South Georgia Association Newsletter

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Cooper Island from the entrance to Larsen Harbour in Drygalski Fjord

SGA AGM at HMS Wellington Postponed due to Covid-19 outbreak

In this issue: Whales survey of South Georgia; Morag Husband Campbell medal awarded to Crag Jones; South Sandwich Islands Expedition; Gold Harbour glacial retreat; South Georgia horticulture; KEP jetty progress; Magistrate sworn in.

Return of the whales to South Georgia (see page 6)

Crag Jones – the latest recipient of the Morag Husband Campbell Medal (see page 2)

New Magistrate for KEP (see page 3)

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SGA News: Morag Husband Campbell Medal

Caradoc (Crag) Jones has been awarded the 2020 Morag Husband Campbell Medal f*or his contributions to fisheries management and scientific studies, and for championing adventurous travel, exploration and mountaineering on South Georgia.* Crag has devoted much of his life activities to South Georgia. He has been involved in fisheries management as a scientist and as a Marine Officer at KEP, having been appointed as the first post-conflict civilian Harbourmaster in 1990.

Crag is well known in the mountaineering and expedition world, having made a number of challenging ascents, particularly in South Georgia. His first ascents of previously unclimbed peaks include The Three Brothers, Mt Nordenskjöld and Mt Baume; and the third ascent of Mt Paget, the island's highest peak (2,935 m (9,629 ft)). He also completed lengthy ski traverses of the island including the Shackleton Traverse and was the first Welshman to climb Mt Everest.

Since 2007 Crag has chaired and coordinated the South Georgia Government's Expeditions Advisory Panel who advises the government on expedition management and acts as the stakeholder voice for visiting expeditions. His skill in liaising between applicants and government and the respect he has earned in the mountaineering and expedition world gives him authority to guide applicants who wish to visit South Georgia. He has helped steer the government's view of the expedition world, and the value of allowing expeditions to take place, balancing the inherent risks with keeping alive the spirit of adventure in one of the world's last wildernesses.

Crag pictued climbing in South Georgia (Photo courtesy of Skip Novak).

The Award will be presented to Crag Jones at the next meeting of the Association.

The 2019 recipient of the MHC Medal, Sally Poncet, was unable to receive the medal in person at the SGA Annual Meeting. Instead, Sally was presented the medal by South Georgia Commissioner Nigel Phillips at Government House in Stanley.

Sally was awarded the medal *for her outstanding contributions to the study and conservation of wildlife and heritage of South Georgia.* Sally has been involved with South Georgia on an almost annual basis for more than 40 years and, amongst many other publications, is the author (with Kim Crosbie) of the South Georgia Visitors Guide.

Commissioner Nigel Phillips presenting the MHC Medal to Sally Poncet at Government House in Stanley.

The Morag Husband Campbell Medal is awarded annually to individuals who have contributed significantly to the understanding, appreciation and promotion of South Georgia. The award of the medal has been made possible by a generous bequest from a long-standing supporter of the Association, Miss Morag Husband Campbell.

South Georgia Government Responds To Covid-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic has not made it to the shores of South Georgia with no confirmed cases. However, that has not made South Georgia immune from its global impact. GSGSSI have worked closely with key stakeholders, most notably the British Antarctic Survey to put in place a series of measures to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 reaching South Georgia whilst allowing key government business to continue.

In late March the Government suspended all visits to Grytviken, meaning an early closure of the Museum and Post Office. The South Georgia Heritage Trust who operate the South Georgia Museum for GSGSSI have returned safely to the UK earlier than normal via the Falkland Islands. Grytviken will remain closed to visitors until August 2020 at the earliest. King Edward Point continues to operate as a BAS operated research station providing important fisheries analysis to support the environmental management of the Marine Protected Area.

The BAS Antarctic Infrastructure Modernisation Project continues with the development of the KEP wharf. Protective and precautionary measures have been put in place to limit contact with visiting vessels, such as *JCR* and *Pharos SG*.

New South Georgia Magistrate Sworn In

On November 8th 2019, the new King Edward Point team, who were en-route south, were invited to Government House for the swearing in of the new magistrate, Fran Pothecary. Fran is the latest in a long line of Station Leaders (formerly Base Commanders) who also fulfil the role of Magistrate at King Edward Point. The team then joined the *Pharos SG* for passage to South Georgia.

Commissioner Nigel Phillips and KEP Station Leader and Magistrate, Fran Pothecary.

The new BAS King Edward Point wintering team with Commissioner Nigel Phillips in Government House.

