






SUPPORTING POLAR  
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

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# POLAR BYTES

ISSUE 091 – MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2019

Loyal readers since 1996



© Oceanwide Expeditions Photo by Rolf Stange



Scott  
Polar  
Research  
Institute

Written by  
our Chairman,  
John Shears

**With the centenary of The Scott Polar Research Institute fast approaching, The Friends are continuing in our efforts to raise funds for the SPRI Centenary Campaign. Our goal is to raise £250,000 to create a permanent endowment for a studentship.**

The fund raising took a huge step forward in early March when we received a cheque for \$25,000 Canadian dollars (£14,305), representing a bequest from the late Sylvia Wyatt, who was a Friend for many years. We have now raised over £50,000, but still have much to do to reach our target. You can read more about the Centenary Campaign in the SPRI Review 2018 (page 25), which is



enclosed with this edition of Polar Bytes. A series of special events is being planned to celebrate the centenary, including a formal Gala Dinner on 28 November 2020 in Downing College in Cambridge, which I hope will be attended by many of the Friends. Please do let me or Celene know if you have fund raising ideas, or want to contribute in some way to the centenary celebrations.

## Summer Event Tickets are now on sale

**SATURDAY 29TH JUNE 2019**

Mark your diaries for Saturday 29th June at 2pm as The Friends gather for Afternoon Tea at the SPRI Lecture Theatre in Cambridge for a thoroughly social afternoon filled with fascinating talks and presentations. The programme will feature an introduction from John Shears about our centenary celebrations, a talk by Nick Jones, our Arctic Artist in Residence in 2018, an exhibition introduction by our Polar Museum Curator – Charlotte Connelly plus a book launch of *Claiming the Ice* by John Dudeney & John Sheail.

All members and their guests are welcome – please book early! Tickets are £16 each.  
**See insert for more details.**

Thank you to Argos Froyanes for their generous sponsorship



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## Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

I'm now back safely home from Antarctica after spending eight weeks in January and February on the most amazing adventure leading the Weddell Sea Expedition 2019.

The Expedition successfully carried out a major inter-disciplinary science programme at the Larsen C Ice Shelf, and our ship the S.A. Agulhas II sailed as far south as the massive A68 iceberg. The scientists, led by Professor Julian Dowdeswell at SPRI, used Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs), drones, corers, water samplers, and space satellites to study the region in unprecedented detail, and have returned with an incredibly rich array of research data and samples, which will lead to important new understanding of the Weddell Sea environment. Against all the odds, the ship battled its way through dense, thick sea ice to the sinking site of Shackleton's Endurance, but we were forced to abandon the search for the wreck after we lost one of the AUVs and then had to leave the area due to rapidly deteriorating weather and ice conditions. We were so, so near, but so far!

Thank you to all the Friends who were following the Expedition in Antarctica and sent us so many great messages of support. It was a huge morale boost! Also, many thanks to our Vice Chair - Susan Rose and Executive Secretary - Celene Pickard for looking after the Friends of SPRI affairs so well while I was away.

Following my return to the UK, I was delighted to be able to meet up with one of the FoSPRI Artists in Residence – Nick Romeril and see his exhibition of Antarctic paintings at the Chris Beetles Gallery in London on 4 April. It was a fantastic show. Meanwhile, Andrew Lansley, our Antarctic artist for 2019, has just returned from an exciting voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula with the RN Ice patrol vessel HMS Protector. We have also just appointed our Arctic artist for 2019, Lesley Burr, and she will be sailing to Baffin Island with One Ocean Expeditions in August. There are news features on both Andrew and Lesley inside this edition of Polar Bytes.

The Friends will be running two events in the coming weeks. First up is Dr John Ash who will give a Friends Lecture on the evening of 29 May at SPRI, and second, we will be having the Friends Summer Event, with a talk by our Arctic artist for 2018 - Nick Jones, also at SPRI on 29 June. More details to follow. Please put the dates in your diaries.

Best wishes,

John Shears, Chairman

*Photo top: John Shears standing on sea ice by the bow of the S.A. Agulhas II during the Weddell Sea Expedition ©Holly Ewart*

## News from the Research Collections

## SPRI Library Hits 90



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



On 21st March our Librarian Peter Lund received a copy of Captain Scott: the full story by Harry Ludham translated into Mongolian by Dr Jugder Gerelkhue of the Mongolian University of Science and Technology.

