

Bergy Bits

The Newsletter of the Friends of Antarctica

ROSS SEA HUTS

Major Boost for the Campaign to Save

Scott's Hut

We are delighted to have been approached by a British charitable foundation which is passionate about preserving the legacy of Scott and his men. The foundation is very keen to encourage others to contribute to the campaign and in addition to making a major grant to the campaign, has offered to match every donation up to a maximum total additional grant of £1 million. So the challenge begins - the additional money is only available to us if we are successful. We are working hard to engage charitable foundations, companies, and individuals for both large and small donations.

UKAHT would like to thank the following for their support since the last edition of Bergy Bits: The Carpenters' Company, The WA Cadbury Trust, CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Grocers' Company and The Mercers' Company. We are also very grateful to all the individuals who have sent in personal donations and their very kind and encouraging letters of support for our work. If you would like to support the campaign please donate online at www.ukaht.org or by post to UKAHT, Kingcoed Farm, Usk, NP15 1DS.

A New Strong Tea for Heroes at Tesco 5p from every pack to support UKAHT

If you shop at Tesco, look out for a new product on the shelves from November; Captain Scott's Strong Blend, a strong refreshing tea of history and distinction. It is the original blend supplied to Scott's 1910 expedition. The packaging looks magnificent and for every box of tea purchased, Tesco will donate 5p towards the campaign to Save Scott's Hut; our match-funding arrangement means this will double to 10p per box. We hope that the boxes will fly off the shelves, making more people aware of this important project as well as helping us achieve our financial ambition.

Work on the huts

Throughout the latest Antarctic winter, four intrepid conservators have been working in the special laboratory at New Zealand's Scott Base on Ross Island on artefacts from Shackleton's Cape Royds hut. They included Fiona Cahill from Leeds, and Chris Calnan who has been working at the National Trust's Eastern region. They have kept up the blog for the Natural History Museum, with particularly interesting pieces on conserving a tin of matches, glass bottle protectors made of straw, and the special dinner to celebrate midwinter. They have now left Antarctica at the end of their shift, and a new team is in place for the summer. It includes another Briton, John Greenwood from Lincoln University.

While the main focus of work in the coming summer season will continue to be at Shackleton's hut, a start will also be made on the major works needed at Scott's Cape Evans hut, beginning with remedying the major snow and ice problem which has increasingly been threatening the hut.

World Monuments Fund Focus on Scott's Hut

In their latest watch list of the world's 100 most endangered sites, the New York-based World Monuments Fund has included Scott's Hut at Cape Evans, and the Explorers' Heritage of Antarctica, Ross Island. The list is re-issued every two years. The 2004 and 2006 lists both included Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds, but now that enough funds have been raised to carry out the necessary conservation work there, the focus has shifted to Scott's Hut at Cape Evans. The new list was launched in London on 17 June, with a special mention of Scott's hut. We are working with the London office of WMF on various fund-raising ideas for the hut.

£3,000 by skydiving for Antarctic Heritage

Friend of Antarctica, Margaret Garood, at the age of 81 has undertaken a skydive with the Red Devils. She jumped from 13,000 feet at Langar in Nottinghamshire, once the test site for the Lancaster. In tandem with Lee Reed of the Red Devils, Margaret was in free fall for 8,000 feet before her parachute opened at 5,000 feet. The Trust is thrilled and very grateful to Margaret for choosing the UKAHT as her sponsor charity and raising the great sum of £3,000. Margaret did not tell her family about the jump, surprising her children on her birthday by showing the DVD of her jump. I wish I could have seen their faces!

Photo to the right: Margaret after her jump with red devil partner Lee.



Port Lockroy

The new season is about to start. Rick Atkinson heads the team again. Helen Annan will be on her first foray to the Southern Continent as Post Mistress. Rachel Hazell will be chief penguin counter. Rachel has previously been South as artist in residence on the Kapitan Khlebnikov and HMS Endurance. We are very grateful again to Quark (www.discover-the-world.co.uk) and Hurtigruten (www.hurtigruten.co.uk) for their support. The

team will begin on a five year programme of work on Bransfield House which has been formulated in conjunction with Michael Morrison's heritage survey carried out the previous season. With financial assistance from the FCO and in partnership with the British Antarctica Survey (BAS) and the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO), we are sending in a film crew to make a short information film about port Lockroy. This should enhance the experience for those who visit providing useful historical and background information.