King Edward Point Wharf Rebuild Progress

Work got underway on the new KEP wharf in January 2020, with work being undertaken by BAM-Nuttall (see Nov 2019 Newsletter), BAS's construction partner. The cargo vessel MV *Billesborg* arrived at KEP in mid-January to off-load most of the materials and the crane. By late-March the main jetty and slipway were nearing completion and work was underway on the dolphin. Construction work is due to be completed by the end of May. The new wharf will continue to facilitate the safe berthing of the Government's patrol vessel, *Pharos SG*, as well as now being capable of taking the new BAS research vessel RRS *Sir David Attenborough*.

The cargo vessel Billesborg alongside the old wharf at KEP.

Geology and glacial retreat at Gold Harbour *by Phil Stone*

The retreat of the Bertrab Glacier at Gold Harbour has revealed some spectacular geology in the clean, recently deglaciated rock faces. The structure that is now visible was covered by ice when I mapped-out the geology of the area in 1972, working for the British Antarctic Survey, so I was curious to see what could be made of the new evidence. My starting point is summed-up in the 'before and after' images (Figure 1). An appeal for photographs illustrating what can now be seen (*SGA Newsletter* **33**, November 2017) was very successful and I received dozens of superb images (*SGA Newsletter* **34**, April 2018). Working from the images I was able to establish the character and orientation of the prominent fold structure now dominating the cliff below the remains of the glacier, and have been able to publish a comprehensive account in *Falkland Islands Journal* (2019, **11** (3), 40-56): the full 'accepted' text, with illustrations, is available as a free download at: http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/525903/.

Meanwhile, and post-publication, images continued to arrive. One received from Tom Sharpe is a beautiful record of the heart of the fold structure (Fig. 2), as now seen at the left (south) side of the 2014 view in Fig. 1. The axis of folding runs approximately parallel to the cliff line and the whole structure (the obvious fold is actually the lower half of a 'z-shaped' pair of folds), is inclined towards the glacier. So, as erosion has cut into the fold (where the waterfall tumbles down) we now see 'mirror images' of the structure on either side. Another of Tom's images shows the detail of the rock beds at the north side of the deglaciated cliff (Fig. 3). There, one of the fractures seen cutting across the face from top left to bottom right in the 2014 view in Figure 1 is clearly a fault that displaces the beds; the other fractures don't appear to have had such a significant effect.

The details of the geology will only be of interest to the specialist minority, but for *Falkland Islands Journal* I was able to expand the story to include some reminiscences of fieldwork on South Georgia in the early 1970s.

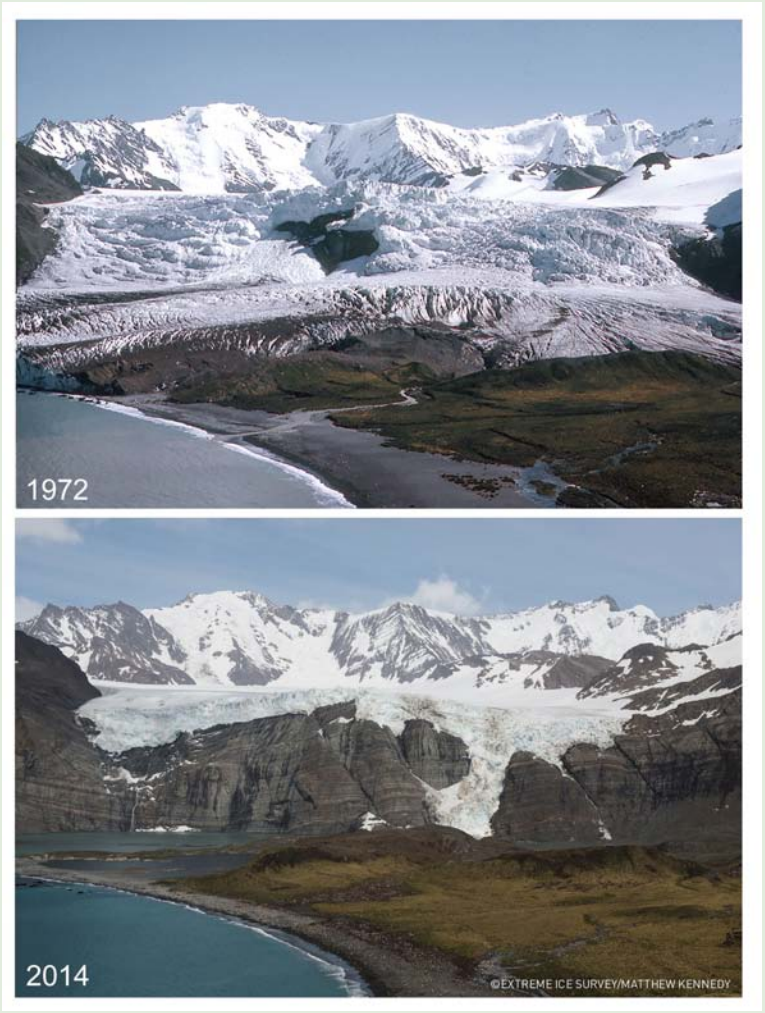


Fig. 1. The Bertrab Glacier, Gold Harbour, in 1972 (photograph by Phil Stone) and 2014 (photograph by Matthew Kennedy, Extreme Ice Surveys). The folded strata uncovered by glacial retreat lie at the left (south) side of the deglaciated rock face in the 2014 image.

