Signy and Rothera, a platform for heat-flow measurements in the Scotia Sea and a recovery of current meters in Drake Passage. The vessel undertook two major BAS cruises: marine biology around South Georgia and geophysical studies of the floor of the Scotia Sea. RRS *Bransfield* supported Halley, Signy, Bird Island and Rothera stations and played the principal part in withdrawing waste materials and plant and vehicles for Tilbury Douglas.

The fleet of four Twin Otter aircraft operated from both Rothera and Halley, providing field support and a remote sensing capability. After several early flights to Rothera in November, serious latent design problems were identified in the Dash-7 and the aircraft was withdrawn from Stanley in December, initially to the United States and subsequently to the UK.

Major Developments in the BAS Antarctic Infrastructure

Rothera Redevelopment

The Tilbury Douglas (TD) team returned to Rothera for a second season. They demonstrated great enthusiasm and motivation and had their camp operational on the second day. The wintering personnel had cleared the snow off the road to the TD camp and some of the site storage areas, in addition to the runway, apron and haul roads needed for relief.

The first work was to erect the control room and the generator cells in the new building in readiness for the arrival of the generators. The generator building was designated as the priority to allow the mechanical and electrical team start work when the ship arrived. This enabled the carpenters to carry on with the erection of the laboratory block, the second

priority. One setback was caused by an episode of late-winter melting. The water had subsequently refrozen and had deposited a 300 mm thick layer of hard ice at the base of each building panel crate, welding them to the foundation. Hard work was necessary to free them and no damage resulted. The service boxings were buried by snow, which had to be dug out. They were full of hard ice, which had to be melted out. During warm periods meltwater ran through the boxing like a stream as intended.

By the time the ship arrived, the building programme was running to schedule. By the end of February, the laboratory block and transit block were both erected, the generator building was fitted out and the generators in place. On 28 February the generators were commissioned, and on 6 March the generator building was accepted for handover and snagging. Most of the items identified on a snagging list were easily rectifiable. Many however were difficult to achieve and impossible where the materials or equipment necessary were not available on site. Material shortage was the primary reason for the failure to complete all work.

At the end of the season TD had completed the services buildings, but not the laboratory or transit accommodation buildings. This work is scheduled for completion in January 1997.

Signy Redevelopment

The Tilbury Douglas workforce started the building programme within a few days of their arrival at Signy Island on 9 November. The levelling of an area to the east of the station was the top priority, as space was needed for temporarily storing the building components for the new station. This levelled area later sited the two steel panel fuel tanks and the concrete containment bund. Unfortunately the tank panels were corroded in transport. As a result the contractors will have to return to Signy in 1996-97 to complete the fuel-farm installation, as well as a number of other smaller tasks.

The new Sorlle House, which was brought in as boxes of preformed panels, took shape very quickly, with the main structure being complete by mid-January. The former boathouse was rapidly converted to a building for the generator and water production plant.

During this period BAS staff started the process of packing non-essential equipment for removal and the clearing of the workshops in the old generator building. At the end of February, after the contractors had progressed sufficiently, BAS staff were able to move out the generators. One of these was set up temporarily in an outbuilding and power was restored the same day. BAS staff and the contractors were then able to refurbish the building as a new storage facility. This became the busiest part of the summer with many concurrent activities, such as packing, demolition within the old station, refurbishment within the old buildings, together with the continual need to provide services. The contractors finished their remaining tasks a few days before the final ship call on 13 April.

Bird Island - Multi-Purpose Building

As part of the long-term management of the facilities at Bird Island field station this season saw the replacement of the collection of stores that serviced the station. This collection of lightweight huts housed the builder's store and workshop, the travel and emergency store and an area for specimen sorting. Also sited between the huts were covered and open storage racks.

The building project was managed by S W Canham. Accommodation restricted the building team to four people and was only available at the end of summer. Because of this a system was developed to minimise the erection time and be resistant to inclement weather. Messrs Rothwell Robinson Ltd manufactured the building and trial-erected it under cover. The company's attention to detail greatly contributed to the smooth site erection of the unit.

RRS *Bransfield* delivered the materials, equipment and labour force, and poor sea conditions and weather detained the ship longer than anticipated. Once everything was ashore the outdated huts were rapidly cleared away. The foundation system was of prefabricated steel beams sitting on adjustable legs. This gave rapid on-site construction without the use of mass concrete - an important consideration where limited resources and speed were essential.

The prefabricated floor and wall panels soon gave the building shape as they were positioned during breaks in the weather. The panels were fabricated using a core of galvanised steel studwork which is

not so susceptible to the damp conditions of Bird Island as the previous traditional timber construction. The strength of this system was tested as a severe storm blew up when the building was at its most vulnerable stage - about two thirds erected.

The key features of this new building are its high degree of internal fire resistance, roof-water collection to supplement the summer water supply and speed of construction. The external envelope of the 5 m by 20 m structure was completed to the tight schedules as planned.

Transfer of Faraday

Negotiations to transfer Faraday research station, as part of the BAS restructuring programme, began in earnest in 1994 and culminated in an exchange of diplomatic notes at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 22 July 1995 between Mr David Davies, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Dr S Komissarenko, the Ukrainian Ambassador to UK. The detailed arrangements between BAS and the Ukrainian Antarctic Research Centre (ARC) were set out in a Memorandum of Understanding also signed in the Locarno Room by Dr R B Heywood, Director BAS and Dr P Ghozik of ARC.

Visits to the station were paid by ARC staff in the 1994-95 summer season and, following training at Cambridge, the first four Ukrainians travelled with BAS personnel to Faraday in November 1995 to begin formal handover arrangements. A further group of Ukrainian staff arrived in late January and a brief handover ceremony was conducted on 6 February with BAS base members withdrawing on HMS *Endurance*. Dr J R Dudeney, Head of the Upper Atmospheric Sciences Division and a former Faraday Base Commander, represented the Director at the ceremony.

The interest in Faraday shown by Ukraine reflects its previous strong presence in the Antarctic programme of the former Soviet Union; many ARC staff worked and wintered on the continent. The transfer agreement provides for the free transfer of scientific data by ARC to BAS for the next ten years, thus preserving the long meteorological and ionospheric data sets collected at Faraday for over 40 years. Negotiations with the Ukrainian authorities were led for BAS by Mr F G Curry, Head of Administration.

Arrangements at Faraday were co-ordinated by D Haigh, who remained Base Commander, following M E Dinn's transfer to Signy. J D Shanklin and S J Lucas from Cambridge assisted with the transfer at Faraday during the final two months.

Despite the sadness inevitably associated with the loss of a much loved station, BAS looks forward to close co-operation with ARC in the future. The station has been renamed Vernadsky and its first Base Commander is Dr G Milinevski.

Ship Operations

RRS James Clark Ross

Under the command of Captain M J S Burgan, the ship sailed from Grimsby on 16 August to conduct scientific trials in the Norwegian fjords, arriving back at Grimsby on 24 August. Subsequently the vessel sailed on 21 September under the command of Captain C R Elliott after loading stores, cargo and bunkers. Personnel from Plymouth Marine Laboratories joined the vessel at Grimsby to conduct daily CTD sampling as part of the Atlantic Meridional Transect Programme (AMT) on passage to Stanley. En route to Montevideo, the vessel called at Portsmouth where bulk aviation fuel was loaded and during the subsequent passage to Madeira, opportunity was taken to test the deployment of the CTD.

Departing Montevideo on 21 October in good weather, the vessel berthed at Stanley on 25 October bunkering at Mare Harbour en route. With transhipment of cargo and the transfer of personnel complete, the vessel sailed for Signy on 26 October. Brief calls were made at Bird Island, Husvik and Grytviken. Whilst on passage a heat-flow sensor was deployed intermittently in the Scotia Sea. The ship finally completed cargo and personnel disembarkation including Tilbury Douglas personnel at Signy on 13 November, returning to Stanley on 19 November.

Having embarked cargo for Tilbury Douglas and a transhipment from RRS *Bransfield*, the vessel sailed for Rothera on 24 November after delaying departure to embark personnel from the UK flight. Prior to arrival at Rothera on 1 December the vessel called at Faraday for cargo/personnel transfers on 28-29 November including five Ukrainians. After hectic

days unloading cargo and personnel at Rothera, the vessel departed 6 December for Stanley arriving on 10 December.

Whilst at Stanley, senior service personnel including Commander British Forces, Falkland Islands, Commodore A Bacchus were entertained on board. Another distinguished visitor to the ship was the Acting Governor, Mr Andrew Gurr. Departing Stanley on 15 December the ship bunkered at Mare Harbour en route and called at Jubany, Port Lockroy and Faraday finally arriving at Rothera on 22 December. Due to difficult ice conditions prior to arrival, the vessel departed the same day for Stanley following discharge of cargo and personnel, arriving 28 December. Calls were again made at Faraday and Jubany en route.

