

South Georgia Association Newsletter

Number 6 April 2004



Website: www.southgeorgiaassociation.org

Making Grytviken safe



Grytviken at the end of February. Dias is afloat alongside a barge at the Tijuca jetty. The plan has been cleared away and the blubber and meat cookeries and boiler houses are exposed. At the far end of the station, beyond the meat freezer, stands the temporary accommodation and offices for the AWG workforce.

Work on clearing-up and making safe of the Grytviken whaling station was started last September when a small party of 10 men arrived with considerable amounts of plant and equipment. Their first task was to build the accommodation camp complete with generators, two-man cabins, kitchen, freezers etc. In October the main party of about 30 men arrived. A specialist decontamination unit was built for the asbestos removal team and the real work began. The intention was to remove asbestos, oil residues, old gas cylinders, possible PCB-contaminated oils and other hazards. The remit was to leave the station, with as much of the plant intact, in a reasonably safe state for visitors.

A great deal was achieved in the summer. In order to gain safe access to the asbestos quite a few of the sheds and buildings were removed but the machinery inside them has been retained. This means that it is possible to see much of the main part of the processing system from the plan area, without having to enter dark, unsafe structures. Asbestos removal is expected to be complete by the end of the season. It should be noted that the asbestos has been removed by a specialist contractor under the supervision of independent and qualified U.K. inspectors. Thus the work has been done to the highest UK standards and continual air monitoring has shown that at no time has any person been exposed to asbestos risk. The asbestos itself has been treble wrapped in heavy polymer material and placed in a landfill site for burial to the best U.K. specification. The burial places are accurately mapped and marked to prevent any future development exposing them.

The next major task was to remove the heavy oil residues from the bulk storage tanks and to raise and clean *Petrel*, *Dias* and *Albatros*. Once more specialists were required to work on the ships. Many readers will know that the *Petrel* had been floated and sunk on several occasions. *Dias* was

partly sunk in 1974 and *Albatros* in 1975, after heavy snowfalls and storms.

A small amount of residual furnace oil was removed from *Petrel's* bunkers. Then a big excavator was used to dig away a small part of the shore in front of her old position at the former slipway and she was drawn forward until her keel was level with a flat area of sea bed and her bow hard against the shore. She was stabilised by putting beach material around her bow and about a third of her length back and water was pumped back into her so that she lies on the bottom in a fully upright position with her decks remaining above water. *Dias* was next to be raised. This was a much more difficult task due the very thin plate on her hull and the many holes. Divers worked constantly for a week or more to patch her hull sufficiently to pump her and bring her to the surface. Her tanks were then cleaned out. Our salvage consultant on site has said that she is so thin she cannot be towed out of Cumberland Bay. The only way to move her further is with a lifting ship. I mention this because her history as a steam-powered trawler (still having her original engine), active service in the Great War and



Boilers and blubber digesters are exposed to the public gaze.

much in between before her final days as a sealer and supply vessel at South Georgia makes her a very valuable old lady indeed. There are hopes that she can be fully restored in her home port of Hull; the financial implications and fund-raising possibilities are being examined.

Finally, I was fortunate to see *Albatros* come up from the bottom. I like to think of myself as a tough old (actually quite young) former Fid of a stoical Scots nature but I confess to some emotion, as after two weeks of patching and hard work by the divers, she was finally pumped out and slowly, so slowly, broke the suction in the mud that held her and gently rose to the surface.

Within a few days, many tonnes of mud had been removed and she was safe for the cleaning team to enter properly. Her tanks were then cleaned until there was more grease on a good breakfast. *Albatros* is so frail that she could barely be moved at all but both she and *Dias* are now lying alongside the Harpon Jetty as they have done for years. The difference is that they both sit proud and upright, again on the bottom but always above the highest tides and stabilised by scree quarried from the surrounding slopes. *Dias* could be easily freed and moved if that is decided to be desirable and achievable. It should be noted that there is still asbestos inside these ships because cleaning the boilers would require removal of much of the hull plates and thus effective destruction. We did not consider that in any way acceptable, so the hulls have been sealed up to prevent asbestos escaping or people getting access to it. Congratulations are due to Lyle Craigie-Halkett, the salvage consultant, and to the captain and crew of the salvage tug *Luma* because there were many problems, but all went exactly according to plan in the end.