Fig. 2. Detail of the large fold structure exposed by retreat of the Bertrab Glacier (photograph by Tom Sharpe). The arrows indicate the line of folding the axis of which runs approximately parallel to the cliff face and is symmetrical about a plane that is inclined towards the glacier. Erosion into the core of the fold has created its 'mirror-image' appearance on either side of the waterfall.

Memorable events included the arrival of *Lindblad Explorer* on one of her earliest tourism voyages at our camp site in Royal Bay, and a surreal encounter with the crew of a Russian fishing boat on the beach at St Andrew's Bay, where the glacier reached the sea in those days.

The time spent around Royal Bay also allowed the exploration of one of South Georgia's historical sites, the base of the 1882–1883 German International Polar Year Expedition on the north side of the bay and not far from our campsite at Moltke Harbour, which was named after the German expedition's ship. The remains of several huts were still evident in 1972. One had incorporated large cubes of granite (probably as solid foundations or to stabilize scientific instruments) with the timbers held together exclusively with copper nails; it was clearly a structure intended for the collection of geomagnetic data. Equally curious was the twisted framework of the structure built to house an astronomical telescope (Fig. 4) through which was observed a transit of Venus across the face of the Sun on 6 December 1882. Measurement of the transit had been one of the expedition's principal objectives and perhaps surprisingly, given the capricious South Georgia weather, it was successfully accomplished.

The site was subsequently reoccupied so that the geomagnetic observations could be repeated: in 1909 by the relief party from the Argentine 'Orcadas' base in the South Orkney Islands (Fig. 5) who were probably travelling aboard the ship *Uruguay*, and in 1911 by Wilhelm Filchner's *Deutschland* expedition.

The final pleasure of the *Falkland Island Journal* article was the opportunity it provided to acknowledge those who had supported my field work on South Georgia, the BAS 'GAs' (or General Assistants – a name that grossly undervalues their role): Jim Whitworth (1970-71), Eric Lawther (1971-72), Dog Holden (1973-74) and Roger Daynes (1974).

Fig. 3. This clean, recently deglaciated rock face on the north side of the Bertrab Glacier shows the marked variation in the thickness of the sandstone beds that make up most of the South Georgia rock succession (Photo: Tom Sharpe). The fracture running from top left to bottom right is a fault plane that has dropped down the strata to the right (north), as best shown by the displacement of the thickest bed and identified by the arrows.

Fig. 4. The remains of the astronomical observatory in Moltke Harbour occupied by the 1882–1883 German IPY Expedition (photo: Phil Stone). In the background, seen across Royal Bay in early December 1971, is the combined snout of the Ross and Hindle Glaciers. The two glaciers have retreated substantially since then and have separated into individual valleys. They may no longer be visible from this viewpoint.

Fig. 5. The relief party from the Argentine 'Orcadas' base in the South Orkneys reoccupying the German huts at Moltke Harbour in 1909. Note the large surveying tripod in the right foreground. This image was provided by Edinburgh University Library (Centre for Research Collections) and is one of 8 photographs recording the event that are held within the William Speirs Bruce archive. The identity of the photographer is unknown but was possibly Ernest Alexander Miller. Efforts to trace potential copyright holders were unsuccessful and correspondence concerning this issue would be welcome.

Braveheart Whale Survey

Danny Buss, BAS & University of Cambridge

In January, a team of 10 scientists ventured to South Georgia aboard the 40 m RV *Braveheart* to monitor southern right whale populations. This was the final year of a three-year research project led by Jennifer Jackson at the British Antarctic Survey to understand southern right whale feeding habits, whereabouts, and health. Since the 18th century, southern right whales were heavily hunted leading to dramatic declines in population size. Today, southern right whales are observed in South Georgia annually during the warmer months, and therefore, understanding how the whales are using the waters around South Georgia is vital to monitor recovery. The team were also tasked with observing and recording the presence of other large baleen whale species – all of which were heavily exploited throughout the 20th century and are now thought to be returning to South Georgia waters.

