






SUPPORTING POLAR  
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

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# POLAR BYTES

ISSUE 089 – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018

Loyal readers since 1996



Arctic by Russell Buckingham

## An unmissable tribute

Written by  
Angie Butler

**In its second year, the Annual Polar Tribute Lecture is promising to be an unmissable event.**

The evening at the RGS to celebrate the life of Dr Charles Swithinbank was a triumph and the much loved glaciologist and polar explorer who spent three winters and twenty field seasons in Antarctica was movingly remembered by several speakers.



Chairman Nick Lambert giving opening speech at the event

The lecture was given by Sir Ran Fiennes, who had, like so many explorers, relied on Charles's research and expertise. Ran's lecture had everyone thoroughly entertained. His courage as an explorer told in a self-deprecating and highly amusing way was the grand finale of an excellent evening.



A Friend getting her book signed by Sir Ran Fiennes

SELLING FAST

## DON'T MISS OUT!



The Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute are delighted to announce that actor, writer and presenter Michael Palin will be visiting the Institute on Wednesday 28 November to introduce and discuss his new book 'Erebus'.

Tickets are priced at £10.00 and commences at 7.00pm at the BMS Lecture Theatre.

**BOOK YOUR TICKETS TODAY,**  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7kydsb3>

Thank you to Argos Froyanes for their generous sponsorship





### Welcome to our Autumn Polar Bytes newsletter

It's PB time once more but this time with considerable regret, as this edition marks my swansong as chairman of the Friends. Amazingly it was eight years ago that I first put a pen to the PB paper which equates to something like 36 editions and a significant chunk of my (and your) life (lives). The Polar Regions and especially the Antarctic get quietly under the skin, becoming a passion and an integral element of one's thoughts and actions; a passion to which I'm more than happy to admit and acquiesce. I love the Institute, its history, its work, its people and all that it stands for. The Friends is a similarly remarkable association with a track record to die for, a reputation for selflessly supporting the Institute and underpinned by members who share a love of the Polar Regions and their history.

Ruminating on those eight years brings many happy occasions to mind: the opening of a spanking new Polar Museum, the Scott and Shackleton centenary celebrations (a myriad lectures, dinners, exhibitions and visits), national services in St Paul's and Westminster, Antarctic and Arctic expedition cruises, lectures in the RGS and onboard Headquarters Ship Wellington on the Thames, black tie dinners in Trinity House and Jesus College, a gathering at Gilbert White's House and Chatham's historic dockyard, and local events as far afield as Dundee, Plymouth and Kent. Some occasions are more poignant: the sad passing of many older Friends including Charles Swithinbank (whose generous bequest epitomised his belief in the FoSPRI) and the untimely departure of Henry Worsley who won the hearts of so many Friends during the 2014 Antarctic exped cruise. And the great thing is that many occasions lie ahead: the Weddell Sea Expedition next year, the Institute's centenary in 2020, exhibitions at Bonhams, the highly successful artist in residence programme south and north, and many others. I'm enormously proud of a Friends' association that, with a small but perfectly formed 600ish strong membership, supports and enjoys such an imaginative, engaging range of activities year in, year out.

None of this happens without the unstinting efforts of many people, sadly too many to record individually in this short piece, so I will highlight my fellow committee members of eight past years, Celene, our pivotal Secretary, the cracking team at the Institute and Julian our Director and a fount of wise counsel; above all thank you to all our Friends in the UK and abroad, the bedrock of FoSPRI. It has been an honour to be your chair and my privilege to report that John Shears, our current Treasurer, was unanimously voted as my successor at this week's committee meeting. Thank you for grasping the baton John; it will be in fine hands. Good luck to you, the Committee, the Friends and the Institute for all that lies ahead!

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 the Friends of SPRI cruise to West Greenland and Baffin Island, which included revisiting the ice cap on Baffin's Meta Incognita Peninsula where I undertook the field work for my Masters thesis almost 40 years ago. The trip, on One Ocean Expeditions' ship Akademik Sergey Vavilov, was excellent throughout, and also enabled the sampling of driftwood on a number of Arctic beaches. The wood will be dated in due course and should allow the reconstruction of Arctic sea-ice cover over the past few thousand years, given that sea ice transports wood for long distance whereas it would otherwise sink through waterlogging in a matter of months. As well as this research project, One Ocean Expeditions looked after almost 40 Friends of SPRI very well indeed and also hosted our latest Artist in Residence, Nick Jones.

I should also like to record my appreciation of the great support given to the Friends and to the Institute by Nick Lambert, who has chaired the Friends over a critical 8-year period that saw the celebration of several major polar centenaries and also the successful repositioning of the Friends organisation within the University; Nick will end his term as chair in December.

