



## SCOTTISH ARCTIC CLUB

### Newsletter - Summer 2013

*President: Mike Lea,*

*Vice Presidents: John Peden and Anthony Walker*

*Secretary: Iain Allison, Treasurer: Chris Calver,*

*Committee members: Chris Bartle, Ashley Buchan, Chris Gilmore,*

*David Shaw and Fraser Sutherland*

[www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk](http://www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk)

*New members are welcome: the Club is for people of all ages and nationalities who have an interest in the Arctic, particularly if they have already been, or are planning to travel there. See the web site for an application form.*

### 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gathering and Supper

**15th to 17th November 2013**

**The Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William**

**Phone number 01397 702331.**

[salesbennevis@strathmorehotels.com](mailto:salesbennevis@strathmorehotels.com)

The Gathering and Supper will be held on Saturday 16 November, though members are also invited to an informal get-together on Friday evening. The hotel has reserved rooms for us for 45 people on the Friday night and 80 on the Saturday night. Please book early.

**Accommodation and Supper Costs for Hotel Residents:** The cost of Dinner, Bed and Breakfast for both Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November is £35 per person per night sharing a twin/double room. For bed and breakfast only on Friday night the price is £30 per person sharing a twin/double room. For singles there is an additional single supplement of £10 per person per night. Please note that the price for Saturday night includes the cost of the Supper for hotel residents.

**All this should be paid direct to the hotel by the individuals.**

**Supper Costs for those not staying in the Hotel:** If you are attending the Supper but not staying at the hotel, the price of the Supper will be £19 per person.

**This should be paid to the SAC using the booking form to be circulated in October.**

**The Gathering**, with talks and presentations, will be held on Saturday afternoon from 2-5 pm, followed by the AGM. For this there will be a charge of £10 person, to include tea/coffee/biscuits, conference costs and the costs of our guests.

**This should be paid to the SAC using the booking form to be circulated in October.**

**Subscriptions:** The subscription year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August. All members should pay their subscriptions **to the SAC using the booking & subscription form to be circulated in October** whether you are attending the Gathering or not.

For alternative accommodation over the Supper weekend, see [www.visit-fortwilliam.co.uk](http://www.visit-fortwilliam.co.uk)

Meantime **BOOK DATES** in your diaries and  
**RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM.**

#### Note from the Secretary

The next **Newsletter** should be with you in October along with the subscription renewal notice and booking form for the Gathering. Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome - short book reviews, news items, interesting web sites etc.

**Club email address - [sacsecretaryia@gmail.com](mailto:sacsecretaryia@gmail.com)**

## 2013 SPRING MEET – Attadale

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013

We enjoyed another spring meeting at Attadale with a total of 21 members and friends staying for varying lengths of time. As usual the gardens were looking lovely in spite of the long cold winter. The weather was variable but did not stop the group for making the most of it and exploring Applecross, Torricon, Skye and Strathcarron. Again there were 4 kayakers who tackled various parts of the coast and some of the lochs and are already making plans for next year! The hill walking was mostly at lower levels since the weather on the tops was not very good with blizzards and very strong winds. However on the penultimate day four of the group made it to the snowy summit of Beinn Bhan and enjoyed magnificent 360° views and huge cornices. As usual we had two communal meals - venison stew cooked by John and an array of salmon and seafood dishes as well as delicious cakes, puddings and a range of cheeses, all provided by the members of the group.

**Kathleen Cartwright**

We plan to return to Attadale in 2014 and have booked the cottages for the week of 10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May. More information later - please contact: Mike Lea: 017683 42353, [MikeJLea@gmail.com](mailto:MikeJLea@gmail.com).



