



SUPPORTING POLAR
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

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POLAR BYTES

ISSUE 098 - DECEMBER/JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

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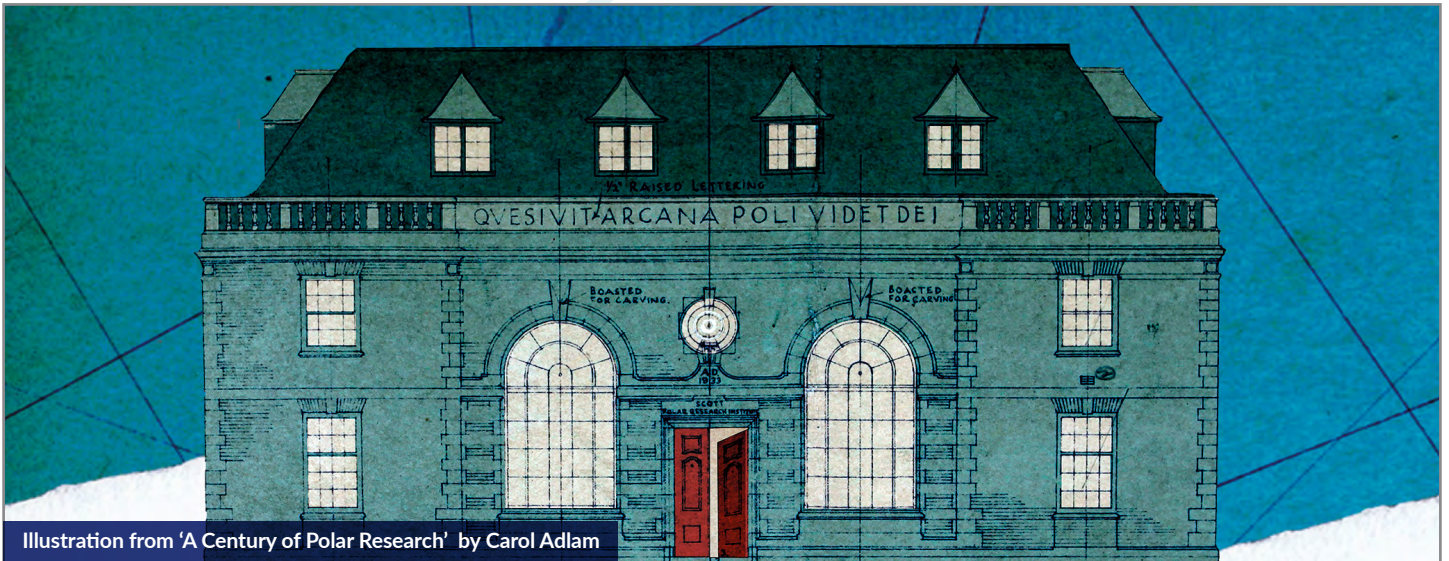


Illustration from 'A Century of Polar Research' by Carol Adlam

The Big Freeze

4-14 March 2021 www.bit.ly/BigFreezeArtFest #BigFreezeArtFest

This spring, the Scott Polar Research Institute is holding an online art festival. Featuring work from the Polar Museum's collections, Friends of SPRI artists in residence and a range of other polar artists and film makers.

WATCH Throughout the festival we'll be streaming short films and interviews with a range of artists. Find out about the Inuit traditions that inspire Alaskan artist Art Oomittuk's work, watch a short film about Lesley Burr's residency in the Canadian Arctic and watch a film showing a day in the studio with Theo Crutchley-Mack. The full programme is available on our website.



READ The Big Freeze art festival includes an online exhibition featuring work from our participating artists and from our collection, which you can explore at your own pace.

DO You can get involved too by joining in with The Big Freeze Challenge: Polar self Portraits! How about a polar self portrait of... yourself? The festival will open with a special online screening of artist and curator Zsuzsanna Ardó's Polar Self Portraits project, and the invitation to join in by imagining yourself in the polar regions and creating your own self portrait. Share your image with us using the #BigFreezeArtFest hashtag on social media.

