This report covers the period September 2013 to August 2015.
Introduction
The South Georgia museum becomes a busier place year-on-year, with more ships and more visitors coming to the island. The general feel of the museum and its displays remains traditional, which is popular with the visitors, but does not mean things stand still. We are constantly refreshing the exhibitions and putting on new ones. New exhibitions include those to celebrate the current Shackleton Endurance Expedition centenary and the centenary of the church at Grytviken.
The museum collection has expanded considerably in the past two years, the period covered by this report. And we are developing more attention to detail in the way we care for the collection.
In each season our enthusiastic and hard-working museum team has had a challenge to keep up with the work-load, but has always risen to the challenge. These challenges are sometimes unexpected, such as when we gave overnight accommodation to over seventy people.

Staff
A core team of four staff operate the museum throughout the summer season. The SGHT Director (South Georgia) is Sarah Lurcock who, amongst other tasks, manages the day-to-day running of the museum. Each year a graduate of the University of St Andrews’ Museum and Gallery Studies course is appointed as a Curatorial Intern and receives the David Nicholls’ bursary. This was Suzanne Paterson in 2013 and Deirdre Mitchell in 2014. The intern looks after the museum collection and has many other tasks such as mounting new displays, dealing with museum enquires, and leading guided tours.
The Museum Assistants in 2013-14 were Josephine (Josie) Clarke and Kris Allan, and in 2014-15 were Sheri Bluestein and Rachel Morris. They undertook many tasks including cleaning, operating the gift shop, maintenance, recycling, and administration assistance.


In winter months, if the SGHT Director is away from the island, the museum is opened for visiting vessels by the GSGSSI Government Officers, often assisted by volunteers from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) station at KEP.
By generous agreement with her employers, National Museums Scotland, former curator Elsa Davidson is available for advice and she assists with recruitment and training of the Curatorial Interns.

Shop Buyer Liz Adams works from her home in the UK.

In 2013 Artist in Residence, sculptor and photographer Anthony Smith, was part of the museum team. We were also joined by PhD student Scott Smith.

**Visitors**

**Ship Visits**
Cruise ship visitor numbers and passenger numbers have continued to increase. Some years ago numbers fell following the global financial crash (2008-9) but have built again steadily to an all-time high last season (2014-15), when 8,142 cruise ship passengers visited Grytviken. Fifty-five cruise ship visits were made in 2013-14, rising to 65 in 2014-15. There are several more visits from Royal Navy ships, research vessels, yacht etc.
The cruise ship season starts in late October and finishes in early April. The ships are now more evenly distributed throughout the season than in the past. November is usually the busiest month, but the Christmas and New Year period is especially busy and it is usual for two ships to visit on one day.
Sixty-six different nationalities were represented amongst the passengers in 2014-15. The majority still come from English-speaking countries (USA 23%, UK 14%, Australia 11%) but the trend is for an increasing numbers of eastern passengers. 7% of all passenger last season were Chinese, double the number from the previous year, and a couple of ship visits each season are entire Chinese charters.
The increase in cruise ship visits looks set to continue, with a record number of ships (73) booked for the 2015-16 season. Passenger numbers will also increase and could well exceed 9,000.
The largest vessel that has visited in the past two seasons is the 450 passenger *Seabourn Quest*. The vessel is booked to visit again next season.

Visitors to the museum at Grytviken can expect all weathers, sometimes all on one day. **Cruise ship Fram**, left.
Museum Displays

Over the two seasons several new displays have been mounted, and a major reworking of the displays achieved in the Carr Maritime Gallery.

**Fullerton Room:** A special exhibition has been mounted in the Fullerton Room for the centenary of the British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914-16 (Shackleton’s *Endurance* Expedition). The three-panel exhibition concentrates on the month the expedition spent at Grytviken on its way south. During this period the expedition members conducted various types of research, and erected beacons on the hillside above King Edward Cove to enable the whalers and others to correctly set their compasses. The exhibition also records the expedition members’ none-too-complimentary descriptions of the whaling station. Expedition photographer Frank Hurley’s photographs are used to portray what Greenstreet described as, “an absolute disgrace … if you land anywhere you will sink over your ankles in whale grease and decomposed matter”. A specially commissioned climate-controlled case now houses some of the very important Shackleton artefacts in this room, including the almanac used to navigate the lifeboats out of the Weddell Sea and the *James Caird* from Elephant Island to South Georgia. The case was sponsored by Teresa Smallbone in memory of her mother Hester who had a special interest in polar history and exploration.

