

# South Georgia Association Newsletter

Number 12 April 2007

Website: [www.southgeorgiaassociation.org](http://www.southgeorgiaassociation.org)

ISSN 1747-4302



## South Georgia Historic Sites Survey

I have always been fascinated by the history of South Georgia, in particular the sealers who quietly got on with the job, incidentally discovering some of the subantarctic islands while the more 'official' polar explorers were busy dying in the North-west Passage. Therefore I was very keen to get involved in the South Georgia Historic Sites Survey.

I should make it clear at the outset that I do not claim to be any sort of archaeologist or historian. However, the aim of this initial survey was to create a simple record of what was at each site for inclusion into a South Georgia Historic Sites Database. Principal data recorded at each site were GPS positions, photographs and a description of the site. Additional information was collected on vegetation type, level of fur seal erosion and any potential threats to the site or artefacts.

The starting point of the survey was the list of Historic Sites in the table prepared by Dr. Liz Pasteur for the South Georgia Government, based on information from Bob Headland's document 'Historic sites on South Georgia: Evaluation and Protection, 2005.' This gave us a list of sites to work from. Information about additional sites was provided by Sally Poncet and Dion Poncet.

The survey was carried out in addition to my main role as deckhand on the yacht *Golden Fleece* which was chartered by the South Georgia Government as support vessel for the South Georgia ACAP petrel survey (See Newsletter 10, pp 4-5). Survey work had to be fitted in around the usual things that one gets up to carrying out a yacht-based survey in South Georgia, like zodiac driving, cooking and cleaning the toilets. Dion Poncet, skipper, and Stevie Cartwright, crew, were fully involved in the historic sites survey as well, and Dion's sharp eyes usually picked up what the rest of us had missed. Other members of the ACAP team also helped out.

Fur seals added a certain edge to the work carried out in the early part of the survey. Nevertheless they made useful

scale objects in photographs when I dared not approach the subject any closer. In particular, I remember trying to piece together pieces of iron on the beach at Undine Harbour whilst surrounded by territorial males, and feeling like I was carrying out archaeology in a war zone. It is of course fantastic to see how well fur seals have recovered from their near extinction and one can only hope that the numbers of these fascinating animals continue to increase to their previous levels. After all, the seals were there first.

A real high point of the survey for me was finding Robert Cushman Murphy's campsite at Start Point in the Bay of Isles. We had found the approximate area with the help of one of his photographs in the book 'Ambassador to the Penguins' by Eleanor Matthews. Andy Black found the exact site by matching up the stones we saw under the tussock with those appearing in the photograph. I found it quite a moving experience to sit there in the late afternoon sunshine reading the words of the man who had set up camp there so long ago. I'm not so sure if Andy or Leiv appreciated my reading out loud though.

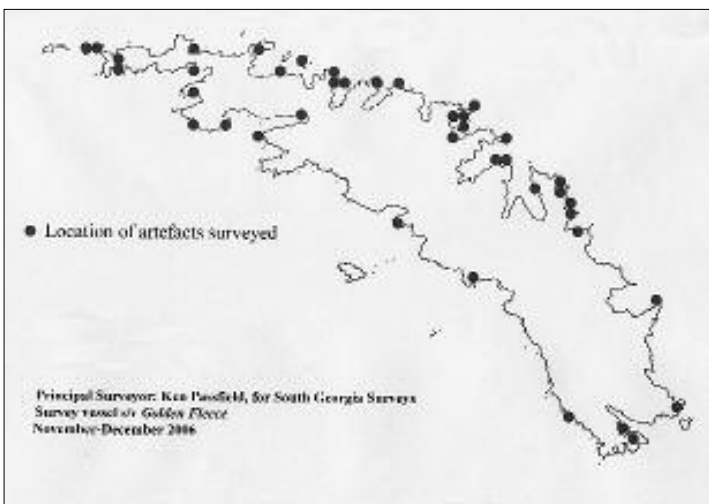


Another high point was surveying the shipwreck site at Diaz Cove, where Stevie found a felt object sticking out from under a tussock bog. This proved to be a felt hat in almost wearable condition, as modelled by Carolina. Other artefacts here included a cache of eggshells, presumably penguin eggs.

