

South Georgia Association Newsletter



Number 37 October 2019

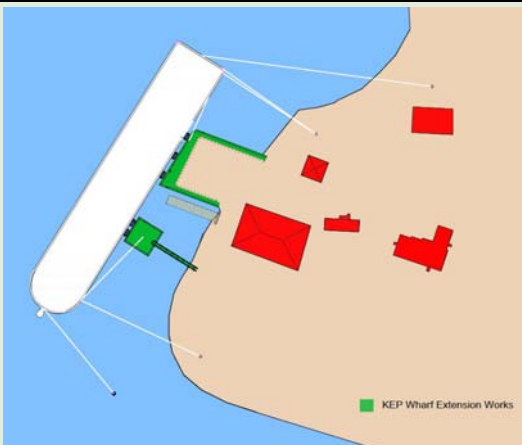
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King Edward Cove with the Pharos SG alongside KEP and a cruise ship in the Cove

In this issue: Minutes of the 2019 SGA AGM; launch of the RRS *Sir David Attenborough*; South Georgia archaeology; plans for a larger wharf at KEP; GSGSSI stakeholder meeting at Kew; habitats restored stamps issued; GSGSSI accounts for 2018 published.



*A new wharf for King Edward Point to accommodate the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* (see page 9).*



Oliver Prince, Theo Crutchley-Mack & Steph Prince at the recent SGA autumn meeting in Plymouth.



*The RRS *Sir David Attenborough* was officially named by HRH The Duchess of Cambridge at the Cammell Laird yard on the Mersey in September (see page 10; photos courtesy of BAS).*

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5 pm, 13 April 2019

ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE, LONDON

The meeting was attended by 41 members and guests, including the following members of the Committee:

David Tatham (President), David Drewry (Chair), John Owen (Treasurer), John Mills (Membership Secretary), Martin Collins (Newsletter Editor), Paul Rodhouse (Events), Pat Lurcock (Website), Bob Burton, Alexandra Shackleton, Bob Headland, David Rootes and Fran Prince (Secretary).

1 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all SGA friends and colleagues to the Spring meeting and AGM, especially Tom Chance, FCO; Nick Prentice, Chairman of SGHT; Alison Neil CEO SGHT; and Olav Helge and Kjell Tokstad from Øyas Venner.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from 15 members, including committee members Bill Block, Sarah Greenwood, Ron Lewis-Smith. Apologies were also received from Dame Jane Francis, Director BAS; Jane Rumble, FCO and the Commissioner, Nigel Phillips.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Seventeenth AGM held on 20 April 2018 were approved as a true record of the meeting (proposed by Bob Headland and seconded by Alexandra Shackleton) and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising that were not covered in other Agenda items.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Morag Husband Campbell Medal

David Drewry gave a resume of the origin of the Morag Husband Campbell Medal. This is the second year of the award and following a nomination process, the Association was delighted to announce Sally Poncet as this year's recipient. He gave a brief resume of Sally's career and commitment to South Georgia.

Sally was unable to attend the meeting in person to collect the medal. Pat Lurcock received the medal on her behalf presented by the SGA President David Tatham and then Pat read an acceptance speech from Sally Poncet.

SGA events over the last year

- a) The AGM 2018 had been attended by over 50 people, and the talk was given by Mark Brandon on "Giant Icebergs and South Georgia".
- b) A successful barbecue on board HQS *Wellington* was held on 8 June. This was attended by 50 members and guests including 2 Commissioners, and 2 BAS Captains – Elliott and Lawrence. All enjoyed the excellent food and freedom to explore the ship and her artifacts. Thanks were given to Alexandra Shackleton for arranging the event with the Honorable Company of Master Mariners and to Fran Prince who assisted with the organisation.
- c) A successful joint event with the Friends of SPRI was held in November, with a day of interesting talks. Julian Dowdeswell, Director of SPRI, agreed that a similar event should be held again. Thanks were given to Celene Pickard (FoSPRI), Paul Rodhouse and Fran Prince for help with organising.



