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# ANTARCTIC NEWS BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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## THE AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION

### PERILOUS JOURNEY IN MACROBERTSON LAND

New Zealand geologist Bruce Stinear was one of a party of four who, in the words of the leader, had to "fight to survive" during a 200 miles winter weasel journey over sea-ice eastward of Mawson. A radiogram from Robert Dovers to the Antarctic Division reads as follows:-

"A party comprising Dovers, Stinear, Storer and Harvey departed from the camp on 17th May in fine weather with the intention of exploring to the east with two weasels, two sledge caravans, two weasel sledges, three tons of petrol and an emergency man-hauling sledge packed with a tent and supplies. Rations for five months were carried to cover the risk of the party being stranded by a breakout of sea-ice. The object of the journey was to visit Scullin Monolith, more than 100 miles to the east of Mawson, and to carry out scientific observations there. The entire journey was made over the frozen sea. As there was little daylight at this time of the year the men travelled mainly by starlight and moonlight. It was a magnificent spectacle winding among imprisoned icebergs under a full moon with the Aurora Australis blazing overhead. The party was blocked for one day on an island 34 miles out by a blizzard but then ran non-stop to camp on the sea-ice a further 60 miles away in twentyfour hours. Open leads in the sea-ice were bridged with bridging timbers. The party left this camp at 10 a.m. for Scullin Monolith 20 miles away.

### THE HOME OF THE BLIZZARD

"The last 80 miles of sea-ice to the Monolith is without islands or land and there is no possible point where the continental ice slope could be gained, as ice cliffs rise sheer from the sea-ice for 200 feet. At the Monolith they encountered winds of hurricane force, the sky was heavily clouded and the night was pitch dark. Two miles from the Monolith their emergency set of bridging was blown off its mounting on top of the second caravan by a gust of wind. The gale was too strong to permit the men to recover it, so it was left to be picked up later. Upon their arrival at the Monolith the men circled the shore, illuminating it with head-lights and searching for a place to put the weasels on land, but everywhere rock cliffs 1,000 feet high fell sheer to the sea. They, therefore, made camp on the sea-ice in the centre of the bay. If possible, the hurricane increased during the night, and the weasel sledges loaded with over a ton of petrol were blown about the bay on the ice. The main set of bridging timbers was blown from its lashed mountings and disappeared. With dawn the party was troubled to see cracks developing in the sea-ice, which began to break up. As the weasel fuel-tanks were nearly empty, the men attempted to refuel, but had hardly started when they saw that the break up was rapid - a matter of minutes only."

### FLOE-HOPPING BY WEASEL

Dovers continues: "We hitched the weasels to their loads and with a man on foot leading each weasel we attempted to reach the eastern corner of the bay, which seemed to be the safest point. By this time the largest floe remaining was 20 feet by 30 feet and the bay was a mass of broken ice and detached floes heaving a yard up and down in heavy swell. The weasels were magnificent, scrambling from one floe, which sank as weight came on to it, to the next, which did the same. The leading man was not much use, being whisked away by wind, so drivers could only guess the direction he was trying to indicate. Open water developed towards the eastern point so we turned into a small

inlet. Twenty feet of swirling brash-ice separated the loose floes from the shore. At this stage there appeared to be no hope of saving the weasels; the best we could hope for was to get the caravan containing our emergency ration onto land. Nobody had any illusions we were doing anything else but fighting for mere survival. We attempted to tow a caravan onto the rock with a weasel by a long rope running through a loop hitched onto a pinnacle of ice ashore, but the rope parted. The ice was now so broken up that the weasels were no longer manoeuvrable. The floe under No. 1 weasel cracked and the weasel began to sink.

"Abandoning the weasel we got a chain block ashore and laboriously inched the caravan towards the land. Bombarded by ice fragments and frozen spray, we clung to the ice pinnacle and worked with the chain block. A gust blew the second caravan over and a second gust righted it again, whilst the man-hauling sledge loaded with 500 pounds of gear was sent flying through the air ten feet above the ground, smashing into the tide crack and narrowly missing Stinear. How we held on there under that destructive wind will always be a mystery. Exposure was now taking its effect on all of us and to make matters worse a large hole was smashed in the hull of our caravan so that we could not get it across the water to the land-attached ice.

#### HURRICANE IN THE NIGHT

"As we would not have been able to survive the night ashore we went out to the caravan on the ice-floe, making sure it was tied to the land, and crawled inside. Harvey and Storer nailed a temporary patch on the hole in the hull. Battened down in the caravan we prepared to spend the night. This was the nadir of the journey. The caravan rocked in the wind and was under constant bombardment by flying ice fragments. Less dramatic, but more sinister, was the jarring of moving ice-floes and the scraping as they brushed against the thin plywood hull. Nobody slept much, and not seeing what was going on made the long night less enjoyable. Towards 2 a.m. the caravan gave a gentle lurch and settled in the water. A hasty inspection revealed that the temporary patch was water-tight.

#### HANGING ON TO LIFE

"With dawn the caravan was still afloat but No. 1 weasel was over on its side, hanging by one track onto a floe, flooded and jammed between floes. Miraculously, No. 2 weasel was sitting safely on a detached floe but both doors had been blown out. On other floes were the wind-shattered wreck of our second caravan and two weasel sledges loaded with petrol, whilst washing about in the sea in the tide-crack was the man-hauling sledge. The floes were littered with fragments of our gear. Our casualties were a nastily cut hand for Harvey and a frostbitten hand for myself. The days that followed were not happy ones. We could not risk our caravan across the tide-crack, which was open water, and we were obliged to remain camped on the floe. No. 2 weasel remained safe on its floe but each day brought further gales and uncertainty. Our first inspection each dawn was to see whether No. 2 weasel was still afloat, as it represented our best hope of getting home again.