To give them a break from their confinement aboard *Endurance*, the expedition dogs were tethered near Grytviken cemetery. The dogs often broke loose and Hurley, the expedition photographer, noted that they took a “wolfish delight” in rounding up the station pigs.
Carr Maritime Gallery: The main exhibition project for 2014-15 was a major reworking of the displays in the Carr Maritime Gallery. New sections have been created within the gallery to cover the four vessels, Albatros, Dias, Petrel and Louise, all of which lie at Grytviken. This was an opportunity to incorporate some important recently arrived artefacts from these ships including compasses, ship’s clocks, binnacles and the bell from Albatros. There are also now sections dedicated to navigation and safety at sea. The Siebe Gorman diving air pump and suit used at Leith whaling station (seen in use below) was also moved into the gallery.

Curatorial Intern Deirdre Mitchell starts the task of reworking the displays in the Carr Maritime Gallery.

Fittingly the Captain and some of the crew of HMS Clyde attended the reopening event in the Carr Maritime Gallery on March 13th 2015.

Church: The centenary of the construction and consecration of the church at Grytviken (see below) was celebrated over the Christmas period 2013. A special exhibition was mounted at the rear of the church. Seven main panels each dealt with a different aspect of the church’s history such as its design and construction, the two beautiful and specially cast bells hidden away in the belfry, the pastors employed in the earlier years to work there, the way Christmas was celebrated by the whalers and residents of King Edward Point and the other uses of the church such as for holding concerts, showing films and even as a potato store. This temporary exhibition remained in place throughout the centenary year.

Bonner Room:
An exhibition ‘African Labourers in South Georgia’ was installed in the temporary exhibition area in the Bonner Room (museum front hall) at the end of the 2014/15 season. The exhibition was put together on two large panels by visiting curator Dag Ingemar Børresen of the Sandefjord Whaling Museum (see below). oddly, despite there having been many hundreds of African whalers working in South Georgia in the early years of the whaling here, (one report says 300 to 400 Africans working on South Georgia in 1919) there are very few photographs in which they feature. They were sometimes stowaways, boarding the whaling ships in places like the Cape Verde Islands, and were often exploited as cheap, indeed sometimes unpaid, labour.

The newly arrived artefact display in the Bonner Room is a place where interesting objects can quickly go on show. Currently it includes a colourful comic, printed in 1952, that was discovered down the back of a cupboard in one of the barrack buildings. Touchingly the comic has an inscription from a sister back home in Norway, and the find helps to remind us how young some of the whalers were - some of the stewards were only in their mid-teens.

**Buildings and Maintenance:**
Major maintenance of the museum buildings is done by the GSGSSI building team. They have refurbished four small buildings at the side and rear of the museum. The Slop Chest, one of the oldest surviving buildings at Grytviken, has been completely refurbished and looks brand new. The use has been changed from the museum’s main workshop to a post office, while a new exhibition area has been created in a room behind, with a large storage area above. We are hoping to use part of the storage area for a new archive store.

The GSGSSI builders refurbished the small buildings around the museum including the fuel store (left) and Slop Chest (right).
The other three buildings - a potato store, food store and the old Coffee Grinding House - are used by the museum as a fuel store, outdoor store and a waste handling building. Extensive rot to beams and other wooden structures, and erosion of the original corrugated iron cladding, meant two of the buildings needed to be reroofed. During the works the museum team photo-documented the exposed original structures and recorded things like the graffiti that had been written on the beams and roof supports by the whalers who constructed them. Some interesting features included the use of locally dug peat sods to thickly insulate the ceiling in the old potato store.

In one building there were many old gun powder tins and packing cases. The oldest and best examples of these were retained for the museum collection. The GSGSSI builders also removed rotten floor boards from the museum staff entrance and did several other maintenance tasks including fitting out a storage cupboard and creating a new lockable cupboard in the eaves for use as an extra archive store.

Light fittings collected from the shelves in an old store at Leith whaling station were used to replace unsightly strip lights in four museum display areas. These fittings were appropriate in the reconstruction of the whalers’ bunkroom, forge, and in the whalers’ trades display area. Other attractive old light fittings will also be fitted outside to replace modern fittings above the main and rear entrance to the museum.

**Guided Tours**

The whaling station tour, the primary tour offered by the museum, is increasingly popular and was requested by more than 85% of all cruise ships visiting in 2014-15. Cruise ship expedition staff member Lisa Strycker said of the whaling station tour, “Grytviken really came to life when we were treated to a lively, informative, and entertaining personal tour of the whaling station.”

