



SUPPORTING POLAR
SCIENCE AND HERITAGE

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POLAR BYTES

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Loyal readers since 1996



Lockdown Learning at The Polar Museum



The challenges and restrictions imposed on society because of Covid-19 have caused great anxiety and consternation, but at the same time, the crisis has been a strong driver of creativity and innovation and people across the country have shown huge resilience and an ability to adapt to these challenges.

Many people have taken on new technology for the first time, to communicate with friends and family or do their jobs. Surgeons more used to the calm handling of a scalpel mucked in and retrained as nurses and much-loved pubs instead of pulling pints, became suppliers of meat and loo roll to their village patrons.

The Polar Museum too, has shown great generosity and inventiveness and has used its time in lockdown to create a fabulous array of downloadable resources for online learning. One of the most daunting tasks for many parents during lockdown, particularly those who have been trying to sustain their own work practise, has been the supervision of their children's education and these sorts of resources will have proved invaluable. But, its not just children and students who have benefited. Anyone with an interest in the polar regions now has access to a wonderful array of videos, high resolution images and download packs - from whimsical origami penguins to more serious, thought-provoking projects that investigate the polar regions via maths, science, history and the arts.

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Scott
Polar
Research
Institute



A Radiosonde from the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1949-52, measured air pressure, temperature and humidity. It can be used to teach a variety of topics, from data handling to science reporting or as inspiration for art projects ©SPRI

The added bonus is that once normality returns, these resources will continue to inspire and aid teachers and parents for years to come. Discover for yourself at <https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/resources/>

Thank you to Argos Froyanes for their generous sponsorship



Welcome to our Summer Newsletter



Dear Friends,

I hope you and your families and friends are all well and staying safe.

At long last, the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are being eased in the UK and very slowly life is starting to get back to normal. I'm pleased to tell you that at the start of August some staff at SPRI were able to get back to work, and the Institute is preparing for the arrival of further staff and students in September. However, at the time of writing wider SPRI, including the Polar Museum, Library and Archives remain closed to the public. Consequently, we have taken the very difficult decision to cancel all the Friends events till the end of the year. Unfortunately, this includes the Friends' Annual General Meeting, which had been scheduled to take place at the Institute on Saturday 7 November. Instead, we will send out all the papers for the meeting, including the Chairman's Report, Treasurer's Report and News from the Director in the winter edition of Polar Bytes. We will keep you informed as and when things change, but whatever we do our top priority will be to ensure the wellbeing, health and safety of the Friends.

Given we will be unable to meet up in person possibly for many more months to come, our newsletter, Polar Bytes, takes on even greater importance to keep you all informed about what the Friends, and wider SPRI, are up to and what plans there are for the future. We had a tremendous response from the Friends to the last e-newsletter, which I know helped to cheer and brighten up a long day in lockdown for many of you.

Although the Friends events are cancelled, our other work continues. A priority has been to keep up the fundraising for the SPRI Centenary Campaign. I'm delighted to tell you that we have now reached over £140,000, and are now well over half-way towards our target of £250,000 to fund a studentship at SPRI. Thank you to John and Patricia Hollingsworth for their recent donation of £10,000, Susan Jourdain for her donation of £5000, and Andrew Sheaf for his donation of £1600. Also, many thanks to all of you who have bought SPRI Centenary First Day Covers. The covers were taken on the Friends expedition voyage to the Ross Sea, Antarctica in February 2020, and have been signed by Professor Julian Dowdeswell,



Dafila Scott, and the Captain of the ship M/V Ortelius. I still have a few left and it's not too late to buy one. But hurry, as stocks of the unsigned cover have now sold out, making the signed cover a highly desirable collector's item. The signed cover costs £30.00. If you would like one then please contact the Friends by e-mail (friends@spri.cam.ac.uk).

Another piece of good news is that the Friend's Artist in Residence scheme has re-started with the Royal Navy. The Royal Navy have kindly agreed a placement for the artist on the ice patrol vessel HMS Protector during the 2020/21 Antarctic summer season, probably in February/March 2021. The new Captain of HMS Protector, Captain Michael Wood, has told me that he and the ship's crew are very much looking forward to sustaining the excellent partnership they have with the Friends. We have now advertised the placement on the SPRI website and on social media, and plan to select the artist by early November.

Our most recent artist onboard HMS Protector was Andrew Lansley in 2019. He returned from Antarctica with an extensive portfolio of sketches and ink drawings and over 5,000 photographs. His wonderful paintings and watercolours documenting his voyage are now being exhibited for the first time at the Informality Gallery in Market Place, Henley-on-Thames. The exhibition "Works from Antarctica" runs from 5 August to 8 September 2020.

Planning continues for the next FoSPRI polar expedition voyage to Spitsbergen and Northeast Greenland scheduled between 31 August – 13 September 2021. We have been working closely with Steppes Travel, and Oceanwide Expeditions, to make all the necessary arrangements for the trip, which

will be onboard the M/V Ortelius. We have 20 berths set aside for the Friends, of which 12 have already been snapped up. Places are limited so don't miss your chance to go on this fantastic voyage to a remote and beautiful part of the Arctic. For further information and details of how you can book your place please see inside the newsletter.

Finally, for me one of the joys of lockdown being lifted has been the return of cricket. Last weekend I was able to watch the first game of the year in the village of Bluntisham where I live in Cambridgeshire. The match brought back magical memories of playing cricket on an ice floe on the Weddell Sea Expedition in February 2019. The game was between the South African crew of our ship, S.A. Agulhas II, and an international team of Expedition scientists and engineers. South Africa were winning, but play had to be abandoned after only a few overs because of a pitch invasion by a couple of inquisitive Emperor penguins!



