

Welcome to our Polar E-bytes Spring 2018.

[View this email in your browser](#)



SUPPORTING POLAR  
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

[www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends)

# POLAR E-BYTES



© Nick Romeril

Issue 087 March/April/May 2018 / Loyal readers since 1996

## In this issue

- [Will the Endurance be located?](#)
- [Chairmans letter](#)
- [Oates](#)
- [From the Institute](#)
- [SPRI visit by Captain HMS Scott](#)
- [Artist in Residence update](#)
- [Crossing Continents](#)
- [Dates for the diary](#)



## STOP PRESS!

## Will the *Endurance* be located?

Written by Dr. John Shears

Just as Polar Bytes was going to press it was



## Welcome to our Spring Polar E-Bytes newsletter

Following the Weddell Sea Expedition 2019 launch at the RGS this morning my head is full of matters Polar, key science activity related to climate change, the nature of the underside of ice caps, under ice cap water cavities and the use of advanced autonomous underwater vessels to explore what Julian Dowdeswell described as 'probably the most inaccessible areas of our planet'. The Director of SPRI is the expedition's science leader and John Shears, the FoSPRI Treasurer is co-leading on operations and logistics. This will be a significant expedition operating in the extremely difficult conditions of the western Weddell Sea and with the potential to locate the wreck of Shackleton's *Endurance*. Exciting stuff and we wish them well.

Back in Blighty, Nick Romeril, our artist in residence has returned with salty tales and great material from *HMS Protector*, the plans for the Summer Lunch at the Gilbert White House are well underway (do come along and bring friends as we're keen to increase our membership numbers), we're receiving great interest for the APTL commemorating the exploits of Charles Swinbank in July and have agreed to team up with the South Georgia

**announced that the SPRI will be at the centre of a major international scientific expedition taking place in 2019 to explore one of the coldest, harshest and most remote locations in the world: the Weddell Sea off Antarctica.**

Funded by a charitable trust in the Netherlands, the Flotilla Foundation, the Weddell Sea Expedition 2019 has a pioneering programme of science and exploration planned, under the leadership of Professor Julian Dowdeswell, Director of SPRI. The co-leader of the expedition is Dr John Shears (the Treasurer of the FoSPRI). The expedition was officially launched at a major event at the Royal Geographical Society in London on 10 April 2018. (See Prof. Julian Dowdeswell's report)

The objective of the Weddell Sea Expedition is to survey the underside of the Larsen C Ice Shelf, document the rich and little-studied marine life of the western Weddell Sea ecosystem, and attempt to locate the wreck of Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship 'Endurance', which was trapped and crushed by the ice and sank there in 1915.

The 45-day voyage of discovery, starting on 1 January 2019, will be conducted from the South African polar research and logistics vessel 'S.A. Agulhas II', owned by the Department of Environmental Affairs. Built in 2012, the vessel is one of the largest and most modern polar research ships anywhere in the world, has a wide range of science laboratories and facilities.

The Weddell Sea Expedition 2019 hopes to inspire young people about science, engineering and technology, and the protection of Antarctica, and is partnering with the Royal Geographical Society to ensure that the expedition's research and findings are disseminated as widely as possible to schools and students in the UK, South Africa and beyond.

We will be featuring regular updates about the expedition in Polar Bytes over the coming year and beyond. For more information visit the expedition website:

<https://weddellseaexpedition.org/>



Association for our AGM in November.

The breaking news as I type, is that Michael Palin will give a talk and book-signing for the Friends at SPRI on 28 November 2018. We plan to fill the Chemistry Theatre so get the date in your diary to avoid disappointment later. And how did I forget to mention the Bonhams exhibition in August and the One Ocean/Ice Tracks expedition cruise to Greenland in September? Must be something to do with a very busy FoSPRI programme!

Committee business continues apace as ever. Celene and the SPRI team have gripped the bureaucracy of the EU's GDPR legislation (thank you team!), our efforts to fundraise for the SPRI Centenary are shaping up very well (thank you for taking charge Richard!) and we've set increasing our membership numbers as our objective for the next couple of years. Do please join us at one or all of the events; it will be lovely to see you and to enjoy your company!

