



## Antarctica Helps Us Understand The World

Antarctic Heritage Trust Chair Sir Jerry Mateparae views the icy continent the same way he views the world.

“It’s a place where there is so much to learn about our history and science, for today and tomorrow,” he says.

Sir Jerry was scheduled to visit Antarctica in December with Trustee Mike Dawson and Executive Director Francesca Eathorne, but unusually prolonged poor weather conditions meant the travel was cancelled.

Sir Jerry says Trustees and staff accept travel to Antarctica is never guaranteed.

“The nature of the work we do and where we do it means we have to be prepared for the possibility of change. It’s disappointing of course, but we understand why we couldn’t get there this time.”

Our new Chair says becoming a Trustee a year ago expanded his view of an organisation whose work he was always aware of.

“I grew up aware of the ‘heroic era’ of exploration, the stories of Scott and Shackleton, and how they came through New Zealand to get to Antarctica,” he says. “Observing the Trust conserving the huts and artefacts left behind highlights to me

how much we are finding out about our modern world. It’s where the past meets the future, and Antarctica has a lot to tell us.”

Sir Jerry believes the Trust’s Inspiring Explorers™ programme is an example of this. “The young people see how the early explorers lived, survived and reported what they had seen. They can then consider what they can do themselves. The expeditions help them make decisions that will influence their lives, through interest and engagement in what is much more than a continent. It’s their place in the world seen through the lens of Antarctica.”

The first thing that comes to mind when Sir Jerry is asked about Antarctica is the buildings at Cape Adare.

“Those buildings are the only example left of humanity’s first buildings on any continent in the world,” he says. “How special is that!

“When I say that to people, they understand the buildings’ historic and cultural significance and the value of the work the Trust does. Antarctica truly is where the past meets the future.”

Sir Jerry says the work the Antarctic Heritage Trust does aligns with his values and things that are important to him.

The Trust’s 2024-25 On-Ice Conservation team inside Shackleton’s *Nimrod* hut. L-R: Lead Artefacts Conservator Conor Tulloch, Conservator Nicola Stewart, Building Conservation Programme Manager Zack Bennett, Archaeologists Jeremy Moyle and Emma St Pierre, General Manager of Programmes Johan Bergman. © AHT

“I think back to my first visit to Antarctica and the state of the huts I visited then, compared to how they are now thanks to the Trust’s conservation work.

“Our work protects not only New Zealand’s heritage, but the world’s. It also gives us the chance to provide young people opportunity in a way that stirs their soul.”

## Chair Honoured

Sir Jerry Mateparae has received University of Waikato’s most prestigious award, an Honorary Doctorate, acknowledging what was described as his unparalleled service to his country.



Trust Chair Sir Jerry Mateparae. © AHT

That service includes military honours and a knighthood — 39 years with the New Zealand Army, serving as Chief of the Army culminating as Chief of the Defence Force, before becoming Governor-General in 2011, and High Commissioner to the UK between 2017 and 2020.

# A Legacy of Innovation: Farewell to Chair Mark Stewart

The Antarctic Heritage Trust extends its deepest gratitude to outgoing Chair Datuk Mark Stewart P.J.N. (Kehormat), MNZM, whose leadership has been critical in broadening the Trust's mission over the past twelve years. Mark, who was formally farewelled in August at Government House in Wellington (NZ), finished his chairmanship in September and leaves a legacy of innovation and growth.

Since joining as a Trustee in 2012 and taking the helm as Chair in 2016, Mark's contribution has been instrumental in repositioning the Trust for the future.

"His entrepreneurial mindset and innovative approach helped guide us as we broadened our focus from conservation of the huts, to using the huts to inspire the

next generation of explorers," says Deputy Chair Anthony Wright. "Mark's capacity for thinking outside the square has driven an injection of youthfulness and diversity to all the Trust's work, while always staying true to our core mission."

During his chairmanship, Mark guided the Trust through significant growth and evolution, which included the expansion of conservation projects, the successful development of the Inspiring Explorers™ programme and virtual reality experiences that bring Antarctica's heritage to life for global audiences.

