

South Georgia Association

Newsletter

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The next Annual General Meeting will be on May 19, 2006.

Troels Jacobsen

Special Members' Cruise to South Georgia Rapid response needed

All Members should by now have received a personal notice of our plans for a Members' Cruise to South Georgia, which has been arranged in accordance positive response from more than 50 Members to our questionnaire earlier this year. This will be a special voyage because few cruise operators are prepared to run South Georgia-only cruises.

The cruise will be operated by Oceanwide Expeditions, using the ice-strengthened, Finnish-built former research ship, *Aleksey Maryshev*, which accommodates 46 passengers in 23 cabins. It will run from 9 to 26 November, 2006. Starting in Montevideo, Uruguay, *Aleksey Maryshev* will sail straight to South Georgia and spend six days there. The next call is the South Orkney Islands for one day, where we hope to land at the BAS base at Signy Island, and then up to Ushuaia, Argentina.

To provide the required holiday booking protection, we have made arrangements for participants to book through Wildwings, a British travel operator that specialises in birdwatching tours. Wildwings will also promote the cruise to their own clients.

Cruise prices start at US\$6,900, depending on the cabin. This is about GB£4,050 - final price will depend on exchange rates at the time. The price includes the cruise but not DOES NOT include flights, hotels, airport transfers, insurance, etc.

We need your help to make this cruise happen. It may be the only opportunity to join a ship full of like-minded people with a particular interest in South Georgia. An early payment of the deposit of £510 by as many participants as possible is vital if we are to secure the favourable terms that we have negotiated.

For the full picture, contact Keith Holmes (01865 318 914, kdhox@hotmail.com) or David Rootes (01954 718044, david.rootes@polespart.org), who will be able to discuss the cruise and send you further information.

The Fourth Annual General Meeting, 20 May 2005

The Royal Over-Seas League, St James, is becoming a familiar venue for our AGM. Fifty three members including the members of the Committee attended. Another 41, including the President, Stephen Venables, sent their apologies.

The chairman, David Tatham, started the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the meeting, especially Mr and Mrs Tokstad from Norway, Sally Poncet from the Falkland Islands and Kate Batty Smith, FCO representative. He then summarised the Association's activities over the past year. There was a successful Meeting in Edinburgh (see Newsletter No. 7). Bob Headland's talk 'A Century of Grytviken' at SPRI, Cambridge, was attended by a number of members who gathered for refreshment beforehand. The report of the Cambridge Conference was published.

David explained his wish to stand down as Chairman

because he was now Chairman of the Falkland Islands Association. He was prepared to continue as provisional chairman until a successor could take over. He also announced the retirement of Mark Brandon from the Committee and the appointment of Stephanie Martin.

In Elizabeth Hawker's absence, Keith Holmes reported on membership. Numbers have risen by 27 in 2004 to 340. 300 have paid the 5-year subscription (= £6000), 274 members are from UK. In 2007 the challenge will be to renew the 5-year subscriptions. There are currently three corporate members: Polar Star Expeditions, Polar Operations of Peregrine Shipping and Zegrahm Expeditions.

Keith, as Treasurer, also tabled the accounts, which had been independently examined and signed by John Bawden. Total assets amount to £13,000 of which £6,000 is from advance subscriptions. £11,000 is in the deposit account and made £127 interest last year. It has been decided to close the

US account which holds £875 (see below).

Bernard Stonehouse kindly agreed to chair the meeting for the election of the Executive Committee. Bernard thanked the outgoing committee, and, with no other nominations having been made, proposed that the Executive Committee be re-elected en-bloc. This was seconded by Ros Marsden and passed unanimously by the members present.

The Committee comprises:

President: Stephen Venables Chairman: David Tatham

Secretary: Fran Prince Treasurer: Keith Holmes

Membership Secretary: Elizabeth Hawker

Newsletter editor: Bob Burton

Members: Bob Headland, John Heap, David Rootes, Alexandra Shackleton, Stephanie Martin

Corresponding Members: Jan Cheek (Stanley), Sarah Lurcock (KEP), Skip Novak, Trevor Potts, Dan Weinstein (USA). [Note: since the AGM, Ron Lewis Smith has been co-opted onto the Committee.]

