South Georgia Museum

Annual Report
2011/12
This report covers the period September 2011 to August 2012.

**Introduction**

The South Georgia Museum has had a good year. Visitor numbers have levelled off and were similar to last season, but are expected to climb again in the future.

There are on-going changes in the staff roles to streamline the museum operation and help keep costs down. The curatorial internship is working very well and is giving aspiring museum professionals real work experience in a wide variety of areas of curatorship and the running of a museum.

The museum team is kept busy for most of their time with the day to day running of the museum and gift shop, fundraising, production of ‘SG Island Crafts’, and day-to-day housekeeping and maintenance of the museum buildings and cemetery.

The museum collection continues to grow, with the addition of some exciting and important new artefacts, and we are actively sourcing some items with a view to coming new displays.

There were various notable events through the summer season, but the highlight was the interment of the ashes of polar explorer Frank Wild in the cemetery at Grytviken; with a coinciding display in the museum to highlight the achievements of this remarkable man. There is also a new exhibit on Shackleton House, using some of the artefacts from the old mess room; and the whaling radio and radar display was reworked.

The museum and its environs are looking good with the museum and church having been painted externally by the GSGSSI building team, and the workshop (old slop chest) and external artefacts and some areas inside the museum painted by the museum team. The gift shop has been improved with new displays, is more profitable, and now allows more space for customers.

Fundraising in support of the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project is a major part of the work for the staff and will be for the next year or so.

The museum benefits from the support of local residents, visitors, and many agencies and individuals, helping us to develop our collection and function as a museum on this special but remote island.

**Staff**

A new position of SGHT Director South Georgia was created in November 2011. The role combines management of the South Georgia Museum, overseeing the curation of the museum collection and looking after the other interests of the South Georgia Heritage Trust on the island. The SG Director works full-time on the island for the tourist season and half-time for the rest of the year. The position was taken up in mid-November by Sarah Lurcock who has a long term interest in the history of South Georgia, and in Antarctic history, a background in biology and has lived and worked on the island for some years.
After four years of working for SGHT, curator Elsa Davidson moved to a new role at the end of January. Elsa’s legacy at the museum includes improved collection management, founding of the Oral History Project, the creation of the displays in the Carr Maritime Gallery and the expansion of the museum collection. Elsa is now Curator of Technology at National Museums Scotland and we are very lucky that her new employer has encouraged her to continue to support the South Georgia Museum as part of her new role with them.

There was a maximum of five staff (one part-time) at the museum during the season. The curatorial intern was Katie Murray (October to January). The curatorial intern concentrates on curation of the museum collection, mounting museum displays, dealing with queries, works front-of-house during tour ship visits and leads tours, as well as assisting with fundraising and day to day running of the museum.

The early-season museum staff team (left to right): Sue Edwards, Liz Adams, Sarah Lurcock, Katie Murray and Tom Adams

Shop Buyer Liz Adams spent the early part of the season (October to December) here whilst she improved the gift shop, and helped cover the running of the museum. Liz was accompanied by her husband Tom who was volunteering as a museum assistant; Tom’s handyman skills came in very useful both to help revamp the gift shop and to assist with the installation of new museum displays. He also made a plentiful stock of South Georgia Island Craft models. Sue Edwards came back as a volunteer, having worked for us last season, to spend a month at the beginning of the season helping to get the museum open and operational. Hugh Marsden returned as handyman (December to March). He was working part-time for SGHT and part-time for GSGSSI as the postal officer. In future, the summer handyman/postal officer will be employed by GSGSSI, and all maintenance of the museum buildings will be undertaken by GSGSSI. Henrik Lovendahl and Sue Werner arrived on Christmas Day to take up their jobs as museum assistants until the end of the season. They have both worked extensively in the polar tourism industry and so had much to offer. Henrik speaks several different languages, which was very useful when dealing with our multinational visitors, and having trained as an electrician was able to install new communication equipment. Sue’s office skills were useful for assisting with some of the administration.

Tom Adams making SG Island Crafts
Visitors

Ship Visits
Fifty-one cruise ships visited South Georgia during the 2011/12 season, bringing 5,858 passengers. This was a slight increase on the previous season. There were also 5 visits from Navy vessels, 4 from research ships and 7 visits from yachts (of which six were on charter and one was on a private visit.)
The season started on October 23rd with the visit of Plancius, she was also the last ship of the season on April 9th, but, due to breakdown, was then trapped here for a fortnight.
The busiest months for cruise ship visits are November and January. The period around Christmas and New Year is also busy as the expedition staff like to use the Church to celebrate the occasions.
The majority of tourists are still North American and European, but the number of visitors from eastern nations is growing. The vessel Hanseatic bought a group of 60 Japanese and the vessel Fram regularly brings large tour-groups of Chinese.
The crew of some of the fishing vessels make occasional visits to the museum during the winter months.

L’Austral in King Edward Cove

The number of tourists visiting the island has a direct effect on the museum finances both because a small percentage of the Visitors Fee, collected by GSGSSI, is passed on towards the costs of running the museum, and through the amount of sales in the gift shop. In future GSGSSI will award a set amount towards the museum running costs, and any profits from the shop will be able to support the work of the SGHT.
Visitorship is still well short of the peak in the 2008-10 period, when up to 70 vessels visited bringing around 8000 visitors a season, but there are signs that visitor numbers will slowly increase. That said, the number of cruise ship visits booked for the coming season is about the same as for this season.

Other Visitors (VIPs)
SGHT Trustee Michael Moore visited in November on the Wild cruise (see below). He was accompanied on the One Ocean Expeditions trip aboard cruise vessel Akademik Ioffe by his wife Hannah and some SGHT passengers. Part of the price of the SGHT passengers’ cruise was given to the SGHT to help fund the Habitat Restoration Project.
Oscar Castillo, Desk Officer for South Georgia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, visited the museum during a visit to the island. He joined us for lunch to talk about tourism. We were also glad to see various normally Falkland Island based GSGSSI officers, including Chief Executive Officer Martin Collins and Executive Officer Richard McKee, during their visits to the island.

Three granddaughters of Grytviken founder, CA Larsen, arrived for a visit on the Norwegian cruise ship Fram. Their mother had lived at Grytviken as a child and was in the original Manager’s Villa when it caught fire and was destroyed in 1914. The story passed down the family is that their mother and her sister had left their dolls leaning against the chimney pipe when called down to dinner and the dolls caught light. Everyone ran out of the house to avoid the fire, but the children ran back in to find the dog. The doctor followed them and saved both them and the dog. The South Georgia Museum is housed in the villa that was built to replace the one that burnt down.

Chris Nunn, who commanded some of the troops who liberated the island and was the first garrison commander after the Argentine invasion in 1982, returned on a veterans visit. He was accompanied by his wife Siobhan. Chris presented the museum with several artefacts and is collaborating with us for the review of the military history displays in the coming season (see below).

TV chef and environmental campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall visited the island to film for his latest TV series and ‘Fish Fight’ campaign. He and his film crew had travelled down on the charter yacht Hans Hansson and spent a couple of days in the area filming and interviewing various locals. We made the film crew welcome whilst they worked around Grytviken, though they were too polite to say if the famed museum cake tin held anything up to their standard! Another well-known chef, Gerard Baker, who broadcasts regularly on BBC radio, was also visiting. He and Hugh helped cook a meal for all the KEP and Grytviken residents and had a ‘cook-off’ using krill. The event was filmed, and Hugh’s yummy potted krill came second to Gerard’s delicious krill toasts.

**Museum Displays**

The three main museum displays worked on this season were a poster display about Frank Wild, a new display about Shackleton House, and refreshing of the Radio and Radar display in the Allardyce Room.
The Frank Wild display was mounted ready for the day of interment (see ‘events’ below) and altered soon afterwards to incorporate two original memorial cards. Frank Wild has a strong link with South Georgia. He first visited the island in 1914 on the *Endurance* expedition when he was second-in-command; he was also in charge of a dog team and he and five other dog-handlers stayed ashore at Grytviken for a month practising dog-sledding on the frozen Gull Lake. He returned with Shackleton on the *Quest* expedition in 1922. Shackleton died aboard the vessel in King Edward Cove, leaving Wild to lead the expedition south, returning to South Georgia a few months later when they stayed for another month before sailing back north. The new display includes a copy of the entry in the Magistrate’s death register recording the death of Sir Ernest Shackleton, it was signed by Wild.

First conceived as a hospital, Shackleton House was built during the summer of 1962-63 at Hope Point, KEP. It soon became the base for the Falkland Island Dependency Survey (later BAS) team, until taken over as the main garrison building for the British military who stayed to guard the island after the Argentine invasion in 1982. Shackleton House was closed down when the new science base opened in 2001 and demolished shortly-after.

The new Shackleton House display is in the Jarvis Room and aims to recreate some of the atmosphere of the attractive mess room of Shackleton House. The display incorporates a variety of the many objects that had decorated the mess and which were added to the museum collection when the building was closed down. Used as the Officers and Senior NCO’s mess during the military years, it was described by visiting mountaineer, Stephen Venables, in 1989 as, “...a friendly room panelled in yellowing pine...Almost every foot of wall space was hung with nautical and polar bric-a-brac: a pair of Canadian snowshoes framing a window, ships’ bells and wheels, a globe, a helicopter blade, balalaikas donated by Russian trawlemen, sledging photos by Duncan Carse, sketchy old charts of the island, ships’ pennants, whaling harpoons and a piece of whale baleen.” Some of these objects are in the new display, including a painted balalaika.