SGA Chairman, David Drewry, introducing proceedings at the AGM

- d) The GSGSSI Stakeholder meeting on 17 September was attended by four committee members, so continuing to maintain SGA interests. SGA receives opportunities to comment on consultations, and consults with members where possible.
- e) Newsletter - Martin Collins thanked Bob Burton for the past years of producing the SGA Newsletters. Members were asked for any feedback, and for articles for the newsletter. Martin was thanked for taking on the job of editing the newsletter.
- f) Initiative Funding - This year SGA has supported the South Georgia Archaeological Project. Bob Burton explained how SGHT had been persuaded to take on the project and SGHT persuaded Bob to organise it! Archaeologists from Cambridge University were keen to be involved. The team operated from the vessel *Hans Hansson*, and included Dion Poncet, Oli Prince and 6 Citizen Scientists. Neil Golding from the Coastal Mapping Project was also involved and produced superb aerial photos from a drone. Nineteen days were spent around South Georgia, and 19 sites were visited. The Initiative Funding financial support was used to purchase clothing.
- g) Communications - The SGA Facebook continues to be popular. GDPR privacy requirements are fully embedded. John Mills was thanked for organising this and for making it simple and easy to use. Website - Andy Rankin was thanked for hosting the SGA website, as was Pat Lurcock who will be taking over managing the website.

Future Events

Paul Rodhouse is organising a joint event with Devon and Cornwall Polar Society to be held at Plymouth on 19 October 2019. The event will include talks, dinner, art and photo exhibition and a possible boat trip to Plymouth breakwater.

5 TREASURER’S REPORT

John Owen, the Treasurer, summarised the SGA finances for the meeting: there is currently £25,000 in the bank, and a summary sheet will be included in the April newsletter. Members’ subscriptions cover the costs of the two newsletters, the AGM and minor expenses; other events cover themselves.

There is no need to alter the cost of subscription.

6 MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER FOR SGSSI

Tom Chance, SG Policy Officer in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, read the message from the Commissioner Nigel Phillips.

Topics covered included the Commissioner’s Stakeholder visit to SG with VIPs Dame Jane Francis (BAS) and Dr Colin Clubbe (Kew); fishery patrol vessel in action; fishery management policies; 5 year MPA review with massive increase of no-take zone (20,431 sq km to 284,212 sq km) and larger buffer zones around the islands, so hoping to encourage greater conservation measures through CCAMLR. Discussions were taking place with BAS about climate change research; managing increase in tourism and more stringent biosecurity measures.

Tom was thanked for bringing the Commissioner’s message to the meeting and for the GSGSSI update. SGA values these contributions.



Tom Chance (FCO) delivering the message from the Commissioner.

7 INTERNATIONAL REPORTS AND REPORT FROM SOUTH GEORGIA HERITAGE TRUST

Alison Neil, CEO of South Georgia Heritage Trust, reported on SGHT activities. Excellent news that there are still no rats evident on South Georgia. There is a two-year trial on the Falklands 'Working dogs for conservation' using rescue dogs. A local Falkland Islander is working with a spaniel 'Pipit' on biosecurity in the Falklands, checking on all ships bound for South Georgia. Biosecurity is as strong as can be.

The sealing archaeology field project has completed successfully. Thanks to SGA for support, Bob Burton for organising, and Oli Prince for guiding tourists.

A donation has been received for part of a Curator's salary for three years for the SG Museum. SGHT is looking at outreach, and the Accreditation Scheme for UK Museums. It is hoped to open up Main Store upper floor for outreach use, working with GSGSSI.

There is also a plan to rebuild/renovate the flensing "plan" for visitors to understand better the whole of the whaling operations at sea and on the island.

Olav Helge, Chairman of Øyas Venner. Olav has been chairman for 3 years, replacing Kjell who had been chairman for 17 years and is now foreign ambassador. Øyas Venner was founded in 1998 with 330 members, now there are only 250 and with few new members joining. One third of membership are ex-whalers, one third are family of whalers, and one third with South Georgia interest. Øyas Venner have organised cruises such as the jubilee church cruise in 2013 and hope for a future trip in 2022. 137 Norwegian whalers are buried in SG. Metal sheeting from SG has been inscribed with their names and placed in the floating Harbour Chapel at Sandefjord. They hold 2 annual meetings in April and on 16 November – celebrating the first Norwegian whaling station on South Georgia on this date in 1904. Olav brought 50 calendars for SGA friends at the meeting.

