

After the World Monuments Fund listed Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds among the World's 100 Most Endangered Sites in 2004, some substantial donations were made to the hut's conservation by major American Foundations. The Getty Foundation made a grant of US\$250,000, and the American Express Foundation pledged US\$100,000. Together with further donations from individuals and other sources, these enabled work to start on the main preservation project during the 2004-05 work season in Antarctica.

The original plan had been for the team of carpenters and conservators and an archaeologist to concentrate on Shackleton's Hut. However the bad storm which had occurred during the winter had led to a build-up of snow and ice in and around Scott's Hut at Cape Evans. So the team had to spend several days clearing this out and effecting emergency repairs to the stables there before proceeding to Cape Royds.

Once at Cape Royds they were able to complete much valuable work on roof repairs and preparation for re-roofing, as well as other structural repairs on the hut, and also to

excavating, sorting and storing the numerous provisions, especially from the exterior of the hut. The clearance work brought to light several previously undiscovered items in the areas of the stables. These will be properly excavated next season. Essential work was completed for next season's conservation of the hut's fabric. In the Antarctic all work is subject to the vagaries of the weather, and this season was no exception. However it was all important progress towards the long



Cape Royds, photo Kevin Rigarsford

term goal of preserving this unique and iconic legacy from the heroic era of Scott and Shackleton.

The circulation in the UK of the Save the Huts leaflet recently has led to a steady flow of small contributions, now totalling over £2,000. Readers of Bergy Bits are invited to send in further suggestions for raising funds, or requests for further copies of the leaflet, to the Sub-Committee's Chairman, Martin Williams - Tel 01622 815403, e-mail mjwconsultantuk@tiscali.co.uk.

Ponting Negatives acquired by SPRI

Over 1,000 original glass-plate negatives taken by Herbert Ponting during Captain Scott's fateful expedition to the Antarctic from 1910-1912 are now housed at the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) in Cambridge. The Institute was awarded a grant of over half a million pounds from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to enable the purchase of the Herbert Ponting photo archive which comprises a unique collection of the original glass-plate negatives of these photographs. They came in the original wooden boxes that Ponting used to carry them back from the expedition. After cleaning and scanning they will be re-housed in conservation quality materials. SPRI won't be throwing out the boxes though!

Ponting's photographs



Scott in his Den taken by Herbert Ponting, winter 1911, © SPRI

of Antarctica remain among the most evocative images ever taken of the Southern continent. They capture not only the splendour of the Antarctic environment and the hardships of early exploration, but also the day-to-day life of the expedition and its members and the innovative scientific work that they undertook.

An exhibition of the glass plates and the spectacular images printed from them is planned for September to run until Easter 2006. Before then (from May to July) the Institute is running an exhibition: *The Antarctic Paintings of Edward Seago*; a rare opportunity to see this collection of Antarctic paintings, executed during the tour of the Royal Yacht *Britannia* to the Antarctic territories in 1956-57.

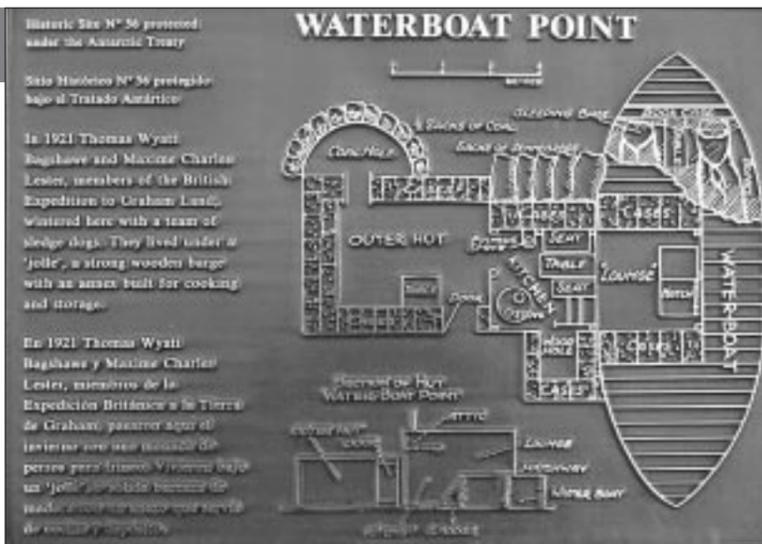
Bergy Bits

The Newsletter of the Friends of Antarctica

WATERBOAT POINT

One of the lesser known expeditions to Antarctica bridges the gap between the heroic age of exploration and the modern British era which is based on and around the Antarctic Peninsula.