Left: Art Oomittuk, 'Moonmask', 2018, carving.

Bottom: Shelly Perkins, 'Glacial Monuments', 2020, digital collage

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Scott
Polar
Research
Institute

A Century of Polar Research

The Polar Museum recently unveiled its new exhibition, dedicated to the Scott Polar Research Institute centenary 'A Century of Polar Research', which you can now view online. Visit: www.museums.cam.ac.uk/story/a-century-of-polar-research



Thank you to Argos Froyanes for their generous sponsorship



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Welcome to our Winter Newsletter



Happy New Year!

I hope you and your families had a safe and healthy

Christmas and are keeping fit and well. I'm writing to send

you all my best wishes for the New

Year, and to give you an update on what is happening with the Friends of SPRI in 2021.

The year starts on a sad note. I'm sorry to tell you that one of our long-standing Friends and stalwart Committee member, Captain Simon Culshaw died on Wednesday 11 November 2020, after a short illness. Pat, his wife, and their daughters were with him when he died. His death was not COVID-19 related. Simon was highly regarded by all of us at the Friends of SPRI, and more widely across the polar and marine world. He was



Captain Simon Culshaw

an excellent member of the Committee, and would always be coming up with new ideas for events and fundraising. It was through Simon that we established our

strong and long-lasting partnership with the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. Simon was a lovely, generous man, and we will miss him greatly.

As I expect many of you know, SPRI has had to close its doors again to all visitors because of the latest COVID-19 lockdown. Currently, only a skeleton staff of no more than 2 people are permitted inside the building, and they are running building checks and safeguarding the collections. The Institute will only re-open to the public when the national COVID-19 lockdown is lifted, the University gives permission, and all necessary health and safety measures are in place. Unfortunately, this means we cannot hold any Friends events or meetings at SPRI until further notice.

With the Institute closed to visitors, the Polar Museum has recently launched its new exhibition, "A Century of Polar Research", to view online. Click on: www.museums.cam.ac.uk/story/a-century-of-polar-research. The exhibition tells the fascinating story of SPRI over the past century, and a virtual visit is recommended. Well done to Henrietta Hammant and Charlotte Connelly on curating this excellent exhibition.

The Friends have also continued with our remote activities. I'm pleased to report that in early November last year we selected our next Antarctic Artist in Residence. We had a very strong field of applicants, and selecting one artist from such a talented group was tough. Unfortunately, we couldn't interview the final shortlist in person at SPRI because of the lockdown, but did the next best thing and interviewed them over Zoom instead. The winner was Claudia Myatt, who is a painter and illustrator based in Suffolk, with an obsession with sailing and the sea. Unfortunately, her scheduled voyage onboard HMS Protector in early 2021 has had to be postponed until next year because of the extended dockyard refit of the ship and the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic. You can find out more about Claudia by having a look at her website. Click on:

www.claudiamyatt.co.uk/

Fund raising for the SPRI Centenary campaign also continues. The latest financial report, dated 13 January, shows that we have now raised the grand total of £152,627.39! We still have some way to go to reach our target of £250,000, but we are now well past half way and if we keep up the hard work then I'm confident we will get there. Any donation you can give big or small all gratefully accepted. Thank you to Carol Perry for her recent donation of £50 on behalf of her husband Roy.

During the long months of lockdown, Celene Pickard, our excellent and hard-working Executive Secretary, has been busy talking directly by e-mail and the phone to many of the Friends to keep them informed. I know that many of the Friends greatly appreciate their messages and chats with her, especially at such a difficult, stressful and lonely time for so many people. Thank you Celene!

