

Expedition Log Book
VOYAGE #2293
FORGOTTEN ISLANDS
December 31th – 6th 2005

Saturday 31st December

Everyone assembled at the Southern Cross Hotel in Dunedin after breakfast and were met by Shirley and Chris from Heritage Expeditions. It was only a short coach ride to the old Dunedin docks and we were all aboard the *Spirit of Enderby* by 0900 hrs.

While everyone's bags were being delivered to cabins by the crew, our expedition leader, Nathan Russ, held the first briefing for everyone on board to introduce us to the ship, the voyage and all the expedition staff.

At 1000 hrs the pilot came aboard and our voyage commenced with a leisurely trip down the harbour, past Port Chalmers and out to the Southern Pacific Ocean. The strong following wind soon died away to give us a beautiful morning and a very pleasant journey down the harbour. Everyone was on deck to enjoy the coastal scenery and do some "birding". The pilot left us beyond the harbour entrance and we then began to head south around the Otago Peninsula.

While still in fairly sheltered waters we all attended the compulsory lifeboat drill. After that, as we cleared the Peninsula, we began to feel the first effects of the Southerly roll being generated by a strong SW weather pattern over southern New Zealand and the Southern Ocean. By the evening we were well established in this pattern as we pushed south towards Campbell Island. Many of us decided to retire to our berths for an early evening! Thus it was a quiet first night in the bar and the dining room, and even quieter for the new years celebration at midnight! Only two passengers and some of the staff stayed up to toast the arrival of 2006, and even these hardy (or foolhardy?) characters also soon retired to their cabins!





Pilot departing at the Port of Otago

Sunday 1 January

Happy New Year!

We spent the day at sea pushing south on a course for Campbell Island, and accompanied all the way by a solid South Westerly swell. Nevertheless many of us now had our ‘sea legs’ and were able to enjoy the day on deck or on the Bridge, birding or just enjoying the journey.

The video “Beyond the Roaring 40’s” was screened in the morning. This video, although now a little dated, is an excellent commentary on New Zealand’s Sub Antarctic Islands.

At 1500 hrs Nathan gave us an introductory lecture on Campbell Island, which gave us an insight to the features and activities awaiting us on the island.

At 1700 hrs Maurice presented the Department of Conservation’s video “The Battle for Campbell Island”. This video describes the campaign to rid Campbell Island of introduced Norway rats. These rats were present in plague proportions and had severely affected bird and insect life on the island. Dept. of Conservation believes that the island is now completely rat free as a result of that campaign, and Campbell Island is thus now free of all introduced predators.

Our special New Years Eve dinner was served tonight – it had been postponed from last night. More of us now had our sea-legs and were able to enjoy the celebration!

Monday 2 January

The *Spirit of Enderby* entered Perseverance Harbour, Campbell Island at first light. We awoke to a cool, blustery day with frequent North Easterly squalls. A typical day on Campbell Island where all four seasons can often be experienced in the same hour!

This is what we had come to see, so there was no time to be lost. After an early breakfast we were all briefed on the days' activities and the Naiad operations by Nathan while the other expedition staff launched the Naiads and organized the days' activities.

Two separate activities were organized for the day, with the choice of a round trip to North West Bay (the "long walk") or the walk up the boardwalk to spend time with the Southern Royal Albatross in its breeding area. (The Col/Lyall walk) On both walks, the mega- herbs are also a major feature. By 0900 hrs we were ashore at the Campbell Island wharf and the day's activities began.

North West Bay

With Nathan leading and a North East wind at our backs we made good time on a relatively pleasant climb up the hill but rain soon set in and became gradually incessant. Two of our fellow expeditioners -Bob and Kerry – were based in Tucker Cove in the early 1970's so they enjoyed the opportunity to deviate from the track with Chris to visit the old coast-watch station (now derelict) where they had been based. The rest of the group carried on to the ridge-top where Bob, Kerry and Chris rejoined them.

At the top of the ridge the group was able to escape the wind and enjoyed wonderful views of NW Bay and the carpets of mega herbs. Near the summit of the ridge a pair of Hooker sea lions were at home on the track. They were as far from the sea as they could get. The New Zealand pipit was seen in numbers. The numbers of these friendly little birds are building rapidly since the removal of rats from the island. On the descent into Capstan Bay we were met by a yellow eyed penguin making its way up the hill.



Kerry and Bob at Tucker Cove, Campbell Island

The group stopped for lunch at Capstan Bay. While we were there the weather began to deteriorate even more and Nathan received word that one of the passengers back at the wharf had suffered a fall. Nathan thus departed with Doctor Phil to return to the ship and attend to the situation. Chris and John stayed on with the long walkers.

