

THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEW ZEALAND ANTARCTIC SOCIETY

# ANTARCTIC

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## ANTARCTIC

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

### PATRON OF THE NEW ZEALAND ANTARCTIC SOCIETY:

Professor Peter Barrett, 2008

### NEW ZEALAND ANTARCTIC SOCIETY LIFE MEMBERS

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.

Current Life Members by the year elected:

1. Jim Lowery (Wellington), 1982
2. Robin Ormerod (Wellington), 1996
3. Baden Norris (Canterbury), 2003
4. Bill Cranfield (Canterbury), 2003
5. Randal Heke (Wellington), 2003
6. Bill Hopper (Wellington), 2004
7. Arnold Heine (Wellington), 2006
8. Margaret Bradshaw (Canterbury), 2006
9. Ray Dibble (Wellington), 2008
10. Norman Hardie (Canterbury), 2008
11. Colin Monteath (Canterbury), 2014
12. John Parsloe (Canterbury), 2014
13. Graeme Claridge (Wellington), 2015

### ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY:

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North Island Vice-President: Linda Kestle  
National Secretary: Myra Walton  
National Treasurer: Lester Chaplow  
Immediate Past-President: Jud Fretter

### BRANCH CHAIRS:

Auckland: Linda Kestle  
Canterbury: Ursula Rack  
Wellington: Robin Falconer



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#### DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT CONTACT DETAILS?

Are your membership and contact details up to date? You will have recently received your membership renewal invoice. Please check the details and contact our Membership Officer – [membership@antarctic.org.nz](mailto:membership@antarctic.org.nz) – if anything needs to be corrected. In particular, with the sharp rise in postage costs we would appreciate having your email address.

Cover photo: Huskies at Scott Base. Photo by Dick McBride. © Antarctica New Zealand Pictorial Collection, 1971.

Photo above: Setting up camp for overnight field training. Photo: Grant Hunter.

Back cover: The cairn over Scott's final resting place.

## From the Editor

Welcome to an enlarged edition of *Antarctic*, funded with assistance from a bequest of Mr Francois E. A. Lagace. Mr Lagace died in 2001, and left a portion of his estate to the Society.

In this issue, an article on **Shackleton's Bad Lads** considers the reasons behind why he treated some of his men in such a shabby way, in particular by denying four of them a Polar Medal. The second of our 2015–16 volunteers writes of going **From Gateway City to Volunteer Duty at Scott Base**.

If you've been watching news reports in New Zealand this month, you will have heard of, and possibly seen, the *Expedition South* journey of two tractors from Piha Beach to Queenstown. This was a trip to raise funds for the Antarctic Heritage Trust (AHT) to help preserve **Sir Ed's Antarctic Legacy**. Further donations can be made to [www.expeditionsouth.nz](http://www.expeditionsouth.nz).

In **First at Arrival Heights**, Don Webster recalls the erection of the auroral radar station at the heights in the summer of 1959–60. June was the month for **Midwinter Dinners**, and our Auckland and Wellington branches recount their events. Canterbury branch also used the occasion of their Midwinter Dinner to present the Society's **Conservation Trophy** to Lizzie Meek.

A previous issue made mention of Peter Otway's book *It's a Dog's Life in Antarctica*, and we include a short excerpt from his book entitled **Travelling with the Huskies through the Transantarctic Mountains**. AHT are also appealing for any objects, photographs or stories relating to **Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut**. A review of the book **Polar Mariner: Beyond the Limits in Antarctica** follows.

Finally, we conclude with an obituary for a former President of the NZAS, and the Society's Webmaster, **Malcolm John Macfarlane**, who died earlier this year.

Our back cover poem is from a small folio album of letterpress ephemera and clippings pertaining to the Scott tragedy in the Antarctic. The compiler was one J. W. Stones Esq. Clearly, he had followed Scott's career, and clipped all manner of newspaper clippings and magazine articles and pictures, running to a collection of over 70 pages. He penned two poems about the Antarctic. The first was about the *Discovery* expedition, and the second, **In Memoriam. The Heroes of the Antarctic**, is reprinted here.

Lester Chaplow

## From the President

As this issue goes to print we received confirmation from Antarctica New Zealand that our members will again be able to apply for volunteer work at Scott Base. This season the successful applicants will help with work on Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut alongside the Antarctic Heritage Trust team. Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut was the Mess Hut for the original Scott Base. All members have been sent the application information.

Our national AGM will be hosted by the Auckland Branch on 29 October. Jacqui Foley, who is this year's National Speaker, will talk about the Society's oral history programme. More information will be available soon. We look forward to seeing you there.

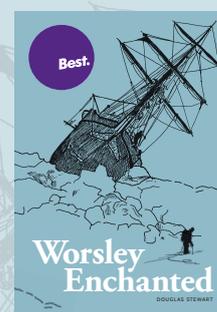
Mariska Wouters

### Life Membership

At the 2015 AGM of the Society, Life Membership was awarded to Dr Graeme Claridge in recognition of his pioneering research on Antarctic soils spanning over 50 years, and for his service as National Treasurer and long-serving member of the Wellington Branch committee (also as Treasurer). Graeme has represented the Society at several important Antarctic NGO meetings in Wellington.

### **Worsley Enchanted:** Finalist in Best Awards

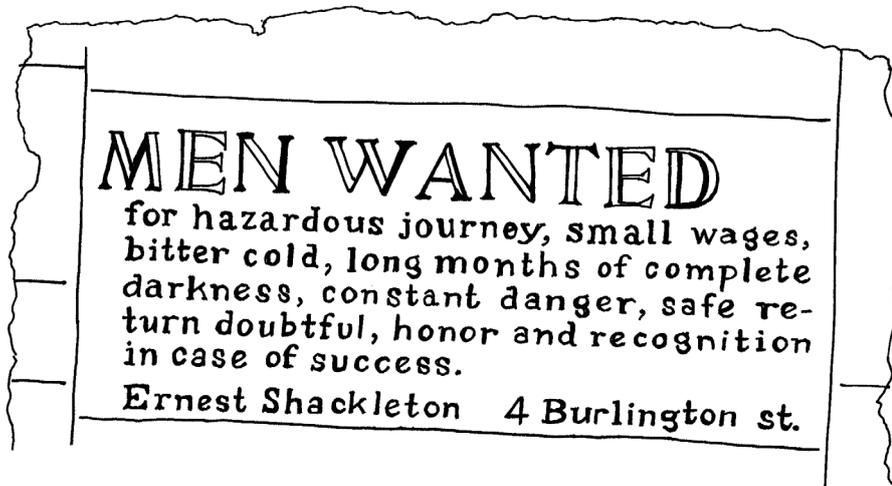
*Worsley Enchanted* (see page 44) has been confirmed as a finalist in the Best Awards – New Zealand's Best Graphic Design, Editorial and Books. Our congratulations, and



thanks, to Gusto Design for their creative design, and to Myra Walton for her illustrations. This is a huge honour as not only are the Best Awards the top design awards in New Zealand, but we were up against agencies and entries from Australia as well. The winners will be announced on 14 October, but this finalist nomination alone is a great achievement.

# Shackleton's Bad Lads

By Andrew Leachman



On their return from Sir Ernest Shackleton's abortive attempt to cross the Antarctic continent, the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (ITAE) 1914–1916, all but four of the 28 members of the expedition, were awarded the Polar Medal, despite never having set foot on the continent. Shackleton achieved this by enlisting the support of fellow masons within the Admiralty and through royal influence.<sup>1</sup> It is noted in Admiralty minutes that the king had not been prepared to sanction the award of the Polar Medal to Bruce and members of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition 1902–1904, even though, unlike the ITAE, the Scottish expedition produced considerable scientific results. The motivation that has driven the research on which this article is based is a desire to understand Shackleton's actions in not recommending four of his party for the medal. What crimes did those four men commit during the course of the ITAE to be treated in what appears to be a shabby and mean-spirited way? In *Shackleton:*

*the Antarctic Challenge*, Kim Heacox quotes Alexander Macklin (surgeon on *Endurance*) in 1919:

*I was disheartened to learn that McNish, Vincent, Holness and Stephenson had been denied the Polar Medal. . . . Of all the men in the party, no-one more deserved recognition than the old carpenter. . . . I think too, that with-holding the medal from the three trawlermen was a bit hard. They were perhaps not very endearing characters, but they never let the expedition down (p.202).*

The general view of most commentators is that Shackleton regarded the Polar Medal as an award for exceptional service; the four “Bad Lads” did not come up to his standards. I question this view.

So, who were these “Bad Lads”?



## Albert Ernest Holness

Born in Hull, Yorkshire on 7 December 1892, Holness was just 21 years old when he signed on as fireman of the ITAE's steam

yacht *Endurance* in July 1914. An entry in the diary of Thomas Orde-Lees dated 12 October 1915 states, “Holness is the youngest,<sup>2</sup> a Yorkshire lad. He is perhaps the most loyal to the expedition” (an opinion not obviously shared by Shackleton).