*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)

I have just returned from a three-month period of sabbatical leave at Canterbury University in New Zealand, having written several chapters of a book titled 'The Continent of Antarctica' which is being written jointly with Professor Mike Hambrey. With this progress, the book has a good chance of coming out later this year.





## Oates

Written by Michael Smith, author of *I Am Just Going Outside – Captain Oates*.

Captain Lawrence Oates, “a very gallant gentleman,” was the Eton-educated cavalry officer whose self-sacrifice symbolised the courage and defiant heroism of Scott’s last expedition. His final message, “I am just going outside and may be some time,” is arguably the most recognised phrase in the English language.

Oates, nicknamed Soldier or Titus, was universally popular on the *Terra Nova* expedition, mixing freely with men from all ranks. Quiet, taciturn and devoted to the care of the horses, the crippled Oates was the only one of the five-man South Pole party who chose the moment to die when he crawled from the tent in a blizzard to help his comrades’ chance of survival.

There was far more to Oates than a noble death. He had a distinguished army record and might have won the Victoria Cross for outstanding bravery during the Boer War after a serious wound left one leg shorter than the other. Bill Wilson, who stood at the Pole with Oates, once said the way thoughts flashed through his mind was reminiscent of snails climbing a

I am to be the Chief Scientist on the Weddell Sea Expedition 2019, aboard the South African polar research vessel ‘Agulhas II’. The Expedition, which was launched on 10 April at the Royal Geographical Society, was featured on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Today’ programme and in several national newspapers. Funded by the Flotilla Foundation, the expedition aims to investigate the Larsen C Ice Shelf, which calved a huge, 150 km-long iceberg in July 2017. The ship will carry several autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), equipped with downward and upward-looking multibeam echo-sounders in order to access and image the water-filled cavity beneath the floating ice shelf. The expedition’s AUVs may also be able to locate and photograph the wreck of Shackleton’s ‘Endurance’ which sank in the Weddell Sea in November 1915.

*Photo: Field camp on the McMurdo Ice Shelf, Antarctica, after a blizzard.*



## Nick Romeril talks about being Artist in Residence for 2018

As the 2018 artist in resident for Friends of SPRI, I travelled to the Falkland Islands in late January to board *HMS Protector* for the journey to the Antarctic peninsula. I was extremely lucky with the work package as the ship was ferrying members of the WWF and FCO to visit 15 sites. This meant that the ship criss-crossed the peninsula and traveled 3500 miles in total. The crew treated me openly, engaging with the projects I aimed to achieve.

On one occasion, they happily arranged for a RIB to take me close to some of the colossal blue

cabbage stalk. Petty Officer Patrick Keohane's description of Oates was perfect: "Not much talk about him but chuck full of grit."

Why not come along to the Friends Spring Event to find out more on Oates! See 'Dates for the Diary' Friends Spring Event for more information.

## The Captain of *HMS Scott* visits SPRI

In February, SPRI and the Friends were delighted to host The Captain and Logistics Officer of *HMS Scott* at the Institute. Dr Gareth Rees presented the Captain, Cdr Nick Foster, with a gift on behalf of the Director, Prof. J. Dowdeswell.



Photo top to bottom: Captain, Cdr Nick Foster and Dr Gareth Rees; Left to right: Dr John Shears (treasurer of the Friends), Lt Ben Lay (*HMS Scott*), Celene Pickard, Cdr Nick Foster, Dr Gareth Rees, Charlotte Connolly

bergs. During the residency I created over 200 small paintings/drawings, shot a VR film, kept a diary and plotted the ships course. The first exhibition of the work will be held in Jersey at the Skipton Open Studios series which will take place at the end of June. This will be a small show, only exhibiting a few of the paintings, studies and the first draft of the VR film. The second bigger show will be held at Bonham's (a sponsor of the residency) coming in August. I plan to show several large paintings, studies and the edited VR movie.

Further shows are planned in London and Switzerland for 2019.