Clark and Wordie in their cabin. ITAE 1914-17 ©SPRI

It would have been great to have had Robert Selbie Clark, the Scottish marine biologist on Shackleton's Endurance expedition 1914 – 1917, on our team. Clark was a super batsman and played international cricket for Scotland both before and after the Endurance expedition. Clark played for Scotland against South Africa in 1924 scoring 29 runs. But I've not read anywhere that he took his bat to the Weddell Sea and played there.

I'm sure that over time the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions will gradually be lifted, and SPRI will once again be able to re-open to the Friends. I look forward to that special day and for us to be able to meet together once again.

Please do take care and stay safe.

John Shears, Chairman

The Art of Confinement

Our most recent Arctic and Antarctic Artists in Residence tell us what they've been up to during their time in lockdown

Lesley Burr

The lockdown although a strange and at times unsettling period has proved highly fruitful creatively.

In my role as art lecturer with University of the Highlands and Islands I translated practical art classes into an online programme for art students. This was both challenging and rewarding and meant the students managed to complete their visual arts studies.

In my studio I've been loving experimenting with media and materials. In early 2020 I was awarded a Creative Scotland Visual Artist & Craft Makers award to support producing new monoprints inspired by recent arctic research. With no access to a print studio / printing press (due to Covid 19) I've been making hand-printed collage

monoprints. The visit to Kingait Studios in Cape Dorset and the National Gallery in Ottawa inspired me to combine different techniques and imagery.

I've been working on my artist's website ready to go online in August. On Friday nights I've been watching the Essential School of Painting's series of live artist's talks on zoom and delivered an artist's talk on 12th June. I share insights into my art practice over the last 30 years and highlight the FoSPRI arctic residency on board the CV Resolute. The talk is available soon on Youtube.

www.lesleyburr.co.uk



© Lesley Burr



Andrew Lansley

From the time I was appointed as SPRI's 2020 Antarctic artist, to the time I departed for the Falklands, I had 18 months of waiting. Now it is hard to believe that over a year has elapsed since my return.

The power of Antarctica has long had a grip on my imagination and I was creating polar images before I left. My previous travels had taken me to Norway and Greenland, but I knew that the scale of the scenery in Antarctica would be something else altogether.

I returned from Antarctica with a folio of the sketches and ink drawings and at least 5000 photographs. Antarctica no longer existed solely in my imagination, and the reality of my experience was somehow recorded in

my memory and a cache of visual material, from photography, large scale drawings, sketches and finished artwork.

You can see a range of my work from this expedition in upcoming exhibition at Informality Gallery in Henley-on-Thames: See the exhibition online at: <https://www.informality.co.uk/exhibitions/andrew-lansley-works-from-antarctica/>
www.andrewlansley.net



© Andrew Lansley



From the Institute

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

I am pleased to say that the Institute has been reopened, in an initial socially distanced form, since 4 August.

This means that we have divided the Institute into a series of zones, each of which is self-contained, and there is a one-way system in place together with cleaning stations. This has allowed key administrative staff to re-access the building, along with senior academics, library, archive, picture library and museum staff. Our staff are coming back just a few days a week on a rotating basis to minimise the numbers working in the building at any one time and are continuing to work from home on other days. After a successful three-week trial of these arrangements we are also allowing our research students back on a similar rotor system. The Institute remains closed to both academic and museum visitors (and to Friends, I am afraid) and we are working on plans for a partial reopening of the Polar Museum in the Autumn.



A tidewater glacier flows to the sea from the mountains of NW Spitsbergen © JAD.

As you may imagine, our plans for summer field work in the Arctic have all been cancelled and this is the first year I will not have been in Svalbard for part of the season in over twenty years. Likewise, we are unlikely to undertake any field programmes in Antarctica during the coming austral season. We have plenty of data to be working with, however, and the flow of papers in the scientific literature continues, with a recent contribution published in Science with the title of 'Delicate seafloor landforms reveal past Antarctic grounding-line retreat of kilometres per year'. This is research from the Weddell Sea Expedition of early 2019.

Spitsbergen & Northeast Greenland Cruise



31st August - 13th September 2021

There are still tickets remaining for our wonderful fund-raising voyage for the Friends. The Spitsbergen and Northeast Greenland Friends Expedition will be onboard the Ortelius and will take place in 2021. There are very few polar voyages available which offer so much variety in terms of wildlife and landscapes, which is what makes this particular trip so compelling. See the enclosed leaflet for further information and how to book.

SteppesTravel



SPRI Closure update



The Scott Polar Research Institute is currently closed to the public due to Covid-19 restrictions, but is now open to staff on a limited basis for essential research and teaching activity.

Our Polar Museum and library remain closed to the public. We look forward to welcoming you back to our public spaces; however, our first priority continues to be the safety of staff and visitors. We will only reopen to the public when all necessary safety measures are in place.

Please follow our Twitter and Facebook accounts, and this website, for further updates and news on our re-opening.



A Note from the Executive Secretary

Dear Friends,

We sincerely hope that you are all keeping safe and well during these difficult times. EXCITING news is that membership can now be paid/renewed by DIRECT DEBIT.



Enter the web address below to set up a one off or recurring direct debit membership: <https://tinyurl.com/yyho3mj4>

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS - If you have recently received a renewal letter from me, please do remember to renew as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support.

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

PASSING FRIENDS - We were sad to hear of the passing of Mike Bullock, who had visited SPRI several times to carry out research in the archive and picture library, most notably when he was carrying out research for his biography of Raymond Priestley. Priestley's Progress: The Life of Sir Raymond Priestley, Antarctic Explorer, Scientist, Soldier, Academician was published in 2017.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Friends Secretary -
Celene Pickard

Email:
friends@spri.cam.ac.uk

Tel: 01223 336 540

Address: The Friends Office, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER, England



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