



Nearing the end of the Trans-Antarctic Journey: Sno-cats and sledges on the Skelton Glacier

TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION 1957-58.

Royal Commonwealth Essay Competition

Class 6

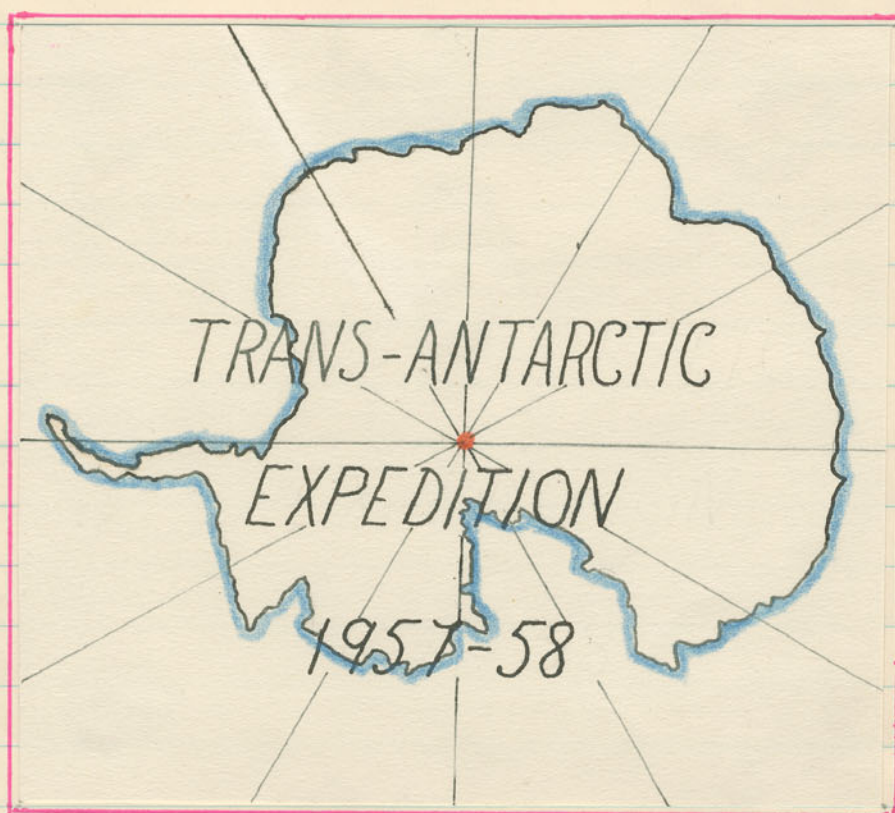
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The Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic
Expedition



Introduction

After a full two years of planning, building and collecting funds, Fuchs, as leader of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition set out from Shackleton Base with the intention of crossing the entire Antarctic continent. This, he and his team did in 99 days as you will later read. Hillary and his New Zealand party went of their own accord to help to prepare part of the way for Fuchs. They had nothing whatever

to do with the Trans-Antarctic Expedition. ?

The Equipment.

Both leaders in the Antarctic Expedition were entirely dependant on their equipment.



Fuchs

Smiths and Sons
were responsible
for many of
their necessaries
compasses,
sledge metres,
dial thermometers
magnetic
speedometers,