David Drewry thanked Alison and Olav for their reports, and noted how SGA and OV share common heritage. The committee were all thanked for their work with SGA.



Alison Neil presents the report from the South Georgia Heritage Trust



Olav Helge presents the report from Øyas Venner our Norwegian sister organisation

8 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Committee stood aside for the President of the Association, David Tatham, to take the Chair. David thanked members for attending and to the committee, and paid tribute to David Drewry for his vision and terrific work for SGA for which we are all grateful. The re-election of the committee was proposed by Patrick Fagan and seconded by Philippa Foster Back. The meeting voted in favour of all to be re-elected.

Chairman:	David Drewry	Newsletter editor:	Martin Collins
Secretary:	Fran Prince	Events:	Paul Rodhouse
Treasurer:	John Owen	Initiative Funding:	Bill Block
Membership Secretary:	John Mills	Website:	Pat Lurcock
Members:	Bob Burton, Bob Headland, Sarah Greenwood, Dave Fletcher, David Rootes, Alexandra Shackleton, Ron Lewis-Smith	Corresponding Members:	Jan Cheek (Stanley), Sarah Lurcock (KEP)

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Stuart Lawrence asked about research carried out by SAERI.

Alison Neil replied that the Discovery 100 project is being developed by SAERI and if it is funded is likely to be run under the BAS umbrella on South Georgia.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm and was followed by an engaging and excellent talk with video by Elizabeth White, BBC Natural History Unit "The BBC at the South Sandwich Islands"

Fran Prince, Secretary, 23 April 2019

Naming of the RRS Sir David Attenborough

The new Royal Research Ship *Sir David Attenborough* (SDA) was officially named by HRH the Duchess of Cambridge in a ceremony at the Cammell Laird Shipyard in Birkenhead in late September. The new ship, named after the famous broadcaster and naturalist, is 129 m long and 15,000 tonnes, making it the largest commercial ship built in Britain in three decades. The vessel is due to undertake ice trials in the northern hemisphere from March 2020, with a science rehearsal cruise in August 2020. The ship is scheduled to enter full service from October 2020.

The RRS SDA will replace the RRS *James Clark Ross* (JCR) and *Ernest Shackleton* as British Antarctic Survey switch from a two-ship operation to a single vessel. The chartered RRS *Ernest Shackleton* has already been returned to its owner and the JCR is due to be sold next year. The funding agency, the Natural Environment Research Council, commissioned the SDA to fulfil the tasks of both the earlier vessels - in research and in logistics.

The JCR is just beginning her final season south and is due to call at King Edward Point in late November or early December.



The RRS *Sir David Attenborough* on the Mersey.



The Duke & Duchess of Cambridge and Sir David Attenborough wave to the crowds from the deck of the new ship.

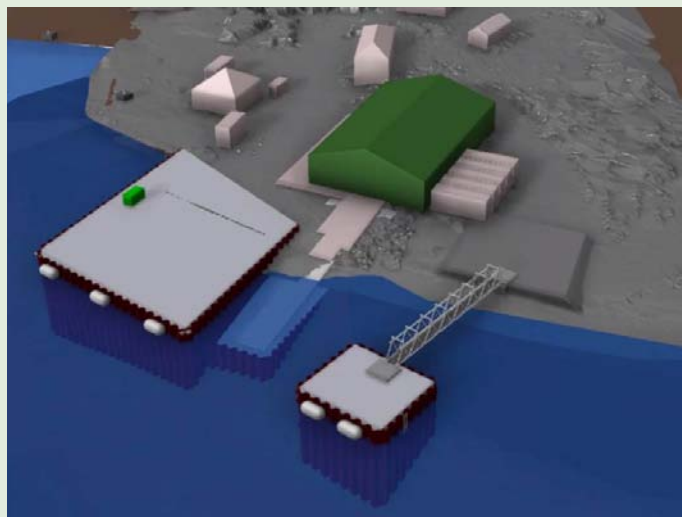
A new wharf for King Edward Point

Joe Corner, BAS Antarctic Infrastructure Modernisation Programme – Islands PM

In 2017, funding for a redeveloped wharf facility at King Edward Point was agreed between BAS, NERC, GSGSSI and the FCO to allow BAS's new polar vessel, the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* (*SDA*), and the GSGSSI's fisheries patrol vessel to berth safely for the next 50 years. This will allow both government operations and scientific support to continue safely and efficiently into the future. This is one part of a package of works commissioned by BAS/NERC to support future polar science, and also includes redevelopment of the Rothera station on the Antarctic Peninsula, the redevelopment of Bird Island just off the western tip of South Georgia and other works.

