



UK
ANTARCTIC
HERITAGE
TRUST

30

ANTARCTICA'S UNFOLDING STORY:



A JOURNEY OF HERITAGE PRESERVATION & HOPE

CELEBRATING THE FIRST 30 YEARS
OF CONSERVING, INSPIRING
AND SHARING

FOREWORD

JOHN PYE, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) was founded thirty years ago “to advance the education of the public in particular by the preservation and protection of their Antarctic Heritage”. This report describes our journey from being a small and dedicated group in the 1990s to becoming the respected operational organisation that we are today.

Our management of heritage sites on the Antarctic Peninsula has enabled us to establish our reputation in the field of preservation and protection. Our aspiration is for us to become equally well known as the source of information, education and knowledge of Antarctic heritage in its widest sense.

Our achievements and our future success depend of course on people. We have an engaged group of trustees, a professional executive team, and a growing group of donors and supporters. I hope you will be inspired by our story.

John Pye, Chair of Trustees,
UK Antarctic Heritage Trust



Photo credit: © UKAHT.

INTRODUCTION

FROM CAMILLA NICHOL,
CEO, UK ANTARCTIC HERITAGE TRUST



THIS YEAR, THE UK ANTARCTIC HERITAGE TRUST CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY.

I have been lucky enough to lead this remarkable organisation for the past eight years. When I think back to the first time I visited Antarctica, I still feel the same thrill. I flew to the Ross Sea and, after a long flight on a USAF cargo plane, landed straight on the ice. Nothing prepares you for the dry, biting cold and the wind whipping around you, even at the height of summer. It was truly an assault on the senses.

As an organisation, we exist to protect the six historic sites that still cling to that ice-bound landscape, and we tell the stories of the explorers, scientists and conservationists who have braved one of the most challenging environments on Earth over more than two centuries.

Over the course of our 30-year history, our role has evolved hugely. In the early days, we were an adviser and grant giver, growing to also become a vocal, visible and passionate advocates for heritage in Antarctica. We have been instrumental in supporting efforts to protect Antarctic heritage, including helping to save key artefacts for the nation, such as Shackleton's Boat Compass and Scott's sledging flag.

Today, we are actively influencing the policy decisions that affect heritage in Antarctica, working alongside the UK Government and other agencies, on heritage designation, conservation management and best practice. We also work tirelessly to uphold the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty System, which depends on the harmonious collaboration of many nations to protect Antarctica for peace and science.

We have a truly multi-faceted role to play. We look after Port Lockroy, which some of you may know affectionately as "the penguin post office", along with five further former British Bases on the Antarctic Peninsula. We were proud to support the effort to save the Ross Sea explorers' huts of Scott and Shackleton. Today we are an influential voice for the protection of Antarctic heritage in Antarctica and closer to home.

We aim to catalyse conversations about the Antarctic and we are so grateful to the people and organisations that have become kindred champions for Antarctic heritage over the years. Supporting the Polar Worlds gallery at the National Maritime Museum was a real highlight, as well as the Enduring Eye exhibition at the Royal Geographical Society which toured internationally.

We are currently working to help protect *Endurance*, Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship, which sank in 1915 and now rests 3,000 metres below the surface of the freezing

Weddell Sea. It is a challenging endeavour as we consider how such an iconic historic site can be protected, particularly as the climate and its environment changes. And this is the great challenge we have for all heritage in Antarctica.

Before becoming Chief Executive, I worked in heritage for 20 years. From dry rot to damp, I thought I understood the challenge of preserving our most precious historic buildings. I only had half the story. In the Antarctic, you are at the mercy of the environment and the climate, which might prevent us from reaching our sites, or undo previous work we have done. As the climate changes so rapidly these challenges become more acute. How do we carefully and sensitively help buildings that are experiencing the effects of increased rainfall and warmer temperatures with flooding or mould growth? How do we maintain absolute biosecurity, preventing invasive species from hitching a free ride in our clothing and cargo?

Despite the challenges, managing Antarctic heritage is a truly humbling, fascinating and exciting privilege. It is also something we cannot do without the help we receive from our stakeholders and our supporters; from donors to collaborators, we are grateful for their help in protecting and celebrating this precious place, both now and into the future.