The group began the second part of the trip in worsening weather. Chris quickly decided to split the group up allowing the faster walkers, led by John, to get back to the ship more quickly and the slower group to make their own pace. The faster group made good time and was soon back on board. For the slower group, hot soup was brought out to them from the *Spirit of Enderby* and everyone was back on board by 1830, having enjoyed a wet but memorable day.

Col/Lyall Walk.

The people who went on the Col/Lyall board walk had an equally enjoyable day. The shorter walk enabled most to return to the ship quickly when the rain became more persistent. There were many nesting Southern royal albatross to be seen at the top of the board walk. Walkers were able to check out with Helen and go beyond the boardwalk to enjoy the albatross and mega herbs, but the wet conditions meant an early return to the ship for most.

One passenger overlooked the need to check-in with Helen at the top of the board-walk and stayed out a little longer than intended - enjoying a more personal view of North East harbour than intended!

With the days' excitement over and everyone back on board, we had a late dinner in the calm of Perseverance Harbour. The Captain raised the anchor and we headed back out to the open sea.

Outside the harbour the combined effect of an Easterly swell and SE wind created a spectacular sea. A much smaller vessel, the Clan McLeod, followed the Spirit of Enderby out of Perseverance Harbour. We were able to enjoy the spectacle of its progress, as it surfed some of the waves, from the safety of the *Spirit of Enderby* Bridge. It was a rough night at sea as we headed north to the Auckland Islands.



The Clan McLeod Departing Campbell Island

CAMPBELL ISLAND HISTORY

Campbell Island was discovered in January 1810 by Captain Frederick Hasselberg of the sealing brig, *Perseverance*. Hasselberg named the island after his employers, Robert Campbell and Co. of Sydney. On a later visit to the Island Captain Hasselberg, along with a woman called Elizabeth Farr and a young boy George Allwright were drowned in Perseverance Harbour.

The Sir James Clark Ross expedition of 1840-42 called at Campbell Island. Two scientists accompanying Ross, J Hooker and D Lyall, compiled the first plant and animal inventories for Campbell Island.

A second expedition sponsored by the government of France to observe the transit of Venus arrived in 1874 and remained for three months. One member of this expedition, M Duris, died of typhoid fever on the island. He was buried on the point

opposite Venus cove. An inscribed tombstone and iron cross were erected over the grave.

From 1868 to 1923, both British Navy and New Zealand government vessels made periodic visits to the island to service a castaway depot (at Depot Point, Perseverance Harbour), one of the several erected on the Subantarctic islands.

Sheep, goats and pigs had been liberated at various times prior to 1895 with the intention of providing sustenance to the shipwrecked, but none of these animals survived for very long. Fires had been started occasionally by accident or by design and rats had been reported as well established on the main island by 1874. Sheep were re-introduced in 1895 after the island (Pastoral Run No. 511) had been leased to J Gordon for a term of 21 years. The last of the shore whaling stations was located at North West Bay and operated from 1909 to 1916, in conjunction with management of the sheep run.

The farming era lasted until 1931 when unreliable transport, accidents and a world-wide recession finally made farming uneconomical. The farmers withdrew and left about 4000 sheep and between 20 to 30 cattle unattended on the island.

A wartime coast-watching station was established in 1941. When the coast-watching station was abandoned at the end of the war, meteorological activities continued at Tucker Cove. The station now occupies a new base at Beeman Cove, opened in November 1958. This base was decommissioned in late 1994. The old base is derelict.

The sheep were removed over a 20 year period 1970 – 1990. The cattle were removed in the 1970's and once the sheep were gone what few cats remained died out naturally. The Rats were poisoned in a major operation in 2001. Today the flightless teal have been released back on the main island and snipe have recolonised the Island.

Tuesday 3rd January

This morning we arrived at Auckland Island at 1300 hrs. Some people were out of bed to see the great view of the harbour entrance as we entered Carnley Harbour before anchorage in Tagua Bay. Breakfast was ready at 0800 hrs, after which we had a briefing on the days' activities from Nathan. We had two options – 1. a walk to the coast watchers hut, or 2. a Naiad cruise in Tagua Bay. 20 people decided to go to the coast watchers huts, led by Nathan, while everyone else enjoyed the Naiad cruise with Matt, Maurice and Chris. There was plenty of birds and wildlife to be seen on both trips.

The coast watchers' camp in Tagua Bay is hidden amongst the rata forest, and although in a state of rapid decline, it gives an insight into the life of the few people who lived on the Auckland Islands during World War 2. The well kept lookout further up the track with its view straight down Carnley Harbour must have seen many hours of watching. Its position and the vegetation combine to give the feeling of seclusion.



