



The Inspiring Explorers before camping out overnight on the ice. © AHT/Alexander Hillary

Inspiring Explorers' Antarctic Expedition

“Perception shattering” was the comment about Antarctica that came in unison from this year’s team of Inspiring Explorers. The ten-member team recently returned from a two-week trip to the Antarctic Peninsula as participants in the Trust’s fourth Inspiring Explorers’ Expedition.

Whether it was the environment, wildlife or history, all the explorers agreed Antarctica was nothing like they anticipated. It was much, much more.

Antarctic Heritage Trust selected five young explorers for the expedition: accomplished photographer Alexander Hillary (Sir Edmund Hillary’s grandson); living kidney donor and freelance camera operator Leah Stewart; Wellington communications specialist and mum Rosanna Price; Christchurch learning advisor Georgina Archibald; and photographer and sound specialist Marco de Kretser. Two students Lana Kiddie-Vai and Mele Fetu’u, and a teacher, Caragh Doherty, from Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate (SEHC) were able to join the group thanks to a partnership initiative between the Trust and the Collegiate,

assisted with sponsorship from the Woolf Fisher Trust.

Trust Executive Director Nigel Watson led the trip, with Olympian kayaker Mike Dawson joining as a kayaking mentor. Supported by One Ocean Expeditions and travelling on their ship *Akademik Ioffe*, the group explored the Antarctic Peninsula in kayaks and on foot.

The trip offered young people a chance to challenge themselves, to connect with experts, and learn about the history, science, wildlife, environment and legacy of exploration in Antarctica. Connecting with the spirit of exploration in the world’s most extreme environment and learning more about the legacy the Trust’s cares for on behalf of the international community, were key priorities for the expedition.

Ahead of the trip, Nigel said Antarctica had the power to change lives and that the members of the group would come back committed to sharing their story and inspiring others to go out and explore.

It’s a sentiment that everyone echoed.

The ice was breath-taking,” said Rosanna. “I didn’t expect the magnitude of it, and how amazing the icebergs look, how blue they are. I wasn’t expecting the colours I saw.”

“The sheer scale of everything, and trying to find ways to articulate it so that you can share it in a meaningful way with others – I’m still working through that,” says Georgina. “The immensity of everything is definitely difficult to describe.”

While it was an action-packed two weeks with incredible weather conditions that favoured every adventure they planned, a highlight for the group was the opportunity to camp overnight on the ice. While everyone was excited when told about it, Georgina said, “When they started handing out the spade so we could dig out our beds, we just didn’t know what to expect.”

The team was dropped on Portal Point at Charlotte Bay with directions to head up the hill, find a good spot and dig a hole in the snow. Once the holes were dug and the bivvy bags in place, everyone jumped in their space, zipped up and settled in for the night.



Georgina and Lana celebrate a successful kayaking excursion. © AHT/Alexander Hillary

Georgina says nothing could have prepared her for the night show that followed. “There were just these most phenomenal views of the galaxy laid out above us. There was the Milky Way in sharp detail, punctured by shooting stars, and satellites. It was unreal. It was one of the best nights ever – watching the sky, breathing in the cold polar air, it was definitely a highlight for me.”

“Can you believe it,” marvelled Lana. “I even got to see the sun rise because I couldn’t go to sleep.”

Each explorer has brought home other enduring memories of their trip. For Marco a close encounter with a leopard seal that played around the zodiac was a highlight. “It came right up to me, looking me in the eye and giving me some freaky smiles.”

A decision by three of the group to kayak around Cuverville Island while others chose a shore or ship-based activity brought its own reward for Alexander, Leah and Mike. “We had an extremely close encounter with humpback whales,” says Leah. “We saw a whale in the distance and decided to sit and watch it. Suddenly a group of about eight whales was all around us. For about half an hour they played around us, coming right up to the kayaks so we could see their eyes and teeth. It was amazing.”

Mike agreed saying, “To have just your little yellow kayak between you and something so big, so raw and so much part of Antarctica was spectacular. I’ve kayaked all over the world, but this was a different experience for me.”

Sir Edmund Hillary’s grandson Alexander said, “I felt quite privileged to be standing in the same place as earlier adventurers, such as Ed. It’s a funny feeling because I felt very much like our team was our own adventure but it was nice to think that this was somewhere that Ed cherished and it’s a

kind of expedition he would have cherished as well.”

The team also spent time at Port Lockroy. Designated an Antarctic Historic Site and Monument in 1995, Port Lockroy has done duty over the last 100 years as a whaling station, British WWII base, scientific research station, and now a visitor’s centre, the first major Antarctic Peninsula building restoration that now also features a post office. “I did send myself a postcard,” laughs Leah, “but I won’t get it until November.” The site is cared for by UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. Trust staff Programme Manager Al Fastier assisted with this past season’s conservation work under the UKAHT/AHT partnership agreement.

The explorers will now focus on sharing their journey through outreach programmes supported by the Trust. It is the part of the expedition that Nigel says is the most important.

