

PRESIDENT:
R. A. FALLA, M.A., D.S.C., F.R.S.N.Z.

HON. SECRETARY:
A. S. HELM, M.A., F.R.G.S.

HON. TREASURER:
H. W. KING



P.O. Box 2110.

Wellington, C.I.

New Zealand.

ANTARCTIC NEWS BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN

BULLETIN EDITOR: L. B. QUARTERMAIN, 1 ARIKI ROAD, WELLINGTON, E.2. N.Z.

No. 16.

December, 1954.

AMERICAN ICEBREAKER HEADS SOUTH

The round-bottomed U.S. Navy icebreaker "Atka" left Boston on December 1 on a four or five months reconnaissance voyage to the Antarctic, preparatory to a larger expedition during the 1957-58 geophysical year. The leader is Commander Glen Jacobson of Seattle. The "Atka", which carries a crew of 16 officers and 238 men, has recently returned from the Arctic. It is proposed to examine the Little America site in the Ross Sea, including the condition of supplies left there by earlier expeditions; and, later, to round the Palmer Peninsula, Graham Land, to examine possible base sites at the head of the Weddell Sea. Three small helicopters will be carried, and several snow-mobiles for use at points of landing. It is not intended on this occasion to establish any permanent bases. Admiral Byrd is technical adviser to the Atka reconnaissance and to the projected larger expedition.

For the major project, says a press correspondent, three bases are planned: the main base at Little America, another forward base in Marie Byrd Land, and a third at the Pole itself. No plans have yet been completed for long-range air exploration.

Despite alarmist reports in the New Zealand press, it is officially stated that "there is no foundation whatsoever in any report that the purpose of the coming United States Antarctic expedition is to search for new proving grounds for hydrogen or atomic weapons."

In an article in the Hearst "American Weekly" Byrd says that America has been caught napping and is in danger of forfeiting her "hard-won right" to the Antarctic. "American sweat, money and ingenuity have contributed greatly to the opening of the Antarctic," he writes. "But America is losing Antarctica through sheer apathy. While the rest of the world has stuck their fingers in the Antarctic pie, Uncle Sam is sucking his thumb. Today no one really owns Antarctica, even though seven nations have pseudo-administrations and some try to levy taxes on whales caught in their sector. The Australians claim approximately half of all Antarctica, including a lot of territory explored only by us. Strangely enough, Little America lies completely within the so-called Ross Dependency, a large slice of Antarctica claimed by New Zealand."

"The Antarctic," continues the Admiral, "an untapped reservoir of natural resources, is vital to America's future... The nation that controls Palmer Peninsula, at the northern tip of the continent, could strangle America's lifeline in case of another world war." He says it is not too late for America to press her "rightful claims."

There is a sting in the tail of a leading article in the Otago Daily Times of 25 August on projected American activity in the Antarctic:

"New Zealand must acknowledge American sources for much of the information we have about our own dependency and, as far as this country is concerned, the Americans can go to the Ross Sea as often as they please. If, in their charity, they would take some of our own scientists with them, they would be doing more than New Zealand has ever done towards investigating its southern possessions."

SPRING COMES TO MAWSON.

Dovers reported from Mawson on September 15 that the mean temperatures for the month had been 35 degrees below freezing but the return of the sun was very noticeable. The party was expecting the return of the birds and seals as final evidence of spring. A further seal was harpooned eskimo fashion and gave battle which was reminiscent of big game fishing before finally being landed. The population had been increased by one very small pup. The most difficult labour for the month had fallen to Russell with a major overhaul of the open weasel, in the open. He was not envied.

Preparations for summer sledging were moving towards finality and everyone was looking forward to the sledge trips. At that time the sea ice was five feet thick and stretched unbroken to the horizon. Snow drifts still lay heavy about the camp. It was a quiet month of normal work.

BIRDS AND SEALS.

A report dated 14th October states that September was a fine, cold month with temperatures in the minus twenties. The first bird was seen on the morning of 12th October "flying on reconnaissance round Horseshoe Bay and making a mental note of the seal scraps from our butcher's shop." Seal hunting produced four seals in five weeks. This was enough for the men, "owing to the prompt action of Jeff Gleadell with his knife and shopping basket in keeping one jump ahead of Dovers and Schwartz, who see seal meat as so much extra fuel inside the huskies who are to pull their heavy sledges west on the sea ice." The few seals taken previously barely provided a change of diet for the dogs from patent food.

SLEDGING BEGINS.

Dovers, Stinear and Summers had made local sorties by weasel to Innerskjera and Ringoya for their respective work. Dovers, Macey and Harvey had made a trip to Mount Henderson, marking the weasel route and locating the site for a depot for the summer plateau journeys. All these sorties were made in calm, very cold weather. At this date the sea ice was solid to the horizon of fifty miles, and over five feet thick, but the drifts about the camp were beginning to vanish with the returning sun. The western dog-sledging party (Dovers and Schwartz) departed from Mawson on 12th October under favourable skies. The huskies looked particularly well in their new summer coats and laid their shoulders with a will to the heavily laden sledges. A photographic squad followed in the weasel for two miles to take some action shots of the dog sledges. The dog family at Mawson had been reduced by mid-October to fourteen, including the pups.

LONG DOG-SLEDGE JOURNEY.