Rata tree in flower

With everyone back on board by 1800 hrs, *Spirit of Enderby* went to Adams Island to drop off Graham and Kath and all their gear. They were off to continue their study of the Gibson's wandering albatross, which they have been doing for at least the last 10 years. As we were anchored in calm waters, most people enjoyed a drink or two in the bar for pre dinner drinks before a lovely dinner. We went to sleep in the calm, but at approx. 0300 hrs the captain lifted anchor and we headed for Port Ross.

Wednesday 4th January

Nathan woke us up this morning at 0630 hrs. The *Spirit of Enderby* was anchored off Enderby Island in Sandy Bay. There was an easterly swell with a southerly building – making landing doubtful... Nathan, Maurice and Matt went off to see the DoC ranger on Enderby Island for more information on the conditions. They decided that landing on Enderby Island was not possible as the deteriorating conditions made it too dangerous. Nathan gave us a briefing on the final outcome of the day, which was to be a trip to Ranui Cove, and gave a brief description of the Port Ross settlement. Matt then gave a lecture on the Hardwicke Settlement – historical perspective. He talked about the Enderby Bros. and in particular Charles and his dream of a Southern settlement at Port Ross. The story of the settlement can be summed up by the cemetery where a tombstone for Isabella Younger is made from a mill wheel, brought south to mill grain that never grew.



In Port Ross

Finally we (32 pax) hopped into the Naiads for a long ride from the ship to Ranui. There were some big squalls coming through, but it was fine between them. Onshore the weather was thankfully a little different and it was a lovely warm morning. Everyone had the opportunity to visit the old coast watch station and see the view the watchers had of Ewing Island. The coast watchers were on the Sub-Antarctic islands during World War 2, with the first men living on the islands in 1941. Their job was to watch the coasts of the islands and radio to New Zealand any ship sightings. The code name was the “Cape Expedition”. We also went up to the old coast watch lookout. The weather continued to improve and there were lots of rata in flower, blooming bright shades of red. We could also hear many bellbirds singing. After a lovely morning, enjoyed by all, we endured the long Naiad ride back to the *Spirit of Enderby* for a late lunch. After lunch we went to the Hardwicke Settlement in Erebus Cove, which was a much shorter Naiad ride. With such nice weather conditions at the time we could all see how easily the early colonists might have been duped into thinking that the site had potential for a settlement. How wrong they were!



The historic coach watch station at Ranui Cove

Another boat was spotted in Erebus Cove, the Ketch, Northern Light. Nathan went and talked to them. The rest of us went to look at the cemetery which had several graves from the settlement era and shipwreck era, most of which are those of shipwrecked mariners.



Graveyard Hardwicke Settlement

Birds of the Auckland Islands

The Auckland Islands are the main breeding ground for the white-capped albatross *Thalassarche [cauta] cauta* with an estimated population of 65,000 pairs chiefly on Disappointment Island. Other albatrosses breeding include the Gibson's wandering albatross *Diomedea [exulans] gibsoni*, with an estimated ca. 7000 breeding pairs - main population on Adams Island. The Southern royal albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] epomophora* is represented by only 60 breeding pairs on Enderby and Adams Island. The light mantled sooty albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata* is quite abundant, especially around the southern end of the main island with an estimated population of 5000 pairs. Northern giant petrel *Macronectes giganteus* is a common breeder. Other tubenoses that breed in the group include cape petrels (approx. 200 pairs), which breeds mainly on Beacon Rocks, the white-headed petrel *Pterodroma lessonii* and the fulmar prion *Pachyptila crassirostris*. Sooty shearwater breeds chiefly on offshore islands whilst Antarctic prion *Pachyptila desolata banksi* and the white-chinned petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* breed in various sized colonies. The grey-backed storm petrel *Garrodia nereis*, white-faced storm petrel *Pelagodroma marina* and black-bellied storm petrel *Pachyptila belcheri* are widely distributed as is the Sub-Antarctic little shearwater *Puffinus assimilis elegans* in a much smaller number. The Sub-Antarctic form of the common diving petrel breeds numerous around coastal fringes, whilst South Georgian diving petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus* has been recorded breeding on Enderby and Dundas (present status not fully understood).

Yellow-eyed penguins are found throughout the island group, with good populations on Enderby and Rose Islands. The rockhopper penguin population has declined but some traditional colonies still exist on both east and west coasts.

The Auckland Island shag breeds throughout the entire group, whilst the Auckland Island flightless teal occurs only on the free-predator islets. The Auckland Island snipe breeds on most offshore Islands, including Ewing, Disappointment, Adams and Enderby. The Auckland Island rail breeds on Adams and Disappointment Island.

