

Author: Moya MacDonald (Trainee Leader) Arctic Finnmark, Norway 2013

In mid-July, a British Exploring Society expedition arrived in Finnmark in Arctic Norway. Over 70 young explorers, trainee leaders and leaders journeyed to the Øksfjordjøkelen ice cap in Finnmark, Northern Norway. The expedition aimed to take just over 40 young people (16 – 20 years old) out into a challenging environment where they could experience living in a remote setting, participate in a variety of field science and to challenge themselves with adventure. Field science was executed in the clear waters of the fjord, the steep slopes of the glacial valleys

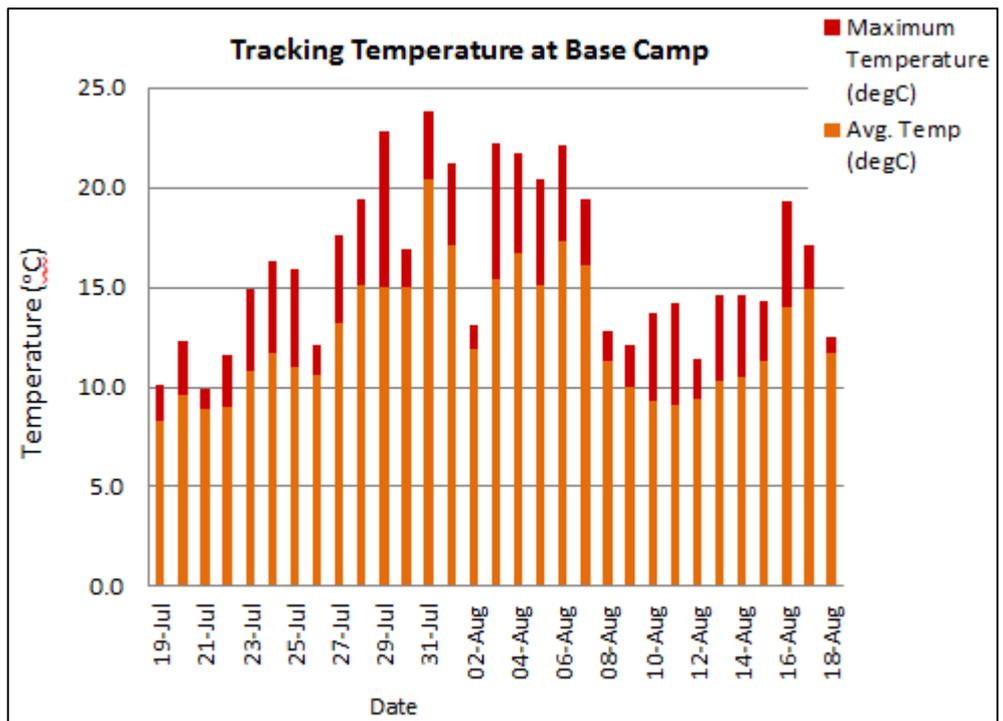


The Kestrel 4500 Weather Station was set up by trainee leaders on top of a nunatak (a mountain that sticks out the ice cap).

and on the Øksfjordjøkelen ice cap itself. One of the field science objectives was to monitor the weather throughout the expedition. This could not have been carried out without the generous help of the Royal Meteorological Society whom kindly loaned two Kestrel 4500 Weather Stations. One weather station was set up in the first week of the expedition by the Advanced Party which was made up of the trainee leaders and about half the leaders. This weather station was located on top of a lateral moraine that bounded the edge of base camp. It remained in that location for the entirety of the expedition, taking measurements every hour, recording parameters such as temperature, humidity and wind speed. This provided an interesting log of the variety of conditions experienced by the expedition members.

After an aborted attempt to reach the ice cap during the Advanced Party's first week, the trainee leader team and several leaders once again tackled the access glacier, reaching the ice cap at the beginning of the second week. A second Kestrel 4500 Weather Station was set up by some of the trainee leaders on top

of one of the nunataks (mountain peaks that stick up through the ice cap). The weather station survived a day of severe gusts but other than that it primarily basked in the sun with a maximum temperature of 19.7°C recorded on the 29th of July



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despite being at 1,100m.



Young Explorers collecting data from the Kestrel 4500 Weather Station at Base Camp during the 24 hour river sampling campaign.

The base camp weather station recorded similar warm weather, and experienced two periods, each five days long, where the 24hour average temperature remained over 15 °C and many maximum temperatures in the twenties. The downside of so much mild weather was heart-breakingly felt amongst the Young Explorers when due to so much melting, the access glacier became impassable as crevasses melted into view up the glacier's entire length. Field science then became restricted to the valleys, mountain ranges and the fjord, and again the weather stations proved their value during a 24hour river sampling campaign. Young explorers dutifully recorded the river that flowed past Base Camp on the hour every hour, and combined their data with readings they took from the Kestrel Weather Stations at the same time.