The book was presented by Dulmaazul Luvsandorj from the Ulaanbaatar Chamber of Commerce. This gift takes the number of languages represented in the library to ninety. For those that don't read Mongolian Peter assures us that an English language version is also available. Don't forget that Friends visiting the library can see a selection on new acquisitions on display each month in the library's entrance.



Left to right: Peter Lund and Dulmaazul Luvsandorj

## News from the Museum



Charlotte Connelly Polar Museum Curator  
contact [museum@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:museum@spri.cam.ac.uk)

## New Exhibition

On Wednesday 1 May a new and very special exhibition called *Tikiqag / Point Hope: Life on Alaska's North Slope* opened at the Polar Museum. Featuring a variety of intriguing objects, from stone arrowheads to ivory needle cases, pipes and handmade fur items, the exhibition explores the great history of Point Hope, believed to be the longest continuously occupied settlement in North America, with over 2,500 years of recorded history.

Come and discover the fascinating story of discovery, engagement and cooperation that unfurled when some of these items came to light. You can also read The Polar Museum's latest blogpost written by Collections Coordinator, Alex Partridge at [www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/news](http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/news)

*Photo © Ellis Doeven*





## From the Institute



A few words from Director Julian Dowdeswell  
email: [director@spri.cam.ac.uk](mailto:director@spri.cam.ac.uk)



**Having returned to the UK from the recent Weddell Sea Expedition to Antarctica, the work of analysing and writing up the large quantity of scientific information that was gathered begins.**

Along with this scientific work goes the planning and implementation of the Institute's Centenary Campaign. The celebrations of 100 years of the Scott Polar Research Institute will culminate on 28 November 2020 with a formal Centenary Gala Dinner in Cambridge following an afternoon of events at the Institute, where I hope that many Friends will be present. Before this, we will have a special SPRI Alumni Dinner in Jesus College on 18 April 2020 for those who have undertaken doctoral and master's programmes with us over the past decades. The inaugural event of the centenary period has already taken place – a small dinner attended by our Patron, HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, held at The Ritz in London, where we discussed how the centenary campaign would proceed.

For the Centenary Campaign we have established a number of fundraising priorities, relating to research, heritage and outreach activities, to strengthen the Institute's national and international roles over the coming decades. We wish to endow academic posts, and especially a Professorship in the field of Polar Environmental Science along with several

lectureships. We are also working to underpin the further development of the Institute's Archive and Museum. Our highest priorities in these areas are to provide permanent endowment funding for the important posts of Institute Archivist and Polar Museum Curator. Funding for these positions has until now been supported by a series of short-term grants. We also wish to build up endowment funds for the support of future research students at the Institute (now initiated as the Scott Polar Scholarships Fund and the Debenham Scholars Fund), and to enable increasingly expensive polar fieldwork to continue to take place on a regular basis. In addition, and particularly if we are successful in growing the number of senior academic staff in the Institute, we will need a new floor to go on top of our existing research area, to house an additional 20-25 people along with a state-of-the-art Seminar Room. If all these objectives are to be supported we have to raise a total of £15 million.

These plans are ambitious, but they are also very timely given the key significance of the polar regions in the context of major changes to the World's climate. Within the campaign, the Friends of SPRI Committee has taken on the particular challenge of raising £250,000 to endow a studentship to support the training of future generations of polar researchers. I know that we will have the enthusiastic support of the Friends during the Institute's centenary period.



Hero's Corner -  
News from our  
Volunteers

## Sir George Nares - Naval Sword

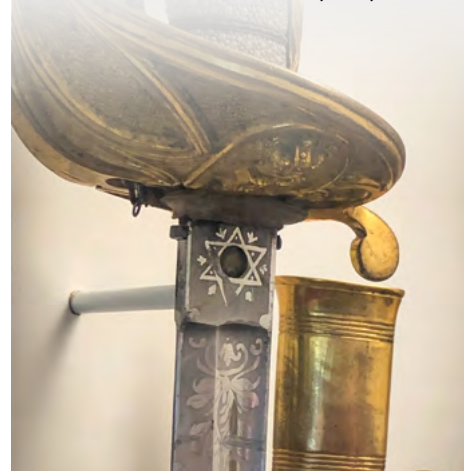
Written by Garry Evenden,  
Polar Museum Volunteer.

**In a previous issue of Polar Bytes, the present writer told the story of a lady visitor to the SPRI museum asking a question about a postcard featuring penguins and a gramophone.**

Just recently a young lad, who was part of a school visit, asked the two volunteers on duty why the 'Star of David' was featured on the base of Sir George Nares' naval sword. Some questions are easily answered, but this one had us stumped! A bit of detective work revealed that this had nothing to do with Israel or indeed Sir George.