Whilst stranded on Elephant Island in June 1916, it was Ernie Holness who managed to catch the first fish. Earlier in the voyage, it was Holness who had discovered the stowaway Blackborow hiding in a gear locker. Between these events, as revealed in *South*, Shackleton's account of the ITAE, Holness fell into the ocean through a crack that had appeared beneath his tent. Holness was somewhat incapacitated, being inside a reindeer sleeping bag. Shackleton pulled him back aboard the ice floe on which they were camping, and very soon afterwards the crack closed up. Shackleton did not receive profuse thanks for saving the young man's life: all he recalled was hearing Holness complain that he had lost his tin of bacci (tobacco).

On his return to England Holness married and set up home at 14 Flinton Street, Hull. He had two daughters and a son. He resumed working in the fishing trade for Pickering and Haldine's Steam Trawling Co. Ltd. He was a member of the crew of their newly acquired trawler *Lord Lonsdale*, launched in July 1923 at Cochran and Sons of Selby, and on 20 September 1924 at the age of 31 he was lost overboard in a storm when the *Lord Lonsdale* was off the Faroe Islands, 25 years after a similar fate had befallen his grandfather.

1 See ADM 1/8495/178.

2 The stowaway Perce Blackborow was 16 months younger than Holness.

Advertisement above: Men Wanted. Drawing by Myra Walton.



### William Henry Stephenson

Born 19 April 1889 in Sculcoates, Hull, Stephenson was an ex-Royal Marine from the Chatham division, and an officer's servant for a time. His role on *Endurance* was that of fireman. He was 25 when in July 1914 he signed the Articles of Agreement in London's West India Dock. Stephenson had been recruited from within the ranks of the North Sea fishermen, and had been working out of the ports of Grimsby, Hull and Bridlington. It is recorded in the Harry McNish journal that Stephenson was badly bitten by a penguin on 21 July 1915. Stephenson was one of the men who slept on the thwarts of the upturned *Stancomb Wills* and *Dudley Docker* whilst on Elephant Island. The hair from his moulting reindeer sleeping bag was of constant annoyance to Thomas Orde-Lees, who snored on the floor immediately below him. Following the rescue by the Chilean tug *Yelcho*, Stephenson went to Buenos Aires, and he shipped out of that port as a DBS (Distressed British Seaman) on the vessel *Highland Laddie*, which sailed on 10 October 1916. His being declared a DBS relieved Shackleton of having to pay his fare back to England. After a long wait, Stephenson eventually received part of the wages he had earned during his time on *Endurance*. Stephenson died from cancer in a hospital in Hull in 1953 at the age of 64.



### John William Vincent

Vincent lost his top lip and his health, but he did not receive a Polar Medal. During his repatriation from South Georgia Jack Vincent's shipmates aboard the *Orwell* were Harry McNish and Tim McCarthy, ex-crew of *Endurance* and *James Caird*.

The master of the *Orwell* was thought to have been Captain Ingvar Thom, who had skippered the *Southern Seas* on Shackleton's first unsuccessful attempt to rescue the 22 men on Elephant Island.

John William "Jack" Vincent was born at Marlcliff, Birmingham in 1879. He ran away to sea at the age of 14. He made several voyages in square riggers. The 1901 Census of England shows that on Sunday 31 March 1901 Jack was aged 22 and stationed at HMS *Cambridge*, a Royal Marine training establishment at Devonport. Jack was serving as a private in the Royal Marines. At the age of 35 Vincent joined the crew of SY *Endurance* as boatswain, having been recruited from the North Sea fishing fleet working out of Hull and Grimsby. Vincent fell out of favour with Shackleton following an acrimonious altercation with former Royal Marine Officer Thomas Orde-Lees (probably the most unpopular member of the ITAE.)

There was mention of alleged bullying by Vincent of his fellow fo'castle hands in *South*, but that accusation does not appear in other accounts. It is believed that Vincent tore off part of his top lip when it became frozen to a tin drinking mug, shortly after the *James Caird* left Elephant Island. Being unable to eat and experiencing great difficulty in partaking of hot soups and cocoa, which sustained the other member of the *James Caird* crew, Vincent's strength faded away. It appeared no one recorded or noticed the injury. Worsley does record that Vincent had trouble with his legs and feet, and that Shackleton administered witch-hazel. Both Vincent and McNish fell into the surf during the launch of the un-ballasted *James Caird* prior to their 16-day epic journey to South Georgia. Vincent

became a virtual invalid during those 16 days, having started as one of the strongest members of the expedition. Vincent's health at the start of the *James Caird* voyage is noted in the 1948 publication *Shackleton's Argonauts* by Frank Hurley, in the following diary entry for 24 April 1916:

*Our leader had departed taking with him the pick of the seamen [Vincent, McNish and McCarthy]. Of our party, one is a helpless cripple, a dozen were more or less disabled with frost bite, and some for the moment, crazed by their privations (p.115).*

Vincent returned to England aboard the Norwegian whale oil transport ship *Orwell*. During the First World War Vincent's ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean, whilst he was on active duty for the British Foreign Office. During 1919 Vincent was living in Cleethorpes (the town of this writer's birth) and working as second hand/chief mate of a shore establishment that trained fishermen to crew armed trawlers. After the war he returned to the fishing trade, working out of Grimsby, Fleetwood and Hull. He worked for a while as pilot and fishing instructor for the Finnish Government. Married and settled in Grimsby, he had nine children: five sons and four daughters (he certainly deserved a medal for that!). He was the subject of a Board of Trade enquiry over the loss of a Grimsby Trawler *MacLeay* in the Icelandic fjords in 1935, and his Skipper's Ticket No. 13338 was suspended for two years. During the Second World War he served with the Royal Naval Reserve as captain of HM *Alfredian*. Built in 1913 by

Cochrane and Sons of Selby and originally named *Waldorf*, she was requisitioned for war service in 1939 and converted to an armed patrol vessel. She undertook several Arctic convoy runs.

Vincent died at the Grimsby Hospital on 19 January 1941. James Dale, a Grimsby historian described “Sailor Jack” as a big burly man, physically hard and strong, with enormous hands. The name of Vincent lives on in Grimsby. His son Sid operated a successful ships’ chandlers business on the North Wall of the Grimsby fish docks.<sup>3</sup> Jack Vincent was not awarded a Polar Medal, but, in 1958, long after his death, a small island within King Haakon Sound, South Georgia, was named Vincent Island in his honour.



### Henry McNish

Born at Port Glasgow on 11 September 1874, McNish died in Wellington, New Zealand on 24 September 1930, aged 56. His father was a boot-maker in Glasgow. A photograph of the shop in Lyons Lane, Glasgow, has the legend “John McNish Boot Maker” displayed above the window. “Harry” McNish was the ship’s carpenter aboard *Endurance*. He was a master craftsman, but he was also sufficiently experienced and confident to express opinions that were not always well received.<sup>4</sup> McNish was, in a word, “difficult”.

Even McNish’s name caused problems. For some unknown reason, the spelling “McNeish” is used throughout *South*. Other writers have followed suit. The November 1998 edition of the magazine *National Geographic* (Vol. 194, No. 5) contains a group photograph of the participants of the *Endurance* expedition. Around

the border of the photograph there are the signatures of each person, and the name is clearly visible as “H. Macnish”. Discussions with his relatives have led me to believe that Harry adopted that particular way of spelling his name because it was more easily understood by English folk. His Scotland-based family remain “McNish” and his England-domiciled relations have adopted “Macnish”. The spelling on the May 1959 New Zealand Antarctic Society headstone in the Karori cemetery remains “McNeish”.

For his full 22 months as the ITAE chippy, McNish did all that was asked of him. He made a **major** contribution to the expedition. Shackleton was able to boast that he never lost a man, but I believe that without his carpenter’s determination, skill and dedication, Shackleton himself might not have survived to make that boast.

Harry McNish was a time-served shipwright. He worked in the shipyards of the Clyde and on square-rigged sailing ships prior to the *Endurance* expedition, and on steam ships during and after the First World War. He was married three times; two of his wives died and his third divorced him. He had one son and one daughter. In his journal, held at the Alexander Turnbull Library (Wellington), McNish refers to his “big love”, Agnes Martindale, and his “little love”, Agnes’s four-year-old daughter Nancy, who appears in the journal as “Tips”. After leaving Buenos Aires en route to Antarctica in 1914, McNish christened the pram dingy *Nancy Endurance*, in honour of his partner’s daughter.

Between 1923 and 1925 McNish lived with his son Henry and his family in Glasgow. 1925 was a

time of economic and political unrest in Scotland. At the age of 51 McNish packed his sea chest and shipped out on the New Zealand Shipping Company vessel *Ruapehu*, a steamer of 7,705 tons. He worked his passage one way to Wellington, having been promised employment on the waterfront in that city.

In 1928, according to the electoral roll (Wellington), Harry McNish lived at 42 Owens Street. At some stage during that or the next year McNish suffered an accident and became destitute. Fellow waterside workers in Wellington, many of whom were aware of his past; found him shelter at the Ohiro Retirement Hostel. Harry McNish died in Wellington Hospital on 24 September 1930. He was just 56 years old.

