



SUPPORTING POLAR
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends

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POLAR BYTES

ISSUE 077 / AUTUMN 2015

Loyal readers since 1996



Photo © Andy Rouse

Secrets behind a Frame

Contributed by Ian Purkis

Friend of SPRI, Ian Purkis had many reasons to travel to Antarctica last year! As a young boy he had been fascinated by the famous picture of Oates leaving the tent which hung on the wall in his grandmother's house.



Many years later he secured the picture, by now gathering dust in his uncle's loft. One day when showing it to a friend, two letters fell out of the back, one dated

1918. With utter astonishment he realized that the two letters were from Tom Crean to his grandfather Captain RH Dodds. It transpired Crean and his grandfather were former friends having met in Ireland.

Ian's other grandfather had rounded Cape Horn at the age of 17 whilst sailing the Lady Doris in 1906. He lost his life at sea when Ian's father was a young child.

However, he was told that his grandfather had visited South Georgia. It seems as though down through the decades "the little white voices of Antarctica had been calling".

Yet, his links with Antarctica deepened further! For the last 30 years he was Technical Director for JELD-WEN UK Ltd and its predecessors Boulton & Paul who manufactured the huts used by Capt Scott. The UKAHT (Antarctic Heritage Trust) went on to form a close restoration relationship with JELD-WEN Ltd under the man so taken with all things polar! (See article right).



Left: Tom Crean. Above: The historic letters are now in safe-keeping with the Purkis family and copies have been donated to the Institute.

Keeping out the Cold!

The UKAHT requested JELD-WEN's support in providing new timber windows to match the originals for "Bransfield House", the main hut at Port



© Photo courtesy of Jeld-Wen

Lockroy, one of the first permanent bases in Antarctica. The timber windows were chosen as the ideal replacement over 60 years after the company supplied the original timber huts. JELD-WEN also supplied triple glazed casement windows for the Nissen hut.

"The originals really do show how good quality timber stands the test of time, even against the most adverse climatic conditions - often 40 degrees below freezing and nearly seven decades old."

Ian Purkis

Thank you to JELD-WEN the UK's largest manufacturer of quality timber doors, windows and stairs, for their generous support www.jeld-wen.co.uk



JELD-WEN



Welcome to our Autumn Polar Bytes newsletter

In the last issue, I reflected that Endurance had been icebound for about ten weeks; by this edition and another twelve weeks on she was still in the ice but by now badly damaged. Shackleton's leadership and the ship's company's team spirit were working wonders but I wonder how many suspected that they would shortly abandon ship?

The Shackleton Centenary proceeds apace with the Friends in the vanguard of activity. The reunion in Cambridge for last autumn's Shackleton Centenary Expedition Cruise(rs) and other events such as generous lunches hosted by Angie Butler and Harriet Crawley, have set the scene for forthcoming gatherings.

Our gratitude goes to HMS Protector for hosting the affiliates day at sea, off Plymouth.

The next few months are filling with Shackletonia in the run up to the proper Centenary next year including our own AGM when Andy Rouse, the renowned wildlife photographer, will regale us with his Polar works. I look forward to seeing you there!

Nick Lambert, Chairman

From the Institute



A few words from
Director Julian Dowdeswell
Email: director@spri.cam.ac.uk

I am writing from Longyearbyen in Spitsbergen, where I am joining the Norwegian research vessel Helmar Hanssen tomorrow. There has been a mixture of snow and rain in Longyearbyen over the past few days, and winter is coming quickly. At this time of year, exactly half-way between mid-summer and mid-winter the shift from long days to long nights is at its most rapid; it is getting dark noticeably earlier each evening.

