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# POLAR E-BYTES

Issue 092 - Summer 2019

*Loyal readers since 1996*

## WELCOME



**Dr. John Shears**  
**Chairman of FoSPRI**

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all well.

I'm pleased to write and tell you that the Friends continue to grow and flourish. We have had several successful events at SPRI over the past few months, where I've enjoyed meeting and talking to many of our members.

We had a fascinating lecture by Dr John Ash about Arctic exploration and climate change on 29 May. But my personal highlight was the Summer Event on 29 June, which was attended by over 40 people. It was a lovely afternoon of fascinating talks and presentations, topped off by a superb afternoon tea. Many thanks to our special guest speaker, Dr John Dudeney, for his excellent lecture about "Claiming the Ice - Britain and the Antarctic between 1900-1950".

Elsewhere this summer, Nick Jones, the FoSPRI Arctic Artist in Residence in 2018, was exhibiting in London at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition between 10 June to 12 August and showed several of his beautiful paintings of icebergs and the mountains of Baffin Island. Lesley Burr, our Arctic artist for 2019, has just returned from a successful trip to South Baffin Island with One Ocean Expeditions onboard the RCGS *Resolute*.

We continue 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. I'm very pleased to report that at the end of May one of our long-standing members, Andrew Sheaf, donated £5000 towards the fund. Thank you very much Andrew!

The planning and organisation for the FoSPRI Ross Sea Centenary Voyage is on track and going well. The voyage is being run by Oceanwide Expeditions and will take place between 16 February – 18 March 2020. We now have a total of 18 Friends confirmed on the expedition cruise, but there are still a couple of spaces available, so hurry up and book if you want to go on this epic trip.

Finally, I'm looking forward to the Friends AGM, buffet and winter talk at SPRI on 9 November, details of which shall be posted in the Autumn edition of Polar Bytes.

Best wishes,  
John



Friends take their seats at this year's Summer Event in readiness for John Dudeney's talk on 'Claiming the Ice - Britain and the Antarctic between 1900-1950'

## NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE

**Prof. Julian Dowdeswell**  
Director of SPRI



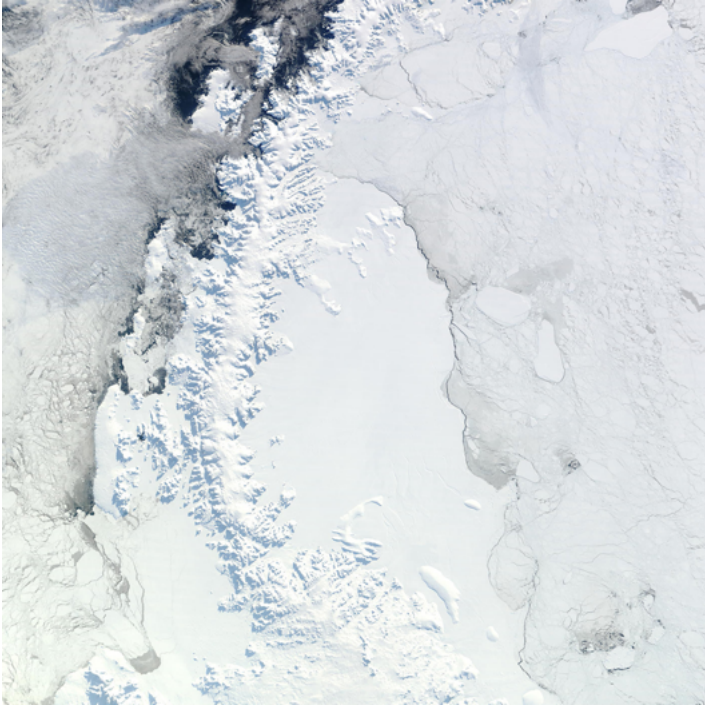


Once the busy period of undergraduate examination marking is over, the summer at SPRI is a time for Arctic fieldwork and for the analysis and writing up of scientific papers. A number of our research students and post-doctoral scientists have been in Greenland working as part of Dr Poul Christoffersen's project concerning basal conditions and fast flow of a large outlet glacier of the Greenland Ice Sheet. By contrast, I have been working mainly on the production and submission of papers based on our investigations from the *Agulhas II* when we were in the Weddell Sea earlier this year. Some of this work was presented by John Shears and myself at a talk in one of the House of Commons meeting rooms and, more recently, at a post-expedition meeting at the Royal Geographical Society. I am also looking forward to going to Spitsbergen in September, which will be my only Arctic trip for this year. After that there is a visit to the *Ortelius* in dry-dock in The Netherlands – this is the vessel which will take us to the Ross Sea on the Friends of SPRI Centenary Voyage in February of 2020.