Mark's steady leadership through challenging times, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrated his unwavering commitment to the Trust's mission. His



Antarctic Heritage Trust outgoing Board Chair Mark Stewart, Executive Director Francesca Eathorne, and new Chair Sir Jerry Mateparae, at Government House. © AHT/Jo Moore

leadership has been pivotal in ensuring the Trust's work remains relevant and inspires the next generation of explorers.

Though farewell speeches have been delivered, Mark's connection with the Trust continues as he joins our active alumni network, where his expertise and passion remain valued.

## On-Ice Conservation Updates



Archaeologists Jeremy Moyle and Emma St Pierre undertaking a site survey of Cape Royds. © AHT/Johan Bergman

### Ross Island

Members of the Trust's 2024-25 On-Ice Conservation team touched down on Ross Island in late November. Since then, they have undertaken work tasks on historic explorer bases at Scott Base, Hut Point, and most recently, Cape Royds.

For Trust Archaeologists Emma St Pierre and Jeremy Moyle, their first season in Antarctica has begun with a sense of excitement around uncovering more of the rich history of these sites. They have just completed a critical archaeological assessment at the site of Shackleton's iconic *Nimrod* hut, building on work undertaken by Trust Heritage Consultant Gord MacDonald last season.

"Our work at Cape Royds involved a thorough documentation of the site conditions and a detailed mapping of artefact distributions," Emma explained. "By carefully recording the current state of the site and the location of artefacts, we create a baseline record that will serve as a foundation for future conservation efforts and help us better understand how the site was utilised by early explorers."

Jeremy noted "It's been great to bring an archaeological lens to the site again. Getting onto the ground at Cape Royds has really got us thinking about the stories that the hut, artefacts, and landscape can tell us about Shackleton's team and the other layers of history at the site."

Next stop for the Ross Island conservation team is Cape Evans. There, Emma and Jeremy will continue to work closely with the Trust's conservators on what may be the most extensive archaeological assessment ever undertaken at the site.

### Cape Adare

In a significant step towards being able to start the initial conservation of the first dwelling ever constructed on the Antarctic continent, Trust Conservator Nicola Stewart successfully reached Cape Adare in late November in an event led by Antarctica New Zealand. Nicola accompanied experts from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) explosives ordnance squad to conduct a crucial assessment of the area

surrounding Carsten Borchgrevink's British Antarctic *Southern Cross* Expedition (1898-1900) base.

The team's primary objective was to identify any historic ammunition, explosives, and flares potentially buried at the hut site. "It's an honour to be a part of this critical mission," Nicola remarked. "By addressing these safety concerns, we can pave the way for future conservation of this unparalleled piece of Antarctic heritage."

The successful deployment to Cape Adare marks a significant milestone in the Trust's ongoing collaboration with Antarctica New Zealand and NZDF after the team weren't able to deploy to site last season. "We are thrilled to have Nicola and the team on-site, taking this essential step towards safeguarding the historic huts," said Executive Director Francesca Eathorne. "The new information they gathered will now be analysed, and if necessary, plans will be made for the disposal of any concerning historic ordnance. This visit has only been possible because of multi-agency collaboration. A huge thanks to event leader and logistics provider Antarctica New Zealand, NZDF and the Italian National Programme who also provided key logistics support."



Follow the Trust's **social channels** for regular updates throughout the season



# Ross Sea Expedition Team Announced

The Antarctic Heritage Trust Inspiring Explorers Expedition™ team who will be heading to Antarctica. L-R: Jake Bailey, Calum Turner, Lucy Hayes-Stevenson, Louise Piggin, Kitiona (Billy) Pelasio, Daniel Borstein, Maia Ingoe, Ngawai Clendon. © AHT



Meet the team at [inspiringexplorers.co.nz](http://inspiringexplorers.co.nz)

The Trust is delighted to introduce the eight young explorers who will join its tenth Inspiring Explorers Expedition™. Together with Expedition Partner Heritage Expeditions, they will travel to the Ross Sea region — into the beating heart of Antarctic exploration and the focus of the Trust's conservation efforts.

