

A Chronology of Antarctic Exploration from the earliest times until the International Polar Years 2007-9

This IPY is an appropriate time for Robert Headland to conclude a compilation of the comprehensive historical chronology of all Antarctic regions. It coincides closely with the 50th anniversaries of the establishment of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) in 1958, and the adoption of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. The work was prepared during 25 years at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, by the former archivist.

Related historical events include details of inventions and discoveries which have been important in Antarctic exploration (for instance: aircraft, photography, preservation of food, the Primus stove, and the cause of scurvy); political events, treaties and wars affecting the region; the foundation of scientific institutes and initiation of publications concerned with Antarctica; and similar subjects.

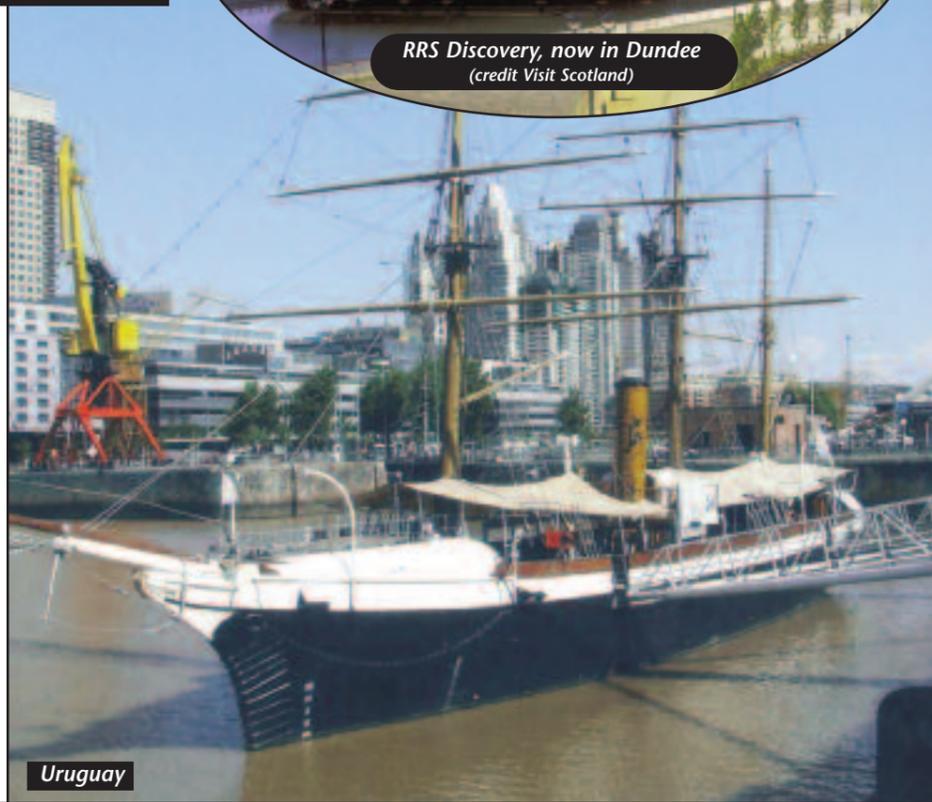
This book is an essential addition to any polar buff's library.

Published in January 2009 by Bernard Quaritch Ltd, Golden Square, London, W1. Hardbound 722 pages (including 40 plates, 27 maps, and 21 histograms, index of approx. 50,000 entries) Weighs 2.4 kg. ISBN 978-0-9550852-8-4. £110 (plus postage). Tel: 020 7734 2983, www.quaritch.com

The regions covered are the far southern parts of the Earth in general and Antarctica in particular. There are 4865 entries from 700 BC to 2008. The majority of these are for expeditions or voyages and give dates, nationalities, leaders (or captains, etc), vessels, places visited, a concise description, and, where appropriate, a reference. It also includes details of the peculiar, but fascinating, 19 'non-existent islands'.

How many expedition ships from the 'heroic age' remain?...

Recently, while visiting Buenos Aires, Mike Tarver (Vice President of the Captain Scott Society) came across a historic polar ship in the city docks. Open to the public and carefully restored was the old corvette *Uruguay*. This ship, under the command of Lt. Julian Irizar, was sent by the Argentine Government to the Antarctic Peninsula to search for the 1903 Swedish Expedition led by Nils Nordenskjöld. It was eventually discovered that Nordenskjöld's ship, *Antarctic* had sunk. Two other expedition ships from the 'heroic' age still remain: the *Discovery* at Dundee and the *Fram* at Oslo. These are the only two recorded in his book *SS Terra Nova*, so Mike was most surprised to come across the *Uruguay* as he had not seen any mention of the continued existence this Argentine polar ship. The ship is a museum and has many artefacts on display and well worth a visit.