The museum tour has less uptake, dropping from 24% in 2013-14 to 13% the following season. A new guided tour, ‘Shackleton at Grytviken’, was developed during the 2014-15 season to mark the Endurance Expedition centenary. Curatorial Intern Deirdre Mitchell developed and delivered the tour, which is largely based on information from Robert Burton’s SGHT publication ‘Shackleton at South Georgia’. The tour covers sites such as where some of the expedition members were housed ashore in the old hospital, and where the expedition dogs were tethered, near the cemetery from where they were exercised on the frozen Gull Lake above.

Also stories such as when one night the expedition photographer, Frank Hurley, fell into the belly of a dead whale whilst trying to climb over it on the flensing plan. Luckily his cries were heard and he was rescued.

The Shackleton tour was requested by 42% of the visiting cruise ships, and was increasingly popular as the season went on. With the centenary of the expedition still upon us we will run the Shackleton tour again this coming season, and if it remains popular we may make it permanent.

The tours are also available to other visitors such as those arriving on yachts, naval and research vessels.
Acquisitions, Gifts and Loans

The museum’s collection continues to grow and diversify and has had some significant additions over the past two years. Seventy-three new additions were made to the acquisitions list during this period. New acquisitions can be donated, found and occasionally purchased, like the 1982 Daily Telegraph newspaper with a lead story covering the end of the Argentine invasion of South Georgia. SGHT purchased the paper which has the headline ‘Marines Capture South Georgia’. The newspaper has been included in the 1982 display in the Jarvis Room where it highlights how invasion of the island and subsequent recovery were portrayed ‘back home’ in the UK.

Relatives donated an almost entire set of clothing worn by Whaling Inspector Sidney Brown who worked on/around the island in the 1950s. It includes a fur-lined leather jacket, fur-lined jumper and woollen undershirts. The museum also welcomed a special guest in Signe Rindal, daughter of the last Whaling Station Manager, Fritz Ringdal. She brought with her a Grytviken Kino (cinema) poster from 1960. The poster, written in three different languages, reflecting the diversity of the workforce at the whaling station, gives us a glimpse into the whalers’ social lives. The poster was added to the display in the Ringdal Room of the old projector and other items that were recovered from the cinema.

It can also be important to add contemporary items to the museum collection and so service programmes and other ephemera from the church centenary were collected.

The members of one family, who used to live at King Edward Point in the late 1950s, have made several donations to the collection including: a watercolour of the wife of former magistrate William Barlas, the logbook of whale catcher Skua; a tea set that may have been used during the visit of Prince Philip to Grytviken in 1957, and a child’s toy. The toy, a small bear known as Little Panda, belonged to one of the children whose childhood is recounted in the recently published autobiographical book ‘Under the Shadow of Shackleton’s Cross’ by Beverley McLeod.
Several more items accessioned into the collection were found in Grytviken whaling station. A home-made bagatelle board (an early form of pinball) was found in a whalers’ barracks and gives an idea of how some of the whalers might have occupied themselves when not working. A number of things were recovered from the Slop Chest (company store) during renovation works on the building. One of these is a very early hand-written ledger covering all the items purchased in the shop by the whalers between 1917 and 1921. It shows that the Slop Chest sold things like clothing and toiletries, soap and toothpaste, but that the most regular purchase was tobacco. An old tobacco tin and tobacco papers were also found and collected and these items will form part of a coming exhibition in the Slop Chest (which will be used as a post office) showing the building’s original purpose.

Other recently acquired objects include a set of crampons used on the first ascent of the island’s highest mountain, Mt Paget, in 1964 by a member of the Combined Services Expedition, and a huge Norwegian flag that used to fly at Grytviken whaling station.

Three items from the museum collection were loaned to other museums for special exhibitions. The Scottish Fisheries Museum in Fife, Scotland, borrowed a piece of Guerlain soap, made from whale oil, for its two-month long ‘Poles Apart’ exhibition on whaling.

A sleeping bag and a primus stove used by mountaineer Tom Price on the South Georgia Surveys in the 1950s have been loaned to the Keswick Museum and Art Gallery where they will form part of an six-month long exhibition called “Inspiring Adventure: The Life and Work of Tom Price”. The exhibition starts on November 12th 2015.

Curatorial Internship

The curatorial internship at the museum is now well established and each year attracts a good number of applicants from the St. Andrews University Museum and Gallery Studies Course. The Curatorial Intern is now more formally recognised as second-in-charge in the museum team, giving the interns valuable management experience that they can add to their CVs.