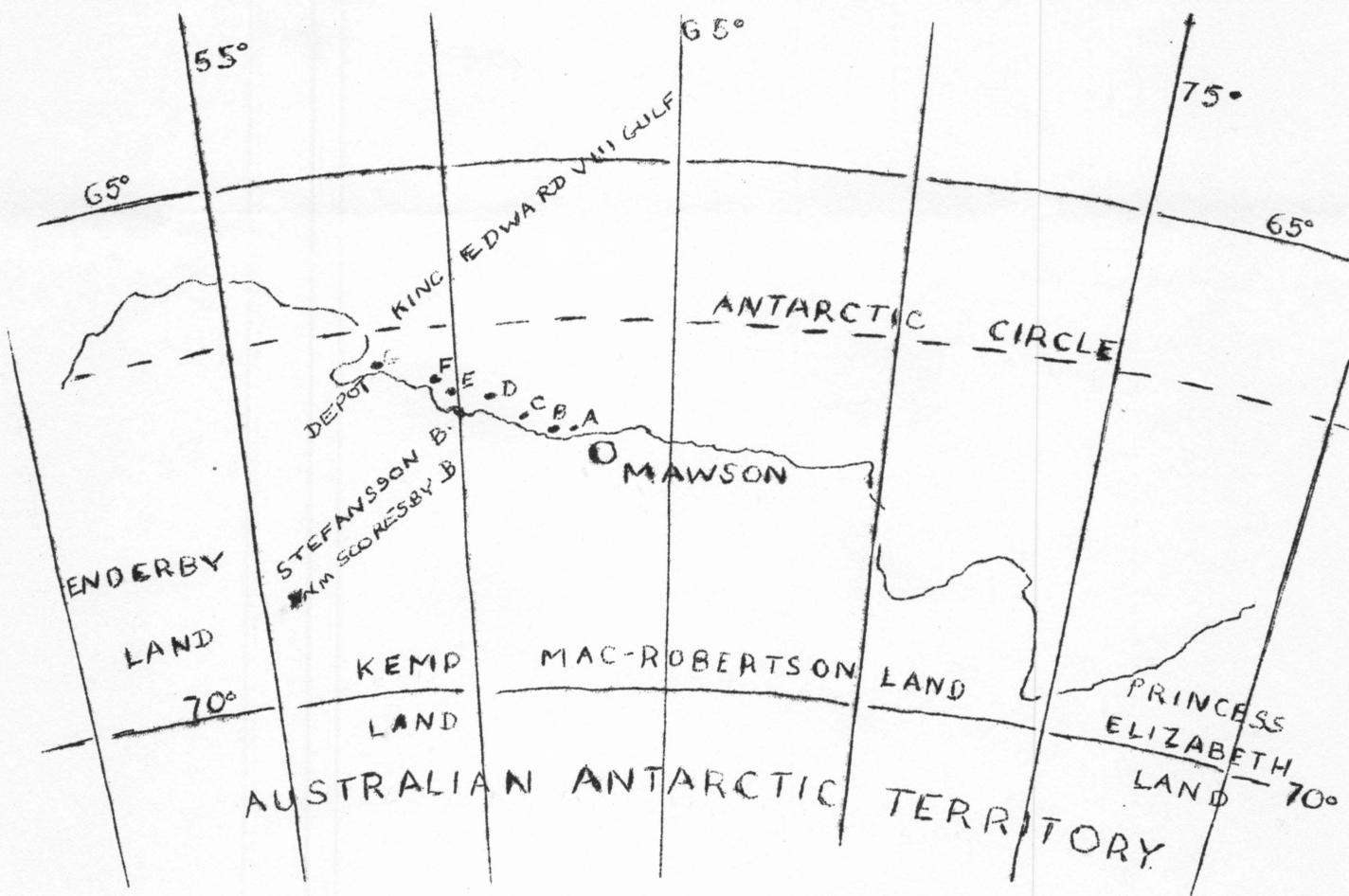
On 12th October Dovers, the Officer-in-Charge, set out on a journey of exploration with Georges Schwartz, the French Observer. They took two sledges, each containing about 800 lbs of equipment, two teams of huskies, and supplies for three months. They planned to obtain additional food for themselves and the dogs from penguins and seals along the route.

The objective of the party is to survey accurately the coasts of MacRobertson Land and Kemp Land and to explore the region which lies inland from King Edward VIII Gulf. This is unknown territory 170 miles west of Mawson. Geological collections and observations of flora and fauna are also to be made.

The progress of the two-man expedition over the frozen sea is shown on the accompanying map. On the 18th October Dovers was at "A". On the 19th, at "B", he reported that sledging over the sea-ice was at times heavy going as the ice has been covered by a thick layer of soft new snow. Cracks in the ice concealed by the snow were a common hazard.

His sledge capsized three times and Schwartz's broke through into the sea. The next day the men were held up by bad visibility and the following few days by bad weather which Macey, the acting O.I.C. at Mawson, described as the worst weather for the year, with gales over 100 miles an hour. On 22nd October Dovers and Schwartz arrived at "C" and discovered an Emperor Penguin rookery with 5000 birds at the edge of the Taylor Glacier. The 23rd and 24th they spent at "D" where they were forced to await the end of another blizzard. On October 25th they were at "E" in Stefansson Bay, and on the 26th at "F".

Messages from the party were transmitted in morse code from a portable radio to the Mawson Station which sent them on to Australia.



INTO THE UNKNOWN.

The next news received reported them at "G" on October 29th where they stopped to rest the dogs. Leaving the sea-ice they pushed up onto the shelf-ice which fills King Edward VIII Gulf and proceeded south to determine the extent of this Gulf. Before doing so, however, they made a depot of all excess stores, records, and the radio transmitter. They advised that they expected to be away for two weeks before returning to the depot, and during that time would be able to receive messages from Mawson but not to transmit any.

On 8th November Macey received a message at Mawson stating that Dovers had completed surveying King Edward VIII Gulf, which he found extended sixty miles inland, and had returned to his depot. From there he intended returning to Mawson with one major stop to permit Schwartz to carry out tidal observations.

The results of Dovers's survey are awaited with great interest because of the considerable extent of this Gulf. Moreover, Sir Douglas Mawson sighted numerous mountain ranges inland when sailing off the coast of Kemp Land in 1930 and these add to the significance of this area. Astrofixes taken by Dovers at identifiable points along his track will enable accurate charts of the whole coast to be drawn from aerial photographs taken by the RAAF Flight which accompanied the "Kista Dan" to Mawson early this year.

WHALING FLEETS ON THE WAY.

An Oslo report states that there will be nineteen expeditions taking part in the forthcoming Antarctic whaling season, which opens (for fin whales) on January 7. This is two more than last season. Japan is sending an additional expedition, three instead of two. The Greek ship-owner, Aristotle Socrates Onassis, sent his "Olympic Challenger", which is registered in Panama, and which did not participate in last year's whaling operations. This, however, is the expedition which has fallen foul of the Peruvian authorities, who claimed that the Onassis fleet was operating inside the 200 miles off-shore zone claimed by Peru as territorial waters, and arrested the factory ship and several chasers. The "Olympic Challenger", say press reports, was damaged by bombs dropped by a Peruvian plane. Mr. Onassis denies that his ships were in Peruvian territorial waters, and claims that the factory-ship was actually 360 miles off shore at the time of her interception by Peruvian planes and destroyers.