Departing from Stanley on the 7th January 2020, the team set off for a 33-day period at sea aiming to conduct visual transects, on route to, and around South Georgia, to gauge which whale species were using offshore and inshore areas. On passage to South Georgia, the seas were unkind and on-deck observations were impossible. However, some monitoring was still possible as the team had a nifty trick up their sleeve - a duo of acousticians and their handy team of sonobouys. Once placed in the water, sonobouys passively record underwater sounds and transmit this information back to the vessel via VHF radio. As large baleen whale species produce unique calls, it was possible to monitor which species were nearby on route to South Georgia – despite the bad weather.

The Braveheart in calm waters between Undine Harbour and the Pickersgill Islands

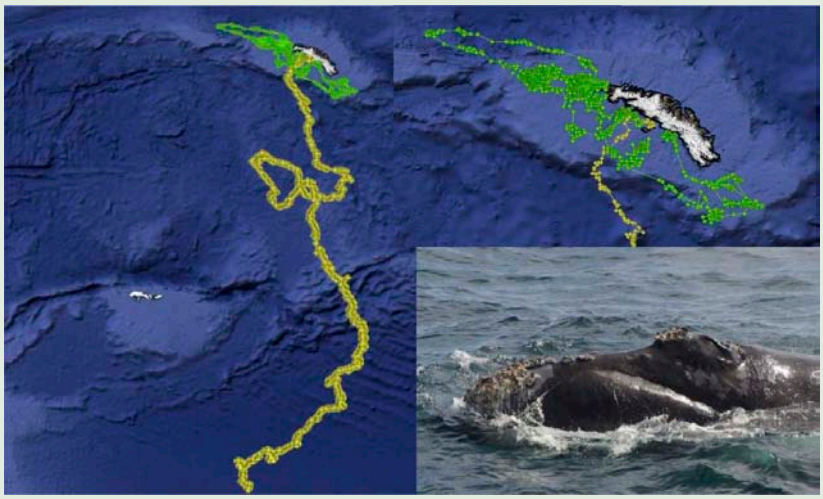
By day 3 of the crossing the weather had calmed, and the visual observers were ready for action. The first species to be spotted was a brief glimpse of a lone sei whale travelling in the high seas, while a group of magnificent blue whales were observed close to Shag Rocks – a collection of small rocky islands 100 nautical miles west of South Georgia. This was a pleasant surprise for the team. Blue whales, the largest animal known to have existed on earth (>30m in length), were so heavily exploited at the start of the 20th century that they disappeared entirely from South Georgian waters by the 1950s and have rarely been observed there since.

This sighting provided an invaluable opportunity to not only collect photographic information to identify individuals but also to obtain the first genetic information for extant blue whales in this region - through the collection of minuscule skin and blubber samples.

After the team arrived in South Georgia waters, whale sightings were an everyday occurrence - an hour rarely went by without a blow being spotted towards the horizon. However, the visual observation team had a challenge at hand. Not only did they have to spot the whales amongst the wind, spray and swell, but they needed to accurately identify the number and types of whales they were spotting. Each species is subtly distinguishable by their dorsal fin placement and shape, body size, skin patterning and colour. Although their blow characteristics are often a good tell-tale sign, interspecies impersonations were common.

A blue whale blowing to the north-west of South Georgia

Over the next 23 days the team were on the hunt to locate and monitor southern right whales. They circumnavigated the island twice over, travelling more than 2000 nautical miles, and sighting more than 1000 whales – few of which were the 'right' whale. Whales were observed in all locations, inshore, offshore, north, south, east and west. Humpback whales were the most common, followed by blue, fin, and finally, southern right. Despite the few southern right whales observed, acoustic, photographic, genetic, foraging and tracking data was gathered.



Tracks of two southern right whales, tagged near Annenkov Island in January.

Two southern right whales were tagged with satellite tags on the south side of the island. Whilst one whale has stayed close to the island, the other has headed deep into the Weddell Sea. Their latest tracks can be seen at: bas.ac.uk/project/southern right whale project.

Further information on blue whales was also collected as they were observed daily – all in all, the cruise was a tremendous success. On the 6th of February 2020, the team reluctantly sailed back to the Falkland Islands, feeling accomplished with their efforts but sad to leave the whales behind.

The information gathered here will contribute greatly to whale science. Acoustic, photographic, genetic and telemetry information will be presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee where it will feed into population assessments for the endangered blue and southern right whales.

This season would not have been possible without the contributions from the RV *Braveheart* crew and the team would like to say a massive thanks for their hard work, excellent vessel and co-operative team efforts

Humpback whale seen on the north coast of South Georgia.

The project was funded by the UK Government's Darwin Plus programme with support from the SGHT and FOSGI and the team are also grateful to the Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands for providing logistic and in-kind support.

