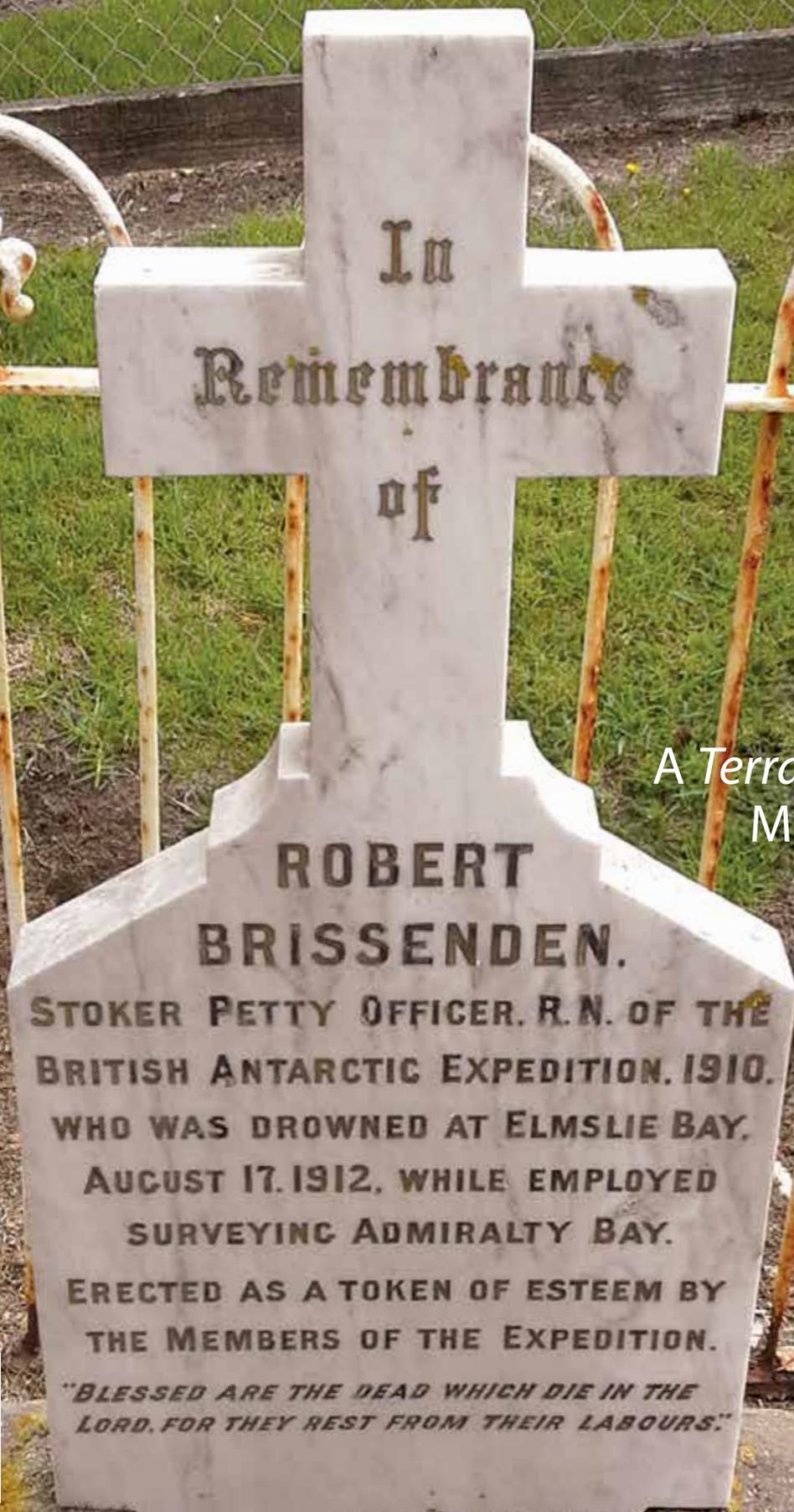


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*A Terra Nova
Mystery*





Contents

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The deadlines for submissions to future issues are 1 May, 1 August, 1 November and 1 February.

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Professor Peter Barrett, 2008

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The Society recognises with life membership, those people who excel in furthering the aims and objectives of the Society or who have given outstanding service in Antarctica. They are elected by vote at the Annual General Meeting. The number of life members can be no more than 15 at any one time.

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From the Editor	1
Note about the Antarctic Tartan	1
A Terra Nova Mystery	2
Origins of Systematic Antarctic Research	4
The Bar from <i>Endeavour 2</i>	6
The Spoken Word	7
The Origins of the Scott Base Huskies	10
It's a Dog's Life in Antarctica	11
Visit by HMS <i>Protector</i>	12
<i>Worsley Enchanted</i>	Back cover

Cover photo: The headstone on the grave of PO Brissenden RN, French Pass, New Zealand.
Photo courtesy of Mr Oliver Sutherland.

Photo above: The bar on the ice. L-R: Lt. T. S. Jones RNZN; Capt. E. Rifenburgh USS *Arneb*; Lt. Cdr. D. G. Banfield RNZN; Lt. C. G. Ashbridge RNZN; Lt. Cdr. I. Hunter RNZN; Ldg. Steward O. Osbourne.
Photo courtesy of US Navy and Captain Trevor Jones.

From the Editor

Thank you for the comments received following my letter in the December 2015 issue of *Antarctic*. I have received several articles and reminiscences from readers and members, which will come to you over the next few issues. My apologies for the later than planned delivery of this issue.

One of the surprises, and delights, to me as Editor, is the reach of *Antarctic* – both to members and institutions, in New Zealand and around the world. With copies of *Antarctic* scanned and online (at www.antarctic.org.nz) a number of students, researchers and other polar-focussed organisations are accessing our back issues, and many make follow-up requests for more information. Recently, a photo of our Mrs Chippy bronze casting (an NZAS, Wellington project), reported in our June 2004 issue, was included in *Cat Mews* – the Journal of the Cats on Stamps Study Unit – together with an interview with Caroline Alexander, the author of *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition*.

This issue includes an article on the mysterious death of PO **Robert Brissenden**, a report on the visit of HMS *Protector* to Lyttelton, and **The Origins of the Scott Base Huskies**. **The Spoken Word** continues our look at the Society's Oral History programme, and we consider the **Origins of Systematic Antarctic Research**. Completing our brief line-up of three Antarctic ships, we find out about **The Bar from Endeavour 2**.

Antarctic has a job vacancy for a Photo Editor, to source photos, and to obtain copyright clearances, etc. Please contact me if you might be interested.