In total, approximately 40 historic sites were visited on both north and south coasts. A data collection format was designed with assistance from Pat Lurcock. Over 70 separate records of artefacts were recorded and over 260 photographs taken and cross-referenced to the records.

This was a preliminary survey, and the data will form a starting point for the South Georgia Historic Sites Database in which information can be easily updated and made accessible to all.

Many thanks to Sally Poncet for supervising the survey, to Stevie and Dion in particular and to the rest of the ACAP survey team, to Pat and Sarah Lurcock and lastly to the SGA for contributing to the costs of the survey through their Initiative Fund.



**Ken Passfield**

## The South Georgia Sheraton

Inland from Grytviken, beyond a cairn-marked pass under Mount Hodges, lies Bore Valley. In summer the view is breathtaking: luxuriant moss cushions in every shade of green and gold; multicoloured lichens proudly asserting their fractal heritage; and lazy, whispering waterfalls, all against a backdrop of dramatically folded mountains. If this is not yet heaven enough, an hour's trek down the valley leads to the magical, cliff-cradled May Cove - Maiviken.

In 1970, as a 'holiday' from my regular radio research work at King Edward Point, I became the Support Party for a botanical survey of the interior. It sounds romantic; more accurately and less romantically, one of the botanists wanted to map the Bore Valley vegetation, and needed some volunteer fool to carry his bags and keep house for him. Me.

The house we finally chose - in preference to our tent - was a cave just above highwater mark in the cliff behind Maiviken beach. Through the tussac-draped entrance, the light of our torches revealed signs of previous occupation, and subsequent research showed that it had often served as a temporary refuge for sealers and whalers throughout the previous century. Although the amenities were basic, it was an almost ideal home for us. It offered solid protection from the four seasons which we could daily expect from the South Georgia weather, it had running water (albeit down the back wall and across the floor), and was within easy reach of the botanical killing fields.

So, after a cup of fortified tea, my colleague disappeared to botanise in the hinterland, whilst I unpacked our kit and collected armfuls of tussac grass on which to lay the sleeping bags. However, it soon became clear that if we were to avoid sitting on damp gravel and scrabbling in the gloom for uneven cooking- and work- surfaces, urgent action was required, so I set off before daylight failed to see what solution May Cove could offer.

Within minutes I had found it! There, lying on the beach, guarded by a rather bored gentoo penguin, lay a full suite of lounge, kitchen and dining room furniture, just ready for the taking. So I took it. The penguin protested - though only half-heartedly - and the cause of science was advanced by a magnificent 10 foot length of sun-bleached 9" x 3" timber.

*The 3-piece suite under guard.*



Now, one long plank may sound barely more promising than two proverbial short ones, but back in the cave, levelled between boulders along the left wall, it blossomed. By day it was our cupboard, specimen rack, writing desk and chairs. Work finished, it became our kitchen table; then our sideboard, dining table and chairs. After dinner it served as sofa, card table and bar. And when we finally retired for a dreamless night's sleep, it became our bedside cabinet. Three days later we returned to base, mission accomplished.

In subsequent seasons, the Maiviken cave was generously stocked with 'emergency' supplies to establish it as a luxury hotel for future generations of holidaying explorers. It was regularly used until 1982; it may even be in use again today. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who knows if the original, classic furniture is still in place.....

**Steve Chellingsworth**

### Pat Lurcock has sent this update on the Sheraton

The cave was refurbished a couple of years ago inasmuch as the door was moved to the centre, a double-glazed window unit was put in, and the sleeping platform expanded. There was even an eco-friendly stove (the Briburn) that Brian Beck the genny mech built to burn drip-fed waste chip fat, but it came back to KEP for refinement (it was so hot it melted the solder!) and never got finished before he left. The stream no longer runs inside the cave.



I slept at the Sheraton recently, after skiing over to see gentoos roosting in the late afternoon. The cave reeks of rats, though is rat-proof these days following Bri's refurbishment which was assisted by boatman Hamilton 'H' Males and me. (I did the standing around passing unwelcome advice.) The cave was also nice and warm - a blast of zero degrees air hit me as I opened the door and stepped in from the - 10 outdoors.

### Good penguin news

The one thing that Grytviken has lacked is a colony of king penguins. In 2002/3, one pair hatched an egg at Penguin River but the chick disappeared. This summer, four pairs laid eggs but later abandoned them, perhaps because of the floods in February (see Page 4). Let's hope they persevere.

## Greetings from SGHT

Following a meeting in London between the new chairman of SGHT Howard Pearce, SGHT director Alison Stewart and the chairman of SGA Richard Ralph, the SGHT would like to send greetings to all members of the SGA and let you know the latest progress of projects for South Georgia.

Tim and Pauline Carr, who have now left the Museum, have been touring the US since the start of February, raising awareness of South Georgia, the SGHT and its projects. The tour has been successful in raising awareness of the habitat restoration programme remove rats and re-establish South Georgia birds such as the pipit and smaller petrels to the main coastline of the island. Darren Christie, the GSGSSI Habitat Restoration Officer, has just returned from a couple of months of camping out on South Georgia, where he and Derek Brown from the New Zealand Department of Conservation investigated the ranges and terrain to be covered by the programme.

The tour has also hatched a scheme for South Georgia museum to have a replica of the *James Caird*. There is an existing replica in the US which was built by Bob Wallace, a master boat craftsman who played Shackleton in the IMAX *Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*. Bob built a replica for the film, but it was swamped and sank off Elephant Island during the filming! If the Trust raises funds to purchase the *James Caird III* and she journeys from the United States to South Georgia, she will be fully seaworthy and may even take to South Georgia waters occasionally.

Back in the UK, we met up with the BSES expeditions (formerly the British Schools Exploring Society), based at the Royal Geographical Society in London. BSES was founded by the surgeon of Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition, Commander Murray Levick RN, who along with his wife organised the first youth expeditions in 1932. Their trips focus on exploration, science and team working in challenging environments. BSES try to visit the Falklands and South Georgia each year with a group of a dozen young people.

In November 2006 the expedition was based at the Husvik Villa which had been renovated externally by SGHT earlier in the year. SGHT hope to support and work with the BSES groups in the future, as they increase their surveying and exploring of South Georgia. BSES are still considering applications from young people aged 16-20 for the next South Georgia expedition in November 2006, see [www.bses.org.uk](http://www.bses.org.uk) for more details.

When Howard Pearce and I met Richard Ralph to find out more about the SGA and its activities, we agreed that SGA and SGHT provide complementary but different functions in relation to South Georgia. We hope to find a way of linking the activities of two our organisations more closely in the future.

**Alison Stewart**

## Book review

*Below Freezing: The Antarctic Dive Guide*. Lisa Eareckson Trotter. Rob Still (Maps) 2006. 116pp.  
Old Basing UK: WILD*Guides*. ISBN 1-903657-10-5.  
[www.wildguides.co.uk](http://www.wildguides.co.uk) £19.95 (inc UK P&P).  
[www.longitudebooks.com](http://www.longitudebooks.com) \$39.95 + P&P

This is another book from the generally excellent WILD*Guides* series. (SGA members may be familiar with *A Visitor's Guide to South Georgia* by Sally Poncet and Kim Crosbie.) Lisa Trotter should be commended for bringing us the first published resource on diving in this region. After a brief history of Antarctic diving and an overview of Antarctica the book gets straight into some helpful 'how to...' information. The second and main part of the book individually describes 19 dive sites on the Antarctic Peninsula and islands, and six sites around South Georgia.

Most sites are accorded a double page spread with one or two having more and some, such as a group at Deception Island, running together over several pages. Each site is described by brief location text; general site conditions, including warnings about currents, swell and the like; several colour pictures; a map; and some key features in a side box.



*Diving in Antarctica can give amazing photo opportunities.*

The general layout is good and the guide is easy to use. It is well designed and produced as we have come to expect from WILD*Guides*, although I would have preferred a spiral wire binding like *A Visitor's Guide to South Georgia*, simply because it lays open. And it is well priced at £19.95.

But I do rather object to the sub-title. This is a guide to key sites on the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia but other subantarctic or continental locations are not included. The Peninsula sites cross the biogeographical change from maritime to continental species but this is not mentioned in the site descriptions or in the biological introduction. This is a shame because the biology is otherwise well-handled, within the restrictions of a handy guide such as this.

The site descriptions are let down by the maps. It seems strange in a dive book to have location maps without a hint of marine detail. Granted, these latitudes are poorly charted but there is sufficient for many sites to give some indication

of depth contours. A scale mark would also have helped.

Lisa Trotter is right to stress minimum standards and experience needed. There has been a number of fatalities recently in much warmer waters than the Peninsula and various training programmes, including PADI, have come in for criticism lately (Holiday scuba divers 'dicing with death' *Daily Telegraph* 19 Aug 2006; PADI scuba-dive course slammed. *TimesONLINE* 9 Aug 2006). Polar waters are not the place for inexperienced divers - that is what has caused accidents, not the training.

Lisa has broken new ground with this book and it is well worth buying by anybody with an interest in the polar underwater world. I look forward to future publications from her that include many more of Antarctica's wonderful dive sites.

**David Rootes**

### **We knew the weather was bad but.....**

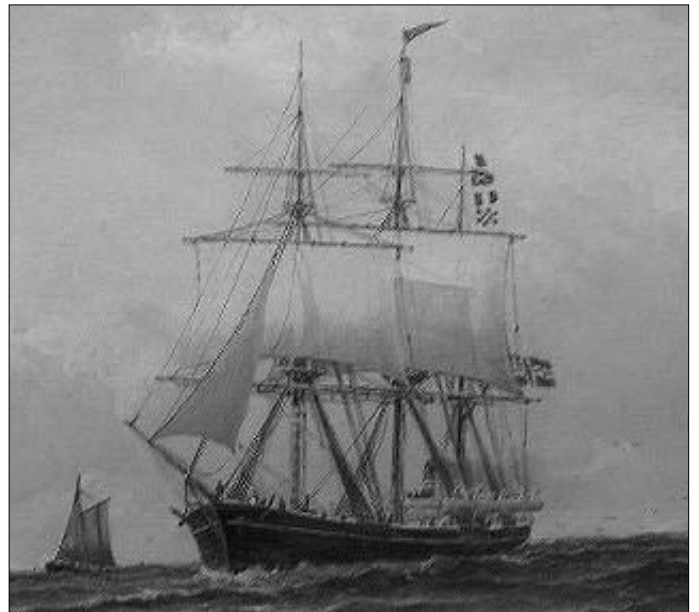


In early February rain poured on Grytviken for 19 hours without respite. Streams on the hillsides turned into waterfalls. The track around the cove was washed out and the main stream burst its banks and flooded the whaling station.

### **The history of Jason**

Ships played such a key role in polar exploration that their names are frequently used as a brief 'nickname' (e.g. Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition is known as the 'Endurance Expedition'). This convention is rather confused by ships which took part in several expeditions. RRS *Discovery* is famous as Captain Scott's first ship but she was despatched to rescue Shackleton's men from Elephant Island in 1916, was the expedition ship of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) (1929-31) and was the first oceanographic research ship of the eponymous Discovery Investigations (also giving her name to the laboratory on King Edward Point).

The *Jason* is less well-known but she had a long involvement in both Arctic and Antarctic waters. She was built as a sealer in 1880 by Christen Christensen in his Framnaes shipyard in Sandefjord, Norway. In 1888 she conveyed Fridtjof Nansen to East Greenland for the first crossing of the



Greenland icecap. *Jason* was held up by heavy ice within sight of land so Nansen and his companions had to make their own way ashore. It took 12 days.