John Lachlan Cope conceived the British Imperial Expedition to Graham Land as an ambitious continental exploration using aircraft but he failed to obtain sufficient finance. Nevertheless in 1920 he and three others reached the Antarctic with the help of the whaling fleet. They intended to sledge south from the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula to see if and how it was connected to the Continent but ice conditions prevented access. Instead they went to the South Shetland Islands where, from Deception Island, Captain Ole Andersen, master of the Norwegian floating factory *Svend Foyn I* took them south to Paradise Bay. They landed and established a camp on 12 January 1921, at the whalers' depot on Waterboat Point. From there local exploration was undertaken using a lifeboat. In February 1921 John Cope and Hubert Wilkins (later to make pioneering flights in the Antarctic) decided to return. With the navigational help of Maxime Charles Lester they rowed and sailed the lifeboat to Port Lockroy where Cope and Wilkins sought passage to Montevideo with the factory ship *Solstrief*. Lester returned by ship to rejoin Thomas Wyatt Bagshaw before the end of the season. They spent the 1921 winter in some discomfort with a team of sledge dogs. The main part of their hut was a 'jolle', a strong wooden barge used for transport of water to floating whaling factories. This had been left by the *Neko* some eight years earlier. An annex was built from packing cases for expedition



Bronze plaque to be erected at Waterboat Point © UKAHT

equipment and stores. The following year, on his return, Captain Anderson was so convinced that the two men had perished, he first sent one of his English officers ashore with a prayer book, prepared to read the burial service. But Bagshaw and Lester were alive and well. Moreover they had made many zoological observations and recorded a full year of meteorological, tidal, ice conditions.

Thomas Bagshaw wrote a book about the expedition 'Two Men in the Antarctic', which was published by Cambridge University Press in 1939. There is now little to see at this Historic Site listed under the Antarctic Treaty. The Trust has commissioned a bronze plaque to replace the now weathered wooden sign. Graffiti from the *Solstrief* in 1921 and the Wilkins team in 1921 can still be seen on Goudier Island.

Friends of Antarctica Event

After the success of our afternoon at the Scott Polar Research Institute we are holding another gathering of Friends of Antarctica. This time we are heading to the north of England to Whitby. The Captain Cook Memorial Museum and Whitby Museum have both very kindly agreed host events. The plan is for a buffet lunch at Whitby Museum and an early evening reception at the Memorial Museum. This leaves the morning and afternoon free for you

to explore the museums as you wish. Places for both the lunch and reception will be limited so please could you register your interest for you and guest with Rachel Morgan by the 11th May. Email ukaht@dircon.co.uk or telephone 01291 690305. When we know the cost of the lunch and reception we will contact those who registered for a final commitment.

We will be making a weekend of it – why don't you? It will be a great opportunity to meet fellow

enthusiasts. Whitby and the surrounding area is great not just for the connection with Captain Cook but for Arctic exploration, the North York Moors, whaling and fishing history, and Whitby Abbey among many other things. There is also the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum in Middlesbrough. Details of places to stay can be found through Whitby TIC on 01947 602674 or www.ycc.org.uk. See also www.captaincook.org

A reminder that.... For those of you who pay your annual subscription by cheque, subscriptions (£20) are now due. If you would prefer to pay by standing order, our Secretary will be very happy to send you a form. Please ring 01291 690305 or email ukaht@dircon.co.uk

THE UKAHT AND PORT LOCKROY

The current fund-raising focus of the Trust is twofold. Fund-raising for the New Zealand Save the Scott and Shackleton Huts appeal which is being run in the UK by Martin Williams and a UKAHT sub-committee – more details overleaf; and fund-raising by increasing the profitability of the shop at Port Lockroy. Our aim is to be able to provide direct support for heritage in the Antarctic as well as seed funding to other organisations (eg Scott Polar Research Institute, National Maritime Museum) that will provide leverage for them to raise money elsewhere. Friends will appreciate that these are not good times to be looking for endowment funding. Our Secretary, Rachel Morgan, visited tiny Goudier Island which is home to the Port Lockroy team during the Antarctic summer. Here is a brief summary of Port Lockroy's history and the part played by the UKAHT.

