

The Antarctic Times

The newsletter of The Friends of Antarctica



No. 38.

April 2014



Helen hoisting the Union flag on the 70th anniversary of Operation Tabarin at Base 'A'

70th anniversary of Operation Tabarin

11th February was the 70th anniversary of the building of Base 'A' and continuous occupation of the Antarctic Peninsula. It started with Operation Tabarin: in World War II the British Government was concerned about increased foreign activity in the Southern Ocean and as a result the Government established bases in Antarctica. Nine men were left to spend the first winter under the leadership of Lt. Cmdr. James Marr. Base 'A', as Port Lockroy was designated, would now be permanently manned (with the exception of three winters) becoming the first base to study geophysics until 1962 when this scientific work was moved and expanded to a more modern site.

For over thirty years the buildings at Port Lockroy lay unoccupied until 1996 when the British Antarctic Survey restored them to their original 1962 condition. The British Antarctic Survey continues that legacy of research and pioneering exploration with cutting edge science in the Antarctic to this day while the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) looks after the historic sites. Port Lockroy is now open to visitors during the Antarctic summer.

This year's team has consisted of Helen, Jane, Kristy and Sarah. Ruth and Andrew of AGB Films, supported by the yacht Pelagic, have been on Goudier Island for the season filming 'Penguin Post Office' for BBC Natural World. The documentary will show the breeding cycle of the gentoo penguins on the island against the backdrop of the museum and post office. We look forward to the release of the film on the BBC next December and on PBS (USA) soon after.

Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project - The stories of Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic endeavours continue to resonate worldwide. Remarkably, their expedition bases remain in Antarctica, full of the supplies and equipment they left behind, cared for by our sister trust, the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZAHT). UKAHT fund-raising has helped the NZAHT to conserve meticulously two iconic buildings (Ernest Shackleton's 1908 expedition base at Cape Royds, and Robert Falcon Scott's 1911 base at Cape Evans) and more than 16,000 artefacts.

Recently the UKAHT has donated £100,000 to the next stages of the Project which will allow the NZAHT to begin comprehensively to conserve Scott's 1902 Discovery hut at Hut Point and Carsten Borchgrevink's Cape Adare huts and their respective collections.

"We are delighted to be able to support this conservation work. It will make a real difference to the efforts to conserve Britain's Antarctic heroic-era legacy. We would also like to thank the Debenham family for the significant legacy that Barbara Debenham bequeathed to this work in honour of her father, Frank Debenham, a geologist on Scott's Last Expedition and Founder of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge," said Donald Lamont, Chairman, UKAHT.

In November, the NZAHT in conjunction with Antarctica New Zealand, hosted UKAHT Director, Rachel Morgan, in Antarctica, giving her first-hand experience of the conservation work undertaken by the NZAHT. See more on nzaht.org



Photo by Robyn Brunton

Nigel Watson and Rachel Morgan outside Scott's hut at Hut Point, built in 1901 and now undergoing major conservation.



Amanda Lynnes

Oral History Project update

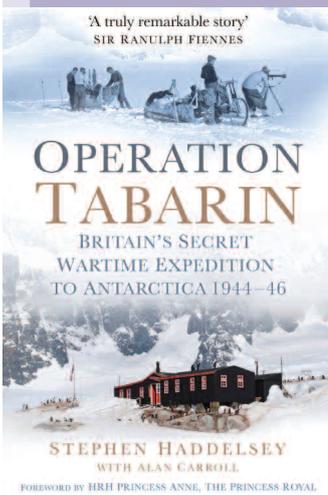
The British Antarctic Oral History Project (BAOHP) aims to capture reminiscences and preserve the memories of those involved in working in the Antarctic. To date 213 interviews have been recorded, 57% of which have been funded by UKAHT, the rest by BAS and BAS Club. To co-ordinate this we were lucky to have engaged the services of Amanda Lynnes who worked for BAS, at Port Lockroy, as a scientist, and in the media department. With the winding down of the interview phase of the project, Amanda has now moved on and taken a position as Operations and Communications Assistant with IAATO (International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators). A big thank you to Amanda and good wishes for her future career.

