



# The James Caird Society Newsletter

Issue 24 · Summer 2018



## A working day in the life of the *James Caird*

The *James Caird* name continues life on the high seas and is still busy at work down in the the Antarctic, and in other spots around the world. Find out more on Page 4.

Registered Charity No. 1044864



## James Caird Society news and events

### Pippa Hare retires ...

After many years of loyal support to the James Caird Society, Pippa Hare has decided to step down from her role as a Committee member. Although the Committee is sad to lose her contribution, members would like to celebrate her dedication, hard work and unerring loyalty to a vital association that has done so much to maintain awareness of Shackleton's leadership. Pippa's father, Harding Dunnnett, was of course the driving force behind the founding of the James Caird Society, and Pippa was always inspired by his example and determination to honour Shackleton, his people and their remarkable exploits. A debt of gratitude is owed to Pippa for taking on his mantle with such commitment, and all good wishes for her 'retirement'.

### The Society's activities

The Society is a Charitable Organisation and its main expenses relate to its aim of preserving the memory of Sir Ernest through, for example, the Newsletter, Journal and website. Additional costs include one-off events such as occurred during the Centenary. Other than that, the Society's spending is in the form of donations to projects, usually expeditions, which emulate the spirit of Shackleton, in particular of the Endurance Expedition

Since 2011 donations have included:

- £6,000 to Shackleton Epic Expedition (completed)
- £6,906 towards the restoration of Trevor Potts' James Caird replica (now on display at SPRI)
- £1,000 to Exercise Antarctic Endurance (completed)
- £4,500 to Fire to Ice Expedition (planned for 2019).

Over the next two years we plan to support Baz Gray's two Challenge Antarctica expeditions. Watch this space!



### Lady Shackleton

We are sorry to report the death of Lady Shackleton on 10 July 2018. Betty Homan married Edward Shackleton (Sir Ernest's younger son) in 1937. She was born in September 1913 just nine years before her future father-in-law was to die aboard the *Quest*. After Lord Shackleton's death in 1994, Lady Shackleton continued to live quietly in the New Forest, and she received centenary congratulations from the Queen

in September 2013 (pictured). She is, of course, survived by her daughter Alexandra, President of the James Caird Society, as well as two grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Friday 23 November

The AGM will be held at 5.45pm in the James Caird Hall at Dulwich College

The lecture will begin at 7pm in the Great Hall.

The speaker will be David L Mearns Oceanographer, author of *The Shipwreck Hunter* and a specialist in deep sea recoveries, with several high profile ship recoveries to his name

Dinner will be served afterwards

Meetings in 2019

May Dinner  
Friday 3 May 2019  
Speaker Sue Flood

### Elsewhere in this issue:

Page 3  
Our President's Year

Page 4  
*James Caird IV* and Amundsen

Page 5  
Ramblings in Antarctica

Pages 6 and 7  
Enduring Eye

Pages 8 and 9  
Cleaning up South Georgia

Page 10  
A Rodent-Free South Georgia!

Page 11  
Edinburgh connections

Page 12  
Miscellaneous

Page 13  
The Argentine Request

Pages 14 and 15  
Shackleton's Ireland

Page 16  
How to join the Society

## Some Presidential outings, June 2017–April 2018

13 June 2017

To Middle Temple for the Annual Falkland Islands Government Reception and Beating the Retreat.

15 June 2017

To Edinburgh to the National Library of Scotland for the 'Enduring Eye\*' – the Royal Geographical Society's superb exhibition. This had been visited by the President in London, Manchester and Birmingham. She had been intrigued to discover that each place had added its own details; in Edinburgh the NLS had projected images of the members of the Endurance Expedition onto the stairway.

1 July 2017

To Trafalgar Square to celebrate Canada Day, 150 years since Federation in 1867. The Square was taken over by cultural activities – including a giant floor map – music, drama and food. There were popular stalls selling 'poutine' a Canadian delicacy best eaten by the very hungry/very thin, consisting as it does of a layer of curd cheese topped by French fries, topped with thick brown gravy!

8 July 2017

To St George's School Windsor Castle for the Garden Party of the Friends of St George's and Descendants of the Knights of the Garter. St George's Chapel is, of course, the Chapel of the Knights and is at the Castle.

13 July 2017

To the National Maritime Museum Greenwich for the Franklin Exhibition, celebrating the discovery of his ship HMS *Erebus* in 2014.

29 August 2017

To the Pakistan High Commission to see Vanessa O'Brien, the first British/American woman to scale K2, have her fine achievement in 2017 acknowledged by the High Commissioner. She formally returned to Pakistan the flag awarded to her to take to the summit of this mountain which has proved fatal to so many.

27 September 2017

To Santa Ana, California, for the 'Enduring Eye' Exhibition. Its host, the Bowers Museum, dumped five tons of snow outside the Museum. Despite the 90 degrees heat it lasted a surprisingly long time to the bemusement of Santa Ana residents and the delight of small children. The Museum also provided 'huskies'. The President discovered that they had been bred with greyhounds (!) which accounted for their somewhat willowy appearance.