A review procedure was introduced in 2013 to assist the development of professional skills for the interns. For this a review of their performance is made half-way through their tenure, giving the intern feedback and guidance. The process is completed at the end of the internship and the resulting review is shared with the Course Tutor at St Andrews and can be referred to when giving references etc.
In her Curatorial Intern Report Suzanne Paterson said there were numerous highlights during her time as curator. She enjoyed curating two new exhibitions and particularly liked being able to work with such a varied collection. She also enjoyed meeting the wide variety of visitors and expedition crew that pass through the museum including having, “really lovely conversations with ‘celebrities’ such as Peter Hilary, son of Sir Edmund Hilary, and relatives of Scott and Shackleton, but it was equally as interesting talking to other visitors, for example ex-whalers that came down with Øyas Venner.” Suzanne is currently working as a Project Officer for the ‘Great War Dundee’ project organising a range of events and activities to raise awareness of Dundee’s involvement in WWI.

Curatorial Intern Deirdre Mitchell said she hugely enjoyed her time at the museum. Highlights for her were the variety of the role and the opportunity to tackle new challenges, such as designing a new guided tour and leading tours for over a hundred people. She enjoyed doing the reworking of the displays in the Carr Maritime Gallery, describing it as “an opportunity to design the new look of the gallery from start to finish, which was very satisfying”. She summed up by saying, “Deciding to come south, 8000 miles from home, was a huge step for me but I am incredibly glad I took it. As well as the wonderful opportunities I have had to develop my skills as a museum professional, I have also had the chance to explore a unique and special little island and have become much more adventurous as a result! Whereas previously I planned to remain in Scotland, I now hope to venture further afield. I have absolutely fallen in love with the incredible landscape and atmosphere in this part of the world, so I would particularly like to find a role somewhere similar in the future.”

Since leaving us Deirdre has been working at the National Museum of Scotland in preventative conservation, and has recently starting a new job on the isle of Arran, Scotland, as a Collections Cataloguer for the National Trust and she will be working on one of the cruise ships travelling to the Antarctic Peninsula in the coming season.
Curatorial Overview Visit

Dag Børresen, Managing Director of the Commander Chr. Christensen’s Whaling Museum, in Sandefjord, Norway, visited for three weeks at the end of the 2014-15 season. The purpose of the visit was to oversee the operation of the South Georgia Museum and report to the SGHT Trustees. During his time with us he was able to see how the museum operated during a couple of small cruise ship visits. Dag was given access to all areas of the museum’s curation and management. He was able to advise and assist with the writing of some new museum documentation and undertook various research works. This was a useful visit leading to some recommendations that may help shape the museum’s future. He concluded his report saying “My general impression based on three weeks of observation is that South Georgia Museum is running well.”

Special Events

Church Centenary

Grytviken whaling station founder Carl Anton Larsen was the main force behind the creation of South Georgia’s only church. He was interested in the social and mental welfare of his employees, aware that they were working in a remote place and in harsh conditions. He employed the first pastor, Kristen Løken, who arrived at Grytviken on April 1st 1912. The funds to build a church came from donations from some of the whaling companies and some individual whalers, with Larsen providing the largest donation. A wooden church was designed by the Larsen’s son-in-law architect Adalbert Kielland, manufactured in Norway and shipped to the island. It was erected in just one month by the whalers in their limited free time. The church can hold a congregation of two hundred and also houses the Whalers’ Library in a separate room. The church was consecrated on Christmas Day 1913.

The centenary of the church was celebrated with a number of special events. A temporary exhibition on the history of the church was installed at the back of the church (see above), and Liz Adams designed a new and attractive display of Christmas decorations.

After the closure of the whaling stations many wooden buildings collapsed, but the church survives thanks to the efforts of the scientists, military and others based at King Edward Point, or who passed through on ships, to keep it weather-tight. Twenty years ago there was a major restoration masterminded by Tim Carr.
Today the GSGSSI building team maintain the church. They ensured that the building was looking its best for the centenary. Works included installing new electrics and replacing the lights with lampshades recovered from the old stores at Leith whaling station. Øyas Venner, a Norwegian organisation of ex-whalers and their relatives, made up a large charter group (140) aboard the cruise ship Fram. Unusually they had arranged for the vessel to spend two days at Grytviken over Christmas 2013. Øyas Venner arranged two special church services, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to celebrate the church centenary. Three church ministers were amongst those travelling with Øyas Venner: Richard Hines from Christ Church Cathedral Stanley (Falkland Islands) in whose parish the Grytviken Church is included; Stein Unneberg and Øyvind Nordin. Other special guests included Dr Susan Barr of Norway’s Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Martin Collins, Chief Executive Officer of GSGSSI. A civil wedding, with a church blessing, was also performed during the celebrations.