BAS entered a Partnership with Ramboll, who are acting as the Technical Advisor, BAM Nuttall as the construction partner and DMC as the Marine Engineering partner for BAM Nuttall. Following consultation with the various stakeholders the final design was agreed in May and construction contracts signed in June to commence with detailed design, procurement, logistical and construction planning.

The wharf is referred to as a 'wrap around' where the existing structure is retained and the new berthing faces are constructed around the existing facility to strengthen and increase the size. The *SDA* is 130m long so required a larger berthing face compared to 89m for the *Ernest Shackleton* and 98m for the RRS *James Clark Ross*. To achieve this, an additional berthing face has been proposed which is often referred to as a 'Dolphin'. This allows larger vessels to berth without the environmental or commercial impact of constructing a larger wharf. The existing slipway will also be lengthened to allow the Harbour Patrol boats to be removed from the water on a greater range of tides.



Visualisation of the new wharf and "dolphin" at KEP.

Following submission of the design, a thorough Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was prepared by the BAS Environment Office with input from GSGSSI, BAM Nuttall and various BAS and external scientists as well experts in the field. This report is available for review on the GSGSSI website.

The project will be mobilising from Teesport in the UK in early November where the vessel, equipment and materials will undergo a thorough bio-security inspection including inspection by a Rodent Detection Dog and fumigation of the ship's holds on route to South Georgia. The team are due to arrive at KEP early January in two waves with the logistics vessel due to arrive mid January.

Following cargo works, construction is due to take approximately 4 months and demobilisation of the plant, equipment and personnel is scheduled for early June so we can let the station wintering team enjoy a well-earned Mid-winter celebration.

As with most South Georgia construction projects, this project will overlap with the tourist season and efforts are being made to engage with IAATO and the various tour operators. The aim is to reduce impact as much as practicable, but some areas will be restricted for safety reasons such as the track to KEP from Grytviken.

The archaeology of sealing at South Georgia

Marcus Brittain (CAU) and Bob Burton (SGHT)

Why do archaeological fieldwork in South Georgia?

The archaeology of South Georgia has received little attention. The island's whaling stations have rightfully been recorded in advance of their inevitable decay, but traces of the island's earlier bloody history of seal hunting have not been studied. One point in favour of archaeological investigations of sealing at South Georgia is to compare the activities of 18th and 19th century sealers there with those in the South Shetlands and elsewhere in the Southern Ocean, as a response to the island's unique character. Moreover, and notwithstanding the catastrophic long-term consequences of fur and elephant seal hunting between 1786 and 1830 (with fur seals almost becoming extinct), we can look at what was, at its core, a very human experience of endeavour, adaptation and (but not always) survival. To place this in the narrative of Antarctic sealing, mainly by British and Americans, is one task of the South Georgia Archaeological Project.

The Project's Conception

This is a collaborative effort between the South Georgia Heritage Trust and the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, the commercial branch of the University of Cambridge's archaeology department. The first fieldwork season took place in February and March 2019, when the beaches would be almost empty of fur seals. Sailing from Stanley on the *Hans Hansson*, a team of three archaeologists were accompanied by the hugely-experienced Dion Poncet as Expedition Leader and Oli Prince as Shore Guide and, significantly, six citizen scientists whose contribution (financial, intellectual and participatory) was integral to the project's success.



The team at Elsebul with the three tripots. Photo courtesy of SAERI.

The archaeology team were joined by Neil Golding of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute's (SAERI) Darwin Initiative-funded Coastal Mapping Project (See Newsletter No. 36). Neil's use of a drone for taking aerial images and video footage was also central to the archaeological survey. During three weeks at South Georgia, 17 landings were made despite changeable South Georgian weather. Twelve sites showed evidence of past sealing activity and gave a view of a unique archaeological landscape, a snippet of which we recount here.