Kjell Tokstad, Chair of Friends of the Island (Øyas Venner) reported that 23 Norwegians had visited South Georgia this season to celebrate the Norwegian arrival at Grytviken on 16 November 1904. The Øyas Venner exhibition 'Grytviken 100 years' is currently displayed at Sandefjord. There are 135 named Norwegian graves at South Georgia and £10,000 is needed to care for the cemeteries. Øyas Venner hopes for a closer relationship with SGA. [It was later announced that the exhibition will be taken to Grytviken in the new year.]

Sally Poncet described some of the environmental research continuing at South Georgia which is funded by the FCO. GSGSSI. Giant petrels and white chinned petrels will be surveyed in two field trips, in collaboration with BAS and Falklands Conservation. Sally commended the Government's continuing input into environmental research.

A future event would be a visit to the UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton, on 30 September (see page 3).

On behalf of David Walton, who sent his apologies, Elizabeth Pasteur spoke about the current review of the South Georgia Environmental Management Plan, first produced in 2000. GSGSSI has asked British Antarctic Survey to review the plan, building on the first plan and focussing on policy details that will be put together using responses from the Government's questionnaire. Hopefully this will be achieved by the end of 2005. Dr Pasteur encouraged people to complete the questionnaire that had been circulated to all members. This would be a chance to influence the direction of policy and legislation. David Tatham explained that the SGA committee had decided not to send an overall SGA view, and but hoped that members would send individual responses to Dr Pasteur. Dr Pasteur thanked SGA for distributing the questionnaire.

Kate Batty-Smith read the Commissioner's report (see below).

Keith Holmes described the response to the SGA Cruise questionnaire which had been circulated to the membership. Thirty-five responses had been received, enough for the committee to consider planning the next phase of the cruise. Generally people would prefer visiting the South Orkneys rather than the Falklands, and would be less interested in taking part in a block-booking of another tour than in a dedicated SGA cruise. (see page 1)

With 340 members, there are now surplus funds and the committee has decided to set up an Initiative Fund for small projects related to South Georgia. (see page 4).

David Tatham thanked Keith Holmes for his work on the cruise and initiative fund.

The meeting was followed by a lecture by Canon Dr Stephen Palmer on 'Human Effects on the Natural Environment of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia'. This talk was based on Stephen's PhD thesis which can be seen at <http://newportparish.org.uk/stephen-thesis.htm>.

Message from the Government of SG and SSI

Thank you for the opportunity to let you know what has been happening in and around South Georgia over the last year.

On the island the completion of the remediation work at Grytviken has been the most significant project. The station is finally clear of environmental and health risks and is largely accessible again to visitors. (See Newsletter No 8.) We are now contemplating some other minor works at Grytviken. The repairs to the Museum continue next year. This has turned out to be a massive undertaking with not only the entire floor needing to be replaced but also much of the lower part of the walls and of course the whole roof.

This is being done with the Museum open to the public and only small sections closed off at any one time. By completion we will have spent several hundred thousand pounds on the Museum and the buildings around it and we will have structures that only need relatively low cost maintenance over the next 20 years. In addition, we are considering the possibility of re-decking a section of the Tijuca jetty to make a landing stage for small boats and a mooring point for yachts.

The other major project that we would dearly like to undertake at Grytviken is the restoration of hydro-electricity to supply both Grytviken and King Edward Point. A major study has been undertaken over the last year or so and a draft plan has now been produced. Broad costs would be of the order of £1.5 million and so if any of you have spare funds or know of sources for environmental projects we would like to hear from you.

GSGSSI funds are very tight at present due to problems

US Bank Account Closed

The Committee has reluctantly decided to close the SGA's US Bank Account because it was not being used very much and was incurring foreign exchange losses. We are sorry that this will inconvenience the Members who have used it, but would they please arrange to pay their annual subscriptions in sterling to: Nat West Bank, Ledbury Branch, The Homend, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1BU U.K. Account no. 23478136. Sort code 53:61:47. IBAN GB63 NWBK 5361 4723 4781 36 Please give a clear reference as to who is making the payment.

in previous years within the CCAMLR stock assessment system and our determination to ensure that we manage the fisheries sustainably. The Total Allowable Catch or TAC for toothfish is smaller this year than it has been for some time and may remain that way for a while. Our fisheries research and protection costs are spiralling upward due largely to fuel price increases and vessel charter costs. The result is that we are running a financial deficit this year and may have to do so next year, whilst our reserves have been depleted to near zero by the necessary work at Grytviken.