Professor Dowdeswell speaking at the House of Commons





Left - Antarctic Peninsula - [WeddellSeaExpedition](#)

Right - Launching the CTD ©[AlexanderOelofse](#)

N.B. A CTD is an instrument that measures the temperature, salinity, oxygen, nutrients, nitrogen, chlorophyll and productivity of sea water.

Some of the findings from the Weddell Sea Expedition were presented at a post-expedition meeting at The Royal Geographical Society on the 24th July 2019. Dr John Shears and Professor Dowdeswell spoke together with marine biologist, Dr Lucy Woodall and physical oceanographer, Dr Katharine Hutchinson of the collaborative and interdisciplinary effort that resulted in a hugely successful expedition. The talks were enriched with fascinating insight from speakers such as Captain Louis Rudd MBE, the first Briton to cross Antarctica unsupported, Will McCallum, Head of Oceans at Greenpeace and José Mariá Figueres, past president of Costa Rica and co-founder of Antarctica 2020 and Ocean Unite.

## NEWS FROM THE COLLECTIONS



**Naomi Boneham**  
SPRI Archives

### Letters from Alaska!

With the museum presently showing the *Tikigaaq / Point Hope: Life on Alaska's North Slope* exhibition, the library and archive have been looking at their own holdings for Alaska. Amongst the collection given to the museum forming part of the exhibition, were a couple of A4 ring binders and a shoebox full of letters, predominantly written by the



missionary Reginald Hoare to his mother during his time in Alaska.

Many of the letters have been transcribed and this was a perfect opportunity for our archive volunteers to list and repackage them before the archive staff produce a full catalogue. We are now about half way through the process - all the letters are in acid free folders along with their transcripts (where present) and the volunteers are populating a spread sheet so we can identify each one. Once this is complete they will tackle transcribing the remaining letters and then we will be able to reconstruct the story of Hoare's life through his letters.

Read Alex Partridge's article below, '[Tikigak/Point Hope - Building an Exhibition](#)' for the fascinating tale of coincidence and collaboration that led to this very special exhibition.

## JOHN SHEARS AWARDED POLAR MEDAL



It is with great pleasure and huge pride that we relay the news that our Chairman, Dr. John Shears has been awarded The Polar Medal. John received the medal from Prince William at an investiture at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday 12 June with his family in attendance. 'It was a fantastic and memorable day' said John, in typically modest fashion. We are sure you will join us in congratulating him on this fabulous achievement.

The Polar Medal was first instituted as the Arctic Medal in 1857 (Gazette Issue 21963). In 1904

it was renamed the Polar Medal to reward participants in Captain Robert F Scott's successful first expedition to the Antarctic. The medal was also intended for those who gave valuable service in any subsequent expedition in conditions of extreme hardship. More recently the medal is awarded to individuals who have given outstanding achievement and service to the UK in the field of Polar research, often over prolonged periods of time and in harsh conditions.

11th. 21963.

309



# The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

320

*Admiralty, January 30, 1857.*

HER Majesty having been graciously pleased to signify Her commands, that a Medal be granted to all persons, of every rank and class, who have been engaged in the several expeditions to the Arctic Regions, whether of discovery or search, between the years 1818 and 1855, both inclusive, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty hereby give notice of the same.

The Medal will accordingly be awarded as follows:

1st. To the Officers, Seamen, and Marines of Her Majesty's ships and vessels employed on the several voyages to the Arctic Seas, during the specified period, and also to the Officers of the French Navy, and to such Volunteers as accompanied those expeditions:

2ndly. To the Officers, Seamen, and others who were engaged in the expeditions to the Arctic Seas, equipped by the Government and Citizens of the United States:

3rdly. To the Commanders and Crews of the several expeditions which originated in the zeal and humanity of Her Majesty's subjects.