The death certificate records: “Henry McNeish, Carpenter (returned soldier)? Sex: male. Cause of death: Chronic Myocarditis. Bedsores.” McNish was given a ceremonial funeral complete with gun carriage and naval escort. During 1958, an island within King Haakon Sound, South Georgia, was named McNish Island in honour of this master craftsman and fine seaman. On 27 June 2004 a bronze sculpture of the ship’s cat, “Mrs. Chippy”, was unveiled on the grave of Harry McNish at Karori cemetery by Baden Norris, emeritus curator of Antarctic History at the Canterbury Museum (a project of the New Zealand Antarctic Society).



### Ernest Henry Shackleton

Shackleton was born on 15 February 1874 in Kildare, Ireland, and died on board *Quest* whilst at anchor off Grytviken, South Georgia, on 5 January 1922. Anglo-Irish, resolute, strong-

<sup>3</sup> As a young lad I collected my first “donkey’s breakfast” (straw-filled bunk mattress) from Sid Vincent’s store prior to shipping out to northern waters on the *Ross Jackal* (circa 1959). Whilst researching this article I was astonished to discover that one of my relatives is living in the house that Jack Vincent occupied in 1919.

<sup>4</sup> See “Harry McNish: An Insight into Shackleton’s Carpenter”, *Antarctic* Vol. 21, Nos 3 & 4 (pp.60–62).

jawed, barrel-chested and fired by patriotic fervour, he embodied the Indian summer of empire. He was a wonderful leader; however, he was also an ambitious showman and glory-seeker, brilliant at self-promotion and a tireless worker for his own causes, which he often pursued under the guise of serving king and country. Furthermore, despite his deserved heroic image, he was a dreadful businessman and an allegedly unfaithful husband, and he demonstrated a myopic view on loyalty. Shackleton was unforgiving if people managed to get on the wrong side of him. To question his decisions resulted in his view that the questioner was being disloyal. He demanded loyalty and optimism. His money management skills (or lack thereof) verged on the criminal. He almost always lived beyond his means and there are several instances of “questionable” financial dealings with expedition monies being siphoned off for purposes not connected to the expedition, from all of which Shackleton escaped untouched, but tainted.

Unsophisticated seafarers “signed on” to serve on the expedition steam yacht *Endurance*. This “signing on” was just the same as a modern employment contract. The sailor agrees to obey the lawful command of the master, and the master agrees to pay a fixed monthly salary (usually with an “allotment”, being an amount sent to the wife or mother of the sailor) plus whatever bonus payments are agreed on. Shackleton’s sailors expected to receive a bonus payment of ten shillings for each month spent south of 60 degrees south.

Sadly, Shackleton was unable to fulfil many of his contractual

agreements, not only during, and immediately after, the ITAE but also earlier, following the *Nimrod* expedition of 1907–1909. Later, when Shackleton’s son was attending Harrow and his daughter was attending Roedean, Shackleton’s esteemed photographer Frank Hurley was still chasing Shackleton around the drinking clubs of London, attempting to secure monies owed.

Probably the most despicable financial action of Shackleton was made on 31 May 1916 when Shackleton stopped payment of all crew wages as of 17 October 1915. This latter date was in fact ten days before *Endurance* had been abandoned. Pay instructions were sent two months before the fate of the castaways on Elephant Island was known. One feels a sense of compassion for Shackleton: his ship had been crushed and had sunk and he was well aware that the expedition funds were slipping away. Even while on the ice with the sinking *Endurance*, he was faced with blunt discussions about pay and conditions from a dour Scottish carpenter (McNish) and three North Country trawlermen who were probably accustomed to being lied to and cheated by unscrupulous trawler owners. History does not record how the families of all Shackleton’s sailors felt when, in the middle of a world war, their “allotments” ceased.

Shackleton had been suffering from a bout of lumbago and he had a cold (most unusual in the deep south) at the time of the McNish insubordination incident 26 December 1915. Was this the cause of the diary entry, “I shall never forget him in this time of strain and stress”? One suspects that there was a return of the heart problems

Shackleton suffered when with Scott in 1902.

Scott seemed to think that Shackleton had let down the *Discovery* expedition by his illness. One would have thought that Shackleton, having himself been treated in that shabby way, would have felt some degree of compassion for his ex-boatswain and his collapse during the *James Caird* voyage. Vincent’s comments to the press when he stepped ashore from the *Orwell* in Liverpool on 2 August 1916 might have irritated Shackleton. When asked about his leader, Vincent was quoted on 4 August 1916 in *The Daily Dispatch* newspaper saying, “He was a Toff deserving of all the credit he gets.”

Had Shackleton treated his “Bad Lads” in an even-handed and magnanimous way, history would have been kinder to him. Sadly, we are left with this rather “bully boy” image of Shackleton, famous polar explorer with friends in high places, including the king. He could treat lesser mortals just as he saw fit and, in this instance, he chose a vindictive and mean-spirited way of expressing his feelings for what he perceived as their lack of loyalty.

My sincere thanks to John F. Mann for support and research advice. ♣



The Polar Medal with "Antarctic 1914–16" bar. Awarded in silver or bronze.

# From Gateway City to Volunteer Duty at Scott Base

By Grant Hunter

Antarctica New Zealand and the New Zealand Antarctic Society supported volunteers Grant Hunter and Don Taylor while they assisted staff at Scott Base in December and January 2015–2016. Grant offers his impressions of life at the base.



This was not glamping, nor did the site meet family-friendly camping criteria in the usual sense. Yet it was not really in the lightweight tramping mould either. Field trainer/guide Richie Hunter and I agreed a suitable marker was “industrial camping”. Earlier in the day we had drawn our gear – of the most robust quality – from the enterprise’s well-stocked racks, and the whole deal was permeated by a “health and safety in employment” ethic – or, rather, it was driven by it. Wellington architect Don Taylor and I were on an overnight induction in field safety on the Ross Ice Shelf, Antarctica. The 30 minute Hägglund drive beyond and out of sight of Scott Base was just far enough to instil a sense of aloneness.

Don and I were sharing the privilege of a month at Scott Base as volunteer workers through a collaboration between Antarctica New Zealand and the New Zealand Antarctic Society. For December–January we would be handy-people, doing the sorts of tasks around the base that staff lacked the time to do. We would become integrated into the small but diverse and self-sufficient business and social community. This community supports an internationally sourced suite of research projects investigating natural features and processes in Antarctica and how the polar region contributes to the functioning of Planet Earth.

But first we had to learn to look after ourselves in the event that some adverse incident played out in this extreme environment.

We also needed to earn this badge of proficiency before we could enjoy ourselves, recreationally, beyond the confines of Base.

Like all good campers we picked a safe and comfy spot with the best outlook on the lot, unwrapped the tent, then laid out the canvas and hardware. We helped each other erect individual polar tents – actually each was big enough to accommodate two, but practice is always good – holding our peaked houses down with a ring of giant pegs, buried dead-men (snow-filled nylon sacs), and snow shovelled on the tent apron. After licking a finger to test for wind direction, we excavated a sheltered kitchen pit and dining room, then stacked up most of the blocks of snow we had sawn out to form a sheltering wall, and finally fashioned the remainder into a workbench and seats.

The second dimension of our field training was drumming into us the ethic of causing no environmental harm. This led to minimalistic catering conventions that did remind me of that tramping trip – firing up the liquid fuel stove, pouring boiling water into the dehy meal sachet, rehydrating for ten minutes, and eating. We’d minimise utensils, and lick and wipe any residue, as dirty washing water must be accounted for back at Base. Hardest of all was remembering not to flick

Photo above: Volunteers Don Taylor (L) and Grant Hunter (R) inside Captain Scott’s hut at Cape Evans. Photo: Richie Hunter.

the final dregs from a coffee mug, or the tea bag, onto the snow. We had to pee only into a plastic bottle of course.

Ironically, it doesn't snow very often in this polar desert, where the annual rainfall equivalent is under half that of Cheviot, North Canterbury in a fierce drought year. Mostly the "new snow" is existing wind-blown stuff redistributing itself around the landscape. If you're tall you can be in the blue, head-above a ground-level snow storm. And so after a clear but windy night our first job was clearing drifted snow from the cooker and digging out our kitchen pit. We appreciated how the bone-dry snow behaved itself well on the shovel.

Back at Base we were now fit for work. In recent years the volunteers like us had been deployed preparing and repainting exterior joinery and window frames, but that job is completed for now and looking good. Our main task was sorting and rearranging storage areas in the "old hangar" and a suite of containers. With restocking and waste removal confined to a single annual ship visit to McMurdo, it is a challenging task to keep Scott Base adequately supplied with materials yet not overrun with discarded items. Part of this is judging the extent to which unused or old items should be stored for future contingencies versus shipping them back home as "retro".

Similar principles apply to food, and our final task was working with Base chef Keith Garrett, vetting all

stored food for use-by date, loading old stock for disposal to New Zealand, and rearranging remaining stocks to make way for the annual restocking when the supply ship arrived later in the month.

Of course the main function of Scott Base is to support science. We struck a quiet time in the summer, with early-season, mainly sea-ice based projects having returned home. The later-season projects were starting to fire up in early January as we readied to depart. Arriving teams spent their first days on refresher field training and in the Hillary Field Centre labs assembling and going over field gear and science equipment. We left them awaiting weather clearances so they might be ferried into field camps in places such as the Dry Valleys.

Several routines through the month underlined how safety must always be at the surface down south. Infallibly, the 8am daily work-group meeting kicked off with a round of "safety shares". These often sharp-witted exchanges – the Scott Base workplace is not short of wags – keep safety awareness simmering while flushing out any specific or immediate risks.

Another was fire/emergency drill. This was no simple city-style routine of file-out on hearing the siren, await emergency services arrival, and then file back when the floor-warden says "All clear." In our accident scenario, volunteer stretcher bearers were enlisted and mobilised, as was the duty fire crew, and casualty

searches were undertaken. Apart from emergency services based at McMurdo station nearby, there is no outside help to be called on, and everyone has a role.

Our first Sunday outing (Base staff work a six-day week), in the company of Scott Base storekeeper Chelsea Lodge, chef Keith Garrett and guide Richie, was a 30 kilometre Hågglund journey across the sea ice to Captain Scott's *Terra Nova* Hut at Cape Evans. Lucky last: coring the thickness of ice at the tide crack showed we were still good to jump ashore, but ours was the very last "terrestrial" vehicle to reach Cape Evans that summer season, as cracks were opening up and pools of water forming in the warming ice. Much has been written about this heritage site – let me just add how overwhelming it was for me to walk through this hut, no less so for being guided by a great-grandson of one of Scott's *Terra Nova* seamen of 1910–13.

The strong outdoor ethic permeating Scott Base extends into recreation. Not only do most staff avail themselves of the opportunities, they are actively encouraged to do so. It's a way to take time out from a close, 24/7 community, as well as a means to keep fit. The system is enabling, as Richie explained: "We'll give you the tools and training to enjoy the area safely, and you'll take responsibility for your own safety."

Flags mark several safe routes for walking, mountain-biking and cross-country skiing. The necessary



Base manager Mac McColl points out features at Hut Point to Don Taylor. *Photo: Grant Hunter.*



Wooden sledges racked above the sea ice at the Base are both heritage items and functional ones. *Photo: Grant Hunter.*



Scott Base's Secret Santa works with flair, skill and love. *Photo: Grant Hunter.*

hardware such as bikes and skis can be borrowed. Some people bring south with them more-specialist toys, such as ski kites. Pint-sized Scott Base Ski Club, recently subtitled “Castle Rock Snow Park,” has scarcely missed a summer’s beat since opening in the 1960s.

Over the Christmas break we scrambled up a fixed rope to the summit of Castle Rock, a skyline outcrop occupying a similar overlook position to that of Castle Rock on Christchurch’s Port Hills. As with its city namesake, you access the rock using “local transport” – on foot, bike, ski or Hägglund.

Most evenings, individuals and small groups were communing with Weddell seals along flagged routes through the ice pressure ridges out beyond the land transition. I have a great many images of yawning seals.

Boundaries for recreation are set by first completing the overnight field training plus any inductions associated with gear, such as bikes and vehicles, and demonstrating the know-how to match clothing and other kit to the conditions (being issued with, for example, six different sorts of gloves means the latter is not so trivial.) You must log every excursion in the comms room, and book out a radio.

Though rugby is now off the list – too many downsides to getting hurt – the Americans at McMurdo organise a range of events. The punishingly steep annual Observation Hill<sup>1</sup> run-up attracted 31 runners this year. Eight Kiwis covered first, second and third. I was 25<sup>th</sup> – first and last in my age category! More meritoriously, I time-kept for the marathon, one of few all-ice runs in the world. All-up we had 30 participants across the full- and half-marathon, no-one this year availing themselves of the also-offered ultra-marathon. It was an average-weather day, with wind

chill temperature about -14°C, but the good news for runners there is that they may shift between the half, full and ultra distances mid-race, depending on the conditions and how they are coping with them. The numbers switching, scaling distance both up and down, sharpened our attention on keeping track of everyone.

From Scott Base one can become steeped in the polar history around – or, by arrangement, within – the heritage huts and memorials from the Heroic Era. One need not travel far, and several evenings I curled up in the window bay of the reading room gazing across the intervening 50 metres to the unimposing but immensely historical hut of the Trans-Antarctic Expedition (TAE), the first building at Scott Base. I felt a craggy Sir Ed might have burst through the door at any moment. Base manager Mac McColl was generous to Don and me with his time in opening up the TAE Hut and Captain Scott’s Discovery Hut (1902) at Hut Point just beyond McMurdo Station, and in sharing his knowledge of these gems.

But the fleet of hickory Nansen sledges, racked up overlooking the drop-off where land meets the sea ice, stole the show for me because they are still used. Standing behind them, looking out onto the ice shelf, brought an emotional tear to my eye (or was it the wind?). Still the sled of choice for towing behind motorised skidoos, these are some of few surviving functional bridges back to the pioneering traditions for Kiwis in Antarctica.

But it’s not all outdoorsy stuff at Scott Base, and, after all, we were on station to celebrate Christmas. Secret Santa’s gifts reached way beyond chain store offerings – except for mine. Even being forewarned, I failed to ask the deeper questions

and my chocolates and socks fell short of the standard. Thoughtful creativity abounded around the dining room. I saw a mini Hägglund machined from solid steel, satchels and shoulder bags fashioned from discarded tent canvas and packing straps, original art work, decorated route flags, clocks and frames made from found wood offcuts, and knitted hats with Antarctic themes.

Skirt Night caught me out too. Assuming it was about improvisation, I fashioned a dress from a length of sacking purged from the hangar, an unstylish “Hangin’ in the hangar” creation. Not so, this dress-up session: building on tradition set during the Heroic Era it has developed to a fine art. Even though the basics of most outfits were drawn from a dress-up box on base, some contenders for “Miss Ross Island” had mastered the total presentation, with amazing fit-outs matched by moves along the catwalk. Ladies on base retorted with a very fine “Scott Babes” Calendar 2016.

And here’s a spiritual thing . . . Don and I joined a small group of like-minded in McMurdo Station’s “Lady of the Snows Chapel”, led by a team of volunteer American yoga tutors in practising 108 sun salutations. Our setting of summer solstice at a southern-most habitation on the globe would be hard to better.

The flight home from Antarctica by Hercules is renowned as eight hours of deafening tedium. Not quite so for me. Just off Oamaru the load master invited two Kiwis on board up to a front window, as our flight path to Harewood tracked dead centre up Akaroa Harbour, elevation 4,000 feet, over the northern bays and Sumner to land. An exquisite sense of Gateway on their part, I’d say.

I gratefully thank Antarctica New Zealand and New Zealand Antarctic Society for this opportunity. 🙏

<sup>1</sup> The 230 metre-high Observation Hill is a volcanic eminence overlooking the Ross Ice Shelf and McMurdo Sound. It was from here Captain Scott’s party kept a lookout for his return from the South Pole in 1912.

# How You Can Help Us Save Sir Ed's Antarctic Legacy

*"The more we walked around Pram Point the more my interest and enthusiasm grew. It was a very pleasant spot and the views were magnificent . . . Bob Miller, too, was impressed with its potentialities, so without more ado I decided that this was the site for Scott Base – making only one reservation, that first of all we would have to prove the route from the ship to the site with a Ferguson tractor."*



With these words, Sir Ed recalled his decision in January 1957 on the location for New Zealand's Scott Base. To consider that the location rested on a plucky little Fergie tractor making it safely from the *Endeavour* to Pram Point gives pause for thought.

This summer will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Scott Base and, with it, of New Zealand's continuous presence at Pram Point in Antarctica: a just cause for celebration.

The first building constructed by the team in 1957 was "A Hut", comprising the mess, kitchen, radio room, Hillary's office, and bunkroom. It still stands. New Zealand's very first building in Antarctica is now under the care of Antarctic Heritage Trust.

In March last year at Parliament, the New Zealand Prime Minister launched the Trust's comprehensive conservation plan to safeguard the building and its artefact collection. This was a unique opportunity for those closely connected to the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition (TAE) and the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957–1958 to come together and reminisce.

The Trust is now seeking funding support to implement the conservation plan. There is much to be done. The intentions of a major work programme for this summer are to remove the asbestos building lining, to consolidate and overpaint the lead paint, to weatherproof the building, including the leaky roof, to repair the Marcus King paintings damaged by water leaks, and to document and conserve the collection of 350 artefacts. All this is planned to be completed in time for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 20 January 2017.

Just like Sir Ed and his team all those years ago, the Trust is asking the New Zealand public to get behind an Antarctic cause. Now, we are asking for help with funding the ongoing efforts to

conserve and maintain Sir Ed's Antarctic legacy. The target is \$1 million and we are well along the way.

In honour of the plucky Fergie tractor, the Trust's *Expedition South* sees two vintage Ferguson TE20s and a modern "Antarctica2" Massey Ferguson tractor travel through New Zealand in August and September 2016 visiting schools and communities, on a journey raising funds to help save Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut and raising awareness of New Zealand's Antarctic history. You can find out how to see the tractors in your town, learn more about the legacy, and donate to the cause at [www.expeditionsouth.nz](http://www.expeditionsouth.nz).

What could be more fitting than donating a fiver (or two)? The banknote has Sir Ed's iconic image on it and, at least on the older fivers, tucked away in the corner discreetly is the image of the tracked Fergie tractor that found its way to the South Pole after safely establishing the viability of New Zealand's Scott Base.

Please consider supporting the cause and *give a fiver to the driver.* 🇳🇿

Photo above: Sir Ed on Ferguson tractor, Antarctica 1958. © Antarctica New Zealand.

Background photo: TAE/IGY A Hut 2014. © Antarctic Heritage Trust



## First at Arrival Heights

By Don Webster

Although the Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA) 122 at Arrival Heights near New Zealand's Scott Base came into existence in 1975, the site had been first used for year-round research some 15 years earlier. In the summer of 1959–60 the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) built an auroral radar station on the Heights, and I was part of that construction team.

Stanford University supplied the radar, Dominion Physical Laboratory (DPL) designed the aerials, while DSIR installed and ran the station. The station was designed to record the “radio aurora” at ranges out to 1,200 kilometres north of Ross Island, and to be complementary to the south-facing radar on Bluff Hill, Southland. Both installations were part of a 5,200-kilometre chain of magnetic, optical, and upper atmosphere observatories: a chain traversing the Southern Auroral Zone, from the South Pole to Ross Island, Cape Hallett, Campbell Island, Invercargill, Christchurch, and Wellington.

The radar needed to face north with a view across the water (or sea ice). Arrival Heights, just

five kilometres north of Scott Base, fitted these requirements. Who selected the site I am unsure, but Bob Unwin, in New Zealand, was the motivation for the radar and Brian Sanford was the man on the ground in the Antarctic.

This first research station consisted of two north-facing aerials, each with a set of four 16 x 1.2m mesh reflectors supported on large hardwood posts, and a 5 x 2.5m radar hut. Testing the aerials took place on the grass behind DPL's laboratories at Gracefield. Four posts were dug into the soft earth, and a reflector was assembled on the level ground and lifted into place by twelve staff. Three folded dipoles were added, and an aerial was tested. Meanwhile, building of the Frank Ponder-designed hut was underway in a carpentry shop at Petone. After the testing, the taking-apart started, and, finally, everything was packaged into manageable-sized lots for shipment to McMurdo Sound.

On 27 December 1959, a small wooden ship with sails, the HMNZS *Endeavour*, left Wellington, taking the 1960 Scott Base wintering-over scientific party and a 15-ton “flat-pack” auroral radar. Twelve

days later, on 8 January 1960, the *Endeavour* berthed in the sea-ice channel that the USS *Glacier* was steadily cutting towards the McMurdo base. Unlike the base today, McMurdo then had no port, and cargo handling was basic. The *Endeavour*, moored to the sea-ice, used cargo nets, slings, and the ship's derricks to unload its cargo. The ship's crew loaded the nets by hand and Scott Base staff emptied and stacked the cargo onto the waiting sledges. The loaded sledges were then pulled by tractors across 13 kilometres of sea-ice to Scott Base. Except for the tractors, nothing in this process had changed since Scott's time.

That summer, Scott Base had a Snowcat, a Land Rover, one Weasel, four Ferguson tractors, some sledges, and a wheeled trailer – but no bulldozer or lifting machinery. We found that two people could lift the prefabricated panels for the radar hut, the aerial sections, and the hardwood posts. A little thought and a few more hands usually solved any problems with the larger cargo items. However, we gladly accepted help from the Americans at McMurdo to move three power transformers and the drums of high-voltage cable.

Before we arrived, Brian Sanford had surveyed Arrival Heights, marking the locations for the aerials and hut, and he had selected the route to the station and had the last short rocky section graded – a feature still visible on Google Earth 55 years later. After we arrived at Scott Base, Brian briefed us on the site and the access, and he introduced us to the Americans who would be supplying the electricity to the radar. Then we went up to Arrival Heights by Weasel, a vehicle we would use

**Photo above: The completed hut.** The hut complete with tie-downs, vents, aerial feeder lines at the right end, and high-voltage power cable fixed along the foundation timber. Note the small windows (standard Scott Base-issue) and the colour (no RBT green here). *Photo: Don Webster.*



for our winter transport. Later we learnt about the Ferguson tractor, the Scott Base workhorse, and the summer transport. However, he left to last the pneumatic drill and the oil-vane compressor – an attachment to the Ferguson's three-point-linkage and driven from the power take-off. We had seen pneumatic drills at roadworks and building sites, but as science technicians we had never used them. However, we became quick learners, and after drilling 70 holes in the permafrost we would think of ourselves as “experts”. This drill became a large part of our lives until, in the following March while drilling the last hole the compressor finally died, haemorrhaging oil.

Before we left New Zealand, there had been little discussion about how to erect the aerials in the Antarctic. Most of the work carried out at DPL involved checking the

assembly and tuning the aerials. Although there had been mention of wearing gloves, there had been no discussions about permafrost or pneumatic drills. Erecting the aerials down south was nothing like the trial on the back lawn in New Zealand. Instead of soft soil, we had permafrost; instead of shovels we used saws; the level lawn was a sloping, undulating rocky surface, while the workforce of 12 became just two: Jack Taylor and I.

All 15 tons of equipment was transported the five kilometres from Scott Base to Arrival Heights over several days by Ferguson tractor and sledge. I took the last trailer-load of hut panels and arrived as Randal Heke and two of the Scott Base's summer construction staff were having lunch on the newly laid foundation grid. With the help of two Scott Base science technicians, the hut was complete

in just three days. The aerials took much longer, with the final 300-ohm feeder lines connected back to the hut in late February. Although the summer construction party left for New Zealand on 6 February, Spr. N. E. Bristow, Sgt. P. Crowther, and Felix Todd stayed on to complete the laying of the power cable from McMurdo. Felix managed to put back into service one of the two abandoned Bren gun carriers and used it in the cable laying. Finally, by the end of February, the power was on, and early March saw the radar fired up and testing under way.

In 1963, I again wintered-over and I renewed my association with the radar and Arrival Heights. Later, after the radar closure, the hut was taken apart and put in storage at Scott Base. Finally, in 1969, the hut became part of the new base at Lake Vanda. ♣

**Photos above, clockwise from top left: Fine-weather drilling.** Don Webster drilling a hut tie-down anchor during one of the many fine days; **Completed hut and aerials.** Looking across the completed radar hut and aerials to the cloud-covered Royal Society Range; **Drilling in bad weather.** Some days the weather was bad. Here the driller is using the Weasel as windbreak while the other two are ready with the hut tie-down cable; **Smoko on the foundations.** The first day. The hut's foundation grid is in place, and it is lunchtime, with a view across McMurdo Sound to the Royal Society Range on mainland Antarctica. All photos: Don Webster.



## Conservation Trophy 2016

By Ursula Rack

Lizzie Meek from the Antarctic Heritage Trust is this year's recipient of the Society's Conservation Trophy. It is an award to "any person or organisation contributing significantly to any aspect of Antarctic or Sub-Antarctic conservation". This contribution can be to the conservation of flora or fauna, or to the preservation of buildings, sites, or artefacts of historical significance.

The Conservation Trophy was presented to Lizzie at the midwinter dinner of the Canterbury Branch. Lizzie is a conservator of the historic huts in the Ross Sea Region, with the Antarctic Heritage Trust (AHT). Her professionalism, dedication, and commitment to the conservation work under extreme conditions are outstanding, and so it was an easy decision to award Lizzie the Conservation Trophy.

The AHT's latest project is the conservation of Borchgrevink's Hut at Cape Adare, the first building in Antarctica – constructed in 1899. The conservation of this hut is extremely difficult from a logistical point of view and because of the weather conditions. Another challenge is the environmental requirements, as this is a place where

Adélie penguins spend their breeding season. The conservators and their support team have had to find ways to both meet the regulations to protect and not disturb the wildlife and to complete their tasks of conservation, and the penguins have caused some delays to the work to be done at the hut and the surroundings. Interesting footage, taken by a Norwegian film crew, was shown during the midwinter dinner and illustrated the difficulties the conservation team had to face in their last season, and gave an insight into the significance of that particular project.

Lizzie is one of the contributors to conserving the first physical signs of human presence in the Antarctic. The early huts and sites are an important part of the history of exploration and science on this continent, and at the same time raise awareness of Antarctica's vulnerability in the global earth and climate system, and also of the vulnerability of human life at this particular place. Lizzie emphasised in her acceptance speech that she is doing her bit as part of a large team, and she accepted the award on behalf of her fellow conservators and supporters.

The trophy itself is a miniature emperor penguin in African walnut. It was carved by Patrick Malcahy, and presented to the Society in 1971 by Peter Voyce. Mr Voyce's concern for the future of Antarctica and the importance of this place was the motivation to give this trophy to the Society to award to individuals and/or organisations for their effort in conserving it. 🦋



Photo above: Lizzie Meek, holding the Conservation Trophy, with Ursula Rack. Photo: Wolfgang Rack.



## Wellington Branch – 2016 Midwinter Event

By Jane Chewings

The Wellington Branch's annual midwinter event was held on the evening of Thursday 23 June at the Royal Society of New Zealand's rooms in Wellington. The event was warmly received by those in attendance. Several dignitaries were able to attend, including the Chilean and Argentine ambassadors, and representatives from the embassies/consulates of Brazil, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Russia, Switzerland, and the USA. The traditional call through to Scott Base was followed by the toasts, this year offered by Mariska Wouters, NZAS President (Loyal Toast to the Queen); HE Isauro Torres, Chilean Ambassador to New Zealand (Current Antarctic Treaty Nations); Fred Davey, NZAS member (Present Parties); and Andy Waters, 2016 Scott Base Winter Leader (Past Parties).

Ambassador Torres mentioned that the outcomes of the 2016 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, held in Santiago, Chile, had proven the

Photo above: Tamsin Falconer and Graeme Claridge. Photo courtesy of Jud Fretter.

international will to continue to keep Antarctica as a region preserved for the peaceful pursuit of knowledge and free of military or economic interests, as well as the desire to increase international collaboration. He also acknowledged the role of the team at Scott Base in upholding the tenets of the Treaty. Andy Waters updated all present about life on base this winter, at just 11 staff the smallest team for a number of years, but including four who have wintered-over multiple times. The temperatures hadn't been too bitter and work was progressing well. They had celebrated midwinter a couple of nights prior on the solstice and had thoroughly enjoyed the gift of Finlandia vodka from the Honorary Consul-General of Finland, Michael Scannell, who had shipped it to them in advance.

Andy also discussed with Fred the successful pilot midwinter flight by the US programme to McMurdo Station, the intention being to run monthly flights in winter 2017. He commented that the proposed regular flights would dramatically change the winter-over experience for both the United States and New Zealand programmes, though the fresh vegetables were very welcome. Anthony Powell, also wintering-over, briefly spoke of his film *Antarctica: A Year on Ice* ([www.frozensouth.com](http://www.frozensouth.com)) and other film work that he was currently working on, including documenting winter life on base. The event concluded with convivial conversation and consumption of refreshments. ❄



## Auckland Branch Midwinter Celebration

By Roger McGarry

With 2016 being such a notable year for important Antarctic anniversaries, the Auckland Branch Committee was extremely pleased with a turnout of nearly forty to their midwinter Christmas dinner at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, Westhaven Marina.

We were fortunate to have two excellent speakers on the evening, Ian Johnson and Robyn Mulgrew. Ian and his wife Yvonne made a special trip up from Tokoroa, and he spoke of the recent 50-year reunion of his winter-over team (1965–66) and presented the committee with a book of poems sent to them by students from a school in Kawerau in 1965.

Robyn gave a moving talk on the life of her father, the late

Peter Mulgrew, who 60 years ago was a vital member of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition. She brought along his British Empire Medal for his naval service and Antarctic exploration and also his Polar Medal. The Polar Medal had been very precious to him as a naval officer, as he had felt the connection with Captain Scott. He had been awarded the medal by the Admiral of the Navy on board Nelson's flagship *HMS Victory*.

Thanks to the help of Simon Trotter and other staff at Antarctica New Zealand, we were able to establish a video link with the winter-over team at Scott Base. Seven members of the team sat in on a question-and-answer session, with dinner guests coming forward to talk to the crew. Committee Member Nichollette Brown was able to re-acquaint herself with friends she had made while working at Scott Base over the last summer.

Auckland committee member Cmdr Brett Fotheringham made an excellent job of the toasts, including the "Loyal Toast", "Past Parties" and "Treaty Nations". In response, Scott Base Team Leader Andy Waters gave an excellent toast for "Current Parties". With the 100-year anniversary of the end of Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 60 years since the start of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, and the live link to the winter-over team at Scott Base, the toasts were very poignant.

A great night was had by all, with an excellent venue and great food. Several of those who attended had spent time at Scott Base through summer and winter in the 1960s, so they enjoyed the opportunity to catch up. We all look forward to next year's event when we hope to once again have a mid-winter chat with Scott Base. ❄

**Photo above:** Robyn Mulgrew with her father's British Empire Medal and Polar Medal.  
Photo courtesy of Roger McGarry.

# Travelling with the Huskies Through the Transantarctic Mountains

By Peter Otway

Dog sledging during the days of reconnaissance mapping in the late 1950s and early 1960s had its rewards. Although frustrating at times, the dogs were also extremely entertaining, as illustrated in this extract from *It's a Dog's Life in Antarctica* by Peter Otway published last year. (For more information about the book, please contact Peter at [otway1@xtra.co.nz](mailto:otway1@xtra.co.nz).)

## Wednesday 18 January 1961 – At Station B, 20 miles (32 kilometres) south of the mouth of the Byrd Glacier; altitude 2,920ft (890m):

Once again the bad weather has found us. Don and I awoke to the sound of snow pattering on the side of the tent, this time mingled with the sound of the southerly that was back with us again. The temperature, which yesterday portended the departure of summer by sliding down  $-13^{\circ}\text{C}$ , has now risen again to  $-9^{\circ}\text{C}$ . For some time now I've been meaning to give a brief description of each member of our team – dogs, that is. Contrary to what may be popular opinion, they each have their own character and could almost be likened to human personalities. First, this is the layout of the team but the orderliness of the traces is rather hypothetical – normally they become plaited together. Fido, the lead dog, is out in front; Brae and Glenn, paired together, are next; then Peabrain and Lindsay; Rocket and Tepi; finally Blue and Bottle.

### The dog characters:

**Fido**, our lead dog, can be likened to a Colonel who should have been pensioned off years ago. The thought has never entered his head that he is another mere dog – he imagines he's one of us. He knows his commands but cannot be hurried by anyone. He maintains great dignity as he ambles along out in front. If Fido is content to stroll at about 1mph down a steep slope, the whole team and sledge travel at 1mph. If Fido wishes to stop for any reason at all, the whole team grinds to a halt. If he imagines Brae is about to overtake him at such times he asserts his worn-out authority, often with disastrous results for himself. In a desperate effort to save face and muster his remaining dignity he issues

parade-ground-like orders and barks to everyone. Poor old Fido, little does he know this is his last season as the Big Boss!

**Brae**, to put it mildly, is pugnacious and clueless but fortunately has his redeeming features. His head, I am quite convinced, is a cross between that of a fox terrier and a sheep, and so is his mentality. If there's any chance of a fight, Brae will be into the middle of it. He is so completely without fear or brain, when he gets a beating from one of us he immediately blames the dog next to him at the time and flies at him. He apparently has no idea why he's being punished. He spends much of his time in "the cells" under our surveillance [tied up behind the team, just in front of the bumper bar of the sledge]. Despite this he can pull exceptionally well and often starts an excited yapping and straining ahead as though he sees a vision beckoning him on.

**Glenn**, a good trier but seems to get rather short of breath. When Glenn decides it is time for a rest he turns right around and looks most pathetically at us. One after another, each head turns around until it seems the whole team is begging for mercy. And so a sit-down strike is underway. He spends much of his time in the cells for these acts of mutiny and forgets to look around at all – so do the others forget. I think he means well, though.

**Peabrain** – fairly aptly named, although the name would suit Brae even better. His chief trouble is that he suffers from hallucinations. The team, the whole world in fact, is against him. Often while sleeping on the span, he will raise his head, eyes still closed, and issue a warning growl to the invisible enemy. Presumably the "enemy" must be either a bit deaf or thick-headed for it ignores the warning and is savagely beaten up and, I suspect, eaten. After this one-sided battle Peabrain again settles down licking his chops hungrily and waiting



for the next careless victim. On his trace, he has been known to work well but normally devotes his energy to *appearing* as though he's working, though, in fact, his trace is quite slack. For this he spends more time in the cells than all the other dogs put together. His attentions are devoted to Lindsay who, I regret to say, is somewhat unfaithful.

**Lindsay** can be likened to a scatty teenage girl. She is quite a flirt with the boys, having upset most of them at some stage or another but has no permanent favourites. Overflowing with enthusiasm and energy, she works very well although regards everything as a big game, not surprising considering her tender age of one year, and is always overjoyed if any one of us should visit her. She is definitely one of the favourites in the team.