RRS Discovery, now in Dundee
(credit Visit Scotland)

Uruguay

Legacies.... Please consider leaving a gift to support our work in your will. Your legacy could make a real difference by helping us to continue to protect British Antarctic Heritage both in Antarctica and the UK. If you would like more information on how to make a bequest please contact Rachel Morgan at the address below.

Bergy Bits

The Newsletter of the Friends of Antarctica

Port Lockroy season

As we go to press, the Port Lockroy team is on its way home after another busy season. Port Lockroy continues to be one of the most visited destinations in the Antarctic and the Trust is proud to strive to make this 'living museum' an informative and enjoyable experience. Having a fourth member of staff has improved the interpretation in the museum and we have plans to improve things further in future years. The Trust is particularly delighted to congratulate our trusty base leader, Rick Atkinson, on being awarded the Polar Medal for his long commitment to Antarctic Heritage.

Work continues every year to keep Bransfield House in good condition and this year the team installed a new window kindly donated by Jeld-wen. The Trust is also hoping to be able to do some work on other historic sites on the Peninsula to ensure they do not fall into disrepair. Out thanks to the many ships and crew who make it all possible. You know who you are... Read the Port Lockroy diaries at www.ukaht.org/portlockroydiaries.htm



Penguins at Port Lockroy by John Quenby

Adam and Gavin make a successful trip to the Pole...

The British South Pole Expedition - Gavin Booth and Adam Wilton have completed their journey from Hercules Inlet to the South Pole. They made the 1130km journey in just over 45 days starting with 120kg sledges. On a dispatch from the Pole Gavin said - "It is only just starting to sink in that we are actually here and we are over the moon. On reaching the South Pole we ... have become only the 12th/13th Britons in history ever to make it to the South Pole from the edge of Antarctica unsupported [no re-supplies or depots] and unassisted [man-hauling only with no kites etc]. Since the start of our planning, it has been a five year journey to get here and we look forward to reflecting on what we have done." Besides reaching the South Pole they are raising funds for Scott's hut. They already had funding for the expedition through the generosity of Propinvest. In addition the pair have raised £8,500 for Scott's hut. This will be doubled with our match funding offer to £17,000. Well done guys!



Adam and Gavin at the South Pole

News from the Ross Sea Huts

It has been another busy season in the Ross Sea. In the centenary year of Shackleton's Nimrod expedition, conservation of the 5000+ artefacts and structural work on the hut at Cape Royds are now complete after three years. The £500,000 legacy from Audrey Dance completes the funds needed for an ongoing maintenance fund.

The winter team is now ensconced ready to continue work on Scott's hut at Cape Evans. 1200 of the 8000+ artefacts have already been conserved. You can read more on www.nhm.ac.uk/antarctica-blog/.

Thanks to further donations from Friends of Antarctica and NZ\$600,000 from the New Zealand Lottery there is now less than £400,000 to raise for Scott's hut. Donations continue to be doubled by our match funding offer.



Jars from Cape Evans after treatment

The Scott Polar Research Institute has moved closer to its £1.75m dream of renovation following the announcement of an award of £994,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Institute is now well on the way to reaching its target to fund an extensive museum renovation project. As a result the museum will be closing for a year from 6th April for major refurbishment. Work will be underway to redesign the current galleries, which will provide additional exhibition space which means never-before-seen items can be displayed. One aim of the project is to double visitor numbers to the museum. Another aim includes building a new archive strong room and reserve stores to house all the collections in suitable environmental conditions. Curatorial space will also be expanded to create, for the first time, dedicated search space for the collections. The museum currently has over 8,000 objects in its care including artefacts, paintings and drawings, over 100,000 photographs and other material charting the history of polar exploration and science. The new Polar Museum will open in 2010, in time to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the departure of Scott's British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition. To be able to

complete the project, a Museum Appeal has been established to raise the match funding for the Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Please see <http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/transforming/> or contact the Director (director@spri.cam.ac.uk) for further details.