4thly. To persons who have served in the several land expeditions, whether equipped by Her Majesty's Government, by the Hudson's Bay Company, or from private resources.

As a short period must necessarily elapse before the Medals will be ready for distribution, no application should be made for a Medal, until further notice shall have been published in the London Gazette.

The Polar Medal was first instituted as the Arctic Medal in 1857.

The London Gazette - Issue 21963

Source - <http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21963/page/320/data.htm>



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Within SPRI's collection is Ernest Joyce's Polar Medal with four clasps - Antarctic 1902-04, Antarctic 1907-09, Antarctic 1914-16 and Antarctic 1917. Only two four-clasp Polar Medals have ever been issued, the other being awarded to Frank Wild - Antarctic 1902-04, Antarctic 1907-09, Antarctic 1912-14 and Antarctic 1914-16.

## TIKIGĀQ POINT HOPE

LIFE ON ALASKA'S NORTH SLOPE



**By Alex Partridge, Collections Co-ordinator, SPRI**

The Polar Museum's current exhibition, *Tikigāq / Point Hope: Life on Alaska's North Slope* was a long time in the making. When an acquisition arrived that dramatically altered its direction, we got a valuable reminder about the power of engaging with different communities.

In late 2017 the Polar Museum was approached by somebody with an old leather suitcase full to bursting with intriguing bone, fur, ivory and stone items that, according to their hundred-year-old labels, came from 'Tigara, Alaska'. Known by many today as Point Hope, the small Alaskan village of Tikigāq on the western-most extremity of Alaska's North Slope has a rich and varied history stretching back over millennia. The items in the suitcase, which represent several periods of Tikigāq's past, from stone arrowheads to more recent fur items made for sale by the indigenous Iñupiaq, were collected by a missionary called Reginald Hoare, who sent them back to his family in Britain. However, the information contained in some of the old labels gave us pause to think especially carefully about how to approach them. Some of the implements in the collection were labelled by Hoare as having been found in graves or 'among bones'.





The presence of grave goods in museums is highly contentious. Criticisms have been levelled at museums that have continued to acquire or display culturally sensitive materials with seemingly little regard for the wishes of the indigenous people who created them. Yet, the International Council of Museums code of ethics states that when it comes to such items, where possible museums should respect the wishes of originator communities. So, after some research and seeking advice from contacts in Alaska, we reached out to community representatives in Tikigaq to alert them to the existence of the Hoare collection.

We eventually got a reply from Tikigaq-born artist Othniel Art Oomittuk Junior who was very keen to hear about our plans for the Alaska exhibition. From this point things moved quickly and we welcomed Art's kind offer to visit Cambridge and give his perspective on the new collection. Now, it was in the course of these discussions that we got our next big surprise.

Art put us in touch with London-based historian Tom Lowenstein, who has written extensively about Point Hope. Tom described how, whilst visiting a friend some years ago, he was introduced to someone who had made a curious find in their attic. By an amazing coincidence this attic happened to be in the house that once belonged to a relative of our Tikigaq missionary, Hoare. To his astonishment, Tom was shown a wooden chest containing more items of ivory and fur labelled in the same hand as those in the suitcase and also accompanied with a huge box of letters from Alaska!





With Tom's help, we were able to reunite these various dispersed parts of the Hoare collection at the Polar Museum in time for Art's visit. Art expressed his happiness that the items had found a good home, even saying that the grave goods had an important story that should be told through the display. In turn, we learned so much more from Art about the items and life in Tikiġaq than we ever would have had we not reached out first.

# EMMA STIBBON RA AWARDED HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS



Emma Stibbon RA has been awarded an honorary degree - *Doctor of Letters*, by the [University of Bristol](#). Emma's work, which focuses on environments undergoing dynamic change has taken her to such diverse and extreme places as Hawai'i, Stromboli and Svalbard as well as Antarctica twice, once as the FoSPRI 2012/13 Antarctic Artist in Residence. Emma's new book, *Fire and Ice*, a stunning collection of field sketches published by the Royal Academy is now on sale at the [RA Book Shop](#).

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FoSPRI Annual General Meeting

Artist: Unknown



## and Lecture

**When: Saturday 9th November 2019**

***Save the date!***

Join us for our Annual General Meeting and a day of exciting talk and discussion.