Lester Chaplow

Note about Antarctic Tartan

The Antarctic Tartan was designed in 2001 by *Celtic Originals* on the Isle of Mull, Scotland. The colours forming the tartan are white, grey, orange, yellow, black, pale blue and dark midnight blue. The symbolism is quite complex. The white represents the ice-covered continent, ice floes and icebergs. The grey represents outcropping rocks, seals and birds. Black represents penguins and whales. Orange represents lichen and part of the head plumage of king and emperor penguins. Yellow is the colour of the summer midnight sun. Pale blue represents the colour of deep crevasses and also the colour of ice under water. Dark blue represents the deep Southern Ocean and the darkness of Antarctic winter. Crossing pale-blue lines represent lines of latitude and longitude.

The tartan has been fashioned into many items in addition to the cummerbunds aboard HMS *Protector* (see page 12). The UK Antarctic Trust has produced Antarctic tartan ties and soft wool scarves, while Dr Jane Francis, Director of the British Antarctic

Survey, has a unique dress made from the tartan. All proceeds from the tartan's sales go towards Antarctic conservation.



The Antarctic Tartan was first discussed in *Antarctic*, Vol 18, No. 3 & 4, 2001.

A Terra Nova Mystery

By Bill Conroy

Was it an accident or was it something more sinister? Whatever the case, the annals of Captain Scott's second polar expedition record the death of a Terra Nova crew member as "drowned". But, an intriguing mystery remains.

Stoker Petty Officer Robert Brissenden RN, a 34-year-old married man with two children, from the village of Eastry, in Kent, joined *Terra Nova* in June 1910 shortly before the ship left Cardiff for New Zealand on the first leg of Captain Scott's second expedition to Antarctica. In the two years that he was a member of the crew, PO Brissenden made two trips to the Ice. Following the second trip, *Terra Nova* underwent a refit in Lyttelton during the winter of 1912. While the ship was undergoing repairs, Brissenden and most of his shipmates, under the command of Lieutenant Pennell, were sent to French Pass, a small settlement in the Marlborough Sounds, to carry out survey work for the New Zealand Marine Department – by launch around the Marlborough Sounds and, more latterly, in nearby Admiralty Bay.^{1, 2}

The story of Brissenden's death and its aftermath were recorded in detail in *The Nelson Evening Mail* of 21 August 1912 (p. 5): At dawn on Monday 19 August 1912 the drowned body of Brissenden was found in the sea at French Pass. It was discovered partly under the wharf, face down with the arms outstretched and the lower limbs together. There was no sign of a struggle. According to the medical report, the body carried some contusions behind the ears and along the neck and a wound was found on the scalp. The neck was broken, but death was due to drowning. The medical examiner expressed the opinion that the injuries to the head of the deceased were not consistent with foul play. A parcel containing phonograph catalogues was found on the body.

On 20 August, a local coroner, Mr J. S. Evans, conducted a lengthy

inquest into Robert Brissenden's death and heard a large volume of evidence, none of which answered the question of why a strong fit man should drown so close to the shore and in relatively shallow water.

The court heard that there had been a considerable amount of drinking going on amongst local people on Saturday on or near the wharf but that none of the *Terra Nova* party had been involved, and there was no evidence to suggest that widespread drinking had carried on into the evening. There had been a fair amount of activity on and around the wharf between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. as two launches prepared to leave and the settlement's service launch (the *Nikau*) arrived. The deceased had last been seen on the wharf at about 9.30 p.m. Lieutenant Pennell told the Court that from enquiries he had made he was certain that the deceased was stunned before entering the water. The coroner did not question the witness on this claim.

The Nelson Evening Mail went on to report that W. T. Webber said that he had seen Geo. Kassebaum (described as being under the influence of drink) on the wharf at about 9.30 p.m., and that there had been no one else about. Evidence indicated that Brissenden had been seen on the wharf between 9 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. and he had called out to Geo. Kassebaum to get off his (Kassebaum's) brother's boat, as it was departing, and to come up onto the wharf. In his evidence,



The crew of the *Terra Nova*. Brissenden standing 5th from left. Photo courtesy of Dundee Heritage Trust.

Geo. Kassebaum claimed to have been fairly sober on the Saturday and to remember the events of that day, but some of his evidence would suggest otherwise. The various times that he quoted were vague or patently wrong, and parts of his other evidence were unclear, repetitive, rambling and unconvincing.

Wm J. Phillips, a recalled witness, said that at about 8.30 p.m. on Saturday night he had picked up a parcel containing phonograph catalogues from the accommodation house and that he had handed it to Cliff Kassebaum (Geo. Kassebaum's brother). He did not know what Cliff Kassebaum did with the parcel and he could not account for the parcel's having been found on the deceased.

The coroner's finding was also reported in the same issue of *The Nelson Evening Mail*:

I find that Robert Brissenden was drowned at the French Pass on Saturday, August 17th 1912, while in an unconscious condition, either from a fall or blow; but there is no evidence to show how he was injured, or how he got into the water. He was himself perfectly sober.

The Colonist newspaper recorded the verdict as shown above, but went on to report some of the coroner's comments in the following way:

In giving his verdict the Coroner said if the evidence was to be accepted it reduced the time the accident happened to about twenty minutes after deceased was last seen. The evidence showed that there was a considerable amount of drinking going on amongst some

*of the people, but not with the Terra Nova men. Some of the evidence in many respects was quite unsatisfactory, and left the impression some of the witnesses were keeping back something. So far as how deceased got into the water was shrouded in mystery, because he was perfectly sober, and he was a splendidly built man, apparently thoroughly able to take care of himself.*³

After over 100 years the mystery remains: how did Petty Officer Robert Brissenden, a fit, strong, sober man, come to fall off the wharf into relatively shallow water – a situation from which he could seemingly have easily saved himself – and yet drown? The court, and others, appeared to have believed that the sailor was unconscious when he fell into the water, so the only sensible conclusion is that he had been unlawfully immobilised in some way before he fell. Seemingly, at the time, others were of a similar view, and officers in the upper echelons of the Police Department took steps to try to unravel the mystery.

On 27 September 1912 *The Pelorus Guardian* (a small local community newspaper) told its readers that two Wellington-based detectives were at French Pass investigating Brissenden's death.⁴ Regrettably, the outcome of that investigation was not made public, so presumably there was insufficient evidence to initiate a prosecution. Undoubtedly, the visit of the two detectives would have caused deep worry for those men who had been drinking so unwisely at French Pass on the day of Brissenden's death.

