

Inspiring Explorers' Epic Expedition



Crossing the Greenland ice cap. © Keith Parsons

They battled hurricane conditions, heavy snowfalls and illness, but the six-person Antarctic Heritage Trust Inspiring Explorers' Expedition reached the finish line of their 560-kilometre crossing of the Greenland ice cap almost a month after they set off. They made the journey on skis while pulling 60-kilogram supply sleds behind them.

Antarctic Heritage Trust selected four young explorers for the expedition from a pool of nearly 200 applicants. Two Kiwis; Brando Yelavich (24) and Hollie Woodhouse (33) and two Australians; Bridget Kruger (30) and Keith Parsons (28), were joined by Executive Director Nigel Watson and Ousland Polar Exploration master polar guide Bengt Rotmo.

The team left the west coast of Greenland on May 4 and arrived in the small village of Tasiilaq (on Greenland's east coast) on Saturday, 2 June.

The crossing is the Trust's third Inspiring Explorers' Expedition and proved to be the most challenging yet.

Nigel Watson says the team's final day saw them ski for 21 hours.

"We set off at 10.00am. A possible polar bear sighting had us on edge, but it turned

out to be an illusion! We continued to ski and eventually saw mountains – there was great excitement after seeing nothing but a flat, white horizon for weeks. We stopped for a hot meal at 1.00am before reaching the end of our journey at 7.00am – there were hugs and tears of relief."

The expedition honoured Fridtjof Nansen, the renowned polar explorer and humanitarian, who completed the first crossing of Greenland 130 years ago in 1888.

Keith, who was in charge of filming content on the expedition said, "It was special for me to have Nansen's story as the backbone for the trip. The sheer audacity of what he did 130 years ago, to get a bunch of capable people together, put two dots on the map and say "we're going between them" without regard for his or others' lives, was astonishing. During the expedition I often reflected on what it would have been like for Nansen's team, who hunted fresh food across the ice cap and slept in reindeer skins. In contrast, we ate our freeze-dried food while wearing the best gear money could buy."

New Zealand outdoors company Kathmandu sponsored the expedition with the team road testing their new XT Series, designed for extreme environments.

The expedition was hugely challenging for all team members both physically and mentally. Hollie Woodhouse had never been in a polar environment, and wasn't sure what to expect. She says she was "totally out of my comfort zone, but I've come out stronger because of it." Hollie notes that

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Bridget, Hollie, Brando, Keith and Executive Director Nigel Watson after their month long crossing of the Greenland ice cap. © Keith Parsons

Inspiring Explorers' Epic Expedition *continued*

"It is rare in today's world for people to be able to extract themselves from their everyday lives and focus and challenge themselves in this way." Nigel Watson

apart from a selection weekend earlier in the year, "we were a team of strangers who were put in a hostile environment and had to rely on each other. Early on, I knew I was with an amazing group of people whom I could trust and who would have my back." Her advice to others is to never give up. "Having the courage to do that first scary step or do that thing you have dreamed about can lead to a whole lot of new adventures."

One mental challenge the team faced was a lack of external stimulus for 29 days, travelling through a vast white landscape that seemed endless. Brando Yelavich says, "The various landmarks, including a massive old radar station at the halfway point, were the only things we could hold on to as a goal to reach. It was quite tough on my brain as I have ADHD and need a lot of stimulation with physical things. Some days being on the ice was like looking at a blank canvas but having no inspiration to paint."

In the last 21 hours of the expedition everyone agreed it was awe-inspiring as

the east coast of Greenland was in sight. Bridget Kruger describes the final descent: "It was a magical, fantasy-like day. We started to see mountains emerge out of the vast whiteness around us – the first real thing we had seen in 27 days. As the mountains grew into view, we skied closer to the sea and were finally going downhill. It was a lot of fun. As the day grew into night, the sun set over four or five hours, blanketing us in this stunning light that sparkled off the snow. The moon was rising, a huge, gorgeous fiery orb. The scene looked like we were skiing down on this sea of clouds to meet the moon. It was the most beautiful evening of my life, and the images will be forever imprinted on my memory."