One event, which will help support good and important projects which the Government is unable to fund on the island, is the creation of the South Georgia Heritage Trust (SGHT) (See Newsletter 8). The fund has already received significant seeding money and already a refurbishment of the Husvik Manager's Villa is being financed and undertaken by Norwegian sources.

The tourist industry is, as ever, important to the island and numbers last season were slightly up on the previous one. Landing fees are being raised for next season to £75 a head and 10 per cent will go to the Museum Trust. This, along with the refurbishment of the Museum buildings, should put the Museum Trust on a more sound financial footing. We have noted the initiative for the SGA to organise its own visit and very much welcome the idea, although we should point out that it will be subject to the same regulations that govern all visits to the Island. Whilst touching on safety issues, this may be the moment to mention the recent discovery of an unknown but possibly very substantial stash of 80-year old gelignite at Godthul. We are grateful to British Forces South Atlantic Islands' EOD (Explosives and Ordnance Disposal) team for looking into this little problem for us.

Sally Poncet will be undertaking a major survey of giant petrels and white-chinned petrels during the next austral summer. This is in support of our commitment to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses & Petrels (ACAP) under the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and is largely being financed by the joint FCO/DFID Overseas Territories Environmental Programme Budget with additional funds from DEFRA via the ACAP secretariat in Hobart, Tasmania.

Many of you will have heard increasing concerns being voiced this year about the threats to albatross populations from longline fishing. We hope we can reassure you all by saying that South Georgia is leading the way in promoting albatross-friendly fishing – a fact which HRH Prince Charles recognised in a speech to the Save the Albatross Campaign dinner at Trinity House earlier this year. Another accolade our fishery has been awarded is Marine Stewardship Council Certification as being a sustainably managed and well-administered fishery. This year some companies have in place systems to trace the progress of fish from hook to retailer, which means you could be able to buy toothfish from South Georgia waters from a supermarket near you before the end of the year.

But running a good fishery is not only about regulated approved companies. We take very seriously the threat from

Illegal, Unlicensed and Unreported Fishing operations and a considerable portion of our budget is spent on patrolling and surveillance. We are therefore pleased to report to you the arrest and conviction earlier this year of a notorious poaching vessel the *Elqui*. She and her catch were confiscated in Stanley and we are now considering options for her future to ensure that she never fishes again.



The option eventually chosen for the Elqui.

Another large project supported by the FCO is the creation of a new legal structure for the Territory. This work is ongoing and, because it is intended to replace most of the existing laws with new bills and to modernise where appropriate, the task is enormous. You will appreciate that despite its remote location, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands is a political entity and the Government has to ensure that we have the legal framework to comply with a considerable range of international treaties and laws as well as cater for our own industries, environmental concerns and populace. No matter how good and how few they are they still need the same sort of legal protection as others.

This has covered some, but far from all, of the activities and events surrounding South Georgia in the last year. We would commend you to keep up to date with matters on the island via our website News and Events page which is updated monthly (www.sgisland.org).

Charting South Georgia – SGA visits Taunton

The Association paid another visit outside the London/Cambridge axis on 30 September when a group of 20 members visited the UK Hydrographic Office at Taunton. The UKHO was established during the Napoleonic wars when the Royal Navy realised that far more ships (eight times as many, in fact) were being sunk in shipwrecks than in battle with the French!

We enjoyed an excellent tour of the UKHO's wonderful collection of maps, charts, soundings, aerial photographs and historic records. Andy Willett, who incidentally is a member of the SGA, introduced the Hydrographic Office and later showed us round his section, Chart Branch 9, which deals with the charting of South Georgia as well as the Southern Ocean and a large part of the Pacific. The engravers have long gone from the Hydrographic Office, although wonderful examples of their work remain, and the

process of chart making is now largely computerised.