Can you help? The team is seeking help from tourists, naturalists and other boat operators who are sailing or working in the waters around the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Scotia Arc during the summer months. Right whales have patches of very rough, white skin on their heads, which have unique patterns in every individual. Good quality photographs of the heads and details of sightings of southern right whales will help create a benchmark and health check of the species. Please do submit photographs to www.happywhale.com, who are supporting the project, and report sightings to the South Georgia museum.

A multi-disciplinary expedition to the South Sandwich Islands

Tom Hart – University of Oxford

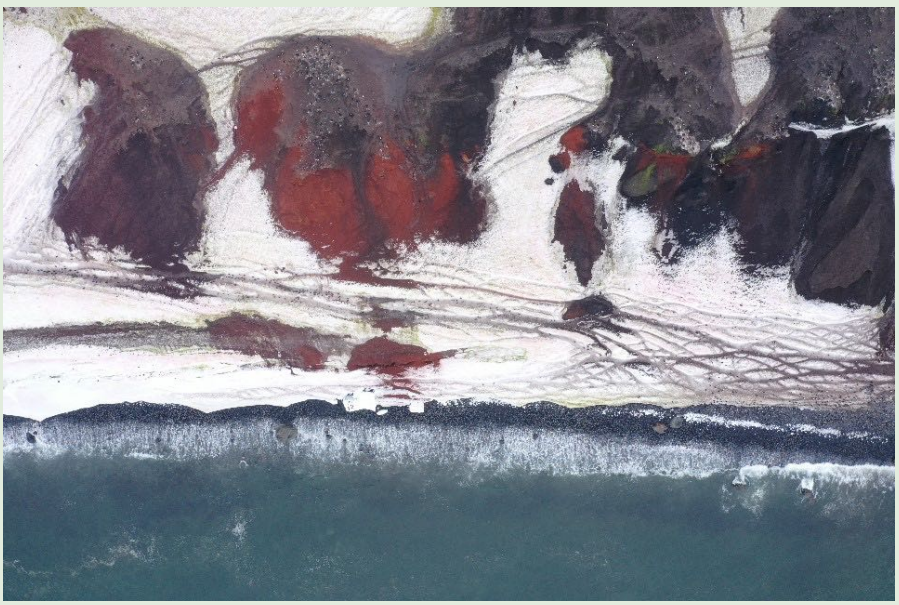
For the majority of time in the South Sandwich Islands, it is likely that your next nearest human is on the Space Station, passing a mere 220 miles overhead. There are few places quite like these islands for such a strong feeling of remoteness and isolation. The rugged volcanic terrain, covered in glacial and periglacial features speak to the soul. Despite a justifiably fearsome reputation, it is a wonderful place that few people can ever experience. It is a particular shame that they are most commonly known as "and the South Sandwich Islands"; something that belies their distinct, independent beauty from South Georgia. In fact, you know you are going somewhere special when Skip Novak insists on coming (he raised it first; I was also going to insist). After three years of planning and fundraising, *Pelagic Australis* became an Ark of scientists – two ornithologists, two volcanologists, two climate scientists and Ted from Happy Whale. It was a stellar team; even Jo our emergency physician had visited the islands twice before and we had Ruth Peacey from Penguin Post Office to document it all.

Leaving Stanley after Christmas, we had an enjoyable and swift crossing – a glass of champagne and a cup of tea at change of watch on New Year! On the sixth day, the cone and plume of Saunders Island grew on the horizon towards dusk. Humpbacks feeding around us were a reminder of how rich in krill the islands are; they support over 4 million chinstrap penguins. By the time we'd crept into Cordelia Bay avoiding known shallows it was pretty dark, but you could still make out some of the larger parts of the colony even 300 m offshore in darkness it was clear that we were back – 200,000 chinstraps are never silent!

Pelagic Australis off the coast of Zavodovski – conditions were too rough to land, so drones did the work.

The next nine days were a whirlwind of landings and science, building on experience and local knowledge gained from previous expeditions on the Golden Fleece, Quark Expeditions and Oceanwide Expeditions visits. We spent three days intensively sampling the rocks and penguins of Saunders Island, deploying trackers for BAS (https://www.bas.ac.uk/project/chinstrap-penguin-tracking/) and surveying the volcano and penguin colonies using drones.

Always following gaps in the weather, we headed south from Saunders Island to the Southern Thule group: Thule, Cook and Bellingshausen, before heading back up to Candlemas Island and finishing around Zavodovski. We landed everywhere we intended to apart from Zaovodovski, which we were able to survey using drones for both penguins and volcanology. Sailing under the steaming cliffs of Zavodovski between icebergs and while flying a drone is sensory overload!



Aerial view of the busier highways on Thule Island between Wasp Point and Hewison Point.