21 October 2017

To Oxfordshire for the Ice Warrior Ball. Jim McNeill of Ice Warrior will be leading an expedition to the northern Pole of Inaccessibility. This Lastpole Expedition is billed as the biggest, boldest, bravest and most important expedition of our time. The President is a Patron.

23 October 2017

To RGS to hear David Mearns's lecture on his discovery of the wreck of Vasco da Gama's ship *Esmeralda* which sank off Oman in 1503. A beautiful astrolabe was discovered.

10 November 2017

To Cambridge for the South Georgia Association weekend of lectures at British Antarctic Survey.

25 November 2017

To Selborne to Gilbert White's House and the Oates Museum for a performance of 'Mrs Oates Gets to the Truth', written and produced by Bryan Oates, and based on recently discovered documents.

1 December 2017

To the recently opened Postal Museum near Kings Cross to celebrate Antarctica Day with the UKAHT.

6 December 2017

To Paddington for the meeting of the Great Britain and Ireland chapter of the Explorers Club of New York. This was held at the Frontline Club.

9 December 2017

To the Cenotaph in Whitehall for Battle Day, an annual wreath-laying in memory of those who died in the Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914 and of all those who died defending the Islands in two World Wars and in 1982.

24 February 2018

To the Imperial Hotel, Torquay, for a Dinner for the 'Challenge Antarctica Expedition'. Our member, Baz Gray, is proposing a two-phase solo walk: Phase 1 from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole, and Phase 2 walking across the whole continent 1,800 miles. The President is Patron.

2 March 2018

To the Royal Overseas League, St James's, with some of the JCS Committee, past and present, to give a lunch for our retiring Chairman, Sir James Perowne. The snow did its best to disrupt proceedings – but failed. We all had a hugely enjoyable lunch!

23 March 2018

To Hull for the 'Enduring Eye' Exhibition. There were photographs of members of the Endurance Expedition who were from Hull, Green and Vincent. The President met Green aeons ago – a privilege.

8 April 2018

To RGS for the Travel Book Fair.

25 April 2018

In London, a meeting of the Friends of the Falkland Islands Museum and Jane Cameron National Archives.

In Conclusion\* ...

The sensational 'Enduring Eye' exhibition has now closed in Santa Ana and in Hull. The grand total of the footfall in all the places where the exhibition has been shown stands at a magnificent 286,000. Warmest congratulations to the Curator Meredith Hooper and to the RGS (with IBG) Head of Collections, Alasdair MacLeod. They have done Ernest Shackleton proud.

*The Hon Alexandra Shackleton, President*



## A day in the life of James Caird

The Survey Motor Boat *James Caird Ice Variant (IV)* can be deployed from HMS *Protector* to conduct high quality inshore survey operations throughout the world. From the remote and icy waters of Antarctica (see front cover) or the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, *James Caird IV* is able to respond to a wide range of survey tasking at a moment's notice.

Equipped with a Multi-Beam Echo Sounder (MBES), Side Scan Sonar (SS) and a suit of modern sensors and communications systems, *James Caird IV* is able to complete an array of tasks, ranging from high quality harbour surveys, Rapid Environmental Assessments (REA) or wreck investigations. The boat's hull is ice-strengthened for the southern waters of Antarctica, which makes her unique in comparison with her sister boats *Spitfire* and *Safire* (deployed from HMS *Enterprise* and HMS *Echo*).

A routine operational day will consist of pre-operation Boat Brief and meteorological update followed by the launch procedure from *Protector's* main boat davit. Inshore survey work will then be completed in support of a Hydrographic Instruction or Short Notice Task, with *James Caird* returning to *Protector* on completion of the day's work. Crewed by a team of Royal Navy Hydrographers, *James Caird IV* has an overall capacity of 12 but will operate as standard with five personnel.

During the past year she has completed survey operations across the Falkland Islands, Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. This summer *James Caird IV* will be deployed in the tropical waters of the British Indian Ocean Territories, and the team are looking forward to the change of temperature!

## Why did Amundsen win the race?

The Annual General Meeting of the James Caird Society was held on Friday 17 November 2017 and was followed by an interesting and informative talk on Amundsen by Geir Klover, Director of the Fram Museum in Oslo.

Geir's explanation for why Amundsen's party reached the Pole first was fascinating: Amundsen made a point of getting to know his men extremely well so that he was fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses; what's more they got to know and understand him at the same time, so a two-way trust and respect was firmly established. Perhaps more importantly he had undergone many training expeditions with the same team in the Arctic, making sure that each man knew what was expected of him. This training included living closely with the Inuit people and observing their traditions. Three years in such hostile conditions proved excellent preparation for the South Pole. The role of the dog teams was also paramount so that everyone was aware of their capabilities; the animals were an essential part of the group and their characteristics also needed to be understood to guarantee they gave their best performance. One fine example of this was Amundsen's observation that, in conditions where the snowy landscape and grey sky merged, the dogs refused to move forward as they could not see where they were heading. The Inuit remedied this by having the women of the family run in front!