**Dias Ceremony**

A museum artefact played a central role in a memorial ceremony aboard the historic ship Dias (former Hull steam trawler Viola). The ceremony was held during the visit of Commissioner Colin Roberts, during a visit to Grytviken by Marine Salvager Lyle Craigie-Halkett and Ship Surveyor Tim Broughton to assess the condition of the vessel. The Dias bell, which is normally on display in the Carr Maritime Gallery, was moved aboard the vessel for the ceremony on November 15th 2014. Though it is not usually possible to go aboard the ship, under supervision around thirty locals and the crew of HMS Clyde crowded the vessel’s bow. The ceremony was led by the Commissioner and in his address he outlined the vessel’s extraordinary history, including its effective role in WW1. The bell was rung to mark the beginning and end of a two minute silence, after which a wreath of remembrance was laid by Government Officer Simon Browning.

**Shackleton Endurance Crew Relatives:** At least eight families of the original crew of the Shackleton’s ship Endurance were represented on a special centenary voyage that visited Grytviken on November 29th 2014. The trip was organised by specialist travel company Ice Tracks Expeditions in conjunction with the Scott Polar Research Institute. Amongst the original Endurance crew represented were Shackleton, Wordie, Macklin, James, Kerr, McCarthy, Orde Lees and Worsley. Rear Admiral Nick Lambert, who commanded the Royal Navy ice patrol ship HMS Endurance and is now Chairman of the Friends of SPRI, officiated at a special service of remembrance in the church.

**British Antarctic Monument Trust:** A group from the British Antarctic Monument Trust travelled through South Georgia during their ‘South 2015’ tour. They were here in late February 2015 having unveiled a section of the two-part Antarctic Monument in the Falkland
Islands. The British Antarctic Monument Trust was set up to celebrate the achievements of the men and women of the British Antarctic Survey, and their precursors the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, and in particular to honour those who did not return. Several of the group had worked in South Georgia.

**Events for the Locals:** Much of what we do at the museum is focused on the visitors arriving on cruise ships, but we also try to involve the local community by hosting special events for them. Traditionally everyone helps with decorating the church at Christmas; to entice them all to help there is mulled wine, mince pies and a barbeque afterwards. Food can be a good draw, so for ‘Tea at the Museum’ we put on a huge spread of teatime treats and set up a quiz trail around the museum to encourage everyone to engage with the collection in a different way. And on ‘History Friday’ we did the Shackleton Tour for the locals, followed by tea and cakes of course, and then in the evening visiting curator Dag Ingemar Børresen showed historic images taken in South Georgia that he had brought with him from the Sandefjord Whaling Museum collection.

**Habitat Restoration**

The third big baiting phase of the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project was carried out in early 2015. The field team was based at King Edward Point, with a field camp further south on the island. The museum team has been glad to be involved in any way it can with this massive and important project, whether it be fundraising or releasing staff to assist with fieldwork and other tasks, and felt truly honoured to be allowed to be part of ‘Team Rat’.

This world-leading project will go down in history as one of the major turning points in the history of the island so we are adding some representative items to the museum collection. These are a section of one of the baiting helicopter’s rotors and the flying helmet of Chief Pilot Peter Garden.

An early indicator of the effectiveness of the rodent eradication has been the return of the tiny South Georgia pipit to main island areas where it has not been seen in a century or more. At the Museum we started a Pipit Log to collect reports of pipit sightings from the cruise ships and other visitors visiting the more remote areas of the island. This way we can chart the return of the bird and we are delighted to report they have quickly re-established in some recently cleared areas.

**Gift shop**

The shop is always a popular place for the tourists and is generally a busy spot during a cruise ship visit. The two Museum Assistants are mainly stationed in the shop during a ship visit, but
all the staff are able to operate the shop. Profits from the museum shop go towards supporting the work of the South Georgia Heritage Trust.

With more people visiting the island, Shop Buyer Liz Adams has had her work cut out to ensure there is a good range of high quality gifts, books, postcards etc to last throughout the summer, and of course we need to have a few things for those visiting during the winter months.

Liz has designed some attractive goods that are exclusive to the museum including aprons, tea towels, tote bags, T-shirts, mugs, baseball caps and the crystal glassware range with penguin and South Georgia map designs. The crystal range is very popular and now includes dram glasses, whisky glasses, decanters, candle holders and gift sets. The range of goods made by the museum staff, called “South Georgia Island Crafts”, has been expanded. Artist in Residence Anthony Smith designed several new items for the range. They remain amongst the most popular purchases, especially the fridge magnets.