This trip was really timely; huge advances in drone technology meant we could cover much larger areas in unprecedented detail even where we couldn't land, so it was a really efficient use of time where the ice core team and volcanologists had different objectives. We can now not only count every penguin from the air, but get the position of each nest to look for changes over time. So while we've been home for two months now, we'll likely be counting for another year.

With hurricane force winds hitting the Falklands, we left Zavodovski before we pushed our luck. Heading for shelter on South Georgia would sound like a non-starter under normal circumstances, but we left the islands alone again, to exist in our imaginations until the next visit. Overall it was a massive success; we estimate that all of the teams got 80% of their wish list; an exceptional success for somewhere with so little shelter. It's great to have so much data to work on over the next few years; but being there is such a rare privilege. As I go through the imagery to extract data, I can't believe what we've just done.

Beach Point, Thule Island, showing the pumice coloured rocks and algae around the Adélie penguin colony.

Shag Rocks - an aerial survey on the voyage back will be used as a baseline count for a project that will continue via citizen science.

The team in Cumberland Bay in South Georgia. Left to Right: Emma Liu (University College London, Team Volcano, deck rear), Chris Kobusch (Skipper, deck front), Hamza Yassin (Cameraman, deck rear), Gemma Clucas (Cornell, Team Penguin, deck front), Ted Cheeseman (Happy Whale, deck rear), Kieran Wood (Bristol University, Volcanologist, on boom), Dr Jo Feldman (Expedition Physician, deck front) Skip Novak (Expedition Leader, deck front), Mariusz Potocki (University of Maine, Team Ice, sat on coach roof), Paul Mayewski (University of Maine, Team Ice, deck front), Tom Hart (University of Oxford, Team Penguin, deck front), Ruth Peacey (film producer, deck front), Thomas Geipel (Crew, deck front), Sophie O'Neill (Mate, steering).

Horticulture in South Georgia – *Ron Lewis-Smith*

Ever since the early days of the whaling industry the number of native flowering plants on South Georgia was rapidly exceeded by invasive species. Most "alien" species that became established were introduced accidentally as seeds in fodder imported to feed domesticated livestock, but relatively few extended their range beyond the environs of the whaling stations. Most were short-lived but some reappeared periodically from viable seed shed into the soil. Others, however, thrived and spread into the native vegetation, notably several species of grass, dandelion, sheep's sorrel and mouse-ear chickweed. Recent environmental disturbance, especially around Grytviken, combined with lengthening and warmer summers, have favoured a few species to undergo a population explosion and spread rapidly into the hinterland. This is currently being addressed by a research team from Kew Gardens as a continuation of the admirable South Georgia Habitat Restoration programme that successfully eradicated reindeer and rats from the island (see Osborne, J., et al., 2009; GSGSSI, 2016).

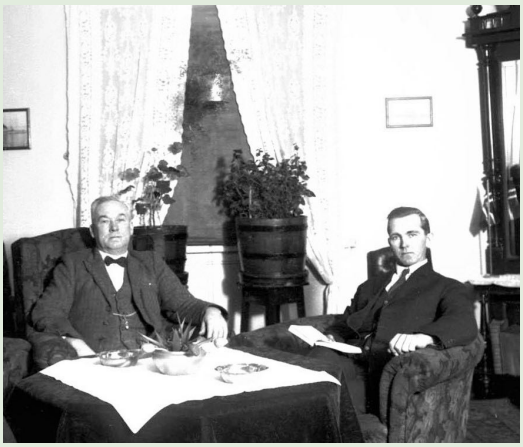


Fig. 1. Lounge of Magistrate E.B. Binnie (right) with geraniums, asparagus fern and ?agave (on table), 1920s. [Lunde, 2004]

The current status of the introduced flora is provided in a beautifully illustrated booklet by Upson et al. (2017). Around 2000, the sudden appearance of a small, yet scarce, plant native to the Falkland Islands (wavy-leaved bittercress, most likely introduced in soil attached to vehicle tracks), prompted GSGSSI to implement a strict biosecurity policy to minimise further accidental introductions and to eradicate many of the less aggressive species. However, before the days when the appearance of non-native plants was considered undesirable various exotic plants were imported to brighten the lives of many of the whalers' living quarters. Some more enthusiastic individuals attempted to grow showy flowers, herbs and vegetables outdoors.

