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SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

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# POLAR BYTES

ISSUE 085 / AUTUMN 2017

Loyal readers since 1996



© Ice Tracks Expeditions - Greenland

## Join us on a 19th century voyage of discovery

**At this years AGM, award-winning journalist Michael Smith, will give a fascinating talk on 19th century Polar explorer Captain Francis Crozier.**



Captain Francis Crozier was a major figure in the three epic quests of 19th century Polar exploration – navigating the North West Passage, reaching the North Pole and mapping Antarctica. He sailed on six voyages of discovery with

Parry, Ross and Franklin.

Michael Smith is a former award-winning journalist with The Guardian and The Observer and an established writer and

speaker on Polar exploration.

He has written nine books and appeared in TV and radio documentaries and lectured at many prestigious venues.

Tickets cost £10 each and include a glass of wine and nibbles. Please see enclosed leaflet on how to book or email [friendsPA@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:friendsPA@spri.cam.ac.uk)

We look forward to seeing you on the 11th November.

*Images left to right: Captain Francis Crozier, the only photograph taken in 1845 before departing on the doomed Franklin expedition; Painting by Arctic explorer, Julius Payer.*



### UPDATE

## Our new membership

A big thank you to all our members who have returned their new membership forms your support is very much valued.

If you haven't yet done so, please could you join the new improved scheme as soon as possible. Annual subscriptions can be done online or by filling in the new form. Standing orders, must be reset up again by filling in the new form only and cannot yet be done online.

More leaflets can be ordered from the Friends office.



Thank you to Argos Froyanes for their generous sponsorship

  
**Argos Froyanes**  
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## Welcome to our Autumn Polar Bytes newsletter

Things have settled to a steady canter for the FoSPRI and the team at the Institute. 2018 will be a year of bumper events including the second iteration of the APTL when we will celebrate the life and achievements of Charles Swinbank, another exhibition at Bonham's in the summer and an exciting foray to Greenland and the Arctic courtesy of One Ocean Expeditions and Ice Tracks. More details of the programme can be seen elsewhere in Polar Bytes.

We continue to focus on building the general membership of the Friends and I'm pleased to report that our funding is in great shape. Importantly, we are keen to attract volunteers to serve on the committee as several current members approach the end of their time so please do let us know if you're interested.

The next event is of course the AGM in November when we will tell you all about our plans... we 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](mailto:director@spri.cam.ac.uk)

Since the start of summer I've been to both Greenland and Svalbard. In the beautiful town of Ilulissat on the West Greenland coast, at the request of the UK Hydrographic Office, I gave a talk about UK work on mapping the seafloor of the Arctic at an International Maritime Workshop. The harbour at Ilulissat is especially impressive with its plethora of small boats surrounded by remnants of the huge icebergs that are calved from the nearby Ilulissat or Jakobshavn Glacier.

This glacier, which has a velocity of more than 10 km per year, is one of the most rapidly moving in the world and is a major



The ice-choked harbour at Ilulissat in West Greenland.

contributor of icebergs into Baffin Bay. In Svalbard, I gave several student lectures at the University Centre in Longyearbyen and continued working on several scientific manuscripts. During September in Svalbard, at almost 80 degrees North, I could see the days shortening over the week I was there, and several snowstorms also marked the rapid onset of autumn.

## News from the Heritage Collections



Naomi Boneham SPRI Archives  
contact [archives@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:archives@spri.cam.ac.uk)



### A Polar Safari

Each year sees an event called Open Cambridge where buildings around the city open their doors to the public for events and behind the scenes tours over a weekend in September.

Over the past few years the library and archive have joined together to offer talks and behind the scenes trails. This year we took the theme of Animals at the Poles and our library team devised a Polar Safari.

For those brave enough to venture forth with just a rough map to guide them a



Library Assistant Martin French ready to greet visitors to the library

series of way stations provided information on the native and non-native animals to be found in the polar regions. From finding out if polar bears are left handed (or should that be pawed) to the difference in bone structure for penguins (theirs are not hollow. This aids them in swimming by reducing their natural buoyancy) the safari took in everything from scientific studies to children's stories. Just over 60 people took the safari - I am told that all returned safely.





# Out of the shadows

Written by Angie Butler

## *Ross Sea party memorial*

**The men of Shackleton's Ross Sea party have been brought out of the shadows again thanks to the efforts of Aeneas Mackintosh's irrepressible octogenarian granddaughter, Anne Phillips.**

The Ross Sea expedition, a tragic tale of self-sacrifice by men who heroically laid depots for what they believed was Shackleton's advancing party ended in the death of Aeneas Mackintosh, Victor Hayward and the Rev. Arnold Spencer-Smith in 1916. Hayward's death was followed 30 days later by that of his younger brother Stanley, at Passion Wood in Belgium.

Mackintosh's memorial which he shares with his mother Annie and two brothers in the churchyard of St John, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, had fallen into disrepair but with Anne's persistence, it is now put to rights. On the 27th September 2017 she was joined at the graveside by Peter, Victor Hayward's great nephew, and Debby Horsman, the closest living relative of Spencer-Smith.



Victor Hayward

Diana Cohen-Robinson who had met Anne on Shackleton's Centenary voyage to Antarctica in 2015 flew especially from San Francisco for the occasion.

Last year Peter Hayward saw the fruit of his endeavours when a Blue

Plaque was unveiled at 40, Connaught Road, Harlesden, London in honour of his great uncle.