The next stage of the project is to catalogue and transcribe the interviews, which are maintained by BAS archives. To date only a third have been transcribed so we are appealing for volunteers to help with this task. Once transcribed, an interview becomes more accessible making it easier to search for particular topics on the database. It is a time consuming process - an hour of recording can take six or more hours to transcribe - but an interesting and rewarding one.

If you would like to join the project as a volunteer transcriber or find out more, please email andy@smitha.demon.co.uk or Lisa at the office.

Books:

There will be a multitude of books coming out in the next few years to coincide with the centenary of Shackleton's Endurance expedition. But here are a few recent publications worthy of mention:



Operation Tabarin: Britain's Secret Wartime Expedition to Antarctica, 1944-46. Stephen Haddelsey with Alan Carroll. The History Press, April 2014

Originally billed as a means by which to safeguard the Falkland Islands and to deny harbours in the sub-Antarctic territories to enemy raiders, the expedition sought to re-assert British sovereignty in the face of incursions by other nations.

Based upon contemporary sources, including official reports and the diaries and letters of the participants, Operation Tabarin tells for the first time the story of the British bases established in 1944.

heroic expeditions in which hunger was the one spice everyone carried. At the dawn of Antarctic cuisine, cooks improvised under inconceivable hardships, castaways ate seal blubber and penguin breasts while fantasizing about illustrious feasts and men seeking the South Pole stretched their rations to the breaking point. Jason Anthony offers a workaday look at the importance of food in Antarctic history and culture.

Antarctic Peninsula: A Visitor's Guide. The British Antarctic Survey. NHM, Sep 2012

Instigated by the Trust this book fills a gap in the Peninsula guidebook range focussing on the physical geography and geology and complementing any wildlife guide. It draws on the British Antarctic Survey's world-class scientific and cartographic work, focussing on the geography and physical features of the Peninsula landscape and surrounding seas. Available from ukaht.org/shop

The Storied Ice: Ice, Exploration, Discovery and Adventure in Antarctica's Peninsula Region. Joan N Boothe. Regent Press, Sept 2011

This book has brilliantly managed to balance scholarship with readability. While there are many books on various expeditions to the Antarctic, there are few that consolidate all of them into such a readable and concise history. This book accomplishes that and more, with extensive notes and references about not only initial discoveries, but also modern scientific exploration.

What ship?: Lieutenant Harry Pennell's Antarctic Legacy. David L Harrowfield, Jan 2013

This book commemorates the centenary of the death of Captain Scott and his party on return from the South Pole in 1912 along with the mysterious arrival during the night of the ship Terra Nova to Oamaru in 1913. There is full examination of the myths associated with the event.

Empire Antarctica: Ice, Silence & Emperor Penguins.

Gavin Francis. Vintage, Nov 2013

Empire Antarctica is the story of one man and his fascination with the world's loneliest continent, as well as the emperor penguins who weather the winter with him. "One of the best travel titles I have read in a long time. Thoughtful, lyrical, extremely well written, it's a triumph." (Giles Foden *Conde Nast Traveller*)

Hoosh: Roast Penguin, Scurvy Day, and Other Stories of Antarctic Cuisine (At Table). Jason C Anthony. University of Nebraska Press, Nov 2012

Antarctica is not famous for its cuisine. Yet it is famous for stories of

Event:

6/7/8 August 2014 - Devon and Cornwall Polar Society, Plymouth Shackleton 100 Endurance Expedition Centenary -

Starting with reception on Wed 6th and ending on Fri 8th at noon with a re-enactment of the departure with a Tall Ship from Millbay Wharf. Between those times music, films, discussions, and lectures, black tie dinner. For further details visit:

devonandcornwallpolarsociety.org.uk

Save the date:

1-4 May 2015 - The second SouthPole-sium will be held in Craobh Haven, Argyll, Scotland. Details on antarctic-circle.org. Registration from May of 2014.