Preparation was a key factor in Amundsen's success: he was adamant that his men should be equipped with the all the latest 'technology' – clothing, equipment, supplies. He discovered that the furs used by the Inuit were much more comfortable than off-the-shelf products from Europe, not to mention far superior in Arctic conditions. Amundsen's outfit was consistently warm, allowed air circulation, kept itself clean and was made of local raw materials. His complete ensemble, including undergarments, anorak, hood, mittens and boots, weighed only two kilos, compared to the five kilos of clothing that was more usual. All aspects of the team's equipment were meticulously researched and logged – and that included food supplies. Amundsen was only too aware of the nutritional demands that would be made on his men: they had to have supplies that would ensure they remained fighting fit throughout the gruelling expedition.

*Dorothy Wright*

Footnote: according to our President, the men on the expedition had actually put on weight when they returned from the Pole!



## Ramblings in Antarctica



At our May Dinner, held at Dulwich College, we were delighted to welcome as speaker our new Chairman, Nick Lambert, who was captain of the Royal Navy's Ice Patrol Ship, HMS *Endurance* from 2005–2007. He began his ramblings around the continent with a dramatic and very moving film of the ice, set to Mozart. If Antarctica had been on your bucket list before watching this, I can guarantee it would have soared to the very top of the list by the end. And if a visit had not been thought of, the question now would definitely be 'why on earth not?' Ice castles and cathedrals, UFOs, wedding cakes, dazzling precipices, soaring white towers and turrets, sculptures more stunning than all the Moores, Hepworths and Kapoors put together.

90% of the world's ice is there and 70% of the planet's fresh water, statistics that I for one never knew before. It's a demilitarised zone that's nuclear-free and we can only hope it remains that way. Nick told us about the work of *Endurance* in the region and taught us something of the techniques of ice-breaking in such a vessel; much of it depends on how old the ice is. The older the ice the denser it becomes, and so the tougher to break. Rule one of icebreaking? Don't break ice unless you absolutely must!

He talked about the work done surveying the area with

multi-beam sonar – a little like mowing the lawn, apparently (he admitted to not being a hydrographer by trade!). Much of the work of the Navy's Ice Patrol Ship (then *Endurance*, now *Protector*) is for scientific and research purposes but there is also a key element of surveying for the safety of navigation and especially the tourist cruise ship industry. 35,000 tourists a year may sound a lot but in fact the tourist industry is so closely monitored and controlled that the annual influx is surprisingly beneficial to the area. Some of them even swim in the waters 'warmed' (to 8° C) in the volcanic waters of Port Foster, Deception Island.

Princess Anne, Patron of the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, spent a week aboard *Endurance* while Nick was in command, visiting heritage sites in the Antarctic Peninsula and islands; not, apparently, as nail-biting an undertaking as entertaining our own illustrious JCS President! A fascinating talk ended with a moving picture of *Endurance* taken from a helicopter and capturing the wake of two RIBs. These circled the ship with an almost perfect white foam heart, an image which featured on the front page of a national newspaper alongside a heart-shaped potato for Valentine's Day 2006!

*Dorothy Wright*

*Nick Lambert's presentation (photo by Steve Scott-Fawcett)*



*Zaz and John (photo by Steve Scott-Fawcett)*



## Enduring Eye:

"I spend the day with Sir Ernest, selecting the finest of my negatives from the year's collection. 120 I re-soldered up and dumped about 400. This unfortunate reduction is essential, as a drastic cutting down in weight must be affected, owing to the very limited space that will be at disposal in boat transport..."

Hurley's diary, 9 November 1915

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is home to a remarkable collection of original photographic glass and celluloid negatives of the images captured by Frank Hurley, the official photographer on the Endurance Expedition, 1914–17; and which made the perilous journey to safety following destruction of the ship in 1915.

A century later this iconic collection, which documents one of the greatest stories of human survival, has been digitally mastered by leading experts direct from negative for the first time, using today's most advanced, custom-made technology. The result: the highest quality of image

achievable using every detail from within Hurley's original negatives and from which the first true reproductions can now be made since those by Hurley's own hand one hundred years ago.

To mark the importance of this moment, the Society has collaborated with master printmaker Georges Charlier and his team, based in Belgium, to create the first ever limited edition series of Platinum prints from these images with the highest possible production values, preserving these historic masterpieces for the wider enjoyment of collectors.

One of the great masters of photography, Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), called the platinum printing process 'the prince of all media'. It is one of the oldest, rarest, most refined, and stable of all black and white photographic printing processes.

The platinum technique consists in coating specially made drawing paper with a light-sensitive emulsion containing platinum salts using a special brush. The paper is then carefully dried and exposed to UV light through one or more full size contact negatives. This is a costly and complicated procedure, each print taking almost eight hours to complete.

When compared to conventional black and white silver prints, platinum prints exhibit an expanded tonal range, three-dimensionality, and a uniquely luminous, painterly quality. Unlike silver prints, where the image is floating in a gelatin layer on top of the paper, a platinum image is part of the fine paper on which it is printed. As well as their aesthetic quality, platinum prints are among the most permanent objects produced by man. The platinum metals are more stable than gold, and a platinum image, properly preserved, can last thousands of years.

Each of these newly created prints is testament to the skill and quality of Frank Hurley's photography; they will stand the test of time and are a fitting tribute to the spirit of the *Endurance*.