Whatever the case, the sad fact is that Petty Officer Brissenden died far away from his native land and his wife and two children never

knew the true reason why he never returned to them. He sleeps in a grave on the hills overlooking the wharf in Elmslie Bay, French Pass. It is interesting to note that, possibly on the grounds that she believed it to be her duty as the wife of the expedition commander, Kathleen Scott (who did not yet know that she was a widow) undertook the task of telling the Brissenden family the tragic news.

In May 1924, Ordinary Seaman R. T. Brissenden, then serving on HMS *Danae*, which was part of the Cruise of the Special Services Squadron that visited New Zealand briefly that year, was given leave to visit the grave of his father at French Pass.⁵ Perhaps the son found closure to the loss of his father by the visit.

The Brissenden affair soon faded into insignificance when, about six months after the death, the news of the epic and heroic deaths of Captain Robert Scott RN and his four companions was broadcast to an admiring world.

However, the mystery lives on.

Postscript

It is of interest to note that among the Edward R. G. R. Evans collection held by the Scott Polar Research Institute in the United Kingdom there are copies of two letters dated 14 May and 29 October 1913 (ref. MS 1453/84/1-2; D), from Evans to Kathleen Scott regarding help from the Scott Memorial Fund for Mrs Brissenden. Seemingly Evans, Scott's second in command, still felt a duty to the wife of his former shipmate.

Brissenden's grave is periodically maintained by the New Zealand Navy (Ed.) 🇳🇿

1 *Nelson Evening Mail*, 21 August 1912, p. 5

2 *Marlborough Express*, 22 May 1912, p. 5

3 *The Colonist*, 22 August 1912, p. 6

4 *Grey River Argus*, 4 October 1912, p. 4

5 *The Press*, 3 May 1924, p. 12

Origins of Systematic Antarctic Research: Contrasts between Britain and New Zealand

By John Bradshaw

There is a strong and ongoing interest in Antarctica in New Zealand, and we are proud of our achievement in Antarctic science and our status in the Antarctic community. A wide range of countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas had sent expeditions to Antarctic in the early twentieth century, but what was the origin of systematic and ongoing research programmes?

The expeditions of the “Heroic Age” collected very significant scientific data on the Antarctic continent, but those data suffered from two important deficiencies: firstly they presented only a snapshot of conditions; and, secondly, they said very little about the surrounding seas. The latter was particularly important because almost all life in the Antarctic is dependent on the sea. The sea also provides the only example of large-scale exploitation of the Antarctic region. The significance of these points underpinned the first attempt at systematic ongoing Antarctic research.

In 1908 Britain had claimed the islands south and east of the Falkland Islands (South Georgia, South Shetland Islands, and South Orkney Islands) as the Falkland Islands Dependencies and had issued licences for, and collected revenue from, shore-based whaling stations. As a result of intensive exploitation, the whaling industry in the Northern Hemisphere had collapsed and attention had then turned increasingly to the Southern Ocean. In the later stages of the First World War an inter-departmental committee in London considered the issue of the Southern Ocean, prompted mainly by the importance of whale oil for food (making margarine), industry and munitions. The committee realised that little was known of the size of the whale population and even less about its age structure, the biology of the whales, their reproduction rates and food resources, and the oceanic influence on these features.

Circumstances were difficult in Britain after the end of the war and it was not until 1923 that work commenced to address the task of understanding the Southern Ocean and its biology and to develop means

of regulating the whaling industry. The plans involved a research vessel, scientific and maritime staff, a marine biological station at Grytviken (South Georgia) and staff in London. The whole enterprise was carried out for the government of the Falkland Islands and funded by the whaling royalties from the Falkland Islands Dependencies.

These royalties must have been significant, and they covered the purchase of the *Discovery* for £70,000, its refitting for research and the costs of staff for the whole enterprise. Captain Stenhouse, who had been with Shackleton in the Ross Sea, was appointed Master. *Discovery* served the programme from 1924 until 1927 but it was not an ideal vessel for oceanographic and biological research, and so the decision was taken to build a purpose-designed craft, RRS *Discovery II*, a steamer of 2,160 tons. Though larger than *Discovery*, it was still a very small craft for the Southern Ocean.

These events mark the beginning of a highly successful programme of research that, in time, spawned the National Institute of Oceanography, the Falkland Island Dependencies Survey and its descendant, the British Antarctic Survey.

It is perhaps not surprising that at almost the same time, in March 1921, the British Colonial Secretary first suggested that other areas claimed by Britain in Antarctica should become the responsibility of Australia and New Zealand. Only the Ross Sea had a potentially useful coastline and this fact encouraged the concept of the Ross Dependency. How responsibility for this region was to be transferred became the subject of protracted legal debate and the boundaries have been shifted several times. The intent was clear: that the Ross Dependency should be governed by the Governor General of New Zealand acting on the advice of the New Zealand government. In 1923 New Zealand accepted the plan without much enthusiasm, although it did start to take an interest in the issuing of licences for whaling and the collection of royalties. There were, however, significant legal questions about the issue of licences

and the management of whaling in the Southern Ocean and particularly on the question of royalties and the “ownership” of whales in international waters.

The maritime limits of the Ross Dependency were also subject to debate, New Zealand at one stage wishing to move them north to 53° south, to include a large slice of the Southern Ocean. A very different view was expressed by the British Admiralty who advised that it could extend only for three miles from Terra Firma and that much of the Ross Ice Shelf (“the Barrier”) was technically the High Seas.

By 1927 it was thought that steps should be taken to reinforce these Antarctic claims, and a joint expedition by Britain, Australia and New Zealand was proposed (BANZARE) to which Britain and Australia would contribute £7,500 each and New Zealand £2,500. The expedition, to be led by Douglas Mawson, was delayed for a year because *Discovery* was not available. New Zealand agreed to provide two young scientists, Robert Falla and Ritchie Simmers, but this led to an acrimonious debate at ministerial level between the Departments of Marine and Education about who was to pay Falla’s salary for the period of the expedition (£525). The bill was finally paid by the newly established DSIR. The Australian Prime Minister was also forced to enquire what had happened to the proposed £2,500 contribution and this was eventually deducted from the DSIR budget as “unauthorised expenditure”. One may note that whaling royalties from one company to the Marine Department in 1928 amounted to £14,000!

