ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

INTRODUCTION

The South Georgia Museum has gone from strength to strength throughout the 2009 to 2010 season. The team has been incredibly busy working on a range of new displays, general maintenance, fundraising and art projects.

We have continued to develop international partnerships through loans, acquisitions and other projects which are helping to promote the collection and the remarkable natural history and heritage of the island. A new dimension has been added to the collection in the form of an oral history project recording aspects of the human history of the island.

The fabric of the Museum, Church and cemetery has benefitted a great deal from the employment of a handyman who will be returning to South Georgia again next season and fundraising initiatives have also increased, highlighting the profile of SGHT through talks and related displays.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports the South Georgia Museum. We have a remarkable resource here in Grytviken and all your support helps us to develop the collections, maintain the Museum and promote South Georgia to the world.
PERSONNEL

The team for the 2009/10 season was as follows:

Ainslie Wilson
General Manager

Steve Massam
Taxidermist

Elsa Davidson
Curator

Hugh Marsden
Handyman

Bridget Steed
Artist in Residence & Museum Assistant

Ruth Fraser
PR & Marketing Manager (SGHT)

Jane Hill
Museum Assistant

Tony Hall
Museum Assistant
VISITORS

Ship visits

There were 62 ship visits from October to April with a total of 6983 visitors. This was lower than last season but this was anticipated.

Cruise ships are now restricted to 500 passengers. The largest ship to visit this season was Delphin which arrived in February with 365 passengers. The second largest ship, Minerva, with 300 passengers, visited on the same day.

Two ship visits were cancelled on Christmas day due to bad weather. The Bremen and Hanseatic were both unable to anchor on Christmas day due to high winds. Thankfully the Hanseatic had managed to visit on Christmas Eve and Bremen did manage to anchor on Boxing Day. Clelia II also cancelled two trips to the island due to damage to the vessel.

It is currently expected that Professor Multanovsky, Professor Molchanov and Lyubov Orlova will not return to South Georgia next season. Le Diamant is also unlikely to return and Minerva will be replaced by the Boreal.

Approximately 20 private yachts visited the island this season with most passengers visiting the Museum and gift shop. Other sources of shop revenue came from RRS Ernest Shackleton, RRS James Clarke Ross and the research ship SA Aghulas.

HMS York in Cumberland Bay

There were also the usual military visits to the island from HMS Gloucester, RFA Gold Rover, RFA Wave Ruler and HMS York. The total number of naval passengers was 765.

Pharos SG continued to deliver people, post and fresh good to the island. Ainslie Wilson, Bridget Steed, Elsa Davidson, Steve Massam, Jane Hill, Tony Hall and Ruth Fraser all travelled to the island on Pharos SG. Hugh Marsden arrived on board RRS
James Clark Ross. Ainslie, Elsa, Steve, Ruth and Hugh all returned on Pharos SG at different stages in the season. Three Museum Assistants travelled home on cruise ships: Bridget Steed (Prince Albert II), Jane Hill (Ocean Nova) and Tony Hall (Polar Star).

Other visitors

There were a number of important visitors to South Georgia this year. Dr Martin Collins (Director of Fisheries/Senior Executive GSGSSI) hosted a 10 day visit to the island, arriving on Le Diamant in early January. Accompanying Dr Collins were Alan Huckle (Commissioner of South Georgia), his wife Helen and Jane Rumble (Head of Polar Regions Unit).

The Commissioner opened a new exhibition in the Museum and also officially handed over a set of benches donated to the island by the South Georgia Association. The benches were made in Grytviken by Thies Matzen from Wanderer III. Fran Prince, Secretary for the South Georgia Association, was also present for the handover of the benches.

Dr Martin Collins arrived for a second fleeting visit onboard the Corinthian II. This was a whistle-stop tour to bring Frank Pope from The Times newspaper to the island and to discuss the impact reindeer have on the ecosystem of the island.

