

## 2.4 Chronology

### 1902

Construction of the hut began in mid-February 1902, and was completed by 8 March. Two small huts for magnetic and other observations were erected nearby (observations were begun on 1 March). A mid-winter celebration with the play 'Ticket of Leave' was performed on 25 June. A base of firebricks was built in the physical laboratory in July for gravity measurements; the main area of hut was used for preparing food and equipment for sledging parties, and the 'Minstrel Show' was performed on 6 August. Wilson erected a tent around the stove and skinned penguins, and a seismograph was placed in the laboratory in November.

### 1903

Use continues for scientific observations and other general purposes.

### 1904

A cross was erected on Hut Point to the memory of George T Vince who died 11 March 1902. The hut was abandoned on 16 February 1904 with the departure of the expedition.

### 1908–09

Hut visited and lived in on occasions by members of Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition 1907–09, and supply boxes were used to build an inner room. Attempt made to burn the magnetic hut.

### 1911–13

Hut visited and lived in on a number of occasions by members of Scott's British Antarctic Expedition 1910–13. On arrival, the interior was found to be full of ice and snow; this was removed, the inner room rebuilt and the brick blubber stove constructed by Meares and Demetri. A telephone line was laid, opening communication between Hut Point and Cape Evans. At one time, ponies were stabled in the hut; stables were made with boxes under the north and east verandahs, and there was a fire within the inner roof. A memorial cross was erected on Observation Hill to the memory of Scott, Wilson, Bowers, Oates and Evans.

*'Those fields of snow sparkling in the sun, the pack-ice and bergs and blue sea... those glorious southern mountains, rearing their heads in desolate grandeur. The movements of the pack, those small mysterious movements with the hush sound that comes across the water, and I hear also the swish of the sledge...'*

SPEECH BY SCOTT ON HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND

## 1915–16

Hut visited and lived in for extended periods in 1915 and 1916 by members of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party 1914–17 led by Mackintosh. The interior was largely filled with ice and snow; dogs were kept in the hut, and parts of it were dismantled for fuel. The hut was last occupied on the night of 15 June 1916.

## 1946–47

Hut visited by helicopter on 20 February 1947 during Operation Highjump; a sledge was removed.

## 1955–56

American tent camp set up beside the hut during the establishment of the US Naval Air Operations Facility for the start of Operation Deep Freeze; Admiral George Dufek USN declared the hut an 'historic shrine'.

## 1956–57

Dr Robert Falla undertook an inspection of hut and reported on its condition; some vandalism was noted.

## 1957–58

Crew members from HMNZS Endeavour cleared rubbish from around hut; an assessment was made by Athol Roberts at Scott Base, and a bronze plaque of the National Historic Places Trust was attached to hut. (This has since been removed.)

## 1962–63

Inspection was made by Ministry of Works architect Frank Ponder, the architect for the Scott Base buildings of 1957; further concern at vandalism and souveniring of artefacts was expressed.

## 1963–64

From 9 January to 1 February, four volunteers from the New Zealand Antarctic Society removed ice from the interior, which was built up to within 600mm of the apex of the roof; approximately 140 cubic metres of snow and ice was removed from inside the hut. Measurements were taken and measured drawings were subsequently prepared by Rodney Smith. A large number of artefacts were transferred to Scott Base, and several items were taken back to New Zealand.<sup>4</sup> Some windows were removed for repair and re-glazing in New Zealand, and the hut was covered with tarpaulins. Remnants of the magnetic huts were bulldozed away at this time, and a heavy chain was placed around the hut.

## 1964–65

The tarpaulins were removed, and the windows and artefacts replaced (although some were kept at Scott Base). A lock was fitted and a New Zealand Antarctic Society 'scroll' was attached to the outside wall. Vince's cross was twice blown over and re-erected.

## 1967–68

Tourists arrive on *Magga Dan*.

## 1969–70

The first New Zealand Antarctic Society 'hut caretakers', Peter Skellerup and Michael Orchard, begin annual maintenance programme.

## 1971–72

Three trailer-loads of scoria were placed around the hut; sections of flooring were replaced; the inner ceiling was wired up, and the blubber stove was reconstructed. A fire extinguisher was placed in the hut.