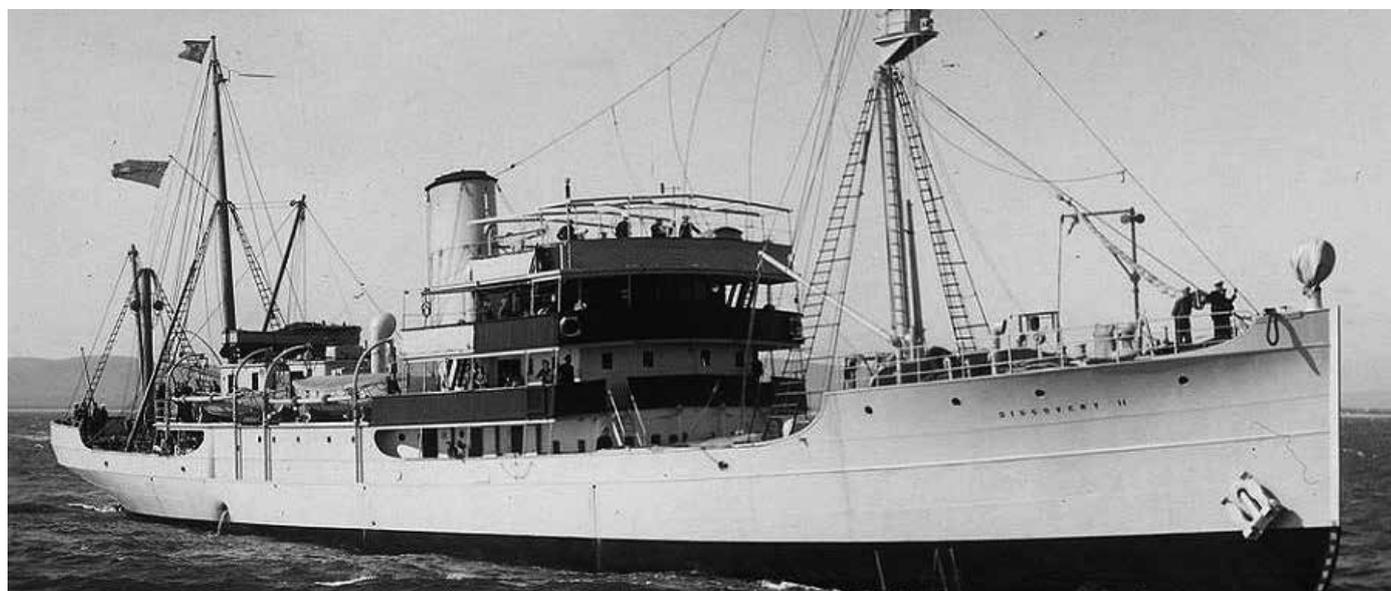
In succeeding years there was little interest from the New Zealand government. A proposal, in 1950, for an Antarctic meteorological station at a cost of

£25,000 and annual cost of £8,000 was turned down by the prime minister as too expensive, and three years later representation from the New Zealand Antarctic Society that drew attention to the approaching 3rd Polar Year in 1957, along with pressure from *The Dominion* newspaper, failed to generate any support for Antarctic activities. The spark that ignited the New Zealand polar programme came from Edmund Hillary and George Lowe in London and their enthusiastic support for a Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Reluctantly, the New Zealand government promised support in the form of a £50,000 donation to the expedition. Initially there was no support for involvement in Antarctic aspects of the International Geophysical Year of 1957–58 and funding for science was achieved only by behind-the-scenes manoeuvres and public pressure. Over time, a very successful science programme evolved. Both the United States and Soviet Union had already developed well-funded science programmes. Had New Zealand, through DSIR, not continued supporting the use of Scott Base for science research after the Trans-Antarctic Expedition, it is doubtful whether we would have had a significant voice in the Antarctic Treaty negotiations. Though it is now politically popular to claim support for our role in Antarctica, left to politicians we would probably have missed the boat. ♣

Further Reading

Coleman-Cooke, John (1963). *Discovery II in the Antarctic*. London: Odhams Press.

Templeton, Malcolm (2000). *A Wise Adventure: New Zealand and Antarctica 1920–1960*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.



RRS *Discovery II* was built at Port Glasgow, launched in 1928 and completed in 1929. It departed for Antarctica in December 1929. It visited Lyttelton nearly ten years later. During the Second World War *Discovery II* served as a fleet auxiliary, mainly in the North Atlantic. After the war it returned to Antarctic waters until it was withdrawn in 1950. Photo: histarmar.com.ar

The Bar From HMNZS *Endeavour 2*

By David Harowfield

The first HMNZS *Endeavour*, following the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1955–58), was sold and became a sealer. The ship subsequently sank off Catalina, Newfoundland, on 11 November 1982.

On 5 October 1962, the New Zealand colours were hoisted on HMNZS *Endeavour 2* (A184), formerly USS *Namakagon* (AOG-53). The World War Two-era (1944) purpose-built combined cargo/tanker (commonly called a “gasoline gig”), was outfitted for the RNZN at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. Kiwi comforts included, for the Officers’ Wardroom, a small bar and a fireplace. The latter had a mantelpiece, a brick facade, and a chimney that was later removed because of the ship’s volatile cargo. The fireplace remained as a decorative feature.

On her maiden voyage to Antarctica in December 1962, *Endeavour 2*, which carried fuel and general cargo, was under the command of Commander James Lennox-King, who had, in 1960, led the third wintering party at Scott Base. The ship, on reaching the pack ice, was towed by the icebreaker USS *Edisto* (AGB-2), commanded by Captain E. A. Davidson. In the meantime, USN Seabees had laid 11 kilometres of pipeline over the winter sea ice to the ice edge, to enable transfer of aviation fuel (JP4) to McMurdo Station. However, the entire shipment of fuel was lost when the sea ice finally broke off and the pipeline went with it. It took a week to unload the *Endeavour 2* and, during this time, Commander Lennox-King visited the United States Amundsen–Scott South Pole Station.

Frank Graveson, a former Scott Base dog handler (1962–64), recalls cold journeys by Ferguson tractor between the *Endeavour 2* and the base as he assisted with transport of stores.

There were several American ships in McMurdo Sound at the time and, occasionally, because the ships were “dry”, the opportunity was taken to have a barbeque on the ice along with appropriate refreshments. It has not been established whether the New Zealanders were the first to have such a party or whether the Kiwis followed the Americans’ example.

A former officer on the *Endeavour 2*, then Sub-Lieutenant Trevor Jones, recalls: “Contact was made with Scott Base and we borrowed a tractor and a 10 ton sled from the Americans.” From the wardroom, some carpet, the bar (never opened at sea), a table lamp and chairs were placed on the sled, which was on the other

side of the *Endeavour 2* and not visible from other ships.