History

In 1944 two British bases were built in the South Shetland Islands and on a small island off the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula as part of the wartime *Operation Tabarin*: Base B, on Deception Island, and Base A at Port Lockroy. Since 1944, 30 bases or refuges were built around the Peninsula by what became, after *Operation Tabarin*, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS). In 1958 there were as many as 11 wintering bases in operation. But with land survey largely complete they had outlived their use and by the early



Kitchen at Port Lockroy, © UKAHT

1960s many had been abandoned. Under the terms of the 1991 Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty countries that had built, and then abandoned, Antarctic facilities were required either to designate them as Historic Sites or remove them. In 1994 a conservation survey was carried out by the newly formed United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust in conjunction with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), and as a result four bases were designated as historic sites – Port Lockroy, Wordie House on the Argentine Islands and further south, Horseshoe (with Blaiklock hut) and Stonington Island. As previously reported in *Bergy Bits*, all but one of the remaining abandoned bases have been removed by BAS or handed over to other operators.

The base today

Port Lockroy is the most well known of the historic bases because of its accessibility for the expedition and tour ships and its magnificent setting nestled between the peaks of Wiencke Island and Anvers Island. In 1996 it was restored and is now actively managed for the education and enjoyment of visitors. This fulfils a part of the remit of the Antarctic Heritage Trust in education and raising awareness of our Antarctic heritage (in this case recent). It is staffed during the summer and proceeds from the small gift shop and post office pay for its operation and upkeep. So what is there for the visitor to see at Port Lockroy? The boat shed is currently used for stores and on the main base the generator shed (generators not in use) is given over to the gift shop and post office. The other rooms on the base have been restored to provide a glimpse of life as it was in 1962 when the base was abandoned. The kitchen with its Esse stove (alas not working) and meltwater tank has shelves stacked with provisions from the 50s and 60s. Many of these have been rescued from the other abandoned bases. The ionospheric room is home to 'The Beastie' the Union Radio MKII ionosonde, retrieved and wonderfully restored by Alan Carroll (base leader 1955-6) and re-instated in 2002, as well as many other scientific instruments used for the upper atmospheric research which was the main scientific function of Port Lockroy. In the living room is a



working 1935 gramophone on which can be heard Benny Goodman, Gracie Fields, and Glenn Miller on contemporary 78s! Around the building there are many other artefacts of everyday life on base as well as sledging clothing and relics from the earlier whaling era. There are also posters and displays outlining the history of the base, present wildlife, and philately.

Rachel Morgan spent a week at Port Lockroy with this season's team of three: Pete, Sue and Matt. She travelled there aboard the cruise ship *Saga Rose* and left on the Quark ship *Orlova*. There was a stark contrast to living at Port Lockroy in comparison to the luxury of the cruise ship. Restoring the base to its 1962 state had not stretched to heating or electricity for light. It was hard to wrench oneself out of a nice warm sleeping bag when the room temperatures can be hovering around freezing. The day started with a cup of tea and perhaps porridge made on the gas stove. If no ship was due to call, there were the general tasks of daily living (digging snow or collecting brash ice to melt for water, emptying waste buckets, cleaning the hut, restocking the shop) or one of the many maintenance jobs (the roof and windows are re-painted annually). There was often some mail to be processed - everyone likes to send a postcard from Antarctica and this season well over 44,000 items of mail were hand franked. Mail posted at Port Lockroy goes by the next ship to Stanley in the Falkland Islands, and then travels by aircraft to the UK where it enters the UK postal system and is distributed around the world. If a cruise ship visit was imminent, the landing site must be inspected, the

hut swept through and the Tilley lamp lit in the radio room (which is otherwise too dark). The numbers of passengers on a ship ranged from around 20 to over 300. Site guidelines limit visitors to 50 on the island at any one time. The visitors get the chance to see how a research station looked in the period 1944-1962 and also to see gentoo penguins 'up close' since they nest all around the base. Interestingly, the penguins only moved on to Goudier Island in the 1970s - when the base was operational there was no penguin colony here – although then in the old days penguin eggs were part of the diet. This season, visitors numbered nearly 9,500. Visiting ships often invite the team on board for dinner if they are spending the

evening in the bay (and a shower is always more than welcome!). In circumstances where a ship cannot make a landing it is sometimes possible for the Port Lockroy team to go aboard with a mobile shop and post office and give a talk about Port Lockroy. See more on www.antarctica.ac.uk/Living_and_Working/Diaries/Port_Lockroy