“The reason we take young people on these expeditions is so they can encourage others to get out and explore the world. It’s by sharing their stories and how they have

been inspired by the spirit of exploration that they can inspire others to go and have equally life changing experiences.”

“I learnt I can go anywhere and do anything,” said Caragh. “I learnt never to underestimate my own ability and my place in the world.”

Caragh says the first thing she did on her return was to buy a tent so that she could take her family to explore the remote parts of New Zealand, and not to stick to the tourist spots. “I learnt that you shouldn’t settle for what’s in front of you, whether it’s your lounge, your local park or your school. Get out there and push your boundaries. Explore.”


Mele was keen to “Try and get people I know to be more environmentally aware and try and get them to be more aware of how important Antarctica is.”

Alongside the Inspiring Explorers’ team, four people joined the Trust’s first Inspiring Explorers Official Supporter’s programme.

For Denise Flanagan (Honorary Vice Consul - Consulate General of Ireland) it was also the trip of a lifetime. She says, “I look forward to hearing the future path taken by the young explorers as I’m sure they returned from the trip with the realisation that there is a world of opportunity waiting for them if they just set their mind to it.”

This was the fourth Inspiring Explorers’ Expedition, following the crossing of the Greenland ice cap in 2018, the summiting of Mt Scott in 2017, and the crossing of South Georgia Island in 2015.

With thanks to partner One Ocean Expeditions, Woolf Fisher Trust, Hillary House Leadership Centre and Staples VR.

 View photos and read the blog at inspiringexplorers.com



Alexander Hillary sitting on an old Ferguson tractor buried in the snow, on Deception Island; the same model that his grandfather Sir Edmund Hillary took to the South Pole. © AHT

Antarctic Artefacts Exhibited

Antarctic Heritage Trust is delighted to partner with Canterbury Museum (Christchurch) to exhibit a selection of artefacts from the Cape Adare huts.

Breaking the Ice: The First Year in Antarctica (1899–1900) will be the public's only chance to see unique objects from the *Southern Cross* and *Terra Nova* expeditions before they return permanently to the ice.

The objects include the famous century-old fruitcake that was discovered and Dr Edward Wilson's watercolour of the Treecreeper. Both stories generated global media interest and have had more than 2500 stories published about them.

The objects were removed from Antarctica by the Antarctic Heritage Trust under a Government permit in 2016 and conserved

by a team of international experts in a laboratory at Canterbury Museum. The Trust will return the objects when it has completed conservation work on the huts at Cape Adare in two or three years' time.

Breaking the Ice tells the story of the British Antarctic Expedition, which sailed from London on the *Southern Cross*, landing at Cape Adare in January 1899. The expedition, led by Carsten Borchgrevink, recorded a number of Antarctic firsts. The explorers were the first people to spend a winter on the Antarctic continent, they erected the first buildings, took the first



Borchgrevink's huts - the only example left on any continent of humanity's first dwelling. © AHT

steps on the Ross Ice Shelf, were the first to use dogs and the Primus stove on the continent, and recorded the first full year of climate data. The exhibition opens on 18 May 2019.



For more information visit nzaht.org

Alumni News



William Pike (Inspiring Explorer 2017) was awarded the University of Auckland's Young Alumnus of the Year Award for 2019 for his William Pike

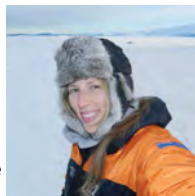
Challenge Award for school students. This programme is designed to foster personal development in young people, with over 6000 students participating so far.

David Skegg (past Trustee) has published a book, *The Health of the People* (Bridget Williams Books, 2019). Read more at this

website: www.bwb.co.nz/books/health-people.

Julian Bickersteth (Conservation Artefacts Consultant) was elected as President of IIC (International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works) in January, the leading materials conservation organisation in the world.

Susanne Grieve (Former Conservator) has started a doctoral research project at Victoria University Wellington in the Museum and Heritage Studies programme on



Susanne Grieve (2012)

the relationship between communities and maritime heritage in the Taranaki region. She hopes to identify models for collaboration between heritage practitioners and communities that lead to the preservation of heritage along the coast. Her and husband, Jeff Rawson (Alumnus), have also welcomed their first child.

Brando Yelavich (Inspiring Explorer 2018) is due to do the first self-supported crossing of Australia (West to East on a new route) on bicycle. Follow his adventure at wildboyadventures.com.



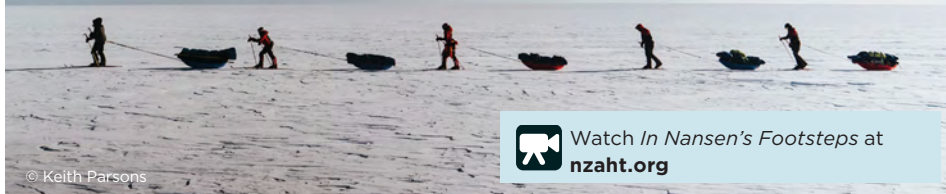
For more alumni news visit nzaht.org

In Nansen's Footsteps

A new short film about the 2018 Inspiring Explorers' Expedition to cross the Greenland ice cap premiered in January at the New York Explorers Club *Polar Film Festival*.

In Nansen's Footsteps shares the story of four young explorers journeying 560km across the ice cap in honour of Fridtjof Nansen's first crossing 130 years earlier. Guided by Bengt Rotmo from Ousland Explorers the team included record-setting

trailblazer Brando Yelavich, New Zealand endurance athlete Hollie Woodhouse, respected international videographer Keith Parsons and intrepid Australian adventurer Bridget Kruger (who once slept for nearly three months to overcome a head injury). The team took 29 days to ski across the ice cap dragging 60kg sleds behind them. They faced unprecedented levels of snow, Arctic hurricanes and sickness, in a season where only a handful of teams made it across the ice successfully.



© Keith Parsons



Watch *In Nansen's Footsteps* at nzaht.org

Governance

In February Dr Brook Barrington stepped down as Chief Executive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with Chris Seed taking up the role after five years as New Zealand's High Commissioner to Australia.

The Trust welcomed William Pike and Isobel Ewing as interns in a new governance initiative aimed at encouraging talented young people connected with the Trust's mission to observe and participate in Board discussions. The fixed term internship will be an opportunity for William and Isobel to establish boardroom experience and make a positive contribution to the Trust's work.

Both William and Isobel are members of the Trust's Alumni Programme, having participated in the 2017 Inspiring Explorers' Expedition to climb Mount Scott on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Antarctic Conservation Update



Scott's Hut at Cape Evans. © Dr Fiona Shanahun

This season the Trust completed monitoring and maintenance work at the huts of Hillary, Shackleton and Scott on Ross Island. A team of four included Programme Manager (Artefacts) Lizzie Meek, and experienced contractors Martin Wenzel, Nicola Stewart and Conservation Ambassador Mike Gillies. Programme Manager Al Fastier worked at Port Lockroy on the Antarctic Peninsula with UK Antarctic Heritage Trust under the partnership where AHT share their conservation knowledge and expertise developed during the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project.

Ross Island

A special milestone was celebrated by our Ross Island conservation team this season, with the Trust's Programme Manager (Artefacts) Lizzie Meek having clocked her 1000th day in Antarctica!

Over the last 10 years with the Trust, Lizzie has spent a winter at New Zealand's Scott Base, and many summers working at the historic expedition bases of Scott, Shackleton, Borchgrevink and Hillary, as well as working on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Lizzie says, "Cheers to the AHT and Scott Base teams over the years – Antarctica is a beautiful and challenging place to work, but the best thing about it is the pride and passion folks here bring to the job."

Alongside the annual monitoring and maintenance programme, the team conserved heroic-era artefacts from cache sites at Inexpressible Island and Butter Point.

Inexpressible Island (Hell's Gate Moraine)

depot was left by the *Terra Nova* expedition upon their departure from Antarctica in January 1913 at Campbell's suggestion, as an emergency depot for future expeditions. The location was roughly 2.5km from the Northern Party's cave site. It comprised a sledge and associated provisions and equipment. The 27 artefacts have now been conserved, including the sledge.

Cape Adare

Due to the Chinese National Programme's ice breaker *Xue Long* being unable to reach Antarctica as scheduled this season, the planned works at Cape Adare will be delayed until the conservation materials and supplies on board can reach site.

Port Lockroy

Despite battling through one of the wettest seasons seen in the last two decades of work at Port Lockroy, with only five non-raining days out of 33, Al and the UKAHT conservation team had a very productive season completing the majority of the works scheduled. The project benefited greatly from having an enthusiastic, dedicated and experienced team.

The team conducted a full survey of the historic buildings at Base A and Damoy Hut to assess their conditions, with repairs made where necessary. A number of maintenance tasks were also completed, as well as product testing in order to be better informed for future conservation works at all of the historic huts within UKAHT's care.



Read more in the Antarctic blog at nzaht.org

Shackleton's 111-year-old beer barrel



The barrel was carefully placed outside Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds. © AHT

A particularly proud moment for the Trust this season was the successful return of a carefully reconstructed beer barrel to Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds, which was home to Sir Ernest Shackleton's historic *Nimrod* expedition in 1908. This is the same hut at which three crates of Mackinlay's whisky were famously found.

In 2016, the barrel staves were removed from the ice and brought to Canterbury Museum's laboratory in Christchurch for examination. One of New Zealand's only practising coopers, Jurgen Voigtlander, was engaged to re-build the barrel. The barrel of beer was originally donated to Shackleton by New Zealand brewer Speight's in 1907.

The Cape Royds hut sits in an Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA), which means permits are required to remove anything from the area and anything temporarily removed has to be returned. The barrel was taken back to site with logistics support from Antarctica New Zealand.

The barrel bunghole on one of the recovered staves is engraved with the words 'Speight's' and 'Dunedin'. © AHT



Watch a video on the barrel's reconstruction at nzaht.org

Thank You

We welcome the following new members:

Bronze Jan and David Fullarton (NZ)
Paul Ramsey (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