#### THE REMNANTS REACH THE LAND

"The following notes summarize our progress thereafter: On 25th May - after three attempts - the man-hauling sledge and the tent were cut out of the frozen sea in the tide crack; on 28th May our living caravan was winched by a chain block across the tide crack onto land based ice; on 30th May a hidden beach was discovered and No. 2 weasel was driven across the dangerous tide-crack on to land; from 31st May to 2nd June we made determined but unsuccessful attempts to salvage No. 1 weasel. On the night of 2nd June we were again alarmed when land-fast ice under our caravan collapsed into the sea under heavy tide action. Fortunately the caravan, moored fore and aft against the wind, merely swung on its moorings like a boat in davits. On June 3rd we risked taking No. 2 weasel across the dangerous tide-crack, to tow our caravan to the weasel beach together with all sledges and the damaged caravan. Until 9th June we were occupied with scientific observations and with salvaging and patching the wrecked caravan, with the idea of leaving it at Scullin Monolith as an emergency shelter.

#### CARAVAN TOSSED

"On 10th June we experienced the most destructive wind I have ever seen or heard, Adie Land blizzards and tropical tornados included. Harvey and I, asleep in the weasel cabin, awoke to find the weasel blown over on its side. Not greatly disturbed, we collected ourselves and our sleeping bags, intending to join Storer and Stinear in the

caravan which was attached to the weasel by a steel strop. We heard a faint cry for help and discovered that the caravan was blown over too, trapping the men inside. We prised open the door and they escaped in their stockings. Harvey and I rigged a chain block to right the caravan but our efforts were wasted as, before we could do so, another gust blew the caravan right side up. Our earlier work on the wrecked caravan also went for nothing as it was completely shattered by this wind.

#### THE ROUGH ROAD HOME

"Our plans at this stage were fairly hazy. We could continue to live here until September but we were anxious to return despite the ice. What we needed was fine weather and a full moon as there was practically no daylight. However, the prospect of an 80-mile journey to the nearest land over newly frozen sea-ice under the prevailing weather conditions was not a happy one. Our load would also be a very heavy one due to the salvaged gear. We took the plunge and started our journey at 2 p.m. on 13th June, under dubious weather conditions which deteriorated as we progressed. At the point of no return we had a nasty moment when an empty petrol tank, the self starter out of action and a jammed accelerator all occurred simultaneously. We repaired the troubles and battled on through rising wind and snow drift but were finally halted 70 miles from the Monolith by a peculiar snow surface over which the weasel could not pull the load. At the same instant another blizzard struck us and we made enforced camp on the sea-ice with the four of us huddled in the weasel cabin. The main topic of conversation was what the barometer was doing.

#### A VERY HAPPY GROUP

"Twelve hours later the snow drift stopped but the wind continued at more than 60 miles an hour so we proceeded to relay our sledges one by one in 2-mile hops. Even so it was impossible to turn the weasel on that surface; however, by persevering we finally reached a safe camp on the island where we first stayed on our outward journey. In spite of the 5-day blizzard we were a very happy group with those 80 miles behind us and our camp once again on solid rock. At 2 a.m. on the 19th June, the blizzard broke and we were under way once more on the home stretch. The surface was heavy with soft snow drifts, making further relaying of loads necessary, but we rolled into Mawson at 10.30 a.m. on June 19th, rather to the surprise of the Station, which had not heard from us for a fortnight.

"So concluded the first journey of its type undertaken in the Antarctic when sea-ice was used in May and June for a scientific journey by weasel. Its happy conclusion was by the Grace of God and the unstinting and determined efforts of my three companions to whom I give full credit for the outcome."

#### A FINAL BLOW

However, the men's troubles were still not over. A later message received by the Antarctic Division stated that No. 2 weasel, which had safely survived the perilous journey, unaccountably caught fire in the middle of the night 8 hours after the party's return, while standing in its usual parking area at Mawson Station. The cabin was burned out and the engine destroyed. However, all the men are well after their hazardous and unpleasant experience. Because of the weather no further field work is envisaged before the end of August.

#### MEANWHILE AT MAWSON

After the departure of the field party on 17th May, the six remaining at Mawson resumed work, arranging stores, stocktaking in readiness, reordering supplies for the following year and improving camp between routine duties. This work was interrupted by two weeks of preparation for the eastern trip. The weather remained good until May 21st, when the strongest gale to date was experienced, with a water sky appearing to the north causing concern for the safety of the field party: justified by radio next night relating the ice breakout. Gale force winds on 25 to 27 May caused huts to creak and shake, but no damage was done and it was then fine till June 10th. The snowdrifts disappeared, revealing bare rock. During this period comparatively high temperatures were recorded, average 14° F. with light winds. Then we had blizzards from the 14th to the 18th with accompanying high temperatures, average 22° F. The absence of news from the field party by radio increased our anxiety for their welfare. The blizzard increased,

drifts of snow exceeding all previous levels we had experienced. This played havoc with radio communications, as precipitation caused static. A dog kennel was rolled fifty yards complete with pups, and mother in tow, but there were no casualties. The five pups are very fit, all delightfully clumsy. Georges Schwartz carves choice cuts of seal for them: a big relief to the haggard mother. The same blizzard blew a loaded dog-sledge half a mile to the west arm but it was retrieved by Doc. Summers and huskies.

#### WELCOME HOME

All were delighted on Saturday the 19th to see the field party return with the battered remnants of their train. The day was spent shooting questions and hearing tales of tough experiences, interspersed with hot baths in our new bathroom, prepared during their absence. But even their best friends kept their distance. This new bath had previously proved a trap, as the diesel exhaust passed unprotected over the end. Stooping to pick up soap caused trouble and rapid removal of the affected part to the tender care of Doc. Summers, with raucous laughter from onlooking "mates" as Ungvita and plaster were applied to second degree burns. An unfortunate fire destroyed the weasel at midnight on 19th June, despite desperate effort to save it, and the unit is out of service.

Party spirit prevailed throughout the 22nd in anticipation of midwinter's day. The hut was decorated tastefully with Dovers' historic flags from the Wilkins expedition and with colourful parcel decorations. There were good eats, smokes and drinks left by Mr Law for the occasion and Jeff Gleadell excelled himself with a beautiful seven-course dinner. Dovers is training the dogs during the short duration of daylight, in temperatures down to 44° below freezing. Two thirds of the sun's disc appeared over the horizon again on July 1st, after approximately three weeks' absence. Since the last blizzard, the marker flag on the fresh meat cache has been buried. Doc. is held to be the culprit for the loss of meat, and is now to be seen daily furtively disappearing in the direction of the cache with shovel, long probe and a guilty look; returning to report like old gold prospector "I think I will have it tomorrow". All the ex-fielders are O.K. Harvey's hand and Dovers' frostbite are better, with no aftermath.