*Jason* took part in two expeditions to Antarctica which had a profound effect on the future of the region. During 1880s, whaling was developing in Norway and new whaling grounds were being sought. In 1892, Christensen sent *Jason*, under Captain CA Larsen, to search for whales in the Antarctic. From reports of earlier visitors, Larsen was hoping to find plentiful right whales. There had been a slump in demand for whale oil, which was suffering from competition from petroleum and vegetable oils, but the price of whalebone had risen dramatically.

No right whales were found, however, but there were enormous numbers of rorqual whales which *Jason* was not equipped to catch. However, Larsen was of a scientific turn of mind and made many geographical and scientific discoveries, including fossils of wood on Seymour Island - the first fossils to be found in Antarctica.

In the following year *Jason* returned to Antarctica in the company of *Castor* and *Hertha*. They again failed to catch any right whales and had to make do with seals and a few bottlenosed whales. Larsen discovered the King Oscar II and Foyen Coasts on the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula and *Jason* reached 68° 10'S in the Weddell Sea. After visiting Ushuaia and the Falkland Islands, the three ships visited South Georgia. *Jason* arrived in what is now Jason Harbour and later struck a right whale but lost it. From this expedition Larsen conceived the idea of setting up a whaling station on South Georgia - the rest is history!

*Jason* returned to Arctic sealing but in 1899, Luigi Amadeo, Duke of the Abruzzi, bought her for his proposed expedition to the North Pole. Renamed *Stella Polare*, she was modified at Colin Archer's shipyard in Larvik by constructing accommodation in the hold and rearranging the top deck for kennels and storage. *Stella Polare* was placed under the command of Carl Julius Eversen, who had accompanied Larsen south in 1893. He sailed her to Rudolf Island, Franz Josef Land, where the expedition wintered. Next spring a sledge party reached 86° 34' N, a few miles nearer the Pole



*The bowsprit of Jason/Stella Polare on display in Milan.*

than Nansen. At the end of the summer, *Stella Polare* was extricated from the ice with the aid of guncotton and returned safely to Norway.

Thereafter, *Stella Polare* became a training ship for the Italian Navy and, when finally broken up, her bowsprit and part of the bow were put on display. The remains are now in the Museo Della Scienza & Tecnica-Museo Navale, Via San Vittore, Milan. I am indebted to Jean Stenico

for this information and to Monica Pontremoli for providing the photograph of the bowsprit.

**Bob Burton**

### **An episode of legal history**

The gaol at KEP is one of two of the original buildings left standing after the building of the new BAS base. When I was the Leith Harbour medical officer from 1946-48, one wondered why there needed to be a gaol and there was a feeling that it was its presence rather than its use that served the greatest purpose. Certainly no local folklore described anyone ever being incarcerated in it. One understood that it was a materials storage facility rather than a prison.

When I sailed south in *Saluta*, I did not realise that alcohol was the currency to get things done in the whaling community. Whaling stations were 'dry' and only a few designated, senior staff were allowed alcoholic supplies. Perhaps because of this restriction, alcohol was the accepted means of remunerating extracurricular and out-of-the-ordinary activities. Money was no use because practically all trading was done through places such as the station 'slop chests' where purchases were debited to earnings. Tied to this was the widespread culture of brewing alcoholic products from a wide variety of substances, including sugar, starch, potatoes and, on one occasion with sadly fatal consequences, black shoe polish. To this was added a fairly constant inflow of 90% puro-alcohol brought down on ships which had bunkered in Spanish and West Indian ports. This of course accounted for the need for customs regulations and a full-time customs officer.

In the summer of 1946, Neil Rankin, the distinguished ornithologist, arrived on board the *Southern Venturer*, bringing a converted RNLI lifeboat, the *Albatross*, to make expeditions to study albatrosses around the coast of South Georgia. Knowing the economics of the island, he had

brought with him a not inconsiderable supply of spirits. Soon after coming ashore he enquired whether I, as the doctor, might have a secure storage space for these supplies. Not having at that time realised that all official alcohol supplies were kept in an enormous pit under the bed of the station manager, I innocently replied that the hospital attic had lots of space. I would be very happy for his supplies to be stored there under the watchful eye of myself and my *diakon* (medical attendant). It did not cross my mind to discuss it with the manager and I was not aware of the immense significance of alcohol to the whaling community.