The team are now delivering outreach programmes supported by the Trust, with the aim of sharing their experiences, and encouraging others to get out and explore.

Nigel says that will be the most important part of the expedition. "The reason the

Trust undertakes these expeditions is to encourage people to get out and explore the amazing world we live in. By sharing their story, the team has the opportunity to inspire someone else to do something they never have before – an experience that could be life changing."

Thank You

The Trust would like to acknowledge expedition sponsor Kathmandu and expedition partner Ousland Polar Exploration for helping make the trip possible. Thanks also to Lumix, Rode and GoProNZ for the use of camera gear and equipment.

Visit inspiringexplorers.com for the fully story and photos/video.

© Keith Parsons

Alumni Programme Launched

Isobel Ewing during crevasse training. © Simon Lucas

We are delighted to launch our Alumni Programme. Celebrating our 30th anniversary last year we reflected on the incredible people that have helped care for the early explorer bases in Antarctica and shared the Trust's stories to engage the next generation with the spirit of exploration. The Alumni Programme connects nearly 100 past staff, conservators, Antarctic Youth Ambassadors, Inspiring Explorers and volunteers. If you have worked for the Trust and haven't heard from us please do get in contact as we are in the process of updating our records. We have a dedicated private Facebook group and new LinkedIn page and welcome you to join us online there and to receive regular communication updates from the Trust.

Alumni News

Congratulations to Isobel Ewing (Inspiring Explorer 2017) for winning the Environmental/Sustainability Award at the 2018 Voyager Media Awards.

A huge congratulations to Dr David Harrowfield (the Trust's first Executive Director) who has had a hill in the Antarctic named after him! 'Harrowfield Hill' is situated on Inexpressible Island, near the site where Scott's Northern Party were forced to winter in 1912 after their ship *Terra Nova* was unable to reach them due to heavy pack ice.



© Dr David Harrowfield



Please email info@nzaht.org to update your details and receive an alumni welcome pack.

Conserving Stonington Stories



The abandoned 'Base E'. © Lizzie Meek

"Like seeing Antarctica for the first time" is how Lizzie Meek (Programme Manager – Artefacts) described her experience at Stonington Island on the Antarctic Peninsula.

In partnership with our sister trust UKAHT, AHT staff worked as part of a 10 week programme to survey the buildings and artefacts left on Stonington Island. Changing places with Trust Programme Manager Al Fastier part way through the season, Lizzie spent six weeks in tent accommodation, cataloguing, photographing and labelling just over 6,000 artefacts.

Like some other historic sites the UKAHT manages on the Antarctic Peninsula, Base 'E' was deliberately abandoned, meaning that only a few emergency supplies were left behind. With fewer site visits and alterations than the Ross Island huts, the layers of history are simpler and easier to understand at Stonington.

The logistics to reach Stonington are challenging however, and rely on the goodwill and strong relationships UKAHT has built up with the IAATO tour ship companies, and The Royal Navy. It takes a week by ship from either South America or the Falklands, and then good luck with the sea ice conditions to be able to make a landing on the island, and offload enough equipment to supply a six-person team for 10 weeks.

Stonington itself is a very active site, with a constantly calving glacier in the adjacent bay, and the shingle beaches occupied by Weddell, fur, crab-eater and leopard seals. Constant and noisy companions are the nesting Antarctic terns and skua, and later in the season a small collection of moulting Adeline penguins sheltered amongst the rock outcrops.

Trust Executive Director Nigel Watson says, "The Trust is delighted to share its extensive knowledge with UKAHT around cold-climate conservation based on our experience of conserving the early explorer bases at Ross Island and the 20,000+ artefacts they left behind. Over many years, conservators working on the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project have developed innovative and detailed methodologies for treating artefacts from the world's most extreme environment."