#### SPRING COMES TO THE ANTARCTIC

July's record wind gust was 96 m.p.h. the highest temperature plus 34.6° and the lowest minus 20.8°: a record month, characterised by high temperatures and mild weather. The return of the sun is very noticeable. A party travelled to Mt. Henderson with the open weasel measuring glaciological stakes and enjoyed perfect weather. The net ablation since April has been three inches.

Seal hunting has entered a new phase. The seals have blow-holes but do not come onto the ice. The first seal for two months was taken Eskimo fashion by harpooning as he came up to blow and towed in triumph back to camp by weasel. All welcomed seal steaks back on the menu, especially the huskies. Dog training continues and is evidenced by the angry screams of drivers on the ice. Three husky pups raided the explosive dump, dining not wisely but well on dynamite. One died, but two were saved by Doc. Summers' efforts. It is now considered inadvisable to kick the pups. Bastille Day (14th July) was celebrated in honour of Schwartz, the French observer. All here are in the best of health and preparing for the sledging season. There is little change in the camp scene. There are drifts about the huts but no snow lying on the plateau. The ice is blue and bare and the whole area completely lifeless, except for an odd seal blowing in a hole.

#### PLANS FOR RELIEF

The "Kista Dan", which carried the expedition to Mawson last season, has again been chartered to carry out the reliefs this year. Present plans are for the vessel to leave Melbourne on November 30 carrying 14 men to relieve the present party at Macquarie Island. Expected back in Melbourne on December 17, the "Kista Dan" will leave again on December 23 for Heard Island, from there to Kerguelen, and then on to Mawson, where she is expected to arrive on February 1, 1955. Leaving Mawson on February 12, she will call at Heard Island to pick up the personnel there, and arrive back in Melbourne on March 11.

The new Mawson party will comprise 15 men under John Bechervaise, leader of the 1953 expedition on Heard Island.

ANTARCTIC WHALING

CATCH FIGURES FOR 1953-54 SEASON

We condense from the Norwegian Whaling Gazette the provisional results of the pelagic whaling season which ended on 18 March last.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Factory Ships</u>	<u>Whales Caught</u>					<u>Total</u>
		<u>Blue</u>	<u>Fin</u>	<u>Humpback</u>	<u>Sei</u>	<u>Sperm</u>	
Norway	9	1,120	11,755	15	102	640	13,632
United Kingdom	3	668	4,643	16	70	948	6,345
South Africa	1	348	1,717	4	-	157	2,226
Netherlands	1	212	1,074	259	-	166	1,711
Japan	2	200	3,272	150	1	595	4,218
U.S.S.R.	1	136	2,510	150	78	194	3,068
<b>Total:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2,684</b>	<b>24,971</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>31,200</b>

The three shore stations on South Georgia (Norwegian, British and Argentine) between them caught 13 blue whales, 2,656 fins, 11 humpbacks, 773 sei and 178 sperm whales, a total of 3,631 whales.

Owing to the changed conditions and additional restrictions on the catching operations, detailed in our March issue, it is difficult to assess the over-all result as compared with past seasons, but the pelagic catch during recent seasons has been:

1950-51	:	31,180	whales
1951-52	:	32,575	"
1952-53	:	28,325	"
1953-54	:	31,203	" (incl. 3 minke whales)

The new system of reporting results and deciding the date for the ending of the season appears to have worked satisfactorily.

The catch of blue whales is the lowest since pelagic whaling began, except during the war; but last season's fin whale catch is, except for 1937-38, the largest on record. The percentage catch of blue whales and fin whales is set out in the following table:

	<u>Blue Whales</u>	<u>Fin Whales</u>
1950-51	28.5 %	71.5 %
1951-52	20.0 "	80.0 "
1952-53	15.4 "	84.6 "
1953-54	9.7 "	90.3 "

The drop in the blue whale catch (1,182 fewer than in the previous season) may be largely accounted for by the new catch regulations, e.g. blue whales could not be taken until January 16 instead of January 2 as in the two previous seasons. But it is generally agreed among the whalers that the stocks of blue whales have decreased.

A total of 28,500 baleen whales were caught, worked out as 15,448.9 blue whale units, very close to the 15,500 blue whale units allowed by the 1953 ruling of the International Whaling Commission. Of these 15,448.9 blue whale units taken, 15,283.2 were processed, resulting in a yield of 1,964, 975 barrels of whale oil. The sperm oil production was 135,904 barrels. The total oil production therefore was 2,100,879 barrels. This compares with a total of - 2,334,805 in 1951-52  
1,998,094 in 1952-53

SEVENTEEN YEARS LATER

In January 1936 a C.S.I.R.O. Fisheries Division research officer in the Antarctic on the British research ship "William Scoresby" fired a metal marker into the side of a humpback whale. Recently the marker was discovered embedded in a muscle beneath the thick blubber of a whale killed at the Western Australian whaling station at Point Cloates.

WHALERS' PARLIAMENT

The sixth international Whaling Conference opened in Tokyo on July 19. In declaring the Conference open the Japanese Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries said its aim was "to derive the greatest possible benefit from the whale resources of the world without depleting stocks". Japan, he said, was in full agreement with this aim. Delegates were present from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R., as well as observers representing Italy, Chile, Portugal and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation. Among the proposals before the Conference was one that the maximum permissible blue-whale units be reduced from 15,500 to 15,000, but this was not approved. The resolutions which were carried at the Conference must be ratified within 60 days by the governments of the countries concerned before they become effective.

HEARD ISLAND BASE TO BE CLOSED DOWN

Mr Casey, Australian Minister for External Affairs, announced on 6 August that men and gear would be withdrawn from Heard Island next summer, when the base at Mawson, on the Antarctic continent, would be expanded. Heard Island, he said, had served its purpose as the stepping stone to the establishment of the permanent station at Mawson. The present complement of nine men at Heard Island would be withdrawn, but the buildings, equipment and supplies left on the Island would enable it to be used as a "staging camp" for expedition vessels. Some buildings and equipment would be transferred to Mawson.

It was expected that the Macquarie Island station, the South African Government station at Marion Island, and the French stations at Kerguelen and Amsterdam Islands would be able to provide some of the data now furnished from Heard Island.

