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A bamboo story.

Over the past eighteen years Bamboo Australia has been supplying the Australian Antarctic Division with long poles used as markers at various Antarctic bases.

Our poles are harvested here, packed and sent to Hobart where they are loaded onto ships for forwarding to Casey, Mawson, Davis & Wilkins bases. A long way from Sub-tropical Belli Park.

When questioned on how the poles are utilised I have been informed on many occasions that an empty beer can was attached to a pole, which provides a radar reflection. Yeah! Pull the other one.

Finally after many years of requesting proof, images and a story have been kindly forwarded to me by the AAD newsletter and yes, the story is true, they even have a small team with a dedicated vehicle fitted up with drilling equipment to drill a hole into which a pole is inserted. Once inserted, water is poured into the hole where it freezes and locks the pole into position.

“Maintaining the cane lines connecting the station to field huts on the plateau is one such project which is undertaken every year. Bamboo canes, up to 6 metres long, are placed at 500-1000m intervals to mark safe travel routes. Navigation these days is mainly by GPS, making it possible to keep moving and stay on route even in poor visibility conditions. However, it is always reassuring to see a cane come into view to confirm that you are in fact heading in the right direction!” (extract from an AAD newsletter)

Attached images show the harvested poles ready for their long journey and where they finish up providing safety.

Durnford Dart

31-10-2023