With the ships personnel changed (command passing to Captain M J S Burgan), scientific personnel embarked for a marine biological cruise (JR11). The programme extended work carried out in 1994 (Cruise JR06) as part of the BAS core programme in Pelagic Ecosystem Studies. This part of the cruise (JR11(1)) was conducted in two parts, the first requiring 22 hydrographic stations at 35 km spacing using CTD and zooplankton sampling. The second component comprised two acoustic survey boxes to characterise the distribution of krill and plankton around South Georgia. The vessel departed Stanley on 2 January after completing trials on the Undulating Oceanographic Recorder. The first hydrographic station was reached on 4 January, north of the Maurice Ewing Bank, and these continued until 10 January at a position west of the Willis Islands. The second part of the cruise started on 11 January with the first acoustic box completed on 16 January. After a 24-hour mid-cruise break at Stromness Harbour on 16-17 January, the second box was completed on 23 January. The final part of this cruise, studying zooplankton ecology and the strength of acoustic targets, was completed on 1 February, arriving back at Stanley on 2 February, having bunkered at Mare Harbour.

After a change of some of the scientific personnel and equipment, RRS *James Clark Ross* departed 6 February on the second leg of JR11 to a study site north-east of Maurice Ewing Bank. On board were two Lithuanian fishing masters to advise on the trawling element of the programme. The first deployment of the Pelagic Midwater Trawl (PMT)

on 10 February was unsuccessful. However the second on 12 February netted 750 kg of seven-star flying squid. Bad weather and damage to the net prevented further use. Prior to the start of the second part of this cruise on 19 February, the vessel made a brief call at Stromness Harbour. The vessel returned to previous study sites to re-sample zooplankton, but inclement weather interrupted this part of the cruise. The vessel arrived at Stanley on 29 February, having bunkered on route.

On completion of a further change of scientific personnel and equipment the vessel sailed on 5 March for the Scotia Sea. Trial deployment of the seismic array on 7 March highlighted several problems which were addressed prior to arrival at the first survey site (90 miles west of South Sandwich Islands) on 8 March. Deployments of the seismic array and magnetometer continued until fog and heavy ice concentrations prevented further surveys on 11 March. These conditions covered the survey area until 22 March. During this period sampling continued using the rock chipper/wax corer. Completing this part of the survey, the vessel moved north on 17 March continuing to use the chipper/wax corer and dredge. A further seismic survey was conducted on 20 March which included the use of sonobuoys. Due to weather and ice conditions the vessel headed south, resuming seismic surveys during 24-27 March. On completion of a magnetometer survey on 29 March, the vessel departed for Mare Harbour to bunker and arrived in Stanley on 2 April.

Departing Stanley on 5 April, having completed transshipment of cargo to RRS *Bransfield* and embarking personnel, passage was set for Signy, arriving 8 March. During the station relief the forward cargo crane developed a major fault which prevented recovery of the vessel's cargo tender. RRS *Bransfield* was instructed to return to Signy to recover the tender. With all cargo and personnel onboard, the vessel sailed for Stanley on 14 March, leaving the base unmanned for the first time since 1947.

Discharge of waste and transshipment of cargo were completed in five days and the vessel sailed from Stanley for the UK on 22 March, with calls at Montevideo on 26-28 March to change crews (Captain C R Elliott in command), Plymouth 22-24 May for a VIP open day in collaboration with

Plymouth Marine Laboratory, finally arriving Grimsby on 26 May.

RRS *Bransfield*

RRS *Bransfield* arrived at Grimsby on 27 September following a protracted dry docking at A & P Tyne Ltd, requiring extensive steel replacement to ballast tanks. With cargo and bunkering completed, the vessel departed Grimsby under the command of Captain J B Marshall on 20 October, arriving Montevideo on 12 November. Having loaded fresh provisions and airfreight and embarked joining personnel, the vessel sailed on 15 November for Stanley, arriving on 19 November. Transfer of cargo achieved, personnel and fresh provisions on board, the vessel embarked for Halley on 22 November, bunkering on passage at Mare Harbour. En route essential personnel and cargo were disembarked at Bird Island on 25 November, at Husvik 26 November, and at Grytviken on 27 November with cargo for the whaling museum. A call at Signy (30 November - 5 December) to discharge Tilbury Douglas personnel and cargo completed tasks on passage.

The vessel encountered Weddell pack ice on 10 December and, making slow progress, arrived off N9, a point on the ice shelf some 55 km from Halley on 16 December. Fast ice conditions along the shelf were found to be unworkable for normal cargo operations. Therefore, discharge started on 18 December with the bows against fast ice at N9. Later it proved possible to work some cargo at Maggies Creek much nearer Halley. Discharge using the landing craft *Tula* were completed on 1 January 1996. Larger heavy items were discharged next day at N9 alongside the fast ice edge. The vessel departed on 3 January for Montevideo arriving 24 January, having been prevented from visiting Neumayer station on Ekstromisen due to prevailing ice conditions. The ship stopped on passage for personnel and cargo transfers at Signy between 12-14 January and Stanley between 17-20 January.

The vessel, under the command of Captain S J Lawrence, departed Montevideo on 27 January following a crew change. Passage was set for Stanley arriving 31 January. After taking fresh provisions and airfreight and personnel from the UK, the ship departed from Stanley on 6 February. Transshipment of cargo from the RRS *James Clark*

Ross was delayed due to the late arrival of a replacement gyro from the UK. On passage to Halley, the ship called at Signy en route 9-11 February arriving at Maggies Creek on 15 February. Under very difficult weather and ice conditions cargo/personnel transfers were completed at Halley on 23 February and passage made for Stanley. Calls were made at Signy, Bird Island (including a rendezvous with RFA *Gold Rover*) and Husvik, before arrival at Stanley on 11 March.

After taking further fresh provisions, water, embarking passengers from the UK flight, the vessel departed 14 March for Rothera. En route the vessel made a rendezvous with HMS *Endurance* and a brief call to the Brazilian station Comandante Ferraz on King George Island. Prior to arrival at Rothera on 22 March the vessel transferred the conservation team from Port Lockroy to Portal Point and called at Vernadsky/Faraday station on 19 March. The ship also successfully recovered two Italian oceanographic buoys from the Bellingshausen Sea. With all personnel onboard and cargo operations complete, RRS *Bransfield* sailed from Rothera on 29 March, visiting on passage Palmer Station, Port Lockroy, Portal Point and finally Point Hennequin (to embark a field party) arriving at Stanley on 4 April.

Transshipment of frozen cargo to the RRS *James Clark Ross* on 5 April completed another rendezvous. On 9 April RRS *Bransfield* was instructed to proceed to Signy to aid RRS *James Clark Ross* with the recovery of their cargo tender. Departing for Signy on 11 April with waste discharged and bunkering complete, the vessel embarked the cargo tender onboard on 13 April and set passage for the UK via Montevideo, with calls at Bird Island and Husvik for cargo/personnel transfers, arriving at Grimsby 18 May.

Air and Field Operations

Air Operations 1995-96

The annual ferry flight of the four BAS Twin Otter aircraft from the UK to Antarctica was completed without incident at Rothera on 22 October. Familiarity training for new pilots together with the opening of Fossil Bluff and the input of pre-field party loads to Fossil Bluff and Sky-Hi started immediately. These tasks were completed by 31 October which also saw the arrival of the Dash-7 at

Rothera.

"Airbridge" flights with the Dash-7 started immediately with a return flight to Stanley on 1 November and rotations on 7-8, 9-10 and 15-16 November. However, fuel transfer and instrumental problems manifested themselves in a persistent way and the remainder of the month was spent in trying to cure them in Stanley. It became clear that outside assistance was needed and the aircraft was moved to Stevens Aviation in Atlanta, Georgia in mid-December where extensive efforts were made to get the aircraft into service. Despite major assistance from the aircraft manufacturers and other specialist companies, it did not prove possible to identify the source of the problems, and for overriding safety reasons, it was decided to return the aircraft to the UK. It left Atlanta on 20 January arriving at Anglo Normandy Aeroengineering Ltd, Guernsey on 23 January where a programme of investigative and remedial work was immediately initiated.

The Twin Otters continued with field party input although the withdrawal of Dash-7 mid-month delayed some passengers until the arrival of RRS *James Clark Ross* in early December.

One Twin Otter, VP-FBL, was configured for ice sounding in late December and tracked over the Rutford, Evans and Carlson ice streams and Orville Coast, operating at times from Haag Nunataks. The plane transferred to Vicecomodoro Marambio, Seymour Island for a joint programme with Instituto Antartico Argentino to survey James Ross, Snow Hill and Vega islands and Larsen Ice Shelf. The survey went to plan and completed on 21 January 1996.

From mid-December two Twin Otters, VP-FAZ and VP-FBC, alternated in being based at Halley research station. They provided the support for checking and raising the Automatic Weather Station (AWS) and maintenance and installation work at Automatic Geophysical Observatory (AGO) sites as far as 84.5°S. A fuel depot for survey work for the European Ice Coring Project in Antarctica (EPICA) was installed in Dronning Maud Land, while a depot used by the EUROSHACK expedition was finally removed. Field parties were input to Berkner Island and locally in the area of the hinge zone. The aircraft also assisted in the shipborne relief of Halley station, moving essential staff rapidly and promptly to N9 55

km eastwards of Halley.

The Twin Otters had another successful season completing all set tasks and a number on an opportunistic basis.

Other aircraft and ships

All BAS stations were visited by aircraft, helicopters or ships of other nations during the field season.

HMS *Endurance* under the command of Captain B W Bryant RN, provided valuable logistic support to BAS geology field parties working on Seymour, Cockburn and King George islands. In addition the vessel deployed the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT/FCO/BAS) conservation party into the Historic Site of Port Lockroy.

HMS *Endurance* undertook hydrographic surveys in sea areas around South Georgia, Erebus and Terror Gulf (in the north-east of the Antarctic Peninsula), Ronne Entrance and local to Rothera Station (the latter using a Navy survey team and launch deployed at Rothera). Support to BAS from HMS *Endurance* in Ronne Entrance included oceanographic survey, shallow ice coring and geological landings. The vessel provided additional unscheduled support in moving personnel and stores to and from Rothera as a result of the withdrawal of the BAS Dash-7 aircraft earlier in the season.

Other Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships were used to move BAS staff into and around South Georgia and to carry mail and supplies to and from Bird Island field station.

Two Twin Otter aircraft on charter to the United States Antarctic Programme and a third on charter to the Italian Antarctic Programme arrived at Rothera from South America in late October for onward journey to McMurdo and Terra Nova stations respectively. After completing their season's work on the other side of the Antarctic continent they routed back independently through Rothera in January and February. Likewise two German Dornier aircraft routed through Rothera and Halley at the start and end of the season for the German stations of Filchner and Neumayer.

The vessel *Akademic Boris Petrov* on charter to the Ukraine National Programme undertook the

Ukrainian relief of Faraday just prior to the station handover on 6 February. The USA National Programme ship RV *Polar Duke* made short courtesy calls to Faraday in November & to Rothera in February & March.

There was another busy season of tourism on the Antarctic Peninsula. BAS continues to limit impacts of such activity through cooperation with the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO). Prior to the station handover to the Ukraine, Faraday received three visits in total from tourist ships *Professor Molchanov*, *Professor Khromov* and *Akademic Boris Petrov*. Signy personnel accompanied *Professor Khromov* and *World Discoverer* on visits to the local Shingle Cove on Coronation Island and Rothera had visits from *Bremen*.

In addition to the tourist ships Faraday received a total of eight different yacht visits. Bird Island field station was visited several times by the yacht *Damien II* in association with a BAS seal census charter.

Activities at BAS Stations

Halley Research Station

Overwinter a regular programme of maintenance of the buildings and site services was carried out. In preparation for the station relief, the Summer Accommodation Building was recommissioned and fuel raised for aircraft operations. The arrival of two Dornier aircraft en route to Neumayer station closely followed by a BAS Twin Otter marked the start of the summer season. RRS *Bransfield* arrived off Halley on 16 December to find recent storms had removed much of the sea ice needed for the station relief. A flexible approach was taken using a combination of *Tula* (*Bransfield's* cargo tender), Sno-cat, and Twin Otter from N9, 55 km east of the station.

M C Rose and Dr P S Anderson co-ordinated the summer science activities. These included the deployment of an Automatic Geophysical Observatory (AGO), a series of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), and relocation of an Automatic System for Sampling Aerosols Year-round (ASSAY). Aircraft supported the field projects and fuel depots, scheduled with 24-hour flying operations

split between two pilots.

As in previous seasons a construction and maintenance team, this year led by J Gorman, set about realigning the Accommodation (ACB) platform support columns, raising the melt tank silo and service shafts, and fitting a waterproof roof membrane on the science buildings. Various masts were extended and two wide-band fan dipole communication antennas constructed. Relocation of the Summer Accommodation Building (SAB) took place towards the end of the season.

At the end of the season, persistent poor weather and loss of sea ice demanded the combined support of aircraft and Sno-cats to effect cargo and personnel moves to RRS *Bransfield* some 60 km east of Halley. I. P. Whittamore, (Station Commander) along with the summer maintenance team, departed on RRS *Bransfield* on 23 February leaving the winter complement of 17 under the charge of B Morton (Winter Station Commander).

Signy Research Station

The arrival of RRS *James Clark Ross* at Signy on 9 November heralded the end of the last winter occupancy of Signy since the station started in 1947. This arrival launched a busy summer to convert Signy into a new summer-only station for eight staff to run science programmes.

Dr H G Butler completed her studies into the biology and chemistry of freshwater lakes by February. The lake chemistry and penguin monitoring programmes were completed by an unusually small complement of two science staff. Requests for biological specimens from BAS HQ and other UK science centres were also met. A number of longer-term projects were continued; two of which, the sea-ice and tidal monitoring programmes, will continue over-winter by way of automated systems.

The Tilbury Douglas work force started the building programme within a few days of the ships arrival, and it was just before the final call of RRS *James Clark Ross* that they finished their remaining tasks with the station near completion. The station was closed for the winter on 13 April.

Rothera Research Station

The winter season was busy, safe and productive. All the winter maintenance, science studies and field season preparations were completed effectively and to time. The winter complement of 15 worked well together and also enjoyed good travelling conditions over sea ice.

Clearing snow from the runway, taxi-ways and apron area was completed by mid October enabling the four Twin Otters to complete the ferry flight and arrive at Rothera on 22 October.

The Dash-7 airbridge operation, carrying the main body of early season priority science staff, support staff, Tilbury Douglas contract staff and cargo, made its first rotation from Stanley on 31 October. This flight deployed P I Rose, the Field Operations Manager/Rothera Station Commander.

Early season work on the station and field deployments began in earnest throughout November and continued on schedule until the Dash-7 aircraft developed technical faults in her fuel system. Unfortunately the aircraft had to be withdrawn from the Antarctic operation after four rotations and was ferried back to Guernsey for a fuel system rectification programme.

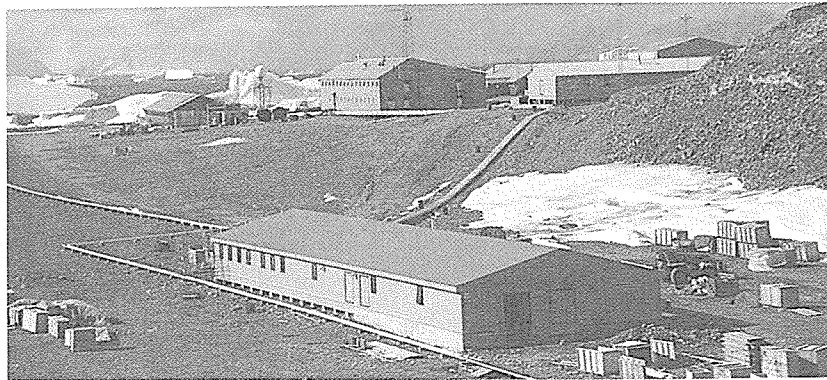
Environmental Management

Antarctic Act

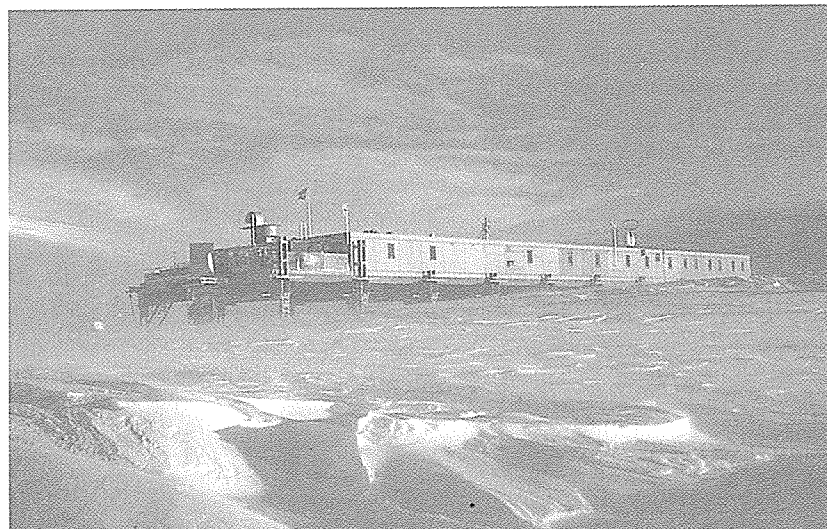
The UK has enacted domestic legislation to enforce the provisions of the Environmental Protocol through the *Antarctic Act, 1994* and the *Antarctic Regulations, 1995*. The Act, with the exceptions of Sections 3 to 7, was brought into force on 1 November 1995. The joint BAS/FCO Working Group is examining how best to implement the outstanding Sections.

Under the new legislation, BAS, after consultation with and approval from the FCO, issued one permit during the 1995-96 season. This was for the introduction of a non-native bacterium, *Bacillus subtilis*, by Dr S Ertz which was used as a known control in a study of the effects of UV-B radiation on different Antarctic organisms.

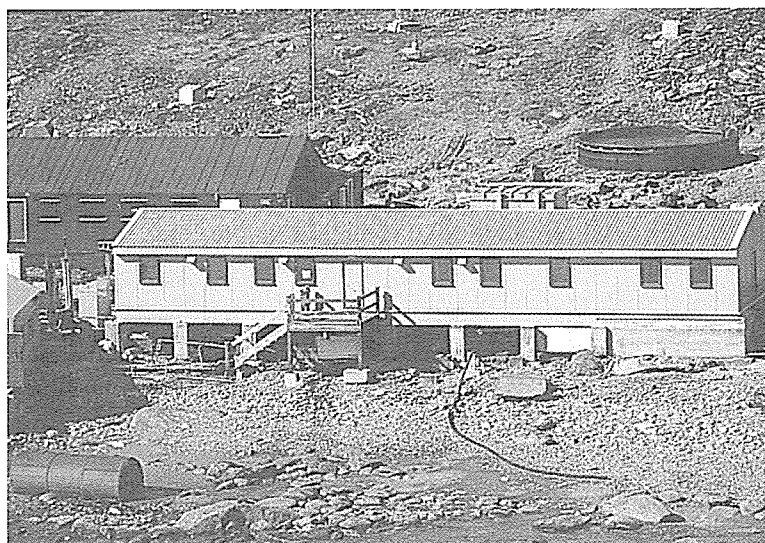
To help BAS personnel going to Antarctica comply with the new legislation, Dr J R Shears prepared a



Rothera



Halley



Signy

guidance leaflet *Environmental Protection in Antarctica*. The final version of the UK guide to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of activities in Antarctica, written by Dr J R Shears and Dr M G Richardson (FCO), was released in 1995.

Conservation of abandoned British bases

Following a conservation survey of abandoned British bases in the Antarctic undertaken in 1994 by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) four bases were designated under the Antarctic Treaty System as Historic Sites and Monuments at XIX ATCM in 1995: Port Lockroy (Base A), Argentine Islands (Base F), Horseshoe Island (Base Y) and Stonington Island (Base E). Port Lockroy was given the highest priority for conservation work by the UKAHT because it is the oldest and only surviving structure of *Operation Tabarin* which later became the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS), forerunner of BAS.

Port Lockroy was established in 1944 and abandoned in 1962 and in that period played an important role in ionospheric research as well as meteorology, geology, botany and topographic survey. The original building, Bransfield House, still survives as the core of the main base. However, since the station was last operational, the condition of the buildings deteriorated badly: the ionospheric laboratory and lounge were in very poor condition, and the only part of the building remaining weatherproof was the original hut.

In recognition of the historic importance of Port Lockroy, and the urgency of the conservation required, the UKAHT together with the Government of the British Antarctic Territory made funds available in 1995 to conserve the site with BAS providing the necessary logistic support. A conservation plan was drawn up in early 1995, and an experienced team of five people including a conservator recruited. Equipment and materials were drawn together in Cambridge during the summer of 1995 and shipped on HMS *Endurance*. The team was transported by HMS *Endurance* and arrived at Port Lockroy on 14 January 1996.

The team spent nine weeks at Port Lockroy, during which time detailed drawings were made of the structure, listings of artefacts were begun, rubbish collected for shipment and the buildings transformed from their derelict state to how they were left in

1962. Roof timbers were replaced where necessary, doors were rebuilt, the exterior walkway reconstructed, much of the exterior was clad with rubberoid felt and creosoted, windows were prepared and painted, the interior was painted where necessary and stoves and generators restored. Information signs were fixed to the exterior walls of the huts explaining their historic status. In addition small signs were fixed within the rooms of the base giving a short description of their use.

Interpretative material depicting the life and work of the base was installed in the lounge together with material describing the current work of BAS. An information leaflet was also made available giving details of the history of the site and visitor guidelines. Port Lockroy is a regular calling point for tour ships and private yachts and during the project was visited by 32 ships and 13 yachts. Visitors were landed at the base during the latter part of the conservation project and it is estimated that 1000 people came ashore. Talks on the Lockroy project were also given on board cruise ships by team members.

The conservation team were in the field for eleven weeks and in addition to meeting all their objectives spent two weeks carefully dismantling a small hut at Portal Point. The Reclus Hut at Portal Point played a central part in a major dog sledge journey in 1957. It has now been removed to the Falkland Islands Museum in Stanley where it will form a central part of a FIDS exhibit.

Waste management

Improvements in the waste management of Antarctic operations have continued. A compactor was purchased and shipped to Bird Island field station and will be used to bale paper, cardboard and plastics. Dr J R Shears undertook an environmental and waste management audit at Rothera research station in early 1996. This showed that since 1990 there had been wide ranging improvements in the ways in which wastes were disposed of. Rothera met, and in many instances exceeded, all the waste management requirements set out in the Environmental Protocol.

Clean-up and removal of rubbish was undertaken at Fossil Bluff with a total of 200 fuel drums containing general rubbish, 11 m³ of boxed waste and 2 m³ of hazardous waste (lead-acid batteries) being returned to Rothera for onward shipment.

Oil spill response and contingency planning

BAS and Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) organised a two day Antarctic pollution control course. This was organised by Dr J R Shears and P Taylor (OSRL) and attended by six BAS personnel.

A full scale oil spill response exercise was carried out at Rothera station in March 1996 involving many of the wintering complement. This was very successful with all equipment and containment booms deployed within 40 minutes of the start of the exercise.

Arctic

The NERC Arctic Research Station

At the request of NERC Council, the administration of NERC's Arctic research station was transferred from Swindon to the British Antarctic Survey, with N Cox, Manager of the station, joining BAS from ITE Merlewood.

In 1991 NERC established Britain's first permanent Arctic research station at Ny-Ålesund (79°N, 12°E), a small settlement (reputedly the most northerly in the world) on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard. That year saw the beginning of an international Arctic research community at Ny-Ålesund with Norway (Norsk Polarinstitut), Germany (Alfred-Wegener-Institut), Japan (National Institute of Polar Research) and Britain (NERC) occupying separate accommodation and laboratory suites near to a central power supply and dining facility. Last year Italy established a station and NASA/Statens Kartverk completed the construction of a \$20 million radio telescope. The Norwegian Space Centre is planning a rocket launching facility for ionospheric and auroral research.

The international research community ranges from 20 to 120 scientists and technicians. Field parties, who travel by boat, snowmobiles or helicopter to distant areas of scientific interest, are supported from the stations.

The Norwegian and German station is open year-round while the British, Japanese and Italian stations are open during the spring and summer months.

Although each research station maintains a certain national autonomy, systems are evolving which help

ensure social and scientific unanimity into the future. The Ny-Ålesund Science Management Committee has representatives from each station, and an annual bulletin *Research in Svalbard*, published by Norsk Polarinstitut, contains individual project details. Scientists give presentations and meet informally, while base managers hold a weekly formal meeting.

The NERC station opened on 22 May and closed on 11 September, with nine project groups using the station (totalling 738 person days). Research in the immediate area was carried out by the Institute of Hydrology, BAS, the Sheffield Centre for Arctic Biology, the Dove Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen, St Andrews and Bradford universities. A geology/glaciology team from Liverpool John Moores University and a limnology group from University College London and Bergen University were field-based.

Firearms training and a safety briefing were held for new personnel at Diggle, Lancashire on 8 April. Further field and rifle training was provided in Svalbard. One of the NERC parties encountered a polar bear in their research area. Sadly there were two incidents where a Norwegian was killed by a bear.

The Ny-Ålesund Science Management Committee met on 3 May at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Potsdam and on 17 August at Ny-Ålesund. As well as promoting research collaboration the committee plays a major role in the development of the international station.

A two-day Ny-Ålesund seminar was arranged by Norsk Polarinstitut and hosted by the Alfred Wegener Institute, Potsdam, Germany on 4-5 May. The multi-disciplinary seminar was the first of its kind for the international station.

Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland was very interested to hear about NERC research during her visit to Ny-Ålesund on 25 May. King Harald and Queen Sonja who visited Ny-Ålesund in August were also impressed by the level of research and the unique international spirit kindled by work and collaboration in a polar environment.

FEATURES

PORT LOCKROY

by Dave Burkitt

The Re-opening of Port Lockroy

Three years ago a two-man party, Ian Collinge from BAS and Chris Cochran, a New Zealand conservation architect, did a survey of abandoned British bases and huts in the Antarctic Peninsula region. Following their recommendations four of these bases were designated under the Antarctic Treaty System as Historic Sites and Monuments. These were: Port Lockroy, Wordie House, Stonington and Horseshoe Island, together with Blaiklock Hut. Port Lockroy (HSM No 61) was given the highest priority for conservation work by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UK AHT) because it is the oldest and only surviving structure of the Naval Operation Tabarin, which later became the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, forerunner of the British Antarctic Survey.

Port Lockroy was established in 1944 and finally abandoned in 1962 and in that period played an important role in ionospheric research as well as meteorology, geology, botany and topographic survey. the original station building 'Bransfield House' still survives as the core of the main base. However, since the station was last operational in 1962 the condition of the buildings at Port Lockroy deteriorated badly; the ionospherics laboratory and lounge were in very poor condition and the only part of the building remaining weather-tight was the original 1944 hut.

In recognition of the historic importance of Port Lockroy, and the urgency of the conservation required, the UK AHT, together with the Government of the British Antarctic Territory made funds available in 1995 to conserve the site with BAS providing logistic support for the project.

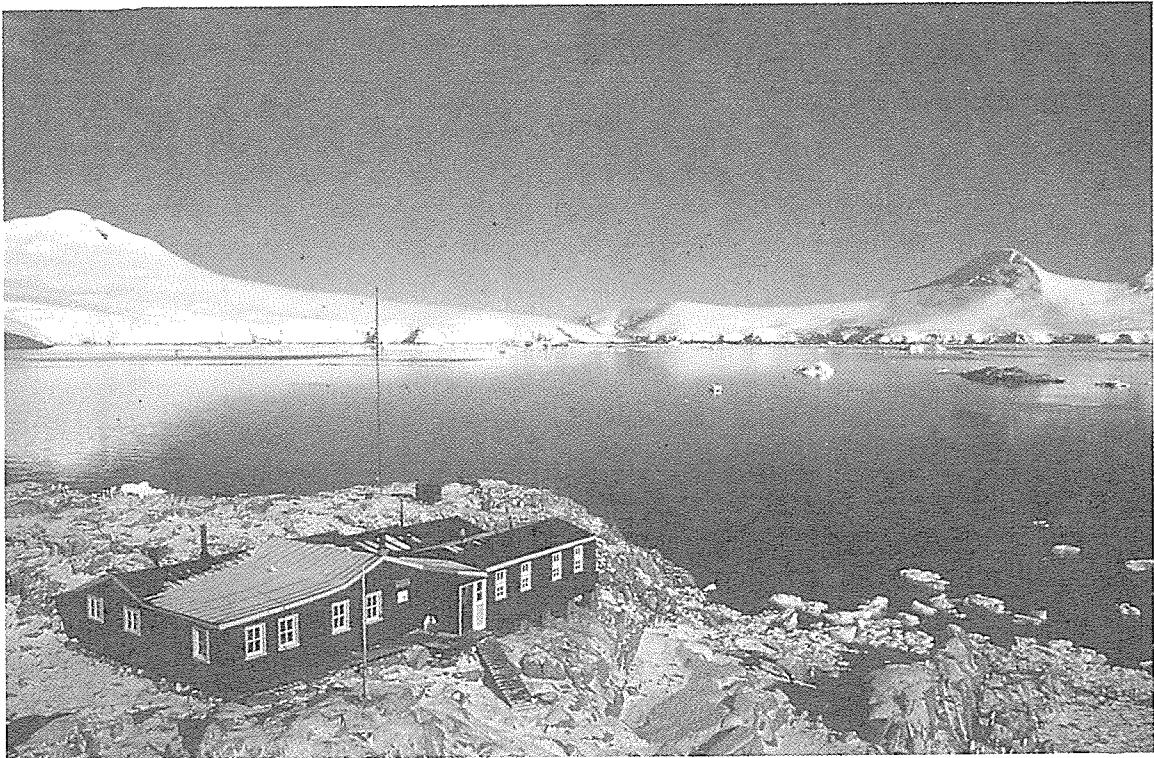
A conservation plan was then drawn up and the team recruited to do the work. Once word had got round about the project there was no shortage of volunteers. The five of us were Chris Cochran, Ben Hodges, Ric Atkinson, Simon Arlmond (Arkwright) who was still at Faraday at the end of his two

winters, and myself. I spent several weeks at BAS during the summer of 1995 getting materials and equipment together, then were all put into a container for shipment South on board HMS *Endurance*.

We flew down to Punta Arenas where we joined *Endurance* and sailed from there in early January. Going via Deception was a nostalgic trip for Ben who had not been there since wintering in the mid 1960s when he was one of the hanger building team - he was like a youngster with a new toy when we caught him sitting on the half-buried Fergy tractor - photographs to prove it!

Early on the morning of the 14 January on a flat calm, blue sky day we steamed round the southern end of Anvers Island and into the Neumayer. A short time later we could make out the buildings and anemometer tower on Goudier Island. We couldn't have had a better day to land and get ourselves settled in. The first priority was to get the primus going and we had morning smoko on the veranda - just like the good old days! The rest of the day was spent sorting boxes, unpacking and getting settled in the bunkroom. This is the oldest part of the building and in the and in the best condition, quite dry, all it needed was a quick tidy up. The kitchen too was in a good state, we installed the Arkburn Mk I stove, coal fired, built by Arkwright, while he was still at Faraday. that evening smoke was seen once more to be drifting from the chimney of Bransfield House, the first time for 34 years.

Over the next week we busied ourselves, mostly shifting the rubbish which had accumulated and got littered about due to years of neglect and, of course, some looting. On any fine day it was important to work on the roof which, in places, was in a very sorry state; main timbers had to be renewed wherever possible though the original structure was left in place. I had got a deal with Ruberoid Building Products as they had supplied all of the roofing felt for the job in return for some publicity photographs. The re-roofing progressed well despite periods of bad weather and after four weeks the whole of the building was once more watertight. Our daily work routine was then a bit more relaxed;



Port Lockroy 1960



Port Lockroy 1996

on bad days we could potter about in comfort inside - minor repair work, painting, recording of artefacts - there was always something to do, even for the gashman/cook who was expected to keep at it between producing smoko goodies and tending the two stoves. Outside everything needed painting and of course as the snow melted there was the ongoing task of collecting rubbish - loads of it was accumulating down by the boatshed for shipping out on *Bransfield*.

Too much work and not enough play makes Jack a dull boy, and we did get time for some relaxation. This was very often on board one of the many cruise ships which came in, 32 visits in the nine weeks that we were there. One of the big attractions for us was the chance of a shower, usually followed by drinks and even dinner on board. One visit, fairly typical, was quite amusing. This is how Ben recorded it in the base diary:

"The ship is the *Bremen* with 150 passengers on board, mainly Germans. The Captain invites us on board and says we can have a shower. He is waiting to welcome us on board when the zodiac goes alongside and we strip off our boots and heavy weather clothing and he immediately takes us up to the bar and buys drinks all round. After a couple of rounds we all go off for a shower and change of clothes and then back to the bar for more free drinks and a meal. A three-piece band is playing on a stage beneath a large glass chandelier - one piece of the band is a grand piano! A very friendly Fraulein who looks like an aged Marlene Dietrich with a dash of a character from 'Allo Allo', grabs hold of Simon and whisks him onto the polished dance floor. This is doubly embarrassing because he's got a touch of lumbago, no shoes on, his socks are wet through. It was a good job it was only a waltz and not a tango."

Work progressed and a few days before pick-up pretty well everything was completed. we even had time at the end to do a good old Fids' scrub-out, down on hands and knees job and the old place was looking good. The flag was lowered, the front door bolted and our task was complete. We left with a feeling of pride of a job well done.

Our season South was not quite finished though. As part of the big clean-up operation our final job was to dismantle the hut at Portal Point. This was used by the Hope Bay team in 1957 when the sledge

journey down the plateau was made. The hut was taken apart as carefully as possible and is to be re-assembled as part of the FIDS exhibit at the museum in Stanley. this project has got the go-ahead and will hopefully start in the near future.

Following the successful conservation work it was decided to put a two-person party in at Port Lockroy for the 1996/97 season. Dr Norman Cobley, a sea bird ecologist who had recently spent two winters at Signy and a further two at Bird Island, and myself, flew down to Stanley where we joined the RRS *James Clark Ross* at the beginning of November. The plan was for Norman to carry out a comparison study on the Gentoo penguin and monitor the effects on breeding success where regular visits by lots of people were taking place. I would do some ongoing maintenance work. We were to act as guides to visitors, operate a post office and sell souvenirs which would hopefully offset the running costs and even make a bit of money for the AHT which was running the project.

On our arrival the base was found to be secure and in a good condition and from the visitors' book it appeared that no one had been since *Bransfield's* final call last season. Within a couple of days though the cruise ships were arriving and we were putting on our Port Lockroy baseball caps and sweatshirts and welcoming the passengers as they stepped ashore by the boatshed. The shop and post office, which we were operating from the old ionospherics room, were soon doing a good business and over the next four months proved to be very popular with the tourists. In particular, the post office far exceeded all our expectations. It was a bit embarrassing operating a Post Office with no postage stamps for sale; we sold out of them on several occasions. The service continued though, we had re-supplies by different ships and lots of stamp licking sessions for ourselves.

As on the previous season we were well looked after by the cruise ships - showers, saunas, dining on board, supplies of fresh food - BAS was never like this! We met a lot of interesting people including a number of ex Fids who were working as guides/lecturers. By the end of the season we had had 4,265 visitors from 62 ship visits and 19 yachts. It had been a busy four months.

What of the future? Like it or not tourism in Antarctica is a big industry; its all a far cry from the days of Lindblad Explorer paying the occasional visit to South Georgia or Signy. And its increasing every year. For Norman and myself it was a very enjoyable experience and indeed we felt proud to be showing a piece of Britain's Antarctic heritage to ordinary people from all over the world - contrary to what a lot of people think the Antarctic tourist is not 'loaded', most of them have saved up for a special holiday to a part of the world they really want to see.

recorded in those amazing early accounts both in Port Lockroy in its magnificent setting is real history showing the work and commitment of past Fids and can very much be a window for BAS science now and in the future. The manning of the base this year was for a trial period and for my part I very much want to see it continue.

Dave Burkitt
29.3.97

ANTARCTIC SPORTS-A REVIEW

- by Ken Richard

Wherever men gather it is not too long before the competitive spirit results in a "sporting game of some type" to happen. It is a long leap from the playing fields of Eton but Antarctica too has seen almost every type of outdoor sport occur and a good variety of indoor ones too. Perhaps Antarctic sport is necessary because of expedition high spirits, as a means to alleviate boredom and routine or to act as an escape valve for pent up energy and even to counter colleague frustration.

One would expect the outdoor activities of climbing and skiing so we shall not feature these in this account nor the "entertainment" diving that Signy Island particularly practiced. The obvious outdoor sports that the author can recall from his visits are football-on-the-ice, volleyball, badminton, rifle shooting, cross-ice-running (and fell-running), cricket, golf, hang-gliding, water-skiing, sailing, tobogganing, fishing and the list could go on! Certain bases develop their own sports too. Certainly Midwinter Olympics allowed ingenuity!

Likewise the list of indoor sports would feature darts, indoor football, snooker, table football, not to mention all the hours of cards and board games and the more unusual bar games!

The long winters with the isolation from the active world of entertainment and the winter darkness with indoor confinement inevitably led to a variety of challenges to fill the non-official duty time. It is

recorded in the books written and in film and photographs taken that even the industrious team with Captain Scott's party partook of football and tennis so it was

not all sledging and science even in the historic day! Perhaps even earlier overwintering parties such as that on the Pourquoi-Pas, or those with Nordenskjöld on Snow Island or under the boat on Elephant island likewise participated in some such activities to ease the stress and hunger factor.

The cover of this Newsletter shows just one of the thousands of games of football that have taken place. This one was at Signy in 1980 in the year of the enforced winter with five Fids trapped at Signy after the John Biscoe failed to get through at the end of the summer in April. The fixture was a Saturday afternoon before the evening special meal. The pitch would be inspected, levelled, cracks marked, kit carefully chosen-for warmth and footwear- for grip and protection, the team selected and the the crowds gather-well the odd penguin or two would sometimes appear as spectators-and even as participants! A pretty energetic run-around, especially if any fresh snow had fallen or the surface was glare-ice, would ensure huge appetites (and thirsts) and all the pent up feelings of the enforced winter would be released!

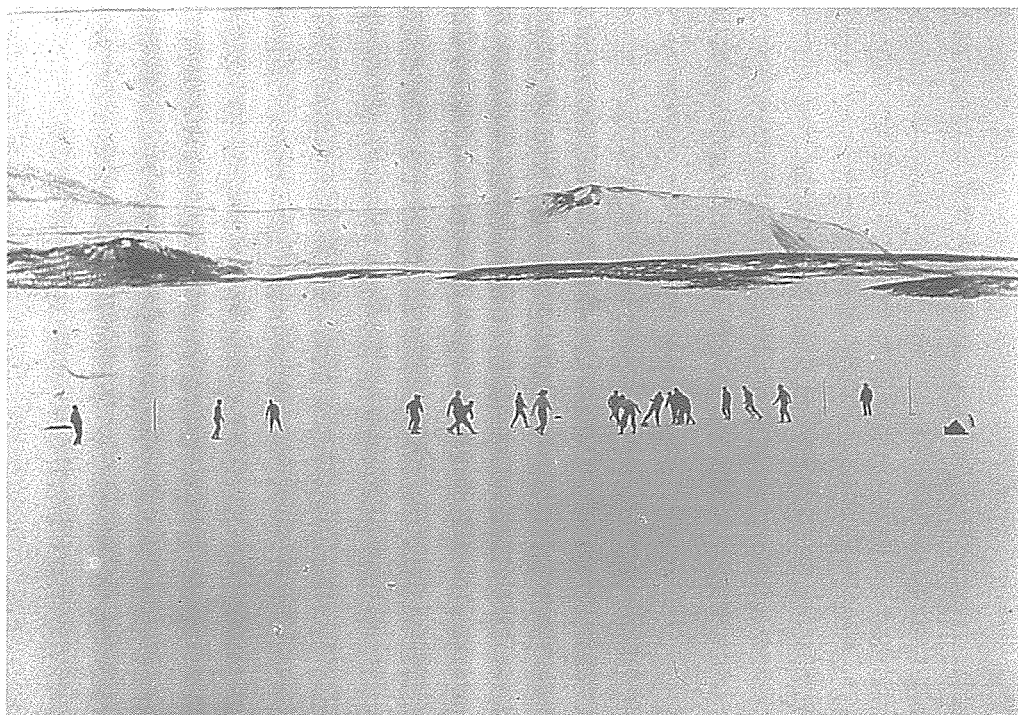
The rare once a week hot shower would follow and the team regather at the bar for the inevitable match analysis. Meanwhile the WOM would gather from

the ethos the sporting results from the real world for the real sporting enthusiast missing his local team back home all those thousands of miles away. The potential disputes would be ended by the dinner bell and a good night would follow as "Dave the Slave" cook supremo would have us all unable to move. Such was a typical Saturday at Signy -helped if there was ice in the cove! (Football would be exchanged for water skiing in summer or poor sea-ice years)

This was all to be good practice for the unexpected "Big Match" that took place in December 1980 when the sea-ice remained at Signy through to December. The first ship in was the Branny which had to break through the fast-ice from way beyond the South Orkneys to carry out the much needed relief. After the cargo work done across the ice, we

challenged the crew of the Branny for a game. We had the advantage of being used to our ice pitch but they had the skills and age on their side. I cannot recall who won but I remember one hell of a game! After the match we gathered for a group photo, as seen here.

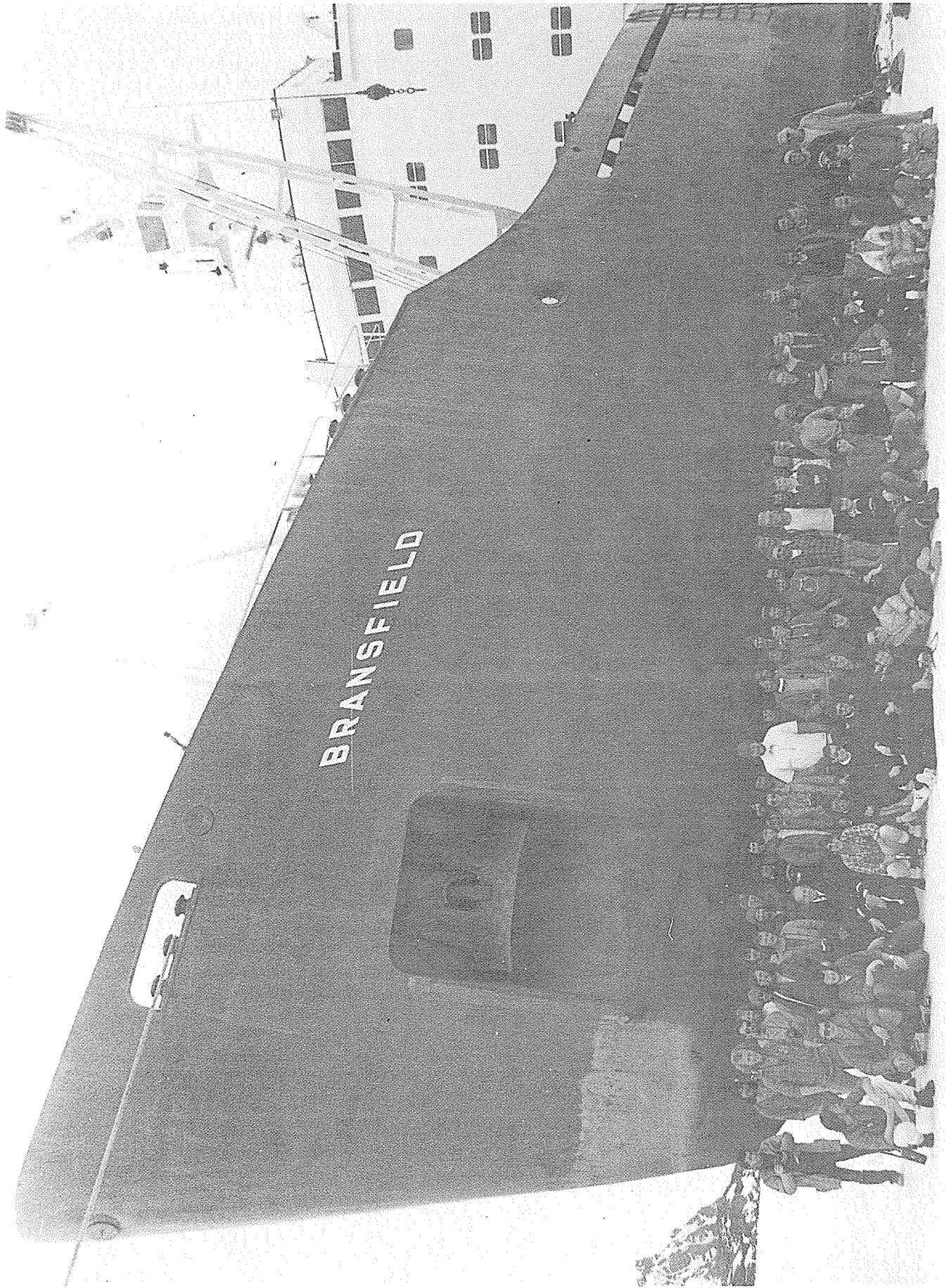
We hope this account prompts others to send in their personal experiences now to add to this start point in the feature on "Antarctic Sports". What about you South Georgia footballers with all your international fixtures against ships of all types and nations. How about an account of the Rothera Marathon. You at those early bases must have some sporting stories for us to hear? The Feature Column awaits more "sporting tales".



National Antarctic Expedition (Scott) "Football match – Winter Harbour 1903". Credit: SPRI.



Transantarctic Expedition
(Shackleton)
"Football match –
Endurance Dec 1914".
Credit SPRI.



Signy – Bransfield and Fids 1980 – “Team” photograph after the “match”

ANTARCTIC POEMS

(Continued from earlier Newsletters)

MARGUERITE BAY CONJECTURE

A blinding circle of light,
In black, blue sky,
Above numbing distance.
To feel the warmth from it,
Somehow passing to one,
Through silent, frozen air
The unbidden thought that perhaps it was an error,
To surrender the worship of the Sun,
A practice utmost as any offered by Earth?
What dark pessimism of a conventional faith,
Can match the sundown of a Polar year,
And Hope, grace beauty of much Christianity,
Is paled by the glory of an Antarctic dawn.

Repress dramatic posturings,
Is the dog sledge traveller to query
The spiritual basis of the western world?
The Sun scientific loses its mystery
And theories rational explain the cycles of the ice.
But on the journey, inwardly and outwardly
discerned,
Are things not commonly available.
The ice is alien and to man indifferent,
A chilling reality suppressed by fictions
In the peopled world.
The Sun alone offers.

Stan Woolley

THOSE WHO GO BEFORE

The Sun shines bright on this white, lone land,
The snow surface good, and life is grand!
The dogs run well and the sledge moves fast, -
"But just how long can this good weather last?"

The wind begins to hiss with drift
The sledge bogs often and is hard to shift.
Eyes strain and ache in this whiteout light,-
"Oh God I'll be glad when we camp tonight!"

But, I must be dreaming!-that's years ago,
When we made new tracks in the untreated snow.
When we were young and fit-and so were our
teams,-
Way back there in the land of dreams.

But now again to me it appears-
I'm back on the track as in bygone years;-
And every day we hurry the pace
To bring us nearer home to base.

Each night in the tent in the lonely snow
I think of the miles we've still to go,-
But I think I'll find friends ahead of me,-
With the primus going! -and a pot of tea!

Ken Pawson

Dedicated to all my old sledging comrades of long
ago,- but especially to those who are ahead on the
track, hopefully with the primus going!-Dan, Brian
and Ralph
(Dan Jardine, Brian Jefford, Ralph Lenton)

THE HALLEY FABLE

Once upon a time there was a scientist who wanted to do some research in Antarctica. 'You can't do that by yourself', they told him, 'What you want is somewhere to stay'. So they sent some builders down with him to make him somewhere to live and they sent some plumbers down with him so he could have a drink and a wash and they sent some electricians with him so that he could turn a light on and watch videos. Then they said, 'What you want is some way of getting around', so they gave him some sno-cats and skidoos, and sent some mechanics down with him so that they could mend these vehicles when they broke down. They also sent down with him a cook for when people got hungry and a doctor for when somebody got ill and a dentist for when somebody got toothache. Soon they realised that there was not enough room for all these people so they sent some designers down to design and build other places to live and a garage so they could bring in bigger and better machinery for all the extra people and more mechanics to look after them. Everybody was so busy thinking about their own plans and schemes that they didn't really notice the scientist doing his work.

Then one day it was decided that there were really too many people on base and somebody had to go. So they called a meeting to decide who it should be. 'We can't go home' said the builders, 'else who will build and maintain where we live?'. 'And we can't leave either,' said the plumbers, 'What will you do when all the water runs out?'. 'Nor can we,' cried the electricians, 'Who else will mend the generator when it breaks down?'. 'And we must stay', said the mechanics, 'otherwise who will look after all the vehicles?'. 'We can't go' called the cooks, 'or who will make food for everybody when they are hungry?'. 'And I'm essential', said the doctor, 'for who else will make the people better when they get ill?'. 'Me too,' cried the dentist, 'If I go what will happen if somebody gets toothache?'.

In the end after much discussion they decided that the scientist should be the one to go home, since he was the only person on base who wasn't indispensable. He was the only one amongst them whom none of the others relied upon, so it made sense that he should

be the one to leave. That day when the scientist finished work they told him and he went back home on the ship. After that everybody was very happy and got on with doing their own specialised work. The builders built, the plumbers plumbed, the electricians wired, the mechanics mended, the doctors and dentists healed and in a short time they forgot the scientist had ever been there.....

Anonymous !

BOOK REVIEW: ANTARCTIC HOUSEWIFE by Nan Brown

This engaging book tells the story of Nan Brown's two and a half years as a young housewife - one of only three women - on the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia near the Falklands. Her husband, a former radio officer in the Merchant Navy, had been given the job of running the island's radio station, and they set out with great interest (and no little trepidation) for a life which they knew was going to be both exciting and rough. What they were not prepared for was the comradeship of the men on the island, and the extraordinary characters who lived and visited there. South Georgia was an important whaling station, and during the short season the little centre of Grytviken became a hive of activity, with whaling men unloading their kills and then eating, drinking, swapping tales and planning the next voyage. Nan Brown herself went to sea on a whaling boat, and she gives an excellent description of the hunt, the kill and the homeward voyage. She has much to say about the home life she created in these most hostile of surroundings. She also tells of her trips across the island, how she learned to ski and to swim in one of the inland lakes, of accidents which happened to men on the station, and of the festivities and entertainments (and the resulting inebriation!) that occurred from time to time. She mentions meeting Prince Philip during his visit in 1957, following his Australian tour, and she tells of the visit of Hillary and Fuchs on their way to undertake their epic journey across Antarctica.

Nan Brown has a real descriptive talent, especially when writing about animals, and one of the most attractive aspects of her story is her account of the flora and fauna of the island. She tells some enchanting stories about the lives of penguins and albatrosses, and about the slightly more bizarre habits of the sea-elephant. While on the island she set up her own first-aid post (known as the Penguin Rehabilitation Centre), and one of her charges became a member of the family. But she also writes about the dramatic moments - of the cold,

snowstorms and heavy seas in a climate which may turn cruelly treacherous at any moment, and of the dangers of 'ice-calving' and avalanches. This is a most enjoyable and entertaining book, and one which tells an extraordinary story with great good humour.

This reprint of *Antarctic Housewife* is a memorial to an adventurous and courageous woman who made a decision not to become, as she saw it, a burden on her family. Her ashes have been interred at Grytviken.

CLUB SALES

NOTICE: Due to the retirement of Bernard Moran's wife from BAS HQ it has become extremely difficult for Bernard to organise book sales. Alternative arrangements are being made for the sale of the existing stocks (see following). At a meeting of the BAS Club committee it was agreed that, for the small amount of profit made, although it is a service to members, it will not be possible in future for the BAS Club to sell books directly. Blazer badges and ties will still be available through the Secretary.

1) MISCELLANEOUS

- a) **Ties.** Blue or maroon polyester with a single BAS crest of lion and penguin on the blade. £5.50 post free.
- b) **Blazer badge** showing BAS crest of lion and penguin; gold embroidered with colouring. £25.00. Post free.