It turns out that in around 1844/45 Wilkinson devised an interlocking bar that is six sided to denote that the sword had unbreakable strength. The brass disc, or proof slug, in the drilled depression signified that the sword was tested to the highest order.

The boy was duly informed of the findings before boarding the school coach. The museum team aim to answer all questions promptly, no matter how obscure or unusual they may be.





# Enduring Memories

**Our most recent Antarctic Artist in Residence, Andrew Lansley arrived home safely in early April after a very successful trip with HMS Protector.**

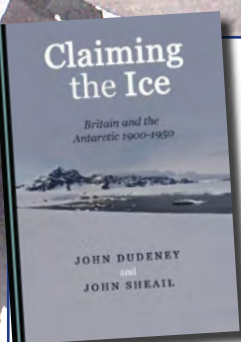
Under the command of Captain Syrett, the ship sailed south from the Falkland Islands via King George Island and Deception Island, through the Lemaire, Neumayer and Peltier Channels and on to the Weddell Sea. Among the many highlights were sightings of orcas and leopard seals and an attempt to land on Elephant Island on the very spot where Shackleton's men were rescued over one hundred years ago.

*Paintings and Photos © Andrew Lansley*

"One of the enduring memories I have is of the dark light created by a strong, low overcast of snow cloud. This made photographs extremely moody and different from the stereotypical blue skies I had come to expect."

Andrew would like to express his heart felt thanks to Captain Syrett and all the crew of HMS Protector for their companionship and support whilst he was on the ship, and of course to Bonham's and the Friends of The Scott Polar Institute for making the trip possible.

We look forward to seeing his work over the coming months.



## Claiming the Ice: Britain and the Antarctic 1900-1950

Claiming the Ice charts the twists and turns of policy making over the

first 50 years of the last century, showing how the priority shifted from a focus on sovereignty to the first glimmerings of internationalisation. It is a story of a great whaling industry, of territorial conflicts and tensions, and how science ultimately came to underpin Britain's policy aims.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

John Dudeney has over 50 years of Antarctic experience as a scientist and administrator at the British Antarctic Survey and as a researcher in Antarctic political history and lecturer on Antarctic tour ships. He received the Polar Medal in 1976, a second clasp in 1995 and an OBE in 2004.

John Sheail is a Research Fellow of the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, and the author of ten books and over 200 research papers drawn for the most part from archival sources.

**Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase at the special price of £45 at the FoSPRI Summer Event.**

Or you can email:  
**[orders@cambridgescholars.com](mailto:orders@cambridgescholars.com)**

A book signing and talk of *Claiming the Ice* will be taking place at the FoSPRI Summer Event. Book your tickets today!





# A BIG Adventure

Written by me!  
Daisy Carty

**In July 2017 our family set off on a big adventure around the world for a whole year. I was 11 and my brother was 9 years old at the time and we were very excited.**

My Mum has a special thing about polar landscapes, so icy, frozen places had to feature heavily on our itinerary. As we went along on our trip we made a point of visiting glaciers and mountaintops wherever we could. Hikes to Annapurna Base Camp in the Himalayas, to Machu Picchu and to Torres Del Paine were pretty tough, but all definitely worth the effort!

I feel so privileged to have gone on this amazing trip and to have seen so many extraordinary things.

In Svalbard, at the very start of our trip we discovered an old ghost mining town called Pyramiden. It felt like a crime thriller novel had come to life and the marked walls and broken doors made it seem like rabid polar bears had scared everyone away.

In Canada, on our way to Jasper we visited Athabasca Glacier, where we got to see how much it had retreated over the last 100 years. If it keeps retreating like this, then in another 100 years, it might not even exist at all. That would be so sad. I loved learning about glacial milk and seeing how glaciers smoothed out massive pieces of rock like sandpaper.

The Glaciarium Museum in El Calafate, Argentina was great fun and me and my brother were blown away at the sight of the Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciers National Park. We even got to hike on it. And, in New Zealand we got to fly over a glacier in a helicopter. I could actually see how huge it was and I felt so small.

In Ushuaia we dreamt about stowing away on one of the giant cruise ships about to set sail for Antarctica, (like Perce Blackborow on the Endurance!) but ventured on our own trip down the Beagle Channel with Gentoo and Magellanic penguins, fur seals and Imperial cormorants to keep us company. They were so cute!