Sealers' sites

Most historical documentary accounts give glimpses into sealing that portray landings by gangs of men carrying only bare necessities, so leaving only the scarcest of material traces of their presence. Examples of this found during the fieldwork include small iron pots for making coffee and to cook chunks of seal meat, as well as two fragments of 19th century clay tobacco pipes. Sealing crews might shelter overnight in tents or under boats but they also made use of shallow caves and overhangs. We examined three – at Carlita Bay and Fortuna Bay – where we found remnants of stone-lined hearths encasing concretised blocks of spent charred fuel, possibly blubber, that included bone fragments.

At other landing sites there were built structures used for shelter and processing the seal carcasses. These include timber floors at Nilse Hullet and Cooper Bay, while at Elsehul there are several stone-walled structures (one encasing a brick fire chamber for heating three large iron try pots) and the stumps of a large timber-framed building. Other stone-built shelters were examined at Start Point (Bay of Isles) and Bird Island. These structures give a very different picture of sealers' imprint on the island. Possibly serving generations of sealers, we may imagine that these structures created a very particular sense-of-place.



Overview of the Cooper Bay site. Drone photo courtesy of SAERI.

Data application

The survey of each site by traditional ground measurements and targeted small-scale excavation was significantly accelerated and widened by aerial survey through Neil Golding's drone imagery. Artefacts, found either on the ground surface or in excavated layers, will provide both a time-frame and an insight to the sealers' lives.

Test excavations showing what lies underground may be of great significance. At Cooper Bay the remnants of a tussock-clad wall faced with stone were found beneath layers containing 19th century materials. We are hoping that seeds and insect remains found within the tussock will provide insight to that era's local environment and broader conditions.

Similarly, soils, bones and other organic materials preserved in known archaeological layers offer the opportunity to answer a range of scientific questions through the study of proteins, DNA and isotopes, for example. This is true also of timbers that, in a treeless landscape, can only have come from elsewhere, carried by ocean currents or human agency. Analysis will, hopefully, give their geographic provenance and age.



Detail of the Cooper Bay timber floor. Photo courtesy of SAERI

The future

The teeming fur and elephant seals on South Georgia are continuously exposing and eroding the fragile archaeological structures. To gain understanding of these fascinating historic sites before the seals destroy them, time is now of the essence. After publication of the first season's fieldwork, and exhibitions of our findings, we hope to return again in 2021 to complete the assessment stage of the project.

We acknowledge the generosity of the South Georgia Association in helping to fund the project.

South Georgia Government Science & Stakeholder Meetings

On September 12th the Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands held a Science Meeting and their Annual Stakeholder Event at Kew Gardens. The morning focussed on the future of South Georgia science and included a range of talks from scientists active on or around South Georgia in recent years. The events were hosted by SGSSI Commissioner, Nigel Phillips, CEO Helen Havercroft and Colin Clubbe (Kew). Colin introduced proceedings with an overview of South Georgia science. David Vaughan, BAS Director of Science, presented the concept of focussing science effort around the theme of “Renaissance Island” and how the island and surrounding seas have recovered from historic exploitation and the introduction of non-native species.

Next, Dominic Hodgson (BAS) gave an engaging talk on glacial history and environmental change on South Georgia. He described how images of the seafloor have revealed the imprint of past glaciations, including the extension of the island’s glaciers more than 100 km to the edge of the continental shelf during the last glaciation. Prof. Hodgson highlighted the recent southward shift and increase in intensity of the westerly winds, linked to the melt of Antarctic glaciers (resulting in global sea level rise), and a reduction in the capacity of the Southern Ocean to absorb CO₂. South Georgia is one of very few locations within the core belt of the westerlies that retains an ice record of past climate parameters and he made a passionate pitch for the community to get behind an ice core drilling campaign on South Georgia to capture this vital climate record before ongoing surface melt and crevassing destroy it.

Anne Jungblut from the Natural History Museum gave a presentation on microbial diversity and ecosystem change. Rose Newton, from Kew, talked about the management of invasive species on South Georgia and the development of a strategy to deal with them.