The archives of the UKHO are a treasure chest of charts, atlases and printed books, letters, reports, remark books, notices to mariners, tide tables and much else besides. Philip Clayton-Gore showed us round the new reading room and produced several early charts of South Georgia and the Antarctic, including – most evocative of all – Frank Worsley's plotting sheet of the course of Shackleton's *Endurance*.



'Capt. Larsen's dwelling'. The first Villa at Grytneken photographed during the visit of HMS Sappho in 1906. The photograph is one of the historic items displayed during the visit to the Hydrographic Office.

The use of aerial photography in chart making was demonstrated in the Photogrammetry section where Judy Craig showed us how numerous photographs taken by the helicopters of HMS *Endurance* were incorporated in detailed charts which filled in many of the gaps in the chart coverage of South Georgia. Once again we were impressed by how much trouble the UKHO had taken to produce their South Georgia material for us to admire.

We left deeply struck by the Office's pre-eminent position in the production of charts worldwide. Ninety per cent of the world's shipping uses charts which are drawn and printed in Taunton and the UKHO is self-supporting financially through sales of charts. It was good to see that an operation based on several hundred years of British naval predominance is still a world leader in today's changed environment.

That evening we held an open meeting in the Castle Hotel, Taunton, where two members of the Association spoke about survey work in South Georgia. Dave Fletcher had surveyed the interior of the Island during the 1970s and produced excellent slides of the various BAS expeditions, with a lively commentary. Andy Willett surfaced again with some more charts and drawings from the UKHO to describe the process of charting South Georgia. Finally Peter Langdon showed a television film from 1964, based on material he had taken himself and showing the crossing of the Island following Shackleton's route, and the first climbing of Mount Paget.

It was a very successful expedition to the West Country and the SGA thanks the UKHO for an excellent tour and the evening speakers for their interesting and entertaining talks.

David Tatham

SGA Initiative Fund - Can the SGA help you?

Please give a clear reference as to who is making the payment. Members attending the AGM endorsed a proposal by the Committee to use some of our accumulated funds to encourage Members to initiate or support projects which will stimulate awareness of, and interest in, all things related to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

The following give some idea of what might be supported:

The conservation of historic photographs
Documentation of relics on South Georgia
Rescuing diaries

Expeditions will not qualify for funding, and funds can only be requested by, and given to, Members of the South Georgia Association. Non-Members may, however, carry out the projects.

We would not expect to cover the full cost of any project, but we hope that the SGA's contribution will make the significant difference between something merely being thought about and actually being achieved.

The sum of £1000 is available in any calendar year, to be administered as follows:

Each application should be no longer than one page of A4. It should include the name of the applicant and full contact details as well as a brief description of the project, its justification, an estimate of the time and cost, a funding schedule, and a clear statement of the product and its benefits.

Applications should be submitted to the Independent Appraiser appointed by the Committee who, at the end of each quarter will review them and make a simple recommendation on each request. After consideration at its next meeting, the Committee will give sound reasons for any rejection and will publish all approvals in the next Newsletter.

The virtual Fund opened on July 1, 2005 with a balance of £1000. Dispersals will be limited to £1000 in each subsequent 12-month period and in each calendar quarter the maximum dispersal will be £250.

The Fund will be virtually topped up to £1000 after each dispersal. A single project may request several dispersals up to a maximum of £1000 over two years. The Treasurer will maintain a record of transactions in the virtual Fund.

Recipients of funds will be required to write a short account of the completed project for publication in the Newsletter and on the website.

Further details may be obtained from the Treasurer: treasurer@southgeorgiaassociation.org Please submit applications directly to the Independent Appraiser, Dr Mike Pienkowski: appraiser@southgeorgiaassociation.org. Copies all applications must, for good order, be sent to the Secretary: secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org

The preferred method of communication is by e-mail, but any postal correspondence should be addressed to the above at: c/o The South Georgia Association, The Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.

The Committee will review, and may modify, this framework from time to time.

Keith Holmes

It's the Wrong Villa!