With the *Endeavour 2* bar set up and the officers in uniform, and Steward Ozzy Osbourne behind the bar, also in proper dress, the group, according to Trevor Jones,

drove around and parked by the cargo ship USS Arneb (AKA-56), where Captain E. Rifenburgh and his officers were invited (half of the officers at a time), to have a drink for international relations. We then captured the captain, and the Arneb left 24 hours late.

Following the function, the bar, carpet and other accoutrements were returned to the wardroom before Captain Lennox-King arrived back from the Pole.

The final Antarctic supply run for *Endeavour 2* was in February 1971, when 43 tons of cargo and fuel were taken south for Scott Base. The ship was returned to the US Navy, and later lent to the Republic of China Navy and renamed ROCS *Lung Chuan* (Dragon Spring).

Late in 2015, two Antarcticans from the former New Zealand Vanda Station, Jeffrey Robertson (hydrologist 1983–84) and John Alexander (leader 1984–85), advised the author that the bar had appeared on Trade Me and that it was something “you should have”. The author took little persuasion. The bar had occupied a corner in the home of the late Captain B. M. (Michael) Commons (*Endeavour 2*, 1966–67) and featured in his book, *One Sailor’s Yarns* (2014).

With the assistance of Jane Commons, Woody (Paul Woodgate, Antarctica New Zealand) and Jack Woodgate, the historic bar was delivered from Rotorua to Oamaru, where it has had several openings. Now in a suitable setting, the bar looks excellent against a backdrop of the RNZN ensign. To the accompaniment of music from a naval band, the ensign was presented by Lindsay and Debbie Johnston of Darfield. ♣

David Harrowfield acknowledges the assistance of Captain Trevor Jones (RNZN Retd.) *Antarctic*, for his information.



HMNZS *Endeavour 2*.

The Spoken Word: The Antarctic Society's Oral History Project

By Margaret Bradshaw

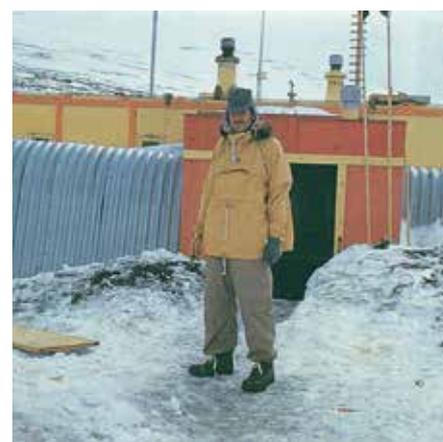
The first person to be interviewed (on 11 March 1997, in Blenheim) was **Frank Ponder**, Government Architect with the Ministry of Works. Frank had been given the task of designing Scott Base for extreme cold conditions, organising the logistics of delivery of materials to Antarctica, and final construction of the base. He had a very limited time in which to complete these tasks. Frank based his design on “a refrigerator in reverse”, keeping the cold out and the warmth in. For safety reasons he designed six huts rather than a single one in case of fire: the biggest danger in the dry air of Antarctica where there was no water. The huts were to be placed seven metres apart and would be linked by an unheated covered way, with heavily insulated doors into a cold porch for each hut. The walls of each hut were to be sheathed in aluminium that would be light and would avoid water vapour penetration that could lead to ice build-up. The walls would be filled with foamed Ebonite for insulation. The base was designed to rest on a timber raft held together with steel tension rods, and guyed into the ground, in some cases by the freezing of anchor wires into the permafrost. A successful trial erection of the huts took place at Rongotai (Wellington) and everyone was very satisfied. The base was then dismantled by the same building team who would later erect

it in Antarctica, and the components were carefully labelled and stored in correct order of use, ready for loading onto the New Zealand ship *Endeavour* and the American supply ship USNS *Private John R Towle*. All went to plan, and a year later in 1957 Frank was able to visit Antarctica to see his design in action. He made three further visits, which left him with strong impressions of Antarctica. In 1996 Frank wrote his book *The Man from the Ministry*, which described his work in New Zealand, Antarctica and the Pacific Islands. The Society was fortunate to have him as guest speaker in 1997 at the 40th Anniversary dinner in Christchurch. Frank died in 2001 at the age of 85 after being a firm supporter of the Society for many years.

Selwyn Bucknell, Scott Base cook during the TAE, was interviewed at Havelock on 12 March 1997. Selwyn was a qualified fitter, turner and toolmaker following an apprenticeship with the New Zealand Railways. He was also a good outdoors person, an experienced skier, and, in his own words had “always known how to cook”. While working for Wildlife Division he applied to be a mechanic on the New Zealand Antarctic expedition depot-laying team, but instead was allocated to be Scott Base Cook under secondment. Selwyn was given ample training – several weeks at the Army Cookery School at Waiouru, two weeks

studying fancy cooking with the chef at Hotel St. George, Wellington and a week on a bread making course at the Wheat Research Institute, Christchurch.

During his oral history interview Selwyn mentioned the training at Mt Cook and how he taught some of the IGY party to ski, as well as spending a full day cooking. Selwyn went to Antarctica ahead of the main party with Dick Barwick and others on the icebreaker USS *Glacier*. On arrival at Pram Point they set up a camp site at “Base Site” and Selwyn started cooking for the construction party while Scott Base was being erected. The whole of that summer was a very busy time and he reports that when the building party and summer staff left it “was a good day” as he had been cooking for more than 40 hungry men each day. During the second summer a relief cook came down to Scott Base and Selwyn was able to join Harry Ayres, Roy Carlyon and Bill Cranfield on their descent of the Darwin Glacier from the Polar Plateau. In his interview he mentions the way the dogs fought,



Frank Ponder outside Scott Base in 1957.



Guyon Warren using a microscope to study rock thin-sections during the first winter at Scott Base. Photo: © Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection.

and how their claws were pulled off when sledging on the hard sastrugi.

Selwyn was obviously a very important member of the team and retained many happy memories. He reports that the only man to get ill on base was the doctor, who quarantined himself, although Selwyn still had to take his meals into him. Even Selwyn's machine-working skills were utilised when the base engineer was away driving to the Pole. On his return to New Zealand he married his fiancée Jean and continued working for Wildlife Division. In 1984 he became Manager and Keeper of the highly important Maud Island Wildlife Reserve. Selwyn retired in 1991 and died ten years later.