1977–78

David Harrowfield made an inventory of artefacts.

1978–79

John Oliver of the Ministry of Works carried out a building survey.

1981–82

Assessment for the Historic Sites Management Committee (RDRC) carried out and conservation problems identified.

1982–83

Roof levels surveyed and a bench mark fixed; temperature and relative humidity levels monitored from October with thermohydrograph, and Gavin Dougherty made a photographic record of the hut

1985–86

‘Category A’ artefacts removed to Christchurch, New Zealand by HSMC (RDRC).

1986–87

A building inspection was made by Ron Garrick. A panel was removed from the west end of the north verandah; supporting timbers were placed within the floor; heavy gauge copper wire was used to support the inner ceiling, and Vince’s cross was repaired by the Scott Base carpenter. Discussions were held at McMurdo Station concerning a ‘special zone’ around the Discovery hut.

1987–88

Architectural survey by Chris Cochran of Ministry of Works, and levels were taken. A meeting was held on 27 January between McMurdo and Scott Base staff.

1988–89

Sacking was attached to the inner ceiling; several roof panels were removed and inspected; repairs were undertaken to the floor, and exterior joints were sealed. A bolt was fitted to the door following unauthorised entry early in the season; bowing to outer walls was observed, and a questionnaire was circulated to visitors by David Harrowfield.

1989–90

Roger Fyfe, archaeologist, made an assessment for interpretation, security and conservation.

1990–91

Thermohydrograph was placed in the hut, and a deformation survey was carried out by surveyors.

1991–92

Data loggers installed, and Athol McCredie made a photographic record of the hut.

1992–93

Deformation survey was carried out, and David Woodings commenced a museological inventory with photographs.

1993–94

Continuation of inventory, and interpretation requirements assessed.

1994–95

Dr Neville Ritchie recommended the establishment of Ross Island Heritage Centre. Some floorboards were replaced; new boot cleaners installed, and conservation monitoring carried out.

1995–96

Artefacts for Reserve Collection’ were identified, and a start was made to remove the McMurdo Station pumping facilities in the vicinity of the hut.

## 1996–97

Repairs were made to the asbestos floor panels, and metal items were assessed for conservation by Peter Maxwell. The remainder of the McMurdo pumping facilities were removed and the site ‘landscaped’.

## 1997–98

The surviving magnetic hut panels with asbestos were wrapped and placed in the AHT container at Scott Base. Butylclad strips were placed as a skirt below the west wall; flooring repairs were carried out, and artefacts were repositioned and some were removed for the Reserve Collection. The display table was dismantled; the jute screen refitted; the inventory was checked and condition reports made for the textiles.

## 1998–99

Remedial conservation work was carried out.

## 1999–2000

Remedial conservation work and photography carried out. Starting this season, and continuing to the 2003–04 season, an assessment has been made of biological decay and non-biological deterioration of the timbers of the hut. This work has been carried out by a joint New Zealand (University of Waikato led by Professor Roberta Farrell) and United States (University of Minnesota led by Professor Robert Blanchette) team of scientists.

## 2000–2001

Further relocation of artefacts was carried out; the asbestos on the floor of the physical laboratory was coated, and condition reports were completed.

## 2001–2002

Photography for a book (Josef and Katharina Hoflehner) and a film (Jonathon Partridge, October Films London) was undertaken. HRH Princess Anne unveiled a plaque to commemorate the centenary of the National Antarctic Expedition 1901–04.

## 2002–2003

Measured drawings by JASMAX were completed (they are included in this Conservation Plan); an engineering survey, the checking of condition reports, and photography was also undertaken.



- 1 Scott, RF, *The Voyage of the Discovery*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, London, 1905, Vol I, pp 104, 105.
- 2 Scott, *ibid*, p 197.
- 3 Scott, *ibid*, pp 306, 307.
- 4 There is a complete list in *General and Architectural Report on Capt RF Scott's Hut at Hut Point, Ross Island, Antarctica*, Rodney Smith, unpublished report, 1964. A script for the play 'Tickets for Leave' and a set of hand-carved chessmen were among items taken back to New Zealand.