The weather forecast is set fair at the moment for the seas north and east of Svalbard, which is good for our marine-geophysical work – heavy seas tend to



The Norwegian research vessel Helmar Hanssen alongside at Longyearbyen in Spitsbergen

degrade the quality of our geophysical profiles of the layer-cake structure of the sub-sea floor and make the deployment of sea-floor sediment coring equipment difficult. We hope to acquire new data that will provide information on the past extent and flow-dynamics of ice sheets that advanced northward from Svalbard about 20,000 years ago, at the height of the last cold period in Earth's history.



Artist in resident presents painting to HMS Protector

With close links to the Ice Patrol Ship, HMS Protector, the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute (FoSPRI) is responsible for organising the 'Artist in Residence' scheme which sees artists joining the vessel on deployment.

The first of the artists, Emma Stibbon, who embarked from April to May 2013, recently visited the ship together with the programme sponsor Robert Brooks CEO of Bonhams, to present one of her pieces.

Commanding Officer Captain Rory Bryan OBE accepted the painting on behalf of everyone onboard and reiterated the importance of forging close working relationships with all those with an interest in the Antarctic region.



Commanding Officer Captain Rory Bryan accepting the painting from Emma Stibbon and Robert Brooks, Bonhams

He said: "It was my absolute pleasure to receive the piece from Ms Stibbon on behalf of the crew of the Ice Patrol Ship.

"In addition to the normal roles expected of a ship within the Royal Navy, HMS Protector enjoys a unique and challenging work environment and it's a privilege for our work to be documented in an artistic medium."



Above: Man-overboard exercise. Right: Visiting RN Cadets. Photography by James Pickard.

All about the Boss

Written by
Naomi Boneham, SPRI Archives
archives@spri.cam.ac.uk



This autumn sees the Institute gear up for some major Endurance centenary celebrations. In November 1915 Shackleton and his

men watched as their expedition ship Endurance sank in to the Weddell Sea. What followed is possibly one of the most iconic polar stories.

Here at the Institute we are extremely lucky to hold the expedition diaries and letters of many of those involved in this expedition. These documents provide first hand accounts for the weeks and months that followed as the men lived on the ice, then sailed in the lifeboats to Elephant Island and the James Caird journey. Our rich archive holdings cover both the men who made that epic boat journey and the day to day lives of the men left behind, revealing their characters and hopes.

The museum retains some of the iconic objects from this time and we have been lucky to gather other pieces on loan.

Key pieces will go on public display in our centenary exhibition **By Endurance we Conquer: Shackleton and his Men.**



MUST SEE EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Main Compass and Chronometer used to navigate the James Caird (on loan from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich)
- Cooking Pot & Shackleton's Pannikan
- The Endurance Spar - the largest extent piece of the ship - on display

Throughout the exhibition items from the archive collections will be rotated either through turning pages from the diaries or swapping out letters so we can reflect particular milestones in the expedition's time line while also protecting the documents.

We hope that as many of the Friends as possible will be able to visit the Institute during this time to see it and participate in the other centenary events which will take place.

Full listings of events can be found on the Shackleton 100 website:
www.shackleton100.org



This exhibition will run from **22 September 2015** through to **18 June 2016** at The Polar Museum. After which, the exhibition will go on tour internationally.

NEXT JULY will see a new display commemorating **The Men of the Ross Sea Party.**



Above: The spar at the Scott Polar Research Institute is the only surviving relic from Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship, Endurance. (Polar Museum: Y98/4)



Fit for display

Due to the nature of events surrounding this expedition much of the paper records are in a fragile state. Before Shackleton's diary could go on display, we first had to have the team from Museum Conservation Services

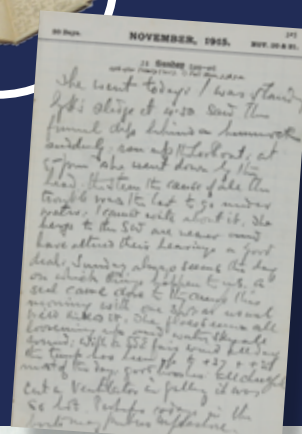
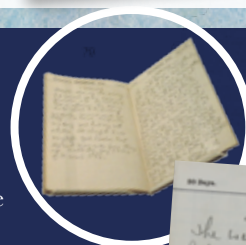
Ltd carry out some remedial work. This volume had no surviving outer covers so it was particularly vulnerable to damage.



| The exhibition

Right: Diary on display.