## SAC Expedition Awards 2013

This year, through the generosity of members, we made a record number of Expedition Awards to fourteen young people and one school. We were also able to increase the total sum from £2000 to £3000. Half of the individual grants were to those going on the British Exploring Society's (formerly BSES) expedition to Arctic Norway. The awardees were:

- Anna Bidgood, independent expedition, University of Oxford, Igaliku, Greenland.
- Ronan Dugan, research on grouse, Pinega State Nature Reserve, NW Russia.
- Mairi Gilmour, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway.
- Rosie Houlding, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway.
- Andrea Ingram, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway.
- Edward Lavender, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway.
- Christine Lockwood, SAMS (Dunstaffnage)-UNIS (Longyearbyen) student exchange..
- Katie Lumsdaine, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway.
- Alexandra Messerli, research on Svartisen ice cap, Northern Norway.
- Esme Moore, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway
- Craig Mushet, BES participant, Arctic Finnmark Expedition, Northern Norway
- Jenny Newall, Arctic skills training, Svalbard with Northern Exposure.
- Sylvan Rackham, sailing expedition, Scotland to Longyearbyen, Gordonstoun School
- Fortrose Academy, 13 pupils + 3 staff, expedition to Ammassalik, East Greenland.

Subsequently, one grant of £200 was returned as the applicant was no longer going on the BES expedition.

Hear all about their adventures at the Annual Gathering in Fort William on Saturday 16 Nov.

## Northern Exposure



One of our young members, and former grant recipient, Jenny Newall, is part of the team that has established an Arctic experience and Polar skills course based in Svalbard called Northern Exposure. Northern Exposure is a not-for-profit organisation that runs small, friendly expeditions, of short duration, to Svalbard giving clients a taste of the wonderful Arctic environment and teaching polar skills, survival and medicine tailored to the clients' ambitions. This spring Northern Exposure successfully ran their first course. The two week expedition combined elements of exploration and adventure, mountaineering and polar survival skills, and Arctic medicine and expedition first aid.

On 26<sup>th</sup> March we left for Longyearbyen with 18 clients, ages ranged from 18 to 50+ with a full range of experience. Before the end of the first day you would never have guessed that everyone had only just met ... there was a brilliant atmosphere of awe and excitement. Over the two weeks, activities included day walks up onto the plateau

including a few summits, exploring numerous ice caves – we even slept in one of them, Nordic skiing, ski mobile safari, husky dog sledging, igloo building and much more. As well as this we ran a variety of skills workshops, from avalanche awareness and dealing with cold injuries to crevasse rescue systems and the ice axe arrest. The evenings were very social with communal dinner and drinks, often heading to one of the bars in town.

The trip was a great success with wonderful feedback from all the clients! We are looking forward to running it again next spring and would love to see some SAC faces. To find out more about Northern Exposure expeditions please visit [www.ne-expeditions.co.uk](http://www.ne-expeditions.co.uk)

Jenny joined the Club in 2011 after her first taste of the Arctic as a YE on the BSES Expedition to Svalbard that summer. For Jenny this was a life changing experience and has led to her embarking on many exciting ventures whilst studying for a degree in Earth Science at the University of Glasgow. This year Jenny was awarded a grant from the SAC to help towards the costs of getting to Svalbard, enabling her to help in the running of Northern Exposure – she had played an instrumental role in establishing Northern Exposure and organising this expedition. Jenny and the team behind Northern Exposure remained in Longyearbyen after the clients returned to the UK to fit in four days of training in preparation for an expedition to Antarctica that they have planned for 2015. Watch this space for more information on that expedition.

**Jenny Newall**

## Jean Downie 1931 - 2013

Jean Downie died on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013 shortly after her 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday. She was a member of the Club for 40 years joining with her husband George soon after the Club was founded. Together, Jean and George, were regulars at the Annual Gatherings. Following George's involvement with BSES (now British Exploring) in the early 70's Jean was a leader on their first co-educational expedition to Norway. They were together as leaders on a number of BSES expeditions until her role as deputy head of an Aberdeen school meant that she could not be away on expedition when the schools started back. Jean and George's cheerful presence has been absent from the past couple of Annual Gatherings. Jean will be sadly missed and to George, her husband of 55 years, we send our deepest sympathy.