Why do we do this? The history of Antarctica would be incomplete without its human heritage. It is so integral to our understanding of this remote, wild and natural place. We have much to learn from those who have gone before and when you visit these special places and are immersed in the theatre of extreme human endeavour, you can feel these great explorers beside you. It is a touchstone for extraordinary human triumph and tragedy with often ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It is our job to make sure that this unique heritage is preserved for generations to come.



Photo Credit: Camilla Nichol in Antarctica © UKAHT.

HELPING TO SAFEGUARD AND PRESERVE ANTARCTICA'S HERITAGE FOR 30 YEARS



Preserving tales of human endeavour and scientific exploration for future generations. Here are some of our key achievements:



CONSERVING ANTARCTIC HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

During the last 30 years, UKAHT has worked hard to preserve Antarctica's heritage. The Trust now manages the conservation of six heritage sites and the historical artefacts within those on the Antarctic Peninsula. In 2022, UKAHT was appointed by the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office to lead the Conservation Management Plan of Sir Ernest Shackleton's shipwreck, *Endurance*, recently found at the bottom of the Weddell Sea.

The Trust also collaborates with other polar organisations to protect Antarctica's heritage. One of its proudest achievements is helping to raise £3.5 million to support the conservation of a number of heritage sites and artefacts from Ernest Shackleton and Robert Falcon Scott's expeditions in the Ross Sea.



Helping to raise £3.5 million to support conservation of heritage sites and artefacts

Photo credits:

Top: Scott's Hut, Hut Point © F G Wills/UKAHT.

Bottom: The inside of Shackleton's Hut, Cape Royds, © UKAHT.

SHARING INCREDIBLE STORIES OF OUR ANTARCTIC PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



UKAHT has dedicated itself to sharing the natural wonders of Antarctica with the world, as well as the inspiring human history of the continent.

As part of its role in the British Antarctic Oral History Project with BAS, BAS Club and Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), the Trust helped to preserve stories and memories of immense triumph, endurance and suffering so that we can all learn from these tales for generations to come. Now over 200 audio and video recordings lie within the BAS Archives Service.

More recently, UKAHT has started sharing incredible stories from leading explorers, scientists, conservationists and artists to talk about Antarctica's fascinating past, present and future on its podcast, A Voyage to Antarctica, to discover why the icy continent matters to us all. It has also collaborated with the BBC on a number of projects to share the stories from 9,000 miles away, including the Natural World documentary, Penguin Post Office, in 2014.



**Preserving stories of
immense triumph,
endurance and
scientific discovery.**

Photo credits:

Top: A UK public engagement programme in partnership with the British Science Association. © Oasis Community Church, Centre & Gardens
Bottom: Oates Gallery at Gilbert White's House © UKAHT.

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO CARE FOR THE FUTURE PROTECTION OF ANTARCTICA AND ITS HERITAGE



Advocating for training in specialist heritage skills for the future

Antarctica is complex, inspiring, fragile and rapidly changing – and so too is its heritage. With this in mind, UKAHT is working hard to help safeguard British heritage and Antarctica, but also inspire the next generation whose continued responsibility it will be to care for this precious wilderness.

Since 2022, UKAHT has become a statutory advisor on Antarctic Heritage to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, which led to its appointment to lead the Conservation Management Plan for *Endurance*. It also plays an advisory role to a range of polar heritage bodies and is working to advocate for the much-needed heritage skills in future generations to maintain its heritage sites.

As an organisation, we are also working hard to adapt to the changing climate and make changes to our operations and policies to ensure we are protecting the wild landscape that our heritage sites call home.

On the next page, we explore some of the key moments during UKAHT's 30-year history.



Photo credits: Top left – right:

Repairs taking place at heritage sites in Antarctica © UKAHT;
Dr Mairi Hilton penguin counting © Lucy Bruzzzone;
Repairs taking place at heritage sites in Antarctica © UKAHT;
SPRI conservators demonstrating their work.

UK ANTARCTIC HERITAGE TRUST

30TH ANNIVERSARY TIMELINE



The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust is established to advance the education of the public by the preservation and protection of their Antarctic heritage.

Assists the National Maritime Museum in saving nine polar lots for the nation including Scott's sledging flag taken to the South Pole and Shackleton's boat compass.

1993



1996



1999



2001

£3.5M

Following designation as an HSM in 1995, Port Lockroy is restored by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) supported by UKAHT and is opened seasonally for visitors.

The Ross Sea Heritage Conservation Project launches. Helping to raise £3.5m to support the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust to conserve the explorers huts of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Robert Falcon Scott.