Whilst the salvage team were working on the ships, the main party was engaged in cleaning out the bulk storage tanks. These had been emptied to the normal outflow level previously but still had up to a foot of oil in the bottom. These are vast tanks so a foot of oil is many tonnes. After sampling the air inside, teams of very robust chaps went in and began literally to shovel the thick glutinous mess into wheelbarrows, push them toward a hatch cut in the side and tip them into an open top tank carried on the forks of a telehandler. This was then taken to the shore, tipped into another tank where it could be heated and pumped onto a fuel barge. This gruesome work was done in almost continual shifts and went on for weeks. It was completed with no complaints from the workers (or not too many) and despite collapsed roofs, heating coils and other debris, without accident to them or to the environment. The old oil tailing pits that lay behind the tanks are presently being dug out and the area infilled with clean materials.

The last items to be addressed were the old gas cylinders which are now vented and empty, and the oils which were checked and found to be free of PCBs, so that was one major worry removed. The last asbestos has to be cleared but we fully expect the site to be certified clear of asbestos hazard by the end of April.

Gordon Liddle (South Georgia Operations Manager)

Taxidermist takes his skills to South Georgia

The work that Steve Massam, the taxidermist, carried out at the South Georgia Museum last summer led to him being described by world famous seabird expert, Peter Harrison, as a genius.

Probably his most spectacular piece of work is a 1.65 metre toothfish. Steve was extremely pleased with the very fine detail that was picked up in the mould. Because of the inevitable damage when heavy toothfish are landed, Steve had to make over 40 'invisible' repairs to the fins. Now the fish is every bit as magnificent as it ever was. It makes a fascinating exhibit to explain the importance of the toothfish industry to South Georgia. And some 50 kilos of excellent, guilt-free toothfish were eaten by the locals.



Steve Massam finishes off the toothfish, aided by Rosie Thomas.

Another unique specimen is a grey-headed albatross which died on Bird Island early this season. It had been first ringed by Lance Tickell in 1959, making it 45 years old. It was the victim of a very heavy crash-landing. All one side of its rib cage was broken; it also suffered a cracked breastbone and dislocated shoulder. Because this bird had been returning to Bird Island to breed, its entire history is known: partners, eggs laid, chicks fledged etc. Over its lifetime only one of its chicks returned to Bird Island to breed, showing how fine the balance is for these birds' survival.

Steve has also produced several other smaller fish while specimens of small birds that are normally not seen close-up will give people a chance to appreciate subtle differences between, for example, an Antarctic prion and a blue petrel.

A king penguin skeleton is still being prepared, which we hope Steve will complete next year. It is really interesting to see beyond the feathers and fat to note how fragile the skeleton of these apparently robust birds really is, and how the flippers lock into place for swimming, so saving the birds from using up unnecessary energy.

Lastly Steve's expertise has been of great value to people at King Edward Point by giving classes on craft work, using natural materials from the island and opening up a whole new range of brilliant ideas for mid-winter presents.

Pauline Carr (adapted from Penguin News)

South Georgia Half Marathon



The first civilian half marathon was run on February 15 in perfect weather. As the day progressed it became sunny and positively warm: shorts and T-shirt weather. The race started at 0900 but most runners were up at six, nervously filling stomachs with their preferred carbohydrate-loaded breakfast. With the flags of the runners' countries flying, Gordon Liddle cut the tape and off went 35 runners.

The route was very severe. The initial flat run to the whaling station was no indication of what was to come but the climb up to Gull Lake was a taster of the torment of ascending 1,100 feet of Brown Mountain. It is a hard walk but running becomes a test of just how much burning thighs can stand and how much air lungs can gasp with each breath. Already the leaders were well away from the main pack of us. A group of three, Andy Whittaker (Museum), Richard Mitchell and Martin Collins (BAS scientists), were closely followed by Chris Hall (KEP electrician) and Ant Risdon (AWG) and then trailing behind them, but not by far, the first woman (Jenny Corser KEP doctor) trying desperately to catch them.



Up Brown Mountain.

If the climb doesn't take your breath away - the view will! The descent was a roped edge that led down across tussock-covered hills at the base of Brown Mountain and across streams that offered clear and oh-so-cold fluid to be grabbed at before jumping across and tearing onwards past the fur seals that guard the cemetery, dodging elephant seals and back through whaling station.