### Book Review:

**Science on Ice, Four Polar Expeditions, by Chris Linder,**  
The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London: 2011.

This is a fascinating book; the A4 landscape format lends itself to panoramic illustrations and wide angle lens shots. Unashamedly a picture book and a teaching book combined, it shows scientists undertaking research as well as the environment in which they do this. It is superbly illustrated with useful and descriptive captions. The book covers three Arctic expeditions plus an Antarctic one in which Chris Linder, scientist turned photographer and education specialist, who works for the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (founded 1930) of Cape Cod, USA, tells the stories in pictures, whilst text is added by four different reporters, Hugh Powell, Helen Fields, Lonny Lippsett and Amy Nevala. There is an introduction by Mr Linder and, at the end of the book, short information pages, Photo Notes, Acknowledgements and Contributors.

The American National Science Foundation created a special funding ability to educate the (American) public and, as it was done by websites, anybody with a web connection could follow the daily photos and essays. As the education seems primarily aimed at schools, probably with the hope of catching the imagination of young future scientists, some of the scientific descriptions are greatly simplified and thus the text can be dry although every attempt is made to make problems, and their (sometimes) successful outcomes, exciting; in particular remote probes surfacing from 2 miles beneath the sea only to be nearly lost in pack ice.

I did find the mixing of imperial and metric units, occasionally within a sentence, rather off-putting especially as I had just (gotten?) become used to the American spelling of meters. However this aside the book is remarkable for its depiction of real people with dedicated focus on scientific research over long periods of time adding significantly to mankind's knowledge the planet. How they got NASA funding for one project, is interesting: study of volcanic vents deep in the ocean trenches and life associated with them may have something to offer when Jupiter's moon Europa is re-visited to check its ice covered oceans for signs of life.

The expeditions, which took place during the fourth International Polar Year 2007/8 are as follows:-  
Adélie Penguins: Life at the edge of Possibility  
Searching for Spring in the Bering Sea  
Exploring the Arctic Sea Floor  
Greenland's Glacial Lakes

*Adélie Penguins: Life at the edge of Possibility* study by David Ainley and Jean Pennycook has been continuing at Cape Royds (the location of Shackleton's hut) and three other sites since 1996 and can be followed at [www.penguinscience.com](http://www.penguinscience.com). This chapter has a great many superb penguin shots plus some of their predators, south polar skuas and leopard seals, and it tells you how people are introduced to the Antarctic and suitable behaviour at McMurdo Sound. The science is discovering how the birds are adjusting (or not) to rapid climate change using embedded microchips, satellite tags and automatic weighing stations.

The longest of the chapters, it contains a good deal of detail about the only land living bird on Antarctica to go with the magical photos.



*Searching for the Spring in the Bering Sea* is a bit more challenging to make, interesting to those outside the scientific community. It touches on the the deployment of US coastguards for only 3 years Arctic duty - somebody has to get the scientists there and keep them fed. I found it the least successful of the chapters from the point of view of text. However if we are to understand how the food chain really works in such a productive ecosystem as the Bering Sea, there is a lot of data to be collected and analysed, which takes time and perseverance, and it might not be that exciting. This is honesty. The photos and captions again are superb and give much about the operation of the icebreaker *Healy* as well as documenting the minute wildlife, typically krill and copepods.

*Exploring the Arctic Seafloor*, as mentioned previously, had some input from NASA, and studied the Gekkel Ridge (yes it does briefly tell you who Gekkel was) under the ice between Greenland and Siberia. A very successful voyage on the Swedish icebreaker *Oden*, (operating on the different principle to *Healy* of rising over the ice breaking through from above ) sent specially made robots several miles down to observe vents and proved that volcanic explosions do occur at these great water pressures. The recovery process, a bit like a good chase, is well written and conveys the excitement of the scientists awaiting to process the data and samples gathered by the robots, which did indeed reveal microbes new to science.