Banded dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus* breeds on Enderby Island. The southern skua is found in scattered numbers throughout the group, whilst moderate numbers of southern black-backed gull and red-billed gull, breed throughout the group. White-fronted tern and Antarctic terns breed in small colonies throughout the group. The red-crowned parakeet is dominant on the larger offshore islands, whilst the yellow-crowned parakeet is found on the main Auckland Island. The local form of the NZ pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae aucklandicus* is common chiefly around the coastal areas. Long-tailed cuckoo and welcome swallow also breed on the island. Grey duck and the NZ falcon breed in small numbers, but with main concentration on the southern end of the main island. Silvereye and Auckland Island tomtit *P. M. marrineri* are common throughout. Bellbird is probably the most numerous of the bush birds, while the tui is present throughout the group in good numbers.

Self introduced breeders include the mallard, skylark, hedge sparrow, song thrush, blackbird, chaffinch, goldfinch, redpoll, house sparrow, and starling. Migratory waders include the knot, sharp-tailed sandpiper, curlew sandpiper, red-necked stint, turnstone, eastern-bartailed godwit and Asiatic black tailed godwit. The white-faced heron is a straggler and the Arctic tern is occasionally seen.

Everyone was back on board the *Spirit of Enderby* by 1800 hrs for dinner at 1930 hrs. After dinner we left the Auckland Islands for Snares Island, heading north in a S.W. wind and N.W. swell. It was to be a rough night out at sea, and we “battened down the hatches” or closed the port holes in preparation for rough seas. Another quiet night onboard the *Spirit of Enderby* with most people retiring early to their cabins.



Interior of the Coast Watch Lookout Hut at Ranui

Thursday 5th January

Arrived at Snares Island this morning through very rough seas, at 0915 hrs. Landing is not permitted on the Snares Islands, but it is possible to view the wonderful scenery and wildlife from the Naiad boats. After breakfast we had great views of the islands as we approached.

On our way to the islands we passed Svetaeva, a relatively new passenger vessel that cruises the sub-Antarctic islands and Antarctica, leaving Snares. They had not attempted zodiac cruising as the conditions were too rough. Nathan decided to attempt the Naiad cruise to see the Snares crested penguin and other wildlife up close. Two Naiads were lowered into the water and one loaded with passengers. Then a big set came through and the wind shifted, which made cruising not possible. All the passengers and Naiads were returned to the *Spirit of Enderby*, and we departed Snares and headed home towards Bluff, with some very wet people onboard.

Conditions improved enough as we cruised into the lee of Stewart Island for Nathan to give us our final debriefing in the lecture room and explain the procedures for disembarking tomorrow. We had a spectacular sunset, and then when it was dark we could see the lights of Bluff and Invercargill glowing in the distance, letting us know that we were nearly at the end of our journey.

The Snares Island

Situated approximately 209km southwest of Bluff, the Snares are 243ha in extent and consist of two small rocky islands and several rocks, including the five islands of the so-called western reef- Tahi, Rua, Toru, Wha and Rima.

The islands were discovered by Vancouver in 1791. Just over one year later, December 1772, the crew of the *Britannia* sighted the Snares and named them the Sunday Islands. The name Sunday gave way to that given by the first discoverer – the Snares.

Historical records of these Islands are sketchy. Little is known of the activities of sealers which obviously worked these Islands. It appears a gang of four, who were escaped convicts from Norfolk Island, were marooned on the Snares between 1810-1817 from the ship *Adventure*, the reason given was that the ship was running short of provisions and the captain gave the men the choice of going ashore or of starving afloat. The men were given a few potatoes which they planted. During their long exile one of the four became deranged – this alarmed the others so much that they pushed him over a cliff. The remaining three were rescued by an American ship the *Enterprise* which reached Philadelphia on 11 May 1818.

There are no recorded shipwrecks from the Island despite their position almost directly in the path of vessels sailing from Australia towards Cape Horn. It was intended at one stage to erect a lighthouse on the Island but with the opening of the Panama Canal the need for a lighthouse largely disappeared.

The Snares group are free of introduced predators and for this reason they have a large number of breeding birds. The islands are especially famous by the endemic Snares crested penguin *Eudyptes robusta* (breeding pairs: about 25,000 in total) and large colonies of the Bullers albatross *Thalassarche [bulleri] bulleri* (a population of 5000-8500 breeding pairs). These return to the islands in mid-December with most eggs being laid in January.



Approaching Snares Island

Friday 6th January

We awoke this morning for breakfast at 0700 hrs, tied up to the wharf at the Port of Bluff. After breakfast everyone packed their bags and tied the correct colour of string to their bags so the Russian sailors could carry them off the ship. Once all bags were off the passengers disembarked the *Spirit of Enderby*, at approx. 0930 hrs. A group photo was taken of us and we all said our goodbyes, hopped on the bus and said farewell to the *Spirit of Enderby*. I'm sure everyone will have many memories (and many photos to develop when back home) of Voyage # 2293, *Forgotten Islands of the South Pacific*. Thanks for a great trip!



The team at the lookout above Ranui Cove