The other expeditions will be as last season, nine Norwegian, three British, and one each from Holland, the Soviet Union, and South Africa.

In accordance with the regulations agreed upon by the International Whaling Commission, the permissible catch will be, as last season, 15,500 blue-whale units, and it is expected that this total will be reached by mid-March. Fin whales may not be taken until January 7, compared with January 2 last season, and blue-whales not until January 21 (previously January 7).

Two factory-ships, including the "Southern Venturer" are reported to be carrying four helicopters and a party of 12 British pilots and 13 engineers under Mr. Alan Bristowe, 31-year old helicopter ace. Their job will be to spot whales and to guide the fleet through the ice.

WHALERS' PAY.

Demands by British and Norwegian whaling crews for 10 per cent wage increases were rejected by the International Wages Arbitration Tribunal meeting at Oslo in September.

INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission was held in Tokyo from 19 to 23 July. All of the seventeen contracting governments, except that of Iceland, were represented. Mr. R.M. Miller of the New Zealand Legation, Tokyo, attended the meeting as deputy for the New Zealand Commissioner (who is the Secretary for Marine). Observers were present from Chile, Italy, Portugal and the Argentine, and also from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

In its report, the Special Scientific Subcommittee appointed at the Fifth Meeting restated the view put forward last year that the maximum catch of pelagic expeditions should be reduced from 15,500 to 15,000 blue whale units; but this recommendation was not accepted by the Commission, which decided that another Scientific Subcommittee should be set up, to study all scientific questions of interest to the Commission, including the conservation of whale stocks and the extension of whale marking. The Commission decided that a recommendation should be made to the contracting governments to the effect that the use of helicopters and other aircraft for whale hunting should be brought within the scope of the Convention.

The following amendments affecting Antarctic whaling were made to the Schedule:-

"It is forbidden to kill or attempt to kill humpback whales in the waters south of 40° South Latitude between 0° Longitude and 70° West Longitude for a period of five years.

"It is forbidden to use a whale catcher attached to a factory ship for the purpose of killing or attempting to kill baleen whales (excluding minke whales) in any waters south of 40° South Latitude, except during the period 7 January to 7 April following, both days inclusive; and no such whale catcher shall be used for the purpose of killing or attempting to kill blue whales before 21 January in any year.

"The minimum length of fin whales which it is permissible to catch in the Southern Hemisphere has been reduced from 60 feet to 57 feet."

These amendments became effective on 8 November, 1954, as no objections were received from contracting governments.

The Commission accepted an invitation from the Soviet Government to hold its next meeting in Moscow in the latter part of July, 1955.

(by courtesy N.Z. Department of External Affairs.)

ARGENTINE ACTIVITY.

An Argentine air and sea task force left Buenos Aires on November 18 on a four-month expedition to Antarctica. Commanded by Captain Alicia Ogara and comprising more than 1000 men, the task force includes the ice-breaker General San Martin, just built in Germany, several transports, tankers, tugs, helicopters and planes. Besides relieving the garrisons in the Antarctic, the expedition will conduct scientific exploration and observations in the area.

The head of the camp established on Deception Island, Lieutenant Juan C. Fort, accompanied by members of the expedition, recently carried out a sledge trip across the frozen sea at Port Foster, Deception Island. They covered a distance of 65 kilometres and visited two refuge stations. Observations were made of the ice, sea and tide, and Mount Istanque was climbed, and temperatures taken of the ice.

SOUTH AFRICA'S FARTHEST SOUTH.

The relief ship for the South African meteorological station on Marion Island, lat. 46°52' S., was due to leave on November 15 with new personnel, and is expected to return to South Africa early in December with the men who have spent the past year on the island.

WEATHER STATION ON BOUVET ISLANDS?

A press report from Pretoria states that South Africa is to explore the possibility of erecting a weather station on Norwegian-owned Bouvet Islands, about 1500 miles south-west of the southern tip of Africa. The naval frigate Transvaal will leave Cape Town on January 25 and will attempt to land a party on this notoriously inhospitable group.

"KISTA DAN", FILM STAR.

The Danish vessel "Kista Dan", which is again to carry Australians to the Antarctic continent, was not making her first visit to Antarctic waters when she went south last summer to establish Mawson base. New Zealand picture-goers will see "Kista Dan" in another role shortly, as the "ice-breaker" on which former naval officer Duncan Craig (Alan Ladd) journeys south to join the whaling fleet on a private man-hunt of his own in Columbia's film "Hell Below Zero" is really the "Kista Dan". The film, which is in technicolor and based upon Hammond Innes' thriller "The White South", was specially screened for the ship's company in Melbourne on their return from Mawson.

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

J. F.
by Capt. S. Holm.

(Continued)

The voyage back to the Auckland Islands was mostly against moderate head winds, and the easterly swell still persisted. The Islands were sighted shortly after daylight, on the morning of Friday, 19th March. We closed from the Southwest, and one of the most outstanding landmarks proved, as we drew closer, to be Disappointment Island off the west coast, the site of the "General Grant" and "DunDonald" wrecks in 1866 and 1907 respectively.

A little before 11 a.m. we entered the Harbour or Strait at the south of the Islands, which separates Adams Island from the mainland, and is known as Adams Strait, or Carnley Harbour. We proceeded up this harbour, a very fine one which somewhat resembles the Marlborough Sounds, for nearly one hour. We would have liked to have proceeded right into the inner arm, where the German s.s. "Erlagen" anchored in the early days of the last World War, and replenished her bunkers with Rata scrub. H.M.N.Z.S. "Achilles" also anchored in this harbour a week or two after the German ship had departed, and while searching for her. Time however, did not permit our going up this far, as I was anxious to embark our scientists, complete the other objects of our voyage and sail again from the Islands before dark. We went up just far enough to see the Government provision depot, and boat shed, on the shore. From the look of them, they seemed in extremely good order; the roof was clearly painted red, and the sides of the shed white.