Second time around

I was extraordinarily lucky to be chosen to spend the 2007/08 season at Port Lockroy. I was the first member of staff to work at Base 'A' since its designation as a Historic Site & Monument who had never previously travelled to Antarctica. The Trust took a risk, but it must have paid off as I was invited to return this season as Base Leader. I was very much looking forward to seeing the tremendous changes that had taken place in the intervening five summers.

During my previous season I loved living and sleeping in Bransfield House, despite the discomforts. The atmosphere and sense of history made the experience very special, and I remember nights curled up in my too-short bunk watching the shadows on the ceiling, listening to the snoring and trying to put myself in the shoes of those men who were stationed there for years at a time, with little physical contact from the outside world. Our stay was by contrast so brief and full of visitors! The irony was that these men were undoubtedly in many ways more comfortable and warm than we were with their Esse range, lounge and bunkroom stoves, fuelled by the ample supplies of coal. They probably didn't experience the terrific condensation soaking into their sleeping bags and mould growing under the bunks that we endured. We had a wet season too, with much rain in December and January. It was impossible to dry anything in the building and we had to watch penguin chicks shivering and drowning in their nests.

The condensation was not good for us, and certainly not good for the building either. But now, on my return, it is wonderful to see Bransfield House even more of a museum after the renovation of the bunkroom and the on-going restoration of the famous ladies on the walls (we had no idea they had been there next to us as we slept!). Living in the Nissen hut has been a revelation. The ceiling height and the light from the windows on three sides creates a superb airy living area with fabulous views, and the insulation and triple glazing mean that we don't often even need to put on the gas fire. The team here has agreed that we all want to build a Nissen hut when we get home! As we near the end of our season in this very special place, we (all the Port Lockroy team 2013/14) would like to express our thanks both to the Trust for enabling us to have the extraordinary experience of living and working in this unique historic site, and also to all our visitors who send a postcard home and give us a reason for being here.

Helen Annan, Port Lockroy Base Team Leader 2013/14



Helen Annan

UKAHT Trustee Meredith Hooper awarded Australian of the Year in the UK



Meredith receiving the award

very top of her profession and will be giving a paper at next month's Mawson Centenary celebrations in her hometown of Adelaide.

Award-winning writer, lecturer, historian and expert on Antarctica, Meredith Hooper, has added another accolade to her collection - Australian of the Year in the UK 2014 presented by the Australia Day Foundation for her passion and dedication to educating the world about Antarctica.

Meredith's first visit to Antarctica was in 1994 when her children's book 'A for Antarctica' prompted an invitation from the Australian Antarctic Division. She is still at the

Since then Meredith has made many journeys south as a writer and promoting the understanding of Antarctica and climate issues to audiences both young and old.

And our ex-Chairman Philippa gets a CBE

We are delighted that Philippa Foster Back, UKAHT Chairman from 2006 to 2013, has been appointed a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2014 New Year's Honours List for her services to Antarctic Heritage.

Philippa stepped up as Chairman of the Trust at a critical time and took the activities of the Trust to a new level. She oversaw the successful fund-raising campaign to secure the future of the Ross Sea Huts as well as steering the Trust in taking on the management of Port Lockroy and other Antarctic Peninsula sites. Her passion and commitment together with the success of Port Lockroy means the Trust now sits as one of the world premier Antarctic heritage organisations. Philippa continues as chairman of the UK Antarctic Place-Names Committee.



Philippa

Letter from the Director



Rachel

Every time it comes to putting together the newsletter, my first thought is, will I have enough to cover two sides of A4? And then I quickly realise we have far TOO much material. And this one is no exception. Conveniently positioned between the Scott and Shackleton Centenaries, last year we enjoyed the 20th anniversary of the Trust and this year the 70th anniversary of Operation Tabarin which built Base 'A' at Port Lockroy and laid the foundations for one of the most important and enduring government sponsored programmes of scientific research in the polar regions.

It has been a busy season for us back in the UK too. We have moved into a bigger office and welcome another new member of staff: Sarah Jackman. Sarah will assist Anna Malaos and Lisa Avis who manage the Antarctic and UK operations respectively.