Management and continued restoration of Port Lockroy – welcoming visitors to the museum, running the post office and capturing data for study of the gentoo penguin colony.

2006



2006



2009



2009-2023



Joins IAATO, helping to advocate and promote safe and environmentally friendly travel to the Antarctic.

Takes responsibility for the management and conservation of Base W on Detaille Island, (after a successful campaign for HSM status), Base F Wordie House and Damoy Point.

Instrumental role in the British Antarctic Oral History Project with BAS, BAS Club and to capture the human stories of Antarctica.

Completes the reconstruction of the Nissen hut at Port Lockroy, which receives an award in 2011 from the Institute of Structural Engineers for its innovative adaptation.

2010



2012



2013-2014



2014



Takes the lead on organising a service of remembrance for Captain Robert Falcon Scott at St Paul's Cathedral.

Collaborates with the BBC on the production of a Natural World documentary, Penguin Post Office.

Base E, Stonington Island and Base Y, Horseshoe Island are added to the portfolio of heritage responsibilities.

With SPRI and the James Caird Society, organises a commemoration for Sir Ernest Shackleton on the centenary of the *Endurance* expedition.

2016



2016-2017



2020



2022



Conservation Programme initiated with detailed site surveys and 3D Base Modelling begins with the Mapping and Geographic Information Centre at BAS.

Antarctica InSight launches – a multimedia programme aiming to inspire people to discover and explore Antarctica.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office appoints UKAHT to lead the Conservation Management Plan of Shackleton's shipwreck, *Endurance*.

THE NEXT 30

SECURING ANTARCTIC HERITAGE

FROM CAMILLA NICHOL, CEO, UK ANTARCTIC HERITAGE TRUST



The next 30 years is about building on our success to find new and inspiring ways to promote a greater public engagement with Antarctica, through storytelling, conservation and advocacy.

Building on our work to date, here are just a few additional ways that UKAHT is helping to preserve and share our Antarctic heritage over the next 30 years

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

Our global climate is changing. In Antarctica, we are witness to the real impacts of a rapidly warming climate. As an organisation, we are highly agile and can adapt to the changing world around us. Adapting to a warmer, wetter, stormier climate on the Antarctic Peninsula and protecting fragile heritage in the face of such change is one of our greatest challenges, both technically and philosophically. On top of that, we must make changes across our operations to minimise our environmental impact and reach Carbon NetZero goals. We are looking at how we operate, how we can harness new technology to minimise our impact, and finding ways to improve our heritage conservation. Advocating for others to do the same is also fundamental to our future.

HARNESSING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Being able to capture our heritage spaces in precise 3D digital models is transforming how we manage our sites. It gives us the opportunity to interrogate the sites and make decisions and plans for conservation without having to pop back with a tape measure. The potential to model planned interventions, prefabricate repairs and gain information that may not be possible in person, is game-changing. Specialists can inform our planning without leaving their desks and we can send teams South even better prepared.

The 3D models also give us a golden opportunity to bring these sites to life for people across the world. Virtual and immersive technologies will allow us to animate these incredible places and share stories and the experience of those who were there for a whole new generation.



CELEBRATING HISTORIC MOMENTS

Bringing to life the wonder of Antarctica, its history and its critical importance in a changing climate, is why we look after its heritage. Public programming through partnership, digital media and culture brings Antarctica to life and it is our privilege to open the door to this extraordinary place for a global audience. We have been celebrating extraordinary stories from the South Polar regions for 30 years. Over the next 30 years, we will shine a spotlight on a more diverse range of stories and perspectives on Antarctica. From revealing hidden tales capturing history in the making and forecasting the future, to exploring our scientific heritage in Antarctica and the impact this is having on us all today. It is our mission to bring this to life in new ways for new audiences and generations.

INVESTING IN FUTURE SKILLS

From artefact conservators to structural engineers and heritage carpenters, it takes a lot of specialist skills to maintain our heritage sites. Many of these skills are in short supply. There are heritage carpenters with experience of Tudor architraves and Baroque cupolas but few have encountered buildings like ours: modest prefabricated huts from the 1950s, standing in the worst weather imaginable. We are advocating for training in heritage skills that can meet the needs of buildings from 1850 onwards, and we are helping to share knowledge in every way we can.