We proceeded out of the Harbour up the east coast of the island, and entered Port Ross again at about 3 p.m. The surf boat was lowered as we passed Enderby Island, and it proceeded to pick up the scientists from the same beach as we had landed them on, four days before. They were found in excellent health, and had had a successful and enjoyable stay. They found about 25 cattle still on the island, and their other research work was completed. Before leaving Wellington, they had been warned of the likely ferocity of the wild cattle and were therefore agreeably surprised when they found that instead of putting back their ears, smoking from their nostrils, and wildly charging them, the cattle did in fact turn around and gallop (if cattle can gallop) in the opposite direction. Their rifles were not needed for the cattle.

Our scientific brethren wished to proceed to the next small island, known as Rose Island, to procure some samples of rabbits. We therefore dropped them there in the surf boat, which then proceeded to Erebus Cove, where the ship had just anchored. Erebus Cove is the place where the Enderby settlement was established in 1849, and ended in 1852, with much pathos, illfeeling and bitter disappointment to the promoters. The climate and isolation had beaten them. We proceeded ashore, mainly for the purpose of painting the tombstones on the little grave-yard there. We had been asked to do this before leaving Wellington.

There is also a provision depot and boat at Erebus Cove, and these both seemed in reasonable condition. I was surprised to find when wading ashore with thigh seaboots full of water (owing to the thickness of the kelp preventing our getting close to the beach) that the water was not particularly cold.

Walking up from the beach, the first clearing in the bush contained the ruins of a wooden hut, and it was here that we thought we had found the grave-yard: I am still of the opinion that at least there was one grave there. On a piece of wood at the head of this grave, there was the following inscription, "EDVIN SODERBERG". Two or three of the party proceeded a little further from the beach, and then discovered the real grave-yard. There were five or six graves and tombstones here, but the writing was not legible on all of them. The tombstones I read quite easily were engraved thus: "JABEZ PETERS, Late Mate, Barque 'DunDonald' R.I.P." (In reading the story of the "DunDonald" disaster, it is apparent that Mr. Peters did in fact die on Disappointment Island; his remains must have been transferred later to the main Auckland Islands.) The second tombstone which was easily readable had the following words: "Sacred to the Memory of John Mahony, Master Mariner, Second Mate of ship 'Invercauld' wrecked on this Island 1864. Died of Starvation". From what is written in the book "Castaways of Disappointment Island" it appears that John Mahony was the only man to get ashore from "Invercauld". He was found dead in the forest with a few

limpets shells around him and a small piece of slate on which he had scratched the name of his ship. There was another tombstone, which referred to an 8 months old child, which died during the period of the Enderby settlement. The name could not be read. On another rough piece of wood was the following inscription "Erected by Crew of s.s. 'Southland' over the remains of a man who had apparently died from starvation, and was buried by the crew of the 'Flying Scud', Sept.1865."

As daylight was showing signs of fading we could wait no longer. No sign of the former settlement was seen, but had we followed the track which led through the thick bush, we might have encountered some sign. However, as it is a hundred years since the settlement was abandoned, signs of it may quite easily have vanished. Before leaving the grave-yard we painted the tombstones with white paint we had brought ashore for this purpose. I am sure that all of us had a feeling of deep respect and were very thoughtful in the near presence of the remains of those who had died on this lonely island.

All around Erebus Cove there is thick vegetation, mostly Rata forest but with quite a few other specimens and some very nice-looking ferns. There were numerous small birds which were very tame and obviously not accustomed to the intrusion of queer humans on their lonely domain.

Back on board "HOLMLEA" we despatched the surf boat to collect the scientists from Rose Island, whence they had collected some fine specimens of rabbits, the fur of which was particularly attractive, some a sort of silver-grey in colour. We weighed anchor, met the surf boat opposite Rose Island, stowed it on board, and left the Harbour at about 10 p.m. By this time, there was a full moon shining in the entrance to the Harbour, and it was indeed a very lovely night, as it had also been on our call at Port Ross during the voyage south. If therefore I had been asked to make a report on the Auckland Islands, I should (although no doubt greatly prejudiced by the pleasant look of the land and the favourable conditions under which I had seen it) agree with the very favourable reports which encouraged the Enderby brothers to establish their settlement there, just over a hundred years ago. No doubt also this impression was the reason for the exiled Maoris from the Chatham Islands who were found inhabiting the place when Enderby arrived, having sought refuge there a few years previously. I understand that several very good reports on the island were received. Experience however, has proved that conditions are not favourable to settlement.

The voyage back from Auckland Islands to Dunedin was uneventful. We experienced mostly light head winds, and arrived at Dunedin at 11 a.m. on Sunday, 21st March.

Everybody on board thoroughly enjoyed the trip, and all comments were most favourable. The ship herself behaved like a lady, and it would be difficult to find a better vessel for this type of work. She has sufficient power to enable the vessel to do a little more speed when required, and behaves excellently in any kind of weather. All ballast tanks were carried full throughout the voyage, although on the last two days it might have been advantageous to have emptied the fore-peak tank. The vessel carried about 130 tons of steel loaded all over the floor of No. 1 hold, and the forepart of No. 2 hold. This trim would appear to be ideal.

The charts of the Auckland Islands are fairly inaccurate in places, but there are plenty of good landmarks; and provided the weather is clear navigation around the Island should present no difficulties. The Harbours are splendid and could not be bettered.

During the time we were at Auckland Islands, we wore the New Zealand Merchant Navy ensign, but we encountered no Argentine man-o-war with which to pass pleasant courtesies.

Radio telephone communication throughout the voyage was good and transmission and reception of messages was carried out with little difficulty. Our communication with Macquarie Island itself was extremely good, and we were talking to them frequently for four or five days.

The three scientists from the Dominion Museum and D.S.I.R. were very pleasant and very conscientious men. We gathered that the trip had been very successful from their point of view. From our point of view, it was a pleasure to have had them with us. Their work included a study of the vegetation of the island, and also the cattle, rabbits, seals and bird life. They were particularly interested in ascertaining the effect on the animal life of inbreeding and living in isolation away from contact with other animals, climate and surroundings which could affect their health and condition.

Unfortunately, owing to a defect in the Echo Sounder, we were unable to comply with the request from Geophysics Division of the D.S.I.R. to take soundings at intervals throughout the voyage. We did cast over the side the drift cards supplied by Oceanographic Division as requested. We also took samples of the sea water in the bottles provided by the Carter Observatory. We sent frequent weather reports to the Meteorological Office in Wellington, and also received from them very helpful broadcasts specially prepared for "HOLMLEA".