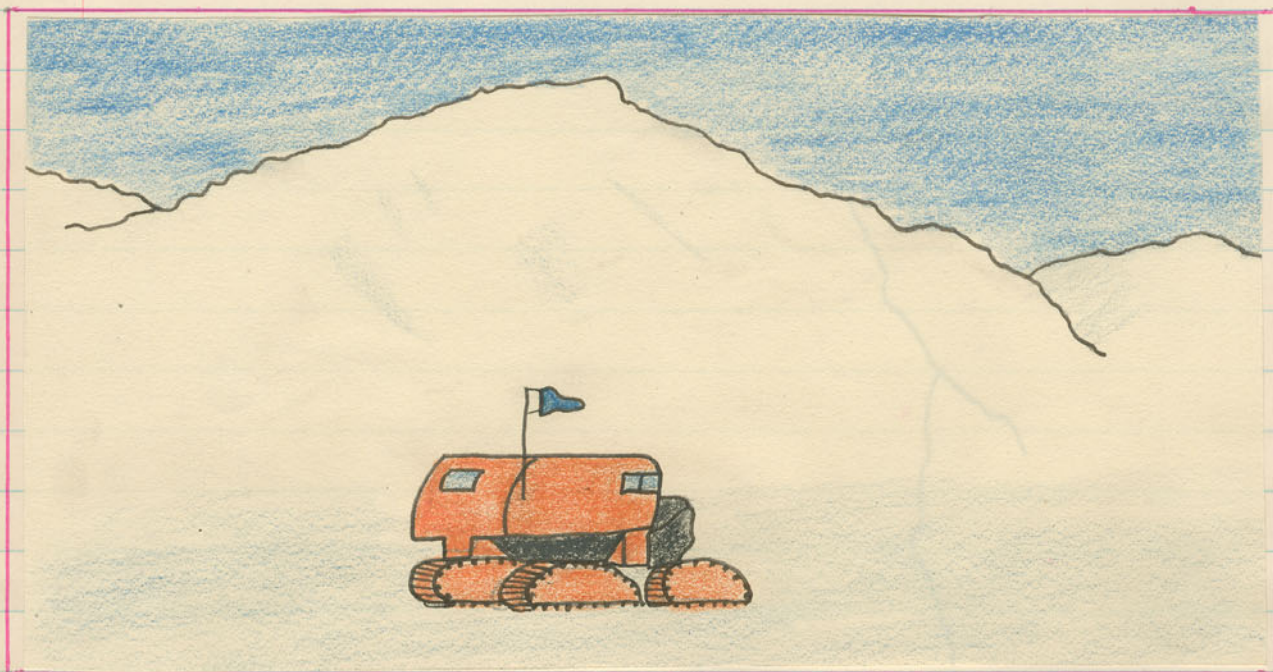


Hillary

water heaters, combustion vehicle heaters, K.L.G. spark plugs, hand tachometres, stop watches, marine timepieces and interval timers were some of the vital things that Smiths provided.

The main vehicles used were weasels and sno-cats but Sir Edmund Hillary also used farm tractors.

When Fuchs left South Ice he had four sno-cats, three weasels and one Huskeg. Two weasels and the Huskeg were later abandoned to save fuel. (Petrol was

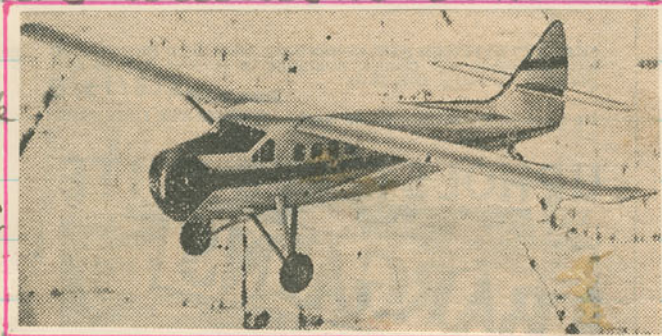


A Sno-cat

provided by the British Petroleum Company Ltd.)

Hillary depended on his farm tractors. Each tractor pulled a small convoy of sledges which were loaded with all their necessities.

The R.A.F. two simple aircraft, and "Auster" been used supplies



provided types of the "Otter" which have to drop at the depots.

An "Otter" aircraft as provided by the R.A.F.

Most of the planes operate with skis.



DO LAZING
sunny summer
wishful winter
ing to enjoy
ne days are at
A we say :—
y for a gay and
e whole thing
you'll go *where*
at, at the price

ays abroad, flying

Sir Edmund Hillary and members of his team photographed at Scott Base. The petroleum products for this Antarctic Expedition were provided by The British Petroleum Company.