**Rocket** is like an overgrown rabbit. He has a rabbit-like expression and bounces about in great leaps whenever we go to shift him from the span to the trace, or vice versa. He, too, suffers from hallucinations although not to the extent of Peabrain. His main fault is that he can never bear the suspense while we load the sledge in the morning. If he had his way he would live up to his name and streak away leaving the others far behind. During such times of uninhibited excitement and impatience, the sight of either Don or me appearing with the rope brake to try a little persuasion in getting him to lie down is enough to set him squealing in anticipated pain. As a rule, the rope doesn't even touch him and even when it does I'm sure it doesn't make much impression on his thick hide. For all of this, he is a good worker and a very likeable character.

**Tepi** is an extremely quiet chap and, I'm afraid, a little bit scruffy and non-photogenic in appearance. He makes up for this by being very good natured with everyone and very obedient. Although apt to conserve strength when the going is easy, when there's any real work to be done he'll put all he's got into it. He is a solid worker and makes no fuss at all.

**Blue**, despite his name has a fairly colourless character and never has much to say except in an occasional argument with his companion, Bottle. He was bitten in the backside about a year ago by the latter and, although the wound has never properly healed, I don't think he bears Bottle the slightest malice. He is probably the best worker of the whole team. Despite his quiet manner, however, he is difficult to catch once he gets off. Not until he has had what he considers his hard-earned stroll around for several hours will he think of handing himself over.

**Bottle** is one of the biggest and most powerful dogs and is also quite a character. While in the trace beside Blue he is very quiet and hard-working but, once on the span at camp, he assumes a different nature. He has no enemies but hunger and will do anything to defeat it. Down slippers, cardboard boxes, cocoa in tins and milk powder, even my Christmas cake still in its tin, are no trouble at all to this walking, yapping garbage disposal unit. On one occasion, as the sledge was taking off in the morning, Bottle started off with such a bound that he broke his trace. Discovering to his amazement and great delight that he was free, he turned back on his tracks to make a clean sweep of the campsite. The golden opportunity to satisfy his insatiable hunger had arrived. Thinking he would soon follow, we carried on for half a mile. Bottle was still busy. We called and sat down and waited. Still, he was systematically combing every square inch of ground like a big vacuum cleaner. Finally, in desperation, I ran back and collected him. The rubbish hole was barren – and Bottle was bulging and looking very happy. His bliss was not to last for long. The sudden exertion on such a full stomach had the most unhappy results. As we brought the team to a halt for the first rest an hour later, Bottle dramatically brought up everything he had so diligently scooped up – bacon rind, porridge, soup packets, plastic bags and all sorts of things completely unrecognisable and equally

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indigestible. Poor Bottle, he's ended up hungrier than ever. One might think he had learned his lesson but I have no doubt that he would repeat the performance given half a chance.

Well, that's the nine of them – all affectionate, faithful friends without whom our field trip would have been an impossibility; without whom, also, we would have less to talk about and amuse us. They are now all tuning up for their evening howlo session, so I'll just sit back and enjoy the harmony! Although I've heard this at least once every evening since I've been in the field, it never ceases to amuse me. Tonight Fido took the lead – after all, the lead dog has to maintain his authority even when there is no work to do. A few half-hearted howls brought absolutely no response from his tribe and so, feeling a little put out at this lack of support from his younger officers, he picked up the span wire in his teeth and shook it vigorously up and down. This resulted in

some rather belligerent growls from one or two others, having been woken so rudely from a deep sleep – but at least it was a start. After again prompting them with his half-bark, half-howl, rather like an old car having difficulty in starting, good old Rocket and Bottle rather sleepily took up the strain. One by one they all joined in, propping themselves up into sitting positions, muzzles held high in the air letting out a series of extremely tuneful “Ow-oooo”s. The overall effect is very musical and makes me regret the lack of a tape recorder. There is never a single shirker; Bottle has a good tenor voice but Peabrain appears a little tone-deaf and Tepi often plays his part lying down with eyes closed. After about a minute of music the howlo suddenly ceases and, their duty done for the evening, the choir members settle themselves comfortably back in the snow for the long sleep ahead. 🐾

## Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut: Calling all stories

By Lizzie Meek

The Scott Base of today has been in continuous use since 1957, and, as many will know, everything down there is either in use or has kept a place on the shelf because it just might come in handy one day. Over the years, older items have tended to either wear out or be retro'd. Up until the point in 1989 when Garth Varcoe organised the relocation of the TAE/IGY Hut “A” (now Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut), and it was re-purposed as a heritage space, the hut was in active use as a bunkroom, and there was only a small handful of TAE-era artefacts left. Over the years a number of other artefacts from the early days of the New Zealand Antarctic Programme have found their way back to the hut, and it is all those items, collectively, that give the building a sense of atmosphere and provide an understanding of early Kiwi Antarctic operations.

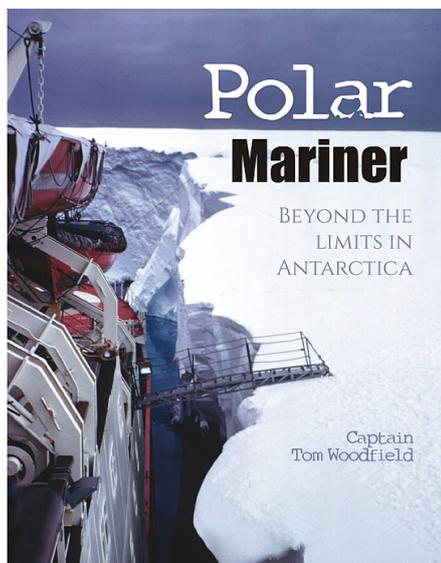
We're hoping that folks out there in the Antarctic community might have additional objects, photographs, or stories relating to the TAE era, or to the early years of the Antarctic programme (1956 through the 1980s), which they would be willing to donate to a permanent home in Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut. Once conserved,

the hut will be a perfect backdrop for Antarctic artefacts and the stories of New Zealanders on ice. The Antarctic Heritage Trust has taken over long-term management of conservation of the building and the collection, in partnership with Antarctica New Zealand.

If you have anything you think you might like to donate to Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut, or would like more information, please contact Lizzie Meek, Antarctic Heritage Trust's Programme Manager – Artefacts: [l.meek@nzaht.org](mailto:l.meek@nzaht.org) or +64 3 358 0212. 🐾



Some of the artefacts in Hillary's TAE/IGY Hut. Photo courtesy of Antarctic Heritage Trust.



## ***Polar Mariner: Beyond the Limits in Antarctica,***

**by Captain Tom  
Woodfield**

*Book reviewed by John Parsloe,  
retired polar mariner*

What a delight to be asked to review this book! Unknown to the editor of *Antarctic*, I had sailed with the author, Captain Tom Woodfield. Would his slim volume of 202 pages come up to my expectations?

In July 1982 I was serving as a deck officer on the small polar expedition vessel *Benjamin Bowring* in the Arctic. Captain Woodfield had joined our vessel in Spitsbergen as ice pilot for the second attempt to reach Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Charles Burton on their ice floe in the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean. The crossing of the frozen Arctic Ocean was the final stage of their Transglobe Expedition (1979–1982).

We had already tried and failed to reach Ran and Charlie and saw

no reason why some ice maestro should be brought in from outside – the reasoning went that his expertise was in the Antarctic, not the Arctic!

So Captain Woodfield arrived on board our vessel in Spitsbergen as unwelcome as the weather outside. He accepted the flak that came his way and openly discussed the situation before we set sail. However, the sea temperature dropped five degrees in 24 hours and the wind moved around to the south, causing the pack ice to tighten up dangerously around our small ice-strengthened vessel. We reluctantly had to abandon this second attempt as well and return to port. But in the process Captain Woodfield, unknowingly, had taught me techniques of manoeuvring a vessel safely and successfully in extreme ice conditions that no textbook can provide. This proved of huge value to me years later when ice piloting on various vessels in the Antarctic.

Back to his book, *Polar Mariner: Beyond the Limits in Antarctica*. I was not disappointed. This very readable book is a reminiscence of voyaging for 20 years to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic.

Tom Woodfield joined the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey in 1955 as a young junior deck officer, when the expedition mentality still prevailed, along with making the best of the tools they had available. During his time this organisation grew to become the British Antarctic Survey. He played a paramount role in the gradual change from underpowered and poorly equipped ships to the professionally managed and sophisticated vessels of his last command.

Exploration and survival during his early years in this unforgiving continent are described. Attempts were made to establish research

stations, support science and survey in totally uncharted ice-filled waters amidst often ferocious weather. Dramatic stories are featured, such as the near loss of a ship in pack ice, and the stranding of another in hurricane force winds and the collapse of an ice-cliff onto the vessel.

The pioneers of Antarctic exploration, the area's history, and the hardships and incredible achievements of those original seafarers are described. Yet polar navigation during the author's years was not without peril and the near loss in ice of his first ship, the RRS *Shackleton*, the demise of her Master, and his ill-judged replacement and consequent dramas are fully told.