The survey revealed that the bulk of items to be conserved at Stonington are food tins and parts relating to the Lister generator set (that provided electricity for the base). Conditions on the island are challenging for artefacts, being wetter and saltier than Ross Island. The buildings get drenched in salt spray, which is picked up and hurled horizontally across the island by the infamous 'Fumigator' katabatic wind. The



Lizzie working on the artefact survey. © Lizzie Meek

wind whirls down the glacier from the top of the peninsula at speeds of 150kph.

Although many things (tents, limited food, cold toes, snow and rusty tins) were similar to working at the Ross Island huts, there are some noticeable differences, including diverse wildlife, higher tourist numbers, and more modern materials involved.

Overall it offered Lizzie a fresh perspective on Antarctica. She says, "An incredible environment and history, challenging logistics and conservation issues, plus working with a team and organisation who share our passion for preserving historic Antarctic sites - it doesn't get much better!"

Governance

We farewell Professor Sir David Skegg who stepped down as representative of the Royal Society of New Zealand taking effect on 30 June 2018. We thank him for his six years of service. We welcome Professor Richard Bedford who will represent the Royal Society of New Zealand from 1 July 2018.

Antarctic Conservation Update



Antarctic Youth Ambassador (2017) Chris Ansin digging out snow at Cape Royds as part of the regular maintenance programme. © AHT

Alongside the annual monitoring and maintenance programme, a focus for the team this season will be on finishing the conservation of the artefacts from Butter Point and Inexpressible Island. The artefacts are from a range relating to sledging expeditions, including a sled, tools, Nansen cooker and boxes of provisions.

Subject to obtaining logistical support, seven heritage specialists will be based at

Cape Adare from late January to undertake Year 2 of the Cape Adare Conservation Programme. This site is historically significant as this is where Borchgrevink's Hut was erected by the first expedition team to land on the continent, making the hut Antarctica's first building. A field camp was successfully installed at Cape Adare earlier this year by Antarctica New Zealand with support from the Chinese National

Antarctic Programme. The team now look forward to beginning the building conservation work, which is expected to take a couple of seasons to complete.

Trust staff will continue to support UKAHT in Year 2 of their long term conservation programme, surveying historic huts on the Antarctic Peninsula.



A Cool Change for Adventurous Drop

Long time Trust supporter Allan Scott Wines are delighted to reveal a new look for their Scott Base wine. Although the Scott Base vineyard in Central Otago was named in honour of treasured Scott family holiday memories, the serendipitous link to Sir Ed's legacy in Antarctica has become a key touchstone as the vineyard continues its partnership with Antarctic Heritage Trust. A percentage of all sales of their premium product are donated to the Trust. Their Cromwell vineyard offers wines made only in small quantities, carefully crafted to give full expression to their regional characters. With absolute focus on harvesting only the best fruit by hand, the wine has a velvety depth and intensity unique to the Scott Base range. The new-look Scott Base Pinot Noir, Pinot Noir Reserve and Chardonnay will be on sale in July at fine wine retailers across New Zealand, online (www.allanscott.com) or - if you're up for an adventure - straight from the cellar door. The Trust gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support.

Manage Your Data

Following recent changes in data management regulations we wish to remind you that you are welcome to update your data and communication preferences at any time. We will not share your data with third parties and will only send you information relating to the Trust and its work.



To update your communication preferences, or have your personal information removed from the database, email info@nzaht.org or ring **+64 3 358 0212**.

PRINZ Finalists

The team was delighted to be awarded a highly-commended at the 2018 Public Relations Institute of New Zealand awards for the watercolour media campaign. In 2017 conservators discovered a 118-year old watercolour amongst the Cape Adare artefacts. Painted by Dr Edward Wilson, it generated global media interest. Thank you to Great Scott Communications for their partnership on this special project.



© AHT

Thank You

We welcome the following new member:

Bronze Brian Honeybone (NZ)

If you would like to support our work, we would welcome your donation or support as an Antarctic Explorer Club member.

More information on how to support the Trust can be found on our website.
nzaht.org