Below: Diary entry for 21 November 1915 (SPRI Archive MS 1537/3/7)



The blubber staining remains but the spine - in danger of complete disintegration and thus rendering the diary untouchable has been consolidated. When we have documents treated we try for the least intervention as possible while ensuring that the documents which have travelled so far will survive for future generations to be inspired by the accounts detailed within their pages. To protect the spine further the volume will be displayed on a specially built mount.



FoSPRI dates for the diary

Please visit: www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends/events for further details



Membership UPDATE

We have not forgotten your renewals which were due 1st September. We are currently in progress of creating our new system and the new date for renewals will be announced at the AGM. Your membership is secure and has not expired. We will be in touch shortly with a new renewal date.

General

EVENT	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING
The Non-Existent Islands of the Antarctic R. K. Headland	10th Oct	7.30pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	FREE – No need to book (£5 non members)
What colour is Signy Island Dr W Gareth Rees	24th Oct	7.30pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	
AGM talks by Darren Rees and Andy Rouse. (Doors open at 2pm) Followed by Friends of SPRI AGM and buffet supper.	Saturday 7 November	2.30pm	BMS Chemistry Lecture Theatre	£10 - talk only (members and non members)
		5pm (AGM), 5.45pm (AGM buffet)	SPRI Lecture Theatre	Talk & AGM buffet £20
Shackleton 'ENDURANCE' Expedition Centenary Celebration	Saturday 21 November	–	Jesus College	SOLD OUT
Friends of SPRI Spitsbergen Explorer Voyage	10 June 2016	–	Arctic	Register your interest: info@ice-tracks.com

Museum events

Further information on the Museum events and exhibitions visit www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/

EVENT	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING
By Endurance we Conquer: Shackleton and his Men	22 Sept – 18 June 2016	10am – 4pm daily	THE POLAR MUSEUM	FREE
The Big Game Night – Explorers & Collectors. Let battle for museum domination commence. 18+	Thursday 22 October	6pm – 7.30pm		FREE – http://biggamenight2.eventbrite.co.uk
The Encyclopaedia Britannica in Antarctica. The talk will be followed by an optional guided tour of the Polar Museum at 7pm. 18+	Monday 26 October	6pm – 7.30pm		FREE, but booking is required via the SPRI website

Christmas cards NOW ON SALE

ORDER YOURS TODAY.

See enclosed order form or visit our website.

Christmas Cards and Susan Rose China will be on sale at the AGM. (Payment by cash or cheque only)

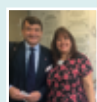


NEW SPRI WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Have you seen our new look SPRI website? The new design brings our polar work to life more than ever before and the Friends pages are being updated as we write. If there are things you would like to see on the Friends website please contact us. Visit: www.spri.cam.ac.uk



A note from the Executive Secretary



Any enquiries about membership (including subscription rates and renewals) should be sent to Celene Pickard, email: friendsPA@spri.cam.ac.uk

NEW FRIENDS – A very warm welcome is extended to all new members.

PASSING FRIENDS – We are sad to note the passing of Sir Sam Edwards, who died in May, a long-time Life member of the Friends.

THANK YOU – To Ian Purkis for sharing his story with us on the front page of this issue of Polar Bytes. Ian and his wife Margaret sailed with us last year on the Friends Shackleton Centenary voyage. If you have a story you would like to share with the Friends we would love to hear from you too.

Celebrate the life of **Stoker William Lashly**

A new website and facebook page celebrating the life of Stoker William Lashly is now online.

Visit: www.facebook.com/StokerWilliamLashly



HOW TO CONTACT US?

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