We are looking forward to better and brighter times later in the year, and planning continues for the Friends voyage to East Greenland in association with our travel partners Steppes Travel and Oceanwide Expeditions. The voyage dates are 31 August to 13 September 2021 sailing onboard the M/V Ortelius. It will be an epic voyage to one of the most remote and beautiful parts of the Arctic. For further information and details of how you can book one of the few remaining places please see the advert on the right.

Let us pin our hopes on a fast rollout of the vaccine programme across the UK allowing the gradual lifting of the lockdown restrictions, and life then getting back to some sort of normal by the summer. I'm so looking forward to that day when the Friends can meet once again in the inspiring surroundings of SPRI.

Please do take care and stay safe this winter.

My best wishes,

John Shears

Chairman of the Friends of SPRI

31st Aug - 13th Sept 2021

Spitsbergen & Northeast Greenland Cruise



Don't miss out! There are still remaining places for our trip of a lifetime fund-raising voyage for the Friends.

BOOK TODAY!

friendsofspri@steppestravel.com

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Steppes Travel can also recommend travel insurance brokers that provide cover for COVID-19 related claims

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

FoSPRI's 2018 Arctic Artist in Residence Nick Jones has recently launched a brand new website, featuring a gallery of atmospheric paintings, writings, news and artwork for purchase.

To find out more visit:

www.nicholasjones.info/



Exclusive

Mount Fiennes

A TRIBUTE TO A TRULY REMARKABLE AND PIONEERING LADY.

Written by Celene Pickard



I am delighted to report that the UK Antarctic Place-names Committee has approved the name Mount Fiennes in honour of the late Virginia (Ginny) Fiennes.

Ginny was a friend of mine whom I have always held in high esteem for her widely unrecognised radio work in extreme polar regions. Operating mostly alone she spent many long winter months in complete darkness and harsh conditions.

The location of Mount Fiennes is 69° 34' 48"S, 70°25'12"W Summit at about 2550 m high on the eastern side of Elgar Uplands, Alexander Island, between Gerontius Glacier and Hampton Glacier.

This mountain has been named for Virginia (Ginny) Lady Fiennes (1947-2004) who was an explorer and polar radio operator, which included research on very low frequency radio propagation.

Ginny played a leading role in the conception, planning and logistics support for the Transglobe Expedition 1979 -82, led by her husband Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

Photos: © Sir Ranulph Fiennes

The expedition was the first to reach both north and south poles, including crossing Antarctica, and the Arctic Ocean through the North West Passage.

Ginny was also the first woman to join the Antarctic Club 1985, and in 1987 the first female recipient of the polar medal.

This is a much deserved and fitting tribute to a tenacious and brave lady, always staying in the background but integral to the success of so many key polar expeditions'.



Wave hello...

In December, the Polar Museum added the sledging flag used by Dr

Eric Marshall (1879-1963) on the British Antarctic Expedition to the collection.

This was part of a joint acquisition with the National Maritime Museum who acquired Marshall's sledge from the same expedition.

The purchase of the two items was made possible thanks to a grant of £204,700 from

the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which is a funder of last resort with a remit to safeguard nationally important heritage.

Dr Eric Marshall was one of four men who accompanied Ernest Shackleton in his attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole during The British Antarctic Expedition. As well as serving as surgeon, surveyor and cartographer, Dr Marshall acted as principal photographer, producing some of the best-known images of the expedition, a number of which feature

his sledge with its fluttering flag at various landmarks on their journey.

You can read more on the flags historic journey online visit: www.nhmf.org.uk/news/antarctic-nimrods-warriors-snow-and-ice

Left to right: Eric Marshall's flag; Marshall outside his tent; The Christmas Camp on the Plateau © SPRI





From the Institute

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

This will be my last Polar Bytes piece as Director of the Institute. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends, with a membership today of about 600, for their strong and sustained support of the SPRI over the past two decades.