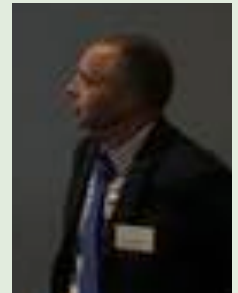
Katrin Linse (BAS) introduced some German-led research into the importance of methane seeps in South Georgia coastal waters and their implications for coastal ecology and contribution to greenhouse gases. Tom Hart (Oxford University) talked about penguin and seabird monitoring programmes in South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands. Marcus Brittain gave a talk on the recent archeological visit to South Georgia (see pages 7-8).

The afternoon was a broad stakeholder event, focussing on the future management of the island with the SGA represented by David Drewry, Bob Burton and Bob Headland.

The Commissioner, Nigel Phillips, welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted some of the recent achievements and key issues facing GSGSSI. Following the Commissioner’s introduction, Jane Rumble (Head of Polar Regions Dept., FCO) emphasised the FCO’s role in working collaboratively with GSGSSI to deliver the joint strategy. Mark Belchier (Director of Fisheries & Conservation) presented the recent updates to the SGSSI Marine Protected Area following the 5-yr review (see April 2019 Newsletter) and Martin Collins & Phil Hollyman (BAS) outlined the new science plan for King Edward Point. Next up was Joe Corner, who presented plans for the new KEP jetty (see page 6).

Following a break for coffee and networking, Andy Deary (MMO) discussed the utility of satellite monitoring for fisheries management and Gwawr Jones (JNCC) demonstrated the value of satellite imagery in monitoring species and habitats. The final presentation of the day was from Jen Black (SGSSI Environment Officer), who provided an update on visitor management and biosecurity for South Georgia.

Helen Havercroft, GSGSSI CEO, summed up the day’s proceedings, highlighting the need to promote the successes of South Georgia and encouraged stakeholders to contribute to the development of a new strategy for the Territory.



Prof. Dominic Hodgson discussing South Georgia’s glacial history



Dr Tom Hart talking about penguin monitoring



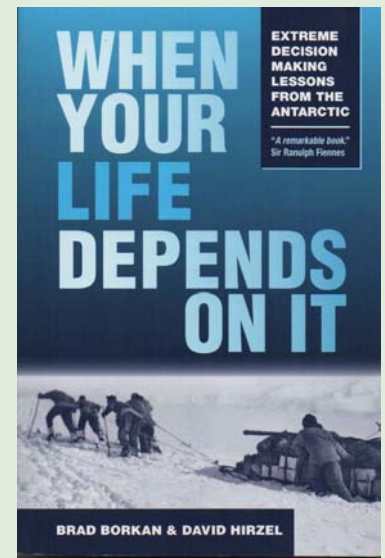
Helen Havercroft, GSGSSI CEO rounds up the proceedings.

Book Review: *When Your Life Depends On It* by Brad Borkan & David Hirzel

Borkan & Hirzel's very readable book recalls some of the classic accounts from the "Heroic Age" of Antarctic exploration and highlights some of the difficult decisions taken by Scott, Amundsen, Shackleton, Mawson and others and the impact of those decisions. The book brings together an Antarctic historian (Hirzel) and a decision scientist (Borkan) and challenges the reader to think about how they would respond in the circumstances faced by the leaders of the historic expeditions and also consider how lessons from that era can be brought into modern decision-making.

After recounting classic tales highlighting decision making under duress, the final chapter identifies some of the key decision strategies, including the value of teamwork, being decisive and taking inspiration from unlikely sources. The book also, very helpfully, tabulates details of the key characters, expeditions, ships and bases in appendices.

For readers familiar with the history from the Heroic Age, this provides a different perspective; whilst for the uninitiated it provides a great synopsis of some classic stories of endurance and survival.



New *Habitats Restored* stamps issued for South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

A new set of stamps have been issued to celebrate the recovery of the islands' habitats following the removal of invasive species from South Georgia. The six-stamp set feature some of the species that will benefit most from the eradication of rats, mice and reindeer.