From Auckland, New Zealand come Kitiona (Billy) Pelasio (16), Lucy Hayes-Stevenson (33), and Maia Ingoe (22). They are joined by Louise Piggin (26) from Christchurch, Calum Turner (28) and Ngawai Clendon (21) from Wellington, Jake Bailey (27) from Arrowtown, and Daniel Bornstein (32) from Melbourne, Australia.

Cancer survivor and best-selling author Jake Bailey brings a unique perspective to the team. "Since the cancer, I've been pretty mindful of trying to live life to the fullest," he says. "The privilege of visiting one of the most remote places on earth, let alone walking in the footsteps of the early Antarctic explorers, is an incredibly unique opportunity."

In a significant first for the Trust, these Inspiring Explorers™ will visit the iconic expedition bases that the Trust has been conserving since the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project was launched in 2002.

The team recently gathered in Christchurch for a weekend of team building, where they learned about the Trust's work and the significant legacy it cares for. The weekend also saw them begin work on their outreach project — a podcast series about their journey and the Trust's work safeguarding Antarctica's cultural heritage.

"I'm passionate about using creative storytelling to bring science to life to inspire and educate others," says journalist

Maia Ingoe. "Never in a million years did I think I would get an opportunity like this, and through the podcast I will get to take the listeners on this amazing journey with me."

Prior to departing, the team have been involved in the conservation of a unique artefact, and they will have the honour of repatriating it to Scott's *Discovery* hut, on Ross Island. Young conservator Daniel Borstein and Conservation Technician Louise Piggin worked under Trust Collections Conservation Manager Lizzie Meek to prepare the object for its return.

The item — a well-worn copy of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas — bears sooty fingerprints and the lingering scent of seal blubber — used to fuel the explorers' stoves as they waited for sea ice to freeze. The book was gifted to the Trust by an anonymous donor who received it as a school prize in 1965.

"Conservation requires meticulous processes and it's always satisfying to see an object stabilised while protecting its essence and the stories it represents," says Louise. "Items like this help both current and future generations connect to the lived experiences of these early explorers, and it's an enormous privilege to have the opportunity to return it to Antarctica."

The team departs in January 2025 aboard Heritage Expeditions' purpose-built polar vessel, *Heritage Adventurer*, for a 28-day voyage. The Trust's former Programme Manager Al Fastier, joining the voyage as part of the Heritage Expeditions crew, looks forward to mentoring the young explorers.

Heritage Expeditions Commercial Director and Expedition Leader Aaron Russ says the company is proud to partner with the

Trust on this special Inspiring Explorers™ expedition.

"As New Zealand's only family-owned and operated pioneering expedition cruise company, and the most experienced Ross Sea and Subantarctic operator, we are looking forward to sharing this incredibly special, remote part of the world with the lucky eight Inspiring Explorers™. We can't wait to welcome the Ross Sea's next generation of custodians and ambassadors on board and assist with the repatriation of *The Count of Monte-Cristo*, on an unforgettable voyage of a lifetime into the 'heart of Antarctica'."

"We hope this expedition will inspire this talented group of people to embrace the spirit of exploration," says Trust Communications and Engagement Manager Anna Clare. "It's a spirit as critical in the 21st century as it was over a century ago — particularly for our young people who face a rapidly changing world. Our thanks go to expedition partner Heritage Expeditions and supporter Cheshire Architects for helping make this possible."



Daniel Borstein and Louise Piggin carry out conservation work on *The Count of Monte-Cristo*. © AHT/Anna Clare



Follow their journey at [nzaht.org](http://nzaht.org) and on the Trust's social channels





Inspiring Explorer Tegan Allpress. © AHT/Anna Clare

## Into Ocean & Ice: Inspiring Explorers™ Share Antarctic Legacy

Four emerging artists from the visual arts outreach team of the Trust's 2023 Inspiring Explorers Expedition™ to South Georgia are sharing their transformative experiences through a compelling new exhibition at the New Zealand Maritime Museum Hui Te Ananui a Tangaroa in Auckland.