Our website, facebook and twitter pages receive more and more hits and we are particularly pleased that UKAHT was chosen by the Google Cultural Institute as an exemplar for other museums, archives, and galleries to profile their work.

See: <http://antarctic-heritage-trust.culturalspot.org/home>

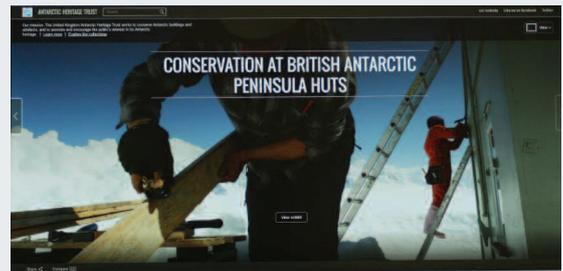
And some good news out of bad. Back in 2010 Wordie House suffered damage at the hands of some yachtsmen as well as the theft of our very special sunshine recorder. In a precedent for Antarctic legislation, TAAF (the French equivalent of the Government of the British Antarctic Territory) has made a successful prosecution leading to a fine of Euro 10,000. The fine is actually for unauthorised excursion to Antarctica and therefore breach of the Environmental Protocol rather than the damage. But it was the damage that prompted the pursuance of the perpetrators on the yacht which is not allowed to apply to return to the Antarctic until 2016.

This season was particularly rewarding for me personally as I visited the Ross Sea as the guest of our sister trust in New Zealand. It was marvellous to see the fruits of all the fund-raising over the last few years and I was hugely impressed with the no compromise approach and integrity of the conservation work carried out at Cape Royds and Cape Evans. My thanks to NZAHT Director Nigel Watson for showing me the results of he and his team's dedication.

But this is my last letter for the Antarctic Times, I will be stepping down as Director soon. For the past fourteen years I have loved working for the Trust and growing it from its infancy to the position it is in today. It was rewarding to visit Port Lockroy recently and to have been part of its growth over the years from when I first visited in February 2005 to scope the feasibility of taking on the operation and conservation work on the Peninsula. And this year culminates in getting Port Lockroy and the work of the UKAHT onto worldwide television and inspiring future generations through the BBC.

I would like to thank you, Friends of Antarctica for your continued support of the Trust and being such a big part of my life. While I am leaving UKAHT, Antarctica remains close to my heart and will continue to be so.

Rachel Morgan, March 2014



Google Cultural Institute Credit: Google



Photo by Duncan Lawrie

Anne-Rachael Harwood showing the special cabinet paid for by the UKAHT. These less glamorous items are hard to raise funds for but the Trust is able to help out



Photo by Duncan Lawrie

Edward Wilson's nephew David, proudly showing the new branding for Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum: The Wilson.

Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum is one of the institutions in the UK with a significant Antarctic heritage collection, namely that of Dr Edward Wilson who accompanied Scott on both his expeditions to the Antarctic and died on his return from the Pole in March 1912. Over the last few years the museum has been closed pending a major overhaul as part of a multi-million pound project. All the more exciting is the rebranding of the museum now called 'The Wilson'. Recently it had a special opening of the Paper Store - an 'open' store enabling public browsing of the archives along with remarkable new access to the Wilson material, including his watercolours. The Trust is delighted to have been able to make a substantial contribution. You can read more about Cheltenham in Antarctica in the eponymous book about the life of Edward Wilson by David Wilson.

Friends of Antarctica:

With your continued support the Trust is able to maintain its conservation plan and engagement with the public. A great way to help the Trust increase its membership is through its existing members, so please tell your friends, family and colleagues about the Trust which offers a number of levels of support. Find out more on www.ukaht.org



GET IN TOUCH! www.ukaht.org

We want to bring you details of the Trust's work and news from around the Antarctic community and in-depth features on topics of particular Antarctic interest. We would love to hear your comments and suggestions for anything you would like to see or read about. Please contact lisa@ukaht.org with your thoughts.

NEW Address: UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET

