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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 9: Mooring recovery

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The ship arrived on station this morning and began preparations for recovering a mooring that was deployed last year. The water depth here is nearly 4 km and the mooring is designed to sample pretty much the entire water column. The mooring consists of a large anchor (made up of two old train wheels), an acoustically actuated release mechanism, several lengths of wire, floatation, and a full complement of instruments.

Since the ship is so well equipped to handle ice, it is used to break up the larger bits that are near the mooring site. This helps keep ice pieces from tangling the wire or damaging the instruments. Driving the ship through these pieces is like being in a bumper car as we crunch through.

The first step in a recovery is to get a very accurate (~ 1-2 meter) fix on the location of the mooring as it may have wondered during deployment last year. When it is released we want to make sure that it doesn't come up under the ship or a large piece of ice. While that is happening the deck is set up for recovery with the winch, block, spools and all the other hardware in place.

Happy Birthday to Seaman Llewellyn Oram!

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