After a voyage of enormous responsibility aged just 25, he transferred to the RRS *John Biscoe* as Chief Officer under a fine seaman but a difficult disciplinarian. The first ventures of the *John Biscoe* into the Weddell Sea are recounted, with information on the nature and movement of ice, its interrelationship with weather, and the methods of navigation in ice before the age of satellites.

The author recounts the extraordinary maiden voyage of the RRS *Bransfield*, which he had been appointed to command, during which it was feared she would split in two. The battle with a horrendous storm at the end of his last voyage is fully described, together with his final sentimental return to the Falklands.

I leave the final word to HRH The Princess Royal. In her foreword to the book Princess Anne writes: "This is an account of polar exploration, seamanship and human endeavour that is rarely found in this modern age and I am sure you will enjoy reading it."

Published by Whittles Publishing Ltd., Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland, U.K. RRP (UK) £18.99. ISBN 978-184995-166-1. 

# Malcolm John Macfarlane

By David Lucas



Malcolm passed away unexpectedly at home as a result of a massive heart attack on Monday 11 April 2016, aged 60 years. He was the eldest son of the late Jim and Alba MacFarlane and the beloved and treasured husband of Rosey Mabin.

Malcolm was educated at Wanganui Collegiate, and in 1980 gained a master's degree in Agricultural Science at Lincoln University. He went to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and after three years he was seconded to the Antarctic Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to be summer leader at New Zealand's Vanda Station in Wright Valley. The station's staff of four hosted visitors, supported scientific research, ran a meteorological programme, and sampled and recorded the flow of the Onyx River.

In the 1987–88 summer Malcolm was appointed Operations Manager and Senior Scientific

Officer at Scott Base, and in the 1988 winter he became the base's Winter-Over Manager of 13 staff. He then became the New Zealand Antarctic Programme's Operations Manager and, over five summers, New Zealand's Senior Representative (SENZREP) at Scott Base. In the years between 1983 and 1995 he had made 55 trips to the Ice and spent just over four years in total on the continent.

Malcolm and I first met in July 1993 when he was on his penultimate tour of duty as Operations Manager for the New Zealand Antarctic Programme. As the incoming Engineering Manager I spent many days with him in Christchurch planning the electrical systems turnaround at Scott Base to Programmable Logic Control, whilst preparing for the August 1993 Winfly flights to Antarctica. I was on one of these flights, and I returned to New Zealand after ten days' engineering appraisal work. Six weeks later in October we both flew down to Antarctica and became "roomies". Malcolm left towards the end of the year when his term as SENZREP expired. I had the honour of sharing nearly six months in his close company as a professional colleague and found him to be a mindful, highly inquisitive, and extremely adaptable man. He became a special friend.

Malcolm was a perfect mentor and I admired him greatly. He was understanding and insightful, welcoming and humorous, knowledgeable and professional,

and never overbearing. These qualities, linked with his vast experience, made Malcolm a comfortably able exemplar, and a non-judgemental senior manager. It amazed me that even after our traditional Scott Base formal dinners, entertaining the most esteemed company, he would later go to the workshop to fix a broken radio or rebuild a scientific instrument, for such was this man's hard work ethic and energy. Early-season start-ups can be very fatiguing. He'd happily fall into bed at around 2 o'clock in the morning having just completed yet another eighteen-hour working day. He would be eloquent at after-dinner speeches as SENZREP, and then deeply practical with a strong commitment to keeping Scott Base running. Malcolm possessed an uncanny eye for detail. Thus was the man.

During our mutual time at Scott Base, during the spring of 1993, and around 4 o'clock every morning engineering alarms would sound in our shared room and wake us. This was my time to get up and unblock the seawater filters "blinded" by krill. Malcolm never became annoyed, although the alarms sounded each morning for weeks, and this showed the measure of his tolerance and his commitment to having Scott Base operate smoothly. At 8 o'clock in the morning for six days a week he ran the Manager's Morning Meeting, with plenty of black coffee on offer.

Malcolm took five of these seasons as SENZREP in his stride,

*Malcolm embraced the isolation and challenges of being self-reliant, while quietly becoming increasingly resilient, which enabled him to resist the fatigue brought about by consistently demanding days and nights on the Ice.*



Malcolm in 2015 with highland cow Heaven on his Inglewood property.  
Sue Dowd/Fairfax NZ.

so creating an action-filled culture where empowering team dynamics naturally developed. His position of Winter-Over Manager at Scott Base in 1988 would have been the “S.A.S.” of management training, and stood him well for his 55 visits to the continent. During that time he held a myriad list of positions of high responsibility. If it was difficult or near impossible Malcolm would take it on.

Malcolm embraced the isolation and challenges of being self-reliant, while quietly becoming increasingly resilient, which enabled him to resist the fatigue brought about by consistently demanding days and nights on the Ice. Leadership positions can be lonely, and Malcolm played this role well, assuming responsibility where it was needed with good humour, always helping others.

The New Zealand Geographic Names Board has acknowledged his worth and has named a locality after him, MacFarlane Bluff: a bluff reaching to over 1,800 metres (6,000 feet) in the All-Blacks Nunataks, west of the Churchill Mountains of Antarctica.

Leaving the Antarctic Programme in 1995 Malcolm worked on tourist ships as a guide and lecturer, visiting the Ross Sea and sub-Antarctic islands. Later, whilst in Wellington for twelve years, he had a 9-to-5 job for the first time ever in his life, installing the digitised 111 service for the national police and fire services. His operational skills complemented his expertise in digital data and technology, which were often used at the highest level (by the prime minister).

Later, his involvement in disaster management was pivotal in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the Christchurch earthquake recovery. Malcolm was also highly involved in the data collection for the prevention of the spread of swine flu, and, on a lighter note, for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

His summers were spent in the Falklands or South Georgia establishing a wildlife foundation that is now a reality.

Malcolm was more recently involved in a small project to improve grass seed for drought-ridden coastal country and sheep farms. The outcomes were so dramatic that the project grew

and grew and now attracts \$6,000,000 in funding. What a success! He was also helping establish an agribusiness service hub in Saudi Arabia to showcase New Zealand technical services, farming systems, animal health, on-farm equipment, genetics, and farm expertise.

Malcolm was President of the New Zealand Antarctic Society from 1993 to 1995. His main role was to set up a website for the Society to enhance communication among members and the public. He was in fact in conversation with Society leaders on upgrading the website at the time of his untimely death.

Words that come from the heart enter the heart.

Rosey, his wife, has offered this reflection. Thank you, Rosey.

*My wise, strong, logical, gentle, thoughtful, lovely man, rock solid, and nothing fazed him. My total softie under his bearded reserve. I honour him.*

And so do we, Rosey. 🍷

# 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 (Scott's 1910–14 *Terra Nova* 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.

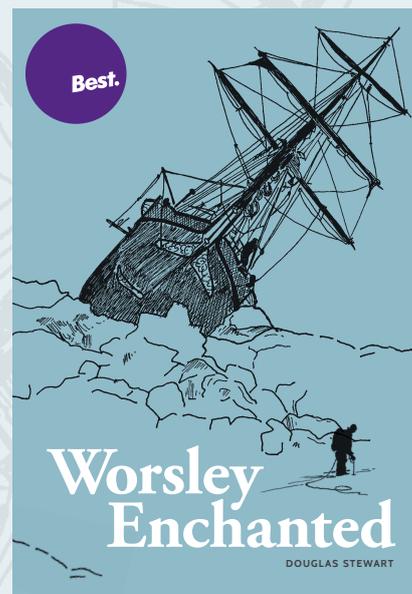
From Elephant Island, Shackleton and five men sailed to South Georgia where they gave the alarm, and eventually they were able to rescue all of the remaining men from Elephant Island. Once all the men were saved, Shackleton then made another voyage, this time to the Ross Sea, to rescue the surviving 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](mailto: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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New Zealand or  
[worsleyenchanted@antarctic.org.nz](mailto:worsleyenchanted@antarctic.org.nz)



[www.antarctic.org.nz](http://www.antarctic.org.nz)

# New Zealand Antarctic Society Membership

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](mailto: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](http://www.antarctic.org.nz/pages/journal.html), or contact the Editor.

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PO Box 404  
Christchurch 8140  
New Zealand

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# In Memoriam: The Heroes of the Antarctic

Far, far from home, amid th' eternal snows,  
And brooding silence of that bleak, lone land,  
They lie at rest, their life's brave journey o'er;  
Their grave—the scene of their heroic strife;  
Their winding-sheet—the snow; their requiem—  
The fierce Antarctic storm ... Not theirs to hear  
From King and countrymen, 'mid cheering crowds,  
The proud, glad welcome home; but from that scene  
Of death so nobly met, they went up higher;  
To meet a mightier King, and hear from Him  
The glad "Well done!" Death has no sting.  
And Grave no victory, for such as these;  
Who being dead, yet speak, with deathless words,  
Of noble courage and self-sacrifice;  
Of hardships bravely borne, and life itself  
Giv'n up for comrades' sake. Yes, brave, true souls,  
For honour of your country have you died;  
But in her people's hearts your memory lives,  
While England lasts!

*By J. W. Stones*