Guyon Warren, a member of the TAE four-man Northern Party, was interviewed at Nelson on 13 March 1997. The Northern Party was responsible for exploring and surveying an enormous area of southern Victoria Land (40,000 square kilometres) while Hillary's Depot Laying Party was heading towards the Pole. Guyon originated from Christchurch and after his completion of an MSc in geology at the University of Canterbury he joined the New Zealand Geological Survey. He successfully applied to become one of two geologists on the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic

Expedition (Bernie Gunn was the other). In his recorded interview, Guyon described the month-long training at Mt Cook as "brilliant", with good weather, great scenery and an excellent opportunity to meet the other TAE/IGY participants. He wasn't so happy about the inoculations they had to have, as he developed a bad reaction to the smallpox vaccine. The Governor General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, flew into Mt Cook with his family, and all in all, the party had "lots of fun". Guyon described how some of the stores were flown in to the Tasman Glacier by the air force, who tried out a system of collapsible cardboard "bombs" for the airdrops. Unfortunately, they didn't work very well. The air force also dropped several partial horse carcasses for the dogs onto the glacier, some of which were never found. One of the main reasons for the training was to get the dogs fit as they were in very poor condition. Following their arrival from Greenland, the dogs had been living in "awful conditions" near Ball Hut where the autumn had been very hot and dry. Another reason was to get more men used to driving them as only two people in the entire team had previously run dogs (Richard Brooke and Roy Carlyon).

Guyon sailed down to Antarctica on USNS *Private John R Towle* with Arnold Heine, Murray Douglas and the dogs. They found the inside of the ship very hot and noisy, so the New Zealanders slept out on deck, close to the dogs. The men lived aboard the ship for quite a while after arriving at McMurdo Sound, but they spent weeks outside killing seals for dog-meat. Guyon tells the story of making a stockpile of seal bodies on the sea ice, only to lose them all when the ice broke up.

In the meantime, the *Endeavour*

arrived with the rest of the party. After Butter Point was rejected as a site for Scott Base, Guyon had the chance to join Ed Hillary and Bob Miller in a helicopter to inspect and select Pram Point as a far better site. Guyon describes the unloading of the *Endeavour* and the other ships, saying that it took thousands of hours, day and night, over four to six weeks, with breaks only for very bad weather. It was extremely tiring work that became hazardous and more urgent as the sea ice began to break up. Guyon describes the *Endeavour* as "a very sad ship", mentioning conflict between the expedition and the crew. He found the food better on the USNS *Private John R Towle*!

Guyon had very little involvement in the building of Scott Base, as he was busy geologising on the lower Skelton Glacier, gaining experience of "living in the field" with Bernie Gunn and Arnold Heine. The small party man-hauled two sledges, stopping every third day to look at the rocks. Guyon described the man-hauling as the hardest work he'd ever done, and it gave him some empathy for what it was like for Scott's Polar Party. Gunn, Heine and Warren climbed Mt Harmsworth in the Worcester Range, taking 26 hours in all.

Winter was spent preparing for the next season's fieldwork, but also allowed the two geologists to cut thin sections of some of the rocks they had found in the Skelton region. The field food boxes had been filled in England but contained a lot of packing, so all were repacked and added to during the winter. Pemmican was the part of the diet, and Guyon describes it as "disgusting to eat" and outlines how they managed to disguise the taste. He acknowledged that the pemmican was very nutritious and

that they actually put on weight in the field because of it. As an aside, Guyon mentioned that Ed Hillary refused to eat pemmican and spent the winter creating his own “brew”. Guyon believed that this was why Hillary lost so much weight over the following summer. In fact, Guyon provided many insights into Hillary and his plans.

Everyone got on very well during the winter, and the darkness didn't seem to get anyone down. Nearly everyone on base became involved with the dogs, which were run frequently, especially when the moon was up. The phone link with New Zealand was very “crude” and not at all private. The comment was made that no contact might have been better as the phone calls were disastrous for some.

The Northern Party planned for their summer trip using crude maps and aerial surveys. They estimated distances and decided where to site depots. The dog-supported four-man team was led by Richard Brooke (UK), who had been on many surveying expeditions using dogs. Bernie Gunn and Guyon were the geologists, while Murray Douglas, an alpine guide, helped with the surveying. The party left Scott Base on 4 October and returned mid-January: it was a long and incredible journey across largely unexplored country along both the eastern and western sides of the Transantarctic Mountains, from the Mawson Glacier in the north to the Mulock Glacier in the south. Many new and important geological discoveries were made, such as *in situ* Devonian fish fossils from rocks in the Skelton N ev e area. To cover such a vast area the party had to be resupplied by plane. They had air supply drops of which 80% would be dog food. The pilots (Claydon and Cranfield) would bring in a treat



Selwyn Bucknell cooking at Scott Base. Photo:   Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection.

from Scott Base, which usually froze before it could be eaten. Mail was an important highlight when it arrived.

Guyon described the dogs as “pretty thick”, saying they were aggressive to each other but not to people. He had the dubious honour to find that dog Alison had produced pups on his sleeping bag after clawing her way into the shelter of the tent. He found it an unpleasant duty to get rid of the pups. Guyon provided a wealth of detail concerning the difficulties of sledging with dogs.

Most days would see Brooke and Douglas surveying the newly discovered landscape, while Gunn and Warren geologised. The twenty-four-hour daylight was a bonus. The black dogs tended to overheat on sunny days near the coast, so the party often sledged at “night”. Dogs could be driven for only about five hours a day.

The return to base was “quite traumatic”. They had been away almost four months and everything had changed at base. A new summer team was there and the place was full of journalists. There was a certain amount of social discontent. Guyon returned to New Zealand aboard

the SS *Greenville Victory*, glad to get away. His fianc ee, Sally, was waiting for him on the wharf, and soon afterwards they got married. In 1962, Guyon Warren and Bernie Gunn published a landmark bulletin of their discoveries for the Geological Survey.

In 1964 Guyon returned to Antarctica to visit Carapace Nunatak on the edge of the Polar Plateau (near the head of the Mackay Glacier), where he had previously seen some interesting rock. Unfortunately, the day after they were put in, Guyon slipped down a blue ice slope and broke his leg badly against a rock. He was rescued by helicopter and eventually flown back to Christchurch where, for a while, the compound fracture caused some concern. Guyon continued to become a prominent New Zealand geologist, retiring to Nelson in 1993. He died in 2003 when he was knocked off his bicycle by a lorry. His sledging experiences in Antarctica are immortalised in his book *The Daily Journal of an Antarctic Explorer 1956–58*, edited by his daughter-in-law Karen Warren, with Sally's help, and published in 2014.  

The Origins of the Scott Base Huskies

By Frank Graveson

When Sir Edmund Hillary was appointed leader of the Ross Sea Party of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1955, he decided that he would need 60 huskies to carry out the aims of the expedition and additional work to reinforce New Zealand's territorial claim to the Ross Dependency.