The surf boat is an extremely good boat for this work; in fact had we not had it, we could not have done the work in the time. The crew of the surf boat worked extremely well, on every occasion, although each time they received a thorough wetting.

SCIENTISTS ON THE AUCKLAND ISLANDS.

As outlined in our last issue, a party of scientists under the auspices of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research visited the Auckland Islands during November. The personnel, differing slightly from the list given previously, comprised Dr. R.A. Falla (leader), Dr. K.A. Wodzicki and Mr. R.H. Taylor (Animal Ecology Section), Dr. J.B. Hair and Mr. N.H. Moar (Botany Division), Mr. M. Leamy (Soil Bureau), Mr. N.M. Ridgway (N.Z. Oceanographic Institute) and Mr. E.S. Gourlay (Cawthron Institute). Leaving Dunedin on H.M.N.Z.S. Tui at 9 a.m. on November 5, they arrived at Port Ross, Auckland Islands, on the morning of the 7th. Dr. Wodzicki and Mr. Taylor were disembarked at Rose Island and the rest of the party, with the exception of Mr. Ridgway who proceeded to Campbell Island, at Ranui Cove. The ship left for Campbell Island at 2 p.m. and the rest of the day was spent in unpacking, setting up camp and getting to work. This disposition of parties continued until the return of the ship to Ranui Cove at 9.15 a.m. on Wednesday the 10th. In the course of that day the Rose Island party was transferred to Enderby Island, landing there about 2 p.m. accompanied by Mr. Ridgway as additional assistant.

On the 11th the weather was south-easterly and unpleasant, but not bad enough to interrupt work ashore.

On November 12 a party of four (Falla, Gourlay, Hair and Moar) were taken to Ewing Island in the ship's whaler in the morning, and in the afternoon, with the exception of Gourlay, went in the borrowed dinghy to Ocean Island with Able-Seaman Nolan. The Tui, taking Gourlay and Leamy, had then left for Enderby to embark the 'rabbit party', and proceeded to anchorage in Laurie Harbour, returning at 8 a.m. on the 13th to Ranui Cove to embark the main party. All were then taken to Carnley Harbour, arriving at the western end about 4 p.m. and spending nearly four hours ashore in the "Fairchild's Garden" area. "Tui" sailed from Carnley at 4.45 a.m. on the 14th, arriving at Bluff at noon on 15th November.

The nature of the work done was such that it can only be covered by the individual reports of the persons concerned. In general it followed the pattern proposed in advance. (See Bulletin No.15.) Mr. Ridgway was able to work three full deep water stations between Campbell and Auckland Islands. Dr. Wodzicki and Mr. Taylor collected and dissected 100 rabbits on Rose Island and rather more on Enderby. Dr. Hair made a representative collection of living plants from all localities except Rose and Enderby. Mr. Moar collected a full range of peat samples from a selected area, and made botanical collections in several. Mr. Leamy took peat and soil profiles from sea level to about 200 feet altitude in the Port Ross area. Mr. Gourlay concentrated on

insect collecting, but did much shore and general collecting of invertebrates as well.

The party had valuable help from Mr. B. Hart, ionosphere observer on his way to Campbell Island and from Mr. T. Talbot, returning from Campbell Island. Mr. A.J. Black of Dunedin provided a strong and handy dinghy for the use of the party at Ranui Cove. The ship's company provided practically all the water transport needed and relieved the scientists of all handling of gear and stores. The shore radio set was installed and dismantled by Leading-Telegraphist Smith, and the services of Leading-Seaman Nolan, who was attached to the main shore party for the whole period, were much appreciated. Each member of the party concentrated on his main job until the field objectives had been gained. The only interruption permitted was in the way of contribution to camp maintenance in which all participated.

The ten years of stormy weather had left the coast-watchers' huts in almost as good order as they were during the war, with comfortable bunks, stoves and even a pile of coal. What deterioration there was, such as rust and leaks, was soon remedied by sailors from the "Tui". The camp was given a coat of paint and some parts were re-canvassed.

(We are indebted to Dr. R.A. Falla, Director of the Dominion Museum, for the above information. Dr. Falla, leader of the party, was a coast-watcher on the islands during part of the war years.)

CAMPBELL ISLAND AIR DROP.

by C.P.B. Sewell.

"Wouldn't it be nice if they'd send down some mail in an air drop?" How often these words must have been spoken in the various sub-antarctic outposts of the Empire; and here at Whenuapai, on the 21st of September, 1954, at the invitation of the R.N.Z.A.F. I was on the verge of leaving in a Hastings aircraft of No.41 Squadron, R.N.Z.A.F., which was to drop some urgently needed motor spares, stores and mail to the Civil Aviation Administration meteorological and geophysical outpost at Campbell Island. One attempt had already been made to get in to the Island on 17th September, but a thick blanket of low cloud had prevented all but the briefest of glimpses of the Island.

At about 7.30 a.m. Squadron Leader Dick Bolt let off the brakes and a few moments later the 2300 miles 13-hour non-stop flight had commenced. The aircraft climbed rapidly upwards, passing through a dense blanket of strato-cumulus cloud and finally levelling off in clear sunshine at 9,500 feet. Slowly we progressed down the coast of the North Island, on across Cook Strait, and climbing higher, over the jagged peaks of the Kaikouras; over Christchurch, over Dunedin, and then the 450 mile empty stretch of water down to Campbell Island. The weather had cleared over the Kaikouras, but once again the serrated feathers of cloud were beginning to get closer and closer, until at last a grey blanket completely blotted out the sea below.

The aircraft was a beehive of activity. Up for'ard the crew were occupied with their duties. Down aft all hands were busy hauling out the "storepedos" - cardboard containers about 18" in diameter and six feet long, carrying about 250 lbs. of stores, and each containing a built-in parachute. These had previously been stacked up for'ard for the take off, and were now being moved down aft ready for dropping. Three large sacks of mail with their attendant parachutes were stacked alongside a pile of storepedos, as were numerous other packages.

Time moved slowly by until at last the aircraft began its gradual descent through the grey overcast. At last the sea was visible below: black and uninviting, the surface streaked with great wind vanes. The aircraft began to bump around as the more turbulent air close to the surface was encountered. All eyes strained to catch a glimpse of land.