A range of goods, including books, clothing, gifts and artwork, can be bought from the SGHT website. You can find some of our super exclusive goods there, and it also stocks several items that are different from those stocked at the museum.

www.sghtonline.gs

The Museum Online

With only a small number of people able to visit the South Georgia Museum, we have three websites that make it available to many more people.

You can see most of the museum collection on eHive. All newly accessioned items are documented on this website, along with information about the objects and photographs. You can view the collection at http://ehive.com/account/3408

The museum website is at www.sgmuseum.gs It is updated at least monthly through the summer season with news from the museum. Find the latest news here: http://sgmuseum.gs/index.php/Latest_News

The museum blog is also posted on the SGHT Facebook page

The SGHT website is also a useful source of information www.sght.org
We were also glad to encourage Google Street View cameras into the museum and into the church so you can now “walk around” both on your computers at home.

Whale sightings in South Georgia waters are collected at the museum and uploaded onto a website. Sightings can be viewed on a chart available on the SGHT website.

Fundraising

The museum team has put a lot of time and effort into fundraising for the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project and through the generosity of the visitors to the island has been able to raise a substantial amount of money towards this £7.5 million project. We have enjoyed huge support from the cruise ship industry. Fundraising has largely been through the ‘Sponsor a Hectare’ scheme, where the visitors are asked to sponsor the clearance of one or more hectares of the island of rodents. We go on board the ships to give a presentation about the work being done and, luckily for us, most of our visitors really understand the benefits the project will bring to the island. Each year more and more of the cruise ships have welcomed us aboard to give the Habitat Restoration presentation. By last season it was given 54 times on 83% of the visiting cruise ships (having risen from 72% the previous season). Sarah Lurcock gave most of these short presentations, and, whilst the third baiting phase was underway, could give up-to-the-hour updates on the project’s progress. It was an exciting tale to tell with damaged helicopters, dropped baiting buckets and the usual “will they do it or wont they” ending. Other members of staff also gave the presentations, sometimes in other languages, and we also often worked with on-board translators. On some of the larger vessels we now gave two simultaneous presentations.

The expedition staff on the vessels have been wonderful. They are continually educating visitors about the positive benefits of the project, and their reports of pipit sightings in recently cleared areas have been some of the earliest indications we have had that rats have successfully been cleared. The ship staff have also helped significantly by doing further fundraising on behalf of the Habitat Restoration Project by organising auctions and other fundraisers.

Auctions again proved to be a very useful source of funds. We try to make this as easy as possible for the cruise ship staff by providing a package which includes a range of exclusive items for auction, along with payment forms and practical advice. The forty auctions held last season raised over £50,000 towards the Habitat Restoration Project.
Environmental and Pest Monitoring
A more robust programme of environmental monitoring has been put in place in the museum, archives and other important areas such as the whalers’ library in the church. Less than ideal environmental conditions in museums housed in historic buildings are a common problem. The South Georgia Museum suffers from high humidity, so two trials have been conducted using heating and a dehumidifier to assess what could be done to improve conditions for the museum collection. Unfortunately it is unlikely that, without major works, the situation could be much improved within the museum. For now we are adopting the approach of housing some of the more vulnerable objects in specialist climate-controlled cases.

Luckily, due to the cold temperatures in the museum and the remoteness of the island, we do not suffer from many of the common pests encountered in other museums such as clothes moth, carpet beetle and woodworm. But for best practice we have installed a pest surveillance programme that is built upon what we are required by GSGSSI to do as part of their biosecurity checks. Our programme is more extensive, and is more regularly checked, to ensure we would quickly be alerted if we do encounter any infestations.

Media
The museum provides a good deal of assistance to various filming groups, radio broadcasters, authors, and newspaper, magazine and website journalists. Assistance ranges from providing information from the museum collection and library, and enabling objects from the museum to be filmed, to helping track down historical film footage, and checking text and scripts for historical accuracy. We also give many interviews to media from all over the world.

One particularly good programme was BBC4’s two-part documentary ‘Britain’s Whale Hunters: The Untold Story’. And we enjoyed our interactions with CBBC programme makers “Deadly Pole to Pole”.

Environmentally Friendly
At the museum we try to be as environmentally friendly as possible. The power we use to light the museum (only the staffroom and work rooms are heated) mainly comes from a hydroelectric power plant, and we recycle as much as possible. All rubbish is sorted, processed and then recycled with the waste from the KEP station.

All packaging is recycled and, where possible, reused. We also sell SGHT logo ‘bags for life’ to discourage the use of plastic bags.

