

# Brabant Island 16.4.84

The skidoo driven by John Spottiswood was pulling the Nansen sledge. John Beattie, Nick Evans and myself were being towed as we returned to Metchnikoff. The conditions were poor - visibility zilch when a thundering noise alerted us to the fact that we were crossing a crevasse field. The snow ahead of us gave way to the weight of the sledge.. pulling the skidoo towards the mouth of the 'crevasse monster'. Spotts leapt from it as the sledge disappeared from sight. JB's swift action prevented the sledge from slipping further into the abyss by isolating it with a dead-man.. having the effect of an anchor.

With trepidation, roped together, we moved to safer ground finding a suitable slope for protection. Tent-less without shovels we took it in turns to dig a snow cave, removing the outer crust of snow with a saw and the rest with our Billy cans... after several hours we had created a large enough space into which the four of us crawled ... cold, exhausted and relieved.



Travelling in poor visibility



Shelter for the night

Unsure of the next day's weather we restricted ourselves to a 1/3 rations... recounted the incident before drifting off to sleep. I woke to a lack oxygen, a little disconcerting, caused by a heavy snowfall as we slept which had blocked our narrow, ski pole thickness, air vent. JB did the honors by punching out a larger airway...it went down a treat! With little food we were forced to set off in white-out for Metchnikoff. Arriving safely eight hours later thanks only to the beautiful sound of 10,000 Chinstrap penguins.



An inquisitive Chinstrap



Recovering the sledge & skidoo a few days later