The Manager's House, or Villa, at Stromness is, as they say, an icon. It was the endpoint of an unbelievable journey that is one of the greatest stories of Antarctic exploration. It is where Thoralf Sørle welcomed Shackleton, Worsley and Crean back to civilisation with the words: 'Who the hell are you?'

There is a blue metal plaque recording the event and the Villa was a place of pilgrimage for visitors to South Georgia until the dangerous state of the whaling station caused it to be put off-limits. They posed for photographs in front of the building, or even in the bath where the three heroes had scrubbed off months of grime, blubber and soot. This bath has now been removed to the South Georgia Museum for safety. I, among others, have lobbied the Government of South Georgia for the restoration of the Villa's dilapidated fabric, and a sum of money has been raised for this purpose.

Unfortunately..... this building did not exist at Stromness in 1916. Professor Bjørn Basberg, who has carried out detailed studies of the structures at most of South Georgia's whaling factories, had his suspicions but no proof. Then, a couple of months ago, three plans of the Stromness factory came to light, dated 1912, 1914 and 1926. None shows any sign of the familiar Villa. Instead, the building marked on these plans as the 'Manager's Dwelling' is the building that later became the 'Foremen's Barracks', known locally as 'Fattigmannsvillaen' -the Poor Man's Villa.



The Stromness Villa with its memorial plaque.

So Shackleton did not have his 'coffee and cakes', his bath and a soft bed in the Villa shown above. This building was originally at Ocean Harbour and was moved to Stromness only in 1926, arriving too late to go on that year's plan.

Never mind. We can transfer our attentions, the plaque and the funds to the correct Villa. It, too, is out-of-bounds and also in need of repair. Bjørn Basberg and I hope to publish the full story of the two Villas in a future issue of Polar Record.

Bob Burton

How you can save Albatrosses

The RSPB is selling Limited Edition Keith Shackleton prints in aid of the Save the Albatross Campaign for £350 which feature Light Mantled Sooty Albatross at Shag Rocks. Go to www.rspb.org.uk/international/albatross_appeal/dinner/index.asp?view=



Around the Shag Rocks, light-mantled sooty albatrosses, by Keith Shackleton. (107 cm x 72 cm, landscape)

Alternatively, at http://www.rspb.org.uk/international/albatross_appeal/stamps.asp, you can donate the stamps saved from your mail. The RSPB gets £1.50 per kg for UK stamps and £12.50 per kg for foreign stamps. Last year they raised almost £3,000 from stamps.

A Message from the Captain of HMS *Endurance*

My name is Nick Lambert and *Endurance* is my third command. She's a unique platform, with a unique role and operates in a unique environment; an environment that I find singularly fascinating. I can't claim to have been to the ice before, only South Georgia, and I'm told that doesn't count. On the other hand I am a Durham University geography graduate who attended a module on Antarctic politics in the final year. Hence I was very enthusiastic when my appointer (Navyspeak for HR manager) mentioned *Endurance*. I'm absolutely delighted to be her captain; there is no other opportunity like her in the Navy or, indeed, many other navies. I'm also in no doubt as to the importance of the ship's role in the context of UK foreign policy in the Polar Regions, or the contribution that she makes to the scientific output of the British Antarctic Survey and the UK Hydrographic Office.

Endurance will make short visits to Madeira and Salvador before arriving in the Falkland Islands in early December. There we will undergo a final major exercise (again based on the stricken liner) before proceeding for our first work package in South Georgia until the New Year. Work there will consist of hydrographic surveys to the south-west of the island using our new Multi Beam Echo Sounder, boat camps for inshore surveys and a lot of support for the BAS

scientific programme. We will also land a 10-strong team from the British Schools Expedition Society, while our Royal Marine Detachment will walk the Shackleton Route; albeit with modern equipment (they declined my suggestion that they should do the boat journey first). I also hope that we will be able to support the South Georgia Heritage Trust.

In January and February, we will undertake work farther south around the Antarctic Peninsula

As the season closes we will head north for the UK carrying out defence diplomacy work in the Falklands, Argentina, Tristan da Cunha, South Africa, Ascension Island and St Helena. The ship will return to Portsmouth in mid-May. Our work is not over then however as we plan to visit Leith in company with RRS *James Clark Ross* as a backdrop for the Antarctic Treaty Convention Meeting in Edinburgh in June 2006.