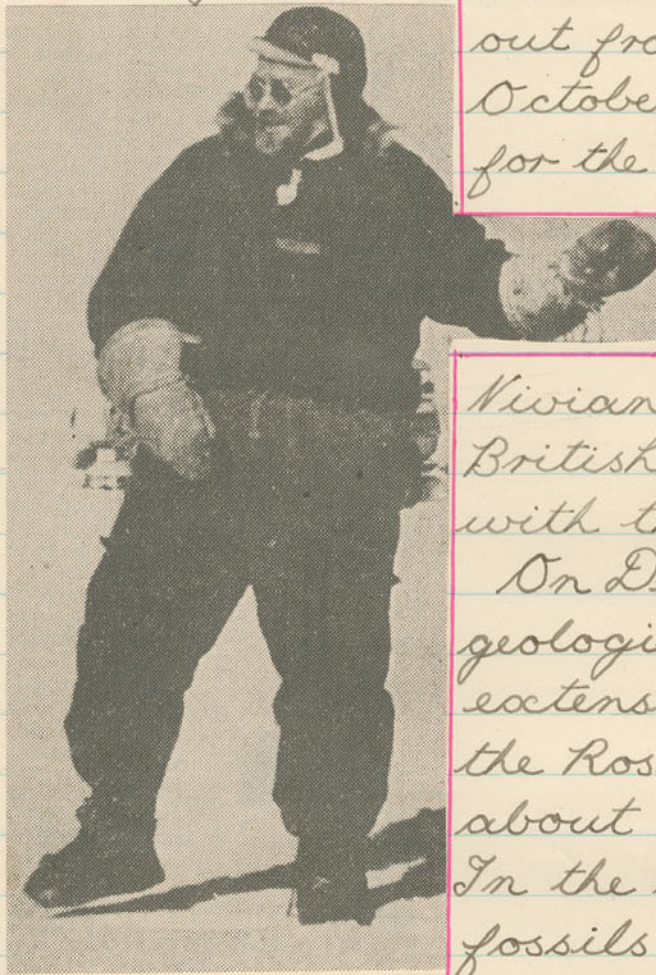


Sir Edmund Hillary and members of his team photo at Scott Base. The petroleum products for this Antarctic were provided by The British Petroleum Company.

Not original plan

Hillary — his journey.

Hillary.



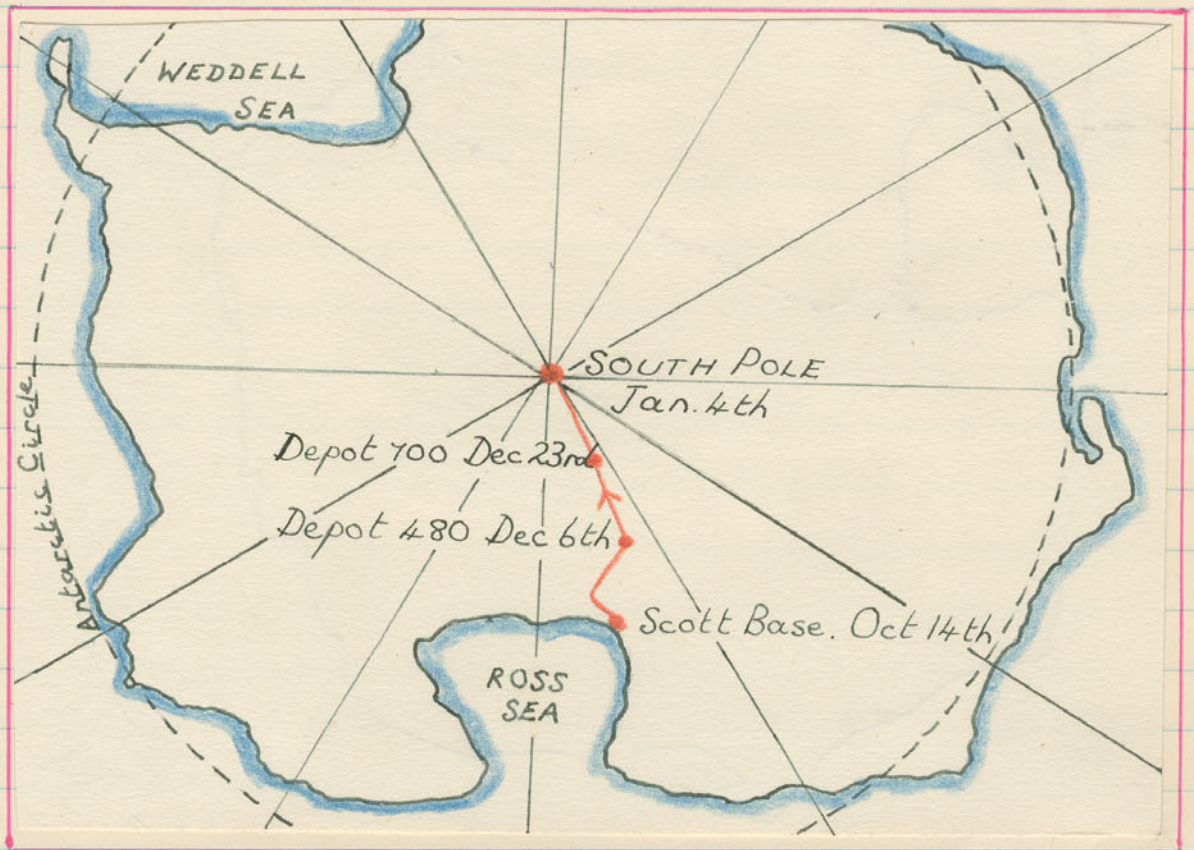
Sir Edmund Hillary set out from Scott Base on October 14th 1957 bound for the South Pole. Here, Hillary and his New Zealand team hoped to meet Dr. Vivian Fuchs and the British team and go back with them to Scott Base.