You can imagine my discomposure when, a few weeks later, Neil Rankin came to me in some disquiet, saying that some of his stock of liquor appeared to have vanished. I was not sure that he might even have had some suspicions as to my own integrity. My predecessor had had to be returned to Montevideo in the custody of two husky whalers, having partaken of too much of his own supplies of alcohol.



*Michael Gilkes and diakon Kjell Haddeland.*

My wonderful, trustworthy, and totally knowledgeable of the world's ways, *diakon* Kjell Haddeland (who incidentally became Chief Mental Health Officer for Oslo) was much more in touch with all the events of the station. He very quickly found the destination of the missing liquor down in the accommodation barracks and unearthed a comatose figure beside a bottle of Red Hackle whisky, Rankin's particular brand. This of course led to further investigations and discussion with my humane and effective manager Torgersen, from whom I took some upbraiding for not realising that Rankin's liquor should have been passed straight to his care. It was clear that the matter should be dealt with by the legal processes available on the island.

The outcome was that, in February 1947, a trial was held in a room of the accommodation block 'Bay View' at Leith Harbour. It was a pity that this prevented me from joining a long-planned trip to the Bay of Isles to collect penguins for Edinburgh Zoo. The magistrate, police officer and customs officer came up from Grytviken and criminal proceedings commenced against the malefactor. I was required to give evidence as to how these matters appeared to have come about and what I knew of them.



*Leith Harbour. Bay View is the white building at centre back.*

The trial was conducted in a completely formal and proper fashion. I not recall the details but the malefactor was judged guilty and sentenced to a month in gaol in Grytviken. The sentence was duly carried out and I believe that most of the month was spent in decorating the prison.

It is unlikely that this trial and sentence had any significant effect on the alcoholic activities within the whaling communities. Certainly my experiences at the end of the winter, when *Harpon* was the first ship to arrive at Grytviken, suggested no change. But it was an interesting example of British colonial justice in operation. I would add that for a young doctor it was yet another cusp of the learning experience.

**Michael Gilkes**



Another example of 'the immense significance of alcohol to the whaling community'.

This illicit alcohol distilling apparatus is now displayed in the South Georgia Museum. It was found in a secret compartment when one of the buildings in Husvik collapsed.

### **Duncan Carse bust unveiled**

The Duncan Carse Bust Appeal came to fruition on March with the official unveiling at the Museum by South Georgia Survey veteran Alec Trendall. The tiny museum room was packed with passengers and an Australian film crew from *Polar Pioneer*. Museum Curator Niall Cooper met Alec and together they inspected the South Georgia Surveys display. Alec then shared his memories of Duncan Carse and the survey expeditions. He talked about the last time he had met Carse, in 2003 at his Sussex cottage. This was the first time they had met in nearly half a century and they spent the time going over many events and incidents from their expeditions. They recalled that Alec had nearly brought the very first expedition to a halt before it had even started. He had fallen down a crevasse and suffered injuries that required him to be sent back to the UK. Fortunately, his damaged leg healed and he rejoined as a geologist on the

four-man 1953/4 survey. Alec moved to Australia in 1962, eventually becoming director of the Geological Survey of Western Australia, before retiring in 2003. After Duncan Carse died, Alec took on the task of completing a book on the South Georgia Surveys. The text is now complete but more work is needed on the maps and illustrations before it can be published, hopefully in 1958.

Duncan Carse made eight expeditions to South Georgia. He first visited the Island in 1933 as part of the Discovery Investigations, returning in 1936 as part of the British Graham Land Expedition. In 1961, after the four South Georgia Survey visits, he returned alone to live on the south coast as part of a 'personal psychological experiment', a venture that turned into a survival exercise after his hut was washed away by a freak wave. His last visit was in 1973, when severe weather prevented him retracing the Shackleton crossing. Despite the Island not always treating him kindly, he never lost his enthusiasm for South Georgia.

The bronze bust was given to the South Georgia Museum to mark the achievements and work of Duncan and the men of the South Georgia Surveys.