I have enjoyed working with successive Chairs of the Friends, who have been uniformly supportive of the Institute – Philippa Foster Back, David Wilson, Robin Back, Nick Lambert and John Shears. I should also like to thank Celene Pickard for her great commitment and enthusiasm for the Institute and all things polar.



The fundraising undertaken by the Friends, together with a continuing series of events and lectures, is an important contribution to the Institute's research and heritage activities and also to spreading the word about the significance of the Arctic and Antarctic in the context of global climate change. One of the things that has changed most over the past twenty years is the growth in understanding that the polar regions are a vital and often driving component of the Earth's climate and the widespread acceptance that the globe is warming – this has brought the research of the Institute very much into the mainstream of public consciousness.

I have very much enjoyed the challenges of being the Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute. It has been a privilege to have undertaken research in the Arctic and Antarctic and their surrounding seas on a regular basis and to have been able to work with a series of very able research students and post-docs over this period. A key continuing role for the SPRI is to train the brightest and best to take forward our understanding of polar environmental change; the Friends' fundraising for a Centenary Studentship is an important contribution to this. I also value the collections of the Institute greatly – our wonderful Library, Archive, Museum and Picture Library. One particular benefit of being Director is the opportunity to get to know these collections and, indeed, to show visitors the breadth, depth and quality of our holdings. Wider outreach through SPRI's contributions to the centenaries of the 'Heroic Age' expeditions has also been memorable through, for example, services of celebration and remembrance in St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

It has been a fulfilling twenty years as Director - as has been my whole career spent in Cambridge, Bristol and Aberystwyth universities. I have been able to work throughout on polar issues and will continue to do so into the future.



From the Research Collections

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



Having returned to the Institute in a part time capacity in mid-August the library, archive and picture library team were delighted to be able to welcome SPRI staff and students back into the space for the Michaelmas term.

We opened four study desks up for pre booked visits allowing access to the physical collections for the first time since March. During this period we continued to offer SPRI's cohort zero contact borrowing for library books and scanning services. Being on site also allowed staff to work on the physical collections and we began the detailed cataloguing of the Commonwealth Trans Antarctic archive. Sadly the new year has meant we have had to close our study desks again but we are still all available to answer research enquiries remotely.

We have had several exciting new additions to the libraries collections including "Songs of Taimyr". We received a parcel of books from the Taimyr peninsula on the Russian Arctic coast, very kindly sent by Larisa Bettu. The Taimyr peninsula, now called the 'Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets Region', is part of the larger Krasnoyarsk region in central Siberia. Several indigenous Siberian communities have lived on Taimyr for generations, including the Dolgan, Nenets and Nganasan' peoples. Bettu has provided us with rare and valuable material from many of these communities, and especially from Dolgan authors, such as the poet Ogdo Aksionova. These resources include texts in Dolgan language, one of only two Turkic languages spoken in the far north.

Among these items are two books of Dolgan songs – a collection from various singers published in 1993, and a series of songs by the singer and composer Vladimir Chardu, published in 2004. These books offer a unique and intimate glimpse of lives in transformation, expressed not only in words but in sound. Readers have the option of playing or singing the songs, so they can experience the meanings in the melodies, as well as the words. As life was changing in Taimyr so was the music – hence Chardu, trained in the European tradition, notated his songs himself. The songs are very personal, and can reference natural features in the peninsula. They draw from a musical tradition that was rooted in a close relationship with a living landscape: the title of Chardu's songbook is 'Taimyr, my beloved land'.



Friends Secretary
Celene Pickard
email: friends@spri.cam.ac.uk

A note from the Executive Secretary

Dear Friends,

THE FIRST WEALTH IS HEALTH - Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82.) As with all charities the past few months, and those yet to come, have and will be challenging. So, we're very grateful for all your ongoing wonderful support. Thank you, and stay well and safe.

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

PASSING FRIENDS - We are deeply saddened by the loss of our Committee Member Simon Culshaw, and our sincere condolences are sent to his wife Patricia and family.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

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