*Alasdair MacLeod*  
 Head of Enterprise and Resources, RGS-IBG  
 For all enquiries please contact:  
[hurleyprints@rgs.org](mailto:hurleyprints@rgs.org)  
 or telephone: +44 (0)20 7591 3060

*With thanks to the Royal Geographical Society for use of the pictures*  
 © Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Endurance – The End





## The Antarctic Legacy of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Frank Hurley



*South Georgia (part of a panorama)*



*Endurance under full sail in the ice*



*On the bow of the Endurance, Shackleton looking back at the camera*



*Endurance at night – side view*



## South Georgia declared rodent free

### More effective than the Pied Piper

South Georgia is one of the world's last great wilderness areas and amongst the wildlife on the island are 98% of the world's Antarctic fur seals and half the world's elephant seals. Four species of penguin nest on the island, including King Penguins - with around 450,000 breeding pairs. The island's birdlife includes numerous species of albatrosses, prions, skua, terns, sheathbills and petrels, as well as the endemic South Georgia Pipit, and the South Georgia Pintail. But, although the wildlife remains impressive, it is but a shadow of what Captain Cook encountered when he discovered and named South Georgia in 1775.

Rats and mice, arriving in the ships of sealers and whalers, had spread over much of the island, preying on the eggs and chicks of many of the native birds. Getting rid of them may have been far too large a task for the likes of McNish's Mrs Chippy, but not for SGHT's Habitat Restoration Project!

In May this year South Georgia was officially declared free of rodents for the first time since humans arrived on the island over 200 years ago.

This remarkable feat was achieved by the joint efforts of the Scottish-based charity the South Georgia Heritage Trust and its USA counterpart the Friends of South Georgia Island. Between them they raised £10 million to finance the project in an area of 108,723 hectares - that's eight times larger than any other rodent eradication area ever tackled anywhere in the world.

On 8 May this year Professor Mike Richardson, Chairman of the Project Steering Committee, said: 'We are delighted to declare that the SGHT Habitat Restoration

Project is complete and that invasive rodents have been successfully eradicated from the island. It has been a privilege to work on this conservation project, the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, and I am immensely proud of what the small charity has achieved - it has been a huge team effort.'

Invasive mice and rats arrived on South Georgia as stowaways on sealing and whaling vessels from the late 18th century onwards and preyed on ground-nesting and burrowing birds. The introduced rodents had a devastating effect on these birds, which evolved in the absence of natural predators and were becoming increasingly confined to rodent-free small offshore islands. In particular, the rodents threatened the existence of two endemic species found nowhere else on Earth: the South Georgia Pipit and South Georgia Pintail.

The Project began back in 2008, its aim to reverse two centuries of human-induced damage to the island's wildlife so that millions of birds could reclaim their ancestral home. The work was done in phases and, since the last phase in 2015/16, no sign of rodents has been detected, with some bird species already showing dramatic signs of recovery. But a comprehensive survey was essential before the results could be official.

This final phase took place in the winter of 2017/18 with 'Team Rat' spending six months on South Georgia searching for any signs of surviving rats using a combination of detection methods. Over 4,600 inert devices, including chewsticks and tracking tunnels, were deployed. The very best rodent detection experts were also brought in: three highly trained 'sniffer' dogs and their two skilled female handlers. In an incredible feat of endurance and teamwork, reminiscent of Sir Ernest Shackleton's epic crossing of the island, the handlers walked a total of 1608km, with the dogs covering 2420km, searching for signs of rats. Together, the handlers climbed the equivalent of Mount Everest eight times over, whilst the dogs made the ascent 12.9 times!

As Richardson commented: '...the birds of South Georgia are (now) free from the threat of rodents. The Trust can now turn its attention and efforts to working with the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands on conservation of a different kind: the conservation and reinterpretation of the island's historic cultural heritage to educate and enlighten future generations about our environment.'

*sght.org*



*Bird-dog (photo by Oli Martin)*



Sniffer dogs (photo by Oli Prince)



Phase 3 supplies (photo by Roland Gockel)



Phase 3 team - a job well done! (photo by Roland Gockel)





## Pictures from a rodent free South Georgia



*Wandering Albatross (photo by Tony Martin)*



Just some of the magnificent birds from South Georgia which are now safer thanks to the completion of rodent eradication on the island.

*Below: Pintail (photo by Tony Martin)  
Left: South Georgia Pipit (photo by Ingo Arndt)*



## Shackleton represented in Edinburgh

### Now Blackborow heads north

A brand new play about Shackleton's famous stowaway is making its way to Scotland this year after an exclusive preview event in London. *Shackleton's Stowaway*, produced by the Stolen Elephant Theatre Company, will be playing at 'theSpace' in Surgeon's Hall from 3–25 August as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018. It tells the story of Perce Blackborow who stowed away on *Endurance* and found himself adrift on the ice with the rest of the crew, hundreds of miles from civilisation. Written by Andy Dickinson and directed by Enrique Muñoz, this is a coming of age story with a difference!