The Australians offered 30 dogs from their base at Mawson and, in December 1955, Harry Ayres set off from Melbourne in the *Kista Dan* to collect them. The Australian dogs had an interesting history. In 1944, when the British established bases on the Antarctic Peninsula they took with them 36 dogs from Labrador. Later, in 1947, the Governor of the Falkland Islands offered to Australia some of the Labrador dogs that had become surplus. Problems of transport could not be overcome and the plan for the Australians to take on the dogs was dropped. Instead, 20 were taken to England in 1948 and offered to the French for their expedition to Adélie Land. France had already acquired 15 Greenland huskies, and, with British dogs added, 30 huskies soon left aboard the *Commandant Charcot*. Fortunately for Australia, the pack ice in 1948–49 proved to be impenetrable and, in February 1949, the *Commandant Charcot* retreated to Melbourne, with the French hoping that the dogs would be allowed to remain for the winter. The authorities agreed, on the condition that the dogs were housed at Melbourne Zoo and never allowed to leave, except for shipment south.

In exchange, the Australians were allowed to keep any pups born at the zoo, plus adult dogs no longer required by the French. Over the next three years, the surplus dogs and newly arrived pups were transferred to Heard Island and, when Mawson Station was established in February 1954, 30 huskies accompanied the men who were to winter-over. By the time Ayres arrived, their breed could fairly be described as "Mawson Husky" – a mixture of Greenland husky and the hotchpotch of breeds that had gone into making up the Labrador dogs. He was able to obtain only 21 adult dogs and five pups to bring back to New Zealand. Their ages ranged from three months to five years.

The dogs travelled with Ayres on *Kista Dan* to Melbourne, and then to a waiting RNZAF Bristol Freighter and onward to Christchurch. They were then taken by Army trucks to a dog camp near the Hermitage at Mt Cook, arriving at the end of March 1956. Fifteen young dogs from Auckland Zoo had been in residence at the dog camp since early March. They were said to be descendants of dogs brought from Alaska by Admiral Byrd.

Training for the dogs started with pulling an old car chassis along the road, but more progress was achieved in August once they were relocated to the Tasman Glacier, where all members of the proposed field parties learned something of dog sledging. The three teams trained were mostly Mawson dogs, as Marsh (one of three dog-handlers, with Ayres and Lt Cdr Richard Brooke) had reservations about the zoo dogs, commenting as follows: "The majority were poor specimens, mentally as well as physically . . . They were smaller and lighter than our other huskies and tended to be lazy." On the other hand he described the Mawson dogs as "large, powerful and good workers".

Eight pups, born at Mt Cook of Mawson parentage, were taken to Antarctica. Marsh's report makes it clear that no intentional breeding was done at Scott Base and that litters born in the Antarctic were destroyed: "We did this because we had no definite knowledge as to what would be the eventual fate of our dogs, and any puppies born at that time would have been too young for us to use ourselves." However, diaries refer to four pups born



Dog teams training on Tasman Glacier. Photo: © Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection.

during mid-summer roaming free until August 1957.

To complete Hillary's requirements, the Ross Sea Committee purchased a further 12 dogs from Greenland. They were transported by HMNZS *Endeavour* from London to Auckland in October 1956. Special permission was given for them to be housed at Auckland Zoo. They were a mixed bunch, with Marsh noting that "although they were generally lighter than those from Mawson, they proved to be good workers. One or two were not ideal for use as sledging dogs, one having a shaggy coat that constantly iced up, and two being extremely nervous and easily cowed. Others were too old for work."

However, needs must, and all 61 dogs were taken South to be considered for the heavy work of hauling sledges.

The Greenland dogs and some of the dogs from Mt Cook travelled south from Wellington on USNS *Private John R Towle*, arriving at the ice edge just before Christmas – the same day that the remainder of the dogs from Mt Cook left Port Chalmers on HMNZS *Endeavour* to arrive just after New Year 1957. The three trained teams were able to set off almost immediately to search for a route up the Ferrar Glacier.

Once Scott Base had been constructed and some preliminary route finding on the Skelton Glacier completed, the dogs were tethered without shelter on the sea ice in front of the base and they spent the winter fed on frozen seal and "Fido" (a proprietary tinned dog food). With the exception of one dog and one pup, all survived until spring, at which time four females, considered unsuitable for sledging, were destroyed "to help out with the dog food situation". With now only 55 adult dogs, to produce six teams of nine Marsh arranged for two "lend-lease" dogs to be borrowed from the Americans.

During the 1957–58 field season the dog teams' performances surpassed all expectations, but the

Department of Agriculture would allow only a few to return to New Zealand. When the expedition departed on *Endeavour* in March 1958, only about 20 dogs remained behind on the ice. Once it was decided that New Zealand would maintain a permanent scientific presence in Antarctica, breeding was encouraged and the number of huskies increased steadily.

In 1960, Antarctic Division realised that new blood was needed, and so Wally Herbert was retained to purchase a dozen selected huskies from Greenland. With generous help from the US Air Force, he brought them (and a bonus pup) from Thule to Christchurch. With their willing assistance, the Scott Base dog population built up to nearly 70 by 1963.

By 1964, the bulk of New Zealand's mapping work had been completed and motor toboggans had become reliable enough to replace dogs in all but the worst going. A drastic and painful cull saw numbers reduced by 50 per cent. In January 1987, to accord with the requirements of the Antarctic Treaty the last 14 huskies were removed from Scott Base, and the era of the Scott Base huskies came to a close. †



Arrivals from Greenland Nov 1960. Photo: © Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection.



Marsh and Miller set out from *Endeavour* Jan 1957. Photo: © Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection.

It's a Dog's Life...

Readers of this article might also be interested in a recent book by Peter Otway:

It's a Dog's Life in Antarctica: Exploring the Transantarctic Mountains by dog sledge 1960 – 1962 and beyond.

This is available from the author
– otway1@xtra.co.nz – for \$45 + \$5 postage.

Visit by HMS *Protector*

By Margaret Bradshaw



Ship officers being led down gangway at official welcome.
Photo: Margaret Bradshaw.

Great interest was aroused in Christchurch when HMS *Protector*, the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship visited Lyttelton in late January. HMS *Protector* is the only icebreaker in the British Fleet. Built in 2001 as MV *Polarbjørn* (Norwegian: polar bear), it was originally chartered by Britain for three years from GC Rieber Shipping of Bergen, Norway, after the Royal Navy's previous survey ship HMS *Endurance* was damaged. HMS *Protector* was finally purchased by the UK Ministry of Defence in September 2013 for 51 million pounds.