Photo: Nick Romeril onboard *HMS Protector* and a close up of his work

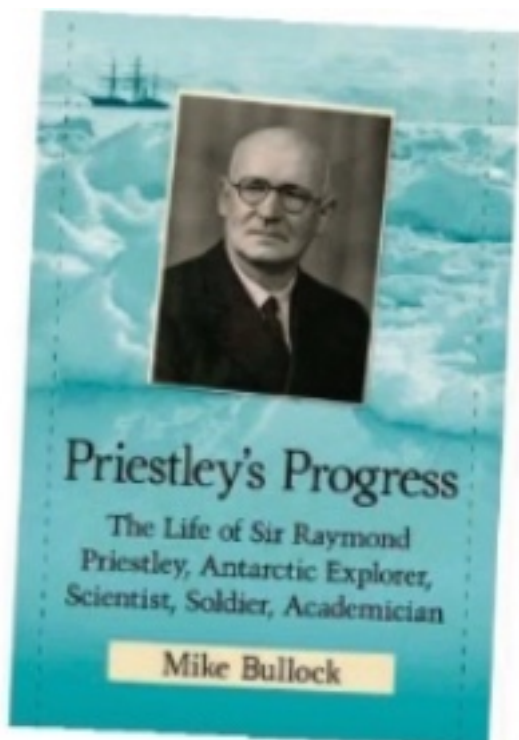
## Crossing Continents!

We are delighted that Peter and Ann Fuchs, will be joining us on our Friends of SPRI Greenland/Baffin Arctic voyage in September. Peter is the son of Sir Vivian Fuchs.

When asked who would you invite to sit next to you at a dinner party? Surely Sir Vivian Fuchs would top the list! Sir Vivian's Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1957 re-ignited an interest in both polar history and expeditions which had laid dormant since Shackleton's Quest expedition of 1921.

The first expedition to complete the crossing of Antarctica covering 2,158 miles with both motorized vehicles and dogs included three teams; the crossing party, the air support and the New Zealand support team led by Sir Edmund Hilary. The 99 day expedition on negotiated huge





## Priestley's Progress OUT NOW

Author Mike Bullock is a long time Friend member. His new Book 'Priestley's Progress' The Life of Sir Raymond Priestley (McFarland, North Carolina: 2017) is available at [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com), [Amazon](http://Amazon) and [Waterstones](http://Waterstones).



**Argos Froyanes**  
Partners for sustainability

**Thank you to Argos Froyanes  
for their generous sponsorship**  
[www.argosfroyanes.com](http://www.argosfroyanes.com)

crevasses in appalling conditions, at times only just defying certain death. It was an extraordinary accomplishment that reverberated throughout the globe. In fact the British public avidly followed the regular reports in the Times.

Sir Vivian was already an inveterate explorer having gone to Greenland in 1929 with SPRI's founder Sir James Wordie. As a Cambridge graduate in geology (Wordie was his tutor at St. John's College) he spent several years in East Africa, spoke fluent Swahili and joined the anthropologist Louis Leakey on an expedition to Olduvai Gorge.

During the war Sir Vivian served in West Africa and landed in France four days after D Day. He followed the invading front setting up civil administrations. He remained in Schleswig-Holstein until October 1946 where part of his duties was to oversee the documentation and dispersal of German refugees from the Russian front. He became director of the Falkland Island Dependencies Survey which became the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and retired in 1973. He forged strong ties with SPR. He was President of the RGS between 1982 and 1984. Peter has followed in many of his father's steps and we look forward to learning more about this illustrious family.

For more information on the FoSPRI Greenland/Baffin voyage contact [info@ice-tracks.com](mailto:info@ice-tracks.com) or [click here](#) to visit our website



**FoSPRI dates for the diary**



# SIR RANULPH FIENNES

## PAYS TRIBUTE TO DR CHARLES SWITHINBANK

Don't miss the Annual Polar Tribute to Dr Charles Swithinbank by the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute.