SGHT Heritage Director
The South Georgia Heritage Trust has appointed a Heritage Director to identify and manage future human heritage projects for the SGHT. Ed Simons has worked in heritage consultancy for over twenty years, including working in another remote island, St Helena. Ed works from home and has been made a reader at the University of Dundee, Scotland.

Artist in Residence
Sculptor Anthony Smith was Artist in Residence at the museum for two months during the 2013-14 season. This was a highly successful tenure. He contributed by assisting with the day-to-day works of the museum, designing some new items for the South Georgia Island Craft range, making some one-off art pieces for our fundraising, and allowing his images to be used to create new items for the gift shop. Anthony also engaged with the Abercrombie and Kent ‘Young Explorers Program’ on their Christmas voyage, taking a group of 34 children of varying ages behind the scenes at the museum, and setting them some enjoyable challenges along the way.

His time on South Georgia provided him with a wealth of inspiration that shaped his work for the following year. He created new wildlife sculptures, and also captured some superb images as a photographer. You can see some of the resulting artworks on his website at www.anthonysmithart.co.uk

Anthony also strengthened his links with the Antarctic cruise ship industry and now sometimes works as on-board artist/photographer so we can look forward to an occasional visit from him in future. Meanwhile his career goes from strength to strength with more and more high profile sculpting commissions.

Scott Smith Student Studies

The South Georgia Museum hosted PhD student Scott Smith during fieldwork for his thesis on computer visualisation using Grytviken as a case study. This was financially supported by SGHT, the Centre for Remote Environments (CRE) at University of Dundee, the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) and GSGSSI.

During his time on the island Scott made a thorough photographic survey of Grytviken and was also able to visit some of the other whaling stations. The main object of the research was to take the existing knowledge of the whaling stations and repackage it in such a way that it enabled a wider public understanding of the historical context and cultural heritage of the pioneering aspects of the whaling industry. The resulting visualisation should provide an interactive experience of historic structures, making the structures feel present and participatory. Visualisations can be crafted to be available for both specialist and non-specialist viewers and in formats that are readily available and able to be archived for posterity. Scott Smith’s External Advisor for his PhD, Professor Bjørn Basberg, also visited for part of the time that Scott was on the island.
Bjørn is the author of the book “The Shore Whaling Stations of South Georgia” and is also an SGHT Trustee.

**Museum Hotel**
One extraordinary event was the overnight stranding of a large group of cruise ship passengers. The passengers were ashore at Grytviken when the wind increased and boat operations had to be suspended for safety reasons. Seventy-three people, including five expedition staff, had to remain on shore overnight. With all the locals assisting, the emergency stores were deployed and mattresses and bedding were set out in the museum, Carr Maritime Gallery and Slop Chest. The museum team did an amazing job of making sure everyone as comfortable as possible and of feeding everybody. The wind dropped overnight and the passengers were collected early the next morning, many having had a good night’s rest. They were very appreciative of all that had been done for them, as were the ship staff who did everything they could to assist throughout. The museum was clean and ready for the next cruise ship that afternoon.

**Publications:** South Georgia historian and ex Museum Director Robert Burton has written a new booklet on the ‘Maritime History of South Georgia’. He also updated his booklet ‘Shackleton at South Georgia’ in time for the current centenary. Both booklets are published by SGHT and are available from the SGHT on-line shop.

**Looking Ahead**

The Shackleton *Endurance* Expedition centenary is on-going and we will mount another special exhibition covering the boat journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia, the first crossing of the island and the rescue of the remaining crew. The GSGSSI has co-operated with the Royal Geographical Society to host an exhibition of Hurley’s slides from the *Endurance* Expedition. This will be housed in the new exhibition area at the back of the old Slop Chest. The area will also house a display showcasing the laser surveys of the whaling stations. Once the new displays have been installed, curation and management of the exhibition and gallery is expected to be passed to the museum. Photographer Jamie Grant will be Artist in Residence for six weeks at the end of 2015. His work will result in a book that will be sold to raise funds for SGHT.
How to Support Our Work

Artefacts
If you have any objects, images or information that you think may be of interest to the South Georgia Museum, please do get in touch. Information on how to contact us is below. Things we are especially interested to collect for current and future displays include items made with whale oil, for instance Sunlight soap or cosmetics, and items relating to the social life of the whalers and other residents of the island. There are also a number of books and other publications we would be glad to add to our collection and/or library.

Shackleton Bust
The centenary of Shackleton’s *Endurance* expedition is an appropriate time to enhance our museum display for this polar legend. Shackleton is the best-known South Georgia historic character. We would like to add a bronze bust of Sir Ernest Shackleton, sculpted by former South Georgia Museum Artist in Residence Anthony Smith, to the collection. We would greatly appreciate any offers to help fund this.