Since the ship's commissioning in 2011, its earlier work in Antarctica had been in the Antarctic Peninsula in support of the British Antarctic Survey. In February 2012 it responded to a distress call from the Brazilian Comandante Ferraz Antarctic Station on King George Island, where a large fire had broken out. The *Protector* supplied men and fire-fighting equipment to tackle the blaze, but two electricians were killed.

Britain shares a concern with New Zealand about the poaching of Antarctic toothfish in the waters surrounding Antarctica, and the *Protector* was deployed from Hobart to patrol the Ross Sea area in late 2015, with a break in Lyttelton. This was the first time in 80 years that the Royal Navy had patrolled the Ross Sea.

There was an official reception on board the icebreaker on 20 January at the invitation of the Acting British High Commissioner, Mrs Helen Smith and the British Defence Advisor, Lieutenant Colonel Mike

Treffry-Kingdom. The Society was represented by the South Island Vice-President and the Canterbury Branch Chair. A Maori welcome was given, and the ship's party was led by Commander, and Second in Command, Trefor Fox down the gangway to be received by the welcoming party on the wharf. Several of the officers looked striking in Antarctic Tartan cummerbunds. After a waiata (song) from the welcoming group, the ship's party responded with an enthusiastic rendition of "To Glory We Steer". Following the hongi, the visitors were invited up to the huge, well-equipped bridge, which gave excellent views of the deck below and the harbour beyond.

Whilst the ship was in Lyttelton, more than 3,000 people queued to visit it on 24 January and the visiting time had to be extended. Many of the visitors were family groups from Christchurch.

The ship is impressive. At 5,000 tonnes it is 89 metres long, with a beam of 18 metres and a draft of 8.35 metres. It has a complement of 88 personnel, and accommodation for up to 100 people. The ship's top speed is 15 knots (28 kilometres per hour). At the stern there is a large work area and a helipad. The ship has plenty of exploratory power: a survey boat (*James Caird IV*), a rigid work boat (*Terra Nova*) and two Pacific 22-rib rigid inflatables (*Nimrod* and *Aurora*), as well as three BV206 all-terrain vehicles and three drones. It has a modest amount of firepower. Without doubt, the ship will complement the work done in the Ross Sea by New Zealand's own ship RV *Tangaroa* and will provide extra surveillance in what is a very large sea. ❧



Bow view of HMS *Protector* on the open day. Photo: John Bradshaw.



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The New Zealand Antarctic Society Inc was formed in 1933. It comprises New Zealanders and overseas friends, many of whom have been to the Antarctic and all of whom are interested in some aspect of Antarctic exploration, history, science, wildlife or adventure.

A membership to the New Zealand Antarctic Society entitles members to:

- *Antarctic*, the quarterly publication of the Society. *Antarctic* is unique in Antarctic literature as it is the only periodical which provides regular and up to date news of the activities of all nations at work in the Antarctic, Southern Ocean and Subantarctic Islands. It has worldwide circulation.
- Attend meetings, and educational and fun events that are held by the Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury branches of the Society.

The Editor of *Antarctic* welcomes articles from any person on any subject related to the Antarctic, the Southern Ocean or Subantarctic regions. In particular, articles recounting personal experiences of your time in the Antarctic are welcomed. Articles may be submitted at any time to the Editor at editor@antarctic.org.nz. The Editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article for any reason whatsoever. Note that all articles will be subject to editorial review before publishing. Please see our advice to contributors and guidelines for authors at www.antarctic.org.nz/pages/journal.html, or contact the Editor.

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Worsley Enchanted

In 1914, as Britain declared war on Germany, Shackleton and his crew departed for the Weddell Sea in the ship *Endurance*. Their goal was to complete the first crossing of Antarctica.

Shackleton and a small team would land on Antarctica, and head, via the South Pole, to the other side of the continent, emerging at Ross Island in the Ross Sea to be met by a support party.

Shackleton's Ross Sea support party were to lay re-supply depots for Shackleton to collect and use once he had passed the South Pole. This support party were taken south on the *Aurora*, and then effectively marooned when their ship was swept out to sea in a storm and unable to return. Despite this, and with a severe shortage of rations and clothing both for themselves and for Shackleton, they completed their mission and returned to their base (Shackleton's 1908 *Nimrod* Hut) to await rescue. Sadly, three from this party died.

Meanwhile, Shackleton's ship *Endurance* was locked in a battle with sea ice, which eventually crushed and sank it. While the ship was sinking, Shackleton's men removed stores and lifeboats, initially setting up a camp on the ice, and then man-hauling the three lifeboats across the ice to the open sea, from where they sailed to Elephant Island.

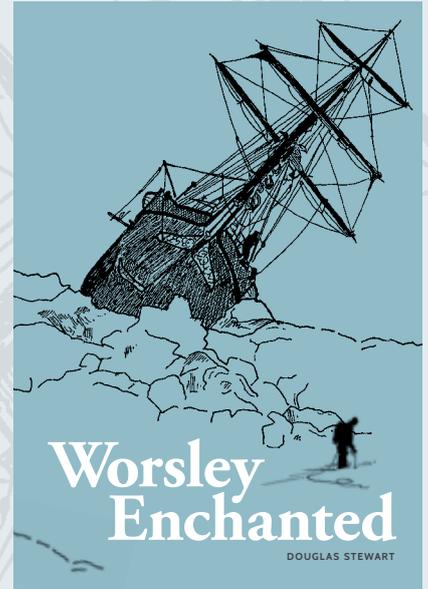
From Elephant Island, Shackleton and four men sailed to South Georgia where they gave the alarm, and eventually they were able to rescue all of the remaining men from Elephant Island. Once all the men were saved, Shackleton then made another voyage, this time to the Ross Sea, to rescue the surviving men from his support party.

The small boat voyage in the *James Caird*, from Elephant Island to South Georgia, is a classic epic of man vs. ocean. The boat was navigated by New Zealander Frank Worsley, and the story, told from his perspective, was penned as a poem, *Worsley Enchanted*, by Douglas Stewart, and first published in serial form in *The Bulletin*, in 1948. It has subsequently been included in three anthologies.

The New Zealand Antarctic Society is pleased to announce the release of a stand-alone edition of *Worsley Enchanted* in the centennial year of the voyage of the *James Caird*.

The three New Zealand branches of the Society, in Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury, will be holding launch events for *Worsley Enchanted* in the coming months.

Copies are also available from the Society at worsleyenchanted@antarctic.org.nz. The price is NZ\$15.00 + postage (NZ\$5 within New Zealand, and NZ\$7 for overseas).



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