The exhibition, which opened on 29 November, showcases the artistic interpretations of Inspiring Explorers Tegan Allpress (Rongowhakaata), Peregrin Hyde (Ngāti Maniapoto), Rose Lasham, and Charlie Thomas. Their work forms part of a dual exhibition connecting contemporary Antarctic experiences with Sir Ernest Shackleton and the 'heroic era' of exploration.

The artists were among 22 young New Zealanders who journeyed to South Georgia to honour the centenary of Shackleton's final expedition, the *Quest* (1921–22). This journey marked the end of the 'heroic era' of Antarctic exploration and deepened the connection between the island and Shackleton's legacy.

Through photography, paintings, sculpture, and video, the Inspiring Explorers™ capture both the grandeur and vulnerability of this remote region. Their work reflects a year of creative development, processing their experiences of South Georgia's

incredible landscape, wildlife, and history of exploration.

"What started as wild ideas in mid-2023 has transformed into something tangible," says Charlie Thomas, whose watercolour works reflect his passion for wildlife conservation. "Having our art on the walls of the Maritime Museum, a place I've visited for years, feels surreal. The exhibition gives us a platform to share our experiences with thousands of people, inviting them to connect with South Georgia through our work."

"This exhibition is a beautiful resolution to what has been a two-year journey," says Tegan Allpress, a film photographer specialising in the concept of *Tūrangawaewae* ("a place to stand"). "From the initial application through to the expedition itself, the South Georgia expedition has changed the fabric of my being. Being able to share our experiences with people who may never visit these remote places and knowing we're doing justice to the environment we encountered, makes me feel proud and privileged."

Peregrin Hyde's innovative microphotography reveals hidden details of South Georgia's natural environment, while Rose Lasham's paintings and ceramic sculptures offer unique perspectives on environmental stewardship and humanity's



Inspiring Explorer Peregrin Hyde. © AHT/Anna Clare

relationship with these remote environments.

The exhibition's contemporary perspectives are complemented by Italian artist Paola Folicaldi Suh's paintings, which reimagine Shackleton's dramatic journey aboard the *Endurance*. These works are displayed alongside reproductions of Frank Hurley's original photographs from the voyage and the meteorological logbook from the *Aurora* that documents the vessel's role in Shackleton's 1914–1917 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

The opening weekend featured special events including a public celebration where visitors could meet the artists and hear about their experiences firsthand. The Inspiring Explorers™ also shared their journey in public talks and led educational workshops, including a unique microphotography session for children conducted by Peregrin Hyde.

Running until 31 August 2025, *Into Ocean & Ice* represents a significant achievement for the Trust's Inspiring Explorers™ programme, demonstrating how modern expeditions continue to inspire new generations to engage with Antarctic heritage and the spirit of exploration. Admission to the exhibition is free with museum entry.



Inspiring Explorer Rose Lasham. © AHT/Anna Clare



Inspiring Explorer Charlie Thomas. © AHT/Anna Clare



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# Exploring Antarctic Heritage Through VR

## Scott's *Discovery* Hut Virtual Reality Experience

The Trust's innovative virtual reality experience of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's *Discovery* Hut is bringing the 'heroic era' of Antarctic exploration to life for students and communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. As part of the Trust's Inspiring Explorers Education™ programme, this immersive technology is transforming how people connect with Antarctica's remarkable cultural heritage.

The virtual journey transports visitors to Ross Island's Hut Point Peninsula, where Scott's expedition built their first Antarctic base in 1902. It offers unprecedented access to this historic site, allowing participants to explore the hut and surroundings just as Scott and Shackleton did over a century ago.

"Every time we bring this experience to a new school or community, we witness something special," says Public Engagement Officer Adelman Matthews. "Participants who might never have the chance to visit Antarctica are now able to walk in Scott's footsteps, interact with the environment, and gain a deeper appreciation for both the 'heroic era' of exploration and our ongoing conservation work."