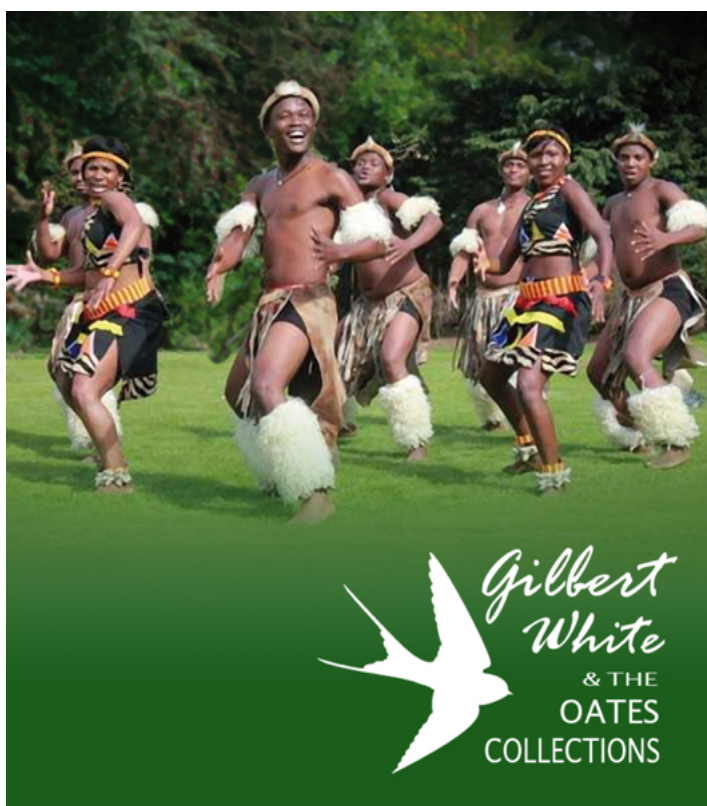
DATE: Wednesday 11th July 2018

TIME: Doors open at 18.15 for a 19.00 start

TICKETS: £25 per person

VENUE: Royal Geographical Society, Exhibition Road, London

To book your tickets visit: <http://bit.ly/APTL2018>



## Friends Spring Event

**Visit to Gilbert White Museum, Selbourne on Saturday 12th May 10.30am - 5pm**

Come along to the Friends Spring Event, the re-launch of the Gilbert White Museum in Selbourne. Enjoy new galleries and facilities, and some great exploration activities! We will be joined by the Lions of Zululand who will be performing and a Silhouette Artist. Don't miss the Official Opening Ceremony at 11:30 with Countryfile's Tom Heap!

The event is free but we are asking for donations of £5 made to Celene on the day. Email [friends@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:friends@spri.cam.ac.uk) to confirm your place.

Find out more visit

[www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk](http://www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk)

## Friends Voyage 2018

Baffin Island & Greenland Explorer

3 – 17 September 2018

Contact [info@ice-tracks.com](mailto:info@ice-tracks.com)

Monday 2 July 2018 4.30pm

**'Singing in the Wilderness:  
Antarctic Sledging Songs of the  
'Heroic Age'**

Elizabeth Leane and Carolyn Philpott both from University of Tasmania

# Lecture and book signing by Michael Palin

Wednesday 28 November 2018 - The Chemistry Theatre, SPRI.  
More details to follow!

## SAVE THE DATE!

This years AGM will be held on Saturday 10 November 2018 and will be an all day event with the South Georgia Association to be held at SPRI. Details to follow.

**Don't forget to put it in your dairy!**

---

### A note from the Executive Secretary

Our new and improved membership scheme is well underway. Thank you to all our members who have returned their forms and renewed their membership, your support is very much valued. **PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP** if you haven't yet done so, you **MUST** renew to continue your membership. Annual subscriptions can be done online or by lling in the new form. Standing orders, must be reset up again by lling in the new form only and cannot yet be done online. Old Standing Orders will need to be cancelled. Please contact Celene Pickard either by email [friends@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:friends@spri.cam.ac.uk) or write to the SPRI address to be sent a form. 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.

*Celene Pickard, Secretary*



---

Information correct at time of going to press. E&OE.  
Photographs remain the copyright of their respective owners.  
Editors: Angie Butler & Susan Rose

#### Our mailing address is:

The Friends Office, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER, England  
**Tel:** 01223 336 540

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to [christine\\_eckers@hotmail.com](mailto:christine_eckers@hotmail.com)  
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
Arlam Design · 33 Edward Road · Oldbury · West Midlands, B68 0LZ · United Kingdom