SPRI Museum may have its doors closed but you can see the photographs online. Work began in April 2007 on a project to capture and preserve the SPRI archive of historical images in digital form. The photographic negatives are a unique resource but also an extremely fragile one. The Institute has digitised over 20,000 photographic negatives from 1845-1960, representing some of the most important visual resources for research into British and international polar exploration. The Freeze Frame project, through a series of interpretative web pages will provide access to hidden collections for all educational levels. It will encourage users to discover polar environments through the eyes of those explorers and scientists who dared to go into the last great wildernesses on earth. 'Freeze Frame: historic polar images' – see www.freezeframe.ac.uk/

Ponting's photo of Edward Nelson at work in his laboratory cubicle in Scott's Hut during the 1910-1913 Terra Nova expedition to Antarctica.



As a postscript to our report about the restoration of Edward Nelson's sledge in Bergy Bits 27 we have report of his daughter heading for the Antarctic

The 93 year old daughter of Captain Scott's biologist on his 1910-1013 Terra Nova expedition set off on a personal pilgrimage to see Scott's Hut. "It's important to preserve these huts for posterity and as a tribute to brave people who risked their lives for the advancement of science and to honour their countries," said Barbara Johns shortly before her death in mid-February.

Her father, Edward Nelson, himself the son of an eminent microscopist and microscope-designer spent nearly three years on groundbreaking scientific work and corresponded under the pseudonyms 'Marie' and 'Bronte' [the Bronte connection comes from the fact that Admiral Nelson was created Duke of Bronte by Ferdinand I of Naples and used to sign himself "Nelson & Bronte". George Sever in Edward Wilson of the Antarctic notes that Wilson's diary entry for July 11, 1910 states that "Nelson is 'Marie Ducat' or 'Antonio the Immaculate' - he always wears a clean collar at dinner time." The nickname evidently followed him from Nimrod. Many of the men were given girl's names as nicknames, cf 'Jane' Atkinson, 'Penelope' Pennell].

Barbara and her son Andrew Hay joined a month-long trip aboard the *Spirit of Enderby* out of Bluff, New Zealand's southernmost port. Her poignant quest was to be the fulfilment of a lifetime ambition to pay homage to a relative whose service to his country took a heavy toll on him and his family.



Barbara Johns at home in Spain.

Edward Nelson was also one of the search party that in November 1912 found the frozen bodies of Scott and two companions who had all died in their tent on their way back from reaching the pole. The dead included Edward Wilson, the expedition's Chief Scientist, who had recruited and mentored Nelson after meeting him at Cambridge. It was a bitter blow to the younger man.

Edward survived the ice of Antarctica only to go through hellfire as he fought with the Royal Naval Division, the RN's light infantry, during the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey and then in the trenches of France. He died tragically in 1923 when he was only 39 and Barbara was seven.

"The Antarctic and the war affected his health," said Barbara, who was brought up on stories of the polar expedition and proudly showed a picture of Edward at work in his laboratory cubicle in Scott's Hut at Cape Evans on Ross Island.

"I want to see the lab if it is still there," Barbara said before leaving. It will be a very emotional experience. I was shown the photos from as young as I can remember. It's the biggest trip of my life, a personal pilgrimage. It's probably the swansong." Sadly, her words were prophetic. She died peacefully after falling and hitting her head when the ship encountered a storm near Macquarie island where she had gone ashore to see the wildlife. She never reached Scott's Hut, but father would surely have applauded her pluck. We salute both their memories and courage.

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What's on...

Friday 24 April 2009, 7pm, Reception and lecture for the launch of the Shackleton Epic Expedition at **Dulwich College** on the anniversary day that Ernest Shackleton and five companions embarked on the now legendary voyage of the tiny *James Caird*, crossing 800 miles from Elephant Island to South Georgia. The expedition leader, Tim Jarvis, sees next year's re-enactment as a tribute to Shackleton. Tickets £25 www.thomsen-events.com or 07706 612 042

6 June 2009, Devon and Cornwall Polar Society dinner on HMS Scott, **Plymouth**. Get in touch with Paul Davies on paul@daviesdev.freeserve.co.uk

Wednesday 21 October 2009, Isobel Williams will talk on Dr Edward Wilson. Graduate Medical Centre, Derriford, **Plymouth** 7.30pm. Get in touch with Paul Davies on paul@daviesdev.freeserve.co.uk

Exhibitions

7 March - 25 May, Face to Face: Polar Portraits Exhibition at Discovery Point, **Dundee**

30 March - 24 May, The Art of Exploration - an exhibition of prints of Sir Wally Herbert's paintings at the National Geographic Store, **Regent Street**, London. Admission free.

30 May - 30 August, Art of Exploration Wally Herbert's prints move to Discovery Point, **Dundee**, Scotland