The Australian base was established in 1947 and has been continuously occupied during the intervening seven years.

A.N.A.R.E. PUBLICATIONS

A collection of Antarctic photographs in volume form is to be published next year. The authors are Messrs P.G. Law, J. Bechervaise and A. Campbell Drury, the Antarctic Division's Photographic Officer.

The new Australian map of Antarctica referred to in our last issue, should be available by Christmas, and will be obtainable from the Antarctic Division.

AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC STAMP

A new 3½d. postage stamp will be issued by the Australian Post Office in November. The stamp will be based on the circular emblem of the Antarctic Division, External Affairs Department, containing a map of the Antarctic Continent, with Australian Territory indicated in dark colour. Surrounding the map will be the words "Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition". Some of the new stamps will be sent to Mawson, and to Heard Island and Macquarie Island. The Philatelic Bureau, Central Post Office, Melbourne, will arrange for collectors' covers to be carried to any one of the stations, where they will be postmarked and returned to the senders.

ARGENTINIANS ACTIVE

General Hernan Pujato has been appointed a lecturer at the University of Buenos Aires, and will give courses on "Argentine Antarctica". His appointment is for five years.

From Bahia Luna, (Moon Bay) a patrol has crossed the MacFarlane Strait, and from Puerto Yankee, on Greenwich Island, a party has started the task of scaling the island as far as Bahia Discovery, returning from there to the base. On Deception Island the personnel of the Argentine base has carried out glaciological observations.

The Argentine Naval Transport "Bahia Aguirre" sailed from Buenos Aires on 6th September, with personnel aboard for the icebreaker "General San Martin" which is being completed in Bremerhaven and will be used on missions in Antarctica.

GERMAN MAP OF ANTARCTICA

Dr. H.P. Kosack has kindly supplied us with the following information regarding his new map:

"The map of the Antarctic, scale 1:4.000.000, comprises 4 sheets. It is published as special supplements to the East-German geographical journal "Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen", so that each issue of the journal contains one sheet. The first one, together with an introductory text, has been published in No. 2 of the current volume. It comprises the Australian Quadrant. The next one (African Quadrant) is in print these days and will appear in No. 3. The Pacific Quadrant is completed and is planned for No. 4, together with the sheet I, (American Quadrant) and an index of names.

"The map is a physical map with layer tints for heights and depths. The political boundaries are given in an inset on sheet 3. Sheet 2 contains a reliability map, sheet 4, besides the title, a navigational diagram with isogonals for RAF-grid. The map extends to 63 degrees south, and in the American section to 60 degrees. The subantarctic islands south of the antarctic convergence are given in insets (South Georgia, South Sandwichs, Bouvet, Crozet, Kerguelen, Heard and McDonald, and Macquarie; the outlying islands of New Zealand are not represented, for they are north of this natural limit).

"To avoid political differences I have chosen to bring the names in those forms adopted by the different expeditions in the original languages. The map is in this way really polyglot. But for official use we will publish with the last issue an index of names. This index gives the forms of names on the map with, in addition, the names officially adopted by the boards of those states having political interests in the Antarctic, e.g. King George Island (map and official British) - Isla 25 de Mayo (official Argentine) - Isla Pedro de Valdivia (official Chilean) with reference to the position on the map.

"After publication in the journal the map will be available also as a special publication. Publisher is the "Geographisch-Karto-graphische Anstalt VEB", Gotha, Justus Perthes-Strasse 3-9, Germany. The price will be fixed after publication of the whole map."

ANTARCTIC BOOKSHELF

John Giaever: THE WHITE DESERT. The official account of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition. Translated from the Norwegian by E.M. Huggard. Chatto & Windus. N.Z. price 25/--.

This attractively produced 304 page volume is in the line of the classics of Antarctic exploration: "The Voyage of the Discovery", "The Heart of the Antarctic", "The South Pole", "South", "Scott's Last Expedition". It is indeed a historic publication, as it chronicles the beginning of a new era in the exploration of the Southern continent. To begin with, the expedition of which Capt. Giaever was leader was the first truly international Antarctic expedition, and the story of how Norwegians, Britons and Swedes got along together during over two years of work, hardship and tragedy is not the least interesting of the many interesting things in this fine book. Moreover, the expedition broke virgin ground. The Queen Maud Land area in which these 18 men lived and worked had never previously been explored: only coastline-charted from the sea and flown over by Ritscher's swastika-dropping plane in 1938-39. Again, this (with the French Adelie Land expedition) was the first party to make extensive use of weasels for ice-shelf journeys, an innovation which enabled the explorers to cover distances which would have been impossible for parties limited to dog-sledge transport. And the systematic use of seismic shooting to determine ice thickness and so obtain a picture of the country beneath the ice was a fourth factor which entitles these explorers to be acclaimed as pioneers.

The expedition had its bad moments: when geologist Alan Reece was hit in the eye by a rock splinter and had to have the eye removed; and above all when Ekstrom, Jelbart and Quar lost their lives through their weasel going over the ice-front into the sea. This unhappy incident is told with a reserve which deepens the sense of tragic loss.

Captain Giaever and the writers of the specialist appendices, on air-operations, the journeys of the glaciological and topographical-geological parties 1950-51, and the seismic journey 1951-52, present a balanced picture of a notable achievement, in a well-illustrated volume which the layman can read with pleasure throughout. There are two unfortunate omissions; there is no index and there is an annoying absence of adequate maps. A summary of prior surveys of the area, sketchy as they were, would also have been helpful to the ordinary reader. Otherwise we have nothing but commendation for a volume which everyone interested in the Antarctic will hasten to put upon his bookshelf.

L.B.Q.

AN "ENDURANCE" DIARY

V

Further extracts from the MSS diary of Harry McNeish. After eleven weeks on the ice of the Weddell Sea, Shackleton and his 27 men are now slowly drifting north on what McNeish describes as a floe "about 100 yards square" with "water showing in many places". A few of McNeish's diary entries must suffice.