The next leg was to Maiviken, 600ft over the col via Deadmans Cairn (an apt name today!) and back again. The final run-in was along the track to KEP. First place was

shared between Rich Mitchell and Andy Whittaker who had competed with each other for the better part of two hours, kicking at one another's heels. On the final descent from Deadmans Cairn, still neck to neck, one tripped, the other stopped and pulled him to his feet despite the thirst for title, and they finished together.



Turning back at Maiviken..

The next three runners were Martin Collins, Chris Hall and Ant Risdon and behind them by two minutes Jenny Corser. And little Al who told me how happy he was because his girlfriend thinks that he's a hero. (He was: he had no running kit and ran in his work clothes and boots.) The trophy, sculpted and donated by Nick Taylor, one of the AWG workers, was of metal twisted into a naked runner sprinting, head held high, over the letters 'SG 1/2'. For everyone else, the reward was a T-shirt kindly sponsored by AWG.

Statistics: 35 runners (4 female), of which 30 were novices and 31 finished. Winners' time: 1h 50, first woman 2h 07 (6th place). Last finisher 4h 24.

Based on an account by Jenny Corser

New South Georgia map delayed

The new map of the Island that was announced in the last Newsletter has not yet been published. The British Antarctic Survey regrets that there has been a hold-up in production plans but intends to publish the map during the summer.

British Schools Exploring Society Expedition



Travelling with pulk sledges on the Upper Neumayer Glacier.

This successful expedition returned from South Georgia in January. The party of 21 young explorers (YEs), ages 18 to 24, six leaders and three assistant leaders had undertaken an extensive programme of adventurous excursions and scientific projects, not only on the Island but earlier in southern Chile and the Falkland Islands.

The adventurous phase involved mountaineering on a journey from Husvik, past Gulbrandsen Lake onto the Neumayer Glacier and up to Admiralty Peak where a mid-way camp was established. The upper Neumayer was followed to the Kohl Plateau and then snowfields led to the unclimbed peaks of the Wilckens Range at around 1200 metres. The return journey was about 60 kilometres.

Hauling tents, food, fuel, climbing equipment and other stores in sledges took about a week of hard slogging to the camp below Admiralty Peak. The unfamiliarity of skiing while roped together, towing a sledge and avoiding crevasses proved challenging for everyone, particularly the novices. To add interest, Gulbrandsen Lake emptied at this point and caused about 200 metres of the edge of the Neumayer Glacier to collapse into the eastern end of the empty lake.

A reconnaissance to the Kohl Plateau found a safe route avoiding the major crevassed areas on the upper Neumayer Glacier and the first group established itself on the plateau. Fine weather allowed the first party of YEs and leaders to ascend three previously unclimbed peaks on the northern aspect of the Wilckens Range. A return to Husvik allowed a couple of days' rest before another group tackled the mountains. Fine weather allowed good progress to be made to the Kohl Plateau and yet another previously unclimbed peak that overlooked the central part of the Shackleton crossing was climbed. A forecast of bad weather was received on the HF radio that evening from HMS *Endurance* and plans for more climbing and skiing the next day were cancelled and a quick exit planned.

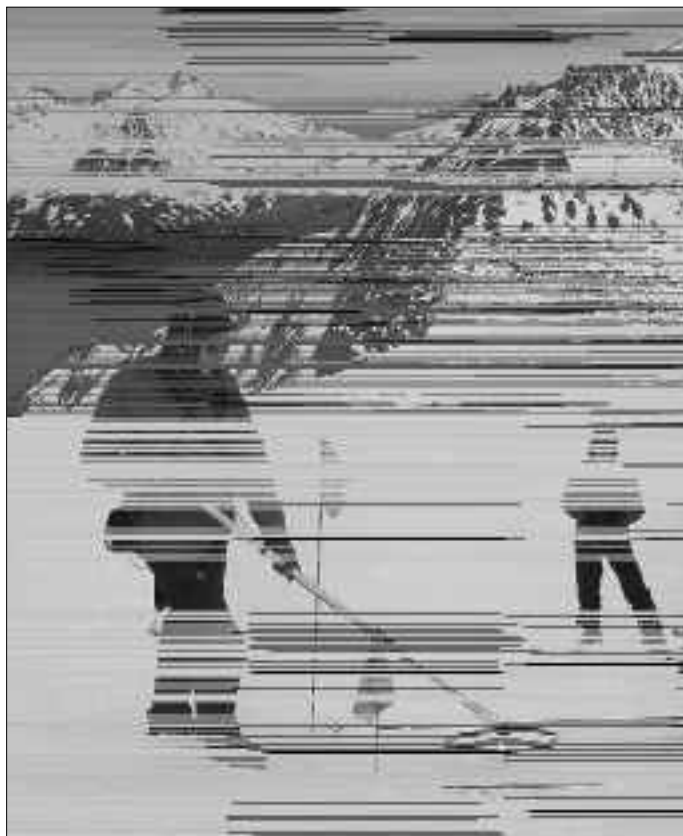
A wake up call at 1.30 am at the height of a storm was

not welcome but by 4 am the weather had calmed. A ski descent followed on crisp snow with spectacular light illuminating the mountains that abut the Neumayer Glacier. The Admiralty Peak camp was cleared as a second front of rain approached around 10.30. About 1 kilometre above Gulbrandsen Lake, David Nicholls suddenly disappeared. He had been dragged backwards into a crevasse by his sledge sliding off a narrow snow bridge. Fortunately he thumped onto the wedged sledge some 10 metres down; the sledge's frame harness broke his fall and he avoided serious injury. The doctor, Deirdre Galbraith, lowered a hat, dry gloves, crampons and an ice hammer and David then climbed out under his own steam. An hour later the whole party was safe beside the empty Gulbrandsen Lake in driving rain. Details of the peaks climbed are given on the South Georgia government website (www.sgisland.org).



Christmas at Husvik.

A group of about 12 spent 10 days searching for Shackleton's Primus stove which was jettisoned in 1916 just below Breakwind Ridge above Fortuna Bay. They carved out a platform for four tents and searched systematically for the elusive stove with a special metal detector. However, it was not powerful enough to penetrate the 2.5 metres of winter snow and then into the ice in which the stove is believed to be buried. So the stove is still in its icy tomb.



Searching for the Primus. South Georgia's Holy Grail?

The expedition's wide ranging science programme included:

Cetacean Survey between the Falklands and South Georgia.

Beetle Studies An introduced carnivorous beetle *Trechisibus antarcticus* preys on the larvae of the native herbivorous beetle *Hydromedion sparsutum*. The latter has reacted by producing larger eggs and larger larval hatchlings, which are less prone to predation. Four sites, at Husvik, Stromness, Harbour Point and Leith, were last surveyed in 1996. By repeating collection of tussock grass litter samples from these sites for later analysis, expedition members have produced an updated 'snapshot' of the progress of this evolution. An opportunistic collection of beetles was also made along the Busen Peninsula to investigate the spread of *Trechisibus antarcticus*.

Fur Seal Surveys Photographs were taken of fur seal beaches around Husvik and along the south coast of the Tønsberg Peninsula for comparison with aerial photographs taken from Lynx helicopters of HMS *Endurance*. Seal pups were counted to investigate whether the peak pupping date differs from Bird Island. For consistency, counts were carried out between 4 - 21 December at Husvik North and

between 1 - 21 December at Husvik (between Manager's Villa and jetty). Skin tissue samples were taken from dead fur seals for DNA analysis of populations.

Reindeer Genetics Twenty six skulls and 24 samples for DNA analysis were obtained from 16 animals from the Busen herd to add to the collection made by Fiona Lovatt on previous expeditions from the Barff herd on South Georgia and the source herds in southern Norway.

Alien/Introduced Plants Expedition members looked for introduced species of plants to check their spread. Unfortunately, it was impossible to enter the whaling stations where the majority of alien plants are found. However, the area around the Manager's Villa and radio shack at Husvik was surveyed and locations of easy-to-spot flowering dandelions were recorded along the Busen Peninsula and around Husvik.

Midge Genetics Midge larvae and adults were collected from freshwater and damp habitats near Husvik and around Seno Skyring in Chile. The aim was to find samples of *Eretmoptera murphyi* and related species for identification in the UK.

Native Plant Survey and Collection Plants were collected and transported back to Dundee Botanic Gardens for scientific and educational purposes. They appear to be doing well in their new home. They now form a central part of a wider collection of plants adapted to harsh conditions in the polar regions. Tissue material was also collected for the DNA bank at the Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

While at Husvik the expedition spent some time cleaning up the Manager's Villa and radio shack. A collapsed reindeer enclosure was dismantled and renovation work was done on the Husvik and Leith cemeteries. Christmas was celebrated at Husvik with a fine Christmas tree of reindeer antlers to decorate the Manager's Villa. On departure, the expedition handed over the Villa to a party from the Sea Mammal Research Unit at St Andrews University.

David Nicholls (leader)

South Georgia Landsat poster

A spectacular colour satellite image of South Georgia measuring 80 x 65cm.

For sale at £12.50 (including postage) from secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org or write to The South Georgia Association, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.

Email addresses

Do we have your correct email address? A mass mailing to announce the date of the AGM resulted in 'bounces' from about 30 addresses.

And, if you have antispam software, please include *@southgeorgiaassociation.org in the "friends" list.

Stromness Villa



This marvellously atmospheric picture of Stromness Villa by Molly Sheridan was presented to the SGA by the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust. It now hangs in the Scott Polar Research Institute.

The proceeds from the premier performance of the Shackleton IMAX film, co-organised by the UKAHT and the National Film Institute, were dedicated to the conservation of the Stromness Villa and are earmarked by the UKAHT until such time as a conservation programme becomes a practical possibility. The painting was presented by the UKAHT in the hope that it can be used to raise money to save the Villa.

Rector of the Falklands preaches at South Georgia

In early February, the Rev. Paul Sweeting, Rector of the Falkland Islands, accompanied the Commissioner on a visit to South Georgia. He held a communion service at the Whalers' Church which was attended by a congregation of about 30. Robert Napier, Chief Executive of WWF-U.K., played the harmonium, pedalling and playing at the same time, the Commissioner gave the Gospel reading and Professor Bjørn Basberg said the Lord's Prayer in Norwegian. The second reading from Job 39 gave the text for the following sermon:

“If Job had lived at Grytviken...

Just to set the scene from our Job reading that we heard earlier on: Job, as you probably know, has been having a horrendous time, and is filled with questions about his life, about God, and about what has been going on. And then in chapter 39 God turns up and speaks to Job out of the storm - I don't know whether it's a snowstorm, but God spoke to Job. And the words we heard read for us are some of God's words to Job.

I wonder what he would have said to Job if Job had been a resident of King Edward Point or Grytviken? Perhaps he might have said something like this:

Do you know when the reindeer give birth?
Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn?
Do you count the months until they bear?
Do you know the time they give birth?

Who lets the Fur Seal go free?
Who allows it to roam around?
Who delights in the Elephant Seal in his wallow?
Who sees it dive to the darkest depths?

The wings of the Albatross sweep over the ocean;
It swoops and soars with a knowing smile:
The Giant Petrel scoops the waves in its wing;
It ranges the empty miles.

Will the Humpback Whale consent to serve you?
Can you possibly know its thoughts?
How will you question it
Or learn its wisdom and grace?

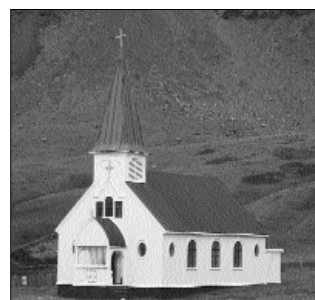
You smile at the Gentoo and laugh at the King,
But beyond your gaze it arrows the water,
While above the Tern flutters and dives,
The Prion dabs and darts.

Do you sculpture the iceberg?
Do you send it across the Southern Ocean?
Will the one who argues with the Almighty correct him?
Let those who question God answer him!

Today, just for a moment, I want us to think about the joy of being part of this incredible Creation. I'm thrilled to be here, and it's been a place on my mind and on my heart for a long time. And some of these things that I've just been describing, that God might have said to Job if he had lived here, we are privileged to enjoy. I've seen people jump for joy at the tail flick of a humpback, I've heard of people that are crazy enough to run a half-marathon through the hills for joy!

And this morning, I joyed to see the fur seals, playing out in fresh ponds, feeling as if I was walking through the Garden of Eden. Of course, it's not always an easy or safe place to be: this morning I also managed to simultaneously spot with my left eye a snarling fur seal about six inches away whilst discovering with my right foot a seal wallow!

There is a deep down goodness and joy at the heart of creation, and that is something that God wants to point Job back to, and so through that back to himself. Part of the joy for me of being here is to be among people who also know that joy, and I pray that that will give you joy not only in this beautiful creation, but in your beautiful Creator.”



The church received a fresh coat of paint this year thanks to Dave Peck and Paul Chapman..

South Georgia Toothfish longlining approved

The long-awaited decision, on March 16, of the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) review of the South Georgia fishery for Patagonian toothfish has endorsed the Government of South Georgia's efforts to control this lucrative industry. The MSC was set up in 1997 by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Unilever with the aim of ensuring the long-term future of fish stocks and the marine environment around the world by rewarding responsibly managed fisheries. (There is some poetic justice in the involvement of Unilever. The company was once heavily involved in whaling at South Georgia.)

The Commissioner, Mr Howard Pearce, said 'the Government of South Georgia has invested considerable resources in managing its toothfish stock so as to ensure long-term sustainability of the species and the best possible protection of the marine ecosystem. We are delighted to have this commitment recognised by the Marine Stewardship Council'.



Three longliners wait in Cumberland Bay East to be checked by the marine officer before receiving their licences. The middle ship is Moresko I which was later wrecked off Moraine Fjord. BAS photo.

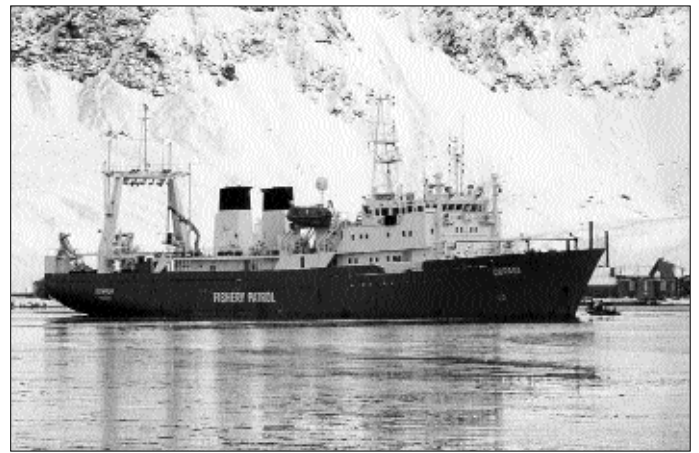
The Patagonian toothfish, often marketed as Chilean sea bass, is a deepwater fish, usually growing to about 1 metre or more and is generally caught at depths of between 400 and 1,800 metres with longlines bearing thousands of hooks. It is very valuable, retailing at about \$20 and upwards per kilo. The worldwide legal catch was estimated at 15,000 tonnes in 2000, which may be only one sixth of the total, and therefore mostly illegal, catch. South Georgia's contribution is only 4,420 tonnes but it is the major source of income for the territory. However, much of this income is ploughed back into management of the fishery. This covers fishery patrol vessels, fishery protection officers and a programme of research, both at KEP and in the U.K.

A well managed fishery is essential for protecting not only the fish but the whole marine ecosystem. The foundation for the management of the South Georgia fishery is CCAMLR, (the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources). Every year CCAMLR

sets TACs (Total Allowable Catches) for each species of commercially-exploited fish within areas of the Southern Ocean. The TAC for the South Georgia Maritime Zone is calculated with information from research fishing and studies by BAS at South Georgia, stock assessment and statistical analysis at Imperial College, as well as catch data and reports from fisheries observers at sea.

The South Georgia Government then issues fishing licences, whose conditions require the fishing companies to adhere to strict regulations, which include measures to reduce the by-catch of albatrosses and other seabirds. These have resulted in the longline by-catch in South Georgia waters falling from 3255 in 1997 to eight last year.

The other big problem facing the toothfish fishery is the huge amount of illegal, pirate fishing. The Government of South Georgia has virtually eliminated this from its maritime zone by spending a substantial part of the licence money on patrolling.



The Falkland fishery patrol ship Dorada in King Edward Cove, on charter to the South Georgia Government.

The MSC certification recognises that the South Georgia authorities are making great effort to manage their fishery wisely. The South Georgia MSC certification applies to the toothfish from point of catch to when it is landed at port. Separate accreditation is necessary from landing to retail (called Chain of Custody) and only then would the consumer be able to buy South Georgia MSC-labelled toothfish.

Certification was delayed by objections from environmental groups. A special review panel upheld some of their objections and the MSC requires the South Georgia Government to carry out further research on the separateness of the South Georgia stock from other Southern Ocean toothfish stocks. (Incidentally, a Patagonian toothfish was recently caught in the Davis Strait, off Greenland, which suggests that separation of stocks may not be absolute!)

Bob Burton



If you want to eat Patagonian toothfish, alias Chilean sea bass, mero, butterfish or bacalao de profundidad, the MSC logo will show that you have authentic South Georgia certificated produce.

Icebergs surround South Georgia



Visitors to the Island this year have been amazed by the huge numbers of icebergs around the coast. On fine days the views of hundreds of bergs glinting in the sun have been absolutely stunning. On the other hand, they were a hazard to shipping. One cruise ship hit an uncharted rock while detouring around a berg, and the masses of bergs in Cumberland Bay impeded access to King Edward Cove.

The origin of these bergs was the largest iceberg of the 1990s drifting up to South Georgia. When it broke from the Ronne Ice Shelf (southern coast of the Weddell Sea) in 1998, A38 (as it was labelled) was 90 miles long and 30 miles wide. This year the behemoth reached South Georgia and split into two main fragments (A38A and A38B), each about 35 miles long. As they have about 150 metre draft, they bounced along the Island's continental shelf and broke into thousands of smaller bergs which then drifted closer inshore.

Although the impact this year is large, historically this is not unusual. Any large bergs from the Bellingshausen and Weddell Seas should eventually end up at the Island. They are pushed by the same ocean current that helped Shackleton reach South Georgia in the *James Caird*: the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.



This satellite image shows another giant (A22) also from the Ronne Ice Shelf. It took two months to reach South Georgia from the South Orkneys in 2001.

Mark Brandon

Committee changes

There have been a few changes to the SGA Committee.

Stephen Palmer has retired as Membership Secretary, after establishing the computer system required to hold the membership roll and signing in our first 300 or so members. Pressure of parish work has obliged him to cut down on other commitments, but we are very grateful to Stephen for his pioneering work which has got us off to such a good start. He will be succeeded by Elizabeth (Lizzie) Hawker who is a research student at the Oceanography Centre of Southampton University.

Trevor Potts and Peter Emeleus have retired from the Committee to become corresponding members and a new member has joined – Mark Brandon, who is a lecturer in environmental science at the Open University with particular interests in Antarctica and South Georgia. Like Lizzie Hawker, he sees South Georgia mostly as tantalising glimpses when working on oceanographic cruises of RRS *James Clark Ross*. We warmly welcome Lizzie and Mark.

Annual General Meeting

To be held at 6.00 pm on Friday 7 May 2004

at The Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, off St James Street, London SW1.

Members are invited to a reception on arrival with optional refreshments at a cost of £12.50 per person. The AGM will be followed by short presentations on recent developments in South Georgia and we hope that the Commissioner, Mr Howard Pearce, will be present in person to give the report from Government House.

Summarised minutes of the last AGM can be seen on the SGA website. The full version can be obtained in advance from the secretary (see below). Copies will be available at the AGM.

Edinburgh open meeting

A public meeting to report on the continuing links between Scotland and South Georgia. To be held from 12:00 to 5:30 on Saturday 19 June 2004 at The Royal Over-Seas League, Princes Street, Edinburgh. Lunch will be followed by some brief talks on recent expeditions to the Island.

The Meeting is open to all, with the first talk starting at around 14:00. Lunch will include buffet and wine at a cost of £15 payable in advance, and there will be a pay-bar.

(This meeting is followed by the British Antarctic Survey Club's AGM and Reunion at Heriot-Watt University.)

To book for the AGM and the Edinburgh meeting please contact secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org or write direct to The South Georgia Association, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER. Please make cheques payable to South Georgia Association.

Please book by **1 May** for the AGM and **12 June** for the Edinburgh meeting.

The South Georgia Association newsletter is produced twice a year, in November and April.

Contributions should be submitted, at least one month before publication, to the editor: Robert Burton, 63 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon PE28 9AW. e-mail: newsletter@southgeorgiaassociation.org