



SCOTTISH ARCTIC CLUB

*To Encourage Adventurous Endeavour and Interest in
the Science, Culture and Protection of the Arctic*



NEWSLETTER October 2025

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ANNUAL GATHERING & SUPPER

31 October – 2 November 2024

Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William

DETAILS INSIDE

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Articles sought:

Members' expedition reports old & new
Items of Arctic interest, etc.

Deadline 15 January 2026

President: Noel Williams Vice President: Anthony Walker
Secretary: Jinty Smart Treasurer: Mandy Peden
Membership Secretary: Jane Craxton Gathering Secretary: Bethany Carol
Other Committee Members: Mike Bauermeister, Louise Hollinrake, Hannah Mortlock,
Henry Lodge, Anne Bartle, Tuppence Mellish (co-opted)

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 website for an application form.

www.arcticclub.scot

Contacts:

Club Secretary: jintysmart@btopenworld.com

Newsletter editor: James Fenton

We are always on the lookout for articles: please send them to james@fenton.scot

ANNUAL GATHERING & SUPPER

31 October - 2 November 2025

This year's Supper will take place at the Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William on the weekend of 31st October-2nd November 2025.

There will be an informal get-together for a bar meal in the hotel on the Friday evening.

Presentations and the AGM will take place on Saturday, with a formal dinner in the evening.

Sunday is free for members to make their own arrangement for any local walks.

The Hotel has offered us the following rates: £50 per person per night for B&B, with an additional £20 per room for single occupancy. They will provide a bar meal in the restaurant for our party on the Friday night. The Dinner on the Saturday evening will be £27.95.

Please contact the hotel to make a booking, and ask for a confirmatory email. Payment is to be paid direct to the hotel when there.

*In order to get this special rate for SAC members, quote **ARCTIC25** to the hotel when making the booking.*

Enquiries and Reservations:

salesbennevis@strathmorehotels.com

Phone Number **01397 702331**

If there are problems try the Events Manager:

bennevisevents@strathmorehotels.com

If attending, please fill in the booking-form sent out with this newsletter.

Please also bring to the Gathering a contribution for the raffle.

PROGRAMME

Friday 31 October

7.30pm Informal get together & bar meal

Saturday 1 November

2pm Expedition presentations

5.30pm SAC AGM

7pm Supper

Sunday 4 November

Informal walks arranged by members

GUEST SPEAKER

The guest speaker at the Gathering is Martin Rickhard who is going to give a talk about Gino Watkins and his time in East Greenland; and also a talk about his own sea kayaking explorations along the Blossville coast, from Scoresbysund to Tasiilaq.



'ALL GOOD THINGS...'

End of an era at Attadale

Kathleen Cartwright

After 15 years of organising a spring week for SAC members at the cottages at Attadale, I am afraid I am, metaphorically speaking, "hanging up my boots"! Many members of the Club have enjoyed Attadale over the years and numbers have varied from 25 spread over a week to this year's figure of 11 (with the average age of 86!) It has been an ideal location close to the gardens at Attadale House and situated at the end of a valley with a path which leads up into the hills and lochs. Skye, Torridon, Applecross, etc are near, with the local, "award winning" Spar shop in Lochcarron an added attraction! The cottages are very comfortable and the Macphersons have been very friendly and kind to us.

The timing of our visits at the end of April/beginning of May has meant that we have minimised our exposure to the West Coast Midges – and also the NC500 crowds! We did slightly misjudge the midges when we had to move the date to September during the year of Covid and, although Pat Duchart had brought her gazebo, we





forgot about the fact that, when we were in it and it became warmer, the midges hiding in the grass took over!

Our activities over the years have included Munro bagging, hill climbing, long distance walking, kayaking, canoeing, checking out the local cafes and tearooms and just relaxing and enjoying each others' company, with at least two communal meals a week around a big table in Strathan House. We have celebrated a Coronation and a Diamond Jubilee with prosecco, canapes and cake, and many have provided puddings, starters, canapes, salads, sea food, wine and whisky and, thanks to John Hay, we have always managed a venison stew or roast.

Prior to Attadale, we spent many meets at Inchnadamp Lodge with its range of accommodation and access to wonderful country for outdoor activities. However due

to its attraction to many geological groups, it became difficult to find a suitable weekend for our group. We then moved to Attadale.

The start of these meetings goes a long way back. (I am sure there must be records somewhere in the Club's archives). Mainly they took place at the weekend nearest to the Summer Solstice and involved either camping or the use of various bothies, SMC and LSCC huts, youth hostels, etc. "Walking in" was encouraged e.g. to Steall Hut in Upper Glen Nevis and the youth hostel at Loch Ossian. It would be interesting to check if there are any records of these.