The British Antarctic Territory Launches its own Currency

To commemorate the Centenary of Granting of Letters Patent in 2008 the British Antarctic Territory (BAT) will issue its first ever legal tender commemorative coins in December 2007. The first coin will be struck shortly at a formal striking ceremony at Pobjoy Mint Ltd, attended by representatives of the



Government of the BAT, the British Antarctic Survey and the UKAHT. The coins will be issued in cupro-nickel and sterling silver versions in £2 denominations, retailing at £9.95 and £44.95 respectively.

Both coins will feature the BAT crest on the reverse and HM effigy on the obverse. The sterling silver version will come in a presentation case with a certificate of authenticity signed by the Administrator of the BAT. Although the coins will be legal tender within the Territory they will appeal mainly to collectors and Antarctic tourists.

The UK's claim to this part of Antarctica is the oldest of any made on the Continent. The BAT is administered in London as an Overseas Territory by staff in the Polar Regions Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and has its own legislative framework, together with both judicial and postal administrations. A BAT Currency Ordinance of 1990 makes provision for coinage for the Territory.

The BAT receives revenue mainly from income tax on overwintering scientists and stamp sales. It is intended that the additional revenue generated from coin sales will be used to help fund a range of special projects to underpin good governance of the Territory. The UKAHT strongly supports the issue of BAT coins and will stock them at Port Lockroy this season. But you can also purchase them, from January 2008, directly from the UKAHT at www.ukaht.org or by writing to the Trust.

Christmas cards for UKAHT

We have long wanted to produce a Christmas card to make available to Friends of Antarctica but for such a relatively small catchment the economics have never really stacked up. Now with companion sales possible at Port Lockroy we can produce a card. The card with gentoo penguins front and back are available in packs of ten for £3.75 inc. VAT and postage. Please send cheques in multiples of £3.75 for the number of packs you would like payable to ANTARCTIC HERITAGE LIMITED (our subsidiary trading company) or send or ring with your credit card details (including security no.) to UKAHT, Kingcoed Farm, Usk, NP15 1DS, 01291 690305. The cards can be ordered with or without a Christmas Greeting.



50th Anniversary of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition

This coming austral summer will be the 50th Anniversary of the first crossing of the Antarctic continent. This was the culmination of the dreams of many notable polar explorers; Filchner, Bruce, Shackleton, Gino Watkins, and the ideas of a group of people in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Sir Vivian Fuchs from the Weddell Sea side and Sir Edmund Hillary from the Ross Sea side, with a dedicated team of companions, from Britain, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Britain, successfully achieved that great journey.

During the crossing mountain ranges were discovered and meteorological records kept throughout. The expedition completed the first scientific traverse with seismic work that gave the first profile of the Antarctic Icecap. The journey itself was an engineering feat with four Sno-Cat tractors completing the 2150 mile crossing. This was not without drama with crevasses to negotiate and mechanical difficulties that were solved in the harshest of conditions. At either end of the journey, significant survey work was completed, topographical and geological. Subsequently this has been added to by the British Antarctic Survey and Antarctica New Zealand. Built for the expedition, Scott Base, has continued to provide the platform for New Zealand's notable Antarctic science programme over the last fifty years.

To celebrate this anniversary in a way that looks forward and involves the modern generation, the Fuchs Foundation is sending its first polar expedition of science and geography teachers to the Ellsworth Mountains in November and December 2007. In the scientific tradition of TAE the four teachers have worked up their own projects, with the help of the Foundation and its associates. From these they will prepare inspiring teaching materials for their own schools and for other teachers and students who will have access to them on the web. The Foundation has a partnership agreement with the Scott Polar Research Institute to produce web based secondary schools' materials. You can see more details on the Foundation's web site (www.fuchsfoundation.org).