**Ainslie Wilson**



*Alec Trendall with the bust of Duncan Carse.*

### **The SGA Duncan Carse bust appeal**

The Appeal launched in Newsletter 11 raised £5650.50 in the period up to the end of 2006, after which no more contributions were received. It was closed for receipts on March 25, 2007, at the end of our Financial Year.

The Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands, Argos Shipping, and the South Georgia Association each contributed £1,000. Nine donors gave amounts between £100 and £350, a further 25 individual contributions were made, and Sarah Lurcock raised £362.20 in South Georgia. Eight donations were effectively anonymous, but we thanked all others at the time and would like to thank publicly all those who made the appeal so successful.

The cost of acquiring the bust, transporting it to South Georgia and preparing a plaque was £3257.28. This leaves a

balance of £ 2393.22.

It is proposed that the final surplus be used to give further publicity to the life and work of Duncan Carse, possibly by supporting relevant publications.

**Keith Holmes, Treasurer**

### The Initiative Fund

The SGA Initiative Fund was established two years ago to encourage members to stimulate interest in, and enhance the awareness of, South Georgia's natural environment, its history and its heritage. Up to £250 per quarter is available for projects approved by the Executive Committee and promoted by Members.

In the first year we received two project ideas: the bio-remediation of oily waste, and the conservation of a collection of historic photographs taken by one of the early South Georgia Magistrates. These ideas are still being developed.

This year we have made three gifts of £250 each. The first two were for a survey of historic sites, which has been described on page 1 by Ken Passfield, and the most recent was to Thomas Binnie of the E.B.Binnie Memorial Foundation as a contribution to the cost of illustrating and publishing an account of the work of Edward Binnie, Magistrate from 1912 to 1924.

We are most grateful to Dr Michael Pienkowski, of the United Kingdom Overseas Conservation Forum, for acting as our Independent Appraiser throughout this period.

Finally, we would be pleased to receive more approaches from Members to continue the gratifying achievements so far. Please send applications by e-mail to the SGA Appraiser, Dr Mike Pienkowski, at [appraiser@southgeorgiaassociation.org](mailto:appraiser@southgeorgiaassociation.org), with a copy to the SGA Secretary, Mrs Fran Prince, at [secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org](mailto:secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org).

Alternatively please post them to the above at:  
c/o The South Georgia Association, The Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER

**Keith Holmes, Treasurer**

### New logo - also available in colour!



The new SGA logo was designed by Jamie Watts, who has

spent the last two years working for BAS as an assistant scientist at King Edward Point. Using the original map outline as a basis, Jamie produced several versions for the committee to choose from. An albatross had its supporters but this king penguin was favourite.

The full colour version has the island in blue and the penguin in all its multi-coloured glory.

### Whaling station explained



The South Georgia Heritage Trust has placed 14 illustrated signs around Grytviken whaling station to explain the functions of the buildings, ships and other structures. The signs of stainless steel, etched and enamelled, were designed by Steve Ellis of Project Atlantis from material supplied by Bjørn Basberg and Bob Burton.

### Visit to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

On Friday 30 March, 17 SGA members visited the FCO in London for a private guided tour of the building. Historian Kate Crowe explained the history behind the many ornate rooms, decorations and architectural styles. Kate was very informative and everyone enjoyed the visit and being able to see and learn about Durbar Court, the Locarno Suite and the Grand Staircase, amongst others. We rounded off the tour with a view out into Downing Street where the obligatory policeman stood guard! we hope to organise another visit later in the year so if you are interested please let Jane Tanton know - address below.

### Work on hydro-power starts

The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands has long harboured an ambition to restore hydroelectric power to South Georgia and remove the dependence on fossil fuels for power, heating and lighting. Over the last couple of years rough estimates of cost were produced and an environmental impact assessment was carried out. The next stage was a detailed study of the dam itself before a final decision on how to progress. To that end, a road was built to the dam from Grytviken to allow access for the heavy plant required to dig out the surrounding soil, expose the dam and subsequently repair and rebuild as necessary. The other need was to see the structure of the dam by lowering Gull Lake with siphon pumps and large pipes laid over the dam and into the natural outfall stream.