Debby Horsman, whose great-grandfather was Spencer-Smith's uncle, ensures his name burnishes brightly having given some 100 talks to date that raise funds for the Institute. Last year a centenary memorial service for him was held in the Edinburgh church where he was ordained.



Rev. Arnold Spencer-Smith

*'For what is the worth of a human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history.'*

*Cicero*



Aeneas Mackintosh



Image above left to right: Jeremy Tilley (stonemason who restored the grave); The Mayor of Burgess Hill; Mark Venning (grandson of Aeneas Mackintosh); Anne Phillips (grand-daughter of Aeneas Mackintosh); Diana Cohen Robinson (friend from San Francisco); Debby Horsman (relative of Rev Arnold Spencer Smith); Terry Horsman, husband of Debby; Rev Kevin O'Brien, Vicar of St John's, Burgess Hill.

## Shackleton Auction Takes the Biscuit

Written by Leona Gaine Murphy

**As Frank Wild once recorded "Thousands of pounds would not have bought that biscuit" when Shackleton shared a vital biscuit with him.**

At Christies in London, September 2011, I bought a Shackleton biscuit rescued from the hut at Cape Royds dating from the Nimrod Expedition 1907 - 1909 for a princely sum. Little did I know

what a journey this little Huntley & Palmer gem would take me on. It captured so many people's imagination that all and sundry wanted to welcome it home, so in the end I did not collect it for 6 long years until Christie's issued their final collection notice.

Similar to Wild, the biscuit has come to symbolise generosity, friendship, collaboration and most of all the power of the imagination. My fellow adventurer Jill Dawes and I took the biscuit from the warehouse into the home of all fine biscuits in London, the grand Fortnum

& Mason, where it even sparked the archivists interest! She's had an epic journey. Like Tom Crean she seems unbreakable!



Images left to right: Vice-Chair Leona Gaine & Jill Dawes collecting the biscuit; A sledge to go home on; Spot the biscuit in the picture!







## FoSPRI dates for the diary

Please visit: [www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends/events](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends/events) for further details

### AHOY THERE FRIENDS!

Friends of SPRI fund raising voyage!

Greenland & Baffin Island

03 – 17 September 2018

A few cabins remaining! Join our Director Prof. Julian Dowdeswell and Executive Secretary Celene Pickard on a once in a life time voyage...

For more information contact [info@ice-tracks.com](mailto:info@ice-tracks.com)

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNTS FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY!**

### General

EVENT:	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING:
<b>Friends AGM</b> (Doors open at 3pm) Followed by AGM talk and Fundraiser	11 Nov 2017	3.15pm 4pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	£10 - talk only (members and non members)
<b>Antarctica talk</b> organised by Journey Latin America with British polar explorer Felicity Aston MBE. <b>ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO SPRI</b>	29 Nov 2017	6pm - 9pm	RGS, London	£10 each Book online <a href="http://www.jla-antarctica.eventbrite.co.uk/">www.jla-antarctica.eventbrite.co.uk/</a>
<b>St Patrick's Day Lecture</b> <b>Ireland's Antarctic Explorers by Michael Smith</b>	Sat 17 March 2018	4.30pm - 5.30pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	FREE
<b>Friends Spring Event</b> Visit to Gilbert White Museum, Selbourne	12 May 2018	TBC	Gilbert White Museum, Selbourne	Details to follow
<b>Annual Polar Tribute Lecture</b> Tribute to Charles Swinbank by Sir Ranulph Fiennes	11 July 2018	7pm	RGS, London	Details to follow
<b>Friends Voyage 2018</b> Baffin Island & Greenland Explorer	3 – 17 Sept 2018	TBA	Baffin Island & Greenland	Contact <a href="mailto:info@ice-tracks.com">info@ice-tracks.com</a>

### Museum events

Further information on the Museum events and exhibitions visit [www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/)

EVENT:	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING:
<b>Uummannaq</b> A century of exploration in Greenland	Until 22 December 2017	10am - 4pm	THE POLAR MUSEUM	FREE
<b>Shackleton: Life and Leadership</b> Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic (Endurance) Expedition				FREE

### SPRI Christmas cards

The new SPRI Christmas card will be on sale from the beginning of November. Price starts at 99p!

BUY ONLINE:  
[www.spri.cam.ac.uk/shop/](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/shop/)



### SOUTH GEORGIA ASSOCIATION SCIENCE EVENT

On the 10th November, the South Georgia Association is holding an event 'New and future science from South Georgia and the surrounding seas'.

Presentations, by scientists and others actively involved in research, will be pitched to share their knowledge and expertise relevant to the Island. A full day of superb events ending with a sit down dinner in the ice-breaker! For more information visit the South Georgia Association website: [www.southgeorgiaassociation.org/events.html](http://www.southgeorgiaassociation.org/events.html)



### A note from the Executive Secretary



We are delighted with our new and improved membership scheme. Thank you to all our members who have returned their forms and renewed their membership, your support is very much valued. However, there are many who still need to do so, so please could you join the new improved scheme. Annual subscriptions can be done online or by filling in the new form (a copy of which was sent to all Friends). Standing orders, must be reset up again by filling in the new form only and cannot yet be done online. We very much look forward to hearing from you - thank you so much.

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

**PASSING FRIENDS** – We are very sad to note the passing of Alastair Bremner and Shirley Balgobin. We extend our condolences to their families.

### HOW TO CONTACT US?

**Friends Secretary** –  
Celene Pickard

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