Friday Jan 14th

.....we had one of the sadest events since we left Home happen there was 27 of our faithful dogs shot to save our food supplies

Sun Jan 16th

.....there was 7 dogs shot this afternoon that leaves us with 15 but I think we are going to keep 6 in case we have to march if we dont get leads for the boats

Mon Jan 17th

.....We got 4 seals this forenoon but we are not getting so much to eat as some of our pessimists has been running around the camp saying we cant get (out) of the ice this summer there was 2 dogs shot and we had a visit from a giant petril which shows there must be open water close too

Tuesday Jan 18

.....it is hard lying down every night cold and hungry

.....It is a year today since we were beset in the ice

Friday Jan 21st

.....well pleased with our drift north 72 miles we want 2 days more & then a calm & open leads & we will be Home by May if all goes well but we are very uncomfortable at present with everything being wet .....

Sat Jan 22nd

Lat 65 32 $\frac{1}{2}$  long 52-22 West We have done 11 miles today but the SW wind has finished & there is a light northerly breeze at present our camp was a great sight today with masts and oars standing up in the snow and clothes beds boats & finscoes & blankets all out to dry any one would have thought it was our washing day & it was far from that as we have not had our faces washed since we left the ship the only wash we have now is a rub with soft snow but it wont be long now as it is only 153 miles to Paulet Island where we know there is plenty of food and I expect soap to if we only had the water for the boats

Thur Jan 27th

.....it is getting a bit monotonous now. We are 92 days adrift on the ice now and it only seems a few days since the ship was crushed.....

Monday Jan 31st

Lat 65-15 South long 51-57 West Temp Plus 27 We got 1 seal & Hurley took 2 shots at another but it was not brought in. The party brought a few books from the Ocean camp which is in great demand. We are very short of reading matter. I have read the Bible from beginning to end. I made a pair of ski sticks today

Tuesday Feb 1st. Lat 65- 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  S long 52-10 West

Wednesday Feb 2nd

Lat 65-14 $\frac{1}{2}$  S long 52-18 West Temp Plus 29 There was a party went to Ocean camp & brought the boat we had left there & a few more stores & tobacco the wind at present is light SSE

Friday Feb 4th

Temp plus 25 It has been overcast all day. With a strong breeze of SSE wind which should help us along if the ice is not up against the land. There has been a lot of pressure going on. Which makes me believe that such is the case. We squared up the boats & put all the gear in them ready to move at a moments notice as there has been two large pieces broken of our floe in the last 24 hours. But it is still big enough for us yet. I made a pair of felt boots to fit inside my burberrys and fincoes & for sleeping with at night As it is getting a bit cold now after sundown and the nights are getting dark again. We hope to be on land of some kind before the Darkness sets in.

Monday 7th

Lat 65 - 2 South Long 53.3 West Temp Plus 28. I(t) have been blowing hard from the SE since Saturday ...There is a big movement going on at present. The two bergs we passed on our way here from Ocean Camp has changed their position. 3 points within the last 4 hours. So the piece we are on is either turning round or we have broken away from the main body of ice there is nothing to do about the camp only we talk of what we will eat when we get to civilisation I myself would give a sovering for I slice of bread & butter & two duck eggs

Tuesday 8th

.....There is open pools alround now. So we expect another blow from the SW. will give us an opening. We got 2 penguins today. Hussey is busy at present with his 6 tunes which is heart breaking.

Friday 11th

Temp Plus 30 The wind has veered round to E  $\frac{1}{2}$  S but light. There is more loosening in the ice now than has been since we left the ship. And the same applies to our stomachs we have a cup of tea at breakfast & water for dinner & supper the cocoa is finished but we have plenty milk. But no blubber to warm water for mixing the milk. So there is nothing for it but get into our sleeping bags and smoke away the hunger .....

Thurs Feb 17th

Lat 64-54 South Long 53.15 West Temp at midnight Plus 15 noon 25 Plus There is a lot of open pools around us again Which I think is owing to the last 12 hours calm But we could get no observations of how the water looked beyond 100 yards. There is a breeze sprung now from the NE. Which would do us a great deal of good but better than NW if it clears up tomorrow we might get a start in the boats we got 68 adelic & 1 Emperor penguins & a seal so we have a(s) much blubber as keep the pot boiling for a month at least. We had for breakfast a cup of Beauve's Pemman mixed with dog pemman dinner a dog pemman bannock & a cup of warm milk supper stewed penguin heart liver eyes tongues toes & God knows what else with a cup a water I don't think any of us will have nightmare with over eating

Friday Feb 18th

Our luck is out for the time at least as the pools have all closed up again.

(To be continued)

#### MORE SCIENTISTS ON THE AUCKLAND ISLANDS

The naval corvette "Tui" is to visit New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands shortly. Present plans are that the "Tui" will leave Dunedin on November 5, arriving at Port Ross, Auckland Islands, on the 7th. Here a party of seven scientists will be put ashore.

Dr. R.A. Falla, Director of the Dominion Museum and President of the N.Z. Antarctic Society, will be in charge. Mr M.L. Leamy is to study the island soil, thought to be zonal peats, and by a series of pits and trenches from highland to lowland, will try to determine the degree of decomposition of the peat material, and whether there is any mineral soil below the peat. Mr E.S. Gourlay, entomologist, will make a collection of insects from the littoral, the "forest" area and the sub-alpine region. Mr A.J. Healy will study the impact of introduced plants on the native vegetation, and Mr N. Moar, another botanist, will study the peat, gathering samples for later analysis of the types of plant contributing to the formation of the peat and for examination of its pollen content. Dr. K. Wodzicki and Mr R.H. Taylor (who visited the islands last March) will be concerned with animal ecology and will be studying the introduced mammals with special reference to rabbits, their reproduction and parasites. If circumstances permit, study will also be made of the wild cattle, goats, pigs and cats, and the introduced birds.

An eighth scientist, Mr D.M. Garner, geophysicist, will establish four hydrological stations at the corners of a ten-mile square, recording temperatures and collecting water samples from the surface to the bottom in order to establish the physical characteristics of the water over the Campbell Island plateau.

The "Tui" will go on to Campbell Island, arriving there on the 10th to carry out a survey of Perseverance Harbour, where the present camp site is located. Leaving Campbell Island on November 11, the vessel will return to the Aucklands, pick up the scientific party, and leave on the 14th for Bluff.

#### AUCKLAND ISLANDS GOLD

Further attempts are to be made to recover the 2000 ounces of gold reputed to have been on board the three-masted clipper "General Grant" when she was wrecked on the Auckland Islands in 1866 while carrying gold and gold-miners from New Zealand.

