



South Georgia Association
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Press Release

The Morag Husband Campbell Medal **South Georgia Association** **2018 Award to Robert Wellesley Burton**

The South Georgia Association is delighted to announce the award of its newly struck medal for 2018 to Mr Robert Wellesley Burton, *“for outstanding contributions to the study and conservation of wildlife and the heritage of South Georgia”*.

The Medal has been made possible by a generous bequest from a long-standing supporter of the Association, Miss Morag Husband Campbell. She was so enthralled when visiting South Georgia, she determined to leave a bequest to the SGA. The Medal comprises a Sterling silver relief medallion, 60mm in diameter. The name of the awardee is inscribed on the reverse.

The Recipient Mr Robert Burton is a well-known wildlife author. Following a degree in Zoology at Downing College, Cambridge University he served as a meteorological/biological assistant at the British Antarctic Survey base on Signy Island in South Orkney Islands for two years. In 1971-72 he was a member of the team initiating a new programme of research at Bird Island, South Georgia where he assisted research on fur seals and albatrosses. Returning to the UK he developed a career as a wildlife author and columnist, writing many books and contributing to The Telegraph’s weekly “Nature Notes”, “Through a Naturalist’s Eye” in British Wildlife and to other magazines. In the 1970s and 80s he took part in several expeditions to the Arctic. In 1994, he became Director of the South Georgia Museum in Grytviken and during his four years the Norwegian Church was fully restored. Since 1992 he has been lecturing on cruise ships in Antarctica and leading camping expeditions to Greenland for his small company Arcturus Expeditions. More recently, he has vigorously supported conservation and heritage initiatives in South Georgia. He has edited and written extensively on South Georgia subjects including editing, with John Croxall, the recent definitive *A Field Guide to the Wildlife of South Georgia (WILD Guides)* and producing the South Georgia Government booklet for visitors. Robert Burton was awarded the Polar Medal in 1996 for services as Meteorologist, Biological Assistant and Museum Curator. “Burton Cove” is named after him on Bird Island, South Georgia.

Robert Burton: commented on the award: *“I am delighted to receive this award. I am lucky to have been one of many people involved with South Georgia - putting it on the map, so to speak – in recent years. When I first visited the island in 1964, it was Terra Incognita to most people. Nowadays, it has become familiar through television programmes about its spectacular and profuse wildlife, and through the interest in the explorer Ernest Shackleton. And now its importance in global ecology is being recognised”*.

The Award will be presented to Robert Burton at the Annual Spring Meeting of the Association on 20th April 2018 in London.

For Further Information: Fran Prince (secretary@southgeorgiaassociation.org)
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Notes for Editors:

The Award: is to individuals who have contributed significantly to the understanding, appreciation and promotion of South Georgia. This includes i) scientific studies as well as in the arts and humanities including culture, history, heritage, artistic endeavour etc. ii) adventurous travel and "exploration", iii) activities which enhance the wider appreciation of South Georgia (e.g. in the media or through administrative functions).

South Georgia: is a sub-Antarctic island and a British Overseas Territory in the southern Atlantic Ocean. It is remote, mountainous and of exceptional natural beauty, with abundant wildlife both on the island and in the surrounding ocean. Uninhabited apart from two small research stations and a few government employees, it is an unspoilt wilderness with a fascinating heritage that is none the less environmentally vulnerable and has been featured in the recent Blue Planet II series. It is 165 km long and some 35-km wide. The Falkland Islands are about 1,300 km (810 mi) west. Captain James Cook made the first landing in 1775. It was the base for the extensive harvesting of fur and elephant seals in the late 18th and 19th Centuries. From 1904 to the 1960s its primary activity was whaling. Sir Ernest Shackleton landed and traversed the island after his perilous crossing from Elephant Island in 1916. He died on a subsequent expedition and is buried at the whaling station of Grytviken.

The South Georgia Association: was formed to give voice to those who care for South Georgia and has several hundred members. Its aims are to encourage interest in, and concern for, the island of South Georgia, to encourage the study of South Georgia, and promote the conservation of its natural and cultural heritage, and to promote contacts and encourage fellowship among those who have lived and worked in or around South Georgia, have visited or are interested in the Island. Further details are to be found at: <http://www.southgeorgiaassociation.org/>