*Greenland's Glacial Lakes* is an account of an expedition by Sarah Das, Mark Benn and Ian Joughin, the first people to actually experience, at fairly close quarters, one of the glacial lakes draining very quickly. An article published the journal *Science* of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 mentions an event in 2005 monitored by the scientist's equipment where a glacial lake covering 2.2 sq. miles and containing 11.6 billion gallons of water emptied in 24 hours, pushing the ice up 3ft when the water hit the rock bed below. This time they were there when it happened! So the text and the photos blend well to prove that the emptying of the lakes does have a lubricant effect on the ice cap and glaciers in particular, and that the lakes can empty by the weight of water splitting the ice. And they released harmless fluorescent dye into a whirlpool to try and discover where such water might go ... but despite another team being equipped to detect dye at 1 part in a trillion at the end of the glacier, no trace was found - the science and discovery must continue.

This book is remarkable in that it provides the view from inside the scientific community and it should be in any library where questioning and interest in climate change is important, or the understanding of the fragility of our planet's ecosystems. It should also be in any art library as many of the pictures could inspire further brilliant photography, painting or communication.

**Chris Calver**

#### **Film review:**

#### ***Chasing Ice*,**

a film about the disappearing glaciers in the northern hemisphere.

James Balog was sceptical about climate change until he started to see the retreat of glaciers. Through his Extreme Ice Project he documented them using time-lapse photography over years and was able to portray visually the retreat of valley glaciers in Iceland, West Greenland and Alaska. The resulting film of an hour and a quarter duration shows how he achieved this and the results , through an initial year of disappointment, and it includes dramatic footage of the calving of a large iceberg. The DVD copy includes a further hour of extras.

The film was screened in Glasgow by The Clipperton Project on a small canal barge, The Floating Laboratory, at the British Waterway's headquarters at Port Dundas. It was introduced by artist/explorer, Sybren Renema, who then led a discussion after the film. "The Clipperton Project is a multidisciplinary initiative that uses notions of exploration, journey and discovery to inspire and empower members of the public to interact with diverse perspectives, peoples and disciplines, in order that we might all come to more positively and progressively address some of the greatest issues of our day." (From their website at [www.clippertonproject.com](http://www.clippertonproject.com)). The Floating Laboratory is touring Scotland's canals this summer.

**Iain Allison**

## New book

Iceland's northerly point is some 3 km south of the Arctic Circle and the other measure of the Arctic, the 10° C isotherm encloses most of the island, so we feel justified in including a flyer for this new book in our **Newsletter**. It is attached to the email or included in the mail version.

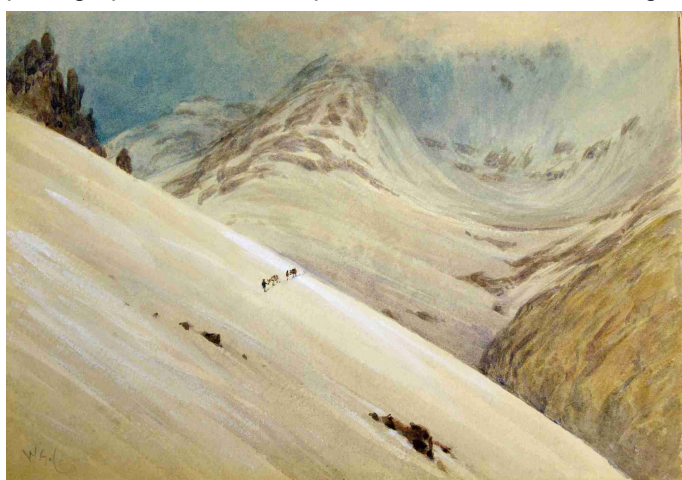
### W.G Collingwood's Letters from Iceland

