

## Dynamic Snowball discovered in Svalbard

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The third period of fieldwork in the NERC-funded GAINS project (Glacial Activity in Neoproterozoic Svalbard) was carried out successfully this summer in three field camps amongst the highland glaciers of North East Spitsbergen.

In the first half of the season there was a gang of three ([Ian Fairchild \(/staff/profiles/gees/fairchild-ian.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/gees/fairchild-ian.aspx), PhD student Ed Fleming and incoming year 4 undergraduate Richard Windmill) and subsequently they were joined by Galen Halverson (University of Montreal), a veteran of previous fieldwork in the area. Galen had many exciting tales to tell of fieldwork in remote areas, but admitted that he had never had such good weather in Svalbard as in the second camp, and he had never had to be evacuated from a camp due to persistent bad weather, as was the case at the end of the field season.

However, despite the gales demolishing and uprooting the tents, the team's field objectives had been reached. The geological record clearly showed that the evidence of deep-frozen "Snowball Earth" 650 million years ago beautifully preserved in the area indicated that it was not a static world, but glaciers on land had repeatedly withdrawn and re-advanced. This will provide a new challenge for earth system modellers.



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