You can find more about the ship's activities at our HMS *Endurance* Tracking Project website www.visitandlearn.co.uk. This is an educational site pitched at Key Stage 1 and 2 and avidly followed by many worldwide enthusiasts.

Abandoned Huts to be Removed

Whaling stations are not the only buildings on South Georgia that require clearing-up. During the 1970s, BAS built a number of huts as field camps for scientific programmes. (They also made good weekend retreats!) The weather has not been kind to them and several are in a state of collapse or completely dismembered by the wind. One, 'Seal View' at Elsehul, has already been removed; others will be removed this summer.

Huts that are still useful or are of historic interest will be maintained. These include the Jason Harbour hut, all that was built of a proposed whaling station and now visited by cruise ships, and the Veslegard hut, built in 1910 as a refuge for men travelling between Grytviken and Ocean Harbour.

South Atlantic Working Group (SAWG)

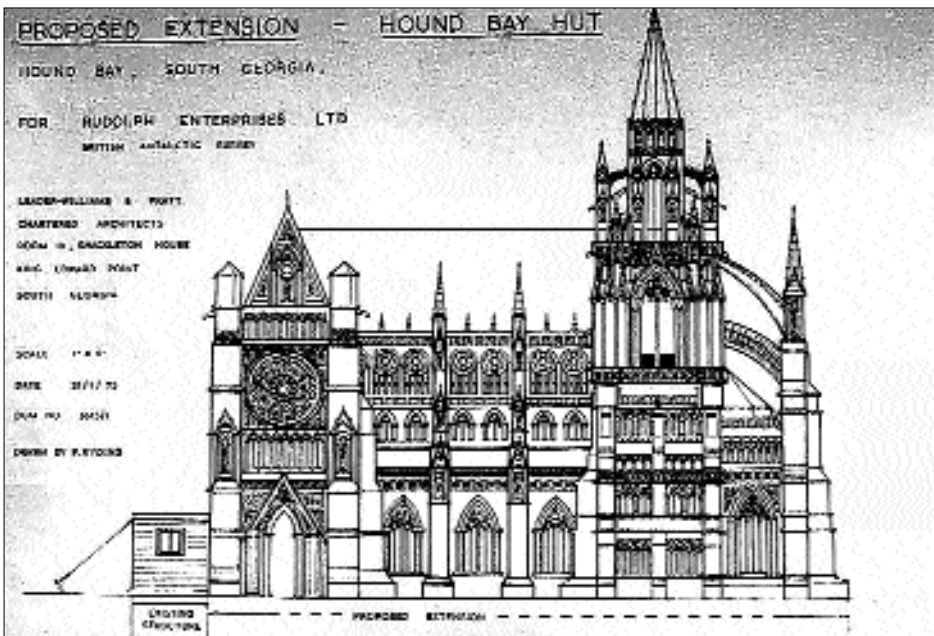
The South Georgia Association subscribes to the South Atlantic Working Group of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF). The latter was set up in 1987 to encourage and support the formation of Conservation Groups in each of the British Overseas Territories. It meets with Government regularly to exchange views and information, and to appraise progress towards goals. Regional working groups, such as SAWG, co-ordinate activities. SAWG deals with Ascension, St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Gough, Falkland Islands and South Georgia (together with British Antarctic Territory).

UKOTCF brings together conservation and science bodies in the UK and its Overseas Territories. It exists to promote the coordinated conservation of the diverse and increasingly threatened plant and animal species, natural habitats and historical features of these territories. It aims to do this by:

- Advising governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the UK and the UKOTs
- Acting as a co-ordinating link for voluntary organisations and individuals with special interests in the UKOTs, thereby providing a principal source of expert advice
- Deploying experience in developing skills of local conservation and heritage organisations or, where necessary, working with local people to create conservation NGOs
- Working with NGOs to assess needs, identify strategies and find funding for conservation activities
- Managing or co-managing conservation projects in the UKOTs
- Maintaining a web-database on the natural history and conservation activities of the UKOTs
- Producing a newsletter Forum News, which shares information with groups in the UKOTs and others

Further information can be found at www.ukotcf.org.