Fig. 2. Nigel and Jenny Bonner's conservatory at KEP, 1950s, including geraniums, fuchsias, violas/pansies, spider plant, impatiens (aka busy lizzies). [With thanks to Jenny Bonner]

In the days of the whaling industry it was customary for "the management" at the stations and at King Edward Point to create as snug a home-from-home as possible in their accommodation. Amongst their home comforts were a diversity of house plants adorning their offices and lounges. Several books about the whaling stations, especially of Grytviken (e.g. Lunde, 2004), contain photographs of interior scenes depicting displays of potted geraniums, aspidistras, asparagus fern, feather palms, peace lilies, etc. (Fig. 1). Some of the KEP bungalows had conservatories resplendent with colourful plants to brighten domestic life (Fig. 2). During their occupation of Leith in the mid-1960s Japanese whalers constructed a large greenhouse for growing vegetables, but it was not completed. However, I found a clump of chives growing within the ruined structure 15 years later, and it was still thriving after 25 years.

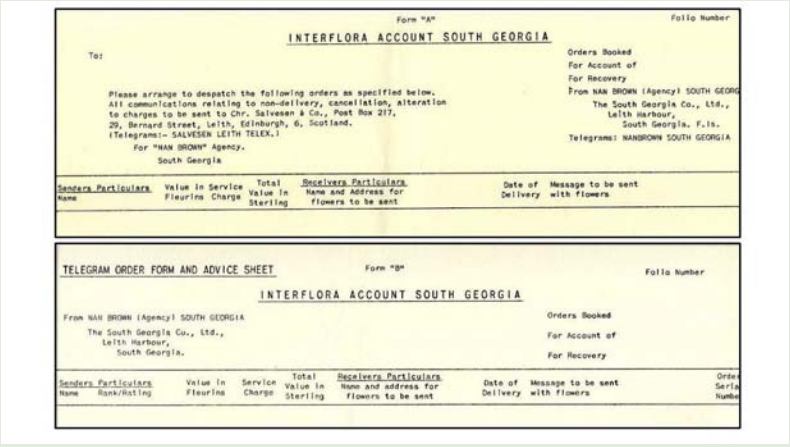
In 1969, when BAS took over the management of KEP and Shackleton House as its accommodation we inherited a plethora of indoor flowering greenery. The lounge and bar, as well as the stairwells, were bedecked with 2-3m high climbing fuchsias and geraniums, and some of us had various pot plants in our individual bedrooms. There was something surreal wakening in the morning and looking out the window through these plants towards the backdrop of Mt Paget and Mt Sugartop (Fig. 3). Similarly, I used to look towards the whaling station from my laboratory (the former hospital) across a colourful window box of nasturtiums and pansies. Some of these house plants were acquired from the former Magistrate's villa that had just been vacated. The botanical team used the villa conservatory as a laboratory and it was also used to propagate new stock. Many years later, in the window of a room at Leith, I found a long-dead geranium that had been grown in soil in a former food tin some 25 years after the station had been abandoned – a forlorn relic of someone's attempt to brighten the dreary winter days there.

Not all these botanical reminders of home were grown indoors. Attempts had been made to grow a few hardy flowers and herbs in makeshift raised beds beside the doors of some buildings. Signs of these "gardens", together with some weeds, remained long after their creators had departed. In 1979, some daffodils and Falkland Islands plants were still growing in the Magistrate's fenced compound on KEP a decade after being abandoned. Similarly, several unusual weeds were still growing by the door of the Manager's villa and outside the main barracks in Grytviken. Some of these species had been recorded *in situ* in the early 1960s, and several individual plants persisted at least 50 years. One of these, cow parsley, existed for at least 40 years before it produced any offspring in the 1990s – no doubt a response to more favourable growing conditions.

Fig. 3. Author's view from his bedroom in Shackleton House, 1969.

In the mid-1960s (and probably in earlier days also) an attempt was made to grow potatoes in the shelter of the hydro power station, while small Falkland Islands shrubs, particularly willow, were grown for a few seasons in a prepared plot amongst the tussac on KEP. In the late 1960s a BAS research experiment assessed the survival capacity of a number of Falkland Islands plants transplanted to a site east of upper Gull Lake River. While some survived a couple of winters all were incinerated after two years! Farther afield, whalers secretively introduced more unusual horticultural curiosities. In Karakatta Valley, about 500m north of Husvik, on a steep, grassy, north-facing slope, a tiny level spot still contains two wild-flower species (autumn hawkbit and St John's-wort), almost certainly of Norwegian origin. Today, they have not spread from their original planting spot yet must have been growing in situ for at least 60 years. Several other unusual species occur in odd places remote from stations and may have been deliberately introduced. A single prostrate plant of the dwarf Falklands diddle-dee shrub, far larger than any known in its native habitat grows on the stony plain of Hestesletten (where horses grazed in the 1920s); a single but spreading plant of the northern European cowberry occurs near the spectacular waterfall in Husdal west of Husvik; a large spreading patch of the Falklands berry-lobelia grows in a sheltered spot below the large waterfall in upper Karakatta Valley. All of these are several kilometres from the nearest station. The latter site was a favourite picnic spot for whalers, while the Husdal site was popular with walkers. How many similar sites were planted with horticultural memories from home during the whaling era and remain undetected?