The Radio and Radar display in the Allardyce Room was refreshed; tidying up the trailing wires and aiming to better reflect the setup of a radio room on a whaling vessel. Radio was used in Antarctic whaling from 1911; though it was 1925 before the first radio station was
built on South Georgia, at Grytviken. The use of radio transformed the industry by making it easier to maintain contact with the outside world. Companies could keep in touch with their head offices thousands of miles away, and individuals with their families back home. Radio also allowed communication between whale catchers and the factory ships or shore whaling stations so preparations could be made for the return of the ships with their catch. The display includes a Marconi radio transmitter and receiver used on catchers at Leith Harbour. The transmitter control unit has been modified from a chocolate box. Recordings from the Oral History Project play alongside the display and include an interview with the late Geoffrey Smethurst, a Radio Operator who worked on a variety of whaling vessels for Christian Salvesen & Co between 1947 and 1962. He features in a photograph and is quoted saying, “Working on the factory ships, in the radio room, you were kept very busy taking DF bearings and messages from the catchers and what have you….Christmas time was very busy because everybody wanted to send messages.”

Radar was introduced onto whaling ships after World War 2 to reduce the dangers of navigation, especially in the ice further south, and whaling was made more efficient as heavy fog no longer prevented hunting. The other use of radar was in finding “flagged” whales. These were whales which had been caught, killed and then set adrift, allowing the catcher to continue hunting. A radio beacon attached to a bamboo pole that would be driven into the side of the whale is included in the display, as is a radar set and antenna control unit used at Leith Harbour in the early 1950s.

The reworked radio and radar display

The post office history display developed by last season’s curatorial intern Lynsey Easton was installed in the Grytviken Post Office.

A cabinet in the museum entrance, mainly used as a table for the visitors book and SGHT forms, has been used to display an interesting array of “found” historical objects arranged attractively by museum assistant Sue Werner.

**Whaling Station and Museum Tours**

Though conducted occasionally in the past, whaling station tours are now a regular feature of a visit to the historic site of Grytviken. Initially take up was slow, but by the end of the season around 50% of visiting cruise ships were asking for tours. Tours are mainly conducted by the curatorial intern and SG Director, and we normally pick up interested groups, up to 50 people at a time, near the remains of the bark *Louise*. It is a fitting place to start the tour as she was the vessel used to bring down the buildings and men to construct the whaling station in 1904. Incredibly it was operating just a few weeks later. On the tours we tell people about the way the factory worked and about the lives of
the men (and handful of women) that lived and worked here. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes and finishes at the museum.

Here’s what some of our visitors later wrote about the tour:
“We all had a great time ashore and really appreciated your tour around the station, it really adds a lot to the experience!”

“The visit started with a highly informative tour, so perfectly delivered that even the Spanish speakers amongst us understood every word. We learnt how the station functioned in the early 1900s, when at its peak 25-30 whales might be caught and processed in a day. The process was gruesome but efficient and the talk was lightened with how the stationers relaxed: - a ski jump? - only the Norwegians! and drinking cologne! you must be joking.”

Tours of the museum are also offered; these are conducted for groups of around 20 people and take ten to fifteen minutes during which we highlight some of the many interesting objects in each of the rooms.

Next season we may offer a tour based on the military history of the Island.

Acquisitions, Gifts and Loans

The museum collection continues to grow, with some unique and important objects acquired. Some of the more significant additions to the museum collection this season are:
Two memorial cards; these had originally been pinned to wreaths at the funeral of Frank Wild at Braamfontein Cemetery, South Africa, on August 23rd 1939. The cards were given by a family member to Angie Butler, author of a new book “The Quest for Frank Wild”, who was researching the polar explorer and searching for his ashes. She bought them to South Georgia and pinned them to a new wreath for the interment of his ashes in Grytviken cemetery. Angie Butler gave her permission for the museum to replace the originals with copies, and then add them to the museum collection. One is from his wife ‘Trix’ and simply says “In Loving Memory from His Loving Wife”. The other was from his friends and neighbours Mr & Mrs Nagle, and includes a handwritten poem: “Master I’ve filled my contract, Wrought in thy many lands, Not by my sins will Thou judge me, But by the work of my hands, Master I’ve done thy bidding and the light is low in the west, And the long, long shift is over…. Master I’ve earned it – Rest.” The cards now form part of the Frank Wild display.

William Mackay donated a whaler’s ‘Norwegian’ knife. He handcrafted a new handle for it when he was working aboard Southern Venturer in the 1950s. The new handle was made from discs of bakelite, perspex and whale tooth.
A bar of French Guerlain whale oil soap from the 1950’s, in pristine condition, still smells very pleasant. It was donated by Bonnie Orr who visited the museum the year before and noticed we did not have an example in the display of objects showing what whale oil was used for.

Various documents and photographs relating to whaling, expeditions and the war in 1982 have been added to the archives, also several charts and maps.

One of several documents donated by Roger Baker was a 1909 chart of South Georgia drawn for Captain Larsen by Hans Wold, his secretary. Mr Baker found the chart strewn on the floor of the chartstore at Grytviken in 1976. The museum collection also contains the blueprint for this chart (on display in the Larsen room).

Visiting 1982 veteran Chris Nunn bought several 1982 related items to donate to the museum collection, including the vast Argentine flag that flew over KEP during the occupation, and several documents relating to military actions in 1982 including several maps with hand-drawn details of defences and military positions.