For more information, please go to [stolenelephanttheatre.com](http://stolenelephanttheatre.com) and for tickets during the Festival: <https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/shackleton-s-stowaway>



### Edinburgh Folk Club Song Competition

David Cox has written a song about Shackleton and the Endurane Expedition that was shortlisted at the Edinburgh Folk Club Song Competition. Sadly, technology does not yet allow us to reproduce music in the newsletter but here are some of the lyrics which would undoubtedly have been appreciated by Sir Ernest, a poet and poem-lover himself.

For more information about the folk song, contact [coxde1962@gmail.com](mailto:coxde1962@gmail.com)

They sailed on the eve of the first  
Great War,  
Shackleton's men left England's shore  
Southwards to a world of ice  
He picked each man in his quirky way  
Common sense at the end of the day  
One man was asked if he could sing

*He won't stop till he's done  
Saved his crew one by one  
To do the job that's in hand  
Get them back to the Motherland*

The ship was lost and sank below  
Crushed to pieces by the polar floe  
All they could do was stand and stare  
The camera man's gloves were lost  
He gave him his at a human cost  
With frostbite he carried on

*He won't let them be found  
As a wooden cross in frozen ground  
Nor will he go hat in hand  
To any widow poor or grand*

They managed to make it to  
Elephant Isle  
No one around for a thousand miles  
He knew then he had to leave  
So he sailed again with five stout men  
Nineteen days in a gale force ten  
Hence he saved every man

*He won't stop till he's done  
Saved his crew one by one  
To do the job that's in hand  
Get them back to the Motherland*

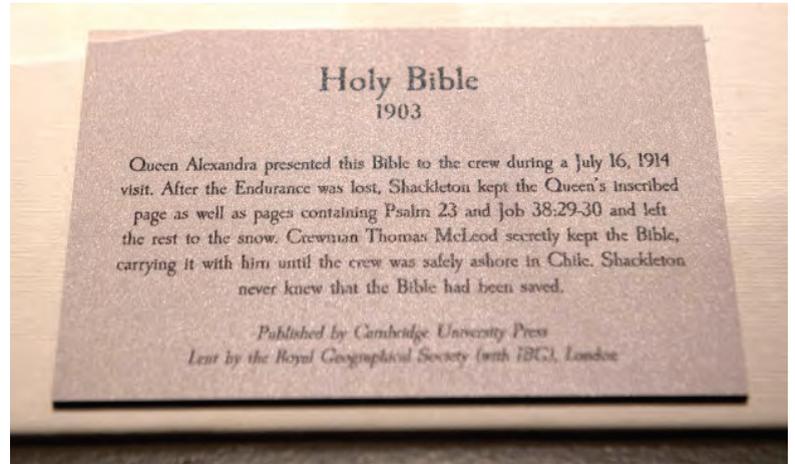
## Miscellaneous

### Questions, questions ...?

What happened to the missing pages from Shackleton's bible?

First asked on the JCS website Forum and subsequently via 'dozens of emails' this question comes from Blasisch Giovanni: 'during the last meeting of the JCS I returned to this topic with other guests at my table; the thesis I find most convincing is that Shackleton kept the pages torn from his bible in a pocket of his raincoat. We all know the story of the Endurance Expedition and how it ended. In particular we remember the navigation to Elephant Island, then to South Georgia and finally across the mountain. Waves of sea water have hit the crew; showers and snowfall have soaked the clothes, already well-worn, of each sailor, and of the Boss. Under these conditions the two pages of the bible, if not properly protected, will certainly have been soaked and so irreparably degraded. But does anyone have any further theories or even, better still, some concrete information?'

Please send any information to the editor: [dorothymanders@hotmail.com](mailto:dorothymanders@hotmail.com)



### A tail fin hero!

Sir Ernest Shackleton is the latest tail fin hero for the airline Norwegian. The renowned explorer's portrait graces the tail fin of a Norwegian Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft which took to the skies in May this year.

Since Norwegian's first aircraft took to the skies, the airline has always honoured iconic figures on the tails of its aircraft, using personalities who symbolise the spirit of Norwegian by pushing boundaries, challenging the norm and inspiring others.

To reflect Norwegian's growth in the UK, the airline has launched a series of UK tail fin heroes with Shackleton becoming the seventh.

## Raising funds through Scott and Shackleton

Rob Caskie is a professional story-teller who will be asking 'what qualities make a great leader?' in aid of the Woking and Sam Beare Hospices in Surrey. The talk will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26 September in St Andrew's Church Woking and promises to be a riveting evening. Full details are available from [randmhay@compuserve.com](mailto:randmhay@compuserve.com)

## The Argentine Navy made a request ...

### From Uncle Geoff to Sir David Attenborough...

It started in 1961 with a tiny, innocuous request (added as a PS) and led – via a short, sharp war – to the launch of a £200million research ship and a plan to search for *Endurance* in 2019.

Nearly 60 years ago my uncle, Geoffrey Hall RN, was aboard HMS *Owen* on his way home from charting the islands of South Georgia when he stopped off in the Falkland Islands to refuel. There he received an invitation from the hydrographer of the Argentine Navy to call in at Buenos Aires for a reception and ‘by the way could he do a favour by taking a line of soundings from the Falkland Islands to the Argentine continental shelf on the way?’