On December 12th geologists discovered an extensive coal field in the Ross Dependency of about 175,000 square miles. In the same area valuable fossils were found. By this time the New Zealanders were making good progress. Five hundred and eighty miles from the pole, the party had planted Depot Midway ready for the return crossing.

On December 26th Hillary sent this message to Scott Base:

"We are heading hellbent for the Pole."

In two days the party had travelled 100 miles and were now past Depot 700.



On December 29th Scott Base reported that Hillary and his men were only 200 miles from the pole but on the last lap of their journey the New Zealanders had had difficulties with a tractor. The party had climbed to an altitude of 10,900ft and the petrol was running low.

By Friday January 3rd Hillary was only 45 miles from the pole. But the party feared that the last lap would have to be

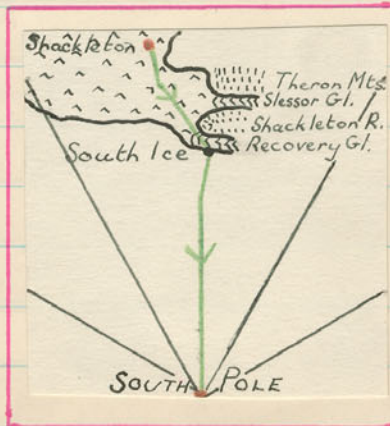
done by foot as they were down to four drums of petrol.

But on Saturday January 4th 1958 Hillary was at the Pole. He and his team had been sighted two miles away and the camp at the Pole prepared champagne and sausages and beans for lunch.