Currently, SAWG involves representatives from local conservation organisations and government, other organisations such as the Zoological Society of London, Royal Botanic



Luckily for the BAS demolition party, the extension of the Hound Bay hut (left) never got off the drawing board.

The hut was used by Nigel Leader-Williams and Bob Pratt as a base for their reindeer studies and the architect of the extension was Frank Ryding, alias Dr Dettol. He says 'the architectural style is a hotchpotch taken from English and French cathedrals and I suppose technically it is "Geometric Decorated Style Gothic".'

Gardens Kew, Eden Project, RSPB, Marine Turtle Research Group, Services Ornithological Societies, etc. The UKOTCF was well represented at the SGA 'Future of South Georgia: A programme for the next 10 years' international conference held in Cambridge in September 2003, which produced the first draft matrix of existing action and further requirements relating to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) Commitments under the Environmental Charter.

I have represented the SGA at the quarterly meetings of SAWG since August 2004. Although SGA has a close relationship and liaises closely with the GSGSSI and with BAS, it is hoped that we will benefit by being a member of SAWG. Certainly, SAWG will benefit from our representation by keeping it informed of relevant conservation and heritage activities on the island, as well as in BAT.

Some of the topics discussed at the July 2005 meeting related to South Georgia. These included:

- Presentation on the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Seed Bank for the UKOTs (much interest in the South Georgia flora)
- Update on grant bids: Darwin Initiative, OTEP (Overseas Territories Environmental Programme), EU South Atlantic Invasives Project
- ACAP (Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels) progress and fisheries issues
- South Georgia Environmental Management Plan
- South Georgia surveys of vegetation in tourist impact areas, seabird colonies and 19th century sealers' sites, removal of field huts, Grytviken safety update
- ACAP Conference on the S Atlantic Territories;

Ron Lewis-Smith

Come into the Garden.....



When you are next in Dundee and have finished inspecting *Discovery*, remembering, of course, her role as an oceanographic ship in South Georgia waters, and have time for more sightseeing, head for Dundee's botanic garden. You will find more of South Georgia interest in the form a newly-planted garden.

During 2003/4 BSES Expedition to South Georgia, Deirdre Galbraith collected live plants and carefully nursed them back to Dundee. They included four species of fern: small, shield, brittle bladder and adder's tongue, great and lesser burnets, water starwort and water blinks, Antarctic buttercup and, of course, tussock grass. Most of them have flourished in captivity and are now being planted out in their own plot, which, not surprisingly, is kept very wet.

Rare giant squid captured alive



Last June, a longliner fishing off South Georgia caught a very rare animal - a live giant squid. Adult giant squid live in deep water and are mostly found as fragments in the stomachs of sperm whales. This one was trapped on hooks set for toothfish at 1625 metres. When hauled to the surface, it took five men to bring it on board. At about 5 metres long and weighing 150-200 kg, the squid was too large to preserve in its entirety but the head and tentacles have been saved. It is believed that this is a colossal squid *Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*, the larger of the two species of giant squid, and perhaps the first adult to be seen alive, although tiny (5 cm) young are caught in nets around South Georgia.

The Floating Chapel



The 'Bryggekapellet' is on the waterfront at Sandefjord, close to the restored whaler *Southern Actor*. It was opened in 2004 as a place of remembrance for the Norwegians who died on South Georgia and for quiet contemplation and prayer. Built on a barge, the chapel houses a memorial with the names of 137 Norwegians who are buried on South Georgia. Commissioned by Øyas Venner (Friends of the Island), this consists of two engraved plaques made from a sheet of steel brought from Stromness by HMS *Endurance* to Portsmouth and then shipped to Norway.

Never mind the Weather, So long as We're Together.....



Crag Jones and Rich Hawarth setting out from Larsen Harbour.