An Auckland man, Mr Charles Levard, has announced plans to go south in the trawler Waipu in mid-October, and to endeavour to salvage the gold from the shore.

An Australian, Mr William Havens, left the Clyde in August, bound on the same quest. His motor fishing vessel broke down near Boston, Lincolnshire, but Mr Havens and his three companions expected to continue their voyage about a week later.

"HOLMLEA" UNDER A.N.A.R.E.

TO MACQUARIE AND AUCKLAND ISLANDS. MARCH, 1954.

( by Capt. J.F. Holm )

"Under the orders of A.N.A.R.E." was reminiscent of wartime practice to those on board M.V. "Holmlea" when this N.Z. coaster recently forsook humdrum coastal trading to do a "mercy" trip to Macquarie Island under charter to the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition.

"Holmlea" sailed from Wellington shortly after 7 p.m. on the evening of 12th March, direct for Auckland Islands, which were sighted on the late afternoon of Monday, 15th March. As it is very near the equinox, darkness set in about the same time as it would in New Zealand, possibly a few minutes later, and the next few hours were rather anxious ones, as the whole success of the timing of our trip depended on departing from Auckland Islands this same evening. If we had been delayed until the following morning, it would probably mean a night time arrival at Macquarie Island and consequent delay there also.

It was getting very dark as we closed the land. How much faith I wondered, could I place on the charts of Auckland Islands? However, after a good deal of misgiving we managed to make out the entrance to Port Ross a few miles in the distance before it was completely dark, (and if any stranger should be entering the port in the future, it is worth noting that the bay just to the North of the entrance could easily be confused with it in the half light).

Hoping hard that the chart was reasonably accurate, we stood in, not daring to slow down on account of the rapidly fading light. The scientists got their considerable quantity of gear ready (which included food for three weeks in case of emergency) between anxious glances at the shore, and I think they were duly impressed at being landed on the tiny beach in the darkness on this small uninhabited island 750 miles from their port of departure.

We dropped anchor about half a mile off the small and only landing place on Enderby Island. The surf boat was lowered and scientists and gear were landed on the beach at about 8.30 p.m. The party was greeted by a large herd of Sea-lions, one of which made a snap at a member of the boat's crew, but was rapidly and effectively repelled by one of the scientists, Mr Dell, who gave it a good hard hit on the nose (its most vulnerable spot) with a piece of drift-wood. The landing was rendered quite difficult by the unusual easterly swell running into the Harbour, and after the scientists and gear had been put ashore the surf boat dragged her anchor home, and broached broadside on to the beach. It was only with considerable difficulty, and with the assistance of the men landed that the boat's head was finally pushed seaward and she was able to proceed back to the ship. We were just commencing to lower a life-boat from the ship to help with the proceedings when those on shore were successful. No damage whatever was done to the boat, and fortunately the men on shore had dry clothes in which to change. Contrary to reports in New Zealand the boat shed was found in comparatively good condition. They were therefore able to sleep in this shed throughout their stay on the Island.

The most amusing incident was the short but excellent swimming dash by the Chief Engineer, who was instructed by the Second Mate in charge of the surf boat to swim out to it, after they had got the boat clear, as he would not risk going back on the beach. The Second Mate did not realise that the Chief Engineer was clothed in thigh sea-boots, which are reported to make swimming impossible. The Chief's protests were not heard in the boat through the noise of the surf, and he had no option but to swim for it. He was pulled aboard in a somewhat exhausted condition. The boat was reloaded and we weighed anchor at approximately 10 p.m. and proceeded down the East coast before taking departure for Macquarie Island.

The weather on the way to Macquarie Island was again unusual in that we experienced mainly easterly weather, with a continuation of the easterly swell. Visibility was not good, and unfortunately, decreased on the day we picked up Macquarie Island. With poor visibility on the afternoon of Wednesday, 17th, it was my intention at about 1.30 p.m. as land had not been sighted to alter course to the southward, till the ship reached a deadreckoning latitude half way up the 20 miles length of Macquarie Island, and then to steam slowly in to the westward if visibility permitted, until land was sighted, as this coast of the Island is clear of outlying dangers. However, just as we were turning to follow this procedure, we sighted the Judge and Clerk Islands, which lie about 8 miles to the North of the northern end of Macquarie Island. We headed straight for these Islands, and taking

departure from them, picked up the headland to the south of Hasselborough Bay, known as Handspike Point. By this time, visibility was very poor, and it was most difficult to establish a correct position, although I felt confident we were somewhere in the entrance to the Bay. We were in Radio-telephone communication with the Island, but they could not see us from shore, nor could they hear the ship's whistle. They lit a big fire on the beach, which although not visible at the time, later proved very helpful.

Owing to existing conditions I deemed it advisable to drop the anchor and lower the surf boat which was to endeavour to establish our position, and guide us to the correct anchorage. Before the surf boat was in the water, the weather temporarily cleared, and we were able to define the beach, and Anchor rock, and weighed anchor and proceeded about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile nearer to the beach.

The usual Bay worked when landing stores at Macquarie Island is Buckles Bay, which is on the opposite side of the narrow Peninsula of Hasselborough Bay, but owing to the easterly swell, we were unfortunately unable to work Buckles Bay, and for this reason, we landed the stores and embarked the sick man from the Beach in Hasselborough Bay.

Conditions were far from pleasant during this time. The ship was rolling in the heavy swell, although conditions on the beach for the surf boat were reasonably good. The wind was from the South East, fresh and very cold, it was raining moderately and visibility was never more than one mile, often only a few hundred yards or less.

The First Mate and Chief Engineer proceeded with the boat's crew ashore in the surf boat, and after landing mails and cargo, proceeded to the living quarters on the Island, where they had a pleasant sojourn with the men at the station while they repaired a portion of our windlass, which had been broken when heaving in the anchor at Auckland Islands, and also filled a tooth of the Chief Engineer's which had been paining him greatly on the trip down from New Zealand. This was done by a Danish doctor on shore, and was apparently a very good job.