Tim and Pauline Carr made two visits to the island during the season. The Museum team were able to catch up with them and they were also able to advise on a range of material for display. They also salvaged a number of artefacts from around the island that they found during their trip. These are now safely stored in the Museum.

Several GSGSSI officers visited the Island during April. Executive Officer Richard McKee and Environmental Officer Darren Christie accompanied Project Director Prof. Tony Martin and Chief Pilot Peter Garden from SGHT, who were in South Georgia to assess the area for the first stage of the SGHT Habitation Restoration Project.

John Rowland (South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands Registrar General) visited the island with his wife. While in South Georgia John visited the Museum to view the archives and made the staff aware of related archive material held in the Falkland Islands.
Professor Nick Owens, Director of the British Antarctic Survey arrived at the end of October on board the RRS *James Clark Ross*. He had the opportunity to visit the museum and gift shop and discuss developments at the Museum with the team. The editor of Penguin News, Tony Curran, travelled to South Georgia aboard HMS *Gloucester* in November to carry out a range of interviews. Tony interviewed Elsa Davidson, Ainslie Wilson and Steve Massam about their work at the Museum and experience of living on the island.

**Gift Shop**

The range of products available in the Museum gift shop has greatly increased this season. The popular ‘Made in South Georgia’ range, produced by Steve and Bridget, has extended and now includes replica whale’s teeth with beautiful scrimshaw designs. The SGHT online shop has also developed and a wide range of South Georgia books and souvenirs can now be purchased from the SGHT website.

**SGHT Presentations**

There were a number of requests for presentations from the cruise ships this year and the staff performed a number of Museum and whaling station tours. Next season there will be a range of presentations available from Museum staff, including the latest information on SGHT’s Habitat Restoration Project.

**COLLECTIONS**

**Documentation**

Once again the documentation of the collection continued throughout the year. The Museum’s online database on elhive has continued to develop and Vernon Systems, who run the database, promoted the Museum collection at a range of conferences and in a number of related articles.

Much time was spent processing material which was moved to the Museum for safe keeping from Shackleton House when it was demolished in 2001. Shackleton House was built in 1963/64 and acted as the main accommodation block at King Edward Point. It also housed laboratories, a surgery and some recreational facilities for the scientists working on the island. The building was taken over by the military while stationed on the island from 1982 to 2001.
Government Officer Pat Lurcock very kindly joined us for this work, helping us to identify artefacts and highlight key items. The collection includes a range of military, domestic and scientific items as well as artefacts which were found around the island. A small display will be created in the Jarvis Room to exhibit a representative selection of this material next season.

The South Georgia Museum collection policy has been updated, highlighting contemporary and scientific collecting as key areas. Contemporary collecting is essential for the future strength of the collection.

**Acquisitions, gifts and loans**

A painting of the pelagic whale factory ship *Southern Venturer* was gifted to the Museum by artist and ex-whaler George Cummings. The painting shows the *Southern Venturer* hauling a blue whale up the stern slipway. George previously donated a painting of *Pesca 2* to the Museum in memory of Nigel Bonner.

Through our links with the ex-whaling community we have also received an excellent range of photographs and historic documents which have greatly enhanced the Museum archive.

We have extended the loan of items relating to the former Steam Trawler *Viola*, now know as *Dias*, until April 2011. This includes the original bell and a ship model. We thank Dr Robb Robinson for all his help in arranging the extension of this loan.

A number of artefacts from South Georgia’s early whaling history will travel to New York in September to form part of an exhibition on changing views of whaling in the 20th century. Artefacts on loan to the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum will include a token from Compañía Argentina de Pesca, a supplies log book signed by Captain C. A. Larsen and a *Discovery* Investigations whale mark. We are keen to promote our collection through such loans which also give us an opportunity raise the profile of the island and its history.
Taxidermy

Steve Massam travelled to South Georgia in October for 6 weeks. He got straight to work on a new scale model of Grytviken which will be displayed in the Bonner Room. This is a long term project which will hopefully increase people’s understanding of the whaling station and related processes. Many hazardous remnants of the Grytviken whaling station were removed in a major clean-up by the Government from 2003-2005, in order to protect humans and wildlife from the debris. Steve’s model will show the layout of the whaling station at the height of its activity. A plan of the station and a variety of photographs were made available for the project by Professor Bjørn Basberg and the Whaling Museum archives in Sandefjord, Norway.

Steve also completed an adult pintail duck specimen with duckling for display in the Prince Natural History Room. The pintail is a familiar sight around Grytviken and Steve’s excellent recreations will give visitors a close-up of this endearing native of South Georgia.

Steve also spent some time collecting specimens for future taxidermy projects and prepared a fur seal skin. He was also involved in finding new display methods for fish specimens, fur seal skins and the skull of a beaked whale. Steve spent time developing the ‘Made in South Georgia’ range and teaching new team members how to make the popular gifts. Steve made a presentation on his work to the team at King Edward Point before his departure.

MUSEUM DISPLAYS

In January a new exhibition was created in the Bonner Room displaying the photography of Theodor Andersson. Andersson took a range of images while working as a carpenter at Grytviken in the 1920s and 1930s. His camera was on loan to the museum from his grandson Bo Svalby. Svalby also donated a range of related processing material to the Museum collection. Stig-Tore Lunde (SGHT Norway) arranged for the material to travel to South Georgia and also produced an interpretation panel in Norwegian and English to accompany the artefacts. The exhibition was officially opened by Commissioner Alan Huckle during his visit to the island. The images on display can be seen in the book Grytviken Seen Through a Camera Lens, 2004.
Ruth Fraser and Tony Hall created an eye-catching display in the Bonner Room in order to promote the upcoming Habitat Restoration Programme which will be kicking off in 2011. The ambitious project, which will eradicate rats from the island in order to protect and bring back ground nesting birds, will be undertaken by the South Georgia Heritage Trust and involves a major fundraising initiative. The display includes images of a number of birds currently in danger as well as a ‘Blue Peter’ style totaliser to highlight how much money needs to be raised for each phase of the project. We hope that it will alert visitors to the plight of many birds on the island.

Artefacts relating to the early scientific history of Bird Island also went on display. The display includes a sign from Lönberg House which was built in 1963. The 1963 scientific project was led by Dr W. L. N. Tickell on behalf of the United States Antarctic Research Program and the letters U. S. A. R. P. can still be seen on the sign under a later British Antarctic Survey design.
A number of artefacts previously in storage were put back on display including a range of fish specimens which were created by Steve Massam, a beaked toothed whale skull and jaw bones and memorials to Sir Ernest Shackleton.

For many years a whale sightings log has been on display in the Bonner Room. In order for the material recorded in the journal to be as helpful as possible, a new form was created with help from Michael Moore, an SGHT Trustee who is an expert in marine biology. The form highlights the important comparable information which is of scientific benefit. The log is completed by many yacht passengers, cruise ship staff and locals.

**Artist in Residence – Bridget Steed**

Museum Assistant Bridget Steed was also Artist in Residence at the South Georgia Museum for the 2009/10 season. As well as developing the ‘Made in South Georgia’ gift range she also curated a temporary exhibition in Grytviken and undertook a photographic project. Bridget was awarded a travel bursary from the Arts Trust for Scotland which paid for her to travel to South Georgia.

Bridget got everyone on the island involved in the exhibition. Each person was given an identical map of the island and asked to create an artwork. In February an exhibition of the work was held in part of the whaling station. The work included drawings, painting, collages, 3D work, a tapestry piece, origami, poetry and animation.

In March Bridget also brought parts of the station back to life by projecting a range of slides of the station in operation onto parts of the whaling station and vessels beached outside the Museum. The projections were photographed and will form parts of Bridget’s work.
The SG Museum Ex Whalers Oral History Project began in February 2010. We have now interviewed 9 candidates, most of whom are members of the Salvesen Ex-Whalers Club. The Club have been involved since the beginning of the project and have helped to shape the interviews and inform us about what type of history should be recorded. The range of questions was developed by Elsa Davidson, Alison Neil and Elaine Shemilt in consultation with Bjorn Basberg who has a good knowledge of related collections in Norway.

So far, interviews have been carried out in central Scotland and the Falkland Islands. The interviews are being filmed so that the material can be used for a wide range of applications. It is hoped that the interviews will form an important historical resource which can be accessed by the public. As well as holding a copy of the material in Dundee, the Scottish Studies Oral History Archive will hold a second copy of the interviews at the University of Edinburgh.

A related website is currently under construction which will feature a range of clips from the interviews. The website will also give people the option to ‘donate their memories’ which will ensure that the archive continues to develop. We will be creating a small display for the South Georgia Museum and will also have a series of film clips on show at the 2011 SGHT Industrial Heritage Conference. It is also hoped that we can use the material for educational applications related to whaling collections in Dundee. For further information on the 2011 conference, visit the SGHT website at www.sght.org

The Museum website www.sgmuseum.gs has been greatly enhanced through the addition of regular team blogs, giving updates on work around the museum, exciting events and the teams experience on the island. We hope that people will visit the site regularly to find out what is happening at the Museum and to gain an insight into life on the island. Upcoming additions will include plans for next season with details of the new team, information on the ongoing restoration work at Grytviken cemetery and our fundraising efforts in South Georgia.
MUSEUM BOOKLET

The new South Georgia Museum booklet by Robert Burton and Elsa Davidson will be available for sale in the Museum gift shop and online from next season.

A booklet on the history of the Museum and its collection has been one of the most requested items in the Museum gift shop so we hope this will be a popular addition to our stock. This 16 page colour publication also details the whaling station, Church and cemetery.

POST OFFICE

The South Georgia Post Office opened in Grytviken this year and has proved very popular with visitors. The post office was opened in the Carr Maritime Gallery building on smaller ship days when the post office did not go on board the ships. The visitors found it convenient and it was good for them to not have to run the fur seal gauntlet to King Edward Point.

New directional signs were created for the post office and the Carr Maritime Gallery.

GRYTVIKEN CHURCH & CEMETERY

The Church was once again used for services by a number of cruise ships over the season. The Hanseatic held concerts in the Church during each of their visits and also set up a small pagoda outside the Museum serving spiced wine and cakes.

There was one wedding in the Church this season which was led by Sarah Lurcock in her role as Registrar. Groom Remco Masmeijer and bride Sabine Lokin travelled to the island on Prince Albert II and all the passengers were invited to join the couple for their service in the Church.

Everyone on base helped to decorate the Church in preparation for Christmas. On Christmas Eve the crew of the Hanseatic invited everyone on the island to join a candlelit service in the Church with each group contributing to the carols and entertainment.

A service of remembrance was conducted at the Church in November. It was attended by the ships’ crew from HMS Gloucester and local residents. A Palm Sunday service was also held in the Church in March with crew from HMS York.
The interior of the Church was regularly cleaned by the Museum team and the floorboards also received a coat of wood stain. Small leaks were dealt with throughout the season but the building is generally in good condition.

A range of essential maintenance was carried out at Grytviken cemetery this year. Hugh Marsden dug out the old ditches around the site in order to improve drainage as excess water has been causing problems. Loose headstones were stabilised and some were re-cemented in place. The stones were also painted. Old shingle in the graves has been replaced and much weeding was done. The major job of re-cementing the grave surrounds started towards the end of the season and this will be continued next year.

South Georgia Museum has a new logo!

The penguin and chick Sg design was created by Andy Rice www.notjustdesign.co.uk

The design also ties in with the new SGHT, SG Habitat Restoration Project and SGHT Publishing logos.
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**DONATIONS**

Please support South Georgia Museum and the heritage and natural history of the island of South Georgia by making a donation to the South Georgia Heritage Trust.

Online donations can be made through the Trust’s website at [www.sght.org/donations.htm](http://www.sght.org/donations.htm). Details on how US citizens may make tax deductible gifts can be found at the same site.

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 also be sent in Sterling, US Dollars or Norwegian Kroner.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Museum and the South Georgia Heritage Trust would like to thank several groups and individuals for their assistance this season.

Thank you to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands for their continued support throughout the year.

Pat and Sarah Lurcock, Keiron and Ruth Fraser and Robert Paterson provided valuable support to the Museum over the season.

Many members of the South Georgia Association have been a great source of information and support over the year. We also thank the SGA for donating a collection of benches to the island so that visitors to the Museum can have a rest and take in the wonderful scenery and wildlife around Grytviken.

The British Antarctic Survey has continued to support the Museum locally from King Edward Point and also remotely from Cambridge.

Tim and Pauline Carr visited the island again this year. It was lovely to see them and we are very grateful for their continued interest in and support of the Museum.

We are delighted to be able to continue our links with the Salvesen Ex-Whalers Club. We have interviewed many members as part of our oral history project. Thanks to Mr John Alexander, Mr Don Bonner, Mr George Cummings, Mr Norman Jamieson, Mr Donald Lennie, Mr Daniel Morrison, Mr David Ritchie, Mr Jimmy Smith and Mr James Yorkston. Chairman, George Cummings, must also be thanked for his very generous donation of a painting for the collection.

Thanks to Mr Mike Bell, Mr Robert Burton, Mr Ian Brown, Mr Paul Flagg, Mr Peter Gale, Mr Timothy Haselwood, Mr Stephen Heijtz, Mr Dave Lawton, Mr Pat Lurcock, Mr Bruce Mair, Mr Erling Malmberg, Mrs Nancy Mowat, Mr Jonathan Shackleton, Dr Jonathan Shanklin (c/o BAS), Mr Eric Stevenson, Dr W. L. N Tickell for donating or loaning artefacts or archive material to the collection.

Thank you to Bo Svalby for his kind donation of photographic equipment used by Theodor Andersson to the Museum and for allowing us to have the loan of Theodor Anderssons camera for the season. Thanks also to Stig Tore for his part in organising this transfer and the related Museum display.

Thanks to The Hull Maritime Museum, the Maritime Historical Studies Centre and Specialist Marine Services Hull. A special thanks to Dr Robb Robinson for his continued support.

A thank you to Robert Burton for all his continued support, it is very much appreciated.
Thanks to Thies Matzen & Kicki Ericson (Wanderer III) for all their help with a range of projects around the Museum.

Thank you to Dave Peck for all his valuable help and advice over the season.

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

George Lemann, boatman for BAS, has increased his range of South Georgia note cards to sell in the shop with all profits going to the Habitat Restoration Project. A big thanks to George for his efforts.

We are very grateful to John Alexander who provided a disc of colour photos of his time in the whaling industry for sale to raise funds for the South Georgia Habitat Restoration Project.

Thank you to everyone who donated images for the new Museum Booklet.

Lyle Craigie-Halkett has been a continued source of information and we must thank him for his continued interest and support.

Bjorn Basberg very kindly provided his plans and photographs of Grytviken whaling station for use in the scale model project. Thanks must also go to The Whaling Museum in Sandefjord for their help.

Thank you to HMS Clyde for their continued support.

Thank you to the staff of the Clipper Adventurer who allowed us to auction a photograph of the whaling station on board the ship to raise money for SGHT.

Thank you to the crew and passengers of Le Diamant for their kind donation.

Thank you to Hurtigruten for their continued in-kind support. All of their efforts are very much appreciated.

We are very grateful to the Prince Albert II, Ocean Nova and Polar Star for organising the transportation of three members of the Museum team home from South Georgia. It was an excellent opportunity for the team to see more of the island.

Thank you to the staff and passengers of Minerva for their kind donation to the Church.

Thank you also to Heather Norman, our former Museum Assistant, who is based in Stanley and helped us with getting a range of supplies to the island.

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