Fuchs - his journey

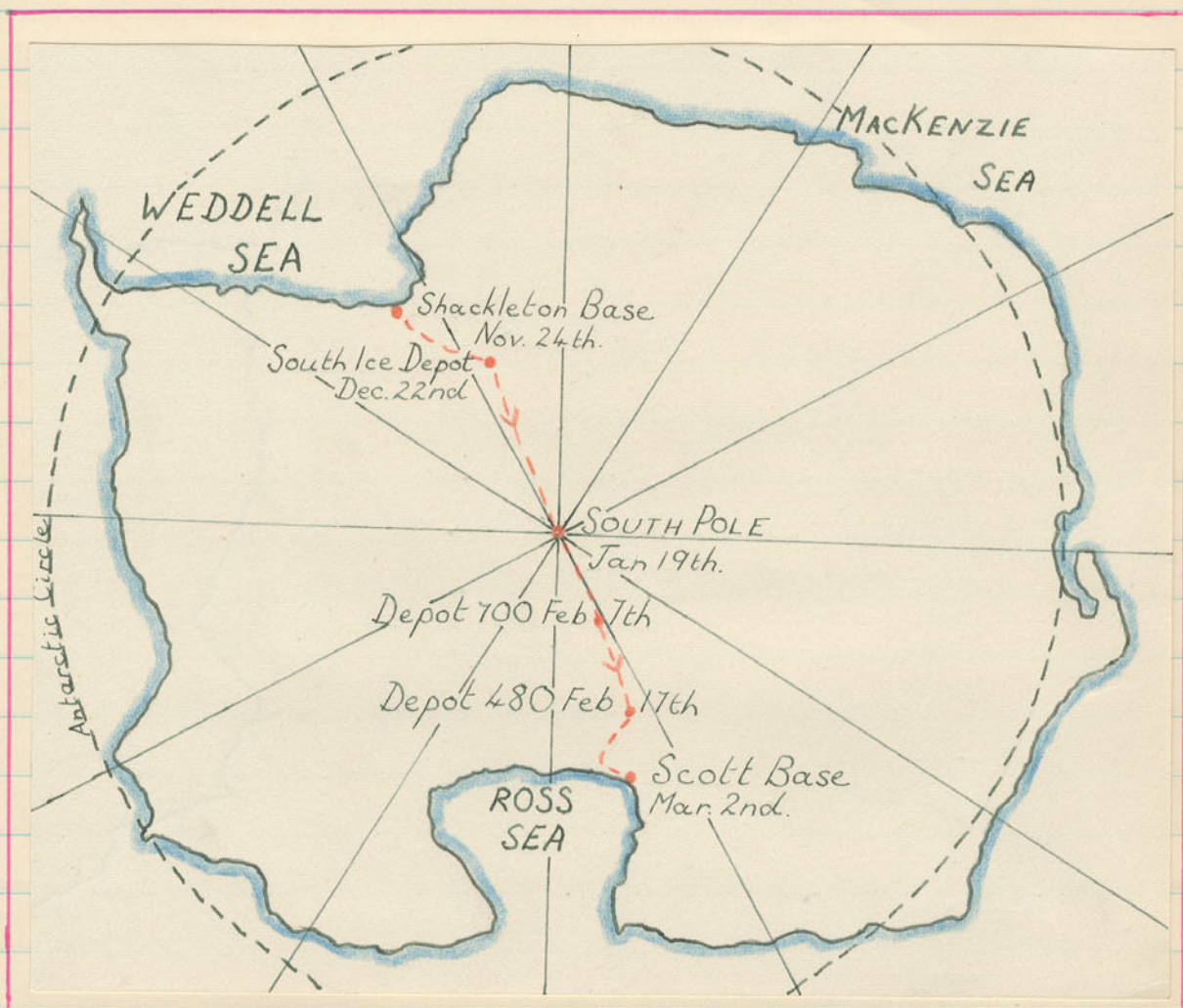
On November 24th Fuchs left Shackleton Base bound for the South Pole and then on to Scott Base with Hillary. "Bunny" Fuchs and the British team set out on perhaps the most difficult trek in the world after two years preparation.

Little was heard from Fuchs until December 16th when he radioed to say that he and his men were crossing the greatest glacier in the world, South Ice.



On Tuesday December 24th the British party had reached the Polar Plateau. They were travelling at night to gain the advantage of harder snow.

Fuchs and his team on January 2nd were 300 miles from the Pole when Hillary was only 45 miles from it. But the British team was gaining rapidly after making 64 miles in a

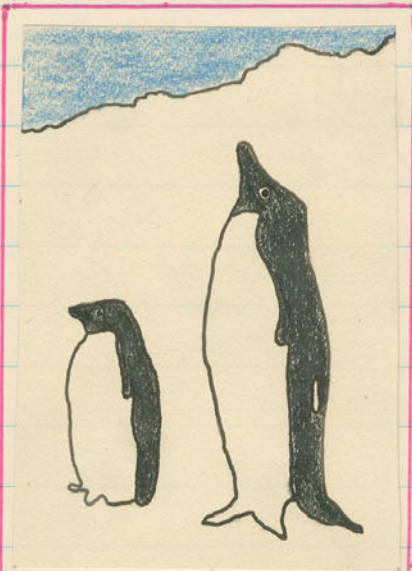


day and Fuchs was hoping to make about 50 a day.