We left Ushuaia aboard the yacht *Pelagic* on 31 December 2004, sailing via the Falkland Islands on the outward and homeward leg, and spending 11 to 30 January at South Georgia. While the mountaineering team - Skip Novak, Julian Freeman-Attwood, Rich Hawarth and Crag Jones - was ashore *Pelagic* was left in the most capable hands of Dion Poncet, that rare breed, a South Georgian native. He was ably assisted by our other shipmates - Jeremine Pasteur and Laurent who had been captured at the last minute from the quayside in Ushuaia. This yacht-based half of the team had a grand time sailing around and exploring the coast of the island while the climbers once again explored the wilder reaches of their idiosyncrasies and even a little bit of South Georgia!

On 13 January we left *Pelagic* and dragged our sledges up the steep glacier to the col overlooking the head of Larsen Harbour. Our aim was to ski into the centre of the Salvesen range, base ourselves there for as long as possible and climb as much as the weather allowed. In the event, poor weather slowed our progress and pinned us down completely for some days.

Over the next few days we slogged NW on along the Philippi Glacier, past Mount Sabatier, across the Graae Glacier. We then turned north to cross the head of the Harmer Glacier and on across the Novosilski and up to the head of the Spenceley Glacier. We made our central camp there, north-east of Mt Baume, below 4792. It had taken us a week to get there through continuously poor weather. We were surprised to find the following dawn to be perfect weather. Caught 'on the hop', we made an immediate but late and rushed start on our main objective, Mt Baume.

Poor snow conditions meant slow progress up a technical buttress. At least this line was protected from the regular serac falls and avalanches which were going down the other side. By evening we emerged onto clear ice fields stretching towards the summit tower.

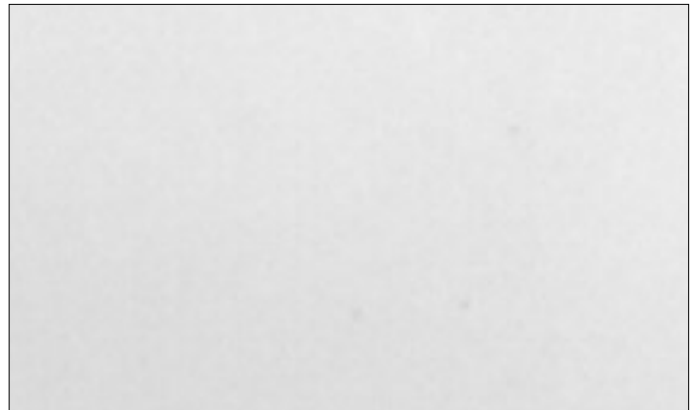
However, we were still only less than halfway to our objective. Although the climbing now looked easier, it would be a very nasty steep, open mountainside to be caught out on

in the event of a storm. There was some debate as to whether we should continue with an inevitable bivouac or to turn back while the going was good. A vote on the issue decided that we should retreat. A long series of abseils through the night saw us relieved to be back at our skis and returning to our tents.

Inevitably the next day was still fine! Using our iridium satellite phone to get a weather forecast, we received the depressing news that this was to be the last fine day for the next week. It was forecast to turn decidedly nasty from the middle of the following day. We therefore saw that our last chance for a successful climb would be to set out very early and make a quick ascent of the unclimbed, but less technical-looking, peak 5680.

We got away from the camp at midnight and, making the most of the fine weather, reached the summit by 5am on the 23 January. By 8am we were back at the tents.

By 10 am we were on all-fours in a screaming gale. The forecast had been correct! We were glad not to have been caught away from camp but even now we were not safe. One half of the team packed the tents away, while the other half prepared a snowhole some distance away.



We spent three nights in this snowhole with very rough weather going on outside. Every six hours one of us would have to gear up and dig our way back to the surface to maintain air flow!

The weather improved by the morning of the 26th and, in a very long day, we packed up and descended the Spenceley Glacier, then headed gently up the Brøgger to the Ross Pass and down the entire Ross Glacier to Little Moltke Harbour. A spare tent we had asked the boat to stash there proved a useful supplement to our storm-damaged tents for the last night. On the 27th we retrieved the remaining loads from the Ross Glacier and battled out through the surf to board *Pelagic* for the voyage home.

Crag Jones

A message from the Membership Secretary: If you change your email address, please let me know - membership@southgeorgiaassociation.org

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