Look out for more details in the Autumn edition of Polar Bytes.

**Where:** SPRI Lecture Theatre

**When: 9th July - 22nd September 2019**

Tuesday – Sunday 11am – 5pm

A new exhibition exploring anonymous art and bringing together for the first time a selection of anonymous art and artefacts from across the University of Cambridge Museums & Collections, including the Polar Museum.

**Where:** [Kettles Yard](#)

## Small Library, Big State - Alaska Collections in the SPRI Library and Archives

**When: Friday 13th September 2019**

10:00am - 4:00pm

This self-guided tour will introduce visitors to the diverse range of materials on Alaska selected from the Library and Thomas H. Manning Archives' collections. The event is part of [Open Cambridge](#) which is part of the national *Heritage Open Days* scheme.

**Where:** Polar Museum

## A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



**Celene Pickard**

**Executive Secretary of The Friends**

Dear Friends,

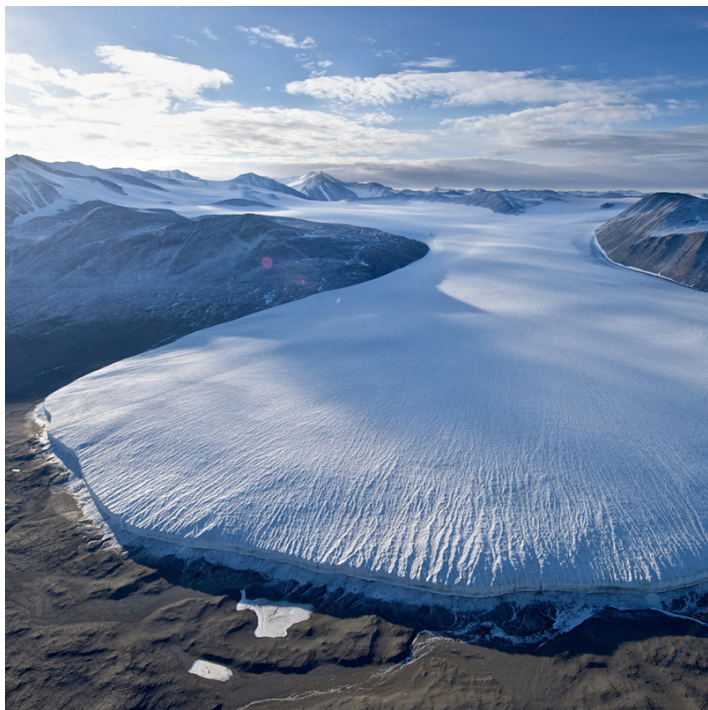
Please put the AGM date of 9 November in your diary. Unfortunately our guest speaker for the day has had to cancel, but we are finalising alternative plans, and will let you know asap.

Please kindly renew your membership if you have recently received a reminder from myself.

NEW FRIENDS - A very warm welcome is extended to all new members.  
PASSING FRIENDS - We are sad to announce the passing of five of our LIFE members, Walter Sondheim (a member since 1956), John Smith, F.E. Wooden, Terry Moore and Keith Shackleton. We extend our sincere condolences to their families.

Best wishes,  
Celene

# SteppesTravel



## ROSS SEA CENTENARY VOYAGE

***16th February - 18th March 2020\****

Join this special voyage organised by the Friends of SPRI to celebrate the Institute's centenary. Hosted by Julian and Evelyn Dowdeswell. An epic cruise including ship to shore helicopter transfers and expert naturalists. Sail in comfort onboard the ice-strengthened Ortelius.

*\*dates to be confirmed*

[Find Out More](#)



## NORTHWEST PASSAGE VOYAGE

***19th - 31st August 2021\****

Follow in the wake of early explorers as you traverse the mythical Northwest Passage. Visit locations associated with Franklin's tragic search for the Northwest Passage. Explore the home of the polar bear, musk ox, caribou and walrus. Travel aboard the RCGS Resolute - one of the most comfortable expedition vessels in the Arctic.

*\*dates to be confirmed*

[Find Out More](#)





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Our thanks to Argos Froyanes whose generous sponsorship make *Polar Bytes* and *Polar E-Bytes* possible



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