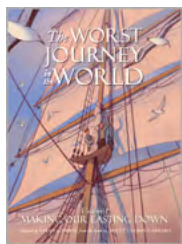
At The International Antarctic Centre in Christchurch we shivered as we learnt about wind chill in the awesome storm room, pretended to fly in the Hercules C-130 flight simulator and enjoyed a crazy Hågglund ride.

I feel so privileged to have gone on this amazing trip and to have seen so many extraordinary things. Sometimes I missed my friends back home, but I love my family to the moon and back for taking me! I have so much more of an understanding of what is happening in the world and more of an insight on how we can try to conserve it.



# The Worst Journey in the World...

**Sarah Airriess was working at Disney when she heard a Radio 4 dramatisation of *The Worst Journey in the World*, and couldn't get it out of her head.**



She read the book, then devoured everything else she could get her hands on. 'I thought – "gosh, this would

make a great graphic novel, someone should do it." Well, before long I had to face the fact I was probably the most qualified, by that point, and kind of surrendered to it.'

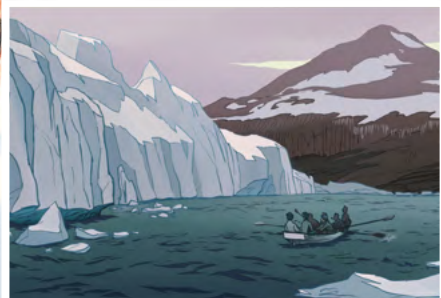
She moved to Cambridge to be close to SPRI, and for a few years spent the gaps between animation contracts poring through the archives. She hopes this book will introduce a new generation to the Terra Nova Expedition, and it's important that everything be right.

'There are so many misconceptions out there. The real story is better than any invention, and the real people are so inspiring. I hope readers get interested in polar science and history, but I also want to introduce them to wonderful people who give us all an example of how to be our better selves. I wish I had met them earlier, but they still changed my life. It's never too late. I hope my work will reach others in the same way.'

Sarah is now working full time on a graphic serialisation of *The Worst Journey*, and is aiming to get the first volume finished in time for SPRI's centenary.

Follow Sarah on her own (hopefully best!) journey as she studies and sketches her way to the completion of this exciting project at

[www.patreon.com/tealin](http://www.patreon.com/tealin)



Illustrations © Sarah Airriess

**WHO'S WHO!  
GUESS THE  
CHARACTERS!**

(Answers on the back page)



Head scientist  
and keen artist



Has an Oxford degree and  
a sizable inheritance



A capable commander who comes  
to the fore in times of difficulty



### MEET OUR NEW ARCTIC ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



**We are happy to announce the appointment of Lesley Burr as our new Arctic Artist in Residence for 2019.**

Lesley will be joining the South Baffin Explorer Voyage in July and we are excited to see the results of her time on board. A prolific artist and now also visiting lecturer at the prestigious schools she attended - Glasgow School of Art and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Lesley says of her appointment, "I am completely

delighted to be selected as the latest Friends of SPRI Artist in Residence for The Arctic programme generously supported by One Oceans Expeditions and Bonhams. The residency brings an extraordinarily precious opportunity to experience and document Arctic landscape and themes first hand, offering rare glimpses into the land and themes of the North. The residency offers me a unique creative opportunity to produce a new body of work inspired by Arctic themes. A painter of landscapes I am drawn to unusual locations in search of inspiration. The Arctic has long since held a fascination for me having lived in the remote Shetland

Islands and presently on the West Coast of Scotland so there is constant connection with the sea and the North. The physical landscape - Northern imagery, mountains and nature, ever changing light, the cycles of the seasons explore a human connection with nature. The mysteries of life, the loss of ice and fragility is represented through painted symbolic imagery and colour. The plight of climate change and the resilience of nature is a current theme and will be part of the focus of chronicling imagery that is discovered in this voyage to Southern Baffin Island."

The Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute

## FRIENDS LECTURE

Wednesday 29 May 2019

## Exploring Arctic Frontiers in a Changed Climate

By Lt Cdr John Ash PhD Royal Navy (ret.)

**This lecture addresses the question: "What is the purpose of Arctic exploration in the 21st Century?"**

It examines the nature of exploration and why people explore, before considering climate change in the Arctic, its consequences, and the role of exploration in addressing climate driven phenomena. The term 'exploration' conjures images of expeditions travelling to uncharted territories in heroic ventures of geographic conquest.

