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## People

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Penguins in the Antarctic

## Lee of the Antarctic

Emma Midgley

If you think it's cold in England, imagine trudging across snowy wastelands in temperatures as low as minus 35 degrees. Lee Farmer, Newbury mountaineer and adventurer will be spending Christmas in Antarctica after conquering Everest in 2008.

First he scaled Everest, now a Newbury adventurer is following in the footsteps of Scott and Shackleton by leading an expedition to the South Pole.

Experienced mountaineer Lee Farmer will lead a commercial expedition through a snowy wasteland this Christmas.

He will be washing in ice-water, enduring inhuman sub-zero temperatures and trying to make sure his group does not fall prey to snow-blindness or frostbite.



Early explorers at the South Pole

Even though it is 'summer' in the Antarctic, with temperatures at around minus 35 degrees, the trip is not to be undertaken lightly.

Lee said: "Where we will be going is 1,500 miles inland from the ocean, so we won't see any wildlife.

"The last time I went there I saw nothing but white snow for so long, it took my eyes a while to adjust when I got back to Tierra Del Fuego. I hadn't seen green for so long it took my eyes time to adjust to seeing colour again."

"In the Antarctic they have six months of summer which is 24 hours of day light, and then six months of winter, which means 24 hours of darkness.

"I've packed plenty of eye-patches so I can sleep."

"I looked today to see what the temperature is today and its minus 35. "I've got all the clothes and the equipment you'd wear on Everest to go to the Antarctic.



Explorer Lee Farmer

"The worst thing is you begin to sweat and lower your body temperature, you've got to keep dry and last time I was there four years ago, pulling those sledges, doing hard work on the mountains, I did sweat quite a lot."

Lee said that the amount of preparation and expertise which went into today's South Pole expeditions made them quite different from the heroic, but doomed exploration by legendary names such as Scott of the Antarctic and Ernest Shackleton.

He said: "What we call the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration from 1900 to 1922 has been likened to space exploration today.

"But anybody with enough money, sponsorship and a team could go.

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"A lot of these expeditions were ill informed and ill equipped. Even though Scott had been once before and Shackleton had been a couple of times before, their knowledge was lacking in what they need to take. It was making errors in the equipment they took that let them down."

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