The **40p** stamp features tussock grass, which is a key component of the terrestrial ecosystem, providing nesting space for birds and habitat for numerous invertebrates. Although it is a tenacious species, grazing and antler rubbing by reindeer saw many tussock bogs reduced to mossy stumps. The **55p** stamp features the endemic South Georgia pipit. In the presence of rodents the pipit was restricted to offshore islands and slivers of vegetation on the harsh south coast. Since the rodent eradication the pipit has made a rapid recovery and now its cheerful song can be heard throughout the territory.

Greater burnet features on the **70p** stamp. A member of the rose family, its soft leaves were a favourite food of reindeer. Since the removal of reindeer swathes of this iconic plant can now be seen in abundance on the Barff and Busen peninsulas.

The white-chinned petrel, which features on the **80p** stamp, relies on steep tussock covered slopes in which to build its underground nests. The removal of tussock by reindeer and rat predation on eggs had an impact on this iconic species.



The Habitats Restored stamps issued in October 2019.

Wilson's storm petrel, which features on the **£1.05** stamp, nests in rocky crevices near to the shore, and was a prime target for rodents. Now great flocks of these beautiful little birds can be seen dancing across the bays and inlets of the island. The **£1.25** stamp features the South Georgia pintail, an endemic subspecies, that nests in association with tussock fringed pools near to the coast. In the presence of rats and reindeer its numbers were depleted. Now its habitat has been restored, pintails are able to raise up to a dozen chicks a year and its distinctive 'chirrup chirrup' fills the evening air.

Fate of the South Georgia Polar Library

Bob Headland

The former comprehensive polar library on South Georgia has been the subject of previous notes in the SGA Newsletter: Mystery of the South Georgia Polar Library (25; 7, November 2013), South Georgia polar library – some found (26; 11, April 2014) and More on the South Georgia Polar Library (27; 8, November 2014). Each of these asked for any information which members might have, and undertook to report any findings. A major sale of a polar library in April provided further news with more indications of the fate of the collection.

The first article described the library accumulated from some of the earliest years of the Falkland Islands Dependency administration, Discovery Investigations, and the whaling stations on the island. Subsequent additions were made by many individuals, as well as the British Antarctic Survey, resulting in a total of 118 books about South Georgia, other islands, the Antarctic in general and even a few Arctic ones. Most were in English although a few in Norwegian were from the whalers. In August 1982 the polar library was found to be almost intact by a BAS party returning to King Edward Point to inspect and salvage things from the base after the events of April and subsequent military occupation. The books were collected, carefully packed, then dispatched to BAS HQ with various other things from the station as described in the first of the notes in the newsletter. They were received in the store with the announced intention for safe-keeping until eventual return to the island.

After 2001 when BAS, as well as the government, were back at King Edward Point the question of a library was raised in the BAS Club and the SGA. At the same time an independent suggestion of obtaining a polar book collection for the island was made. Several members of both organizations recalled the original library but no clue of its fate was apparent – it was evidently no longer held at BAS HQ. On base all the books had been stamped with a distinct purple ink mark on the end papers, and numbered so were easily identifiable. A copy of the inventory was part of the base indent held at HQ. Subsequently a few clues of the mystery were found; a small number of volumes had been incorporated in the BAS library and two had appeared in the second hand trade – one was specifically described as having the markings of its provenance. The second and third *SGA Newsletter* items report these events.

The most recent clue came from Auckland, New Zealand; the sale of Richard Reaney's comprehensive polar library on 11 April. He had been a major collector for 40 years and the sale was reported in many news sources. One of the more expensive books, auction lot 15, *The Voyage of the Scotia* was described as having an *ex libris number on spine*, with *Provenance: This copy [with library marks] from the library of the British Antarctic Survey – South Georgia, King Edward Point*, thus providing proof of its origin. Many of the other books in the sale were, unsurprisingly, titles in the SG polar library and most of these were sold in groups of half a dozen or so with nothing more than author and title to describe them and no note of provenance. A colleague in New Zealand was at the sale and he reported that a proportion of them were also marked with the South Georgia Polar Library stamp and had an *ex libris* number. There was no detail about how they were acquired.