Owing to circumstances and the prevailing weather conditions I felt it inadvisable to leave the bridge during our  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours in Hasselborough Bay, and in consequence I was feeling very cold and miserable and it was for this reason (and because I felt I should let those sitting comfortably in their office chairs in Wellington know) that in my radio message to Head Office I added the two words "weather unpleasant". These two words were apparently the cause of press statements in N.Z. that we were encountering bad weather.

The Island itself looks most inhospitable and there is no vegetation worthy of the name, certainly no trees, shrubs or grass: though we were astonished to learn that they boasted of one domestic cow "Betsy" which by dint of great care had so far weathered the summer months. Whether it would come through the winter without being turned into beef, was a matter of grave doubt. On what it lived we never really found out, but we did take the opportunity of replenishing our supply of fresh milk.

As an interesting side line on the value of food in the sub-Antarctic, it might be said that at Macquarie Island we were offered 1 cwt. in tins of asparagus, 1cwt. in tins of salmon and a quantity of tea, in exchange for even a small portion of yeast. Unfortunately for us, conditions were such that I would not agree to the boat making a second trip, or we would have been very happy to have done the swap.

In spite of very persistent persuasion on the part of the men on shore to remain for the night, the boat was back at the ship by 8 p.m. The hoisting on board of the boat was extremely difficult, owing to the rolling of the ship, but was finally completed without accident, and we weighed anchor and departed from the Island at 8.45 p.m.

(To be continued)

MESSAGE DELIVERED

When flensers cut into a 41-ton whale at Albany on June 23 they noticed a small dentifrice tin in the whale's stomach. Inside was a piece of paper bearing the partly obliterated name and address of a South African on the factory-ship Willem Barendsz. On the back of the sheet were words showing that it had come from a book used by the crew in connection with a lottery on the quantity of oil taken during the 1953-54 Antarctic whaling season.

NEW ZEALANDERS ON CAMPBELL ISLAND

In a radio-telephone conversation with the "Bulletin", Mr L. McManus, leader of the New Zealand party on Campbell Island, gave the following details of recent happenings on the island.

The winter has been a severe one and it was not possible to do much outdoor work. Within, the kitchen was painted, and the jetty at Tucker Cove as well as the landing area was top-dressed with gravel. An 8 x 12 plot outside the entrance to the living-quarters was concreted, involving the cartage of gravel and sand from the beaches. Two garden plots were ready for planting at the time (early September).

There has been trouble with the mechanical plant: only one generator is working for the R/T set and spares are awaited before the other can be serviced. The diesel generating-plant for camp lighting has also been giving trouble, but has been got going again. An air-drop to supply spare-parts is under consideration.

There has been a lot of snow, but it does not lie much. The heaviest fall was one of six inches. The lowest temperature recorded was 23°. A morning job throughout July and into the first two weeks of August was thawing out the pipes for the water supply. Though the weather had improved, high winds were frequent, and the aeri-als had come down. The men tried ski-ing: their efforts were not very satisfactory but they had a lot of fun.

The 27 chickens have been considerably reduced in numbers, for one cockerel has gone into the pot each week for the past two months, and will, says Mr McManus, "until the boat comes". Dehydrated potatoes, cabbage and onions go much better with a little chicken. And there were only nine pullets in the hatchings. The men still hunt sheep from the launch, bringing home two to four at a time and tethering them until "required". However, since the first lambs appeared about the end of August, rams only have been killed.

On August 26, while a party was at the foot of Mt. Honey for sheep, a 40 - 60 ft. whale surfaced in the harbour a hundred yards from the shore. It swam up harbour, surfacing several times, and then disappeared. It was thought to be a hump-back. Since then, regular whale-spotting trips have been made to Col in the North West Bay area and twelve or more whales have been seen at a time. Only one or two bull sea-elephants have been noticed, though their roaring can often be heard. Few sea-bears or sea-lions have been seen either. A few sea-leopards in Tucker Cove have attracted the photographers with their magnificent array of teeth. The albatross chicks are sprouting their wing feathers and were expected to take to the wing in a few weeks' time.

The party are all well, and looking forward to their relief.

CAMPBELL ISLAND RESERVE

At the request of the Civil Aviation Administration, the Lands Department has by Gazette notice set apart practically the whole of the Campbell Island group, some 28,000 acres, as a reserve "for the preservation of flora and fauna". The officer in charge of the station is appointed "ranger", with legal powers to ensure the protection of the wild-life on the island. Mr McManus has also been appointed "customs officer" for the island.

AIR-DROP TO CAMPBELL

The air-drop referred to above was successfully carried out on September 21, after an attempt four days earlier had been foiled by low-lying clouds. A four-engined Hastings transport plane of the R.N.Z.A.F., piloted by Squadron-Leader R.D. Bolt and with Mr C.P.B. Sewell, leader of the island-party last year, as "guide", left Whenuapai at 7 a.m. Arriving over the island about noon, the plane dropped by parachute the essential generator parts and all except three of the other containers (with vegetables, fruit, mail etc.) which it was hoped to deliver, arriving back at Whenuapai about 6 p.m.

We hope to publish a fuller account of the drop in our next issue.

LES ILES KERGUELEN

The relief party for the Kerguelen Islands will leave France by air about December 1, transfer to the S.S. "Vercors" at Tamatave (Madagascar), and should reach the Kerguelen Islands about December 17. The returning party will reach Tamatave about January 8, whence they will leave by air for France.

The expedition reports that this July was the worst for four years. Storms raged without a break the whole month. August was just as bad. But in spite of these wretched atmospheric conditions the expedition has been able to proceed normally with all its regular duties. In addition, the opportunity has been taken to complete several amenities about the camp and the meteorological station. A wooden barge capable of carrying two tons has been constructed in order to hasten unloading operations during the relief.

FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES SURVEY

April - August, 1954.

Base A. Port Lockroy. Frequent gales have generally confined activities to the vicinity of the base, and various improvements have been carried out in the hut. These have included improvements to the darkroom and the installation of another fire-fighting unit. During a few days calm weather, a boat trip was made to a shag rookery to obtain stock for the larder.

Base B. Deception Island. Strong winds have persisted throughout the season. The Collins Point navigation light was extinguished early in April. In the base hut general structural repairs have been carried out and the two generators have been thoroughly overhauled. The dogs have been exercised whenever the weather has been suitable. An unusual bird resembling a heron or flamingo was seen at the end of April.