**Travels in Iceland 1897 by W.G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson**

**Edited by Mike and Kate Lea**

R.G. Collingwood Society (2013). Crown Quarto 234 x 189 mm, 150 pages, Softback,  
Some 200 illustrations, many in full colour. ISBN 978-0-9546740-1-4

William Gershom Collingwood (1854-1932) was an artist, author, antiquarian, and notable scholar of Norse history, literature and language. For 12 weeks in 1897, he sailed to Iceland and travelled by pony round the saga-sites of Iceland with his friend Jón Stefánsson, an Icelandic scholar. He wrote long, detailed and entertaining letters home to his wife and children about their adventures and experiences while making some 300 sketches and watercolours. Collingwood also found time to excavate some of the saga-sites and take photographs with his new portable Kodak camera using early roll film.



This lavishly illustrated book brings together W.G. Collingwood's letters, manuscripts, paintings, drawings, photographs (many scanned from recently discovered 1897 negatives), and maps of 19<sup>th</sup> century Iceland. There are some 200 illustrations, many in full colour and previously unpublished, mostly from Abbot Hall in Kendal and the R.G. Collingwood Society at Cardiff University, and also some from Iceland and Denmark. The book contains introductions by two of his granddaughters, Janet GROSSPELIUS and Teresa Smith, plus additional notes, articles, illustrations and poems. Together, this material provides a fascinating and unique record of the people and the landscape of Iceland and the saga-sites in that era.

Collingwood is linked to many famous people and eminent societies. He was John Ruskin's secretary and biographer, an early member and President of the Viking Club (now the Viking Society for Northern Research), Editor and later President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (CWAAS) and he founded the Lake Artists Society. His son was the world-famous philosopher and historian R.G. Collingwood and the children of his daughter Dora were role models in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* children's books.

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**Orders to:** The R.G. Collingwood Society, Collingwood and British Idealism Centre,  
Cardiff School of European Languages, Translation and Politics, Cardiff University,  
65-68 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3AS, UK.

Tel: 029 2087 4885 E-mail: [collingwoodsociety@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:collingwoodsociety@cardiff.ac.uk)

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(Cheques payable to M.J. Lea) Tel: 017683 42353 E-mail: [mikejlea@gmail.com](mailto:mikejlea@gmail.com)

**Advance notice: ICEMAN:** the world's toughest Arctic Ski Race takes place in NE Greenland, 13-25<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Details on the Tangent Expeditions' website: [www.tangent-expeditions.co.uk](http://www.tangent-expeditions.co.uk)

## **Exploitation of the Arctic**

### **Greenpeace's protest in London**

"Since the six of us climbed the Shard, many people have asked: how did we do it? How much training did it take? How did we go to the toilet?"

### **[Now I can show you. Watch the behind-the-scenes film of our climb.](#)**

It captures the planning, training and (I'm not afraid to admit it) nerves, but also the determination all of us felt. There's nothing about going to the toilet though. We kept that out for modesty's sake! I was overwhelmed by the support we got during the climb, but it's going to take much more than six women climbing a skyscraper to stop Shell. We know that in order to keep the Arctic out of the hands of Shell, we need to build the biggest movement of people the world has ever seen - and you are part of that.

I need your to help inspire others to join the movement. **[By sharing this video and telling others why you felt inspired to join, you can make it bigger and stronger.](#)**

Like climbing the Shard, saving the Arctic is going to be an immense struggle. It will take every bit of strength and dedication we have, and we will be exhausted by the end. But when we win - and we will win - we will have achieved something incredible.

Thanks for being part of the movement.

PS We don't have the slick, multi-million dollar PR machine that Shell has. But we have something I think is far more powerful: you and more than 3 million of the most dedicated activists on the planet. It's time to show Shell that people mean more than money."

If the links above do not work, then the 4-minute video is accessible from [www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

Club secretary: Dr Iain Allison  
Club email address - [sacsecretaryia@gmail.com](mailto:sacsecretaryia@gmail.com)  
Web site: [www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk](http://www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk)