

## Post Expedition report. GSGSSI, 2025

### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHACKLETON , 2025

#### INTRODUCTION.

The group left Stanley, Falklands on the 12<sup>th</sup> October, headed to South Georgia, and arrived back in Stanley, 1<sup>st</sup> November.

#### ROUTE:

From King Haakon Bay we took the standard Shackleton Crossing. We deviated across the Trident range. We also missed Breakwind Ridge and went down the Turnback Glacier. Fortuna to Stromness was the normal route as found on the BAS map, sheets 12A and 12B

#### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

Yacht: Icebird with a full time crew of 3 males.

Expedition leader: David Hempleman-Adams

Group of 7 from King Haakon Bay to Fortuna Bay, group of 8 from Fortuna bay to Stromness.

Dates: 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.on land.

21<sup>st</sup> October 2025. The group was dropped off in King Haakon Bay, South Georgia, at 0830 onto the beach at the start of the traditional Shackleton Traverse. The weather was 0 Celsius, with a forecast of heavy rain that didn't materialise.

Two of the group completed the Shackleton Traverse 10 years ago. This time there was a noticeable change in snow conditions, with no snow covering for at least one kilometre from the beach. It took some time to carry the pulks to the snow without tearing the bases out of the bottoms. Shackleton Gap was also noticeably steeper with less depth of glacier ice than 10 years ago.

The traverse across the Murray Snowfield up to the Trident was no problem.

After reading Skip Novak's expedition report we knew our combined ropes would not be long enough for lowering sledges down the northern col of the Trident. When looking down this col, it was clear lowering sledges would have been necessary for the descent, so this route was a non-starter for us.

We checked the two other cols. All have radically less snow than 10 years ago, and are much steeper.

We retreated that night, 21<sup>st</sup> October, and camped lower down on flatter ground at S 54 08 .813, W 037 15 .41

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025. A night of strong katabatic winds through the night, but sunshine and a high cloud base in the morning with 5 knot winds. 0900 start

We retreated down and climbed back up to the south of point 692 and Sorlle peak, climbing up to the col at S 54 08 .644, W 037 04 .588. This needed a relay of ropes and pulleys for pulks and people. At the top we were able to traverse diagonally down south east and onto the Compass Glacier. Ten years ago there was no exposed glacial moraine, but with the lower ice levels these are now visible, and we camped near the moraine as a perfect wind break at S 54 08 .982, W 037 02 .695

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025. Sheltered from the winds, and a morning of -1 Celsius and high cloud base. A little sunshine. 0830 start

Two groups roped up on skis, across Compass Glacier, Crean Glacier, Nineteen Sixteen Snowfield and onto the Fortuna Glacier with no problems. All the snow bridges still intact. We saw the remnants of the military helicopter on Fortuna Glacier which we didn't see 10 years ago.

The col that we climbed 10 years ago on Breakwind Ridge looked impossible with the decrease in glacier volume. The top of the col looked devoid of snow and it looked like a 10m rock climb!

We took the Turnback Glacier option, down the south side, which was safely navigated down to the beach. The team was picked up from Anchorage Bay.

24<sup>th</sup> October 2025. 1 Celsius, cloudy with a forecast of rain. 10 knot winds. 0930 start.

The team was dropped off at Whistle Cove with day packs, carrying ropes and all emergency equipment.

A cold crossing of the Konig River, Crocs highly recommended. Crean Lake covered in snow. Down into the Shackleton Valley and picked up on the beach at Stromness at S 54 09 .355, W 036 42.473 .

## **Weather**

We had 3 days of rain, sleet and snow. Winds ranged from 5 knots to some Katabatics of 30 knots.

## **Equipment**

All gear worked well. We had Skis, snow shoes and crampons, fully equipped for the terrain and any weather conditions.

### **Safety & Comms**

We carried 2 Iridium sat phones, 2 Inreach trackers, 1 Yellow Brick, set hourly. 2 VHF for Guide comms.

We contacted the Yacht twice a day, and our base back in the UK.

### **Biosecurity Plan**

We had a biosecurity plan in place and adhered to it in full.

### **Conclusion.**

The expedition was a great success, partly because we had travelled the route before so could adapt to route changes. We were blessed with the weather and the conditions. The group were experienced in polar and mountain travel, so was pretty straightforward.

We were helped immensely by the **GSGSSI** personnel with the paper work for which we are all very grateful for their time and patience.