Finally I am sorry to have to report the passing of Shirley Sawtell. Shirley was the Senior Library Assistant from 1988-2012, and will be remembered fondly by both Friends and SPRI staff as an ever-helpful Librarian who treasured the polar regions and the Institute. Shirley will be missed by us all.



The mountains of the Meta Incognita Peninsula in southernmost Baffin Island, Arctic Canada, with the Grinnell Ice Cap in the background.



### Christmas is coming!

Why not buy membership as Christmas gifts  
for your friends and family.

Visit [www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends/membership/](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/friends/membership/)  
for more information



## News from the Heritage Collections



Naomi Boneham SPRI Archives  
contact archives@spri.cam.ac.uk



### All change in the library

**We are delighted to welcome Frankie Marsh to the library team, taking over from Martin French as Senior Library Assistant, she joins us from the Newnham College Library.**

Any Friends paying a visit at the moment will also notice that the book cases which used to grace the Friends room have been relocated to the entrance of the library. This will be their new home allowing us to showcase the latest publications each month. The Friends room itself is presently in the hands of a team of builders who are busy transforming the space so we can make more use of it for meetings, events, visitors and to show more of our wonderful library, archive and museum collections.

Finally for those of you who can't visit us in person you can time your morning and afternoon cups of coffee and tea with us by following the Terra Nova bells new twitter account @Terra\_Nova\_Bell which will helpfully alert you to the 10.30 and 4pm breaks.



SATURDAY 10  
NOVEMBER 2018

### AUTUMN EVENT

FRIENDS OF THE SCOTT POLAR  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ASSOCIATION  
WITH SOUTH GEORGIA ASSOCIATION  
FOLLOWED BY THE AGM

**Our Autumn event this year includes a diverse programme including presentations on history, conservation, ecology, the arts and exploration.**

Please join us and bring interested guests, we are keen to expand our membership and encourage interest in the polar regions. For more information see leaflet and how to book.

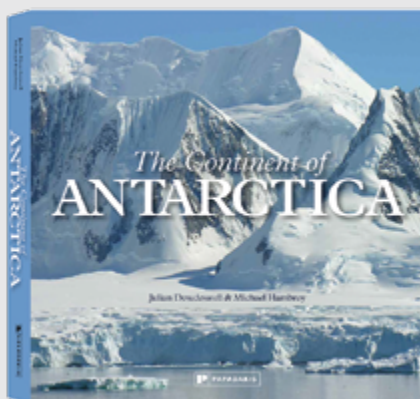


## The Continent of Antarctica

By Julian Dowdeswell and Michael Hambrey

**This book brings together the authors' accumulated experience of the Antarctic continent, through what is a combination of an accessible but informative text, supported by a series of photographs. The selection of photographs are mostly the authors' own.**

The book contains twelve chapters and begins with a short introduction to the continent and a second chapter giving an overview of its geography. Chapter 3 concerns the geological development of Antarctica and, in Chapter 4, the continent's weather and climate are discussed. Chapter 5 is concerned with the glaciers and ice sheets that cover almost the entire continent, and the restricted but unique exposed landscape of Antarctica is examined in Chapter 6.



The Southern Ocean, together with its sea ice and icebergs, is the subject of Chapter 7. Wildlife, in the ocean, on land and in the air, is dealt with in Chapter 8. In each of these chapters a balance is retained between important scientific concepts and accessibility, describing phenomena from aurora to icebergs and ocean currents in words and photographs rather than equations.

Available to purchase from the  
SPRI MUSEUM SHOP £35

By contrast, Chapters 9 and 11 relate to human activity in Antarctica: the continent's discovery and historical exploration in Chapter 9; what it is like to work there today in Chapter 10; and its management and governance in Chapter 11.

Finally, Chapter 12 considers briefly the future of the Antarctic and its surrounding waters in terms of, first, its response to present and future climate change and, secondly, the challenges that face its future management and governance in terms of its preservation as a unique wilderness area. In addition, at the beginning of each of the twelve chapters, brief examples of particular personal experiences during the authors' time 'South' are included.

# WELCOME ABOARD

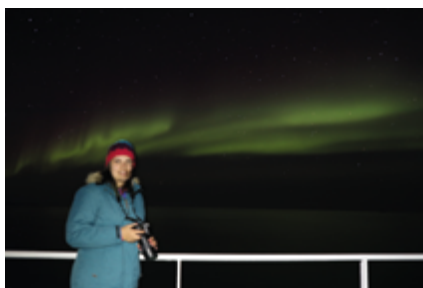
## The Friends of SPRI Greenland and Baffin Expedition!