Those tasks were completed successfully, as were taking soil samples to look at porosity and concrete core samples



*Siphon pipes emptying Gull Lake.*

to understand the construction and strength of the existing dam. Design engineers are now studying the findings to decide what repairs need to be done to the dam.

Next year's plans are not finalised but the hope is to do everything except the installation of the turbine itself That will be installed a year later.

Studies show that the catchment and rainfall will produce



*The temporary road to the dam.*

enough power to run Grytviken and KEP, although backup diesel power will be retained to cope with any hard winter freezes that could reduce water availability. These are shorter and much less frequent than 30 or 40 years ago.

**Gordon Liddle**

#### **Diary dates**

#### **24 April. 25th Anniversary of the retaking of South Georgia.**

Miller's Academy, 28a Hereford Road, London W2 5AJ. (Just off Westbourne Grove, near Notting Hill Gate and Bayswater tube stations). At 6.30pm, there will be talks by Bob Headland entitled "Galtieri, my part in his downfall (The British Antarctic Survey and events of 1982)" and Tony Ellerbeck on "Perambulations of the Red Plum". Bob was captured by the Argentines when they took KEP and Tony was Officer Commanding the helicopter flight on HMS *Endurance*. The talks will be followed by a reception. Tickets are £15, with a limit of 60. First come, first served.. Please send a cheque (to the South Georgia Association) to Jane Tanton, 13 Castle Street, Wouldham, Rochester, Kent. ME1 3UX.

#### **18 May. 6th Annual General Meeting**

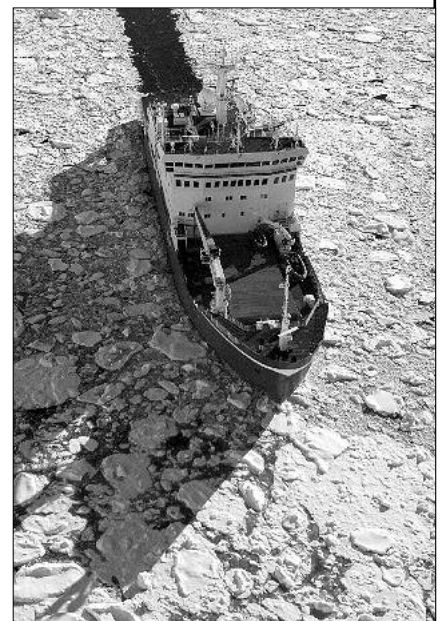
Royal Over-Seas League, London at 7pm. It will be preceded by a reception at 6.00pm and followed by a lecture by Ben Sullivan of the RSPB on "Albatrosses in the Southern Ocean, threats, challenges and solutions". See enclosed flyer for details.

#### **7 July. Visit to HMS *Endurance***

At Portsmouth Royal Naval Dockyard. We have organised a visit to HMS *Endurance*, the ice-patrol ship that has been carrying out hydrographic surveys in South Georgia waters and assisting expeditions to the island. The guided tour of the ship will start at 10.30am from the Victory Gate at Portsmouth Dockyard, with a presentation by Lt Cdr Adam Northover. Refreshments will be provided afterwards in the wardroom.

The visit will be free but members can also visit the Royal Naval Dockyard for £15. HMS *Victory*, HMS *Warrior*, the *Mary Rose* and a Royal Naval Museum are just some of the sights to see in the dockyard. Members, their friends and families, are welcome to both, however children must of walking age to visit HMS *Endurance* as there are restricted areas and it is a working ship. There is also a limit on numbers for the visits on board HMS *Endurance* so places will be issued on a first come, first served basis.

For security reasons, we have to give names well in advance. If you would like to attend, please contact Jane Tanton on 07769 645 941, e-mail [jltanton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jltanton@yahoo.co.uk) or write to her at 13 Castle Street, Wouldham, Rochester, Kent. ME1 3UX by 1 June.



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

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: [robert@burton41.co.uk](mailto:robert@burton41.co.uk)