The experience goes beyond simple observation — participants can feed huskies, encounter penguins, and even take a ride in a hydrogen balloon, bringing to life authentic experiences from Scott's expedition. Inside the meticulously recreated hut, visitors can examine conserved artefacts, each digitally modelled with painstaking accuracy by the StaplesVR team.

The Trust's education team is touring this window into Antarctica's past to communities across Aotearoa New Zealand, offering free visits to schools and community venues nationwide. While the VR experience captivates participants aged 11 and up with its immersive storytelling, the accompanying dynamic educational resources create deeper connections to curriculum subjects and inspire the next generation of explorers and conservators.

To learn more about bringing Scott's *Discovery* Hut Virtual Reality experience to your school, community group, or event, **visit [nzaht.org](http://nzaht.org) or email [education@nzaht.org](mailto:education@nzaht.org).**

Thanks to the generous donors who funded this experience, including Antarctic Heritage Trust Inspiring Explorers™ Fund donors and a grant from Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage Regeneration Fund. The Trust, in partnership with developer StaplesVR, has created this virtual reality experience to celebrate this unique shelter's place in polar history and share the stories of the explorers who inhabited it. The Trust also extends its thanks to logistics partner Antarctica New Zealand.



Scott's *Discovery* Hut. © Alasdair Turner

## Join us in making Antarctic heritage accessible to all

The Trust is seeking tour partners and sponsors to help share Scott's *Discovery* Hut Virtual Reality Experience with communities across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond. To discuss partnership opportunities or support our education programme, visit **[nzaht.org](http://nzaht.org)**.



Students from Christchurch East School with Scott's *Discovery* Hut Virtual Reality Experience. © AHT/Anna Clare



# Generator Talent Partnership

## Developing Leaders with an Explorer's Mindset

An innovative partnership between Antarctic Heritage Trust and Executive Development firm Generator Talent is transforming corporate leadership development by harnessing the inspirational legacy of Antarctic exploration's heroic age.

The Explorer's Mindset Leadership Programme, developed collaboratively by both organisations, takes leaders on a nine-month journey that examines the challenges faced by legendary explorers like Sir Ernest Shackleton, Captain Robert Falcon Scott, and Roald Amundsen.

"This partnership exemplifies everything the Trust stands for," says Trust Executive Director Francesca Eathorne. "By connecting modern leaders with the extraordinary legacy of Antarctic exploration, we're not only honouring these incredible stories but ensuring their leadership lessons continue to shape future generations. The programme's success demonstrates how the spirit of exploration remains as relevant and powerful as ever."

Referencing the iconic stories of the early polar explorers, the programme identifies six key leadership attributes that remain crucial today: curiosity, conviction, loyalty,

resilience, risk-taking and courage. These timeless qualities are explored through workshops featuring guest speakers, including world renowned mountaineer Lydia Bradey, who bring modern-day perspectives to historical leadership lessons.

The programme's distinctive four-stage journey culminates in participants designing and undertaking their own expedition, challenging their physical and mental boundaries while applying their newly acquired leadership skills. Early participants have already completed some remarkable challenges, including a three-day Coast to Coast expedition across New Zealand's South Island.

Highlighting the innovative combination of historical narrative, insightful workshops and experiential learning, one participant noted it as "One of the most creative leadership



Shackleton (centre) and his British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914-1917 crew aboard the Endurance, photographed by Frank Hurley. Credit: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

approaches I've seen in my career. The narrative you're threading is exceptionally creative, the guests you're introducing are world-class, and the quest this is attached to is unique."

Significantly, the partnership supports the Trust's mission, with a percentage of the proceeds from the programme directly funding the Trust's mission to conserve, share and encourage the spirit of exploration.



Learn more about the programme at [explorersmindset.net](https://explorersmindset.net)

## Conservation Plans Enter New Phase

The Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project (RSHRP), the world's largest and longest-running cold climate conservation programme, has been running for over 21 years. During this time, four of the five historic explorer bases under the Trust's care have undergone the initial stage of conservation making them weather tight and structurally sound, along with the conservation of the large collection of approximately 20,000 items left behind by the explorers. The last remaining site to undergo its initial conservation is Carsten Borchgrevink's 1899-1900 expedition base at Cape Adare - the most remote and logistically challenging of all the sites.