**As the long Arctic day turned to night we were treated to the greatest light show on earth! A pale, smoky mist appeared that soon turned to sage before swirling across the charcoal sky in emerald green formations. We were watching the Aurora Borealis at its most spectacular!**

We started our expedition with a stop in glorious Copenhagen that included a city bus tour and canal boat ride, that took us into the heart of the city's superb architecture.

The following day we flew to Kangerlussuaq and traipsed on the magnificent ice cap as well as seeing the astounding Russell Glacier. Here, our Director Prof. Julian Dowdeswell, accompanied by his wife, glacial geologist Evelyn, gave the first of many excellent talks on glaciers, ice caps and climate change.

It was soon time to meet our vessel the Akademik Sergey Vavilov. Time waits no one and we pressed on to Sisimiut with an opportunity to visit the coloured houses and museum. The voyage was an opportunity to learn about Inuit culture now on the cusp of dramatic change not least due to climate change. We were enchanted by the Inuit kayaker performing skilled 'rolls' alongside our ship and the performance of the captivating Inuit throat singers. Sailing on to Illulissat we immersed ourselves in bays of spectacular icebergs.



Bonnie Pickard and the Aurora Borealis

We were soon leaving Greenland and crossing the Davis Strait to Baffin and the settlement of tongue twisting Qikiqtarjuaq. Visits followed to Cape Mercy, Cumberland Sound and Charles Francis Hall Bay. Wildlife was not in abundance but the keen naturalists ticked off 17 species of birds, walrus, whales and one polar bear disappearing into a den.

Our talented Friends added to an array of lectures, including two by our Treasurer, John Shears, on the 'Arctic Air Expedition and very aptly, on the 'The Friends of SPRI'. Bonnie Pickard spoke on the geomorphology of Baffin Island and Robin Back former Chair of Friends brought his ancestor George Back, back to life. Peter Fuchs, son of Sir Vivien Fuchs, took us South sharing his father's story and Debby Horsman gave a riveting talk on her family member, Rev. Arnold Spencer-Smith of the Ross Sea Party. Nick Jones the Artist in Residence had us captivated by a talk on his paintings.

".. the challenge is on for a polar plunge. I go in first and want to shout out: "come on in, the water's wonderful!", but I can't get it out because my teeth won't stop chattering".

*Simon Pierse (Friend of SPRI)*

*Images bottom left to right: Friends of SPRI venturing into Illulissat Icefjord, Greenland © Bonnie Pickard; The Akademik Sergey Vavilov in the South Shetland Islands, Antarctica © LBM1948.*







A gathering of Friends on the deck of the Akademik Sergey Vavilov

At our final destination of Iqaluit we bid farewell to the Arctic and flew to Ottawa spending several hours at the History Museum where we were given a outstanding private tour by the curator of the Franklin exhibition, Dr Karen Ryan. On show was Franklin's Erebus bell recently dredged up from the wreck that the Akademik Sergey Vavilov helped to locate. Michael Palin gave a specially signed copy of his recent book 'Erebus' to the Vavilov. You could say circles within circles.



The Erebus Bell



Expedition Leader Boris Wise receiving Michael Palin's book Erebus from Prof Julian Dowdeswell by Dave Sandford



Giant iceberg at Ilulissat Icefjord, Greenland  
© Bonnie Pickard



Heading out in the zodiac



Inuit Elder lighting a Qulliq (oil lamp) during a cultural demonstration at Qikiqtarjuaq, Baffin Island.  
© Bonnie Pickard





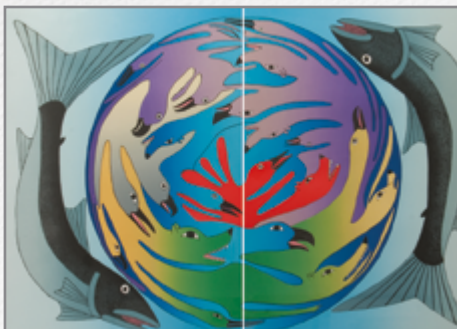
# Polar Encounters

Written by Lucy Carty

**The Chairman of Bonhams, Robert Brooks generously welcomed the FoSPRI this summer, for Polar Encounters, an exhibition showcasing artist's diverse interpretations of the Poles from the last 200 years.**

Stepping into the air-conditioned galleries from the record-breaking heat outside was a welcome reprieve, but it was the artworks on display that really transported us to chillier climes. The Institute's long-standing and close connection with the arts is a precious one and the exhibition was a huge success, with carefully curated works from SPRI's collection shown together with work from our Arctic and Antarctic Artists in Residence Programme.