Many more exciting artefacts are either recently arrived and as yet unentered into the collection, or are en route including:

A Shackleton signature from the estate of ex KEP FID Base Commander Ricky Chinn; two clocks associated with the whaling/sealing vessels Petrel and Albatros (one donated by John Moore, and one from the estate of Ricky Chinn); a sextant found in Leith Harbour Carpenters Shop in 1991, donated by Jimmy Smith; two whale catcher blueprints, donated by Tony Keville - one of the blueprints, for the catcher Petrel, is currently with a conservator being readied for display in the Carr Maritime Gallery; two dining chairs from the Manager’s Villa at Stromness, donated by Lyle Craigie-Halkett; and an almost entire Royal Marine’s uniform, as worn by one of the Royal Marines defending KEP during the Argentine invasion, donated by Bob Ashton.

Detail from the blueprint of whale catcher Petrel. The blueprint is now at a paper conservators being readied for display.
Other artefacts were discovered under the old gaol, the oldest building on KEP, during works to refurbish it, these include a boot, bottles and a knife!

**Curatorial internship**

Each year a graduate from the University of St. Andrews Museum and Gallery Studies course is selected for a curatorial internship at the South Georgia Museum. After two days training with Elsa Davidson in Scotland they come down to work at the museum for the majority of the tourist season, for which they receive the ‘David Nicholls Internship Bursary’. This season’s intern was Katie Murray. During a busy four-month stay she documented the remainder of the Shackleton House artefacts and the museum’s collection of British Antarctic Survey reports, and accessioned around 20 other donated or salvaged artefacts. She gained great practical experience from this and from carrying out every day curatorial tasks, such as entering artefacts, object marking and storage, and answering public enquiries.

For Katie the highlights of the internship included involvement in the historic interment of Frank Wild and working with 1982 veteran Chris Nunn to record information about the museum’s military collection - including the objects he donated. She also enjoyed involving the local community on South Georgia in the work of the museum and recruited their knowledge and skills on various occasions. For instance she lead a group of locals on a special tour of the fascinating Main Store at Grytviken, which remains largely untouched since being abandoned by the departing whalers in 1965, and worked with KEP Boatman Matt Kenney to assist historian Robert Burton with the early stages of an on-going survey of the remains of bark *Louise* (see below). Katie also felt she benefited from being involved with the Habitat Restoration campaign which taught her useful fundraising skills.

She gained a good deal from the work experience offered and said, “The internship has given me a sound basis for continuing a career in the museum sector. It has also been significant on a personal level. I am eager to continue travelling both in the Antarctic and elsewhere, and working on South Georgia has given me the confidence to apply for jobs worldwide.” Katie was successful with her applications. Since leaving us she has worked on a couple of other museum projects, including archaeological work at Knossos, Crete, is now working in the tourism sector in the Arctic and will return to see us in her role as on-board historian on a cruise ship coming to South Georgia in the coming summer.

The curatorial intern for the coming season will be Thomas Kennedy.

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A Shackleton signature from the estate of Ricky Chinn was presented to SG Director Sarah Lurcock, on behalf of the South Georgia Association, by His Excellency the Commissioner Nigel Haywood
Events and Other Projects

Interment of the Ashes of Frank Wild

The ashes of polar explorer Frank Wild were interred in the cemetery at Grytviken on November 27th. The ashes were recently discovered, by author Angie Butler, in South Africa. Wild had died there in 1939. Angie carried the wooden casket containing the ashes to South Georgia aboard the cruise vessel Akademik Ioffe which was conducting a special ‘Wild’ themed cruise. Also aboard were several members of the Wild family and other VIPs including the Hon. Alexandra Shackleton. In readiness for the event the Frank Wild display was mounted in the entrance hall of the museum, the church was readied, the cemetery tidied up with a lick of paint on the fence where needed, and the plot dug. The site chosen was to the right hand side of Shackleton’s grave facing south where a spare plot existed. It is fitting for these two great friends, who had been through so much together in life, to be back in close proximity.

There was a lot of media interest in the event. Four film crews, at least one radio journalist, and several paper journalists were also travelling on the ship. The Rev. Richard Hines officiated at both the well-attended service in the church and the interment. During the church service the casket containing Frank Wild’s ashes, and Frank Wild’s polar medal, were displayed on a table near the altar. Many were involved in the service; one of Wild’s great-nephews addressed the congregation, a great-great-niece read a reading, Angie Butler read a poem, KEP Base Commander Rob Webster played Shetland folk tunes on the fiddle, and a passenger sang a solo of the first verse of the hymn “Eternal Father, strong to save”.

The ashes were then processed to the cemetery for the interment where a great-niece placed the casket into the ground. When the formal ceremony finished, the museum staff filled the grave and placed the stone. Most ships have a ceremony in the cemetery to toast Shackleton, but on this day a new tradition was started - a toast to both polar explorers, “To Shackleton and Wild”.

While most of the visitors then returned to the ship for lunch, the SGHT party travelling on the ship joined us for lunch at the museum. Curatorial intern Katie Murray was meanwhile assisting a BBC film crew to film the Shackleton Nimrod compass and other items in the museum collection. The SG Director was interviewed by two of the media teams.

A normal ship visit was conducted in the afternoon, and all in all the day went very well,
which in no small way was down to the forethought and hard work of the museum team. We all thoroughly enjoyed it and many people commented on how smoothly it all went. Frank Wild is also commemorated by a plaque in the church.

Louise Survey
The museum is collaborating with SG historian Robert Burton to undertake a survey of the remains of the historic bark Louise. The Louise has lain at Grytviken since arriving in 1904 as part of a fleet of three vessels to establish the first South Georgia whaling station. Louise had already had a notable career before that. Built by Charles Bliss and Company of Freeport, Maine, USA, and launched as the Jennie S. Barker in 1869, she was designed as a beamy ‘down-easter’ cargo vessel. She participated in the American cotton trade, crossed the Atlantic and rounded Cape Horn many times, and in 1875, despite significant damage, survived a collision at sea with a paddle-wheeled steam tug. Her name was changed in 1886, by which time she was working out of Sandefjord, Norway in the Baltic timber trade. She was bought by the Compania Argentina de Pesca and sent to South Georgia. By 1920 she was being used as a coal store, then was abandoned by around 1930 because Grytviken’s catchers changed from coal to oil-firing. We are unsure if she was intentionally run aground where she now lies, close to Grytviken cemetery, or broke her mooring. She was still useful there, used as a jetty for smaller vessels and as a store, and finally as a rubbish dump. In 1987 she was set afire and burnt to the waterline. The remains of the vessel are now breaking up, giving urgency to the current survey. Various survey work, and recovery of artefacts from around the vessel, was conducted by Katie Murray and Matt Kenney, with assistance from Lisa Trotter and others to obtain underwater photographs of the hull. There is evidence of her former accident at sea in the area of the bow. Survey work is on-going.

Habitat Restoration Helicopter Dismantling

Helicopter engineer Graham Charman spent a week at Grytviken dismantling and packing the two Habitat Restoration Project helicopters for shipping. Graham was assisted by KEP technician Matt Holmes in the delicate work, and the museum staff helped with manhandling the aircraft and catering. It was a stellar feat to dismantle and pack the two helicopters into shipping containers in just six days.

Manoeuvring the main aircraft bodies into the containers without damage required millimetre perfect movements, often performed with a JCB! The containers were loaded onto a ship bound for the Falklands and eventually the UK for servicing, ready to return in the coming season for the start of Phase 2 of the rodent eradication programme.
Veteran’s Visit

Chris Nunn was the Company Commander M Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines when they helped liberate South Georgia, after it was invaded by the Argentines, in 1982. He stayed on as the first garrison commander at KEP. In January Chris and his wife Siobhan visited the island on a veteran’s visit hosted by GSGSSI. They arrived on the Quark Tours cruise ship *Sea Spirit.* During the visit they spent time at the museum helping us review some of the militaria in the museum collection. Chris donated several significant items to the museum collection and presented us with an M company shield which is now displayed in the Jarvis Room. Chris, who undertakes research for some military museums in the UK, is now assisting us, along with other 1982 veterans, to prepare to rework the military displays in the Jarvis room next season.

Chris also gave a very interesting and moving illustrated talk to the KEP and Grytviken residents about his experiences involved in the liberation of both South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

Chris described the time garrisoning the island as, “...a test both physically and emotionally. We had coped with the open-ended and uncertain operational commitment, coupled with enduring the harsh, mercurial weather that is unique to South Georgia. Therefore, we left with an over-riding sense of a mission well done and few, if any, backward glances.” But Chris discovered that: “while you can leave South Georgia, South Georgia quite never leaves you!”

At KEP, only the gaol and Discovery House remained from the settlement he knew before, and his impression of Grytviken was that it was smaller following the various clean-up operations. “Seeing the church again reminded me of my first visit in 1982 to this simple, elegant building that, more than anything else around it, signals the Norwegian heritage that is so much part of this place...A touching personal moment came when I stood on the interior upper balcony and found the plaque dedicated to my friend Brigadier David Nicholls, a former Royal Marine and renowned mountaineer. Until his untimely death in 2006, David dedicated his retirement to founding and developing the South Georgia Heritage Trust. Over the next few days, I was to gain an insight into the inspirational work that is the keystone of the farsighted legacy he left behind him.” Chris kindly described the museum as “…the jewel in the crown of the SGHT”.

Chris was delighted when curatorial intern Katie Murray found the photograph of M Company taken on their penultimate day on the island in July 1982. Chris has since been able to share a copy of it with several comrades who were with him here in 1982.

As he left this time Chris said he took a last look back as the ship sailed, “The most over-riding impression is of Grytviken, a testimony to a by-gone age of man, caught in a time capsule and surrounded by a savage landscape.” And he feels “proud that M Company Group, 42 Commando Royal Marines, played a small part in securing a positive future for South Georgia.”
Passengers Trapped Ashore at Grytviken

Fifty-seven passengers and some of the staff and crew from the vessel *Polar Pioneer* were trapped on shore for several extra hours by very high winds on January 27th. The museum team were quickly organised to keep everyone as comfortable as possible and managed to provide hot drinks, soup, and a light lunch for everybody. Luckily it was sunny, so many were happy to relax outside where there was shelter from the wind. They later moved across to KEP before being able to re-join their vessel that evening when the wind dropped. The museum team was thanked by the Expedition Leader and GSGSSI for looking after everyone so well.

Cruise Ship Here for Two Weeks

The last cruise vessel of the season, *Plancius*, visited on April 9th, but, due to breakdown, was then trapped here for a fortnight whilst awaiting a tug and a relief ship to take the passengers off. No museum staff remained on the island by this time, but thanks to the GSGSSI and BAS staff the museum was still open every day for the visitors.

Oral History Project

One interview was conducted as part of the Oral History project this period when Captain Tom Woodfield, a BAS captain in the late 50's, was interviewed by Jane Hill. The tape will now be transcribed.
SG Director Sarah Lurcock is working with those involved in the BAS and UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, and Falkland Island Museum oral history projects to co-ordinate the best interviewees for each of the various programmes. The SGHT programme is now widening the group of people it would like to interview outside of just ex-whalers.

Gift shop

Shop Buyer Liz Adams and her husband Tom, working as a museum assistant, added new displays and rearranged the museum gift shop early in the season. Counters were moved to maximise the space for customers whilst still enabling three to work behind the counter when the bigger ships visit. Glass cabinets have been installed to display the jewellery and other units were moved to enhance access to goods and make attractive displays.
Liz, who is normally based in the UK, goes to several major trade shows each year to source goods for the shop, and also commissions unique goods such as South Georgia T-shirts and the museum logo clothing. The shop sells a good range of gifts, clothing, artist prints and paintings, posters, postcards, books and much more. Books include the classic Shackleton books, books on the history of the island, children’s books, and wildlife and visitor guides to South Georgia and the Antarctic region etc.

Exclusive artwork on sale this year included limited edition cold cast bronzes by artist Steve Massam, scrimshawed resin whale teeth by artist Bridget Steed, and water-colour paintings by Una Hurst.

Shop income largely reflects the number of visitors to the museum each year, but a significant increase in shop takings this season, despite no corresponding significant increase in visitors numbers, reflects the success the museum buyer is having in increasing spend per head.

The name of the range of fridge magnets of models made in South Georgia by the museum staff was changed to ‘SG Island Crafts’. The staff enjoy making these, and it is a good way to use up a rainy afternoon or a spare 20 minutes, and they remain popular with customers.

Under a new agreement with GSGSSI, profit made from sale of goods in the museum shop can now be used to support the work of the SGHT.

A range of goods including books, clothing, gifts and artwork can also be bought from the SGHT website, including some exclusive to the site at www.sght.org
Grytviken Church and Cemetery

With everyone aware of the approaching centenary of the church, a good deal of work was done there this season in readiness to have it looking its best for 2013. The GSGSSI building team redecorated the outside of the church and handyman Hugh Marsden undertook a big project refurbishing the many wooden pews. The pews were originally secured with wooden dowels rather than screws, and the same method has been used to repair them. As usual it was a communal event to decorate the church ready for Christmas, with mulled wine and mince pies and other tempting treats to reward efforts. Several Christmas and other services, and concerts, were held in the church by cruise ships and Navy vessels during the summer.

At the cemetery the biggest project was the replacement of a couple of the most damaged cement grave surrounds, and the repair of others. The work has mainly been done by handyman Hugh Marsden, and his work improving drainage of the area is working well to reduce wear and muddy patches due to the wet ground and wear from the many visitors to this confined area.

The Museum Online

Only a relatively few people can visit South Georgia and visit the museum, so it is important to share our museum with a wider audience via the internet. More objects from the museum collection are regularly added to our eHive database. You can view the collection at http://ehive.com/account/3408

Keep an eye on the museum website at www.sgmuseum.gs for the latest news, especially the weblogs that are uploaded monthly throughout the tourist season. These are written by members of the museum team, include photographs of notable events, and are the best way to keep in touch with what is going on down here. http://sgmuseum.gs/index.php/Latest_News

The SGHT website is also a useful source of information www.sght.org
The South Georgia Museum collects data on whale sightings around the island. The information is plotted on a chart on the SGHT website. All the whale sightings recorded at the museum, as far back as 1991, have been plotted on an html page. Visitors to the site can add new entries. The plot allows the user to filter on species and date, and each entry shows the date, location and cruise vessel which sighted the whale. The html page can be found at: http://www.sght.org/sites/default/files/South%20Georgia.html

The chart should show one particularly local sighting when a southern right whale actually entered King Edward Cove, giving visitors aboard the ship anchored in the cove a real thrill. And two whales were feeding just off the cove the next day, one of which performed a display of tail slapping for about half an hour.

Fund Raising

A USA affiliated organisation to the SGHT has been set up in Colorado, called Friends of South Georgia Island to help raise funds for the Habitat Restoration Project and support the work of the SGHT.

A big part of our efforts at the museum this summer went into fund raising for the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project. Though the fundraising adds significantly to the workload, the work is rewarding, should only be necessary for a couple more years and the museum is proud to support this important project. We mainly fundraise by giving PowerPoint presentations aboard visiting vessels to talk about the progress of the rat eradications through the Habitat Restoration Programme and about the work of the SGHT. Most of the presentations were done by the SG Director Sarah Lurcock, but other team members are needed to assist in handing out and collecting in sponsorship forms, checking information and answering queries about the project. Katie Murray and Sue Werner were the main support for this, though all the team actively and enthusiastically assisted throughout the season. Fundraising at South Georgia has raised approximately £65,000 mainly through the visitors being encouraged to help by participating in the ‘Sponsor a Hectare’ scheme.

After a presentation on board Silver Explorer one visitor offered $1000 for the Habitat Restoration sweatshirt Sarah was wearing. She peeled it straight off to great applause! Expedition staff on the cruise vessels were enormously supportive of the fundraising, and helped out by educating their passengers about the problems the invasive rats cause and ensuring there was time in the programme for us to address the passengers, then encouraging them to Sponsor a Hectare. Cruise Operators were also very supportive, encouraging their staff to do end of cruise auctions in support of the project and, in the case of the National Geographic Explorer, offering travel vouchers to the same value as their clients were sponsoring the scheme (to a maximum of $250 per passenger).
Monitoring carried out by GSGSSI of the Phase 1 areas, baited in March 2011, has so far shown no sign of any rats having survived. We look forward to welcoming the Habitat Restoration team back in February 2013 for the start of Phase 2.

Other

Grytviken Maintenance
SGHT have been collaborating with GSGSSI and their historic buildings consultant Michael Morrison who has drawn up a Grytviken Management Plan.

Communications and Data Management
The museum now has a VHF base station and several new handheld VHF radios so staff can easily be in communication with each other and with visiting ships. The radios are also a safety tool for staff working away from the museum, or when they go for recreational walks. Early season problems with access to the internet, probably caused by problems with the fibre optic cable link to KEP, caused a great deal of extra work. Without an internet connection, credit card transactions, email, phone calls and internet research were not possible and a big backlog of work built up. This was largely solved later in the season when GSGSSI installed a wireless link across the Cove.
With the assistance of Patrick Lurcock, improvements have been made to the internal computer network, with more work due on this in the coming season, and backups are now made to a remote site.
Kelly Hague of SGHT has continued to improve the Trust’s collection of photographic and video release information, including museum related film and photography.

Recycling
Packing materials are rigorously recycled, with a lot of material reused to package shop goods. We have improved our waste handling and disposal to match the rigorous system used by BAS and continue efforts to cut down on waste.

Museums Collaboration
SG Director Sarah Lurcock visited the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, UK, to meet with the Boat Collection Manager, NMMC Curator, and an NMMC Volunteer who recently visited the SG Museum. The meeting was to investigate links between the two Museums, and what assistance we could be to each other, and could lead to useful developments for both institutions. It was interesting to see that the yacht Curlew, a Falmouth quay punt with a strong link with South Georgia where she was sailed and lived aboard by former SG Museum Curators Tim and Pauline Carr, is considered one of the most important boats in their collection. Curlew was in the middle of a refit at the time, but Sarah was able to visit the boat in the boatshed. NMMC are looking to raise more than £50,000 for Curlew’s future maintenance.
Links are also being strengthened with the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust who, amongst other projects, run the museum at Port Lockroy on the Antarctic Peninsula.

The SG Museum answers several queries a week from various sources wanting information or assistance on a variety of subjects. This is generally interesting work and we are glad to help where we can. Recently we have been assisting the webmaster for the modern whaling photographs website Paafeltet.org.
Future Plans

The SGHT has formed a Cultural Heritage Steering Committee which will hold its first meeting on October 31st.

During the season ahead we plan to refresh the displays on military history, and expeditions. We will also be working towards a display in the Church to be mounted the following season (2012/13) in time for the Church Centenary.

We will take delivery of new signs for the artefacts on display in the front of the museum this summer.

How to Support Our Work

Artefacts
We are always excited to hear about prospective new artefacts for the museum collection. Do please get in touch if you think you may have something that would be of interest to us. We are currently actively seeking artefacts that would help us portray the way the whaling station managers and their families lived in the Villas. We need items like lanterns, or lights, fabric, wall coverings, ornaments and other household items or furniture. If you think you can help please do get in contact. Perhaps you may have ideas to help us mount displays for the coming Grytviken Church and Shackleton centenaries?

Donate
Please support the South Georgia Museum and/or the work of the SGHT to protect the heritage and natural history of South Georgia by making a donation.

Online donations can be made through the Trust’s website at
http://www.sght.org/make-donation

US citizens can make tax deductible gifts via Friends of South Georgia Island
http://www.fosgi.org

Alternatively, donations may be sent by post to the South Georgia Heritage Trust, Verdant Works, West Henderson’s Wynd, Dundee, DD1 5BT, UK. Cheques payable to “South Georgia Heritage Trust” can be sent in Sterling, US Dollars or Norwegian Kroner.

What They Said

Visitors to the South Georgia Museum are invited to sign the visitors book. Many of the comments are simply “amazing” “wonderful” “fabulous” or “gorgeous”, and may well be about the experience of visiting the island as a whole, rather than the museum, however below are a selection of some more specific comments from last season:

BO, USA: “A truly wonderful museum”
JW, UK: “The museum is stunning”
MT, UK: “Best museum ever”
J and C R, UK:  “Great displays”  
A and A W, FI:  “Really well put together”  
JB, USA:  “Wish I had more time”  
JB, USA:  “Haunting”  
MC, USA:  “Thank you for educating us”  
F and D D, Australia:  “Thank you for saving this for us”

Contact Us

Do please keep us up to date if your contact details have changed recently.

SG Museum Postal Address: South Georgia Museum, Grytviken, South Georgia, S1QQ 1ZZ, via Falkland Islands, South Atlantic.
Email: museum@sght.org or sghtdirectorsg@sght.org

SGHT HQ Postal Address: South Georgia Heritage Trust, Verdant Works, West Henderson’s Wynd, Dundee, DD1 5BT, UK.
Email: info@sght.org

From this year we have started distributing the Annual Report by email. If you received a hard-copy but would prefer to get it electronically, or know of anybody who would like to receive the report by email in future, please forward details to us or suggest they get in touch with us.

Acknowledgments

The South Georgia Museum could not operate without the help and support of many different people and organisations.

The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, GSGSSI, provides the infrastructure for accessing and living on the island and financial support (from a proportion of visitor landing fees) to cover part of the costs of operating the museum. They also undertake the major maintenance of the museum buildings. We were especially grateful for their efforts to resolve communication issues at the museum and for installation of the wireless link.
The GSGSSI Building Team repainted the museum and church this season, so they look very smart. And thank you to Dave Peck for all his valuable help and advice over the season.

The Government Officers Patrick Lurcock, Keiron Fraser, Robert Paterson and Jo Cox help in more ways than can be listed here, but especially thanks to them for opening the museum for visitors through the winter months when the SG Director was absent, and thank you to Patrick for various computer support and advice.
Thank you to Aurora Expeditions and Polar Pioneer, and to Abercrombie and Kent and Le Boreal for giving passage to museum staff on their vessels this season.

Grateful thanks to Jo Cox, Paula O Sullivan and others from the BAS team for opening the museum every day whilst Plancius was trapped here.

BAS Logistics Coordinator Les Whittamore, the KEP Base Commanders and entire KEP BAS team also assist us in more ways than can be listed.

BAS staff at Cambridge assists us in a variety of ways including helping by agreeing to ship artefacts on their vessels and assisting with our research.

Our grateful thanks to National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, for enabling former SG Museum Curator Elsa Davidson to continue her links with, and assistance to, the South Georgia Museum as part of her new job, and of course to Elsa herself.

Thank you to everyone who has donated artefacts, loaned items, or given books, photographs, papers etc for the museum collection. Donors include: William Mackay, Bonnie Orr, Albert-Fredrich Gruene, Bob Clunas, William Block, the late Geoffrey Smethurst, Roger Barker, David Matthews, Arthur Blessitt, George Cummings and the Salvesen Ex-Whalers Club, Nik & Judy Wilkinson, Angie Butler, John Alexander, Norman Jamieson, Phil Stone, Michael Stammers, Chris Brading, Chris Nunn, Bob Ashton, Jimmy Smith, Tony Keville, Lisa Trotter, Jane Hill, Robert Burton. Thanks also to Geoff Renner for his assistance with items from Ricky Chinn’s estate.

John Alexander continues to support us in various ways including supplying historic photographs and financial support through the sale of his CD of whaling images.

Thanks to artist John Gale for his continued support through exclusive prints of Stromness on sale in the museum shop.

We would also like to thank Stefan Heijtz, Robert Burton, George Cummings, Chris Nunn, Patrick Lurcock, and others for advising us on various historical topics, especially in relation to new material now displayed in the museum.

Special thanks to Kelvin Floyd for his enthusiastic support of our fundraising efforts for the Habitat Restoration Project.

Thank you to the Expedition Leaders, staff and crew on all the cruise vessels for working with us to enable fundraising on board the vessels, and for all the invites on board the vessels for delicious meals (all that salad, fabulous!)

Our thanks to Øyez Venner for their continued support in various ways, including annually donating copies of their attractive calendar for sale in the gift shop to raise funds for the museum.

The pursers aboard the cruise ship Bremen are thanked for assisting by exchanging marked dollars notes that our bank would not have accepted.

Various people have helped staffing the museum, or with museum related tasks, when we were short staffed, including Jude and Steve Brown, Paula O'Sullivan, Jo Cox, and Will
Whatley. Thanks as always to Steve Massam for helping to train the staff in making sculptures and for his generosity and advice.

Thank you to the crew of the beautiful Bark Europa for the invitation for the museum staff to join them at Maiviken for a fantastic sail round to Grytviken. Also to the crew of HMS Clyde for the opportunity for staff members to see a little more of the island with them, and their support fundraising on board.

And a very big thank you to the many other people who gave donations and assistance to the museum this season, it is very much appreciated.