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 the Friends of South Georgia Island website http://fosgi.org/donations

Alternatively, donations may be sent by post to the South Georgia Heritage Trust, at the Dundee address below. Cheques, payable to “South Georgia Heritage Trust”, can be sent in Sterling, US Dollars or Norwegian Kroner.

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. (Add ‘via UK’ if posting from outside the UK)
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

All recently added recipients of this report receive it electronically. Please do make sure you keep us up to date with any changes to your email address.
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Acknowledgments

The South Georgia Museum could not operate without the help and support of many organisations and people. We cannot mention them all by name but special thanks are due to:

GSGSSI who provide the logistics and infrastructure on the island. They also cover the running costs of the museum.

The GSGSSI building team, under the supervision of David Peck, who do the larger maintenance jobs on the museum buildings and assist us in many ways, including lending useful extra muscle for some of the heavy jobs, being very generous with practical and other advice and with their transport.

The GSGSSI Government Officers, BAS employees and others who live and work at King Edward Point who help us in many ways including opening the museum for occasional visitors through the winter when no SGHT staff are on the island.

Thank you to everyone who has donated artefacts, given books, or sent photographs, papers etc.

Thank you to HMS Richmond and Lt Cdr Dawson SO2 J3 MAR HQ BFSAI for your assistance, especially transporting the museum staff to the island at the beginning of the 2013-14 season.

Thank you to Bob Simpson and Abercrombie and Kent for bringing one of our SGHT Trustees to the island and for giving passage out to our Artist in Residence aboard Le Boreal.

The GSGSSI Postal Officer and maintenance man Hugh Marsden deserves special thanks as he is always willing to lend us a hand, and is, as far as we are concerned, an honorary member of the museum team.

The BAS Logistics Coordinator Rod Strachan, and before him Les Whittamore, are always cooperative and helpful.

Thank you to Robert Burton who is not only an ever-willing source of information and historical advice but also provides a collection point for larger artefacts in the UK. Bob arranges for these to be shipped down to the museum on the BAS ships at the beginning of each season. Thanks too to BAS for offering this route to get precious objects safely to this remote isle.

Thanks to Magnus Day and his crew on the yacht Pelagic Australis for securing the carcass of a rare spectacled porpoise, and to the staff of cruise ship Sea Explorer for collecting the now rather smelly remains and bringing them to the museum.
Lyle Cragie-Halkett is a valuable source of information about our maritime objects and the local vessels.

Our grateful thanks to former SG Museum Curator Elsa Davidson for her continued advice and support, and to her current employers, National Museums Scotland, who allow Elsa to support us as part of her role with them as Curator of Technology.

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. Thank you too for all the welcome invitations on board for meals and drinks. We are especially grateful to the crew of the beautiful Bark Europa who have offered us the opportunity to join the ship for a short sail - an amazing experience.

Special thanks to those cruise ship staff who enthusiastically run the on-board auctions to raise funds for the Habitat Restoration Project. Also to the generous contributions of several people including John Alexander, Cathy Corbishley, and Jamie Watts, who make or provide things for us to auction, including historic photographs, handcrafted wall hangings, artworks, signed books etc. Nor should we forget the people prepared to bid $100 for a box of ten rat-shaped biscuits made by one of the HR field team chefs, or $500 for a fleece hat with a HR logo rat patch sewn on!

Thanks go to Øyas Venner for their support. Their members are an important source of expertise and also Øyas Venner create an attractive South Georgia calendar each year and generously donate copies to the museum to help us raise funds for our projects.

We enjoyed our interactions with the Habitat Restoration Field Team. Whilst we were glad to assist the project in any way we could, we were also the recipients of much help, hospitality and friendship in return.

Jerome Viard, one of the two chefs working with Team Rat’, was a regular volunteer assisting with everything from folding T shirts to cleaning artefacts - you were a real asset thank you Jerome.

Steve Massam gives us advice on management of some of the natural history collection and trains the staff to make the SG Island Craft range. We look forward to him joining us again here at the museum in the future.

Thank you to the people on the cruise ships who acted as translators on our guided tours and during on-board presentations.

Our Artist in Residence, Anthony Smith, kindly allowed us to use some of his super photographs in this report.

We receive so much generous help from so many people and companies that is not possible to mention them all individually here, so a further big thank you to all of you who gave donations, advice and assistance to us at the South Georgia Museum. We greatly appreciate everything that is done for us and we could not operate in this remote part of the world without help from you all.