Rothera Time line

1957/58

* Surveyed by John Rothera (Base Y, Horseshoe Island 1957/58; Base W, Detaille Island 1958/59) & Peter Gibbs or Len Maloney – left cairn note 30 Oct 1957

1960

* Rothera Point named after John Rothera by Antarctic Place-Names Committee

1973/74

* Decision made to find a new station site on southern Adelaide Island – deterioration of airstrip, cramped site, difficult ship access
* RRS Bransfield (Capt Tom Woodfield) visited Rothera Point to check site and anchorage Apr 1974, in preparation for opening a Base there
* Transit skiway established at Damoy Point (Dorian Bay, Wiencke Island) to enable stores and staff to be flown into Rothera when sea-ice prevented ship reaching the base early in the season (replaced skiway on Doumer Island)

1975/76

* Base R, ‘Rothera Point’, established 25 Oct 1975
* Party camped on Point to prepare a skiway on Wormald Ice Piedmont 5km inland
* Phase 1, small accommodation hut, erected Feb
* Water supply from snow blocks & melt water until desalination plant active 1977/78
* Hut erected at Damoy Point 6 Nov (operated periodically until 2006)
* Fossil Bluff ceased winter operations (last winter 1975) when Rothera became fully functional, completing transition to summer-only earth science field work. Continued as a forward air facility with skiway
* Science: flora & fauna benchmark survey, meteorology, local topographic survey

1976

* 4 wintered 1976

1976/77

* Base T, Adelaide Island, closed 1 Mar 1977.
* 33 on base over summer
* Phase 2 erected – main accommodation block, power house, tractor shed. Tractor train brought storage shed (Bingham House) from Base T, Adelaide Island.
* Twin Otters VP-FAP & FAQ operating from skiway. Test work on a hard gravel runway
* 42 dogs transferred from Base T when it closed (4 teams)
* 2 trip reports: Alexander Island, George VI Ice Shelf, Adelaide Island, Palmer Land.
* Science: geology, airborne glaciology & geophysics, floating ice/ocean interactions, terrestrial geophysics, joint BAS/US Doppler Satellite programme for survey/mapping

1977

* Base R re-named ‘Rothera’ 15 Aug 1977

1977/78

* 19 trip reports: Antarctic Peninsula, Alexander Island, Shackleton Range, Coats Land
* Ship unable to reach Rothera until 28 Feb – disrupted building work
* Science: additionally, biological monitoring on the Point

1978

* Sally & Jerome Poncet over-wintered at closed Base T (yacht Damien II) and manhauled to Rothera at midwinter

1978/79

* Phase 3 erected – scientific offices, travel store, coldroom (named Fuchs House 2001)
* Now centre for earth sciences programmes
* Science: Pensacola Mountains, Berkner Island, Rutford Ice Stream, aerial photography James Ross Island/east coast Alexander Island

1979/80

* Desalination plant installed
* Science: additionally, aeromagnetic survey of Peninsula
* 27 March RRS Bransfield ran aground in Rothera approaches, outer hull holed but seaworthy
* Automatic Picture Transmission system installed to aid aircraft flights
* Transglobe Expedition aircraft passed through

1980/81

* Science: additionally, radio echo sounding Bryan Coast and Pine Island Glacier

1981

* Fatality: John Anderson & Robert Atkinson 16 May RIP

1981/82

* Both aircraft badly damaged in freak storm 18 Nov – disrupted most field work
* 2 Chilean aircraft set up temporary air facility

1982/83

* Science: additionally, aerial photography for geology & penguin census, VLF observations

1983/84

* 3 Twin Otters operating from Rothera for 1st time. Twice a year dig out & raise the flight control caboose
* Satellite communications equipment operational by Apr (replacing teleprinter)
* Science: most ambitious earth science programme to date - joint BAS/US project of airborne & terrestrial geophysics/geology south of Ronne Ice Shelf, including BAS Twin Otter flights to South Pole

1985/86

* Phase 4 started (completed 1986/87) – extension to Phase 2 (named Bransfield House 2001)
* Science: additionally, ice core drilling, glacier fluctuation studies Rutford Ice Stream

1987

* 26 wintered

1987/88

* 4th Twin Otter in operation
* Sky-Hi snow runway established for deep field operations (ski-wheel aircraft and fuel depot) (operated until 1998)
* 1st time woman scientist undertook tent-based field work with BAS (Liz Morris, Rothera-George VI Ice Shelf)
* Science: skua colony monitoring began 1988, seismic reflection programme with W Germany, BAS/USA geology in Pensacola Mtns

1989/90

* Field hut erected on Lagoon Island 30 Nov
* 1st woman FGA working out of Rothera (Sue Redshaw)

1990/91

* Science: aerial photography and GPS for mapping

1991/92

* Gravel runway, bulk fuel tanks, aircraft hangar, wharf (named Biscoe Wharf) completed
* Storage hut (Miracle Span) erected

1992/93

* Science: in-depth terrestrial biology studies on Alexander Island

1993/94

* Science: marine survey Ryder Bay, dive sites identified
* Operational met forecasting began
* Last 2 dog teams (19 dogs) removed from Rothera in Feb (the last dogs in Antarctica), bringing to an end 50-yrs of FIDS/BAS huskies
* Science: VLF recordings 1993/94 & 1994/95

1994/95

* Dash-7 aircraft operational, allowing flights from S America
* Boatshed completed
* Fatality: Kenn Borek aircraft crashed on take-off 23 Nov 1994, killing all 3 aboard, RIP

1996/97

* Transit accommodation block erected (named Giants House 2001) and new generator shed
* Bonner Laboratory completed
* Sky-Blu blue ice runway established 24 Jan for deep-field operations (allowed wheeled aircraft to land)
* 2 field huts erected on Léonie Island in Dec (provided by Netherlands Antarctic Programme)
* Science: biological studies expanded when Signy Station became a summer-only operation, diving programme started, BAS/Dutch terrestrial biology study at Point & Léonie Island

1997

* 1st women winter at Rothera (3 out of 21)

1997/98

* Science: mesospheric rocket campaign

1999/2000

* New accommodation block started (completed 2000/01) (named Admirals House 2001)
* Air operations control tower added to Bransfield House

2001/02

* Bonner Laboratory destroyed by fire 29 Sep

2002/03

* Bonner Laboratory re-built, sewerage treatment plant installed
* Fatality: Kirsty Brown 22 Jul 2003 RIP

2007

* Nunatak, Rothera rock band (5 members), played the Live Earth Antarctica concert on 7 July 2007

2007/08

* New living block, with canteen, library, recreation facilities completed (New Bransfield House)

2012/13

* Dirck Gerritsz Laboratory opened 27 Jan – a collaboration between Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and BAS