On January 4th when Hillary had reached the South Pole Fuchs had hardly moved and was still about 300 miles

away.

But soon after this a row flared up. Hillary was uncertain whether it was wise for Fuchs to go on from the Pole to Scott Base. He suggested that the plan should be abandoned but Fuchs said it was out of the question.



The only animal life is near the coast.

But soon Fuchs really got moving and by Thursday January 12th he had only 100 miles to go. On Saturday 14th Sir Edmund was flown out to the Pole to await Fuchs.

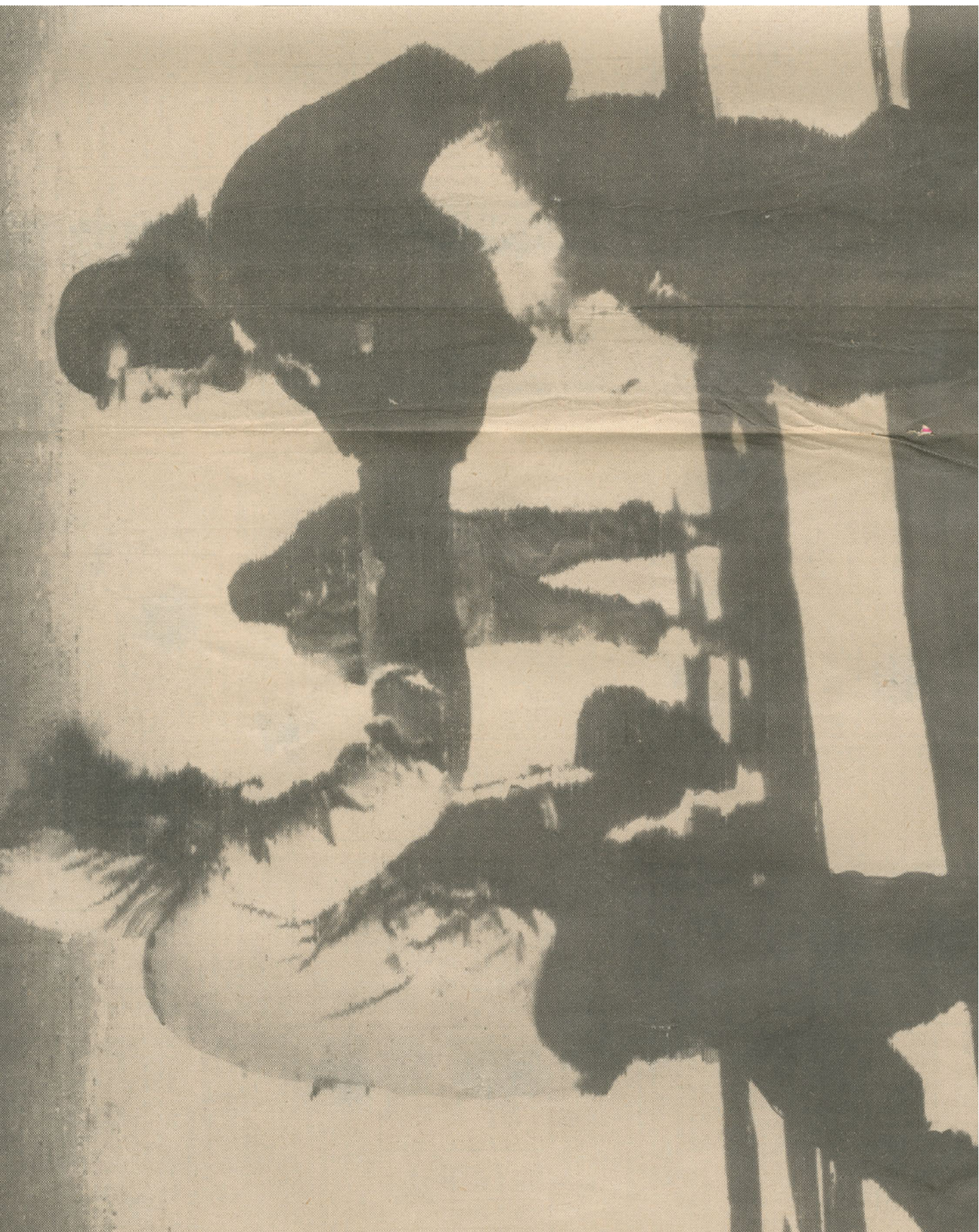
On Wednesday January 18th Fuchs and the British party arrived at the South Pole.

