

Fig. 7. The abandoned Russian station at Teplitz Bay as seen from the wreck site (photo courtesy of Gordon Kilgore).

performance details of this aircraft and its role in polar aviation. An exploration on the ice dome of Rudolf Island itself might reveal the location of the 1930s airstrip, and perhaps other archaeological data. If the Teplits Bay wreckage *is* TB-3 No. 210, as this preliminary examination indicates, then it constitutes the archaeological remains of both the triumphs and tragedies of the daring Soviet aeronautical explorations of the North Pole in 1937–38.

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Improving communications at Port Lockroy

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ABSTRACT. New communications equipment has been installed at Port Lockroy with the aim of rendering more efficient the booking system for visits by cruise ships and other vessels.

Port Lockroy (64° 49'S, 63° 31'W), currently managed by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, is one of the most popular sites in the Antarctic Peninsula area. It receives, during the height of the Antarctic tourist season, as many as two or three visits from ships and yachts in the same day, which is in agreement with the Antarctic Treaty-approved visitor site guide that states a 'maximum of 3 ships per day (midnight to midnight)'. The operating season for Port Lockroy generally opens in mid November and closes in March. Until the development reported in this note, Port Lockroy had only rudimentary contact with the outside world via an hf radio link to the British Antarctic Survey station at Rothera, on Adelaide Island, towards the south of the Peninsula. The communications problem had become acute in recent years, especially with regard to the need to contact incoming cruise vessels, and the Trust conducted investigations concerning how it could be improved. These investigations culminated at the last meeting of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO), held on 24–27 April 2006 in Arlington, Virginia, USA with a proposal for the sponsorship of Port Lockroy by Global Marine Networks (GMN) of Maryville, Tennessee, USA and by Sky Eye Systems Ltd of Auckland, New Zealand. This

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was successfully arranged and a new lap top computer was purchased with an Iridium telephone and data connector. Upon the lap top were mounted Xgate mail server software which makes telephone data transmission extremely efficient and cost effective, and Sky Eye weather and ship tracking software that allows any vessel participating in the GMN vessel tracking programme to share its current position data with Port Lockroy from wherever the ship is on the planet. The power supply for this system is a simple solar installation (Fig. 1).

As soon as the cruise fleet became aware of the capability, the booking system was transformed into a more economical and streamlined regime and the system ensures that the communications problems of the past are over. It may confidently be expected that these systems might be valuable at other remote stations in the Antarctic and elsewhere.



Fig. 1. The equipment as installed at Port Lockroy, with the author. Photograph by David Timar.

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