FUTURE ANTARCTIC HERITAGE

History marches on and some of the sites that are currently operational may, one day, become heritage sites themselves. We also know that there is heritage in Antarctica as yet uncovered, *Endurance* being a key example, and as archaeological and surveying technologies improve our knowledge increases. Our role lies in helping with decision-making, policy development and to support the protection and understanding of this precious heritage for future generations.



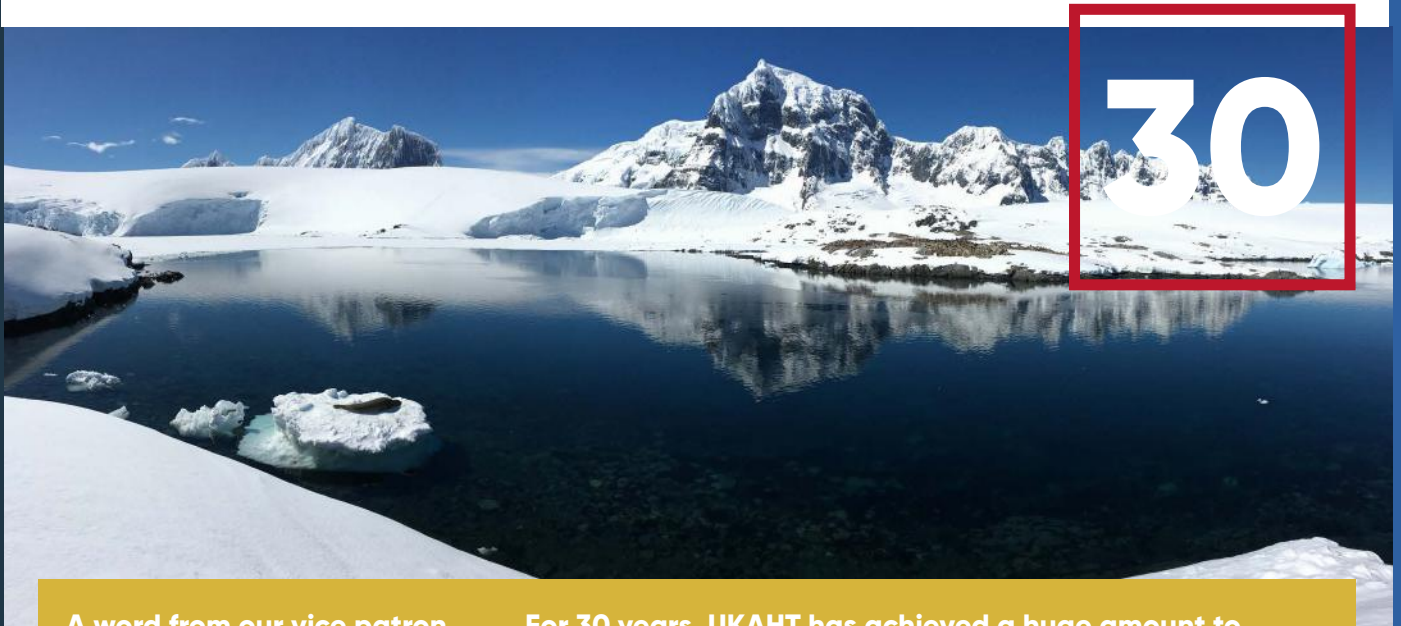
Photo credits: Left - right: 3D modelling, Horseshoe Island, © UKAHT; Port Lockroy goes solar, © UKAHT.



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Thank you

Thank you to all the individuals and organisations who have been invaluable in supporting the preservation and celebration of Antarctic heritage. From our stakeholders and supporters to donors and collaborators, your commitment has played a crucial role in protecting this precious place for future generations. The interconnectedness of the natural environment, scientific exploration, heritage and human endeavour calls for a global team effort and we are honoured to be part of this collective mission. Together, we strive to uphold the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty and ensure the peace, science and enduring legacy of Antarctica. Please continue to support us on this extraordinary journey.



A word from our vice patron



For 30 years, UKAHT has achieved a huge amount to preserve the tales of human endeavour and scientific exploration in Antarctica. It's all in the name of making sure future generations can learn from our tales of triumph, adversity and failure and that these important moments are never forgotten.

I urge you to remain an ambassador for this remarkable continent and its future. Share Antarctica and its stories. Consider how you can make a difference. And join me in supporting the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust in any way you can.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Vice Patron, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust.

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