A key factor in the programme's success has been the development of individual Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for each explorer base. These CMPs, created in 2004 by a team led by eminent heritage architect and long-term Trust supporter Chris Cochrane, in collaboration with experts from New Zealand and Australia, have undergone international peer review. The CMPs have proven to be robust over time, however with the completion of the initial major conservation works, they now

need to be updated to guide the ongoing maintenance and conservation required to preserve the bases for future generations.

Julian Bickersteth of International Conservation Services (ICS) in Sydney, who was part of the original team that wrote the CMPs twenty years ago, commented on the current rewriting process, "What began as a 'refreshment' of the CMPs at a workshop in Christchurch in March 2023 has evolved into a comprehensive rewrite. The aim is to capture a complete record of the work undertaken and develop policies that effectively guide and inform future conservation efforts."

Fiona Tennant, also from ICS, is leading the editing process alongside Julian. Fiona says, "The challenge has been to capture the complexities of the work undertaken and ensure that these documents are fit for purpose for the care of the bases moving forward. We are confident that the end result will be another example of best practice in the care of cultural heritage, consistent with the high standards the RSHRP has demonstrated in all its work to date."

The Trust eagerly anticipates sharing the finalised CMPs with the wider conservation community, Trust supporters and the public once the comprehensive rewriting process is complete.



A pair of improvised crampons hanging inside Scott's Terra Nova hut, Cape Evans. 2021-22. © AHT/Zack Bennett

# Call for Governance Interns

Antarctic Heritage Trust is delighted to open applications for its governance intern positions. The Trust Board welcomes up to three governance interns at a time, giving aspiring directors an opportunity to attend governance meetings and develop their skills.

The intern position is generally for two years with the expectation that interns attend meetings (either in person or online) throughout the year and participate in Board discussions. The Trust welcomes applications from a diverse range of people, including Trust alumni. No previous governance experience is required. The Trust is committed to professional development and provides an induction programme for interns. Aspiring directors with experience in the following areas is desirable: heritage conservation, sustainability, Te ao Māori, climate change, digital technology/communications.

Applications for this round of roles close Friday 31 January 2025. For more information and to apply online please visit [nzaht.org](http://nzaht.org).



Inspiring Explorers™ alumni Sadra Sultani, Laura Andrews (Governance Intern) and Mike Dawson (Board member). © AHT/Jo Moore

## Alumni News



**Gemma Wyllie** (Inspiring Explorer 2023), a passionate pediatric nurse, has embarked on a three-month volunteer mission with Mercy Ships in Sierra Leone, Africa. In a country where over half of the population lives in poverty and access to healthcare is limited, Gemma is part of a dedicated team providing free, life-changing surgeries and medical care to those who need it most, making a profound impact on both patients and communities.

**James Blake** (Inspiring Explorer 2015) recently served as the Director of Photography for the film *Endurance*, which chronicles the discovery of Shackleton's lost ship. He was filming with the *Endurance22* team when the ship was first discovered and captured



the underwater footage of the *Endurance* wreck. James credited his Inspiring Explorers Expedition™ experience with the Trust in 2015 as having a helping-hand in him securing this opportunity. The film has been released in UK cinemas and is now available to stream on Disney+.

**Julian Bickersteth** (Trust Conservation Design Team) captivated attendees at the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) Lima 2024 Congress with a presentation on the Trust's Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project. Speaking to a paper he co-authored with Gord Macdonald (Trust Heritage Consultant) and Lizzie Meek (Trust Collections Conservation Manager), titled "Sustainable Conservation Solutions in a Hostile Environment: the Historic Huts of Antarctica", Julian highlighted the project's adaptability in the face of harsh conditions and the importance of long-term vision in heritage conservation, with particular reference to conservation work on the Observation Hill Cross. The presentation was praised as a "masterclass" by IIC Secretary General Professor Jane Henderson and sparked thought-provoking discussions on the impact of climate change on fragile environments.