Sometimes the most humble marks on paper can have a powerful impact - as felt in the childlike 'Untitled Inuit Drawing' in pencil of 'Hooper' and 'Parry', thought to be drawn by an Inuit named Toolooak, during Captain W.E. Parry's Arctic Expedition, 1821-23. The focus on simple circles indicating eight large,



perhaps shiny buttons on each of the mens uniforms was a poignant reminder of just how unusual the sight of these men would have been to this particular artist. And, Inuit representations of the Arctic as 'home' - a familiar, safe and welcoming place - made for a fascinating contrast with European explorers interpretations, depicting ships in peril, trapped and drifting in the ice.

*Paintings left to right clockwise: 'Song of Spring' by Kenojuak Ashevak; 'Swimming with Giants' by Shelly Perkins; 'HM Ships Enterprise and Investigator, drifting down Barrow Strait'; 'Untitled' Inuit Drawing © SPRI Picture Library*

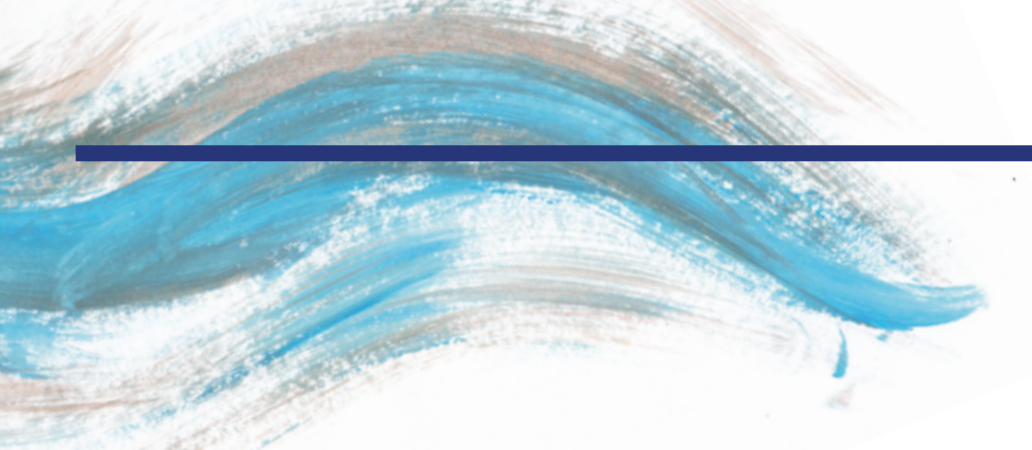


## OPENING NIGHT

*Left to right: Angie Butler, Celene Pickard & Robert Headland; Painting on display; Prof Julian Dowdeswell, Andrew Prossin (Director of One Ocean Expeditions) and Robert Brooks (Chairman of Bonhams)*







Antarctic Artist in Residence (AiR) 2016/17 Shelly Perkins' beautiful illustrations portrayed a bustling, thriving antarctic coastline with colonies of Adelie and Gentoo penguins. Swimming with Giants, a particularly wonderful swirling image of humpback whales found an Arctic partner in the colourful lithograph, Song of Spring by Kenouak Ashevak. But, contrasting interpretations continued with Arctic AiR 2016/17 Julian Grater's exquisite and sublime depiction of icebergs in Baffin Bay reminding us again, with incredible power of the unforgiving, severe nature of such environments.

Art lends you new eyes and in The Friends most recent polar pairing of Kat Austen and Nick Romeril, their different practises showed us just how vital and rewarding it is to borrow them. Romeril's stunning mastery of colour and light transported us to the magic of that moment when he first laid eyes on the scene before him. While Kat's fascinating work challenged us to dig deeper within ourselves and think about how we perceive these dynamic landscapes and the fragile communities that inhabit them.

The Friends are tremendously grateful to the continued generous support of Bonhams, The Royal Navy and One Ocean Expeditions, who make the Artist in Residence programme possible.

Thanks to Bonhams especially for giving us the opportunity to exhibit in such prestigious surroundings and to Andrew Prossin, Managing Director of One Ocean Expeditions, who travelled from Canada to be there.

#### A BIG THANK YOU

To the many Friends who kindly volunteered their time and welcomed visitors to the exhibition over its successful three week run.



Opening night speech by Robert Brooks (Chairman of Bonhams)

## LEO HOULDING'S SPECTRE TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

World Premier of the Expedition film and fundraising lecture for the Mount Everest Foundation and Porters' Progress UK

Come and hear Leo Houlding describing the highs and lows of this gruelling yet ultimately successful expedition. In aid of the Mount Everest Foundation and Porters' Progress UK.

### THE EXPEDITION

The Spectre, Trans-Antarctic Expedition 2017-18 was an ambitious, first of its kind project, aiming to combine an unsupported, wind assisted journey of 1700 km across the interior of Antarctica, with exploration and ascents of the extremely remote and technical Gothic Peaks. This included a peak

named the Spectre, by far the most southerly rock spire on the planet.

### LEO HOULDING, EXPEDITION LEADER

Leo Houlding is an adventure professional. He has vast experience organising major expeditions and has achieved significant first ascents and repeats over 26 years climbing in the Alps, Yosemite, Greenland, Baffin Island, Patagonia, the Himalaya & Antarctica. He has more recently taken up kiting and has 5 years experience in the Lakes, the Alps, Norway & 1000 mile Greenland kite expedition in 2016. He also has an impressive adventure TV & Film resume.



TUESDAY 6TH NOV | 7PM RGS | TICKETS £15  
[PORTERSPROGRESSUK.ORG/EVENTS](http://PORTERSPROGRESSUK.ORG/EVENTS)

SPECTRE  
 TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION



## 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

### General

EVENT:	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING:
<b>The Matter of the Soul Symphony</b> The Matter of the Soul is a sound, sculpture and performance work by Kat Austen, Cultural Fellow in Art and Science at the University of Leeds' Cultural Institute.	23 Oct	7.45pm – 10.15pm	Howard Assembly Room, 46 New Briggate, Leeds, LS1 6NU	FREE Book your space <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yay6axp7">https://tinyurl.com/yay6axp7</a>
<b>Mount Everest Foundation SPECTRE: A Trans-Antarctic Expedition</b> – Lecture by Leo Houlding	6 Nov	7-10pm (doors open at 6pm)	Royal Geographical Society	Tickets £15 each <a href="http://portersprogressuk.org/events">portersprogressuk.org/events</a>
<b>SGA Event and AGM</b> An all-day joint event of talks with the South Georgia Association	Sat 10 Nov	10.45am – 5.00pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	Tickets £30 each. See SGA & AGM insert on how to book
Followed by the Friends AGM		5.15pm – 6pm		
<b>Michael Palin Talk</b> Michael brings to life the world and voyages of HMS Erebus as part of the book tour.	Wed 28 Nov	7.00pm doors open at 6.30pm	BMS Lecture Theatre (SPRI)	Tickets: £10.00 Book today <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y7kydsb3">https://tinyurl.com/y7kydsb3</a>

### MICHAEL PALIN TALK



Wednesday  
28th November

The former Monty Python stalwart and much-loved television globe trotter- brings to life the world and voyages of HMS Erebus as part of the book tour.  
Tickets: £10.00

**BOOK TODAY!**



### MARCH 2ND - MARCH 15TH 2019 An opportunity to participate in marine mammal research!



Join scientist Daniel Zitterbart PHD on cutting edge marine mammal studies in Antarctica. All guests on this voyage will have the opportunity to participate as the scientists track whales and collect data. In addition to ongoing briefings on the study's progress, you will take part in a panel discussion on The Future of the Antarctic.

A special 20% discount of published prices for Friends! 10% of sales will be donated to Friends of SPRI.  
For further information contact [info@ice-tracks.com](mailto:info@ice-tracks.com)

### A SPECIAL INVITATION TO THE FRIENDS!

You are invited to attend a special weekend opening of an exhibition of one of Britain's greatest landscape artists, Keith Grant who travelled to Antarctica in November 2017 with Ice Tracks Expeditions.

Keith Grant has now made a second expedition to Antarctica in the far south. Returning ablaze with inspiration, he has produced over 65 new paintings which are featured in this exhibition. If you would like a catalogue of the exhibition please call the Gallery and mention Ice-Tracks Expeditions.

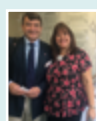
#### SPECIAL WEEKEND OPENING:

Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 October 2018,  
10am - 5.30pm - to meet the artist.

The exhibition will run from 20 October - 10 November 2018 visit [www.chrisbeetles.com](http://www.chrisbeetles.com) for more information



### A note from the Executive Secretary



Dear Friends, as Xmas rapidly approaches, why not gift a Friends Membership to your own friends and family? A present both inspiring and completely unique! Please email Celene for a new membership 'gift' package.

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

**PASSING FRIENDS** – We are very sad to note the passing of Shirley Sawtell who worked in the library for 25 years and who was an honorary Friend. We extend our sincere condolences to her family.

### HOW TO CONTACT US?

**Friends Secretary –**

Celene Pickard

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