Suddenly the Island loomed up dead ahead, a vague dark mass almost indistinguishable from the grey clouds which seemed to mingle

with the darker black of the sea. Rain was falling, and the cloud was down below 1000 feet, blotting out all but the great black cliffs of the Island, and giving but the briefest of glimpses of the saddles connecting the peaks, the saddles over which the aircraft had to pass if the airdrop was to take place.

Close to the Island the weather conditions seemed much worse. Thundering white-capped waves and streaks of spume flinging themselves against the cliffs. The aircraft bumping continuously in the increased turbulence. Showers of rain beating against the plane, dampening down the visibility, and over all an atmosphere of tension in keeping with the surroundings. The met. report from the Island was far from reassuring; wind 40 knots, increasing. If the drop were not to take place today, it would be delayed indefinitely; the aircraft was required elsewhere by the R.N.Z.A.F. The decision was up to Squadron Leader Bolt. For an hour and a quarter the aircraft turned and circled in the turbulence off the coast, the pilot fixing the landmarks, and waiting for a lifting in the cloud.

The Island reported that the saddles over North-west Bay and between Menhir and Mt. Dumas were clear of cloud. From the plane, visibility was increasing, The cloud was lifting and the top of Yvonne Villaceau's 1100-foot peak could be seen.

The time had arrived. Circling around the south of the Island the aircraft commenced a reconnaissance run up the harbour. Aft, all were strapped in their seats. For'ard the crew braced themselves. Violent turbulence shook the aircraft. The wings whipped as willawaws drove across the harbour below. The smoke indicating fire in the dropping zone came into sight - the cone of Beeman - the yellow of the shed at Beeman Cove - the jetty shed, the camp. These were kaleidoscopic impressions. The main attention remained riveted on the narrow saddle over which we must pass, the cloud hiding the peaks on both sides, and the question as to how bad would the down draught be.

The buffeting of the aircraft eased, a tight turn to the left between the peaks of Menhir and Mt. Dumas with Mt. Paris' 1500-foot bulk ahead, and the tension eased with the relative easing of the turbulence. Once more the aircraft circled off the Island. The Captain decided that he would make one more run and drop the much-needed valve springs and as much else as was possible. He did not like the "feel" of the aircraft - neither did we!

Below the wind increased to 60 knots. Aboard the aircraft the "despatching party" donned their monkey tails - a long canvas strip clipped to the floor and fastened by a belt around the waist. The parachute door was opened, the first three storepedos and the sacks of mail were manoeuvred into the opening. Lifelines which had previously been rigged overhead were checked; holding down ropes were passed over the storepedos, through a deck ringbolt and backed up against the turbulence which must come. The aircraft headed in for Perseverance Harbour. Altitude 600 feet. Tension again built up.

As Erebus Point slipped by to the right the severe buffeting started.

All hung on grimly to the lifelines. Monkey tails were held as taut as possible to avoid being cracked like the popper on the end of a whip. The plane staggered and lurched. A giant's fist threw the aircraft down in a violent jerk. Pandemonium reverberated through the aircraft as all the storepedos were thrown up against the holding down ropes and then crashed back to the deck. The despatching party was a wildly gyrating mass of arms, legs and bodies suspended in mid-air. Long jets of petrol squirted from the wing tank relief valves. The wings trembled and shuddered. Men slithered around on the floor until they were again able to grasp the lifelines and haul themselves up.

On past Shoal Point, past Mount Beeman, the signal from the navigator to drop. Backs braced against the aircraft's fuselage, bent legs thrusting against the 700 lbs of stores which slowly slid out the door - the whip crack as the parachute opened - more turbulence - heave out the mail - strain for'ard against the monkey strip and hold on for dear life - North-west Bay below, and once again the relief of being over the open water.

Three more times the trip was repeated. Each time the tension mounted and was suddenly eased.

On the last run up the harbour, when inside, and without room to turn, the cloud started to drop rapidly. As the aircraft passed over the dropping zone the ground below and the walls of the valley to each side were completely blotted from sight. The pilot was completely blind. The struggle with the stores was repeated - the engines roared into full life as the aircraft hurled itself upward through the blackish-grey cloud.

Monkey tails strained forward - the detached roar of the engines did not penetrate the silence in each person's mind as the next thirty seconds slid slowly past.

The aircraft continued to climb - the navigator appeared in the doorway - the wash-out signal was given. The tension broke - grins on all sides. The door was replaced, we were through the clouds, and the calm serene trip back to Auckland was all that lay ahead.

RED LETTER DAYS ON CAMPBELL ISLAND.

Reporting by R/T to the Bulletin on November 26, Mr. L. McManus, officer-in-charge, spoke of "exciting and eventful" days on Campbell Island. After keen disappointment when cloudy conditions on September 17 prevented the plane, which could be heard overhead, from locating the dropping areas, there followed days of excellent conditions for the drop. The morning of September 21 was good, and the two sites, on Sheep Camp Plateau and at Garden Cove, were manned, and markers were placed and smoke signals set off, while back at camp one man kept in touch by radio. Conditions deteriorated, but at 12.30 the plane was over the island and in radio contact. At 2 p.m. a dummy run was made up Perseverance Harbour. The Garden Cove party was recalled, and after four successful drops all the containers were quickly retrieved. But on the final run visibility was bad and the party were three days searching for the container and three bags of mail, which were finally discovered in the shrubby Dracophyllum near "The Lady of the Heather". Nothing was broken and the boys had a happy time unpacking their parcels. "It was just like Christmas," said Mr. McManus. The cake and other foodstuffs were relished, as the party had been living on dehydrated foods for some time.

The visit of the "Tui" was greatly enjoyed, especially the opportunity to go aboard and see the film "Genevieve". There was also great anticipatory pleasure in collecting and planting out the vegetable seedlings grown and sent down by Dr. R.G. Simmers. These included cabbage, lettuce, silver beet and parsley, which are all well established, as well as radish, rhubarb, mint and celery.

The first sea-elephant pup was seen on September 12, when there were 34 cows at the Garden Cove harem. The camp's 10 chickens are thriving. At the time Mr. McManus spoke, all were busy on painting, repairs, road maintenance and concreting, and the launch was being cleaned and painted, in preparation for the forthcoming relief.

CAMPBELL ISLAND RELIEF.