The motivation behind exploration has long been a matter of debate, and modern science has subjected the psychology of expedition members to increasingly penetrating scrutiny. However, the Anthropocene Era brings not only a changing, and therefore new Arctic environment to explore; but a series of consequences for which exploration becomes not merely a matter of territorial acquisition or academic interest, but a means of mitigating existential risks to humanity.



© Dr John Ash

### BIOGRAPHY - DR JOHN ASH

As an oceanographer and submariner in the Royal Navy, Dr John Ash was involved in data collection in the Arctic Ocean to support the study of sea ice thinning.

Selected to lead a team of Russian researchers at Cambridge University examining radionuclide pollution in the Northern Seas, he was later assigned to undertake the initial design work for the Navy Department's Environmental Management System.

John's doctoral research addressed environmental risk management associated with oil development in the Arctic littoral; he has also held a British Safety Council Fellowship at the Judge Institute of Management Studies (now the Judge Business School) at the University of Cambridge, where the focus of his research was the management of dynamic risk problems in operational environments.

An enthusiastic trainer, John devised a course in Logistics Systems Control for the University of Cambridge, and has taught oil company personnel aspects of safety systems development.

John has lectured at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell, and the Joint Services Command and Staff College, on the application of risk management. He was recently called to give evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee investigation into UK Defence in the Arctic. An Associate of the Scott Polar Research Institute, he holds a professional qualification in environmental risk management.



## 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

EVENT:	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:	COST/BOOKING:
<b>TIKIGAQ - Point Hope - Life on Alaska's North Slope.</b> Exploring the long history of Point Hope	Tuesday-Saturday from the 1 May 2019	-	The Polar Museum	Free
<b>Little Explorers - Arctic Birds</b> A different Polar story each session with renowned storyteller Marion Leeper	Monday 13 May	10:00-10:45 and 11:00-11:45	The Polar Museum	Free. For Under 5's. Children must accompanied by an adult
<b>FoSPRI Lecture - Dr. John Ash</b>	Wednesday 29 May	6:00pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	Free – Confirm your place email: <a href="mailto:friends@spri.cam.ac.uk">friends@spri.cam.ac.uk</a>
<b>FoSPRI Summer Event</b>	Saturday 29 June	2:00pm	SPRI Lecture Theatre	Tickets £16 each. Book online: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y5q5uylp">https://tinyurl.com/y5q5uylp</a>
<b>AGM Buffet</b>	Saturday 9 November	TBC	SPRI	Details to follow

## STEPPES VOYAGES

As part of our centenary celebrations we are delighted to offer you the chance to join one of our very special dedicated voyages in partnership with Steppes Travel.



16th February - 18th March 2020\*

### ROSS SEA CENTENARY VOYAGE

- Join this special voyage organised by the Friends of SPRI to recognise the Institute's centenary
- In the company of the Director of the Institute
- An epic cruise including ship to shore helicopter transfers, expert naturalists and lecture programmes
- Visit the historic huts of Scott and Shackleton and the dry valleys
- Sail in comfort onboard the ice-strengthened M/V Ortelius

**From £28,350 pp in a twin-share cabin excluding international flights.**

**SteppesTravel**



19th - 31st August 2021\*

### NORTHWEST PASSAGE CRUISE

- Follow in the footsteps of early explorers as you traverse the mythical Northwest Passage
- Visit auspicious sites linked to Franklin's tragic search for the Northwest Passage
- Explore the home of the polar bear, musk ox, caribou and walrus
- Travel aboard the comfortable RCGS Resolute - the perfect luxury base from which to explore the Arctic
- Activities include walking on the tundra, zodiac cruises and kayaking

**From £14,995 pp in a twin-share cabin excluding international flights.**

\*To be confirmed

**PLACES ARE LIMITED. BOOK NOW.** For a detailed itinerary or to book a place on this very special departure please contact: 01285 880 980, email [friendsofspri@steppestravel.com](mailto:friendsofspri@steppestravel.com) or visit [www.steppestravel.com](http://www.steppestravel.com)



## A Note from the Executive Secretary

Dear Friends,

We very much hope to see as many of you as possible at our Summer Event on the 29 June.

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

**PASSING FRIENDS** – The Friends and polar-world are a lot poorer for having recently lost such key names as David Walton, Peter Williams, Chris Furse and Brian Dorsett-Bailey. We extend our sincere condolences to their families.

## HOW TO CONTACT US?

**Friends Secretary –**

Celene Pickard

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