I am sorry to be "retiring" but if there is anyone else who would like to take over, I should be delighted to pass on the information required.

Ray Woolmore: Photographer and Artist

Jane Craxton

We are delighted to accept Ray Woolmore's donation of his photograph albums recording his journeys to the Arctic. Members will have a chance to see them at the Gathering and for some, they will no doubt bring back memories of happy times.

Ray Woolmore participated in many expeditions to the High Arctic, particularly North-East Greenland. His fourteen photograph albums record his journeys between 1991 and 2008. As a photographer he worked in black and white and colour, making images of the land, the mountains, the sea and the wildlife. As an

artist he drew and sketched on the spot as well as using his photographs as inspiration.

Kathleen Cartwright, one of the organisers of these expeditions, writes:

"Ray was a very loyal traveller with us and loved in particular North-East Greenland. He was a keen photographer and tried to complete a drawing every day and covered a wide range of subjects. He was also a very good amateur archaeologist and made meticulous detailed drawings and maps of the various Inuit artefacts that we came across on our treks, including winter houses, tent rings, burial sites, caches, and children's playhouses. When Jean Stenico joined the trips the pair of them spent many hours

measuring and photographing, and after the trip would put together detailed accounts of what they had seen and I would send them off to the Danish Polar Centre in Copenhagen and the Museum, in Nuuk. They were greatly appreciated since many of the finds were original and hence added to the knowledge of the history of the area.

“He was a very interesting, loyal and uncomplaining travelling companion and we have kept up our friendship over many years.”

Ray’s albums contain mostly large prints of size 8”x 6” or above, printed on Fuji archival quality paper and mounted on pages with interleaving in albums size 10” x 13” approx. The photographs are carefully captioned with their location or other information as appropriate in pencil. They usually include a few shots of expedition

members, their transport, and their camp sites. Each album has a title page with the destination of the expedition and its date.

Several albums have an inserted folder at the end holding maps, some laminated sketches and sometimes a few miscellaneous extra photographs. Ray’s reputation as an artist is such that two hundred of the original sketches are held in the Scott Polar Research Institute archive and can be referenced on-line.

No longer in good health, Ray feels that the time has come to ensure that others benefit from his experiences and enjoy his work. We are most grateful for his generosity.

The albums cover the expeditions listed below.

1) Traill Islands 1991

A Photographic Miscellany

2) Arctic Riviera in Camera July 1993

An ‘unexpected’ expedition to Schuchert Dal

3) Pingo Pass July 1996

An expedition to North-East Greenland

4) North-East Greenland July-August 1997

Third Time Lucky or Milne Land and Bear Island

5) North-East Greenland July-August 1998

Syd Kap and Gurreholm

6) North-East Greenland July-August 1999

Revet and Clavering Island

7) North-East Greenland July-August 2000

Ymers Island

8) North-East Greenland August 2001

Return to Myggbukta

9) North-East Greenland July-August 2002

Lindemann Fjord

10) North-East Greenland July 2003

Clavering Island and Eskimoness

11) North-East Greenland July 2004

Krumme Langsø

12) North-East Greenland July 2005

Vega Sund

13) North-East Greenland August 2006

Dove Bugt

14) North-East Greenland August 2008

Fjords of Scoresby Sound



Ray Woolmore, Dove Bugt, NE Greenland 2006



Dove Bugt, NE Greenland, 2006 b/w



The sketch inspired by the previous b/w photo of icebergs



Dove Bugt, NE Greenland, 2006 b/w



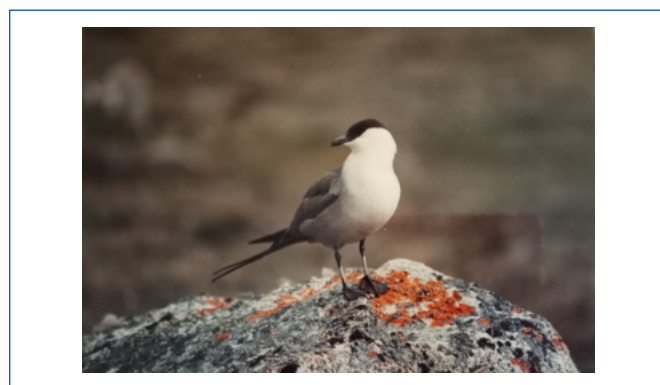
Dove Bugt, NE Greenland 2006



*Lindemann Fjord, NE Greenland, 2002
The expedition team with Kathleen Cartwright
4th from right
Ray Woolmore 5th from left*



*Lindemann Fjord, NE Greenland, 2002
Broad-leaved willow her*



*Schubert Dal, NE Greenland, 1993
Long tailed skua*

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER



Subscription to the Scottish Arctic Club fall due on 1st September. See details on last page of this newsletter.



SCOTTISH ARCTIC EXPEDITION FUND UPDATE

SC046857

Please do tell your young friends and relations (under 30 years of age) about the Scottish Arctic Expedition Fund (SAEF). The Fund provides grants for expeditions to the Arctic which are undertaken by young people.

The deadline for applications is 31 January each year. Application forms and details are on the Scottish Arctic Club website: <https://arcticclub.scot/>

Paper copies of the new Expedition Fund poster were distributed at the SAC AGM last year and have now all gone; digital versions are available on request from: scottisharcticexpeditionfund@gmail.com

New trustees sought

New trustees are welcomed for the board of the Scottish Arctic Expedition Fund. In particular, a new Treasurer and a Secretary will be needed following the AGM in 2026, when Sue Fenton stands down after ten years on the board.

Becoming a trustee involves scrutinising applications for funding at the end of January, and attending a reconciliation meeting by Zoom in mid-February, plus attendance at the AGM at the Annual Gathering in November. Trustees are elected to the board for a stint of five years, and may choose to serve a second term consequently.

Current trustees are :

Bryan Alexander (chair), *Louise Hollinrake, *Mairi Webster, *Sue Fenton, Neal Gwynne, Eve Gilmore, Mandy Peden, Dougal Ranford, Mark Evans, Stella Spratley (*ex officio*) and Jinty Smart (*ex officio*).

** denotes due to step down in 2026.*

The Secretary receives all applications, applies a ranking criteria and then forwards them to the trustees for discussion. He/she liaises with applicants during the year, ensuring that reports are received for the newsletter, as well as presentations at the Gathering. An annual report for OSCR is produced.

The Treasurer compiles annual accounts for the fund and for OSCR, receives donations and gives awards. He/she applies for Gift Aid from HMRC annually.

SAEF donations always welcome

The SAEF is largely funded by donations from Scottish Arctic Club members and donations to the fund are welcomed at any time of the year. Note that the banking details for SAEF are different to those of the SAC itself:

Sort code: 82-67-04
Account: 20011919
Bank: Virgin Money

Gift Aid forms are available on request if you have not previously filled one in and your circumstances/details have not changed.

Sue Fenton, Secretary/Treasurer | Scottish Arctic Expedition Fund | Scottish Charity SC046857



REPORTS FROM 2024 SAEF-FUNDED EXPEDITIONS

Stirling University mountaineering trip East Greenland

Dylan Coker, Benjamin Toole, Megan Cumming, Rosie Aldridge

Awarded the Myrtle and Hugh Simpson Award

Initial report

Our recent expedition to East Greenland spanned from the end of July through to late August. The outward journey took us four days, as we passed through Keflavik, Kulusuk, Tasilaq and eventually arriving at our basecamp on Rodin beach in the Sermigilaaq fjord. Once established at our sea-side base camp, we were treated to some rather Scottish weather for the first four days.

Between the clouds, we had managed to scout a potential objective with some mediocre looking rock. Once the clouds finally cleared, we began our 22-hour siege up the valley behind our camp. After five hours of approaching we reached the cliff which we had been scoping and decided on two different lines. Rosie and I headed up the right side and found ourselves on top of the pinnacle after six pitches of around VS standard climbing. Megan and Ben took the right side and found some harder ground and were eventually blocked from the summit by poor rock. After a couple of abseils, we were all back together and made the remaining four down to the glacier. Many hours later we arrived at camp for a 4am dinner and quickly headed to bed for the next two days.



The remaining two weeks of our trip were filled with a variety of weather, some poor food, a lot of reading and learning how to enjoy doing very little. In between all that, we managed to climb some other routes as well as collecting snow samples for the GAPS research we were

helping with. A less-than-ideal end to the trip was discovering that a local fisherman (or a very crafty fox) had taken two of our ropes from camp while we were out. After an unplanned 36-hour bivvy in Keflavik airport we arrived back home without seeing any polar bears but having many a story to share.