When the Tasman Steamship Co's 600-ton "Viti" leaves Wellington on December 3, she will take south four young New Zealanders to replace the men who have spent a year (or in the case of R.G.L. Hayes, two years) on Campbell Island. T. Talbot, who has also served two years, was relieved by Byron G. Hart during November.

The new officer-in-charge is 30 year-old Ian G. Clark, B.A., a Christchurch school-teacher. Mr. Clark, after four years at Christchurch Boys' High School, spent three years during the war in the Air Force in the Pacific theatre, as a wireless mechanic. In 1950-51 he was teaching in England. He is an outdoors man, particularly keen on sailing and yachting (he has his own racing craft), mountaineering and deer-stalking. He is especially interested in wild life, and is a keen colour-photographer.

The other members of the party are C. Glyn Clear and

Wallace L. Taylor (meteorologists), and Geoffrey P. Kape (ionospheric observer).

The "Viti" is taking down a motor-driven crane capable of lifting half a ton, for erection at Beeman Point, about a mile nearer the entrance of Perseverance Harbour than the present camp-site. A new shed has already been erected here and when the natural jetty has been extended and the crane installed, this will form an alternative landing point for the camp.

Two new generators are also being taken south to replace the present worn-out ones.

F.I.D.S.

The Falkland Islands Dependencies Scientific Bureau supplies the following report of F.I.D.S. activities during September and October, 1954.

Base A. Port Lockroy. Consistently bad weather has continued to restrict outdoor activities. At the beginning of November the base established radio contact with the "Biscoe" which was then on her way to Port Stanley with new personnel and supplies for the coming year. The first penguins of the season were seen at the nearby rookery on 14th October.

Base B. Deception Island. A number of jobs have been completed in and around the base hut and several ski trips have been made for ice observations.

Base D. Hope Bay. In spite of high winds and heavy snowfalls, which have persisted over most of the period, the following journeys have been undertaken.

The two surveyors returned to base from View Point on 25th August, having completed a survey reconnaissance of Duse Bay, and having caught three seals on the way. More seals were caught during September and October by parties staying at the View Point Hut, which is proving a valuable base for seal hunting as well as for meteorological work.

A four-man party left base on 2nd September to move the Cape Longing depot (see Bulletin No.15) further south. They were held up by gales at View Point but then made good progress and laid a 1,300 lb. depot at Pedersen Nunatak (64°56'S.). Geological work was carried out at Cape Longing and at Pedersen Nunatak. On the return journey the party spent a week at View Point to rest the dogs, and finally returned to base on 6th October, having travelled a total of 362 miles.

The physiologist is experimenting with whale porrican for feeding the dogs as well as with the addition of various vitamins to a standard diet. Experiments carried out on various types of sledge-runners have shown that P.T.F.E. strip possesses a coefficient of friction only 75% as great as that of Tufnol strip.

Base F. Argentine Islands. Daily Radio Sonde ascents have continued regularly. The first Weddell pups were seen on 13th September. Since then, many seals have been seen in marked contrast to last year (see Bulletin No.12) when very few were breeding in the area.

Base G. King George Island. In spite of its exposed position the hut was reported to be badly drifted over in September, and much energy has been expended in keeping doors and windows free and accessible.

A few Weddell seals and an unusually large number of crabeaters (approx.150 in the proportion of two males to one female) have been seen near the entrance to Admiralty Bay. Penguins were first observed at a rookery in Admiralty Bay on 14th October.

Base H. Signy Island. Work on Weddell seals commenced at the end of August; fifty seals have been marked and a number of pup skins collected for treatment, with a view to controlled commercial exploitation.

Base M. South Georgia - King Penguin Survey: Stonehouse reports good progress in the work on King penguins. Additional work on Skuas and Gentoo penguins, as well as the extension of the detailed topographical survey inland from the Bay of Isles, is included in this season's programme. The first bull elephant seal hauled out in mid-September.

R.R.S. John Biscoe. The relief vessel left Southampton on 4th October and arrived at the Falkland Islands at the beginning of November. Among her season's tasks is the completion of the Geophysical station at the Argentine Islands. The programme there will include radio-sonde observations and measurements of magnetism, solar radiation and upper air ozone.

F.I.D.S. Scientific Reports. Five reports on the petrology of Graham Land are to be published and the first of these, entitled "The Basement Complex; Early Palaeozoic Plutonic and Volcanic Rocks", is now available.

NEW FRENCH EXPERIMENTS ON THE KERGUELENS.

The s.s. "Vercors" left Marseilles on November 5, and was expected to leave Tamatave (Madagascar) on December 17 for the Kerguelen Islands. To reduce the time spent on Madagascar the relief party is to leave Paris by air on December 16, arriving at Tamatave the day the ship leaves.

In addition to the usual equipment and stores, the "Vercors" will take to the Kerguelens several Shetland ponies and two pair of reindeer, the rearing of which is to be attempted. The reindeer, bought in Norway, will be taken by air so as to avoid as far as possible any prolonged stay on the coast of Africa or Madagascar. ~~Small live trout~~ from the fish hatchery at Tananarive and eggs of trout and Atlantic salmon will also be taken to experiment with their acclimatization in the numerous lakes and rivers of the archipelago.

The "Vercors" should arrive at the Kerguelens on December 27, and is expected to reach Tamatave via New Amsterdam with the returning men on January 18.

NEW MEN FOR MAWSON.

The "Kista Dan" left Aalborg, Jutland, on October 27 to carry out the relief of the Australian bases. While at Aalborg the ship was reconditioned and had its bottom strengthened. After carrying out the relief of the Macquarie Island party during December, the "Kista Dan" will leave for the Antarctic continent late in December, carrying 15 men to relieve the present expedition members at Mawson. Eleven of the new men have had experience on Heard or Macquarie Islands, or on both.

The new leader, Mr. John M. Bechervaise, a 44-year old Australian, began his exploring at 17, and has become well known as a mountaineer, writer and photographer. Before the war he climbed extensively in England, Wales and Scotland; and also carried out a 1000-mile voyage in an open schooner-rigged boat 35 feet long, surveying the southern coast of Western Australia. He came into prominence in 1953 as officer in charge of the Heard Island Station. Mr. Bechervaise spent nearly ten years in Britain, studying at London University and teaching, and was appointed warden of the crafts centre at Geelong College.

SUBURB OF CANBERRA?