The future

Rachel's visit to Antarctica was a scouting exercise to see how the Trust could both enhance the visitor experience at Port Lockroy by improving the museum aspect of the base, and further realise the potential of the gift shop and post office. Until now the restored base has been self funding. With increased revenue the

Trust would aim not only pay for Port Lockroy but have surplus funds for its other projects which include adding to the New Zealand appeal for the Heroic Age huts in the Ross Sea on the other side of Antarctica. It is the ship visits to Port Lockroy that make its operation possible. If anybody has ideas on how the UKAHT can improve the profitability of the Port Lockroy shop, please feel free to be in touch with the Secretary. She is on the lookout for great design ideas, particularly involving gentoo penguins...

Enormous thanks to IAATO, Saga and Quark for their generosity in enabling Rachel Morgan to visit Port Lockroy this season, and to BAS and the Port Lockroy team for making her feel so welcome.

News from South Georgia

One hundred years ago on November 16th Captain C.A. Larsen and sixty-five other men, mainly Norwegians, arrived at Grytviken to set up the first South Georgia whaling station. Larsen, who came from a whaling background, had noticed the potential of the island for whaling during two previous expeditions. He encouraged the formation of the company Argentina de Pesca, and was appointed Manager of the station which they quickly built using prefabricated buildings brought down on ships from Norway. Over the years the station grew to employ several hundred men in the busy summer season. Besides the factory buildings and oil tanks the station included a church, cinema, bakery and piggery. By the end of the 1964 whale stocks had been over-fished, large pelagic whaling fleets followed the remaining whales further south, and Grytviken stopped operating.

For the last forty years the station has succumbed to weather, age and vandalism. The Grytviken Remediation Project, now in its second summer, has removed the dangerous asbestos, furnace oil residues, and demolished unsafe buildings, and is making the station accessible to visitors who will be able to see the vast whaling machinery that was hidden inside the corrugated iron clad buildings.



In January the small Russian cruise ship *Grigory Mikheev* spent a day at Grytviken bringing the Norwegian group Oyas Venner, a society formed 'in the interests of preserving Norwegian industrial cultural heritage on South Georgia' to commemorate the centenary. With the removal of asbestos from Grytviken last year this area now offers only the normal hazards associated with a building site, and the group was able to have a special guided tour.

Afterwards there was a church service in English and Norwegian. The historian Kjell Tokstad gave an account of how 30-40,000 Norwegian whalers worked between 1904 and 1965 either in South Georgia itself or in connection with South Georgia, for example on the factory ships. The Oyas Venner group included two experts on wooden buildings, who had permits to look at some old buildings on the island to evaluate their condition with a view to possible restoration. These were the manager's house at Stromness, the manager's house and radio shed at Husvik, and the 'Nybrakka' or barracks at Grytviken. Their report and recommendations will then be considered by Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and the local Sandefjord Norwegian authorities, with a view to a Norwegian team visiting South Georgia next season to undertake some preservation works.

Dates for your diary...

- 30 April 7.30pm at the Royal Festival Hall, London. **Antarctic Symphony** by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and conducted by the composer. Tickets from box office 08703 800400 or www.rfh.org.uk/max
- 4 June at 7.30pm at the United Emmanuel Reformed Church, Trumpington Street, Cambridge. **The Songs of the Morning: a musical sketch** - a live concert of the famous songs and poetry from the *S.Y Morning*, the relief ship to Captain Scott's 1901-1904 *Discovery* expedition. Tickets £7.50 (including a glass of wine) in aid of the William Mills SPRI Library Acquisitions Appeal
- 1 October at 7.30 pm. **Tom Crean: Antarctic Explorer**, actor Aidan Dooley recreates the heroic tale of Tom Crean, who served with Scott and Shackleton on three of their most famous expeditions. Tickets price t.b.c. in aid of the William Mills SPRI Library Acquisitions Appeal
- **Other Snippets**
 - The Royal Hotel in Cardiff is reopening on 1st July. The Captain Scott Society plans to mark the occasion with a ceremony to replace the blue historical plaque which gave details of Scott's association with the hotel.
 - The Royal Scottish Geographical Society has instituted a new medal, the Scotia Medal (named for the vessel of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition), which will be presented at a dinner in April.