At that time the Falkland Islands were little known to the British public: merely remote windswept islands with isolated farms, thousands of sheep and colonies of sea birds. Hardly ever mentioned in Westminster or on the news.

While Britain slept, the Argentines were analysing my uncle’s data to reinforce their claim on the islands. When Britain withdrew its Antarctic patrol ship HMS *Endurance* in 1982, the Argentine Junta struck, invading at dawn on 2 April. Overnight the Falklands became a household name and a dare-devil long distance and violent campaign began. At the height of that conflict Margaret Thatcher had a secret meeting at Downing Street. Worried about the few unarmed British bases in Antarctica, she summoned a couple of experts, one of whom was the late glaciologist and Polar explorer Charles Swinbank, later a valued JCS member. 90 minutes and a bottle of fine wine later, Margaret Thatcher could appreciate what Britain had going on in Antarctica and the South Atlantic, all of which were worth fighting for. After the conflict ended, and inspired by these experts, she organised increased funding for British Antarctic Survey (BAS) in particular.

As a result, not only did the evil Junta and the ‘disappeared’ era go; Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands all became major tourist attractions. Since then fishery and oil exploration have been extended and British activity in the South Atlantic has increased exponentially, culminating in July 2018 with the launch of RRS *Sir David Attenborough*, a £200million research and logistical support vessel due to enter service in 2019. Also announced is the Weddell Sea Expedition 2019, privately funded, but largely managed by the Scott Polar Research Institute. They will carry on the tradition of British science and exploration by surveying and charting the Larson-C ice shelf – vitally important as it affects sea levels around the world. And they MAY look for the wreck of *Endurance* if they can reach the right area.

It is a big IF but in the next JCS Newsletter we might see images of the dark and crumpled hull of *Endurance*



RRS Sir David Attenborough (photo credit: Cammell Laird and British Antarctic Survey)

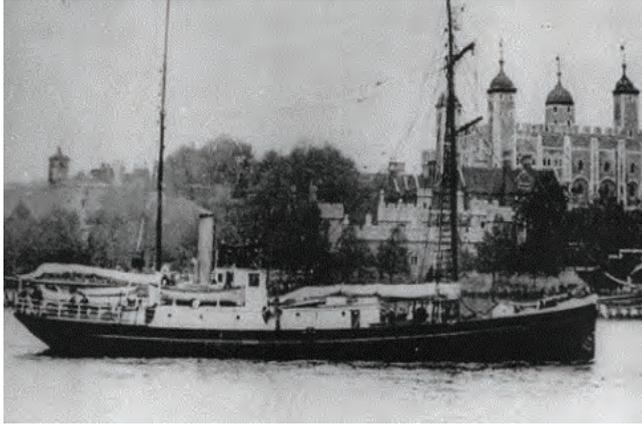
lying 3200m below the solid ice of the Weddell Sea. Very dark and very cold with hardly a sign of life, that iconic wreck will keep its secrets for a long time. The ice above is often 2 or 3m thick and likely to trap anything that ventures there. The free-cruising autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), so far from its mother-ship, might get lost or stuck or go native! No light has reached the wreck for 103 years. Wood-boring worms can’t stand the pressure. There may be some coral or sponges; nobody knows! Everything crushable has been crushed except possibly Shackleton’s saved bottle of fine whiskey under his bunk and a few sealed boxes of Hurley glass plates (the Boss and Hurley apparently stopped smashing them when ‘Hoosh Up!’ was called). But one day the silence of that deep might be disturbed by a hum and a tiny floodlight appearing unannounced and moving slowly near the remains of the wreck on its pre-programmed course before disappearing into the depths, with its data to be analysed hours later, and miles above. If the data reveals an unusual shape on the muddy seabed, the AUV can be reprogrammed to visit again and circle closer with a few lights and cameras recording. But that will be very risky. Interestingly this advanced AUV was used in the unsuccessful search for the lost Malaysian airliner (MH370). It will be keen to prove itself on this most ambitious venture, if it gets the chance. Like Shackleton and his men it will have to endure in the most extreme circumstances.

Little did my uncle know what chain of events would begin when he handed over the soundings plot over drinks at the Argentine admiralty in April 1961. Good for Britain, good for Argentina, good for tourism, good for Polar science and exploration, good for everybody!

David McLean

## Shackleton's Ireland

### Shackleton's cabin from *Quest*



Sven Habermann has taken delivery of many fine and fragile objects at his north Connemara workshop, and they come in all shapes, sizes, ages and condition.