Base D. Hope Bay. Fohn winds kept temperatures high during May, but cold weather set in in June and ice has persisted in the bay in spite of frequent gales. (Gusts up to 114 knots were recorded at the beginning of July.) Advantage was taken of the sea-ice to measure a base line for a topographical survey of the new base area.

The View Point Meteorological Station was occupied until 17th April when the party returned to base to assist with preparations for the first depot-laying journey. The first depot-laying party left base on 9th May but was hampered by poor snow surfaces, and a second party which set off on 6th July was held up by gales and had to return to base a week later. A third party left Hope Bay on 30th July. This party encountered both poor surfaces and gales, and when the gales abated, extremely low temperatures (down to -50° F.), greatly increased the friction on the sledge runners. Moreover, to avoid the danger of lung-frosting in these low temperatures the dogs were worked only short days but even so they became tired and listless, though they appeared to be in good condition on return to base. A 1500 lb. depot was laid south of Cape Longing, and the party returned to base on 19th August.

Two men left base on 6th July to occupy the View Point hut. These were relieved by two others a fortnight later. A small survey party left base on 13th August to make a general reconnaissance with a view to extending the local survey.

Throughout the period a number of repairs and renovations had been carried out in the base hut, and a new stove was installed in the laboratory/surgery.

Base F. Argentine Islands. The new hut was completed in July. The Radio Sonde programme commenced on 1st July with the first ascent to 10,000 ft. Routine meteorological observations were transferred to the new site at the beginning of May, but were continued at the old site for the purposes of comparison.

Base G. Admiralty Bay, King George Island. Frequent gales in April damaged the hut roof but this was repaired by base personnel. The base diesel lighting units and meteorological instruments were also overhauled. Weddell and Leopard seals have been stored at base for feeding the dogs.

Base H. Signy Island. A new generator shed was constructed by early May, and a number of rooms in the base hut have been decorated. As a result of gales in July it has been necessary to repair the roof of the hut, and overhaul the wireless aerials and masts.

Base M. Grytviken, South Georgia. Weather forecasting has been reduced to one forecast a day for the winter months, but routines are otherwise unchanged. All the meteorological equipment has been overhauled.

King Penguin Survey. South Georgia. The Administrative Officer in S. Georgia visited the Bay of Isles at the beginning of June and found the two men working there in good spirits. They were again visited by a whale catcher at the end of July and reported good progress in their biological studies.

ALL BASES enjoyed the Mid-winter's Day celebrations and the various telegrams received were much appreciated.

R.R.S. JOHN BISCOE, arrived back in Southampton having travelled 27,000 nautical miles since last October. She is due to sail again, with new personnel and stores, on the 4th October.

Falkland Islands and Dependencies Meteorological Service.

A publication entitled "The Meteorology of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies, 1944-50" by J. Pepper M.A., Ph. D, is now available from the Crown Agents or from the Meteorological Service, Port Stanley.

(by courtesy F.I.D. Scientific Bureau)

MOUNTAINEERS OFF TO SOUTH GEORGIA.

A party of five experienced mountaineers sailed from Glasgow on August 20 to climb mountains in South Georgia. The first party ever to make mountaineering in the Antarctic its primary aim, the British South Georgia Expedition comprises George A. Sutton, leader, H. Pretty, surveyor, R.A. Brown, geologist, I.M. Brooker, medical officer, and E. Clive Webb, assistant surveyor. The expedition is being conveyed to South Georgia by a British whaling company, Chr. Salvesen of Leith, and will establish its base in a small hut, once a prison hut, at Grytviken on the northern shores of the island.

It is proposed to spend six months in the field. "We plan", says the leader in an article, "an attempt on the summits of Mount Paget and its near and beautiful neighbour, Sugarloaf. We shall make notes of the glaciers crossed, so that our geologists can later select one for more detailed study. Long journeys are proposed to the Kohl-Larsen plateau and ice-peaks of the north, and the shapely, igneous peaks of the south, for the purpose of surveying, geologising and investigating the various glaciers". Mt. Paget is 9950 ft. high. Sugarloaf is 1725 ft. lower, but photographs show it to be a more formidable proposition than Mt. Paget. To reach the ice-peaks of the north-west means sledging across the Kohl-Larsen plateau. Part of this route is over ground covered by Shackleton, Worsley and Crean during their epic crossing of the island in 1916.

Subsidiary aims of the expedition include the supplementing of previous surveys from the higher peaks, collecting geological specimens from higher exposures, observation of the penguin rookeries and the collection of rock samples for research in residual magnetism.

Financial help has been given by the Daily Telegraph and the newly-formed Everest Trust.

SOUTH GEORGIA SURVEY

As a result of the South Georgia Survey 1953-54, whose members returned to England in May on the tanker-transport "Southern Opal" (Bulletin No. 14, p.108) the map of South Georgia is now 60% complete. Previous maps were mere coast-line surveys.

The expedition, which left Glasgow on August 29, 1953, and reached South Georgia on October 10, comprised Duncan Carse (leader), G. Smillie (surveyor), A. Trendall (the geologist who was severely injured on the 1951-52 survey) and K. Warburton (doctor). Also on the "Polar Maid" were Messrs B. Stonehouse and N. Bonner, who were setting out on an eighteen months' zoological expedition to the Bay of Isles area on the north-east coast of the island.

A preliminary survey trip in this area was hampered by bad weather (from December 3 to December 15 there was not one fine day), and by the terrain, which was too steep for sledging. The party was picked up on December 19, after being in the field for 50 days.

Early in January Dr. Warburton had to be invalided home, so the projected southern journeys had to be drastically curtailed. A landing was made at Wirik Bay, near the south-east tip of the island, on January 11, and a sledging journey to the west enabled Trendall to do geological work and Carse to carry out surveys. Ten days were spent on the Salomon Glacier. Carse, in an article in the London "Times", describes the attacks of the skuas whose "sustained ferocity", he says, was remarkable. When the wind made it practicable, they dive-bombed the explorers, and in calm weather they concentrated on low-level strafing. "Neither", says Carse, "is pleasurable". The party was picked up at Cooper Bay on February 18.

After a period on Cape Charlotte Peninsula, further north, from March 23 to April 4, when at one stage a downpour flooded the camp and they were "baling out the tent with cooking pots", the party sailed for home on April 17.