After five days rest at the Pole Fuchs and his party left for Scott Base. They reached Depot 700 on February 7th and left on February 10th with Hillary. After this, going was easy because Hillary knew the way. After calling at Depot 480 on February 17th and they eventually reached Scott Base on



Fuchs reaches the Pole. A swarm land shake with Hillary

100	Smith (S.) (England) (4/), 7/6	1640	Prudential A. 3840 28 11	13 112 134 1132 214	Selection (10), 670
101	Smith Stone (5/), 9/64 184	87 34	Royal (5/), 33/9 4/	100	Tanganyika, Concess.
102	Smith (W.) A. 7/712	14 9 2 3 2	Scott (London) A. 65, 10/	101	Tati (2), 812
103	cf., 192; 412% Pref., 13/32	pd., 34/6; Ord., 68/ 6/712	pd., 34/6; Ord., 68/ 6/712	102	Uruwira (5), 104
104	Smith's Stampings, 35/	Union, 88/9	Yorkshire (22), 10/ pd.,	103	Wankie 512% Deb., 881
105	S. African Drug. (5/),	10516 20 23/6/6	10516 20 23/6/6	104	Willoughby's (10), 15
106	Spencer (George) (5/), 7/3			105	
107	Spencer (Melksham) (10/),			106	
108	Spencer, Turner, 18/1012			107	
109	Spicers, 17/112			108	
110	Squiers 62% Pref., 19/2			109	
111	Splintex (1/), 12/4			110	
112	Spratt's Patent (5/), 7/112			111	
113	Squirrel Confectionery (2/6),			112	
114	5/1012; B (5/), 5/1012; 6%			113	
115	Pap. Pref., 14/0			114	
116	Standard Motor (5/), 7/			115	
117	6/1114 7/034 6/9; 512%			116	
118	Pref., 14/			117	
119	Staveloy Coal, 26/9 7/ 6/712			118	
120	Steeley, 64/9 13			119	
121	Stephens (5/), 4/6 192			120	
122	Stignol 8% Ptpg. Prfd. (10/),			121	
123	7/6			122	
124	Stewart and Ardern (2/),			123	
125	5/514 184			124	
126	Stoll Theatres (4/), 2/11 194			125	
127	1112 1012			126	
128	Stone (J. and F.) (5/), 17/90			127	
129	Strand Hotel 7% Ptpg.			128	
130	Prfd., 35/6 6/3			129	
131	Sturle (2/), 7/9; A (2/),			130	
132	xd., 7/6 184			131	
133	Suburban and Prov. Stores			132	
134	35% Pref., 7/00 112 142			133	
135	Sun Cycle (4/), 2/			134	
136	Sunday Pic. (5/), 10/712			135	
137	Sunderland (Joseph) (2/6),			136	
138	11012			137	
139	Sunlight Laundries (2/),			138	
140	2/412			139	
141	Sussex Brick 8% Pref., 16/712			140	
142	16 13			141	
143	Swan and Edgar, 29/112			142	
144	Symons (1/), 11/12			143	
145	Tarmac, 7/1 70/9			144	
146	Tarslag (2/), 3/112			145	
147	Tate and Lyle Invest. (5/),			146	
148	8/712 1634			147	
149	Tate and Lyle, 53/30 3/0			148	
150	2/9 3/ 2/712; 612% Pref.,			149	
151	21/604			150	
152	Taylor (C. F.) (5/), 9/712			151	
153	Taylor, Woodrow (5/), 15/6			152	
154	13			153	
155	Tecalemit (5/), xd., 6/412 16			154	
156	Technicolor (5/), 6/1012			155	
157	Telegraph Construction, 21/			156	
158	Telephone Mfg. (5/), 4/1114			157	
159	Tesco Stores New Prfd.			158	
160	(1/), 2/1140 1012 1112			159	
161	Thomas and Evans (10/),			160	
162	27/0 7/			161	
163	Thompson Bros. (5/), 6/1012			162	