It is difficult not to conclude that the fate of the South Georgia polar library was private acquisition and subsequent disposal into commercial sale from whence some have travelled far. It is, however, strange that few of the distinctively marked books have been noticed in Britain, where the majority of polar book dealers have been informed about them and had agreed generally to pass on details of any they saw to the BAS Club or SGA. Regardless of whatever and however happened, the chance of any recovery is probably now close to nil; following the sale their distribution has become even wider. We might occasionally expect to see a *South Georgia Polar Library* book turn up in the trade, perhaps with that stamp included in the description to enhance the sale price. Unfortunately it is most unlikely that any will return to the island and it will be difficult to ever replace many of the rarer items of the former South Georgia polar library ostensibly held for safe-keeping.



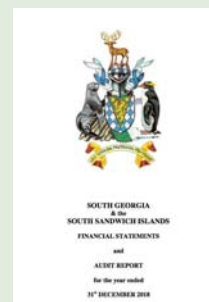
South Georgia Association News

The South Georgia Association is inviting nominations for the award of the **Morag Husband Campbell** medal for the third year. The Medal has been made possible by a generous bequest from a long-standing and enthusiastic supporter of the Association, Miss Morag Husband Campbell. The Association has agreed that the Medal should be awarded to individuals who have contributed significantly to the understanding, appreciation and promotion of South Georgia. Nominations should be made on an official Nomination Form available on the website and from the Secretary of the Association to whom they should be sent no later than 31st December 2019. The award would be made the following year at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.



South Georgia News

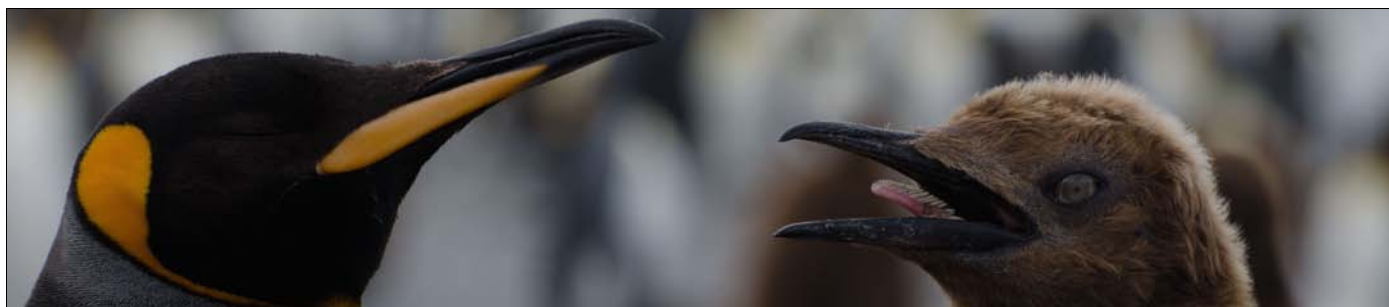
GSGSSI has recently published the **2018 Financial Statements and Audit Report** (see www.gov.gs). The accounts show a cash surplus of £1.8 million. As usual the main source of income (£8.1 million) was toothfish fishing licences (£5.2 million), with krill licences contributing £0.73 million. Visitor landing fees accounted for £1.3 million. The main expenditure was fishery patrol vessel costs (£3.2 million) with other significant expenditure on fisheries research and observers, King Edward Point and biosecurity. The accounts also note the forthcoming wharf reconstruction project, which is estimated to cost £11 million, and will be jointly funded by GSGSSI (with grant from FCO) and NERC.



NASA have recently highlighted some satellite images from South Georgia as part of their Earth Observatory: (<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/89726/glaciers-ebb-in-south-georgia>), including one that demonstrates the **retreat of the Neumeyer Glacier**. In the past 16 years the Neumeyer Glacier has retreated more than 4 km and is now separated from the Konig Glacier. Like many of South Georgia's glaciers, the Neumeyer is a tidewater glacier, flowing into the ocean. On the other limb of Cumberland Bay, the Nordenskjold Glacier has not retreated so rapidly, but may have thinned. Other glaciers, such as the Hindle Glacier in Royal Bay have also shown rapid retreat.



The retreat of the Neumeyer Glacier (photo courtesy of NASA's Earth Observatory)



Editor's Note: 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: Martin Collins (Email: only1martincollins2@gmail.com).