Early-Stage Continental Rifting North Qooroq, South Greenland

Andrew Edginton, St Andrews University

During this summer 2025 I had the exciting opportunity to conduct scientific research in Greenland. I spent five weeks in a small town called Narsarsuaq where my goal was to create a detailed geological map of the North Qooroq region, which will help to answer unsolved questions around the process of tectonic rifting. I also had a specific focus on looking at a diatreme, which is a volcanic feature, with the hope to find mantle rock within it which will provide further insight into the mechanics of rifting and the enrichment of rare earth elements. I worked alongside three fellow students from the University of St Andrews, under the supervision of geological experts in this area. Getting to our field area involved hiking through steep terrain up 600 m elevation from the hostel where we stayed during bad weather. During our geological mapping we camped in week-blocks before returning to the hostel to physically and mentally recover from the exhaustion that the mapping brought.

In the first two weeks we were stuck in the hostel due to a series of storms known as the Föhn winds which brought windspeeds exceeding 130mph at camp. These weather systems are driven by ice sheet dynamics and are channeled down through the fjords. In this time, I focused on preparing for field work and continued researching while waiting for conditions to improve. We

were joined by St Andrews alumni conducting geological projects with mineral exploration companies, and during short weather windows I supported their work, gaining hands-on industry experience in geology. This included drone surveying, photography, targeted sampling, and radiometric surveying, as well as assisting with helicopter-based logistical operations. The experience gave me practical skills and insights that will be highly valuable for my future career.

By the start of the third week the weather had settled so we hiked up to the field area. One of the most memorable parts of this trip was the sheer beauty of the landscape. The setting was breathtaking: the ice sheet formed a 700 m-high white horizon on three sides of our area, with two glaciers meeting at its edge. Towering, steep-sided mountains surrounded us, their valleys filled with glacial meltwater and scattered icebergs. At the start of the trip, the sun barely dipped below the horizon; it never became fully dark until around 2 a.m. But as the weeks passed, the nights slowly lengthened, and by the end of the trip darkness arrived by 11 p.m. It was only in our final week that we realised what this change had revealed: every night, we were gifted the spectacle of the Aurora Borealis. Vast shards of shimmering green light danced above us. Furthermore, whilst we were conducting our fieldwork, we were often greeted by some arctic wildlife such as the arctic fox and arctic hare which was a pleasure to witness.

In the field area, we only had each other's company, as there was no phone service and our only means of contacting the outside world was through satellite phones. After long days of work, we would gather around the food tent, cook dinner on a stove, and chat about our findings—discussing how best to piece our evidence together. Given the remoteness of Greenland, we always mapped in pairs, with each pair carrying a means to stay in contact, as well as a bear horn and flare





for safety. Every day, we checked in with the hostel owner to confirm that we were all safe. The work was exhausting: we made full use of the long daylight hours, and the uneven rocky terrain made everything more demanding. Still, I came to appreciate the simplicity of life out there. With no distractions, our focus narrowed to the geology and the conversations shared amongst ourselves.

From planning the expedition, I learned how important logistics are to successful fieldwork. Coordinating travel, equipment, safety measures, and budgeting taught me the importance of preparation and clear communication. Writing funding proposals was especially valuable, as it developed my ability to present scientific goals persuasively while balancing practical costs. These experiences strengthened my project management and problem-solving skills, which will be invaluable in both research and industry. I am very proud to say how we worked as a team to delegate each task between us. In the case of food, it meant that every day we could look forward to a full meal without worrying about running out of food.

In terms of geology, the project has been a success. I produced a more detailed map of the area than previous studies, which will form a key part of my dissertation. I am currently awaiting the return of my rock samples to St Andrews, Scotland, where I will analyse them through geochemical techniques and microscopy. These analyses will help me address the questions I developed in the field regarding the geological history of the area, with a particular focus on the diatrema, which will be the focus of my dissertation.

Overall, this expedition has been a defining experience that strengthened my passion for Arctic fieldwork and showed me how rewarding it is to work in such challenging environments. The process of planning and carrying out the project taught me resilience, adaptability, and the value of teamwork, while also giving me confidence in my ability to take on ambitious research. More than anything, it confirmed that I want to pursue future expeditions and continue developing as a geologist through hands-on work in remote and demanding settings.



Scottish Arctic Club

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Note from Jane Craxton, Membership Secretary

Please remember that the annual subscription of £10 falls due on 1 September or shortly thereafter.

Note that this year the annual subscription has increased to £10. Please remember to adjust your standing orders. Thank you for all prompt payments of subscriptions at the new rate.

It remains a modest amount but please don't forget. Payment by standing order is preferred or via BACs transfer. Bank details are shown below. Alternatively, cheques can be collected at the Gathering or mailed to the Membership Secretary; Mrs Jane Craxton, 7 Otterburn Park, EH14 1JX, tel. 07973 621168. Many thanks to members who have already arranged payment.

Bank details Scottish Arctic Club
Sort Code 80-06-18 (Bank of Scotland)
Account 00835858