164	Thompson (John) (5/), 23/90			163	
165	Tilling (Thomas), 46/712			164	
166	Titanium Jute, 6/30			165	
167	Titanic (2/), 5/3 124			166	
168	Tizer (5/), 9/712 1114			167	
169	Tobacco Securities, 45/90			168	
170	Tootal, 17/03 18			169	
171	Totalsators 20% Ptpg.			170	
172	Prfd. (1/), 1/0 1012			171	
173	Towles A (2/), 1/1114			172	
174	Transparent Paper (5/), 9/0			173	
175	Transport Development			174	
176	(5/), 7/712 19340 8/30			175	
177	11120			176	
178	Trust Houses, 22/9			177	
179	Tube Invest., 52/30 2/ 1/9			178	
180	2/3 1/6 2/34; 412% Pref.,			179	
181	14/112 13			180	
182	Tuck, 12/6; 512% Pref., 11/			181	
183	112			182	
184	Tunnel Portland B (10/),			183	
185	17/112 13 142			184	
186	Turner and Newall, 54/6			185	
187	Typhoo Tea (5/), 20/			186	
188	U.K. Optical (5/), 5/712			187	
189	Uganda Co. (10/), 16/60			188	
190	412			189	
191	Ultra Elect. A (5/), 5/1012			190	
192	Unilever Lim., 73/612			191	
193	4712 5/6 13 5; 5%			192	
194	Unilever, 16/612; 7% Pref.,			193	
195	22/84 1012 712 1642 3342			194	
196	16 110122 24122; 8% A			195	
197	1642 20% Prfd. (5/), 14/3			196	
198	13/10122 14; 4% Deb.,			197	
199	7512			198	
200	Unilever (N.V.) (112),			199	
201	77/60 13; 7% Pref. (112),			200	
202	32/712; 4% Pref. (112),			201	
203	19/6			202	
204	Union Internat. 6% Pref.,			203	
205	18/60 16 13; 7% Pref.,			204	
206	21/112 11			205	
207	Ud. Dairies, 49/92 19 50/412			206	
208	13; 6% Pref., 19/3			207	
209	Ud. Drapery (5/), 24/712 19			208	
210	184			209	
211	Ud. Gas Dfd. (1/), 3/0			210	
212	Ud. Glass Bottle, 27/6			211	
213	Ud. Lubricants (1/), 1/712 19			212	
214	19			213	
215	Ud. Molasses (10/), 26/90			214	
216	7120 19 16			215	
217	Ud. News (5/), 5/9			216	
218	Ud. Premier Oil (5/), 13/0			217	
219	1212			218	
220	Ud. Service Transport (5/),			219	
221	3/60 19			220	
222	Ud. Tobacco (10/), 13/6			221	
223	10/4120			222	
224	Val de Travers, 37/340			223	
225	Valor (5/), 15/00 16/30 161			224	
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March 2nd to a huge welcome. After 2,000 miles of ice and snow the little train of sno-cats arrived at the Base. Fuchs had crossed the continent of Antarctica in 99 days. They had collected a great deal of very useful information and had reached their goal. Awaiting him at Scott Base was the following message from the Queen:-

"On the completion of your hard and adventurous journey across Antarctica my husband and I send our warmest congratulations to you and to all members of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition. You have made a notable contribution to scientific knowledge and have succeeded in a great enterprise. Well done.

Elizabeth R."

Fuchs reaches Scott
Base. After 99 days
of snow and ice
a good meal in
the warm mess
hut.