### Isobel Ewing

(Inspiring Explorer 2017) recently took the opportunity to spend four months bikepacking in Ladakh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Crete. You can read about her adventures at [substack.com/@isobeuling](https://substack.com/@isobeuling). Isobel is now living in Istanbul working as an anchor for TRT World.



After years of volunteering in the climate space, including co-founding the nonprofit Climate Club, **Jenny Sahng** (Inspiring Explorer 2023) felt it was the right time to dedicate her career to tackling the climate crisis. She has transitioned from working at a tech startup she co-founded to working full-time for Rewiring Aotearoa, a climate data nonprofit. Jenny is passionate about her new role and feels it aligns perfectly with her values and purpose.





You can become an Antarctic Explorer member today – visit [nzaht.org/membership](https://nzaht.org/membership)

# A Treasured Memory

## A Supporter Story by Frank Graveson — Antarctic Explorer Member

In mid-summer 1962, I spent some time living in Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds. I was there as company for Oliver Sutherland, a young Canterbury University student who was studying the nearby Adelie penguin colony. Fifty-four years earlier, Shackleton and his companions had travelled this same region, hoping to reach the South Pole.

In my memory, the hut was warm and cosy. It had been tidied by previous parties and, except for Shackleton's cubicle, showed little sign of occupation by the 15 men who had spent a crowded winter there in 1908. Around the walls were makeshift shelves laden with supplies, candles, matches and foodstuffs – jars of jam, bottled fruit, Colman's mustard. Hanging behind the stove were kitchen utensils, jugs and a ham in its muslin sack. Portraits of the then King and Queen had pride of place.

We had temporary bunks and a table made from packing cases and planks. With 24-hour daylight, we did not need any lighting. From my snug sleeping bag, I wondered about the gooseberries. They were in bottles, not jars, and must have been tediously inserted one at a time. How did they get them out?

Outside there were multiple packing cases and bales of pony fodder – some still part of the walls of the stables and the garage that had held the Arrol-Johnston motor car. Of particular interest was the dog kennel,

which indicated that Shackleton's dogs were much smaller than those we had at Scott Base. Nearby, the penguin colony provided endless entertainment as the birds tended their nests and chicks while skuas circled overhead.

We had been delivered by US Navy helicopter, but when our pickup was delayed due to a crash at McMurdo, we were advised to prepare for an extended stay. Fortunately, a reserve machine collected us after our peaceful 'holiday'.

My next visit in early September 1963 was very different. We travelled by dog sledge, battling through a violent blizzard that forced us to shelter first under Arrival Heights and then at Scott's hut at Cape Evans. What should have been a four-hour journey took two days. When the weather cleared, we finally reached Backdoor Bay and made ourselves at home in the *Nimrod* Hut.

What a contrast! No longer warm and cosy, it was like a refrigerator and, with only a few hours of weak daylight, it was dark and dismal. We were pleased to have our down jackets during the day and our double sleeping bags as we slept on inflatable beds on the floor. It was hard to believe that it had once had an efficient heating stove and acetylene lighting and 15 busy men preparing their equipment.

Our task was to build a new hut for visiting scientists to protect the historic structure. Using prefabricated panels and techniques developed for Scott Base, we worked steadily for three days in the cold, retreating occasionally to the historic haven for hot soup or cocoa with a welcome slug of Navy rum. Once complete with bunks, heating, and basic amenities, the new hut was heavenly – though another blizzard delayed our departure for several days.

Having secured Shackleton's hut, we made an exhilarating six-hour run back to Scott Base with our willing dogs, feeling pleased with a job well done.

I was very pleased when the Antarctic Heritage Trust was established to conserve the historic huts and sites. In my time on the Ice, we took the history very much for granted – some members were still alive – and it is nice to know that it now gets the respect it deserves. I have been happy to contribute.

## Thank You

to our new Antarctic Explorer Members:

**Gold** Duncan Coutts (NZ)

If you love the Trust's work and want to make a gift to continue the legacy of exploration visit [nzaht.org](https://nzaht.org).