The Australian Capital Territory has been increased in size - from 939 square miles to 2,473,000 square miles. This is the result of the Australian Antarctic Territory Act recently passed in the Federal Parliament.

Australia accepted control of the sector in 1933, but prior to the passing of the new act it was not clear what laws were applicable to it. As it is intended that Mawson shall be a permanent base, it was necessary to have a clearly defined system of law, not only to govern the general relationships between the members of the base parties but also to provide machinery for such matters as the registration of any deaths which may occur, the appointment of a coroner, the registration of medical practitioners, the preservation of wild life and the control of mineral resources.

ANTARCTIC ABUSE.

Schwartz, the French observer with the Australians at Mawson on the Antarctic continent, one night brought in a seal carcass for his dogs. In the morning he found nothing but the backbone and the head. Gleadell, the cook, had been there before him. Schwartz's comment, says Dovers, was "Gleadell is a big skua."

THE ENERGETIC NEW ZEALANDER.

In the course of a report on spring activities at Mawson, Robert Dovers comments: "Stinear, our leading pedestrian, scorning the available dog and weasel transport, prefers to do his travelling about the local islands au naturel." Stinear is the Christchurch-born geologist with the expedition.

ANTARCTIC BOOKSHELF.

Garner, D.M. Sea Surface Temperatures in the South-west Pacific Ocean, from 1949 to 1952. (Includes short section on 'The Sub-Antarctic Zone' between New Zealand and Campbell Island, April and November, 1951). N.Z. Jnl. Sc. Tech. B.36 (3), November 1954. 2 figs.

AUCKLAND ISLANDS GOLD.

Mr. W.J. Havens, the Englishman who was reported in our last issue to be contemplating an attempt to recover the gold on the "General Grant", wrecked on the Western coast of the Auckland Islands in 1866, is believed to be en route for New Zealand. Mr. Havens fairly recently took over a lease, granted to a prior lessee in 1930, of that portion of the coast where the wreck is presumed to lie. The lease is due to expire at the end of this year, but it is understood that Mr. Havens is seeking an extension of it.

"The Meteorology of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies, 1944-1950" is the title of a publication recently issued by the Falkland Islands and Dependencies Meteorological Service, and obtainable from the Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administration, 4 Millbank, London, S.W.1., price £2.2.0. The volume comprises a general discussion under such headings as historical and geographical information, pressure, temperature, wind, cloud and precipitation, a gazetteer of the stations and summaries of all the observations in tabular form.

The usual statements have been exchanged between the Governments of the United Kingdom, Argentina and Chile, renewing the assurances that "in present circumstances, they foresee no need to send warships south of latitude 60 deg. during the 1954 to 1955 Antarctic season, apart, of course, from movements such as have been customary for a number of years." Similar assurances have been exchanged over the past six years.

AN "ENDURANCE" DIARY.

VI.

(Further extracts from the diary of Harry McNeish, the 56 year-old carpenter on Shackleton's "Endurance" 1914-1916. The diary is in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

On February 25, 1916, the date of the first extract below, the 28 men have been camped for over seventeen weeks on floating ice in the Weddel Sea.)

.....There has been nothing doing in camp only skinning the penguins that we got yesterday afternoon. Our food is getting very stale to us now as there is no variety of any kind seal meat and penguin 3 times a day. With no bread of any kind but a cup of tea at breakfast and water for the rest of the day. I made a bag out of a blanket to fit inside my sleeping bag. As I have had no sleep for the last to nights with the cold.

Friday Mar 10th.

Lat. 64 South 53-9 West Temp Plus 15. All hands were busy this

forenoon Putting the stores in the different boats. And taking them out again and marking the sledges for each boat. Which will save a lot of trouble When we take to the boats. Then they put the boats back on the sledges. I repaired a boat sledge and fixed a boat hook We got 10 penguins. But there has been no seals about for some time now. Whether they have gone N or not it is hard to say.

66-----

Thursday Mar 16th.

Temp Plus 27. There was some very heavy pressure during the night & everything has closed up again. We got 2 seals and 10 penguins. No observations as it has been overcast all day. I dont suppose there is much chance of us seeing Paulet now It will be the South Shetlands or the Orthneys. I am positive we lost our chance last week. But one dare not say so. As we are more like Prisoners than anything else & a damed way worse off.

Thursday Mar 23rd.

Lat.63.15 South 53.29 West Temp Plus 3 Sir Ernest sighted the land at 7 A M

Friday Mar 24th.

Lat 63.13 South 53.24 West Temp Plus 9 This has been one of the finest days we have had We got all our gear dried Also some bearings of Joinville Land. Which has been in sight since daybreak But everything seems to be jamed up here As we had a lot of pressure. There are about 70 bergs around us In all directions which is causing a lot of the pressure. We had 7 dominican gulls flying around today

Sat Mar 25th

There is a blizzard on at present I prophised this yesterday as there is never a fine day in these Latitudes but there is 3 bad ones against it. Our floe is beginning to look dangerous now. As it is beginning to crack in many places but it is generally the way. Through putting of till tomorrow what can be done today. Our bill of fare now for breakfast

¼ lb of meat & half a cup of watery milk

Lunch

1 sledging biscuit & 1 tinned herring

Dinner

½ lb of dog pemmican or ½ lb of boiled meat & 6 cubes of sugar

Sunday Mar 26th.

Lat 63.1 South 53.27 West Temp Plus 4 light N W winds nothing doing only trying to sleep away the hunger. We are going on a shorter allowance tomorrow ½ lb of dog pemmican & a cup of milk for breakfast - Lunch 1 biscuit & 3 cubes of sugar. Dinner 2 ounces of nutiriment. so we are longing for open water Joinville Island is still in sight. But it is no good to us, as we cant move over the rough hummicy ice

Monday 27th

Lay 62.57 South 53.10.15 West Temp Plus 9 We are 5 months on the floe today & there is a(s) much chance of us getting of it now as there was at the start in fact less as we have not the dogs & as the leads open they freeze over I only hope for a good S E gale so as to jam us in the straits & not let us drift out to sea

Tuesday Mar 28th

..... We did not get an observation. But we got a seal. which means a lot to us. & there was another up about 1 mile away but we could not get near it. as there is a lot of open craks full of brash ice. However this one will keep us going as we are doing at present for the next 10 days. There was a cape pigeon flying around here this morning

(To be continued)