2) PRINTS

- a) **Keith Shackleton** signed print of Cape Renard (Lemaire Channel). Shows ice cliff and Antarctic petrels. £66.50 unframed. **Available from:** Palladian Publications Ltd, The Old Forge, Elstead, Surrey, GU8 6DD.
- b) **Bruce Pearson** prints (colour). A choice of five:
Wilson's petrels flying over kelp.

Minke whale; studies in ice.
Minke whale; breaching amongst ice.
Minke whales; underwater composition.
Chinstrap penguins porpoising.
£64.00 framed; £28.00 unframed.
Available from: Jane Neville Gallery, Elm House, Abbey Lane, Aslockton, Notts, NG13 9AE.

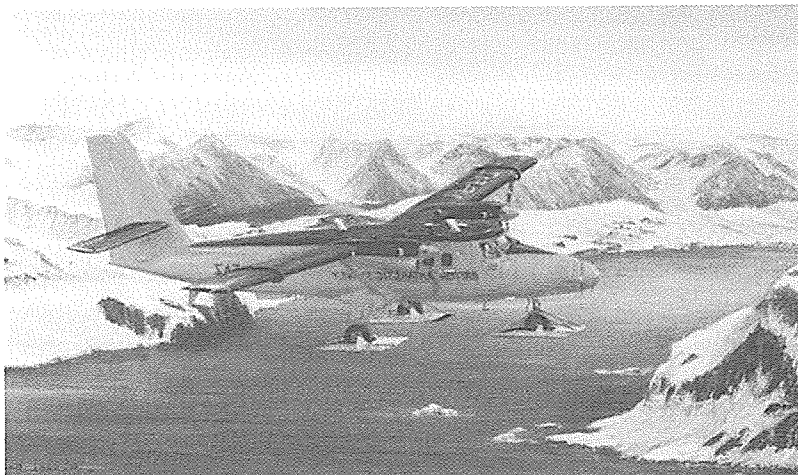
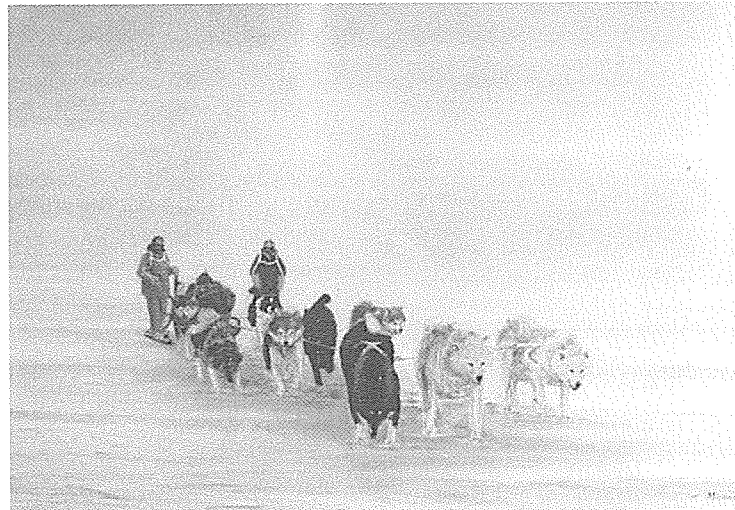
- c) Four **Michael Fielding** pen and ink prints of Antarctic scenery (black and white). £28.40 each. **Available from:** Mr H M Fielding, Hill Croft, Squashley Bank, Reston, ASHBOURNE, Derbyshire, DE6 2EH.
- d) **Mike Skidmore:** *Pointers*, Gallows Green, ALTON, Staffs, ST10 4BN. Tel: 01538 702773.
(please add £1.00 for P&P to the prices below)

Base F Faraday- Argentine Islands showing the classic view across Base F towards the Lemaire Channel. Copies of an oil painting to mark the 50th Anniversary Reunion of Base F held in Grimsby on board RRS *Bransfield*, 12 October 1996. Colour print, approx A3 size, £18.50.

RRS Bransfield: At the Edge of a Wilderness showing the ship unloading onto the Brunt Ice Shelf near Halley in the early 1970's. Colour print, approx A4 size, £12.50.

Mike Skidmore has had three more colour prints made. They are of the BAS Club-owned paintings hanging in the British Antarctic Survey HQ. All are approx A3 size and for sale at £18.50 each.

RRS John Biscoe - approaching Signy:
RRS *John Biscoe* nudges into bay ice off Signy



Twin Otter: in flight over the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Huskies and Sun Dogs: a team of huskies with parhelia

ITEMS FOR SALE FROM BAS INFORMATION SECTION

The following items (post free in the UK) are **available direct from the Information Section, BAS**. Cheques should be made payable to 'NERC'.

- a) Signy Concise Account. Ed David Rootes. 60 page booklet with black & white plates and maps, £3.00.
 - b) Information Booklets. Set of 8: Penguins, Whales and Seals, Antarctic Seas, Food and Clothing, The Antarctic Treaty, Operation Tabarin, Geology, British Exploration. £0.30 each. (£2.00 set).
 - c) Six Posters depicting wildlife, scenery, etc. £1.00 each.
 - d) A set of 21 postcards (set D) depicting bases, ships, aircraft, wildlife, etc. £3.50 per set.
-

4) BASE MAGAZINES TO GIVE AWAY

Want to indulge in a little nostalgia?

The BAS Archives has a few spare copies of the winter magazines produced on base to give away on a first come first served basis. Those available are:

Signy

- 1980 Amateur Pinhole
- 1990 Signy Winter Witterings

Halley

- 1963 Comet
- 1980 Comet (incomplete)
- 1981 Mid-winter mag
- 1983 Comet
- 1984 Comet
- 1985 Comet

If you'd like to claim one please contact Joanna Rae by telephone (01223 251530), Email (j.rae@bas.ac.uk) or letter (J Rae, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, CAMBRIDGE, CB3 0ET).

5) BOOKS

The following Antarctic books are now available from Ian Mathieson, Miles Apart, 5 Harraton House, EXNING, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7HF. Tel: 01638 577627, fax: 01638 5778754.

Miles Apart produces a twice yearly catalogue of new and second-hand books on the South Atlantic Islands including the Falklands and South Georgia. This will be sent free on request.

AUTHOR	TITLE	PRICE inc p&p
ALLAN	<i>The Penguins in the Snow (4 only)</i>	5.75
AMUNDSEN, R	<i>The South Pole</i> (reprint)	35.00
BACK	<i>The Quiet Land</i> - Debenham Diaries	27.00
BARKER, N	<i>Beyond Endurance</i> (1997)	20.50
BORCHIGREVNİK	<i>First on the Antarctic Continent</i> (reprint)	37.00
BROWN	<i>The Voyage of the Scotia</i> (reprint)	37.00
BROWN, Nan	<i>Antarctic Housewife</i> (1996, reprint)	12.50
CAMPBELL, D	<i>The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica</i> (1992)	26.67
CHARCOT, J B	<i>The Voyage of the Pourquoi-Pas?</i> (reprint)	37.00
COOK	<i>Through the First Antarctic Night</i> (reprint)	37.00
FOGG	<i>The Explorations of Antarctica</i>	12.00
FUCHS, V	<i>A Time to Speak</i> (1990)	15.00
FUCHS, V	<i>Of Ice and Men</i> (1995, reprint)	15.00
GORMAN, J	<i>Ocean Enough & time: Discovering the Waters around Antarctica</i>	10.00
HOLDGATE, M & BAKER, P	<i>The South Sandwich Islands: General Description: BAS Report No 91</i> (1979)	13.50
LAWS	<i>Antarctica: The Last Frontier</i>	10.00
MOIR, G	<i>South Georgia: The Island of Whales & Whaling</i> (1996)	3.50
MOTT, P	<i>Wings Over Ice</i> (1986, softback)	6.00
NORDENSKJOLD	<i>Antarctica</i> (reprint)	37.00
OSBORNE	<i>Antarctic Wildlife</i>	4.00
PONCET, Sally	<i>Antarctic Encounter: Destination South Georgia</i> (1995)	13.00
PRIESTLEY	<i>Antarctic Adventure</i> (reprint)	35.00
RYMILL	<i>Southern Lights</i> (reprint)	13.50
SAVOURS, Ann	<i>The Voyages of the Discovery: The Illustrated History of Scott's Ship</i> (1992, softback)	14.50
WALTON, K	<i>Two Years in Antarctica</i>	10.00
WALTON, K	<i>Portrait of Antarctica</i>	10.00

TERMS OF SALE: Prices include p&p and apply to anywhere in the world. Overseas packages will be sent surface mail (airmail subject to surcharge). **For orders to a UK postal address** we offer a 10% discount for any three or more items with a total value of over £50.00 and purchased at one time. Cheque with order please payable to I K Mathieson. Subject to availability.