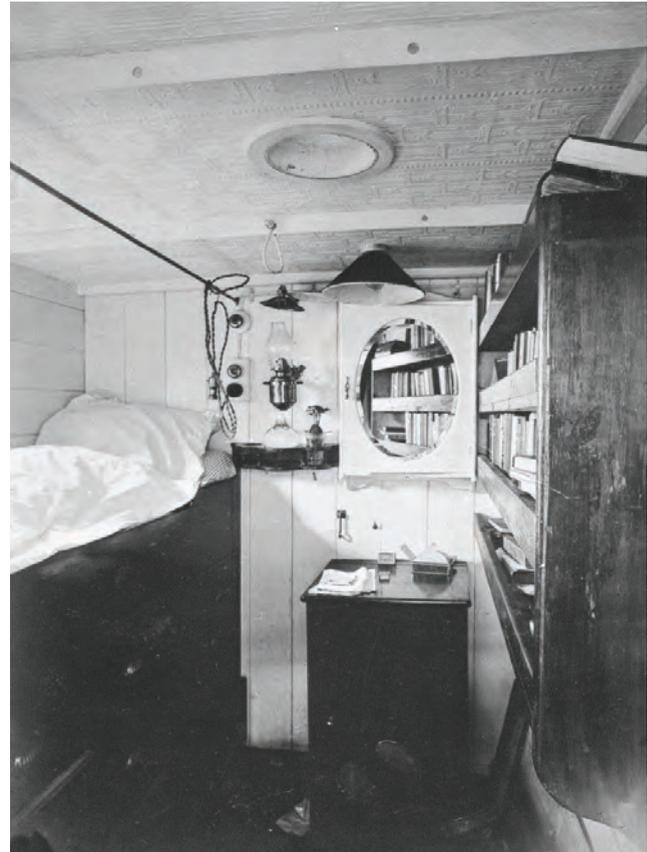
A delivery during autumn 2015 from northern Norway aroused such excitement that it attracted welcoming parties from Dublin. The century-old pitch pine structure had spent some decades as a Norwegian outhouse, but only after its first incarnation as a 'sea-cabin' for Polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

'I have had grown men cry when I showed them this', Habermann says, holding out a doorknob which 'the Boss' would have handled many times. Indeed, many a lump must have risen in the throats of those who have stepped into the tiny quarters where the Co Kildare-born adventurer took his last breath.

'Don't, please, carry away ... an impression of sumptuous state-room,' crewman Scout Marr said of the Captain's cabin, which had been built on board the ship *Quest* for Shackleton's fourth expedition to the Antarctic, in 1921. 'This sea-bedroom was little better than a glorified packing case; it measured seven feet by six, and when you were in you felt half-afraid to draw a full breath in case you carried something away or bust the bulkhead apart.'

Marr's detailed description of the interior – the bunk stretching the entire room length, with drawers beneath and a single porthole above, along with a small washstand, shelves well-stocked with books, a small collapsible chair, and an emergency oil lamp – has proved invaluable for Habermann's work. The timber conservator, who has managed Conservation Letterfrack for the past 17 years, has been charged with preparing the cabin for eventual display after the Athy Heritage Museum acquired it from Norwegian Ulf Bakke. The museum has the only permanent exhibition dedicated to the explorer, and runs the annual Shackleton Autumn School, established to commemorate the explorer in the county of his birth.

As Habermann explains, Bakke's association with the



cabin, and its journey to Ireland, is an adventure in itself. During childhood visits to his grandparents' farm above the Arctic Circle, Bakke would often be asked to go and fetch something from 'the Shackleton' down the garden. As he was to discover later, the 'shed' was a section of the deck fixture attached to a Norwegian-built sealer which Shackleton had bought for his 1921 expedition. It had been rescued by his (Bakke's) great-great grandfather when the ship eventually returned to Norway. Shackleton had debts and this low budget expedition aimed to clear them. *Quest*, however, was so small that a new deckhouse was added in Southampton to make extra cabin spaces, including the radio room and cabins for both Captain and his second-in-command, Frank Wild.

The ship left St Katherine's Dock in London on 17 September 1921, and broke down several times during its journey south. In early January 1922, it anchored off the whaling station at Grytviken on South Georgia where in 1916 Shackleton and fellow exhausted and malnourished adventurers had sought help for their colleagues stranded on Elephant Island.

From his diary entries while at Grytviken, Shackleton appears to have had some inkling of his mortality.

'Another beautiful day,' he wrote on 3 January 1922. 'Fortune seems to attend us this new year, but so anxious have I been when things are going well I wonder what in time difficulty will be sprung on me. All day long a light wind and clear sky was our happy position. I find a difficulty in settling down to write. I am so much on the



*qui vive* (on the alert). I pray that the furnace will hold out ...

On 4 January he wrote, 'A wonderful evening. In the darkening twilight I saw a lone star hover, gem like, above the bay,' and early on 5 January he was attended to by his friend and expedition medical doctor, Alexander Macklin.

'You're always wanting me to give up things – what is it I ought to give up?' Shackleton asked from his bunk.

'Chiefly alcohol, Boss, I don't think it agrees with you.' Then there was silence.

In 1923 the vessel was sold to Ludolf Schelderup, a Norwegian sealer, and refitted in 1924 at the Rognan shipyard. The deckhouse was removed, taken ashore and split up for use as summerhouses and storage sheds. Ulf's great-grandfather, shipyard-owner Johan Drage, took the Shackleton and Wild quarters back to his farm in Nordland. It was transported on a horse-drawn carriage to his farm at Saltdal near Rognan, where it was used to store equipment. Eventually the cabin passed to Ulf, who felt it was his duty to maintain it for historical purposes.