On a vaguely related topic, during the 1950s Nan Brown, wife of radio operator George Brown, operated a telegraphic Interflora service (Fig. 4) for whalers at Leith wishing to send bouquets of flowers to their loved ones back home (presumably not a bunch of tussock grass and Antarctic buttercups!).



Form "A" Folio Number

INTERFLORA ACCOUNT SOUTH GEORGIA

To:

Orders Booked
For Account of
For Recovery
From NAN BROWN (Agency) SOUTH GEORG
The South Georgia Co., Ltd.,
Leith Harbour,
South Georgia, F.Is.
Telegrams: NANBROWN SOUTH GEORGIA

Please arrange to despatch the following orders as specified below.
All communications relating to non-delivery, cancellation, alteration to charges to be sent to Chr. Salvesen & Co., Post Box 217, 29, Bernard Street, Leith, Edinburgh, 6, Scotland.
(Telegrams:- SALVESEN LEITH TELEX.)
For "NAN BROWN" Agency.
South Georgia

Senders Particulars Name	Value in Fleurins	Service Charge	Total Value in Sterling	Receivers Particulars Name and Address for flowers to be sent	Date of Delivery	Message to be sent with flowers

TELEGRAM ORDER FORM AND ADVICE SHEET Form "B" Folio Number

INTERFLORA ACCOUNT SOUTH GEORGIA

From NAN BROWN (Agency) SOUTH GEORGIA
The South Georgia Co., Ltd.,
Leith Harbour,
South Georgia.

Orders Booked
For Account of
For Recovery

Senders Particulars Name Rank/Rating	Value in Fleurins	Service Charge	Total Value in Sterling	Receivers Particulars Name and address for flowers to be sent	Date of Delivery	Message to be sent with flowers	Order Serial Number

Fig. 4. Nan Brown's Interflora Order Forms for use at Leith.

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Two Centuries ago: Bellingshausen, Sealers, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

by Bob Headland

The bicentenary of the discovery of Antarctica occurred early this year. As part of celebrations the voyage of Captain Fabian Bellingshausen, with *Vostok* and *Mirnyy*, was commemorated by an Estonian expedition which visited Britain on its way south (as did Bellingshausen in 1819). For this the Scott Polar Research Institute held a series of lectures, with displays of charts and publication. Bellingshausen's December 1819 visit to South Georgia complimented Captain Cooks January 1775 survey by charting the island's southern coast. On arriving, near Undine Harbour, Bellingshausen was met by a steersman and two sailors aboard a small sailing vessel flying the British colours. They thought his ships were also sealers. Fortunately one of the sealers *was a Russian who had deserted from one of our warships during her stay in a British port and had then drifted into this hare occupation to eke out an existence.* In Russian accounts the deserter was referred to as 'the cockroach' (tarakan, таракан). Details of sealing ships present were exchanged as, by this time, sealers knew South Georgia well and had visited the South Sandwich Islands. Bellingshausen's voyage continued to the northern group of the South Sandwich Islands, which were unknown to Captain Cook. These were charted and named after the Marquis of Traversey, which completed the survey of the entire group. At the SPRI meeting it was reasonably suggested that this was another example of explorers benefitting from practical knowledge gained by sealers.

South Georgia Association News

Shackleton's Final Quest Voyage

The South Georgia Association is delighted to notify our members of the Shackleton's Final Quest voyage that has been scheduled for February 2022.

Organised by Ice Tracks Expeditions in collaboration with our friends at the James Caird Society, this spectacular voyage on the newly launched MS *Seaventure* will pay tribute to the Heroic Age of Polar Exploration. The voyage is timed as a commemoration of the centenary of Shackleton's final voyage south – the Shackleton-Rowett Antarctic Expedition (1921-22), commonly known as the Quest Expedition. Shackleton's sudden death on the voyage on 5 January 1922 was a defining moment in the Antarctic age of heroism, which still resonates today.

The 20-day itinerary features the Falklands, South Georgia and a number of sites in the peninsula and surrounding islands, including (weather permitting) Elephant Island. Guests will also have the opportunity to fly on to Buenos Aires and cross the Rio Plata to Montevideo, the city that gave Shackleton a hero's memorial service.

For further details, including a detailed itinerary, kit requirements and costings, please visit the Ice Tracks Website (http://www.ice-tracks.com/event/shackletons-final-quest/) for more information.

SGA Seeks Members to Assist with Events

The SGA is seeking help from members who would be willing to assist with the organisation of events. Please contact Paul Rodhouse (pgkr@bas.ac.uk) for more information.

Editor's Note

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