In 1980, it was loaned to the local museum in Saltdalen, and was restored and opened to the public. Shackleton is held in high esteem in Norway because his attempt to become the first man to walk to the South Pole provided the route guides for Amundsen in 1911. In 2008, Corkman Eugene Furlong was in a pub on the Norwegian Lofoten islands where he heard about the cabin and made a

connection with Bakke. Danish ferry company DFDS shipped it to Ireland at no cost, using the same trailer all the way to Letterfrack, accompanied by Athy Heritage Centre Museum committee member Joe O'Farrell. 'We were very lucky that the chief executive of DFDS is a fellow Polar enthusiast,' says Kevin Kenny, another committee member.

With funding from the Irish Heritage Council, plus enormous support from the UK AHT, Habermann and his team will attend to every last little detail in time for the cabin's transfer to Athy. Seamus Taaffe of the Athy Museum explains that it has plans to extend its space, with support from Kildare County Council. The museum's exhibits include an original sledge and harness from Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions, and photos and film footage, with material recorded by Frank Hurley of the Endurance Expedition. This more than makes a case for a dedicated floor, which will be designed to include an interpretation of the cabin's significance.

Taaffe's colleague Joe O'Farrell can't wait for the cabin's trip from Letterfrack to Kildare. 'It's not our style in Athy to blow our own trumpet, but we are still amazed and flabbergasted that we managed to acquire this unique item in the face of the stiffest of competition from the world's great Polar institutions.'

*Adapted from an article in the Irish Times by Lorna Siggins*

## 18th Shackleton Autumn School 26–29 October 2018

Lecturers, Drama, Film, Excursion, Exhibits, Polar Exhibition 'Scott'

The annual Shackleton Autumn School Festival is a 4-day event commemorating Sir Ernest in the county of his birth. The Autumn School provides the only forum for the discussion of Polar exploration/research in Ireland.

[www.shackletonmuseum.com](http://www.shackletonmuseum.com)



The James Caird Society [www.jamescairdsociety.com](http://www.jamescairdsociety.com)



## What the Society does

### The James Caird Society was founded by Harding McGregor Dunnett in 1994

It is a registered charity dedicated to honouring the remarkable feats of discovery in the Antarctic and to commending the qualities of leadership associated with Sir Ernest Shackleton KCVO. These qualities proved invaluable during the ill-fated but glorious Endurance Expedition. The subsequent rescue of the entire team, and in particular the vital role played by the *James Caird* and her crew, is a feat unique in the history of exploration.

The boat itself now lives at Dulwich College, Shackleton's former school, and is on display in the iconic James Caird Hall. The Society meets twice a year at Dulwich for a reception, followed by a dinner and talk, typically on a related Polar or exploration topic. These well-attended events are convivial and informative, with excellent food!

The Society also offers support to projects and expeditions which emulate the ethos of the Endurance Expedition – and the spirit of endurance.

### Membership application form

I wish to become a member of the James Caird Society paying a subscription of (*indicate as applicable*):

- £55 for three years, or  
 £100 for six years, or  
 £20 annually (*Payable only by bankers' order*)

*Subscription year begins 1 July*

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Profession .....

Telephone .....

**Email** .....

Shackleton connection (if any) .....

Please photocopy this form or download it from our website. Single year applications (**for UK residents only**) must also include a completed Bankers' Order Form which can also be downloaded from our website. Cheques should be made payable to The James Caird Society and should be sent, with the relevant form, to: Andy Kinniburgh, 43 Prideaux Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2NB. Tel: 07831 747479 and email [akinniburgh@f2s.com](mailto:akinniburgh@f2s.com)

UK taxpayers are urged to take advantage of Gift Aid which allows the Society tax relief on subscription. A Gift Aid Declaration Form is available on the website.

## Update your details

The Society communicates with members by email in preference to post (snail mail) where possible. Overseas members receive the newsletter and invitations only by email. Please keep us updated with your email address to our membership secretary, Tony Parker, at [tonyparker1947@gmail.com](mailto:tonyparker1947@gmail.com).

If your latest subscription is due or not yet paid please contact the membership secretary and send payment so that we can keep your records up-to-date.

*Antarctic Peninsula (photo by David McLean)*



### The James Caird Society 2018

President: The Hon Alexandra Shackleton  
 Chairman: Rear Admiral Nick Lambert  
 Vice Chairman: John Bardell  
 Hon Secretary: Dr Andy Kinniburgh  
 Hon Treasurer: Tony Parker  
 Committee: Steven Scott-Fawcett, David McLean, Roger Slade, Nick Smith

The James Caird Society, Dulwich College, London SE21 7LD  
 Registered Charity No. 1044864  
 Telephone: 01580 714944  
 Website: [www.jamescairdsociety.com](http://www.jamescairdsociety.com)  
 Email: [jamescairdsociety@live.co.uk](mailto:jamescairdsociety@live.co.uk)

Editor: Dorothy Wright, [dorothymanders@hotmail.com](mailto:dorothymanders@hotmail.com)  
 Design and typesetting by Strathmore Publishing Services, London EC1 and Elspeth McPherson.  
 Printed by iPrint UK Ltd, Whetstone, Leicester