

## **Ireland and England October-November 2007**

Thursday 25 October 2007. Left Jaffrey around 9:30am and drove to Weston, Mass., where I left my car at the Bates's. Nancy drove me to the Riverside T Station where I caught the trolley for Logan. Had a leisurely lunch at Legal Seafoods in the airport. Flew Continental to Newark, changed planes and on to Dublin.

Friday 26 October 2007. Arrived in Dublin about 6:30am. Dark as Hades. And still dark at 8am. Took Bus 147 from the airport to the Central Bus Station (€6), left my luggage and bought a ticket for Athy for later in the day. Walked to O'Connell Street where I got a cup of coffee at a Burger King and waited for the city to wake up. Admired the **Dublin Spire** in the center of the street. Wonder how they got it up (you can see at [archiseek](#)). The Tourist office opened at 9 and I picked up a map and bought a ticket for a city bus tour which took about 1-1/2 hours and well worth it. Afterwards walked across the Liffey and up Grafton Street which is now a pedestrian street and lined mostly by chain stores. Had fish n' chips and a pint at The Duke off of Grafton Street. Walked back to the bus station and took the 1:30 bus to Athy. Heavy traffic but a nice ride of an hour or so. Left my bag at the Heritage Center, said hello to Margaret Walsh and had a look around. Soon I was across the way at **O'Brien's**, the unofficial headquarters of the annual Shackleton Autumn School. This was the second year in a row that I had come to Athy. It's always a good time for those interested in the Antarctic and Shackleton. Present were Kevin Kenny, who I remembered from last year, and Frank O'Brien's daughter, Judith, behind the bar. Enjoyed a pint. About 6:30 went across to the Heritage Center for the opening reception. People began filtering in: Jonathan and Arthur Shackleton arrived, Bob Headland, Bob Burton, Zaz, Joe O'Farrell. Several glasses of wine. Then a talk by Kevin Myers, well known in Ireland as a former columnist for the *Irish Times*. Gave a controversial talk on immigration. John McKenna—just as he did with Margot last year—made pointed comments from the rear. Afterwards, Jonathan, the two Bobs, Jackie Burton and Joe O'Farrell went to Joe's (!) Chinese Restaurant for a good meal to end the day. Jonathan and I drove to Abbeyleix to Arthur's house—**Fruitlawn**—where we spent the next three nights.

Saturday 27 October 2007. A big Irish breakfast at Arthur's and then into Athy just as things were starting. Bob Headland began things with a overview of Arctic exploration as it related to sovereignty issues. He was followed by Will Gow on the Shackleton Centenary Expedition (a somewhat questionable undertaking, some think). Jonathan, Paul Davies and I had lunch at The Bay Tree. The afternoon session started with a good talk by Max Jones on Captain Scott and the question of heroes. David Tatham followed with a talk on the biographical dictionary he's preparing on South Georgia. Once the sessions ended, repaired to **O'Brien's** for a pint, then off to shop for Sunday night dinner. Jonathan and I then headed for Frank Taaffe's house for a very nice cocktail party. A marvelous house with lovely furniture and furnishings and filled with books: his, Seamus's and another son's. Three collections under one roof. From Frank's we drove to the outskirts of Athy to the Clenard Courtyard Hotel for the **Autumn School Dinner**.

Salmon or Beef. This hotel could be found in any American suburb; nothing Irish about it. But still a good time. Back to Arthur's, avoiding another rendezvous at O'Brien's. Once at Arthur's I began some of the cooking for Sunday night's dinner: Beef Bourguignonne. Set clocks and watches back one hour.

Sunday 28 October 2007. Back into Athy. First session a very good program by Bob Burton, the theme being the importance of penguins to the success and survival of Antarctic expeditions. Very interesting. A substitute for the next speaker was from the National Trust and spoke on conservation issues related to the historic huts. Next a rundown on the International Polar Year. In the afternoon there was a Korean feature-length very bizarre movie which I'm at a loss to explain. Things ended up with Bob Headland moderating an open forum. Jonathan and I headed back to Arthur's. Finished up cooking dinner and eventually served it up for us and their tenants/neighbors/friends, Ian and Monica.

Monday 29 October 2007. Had coffee with Monica and Ian across the way and then Jonathan and I headed off for Lakeview House, arriving early afternoon. After a slice of pizza, went a few miles away to see if we could spot some migrating swans. No luck. Had dinner that night with Jane and David, Jonathan's kids. Daphne away at the moment. Watched a Mawson docu-drame on TV in front of the fire.

Tuesday 30 October 2007. Late morning Jonathan and I headed for Dublin, stopping at a garden center *cum* restaurant *cum* gift shop (Xmas things already out) and had a sandwich for lunch. Tried to find Shackleton House in Clonee, without success. In Dublin, stopped to buy a can of paint ('Library Red'); then parked the car and walked to a camera shop near Grafton Street. Jonathan picking up his camera that had been repaired and buying a new one for good measure. Then off on a 'mystery tour' to Stillorgan, taking some time to find our destination. What was it? The home of **Geraldine Bransfield** whose husband was a descendant of Edward Bransfield who sighted the Antarctic continent a few days after Bellingshausen back in 1820. We had tea and a good chat. She made copies for us of some interesting papers including some William Speirs Bruce letters. Back into Dublin where we met up with Daphne at the **Kildare Street & University Club** on St Stephen's Green. A lovely old fashioned club with lots of ambience. Enjoyed hake for dinner.

Wednesday 31 October 2007. Spent the day around Lakeview House. Up to see the horses behind the house and down to the hide on the lake to check for Hooper Swans. At least one spotted. That evening, Jonathan, Jane and I (Daphne was on a job down south) drove over to Oldcastle a few miles away and had an enjoyable dinner at **Boilies**.

Thursday 1 November 2007. First thing in the morning Jonathan and I did a quick trip north to the marina where he keeps *Seagull*, his ancient wooden motor launch. Needed some bailing out. Back to Lakeview House then off to Dublin Airport around noon. Ryanair flight to Gatwick, then train to Eastbourne. Why Eastbourne? The Shackletons lived at **14 Milnthorpe Road**, and we thought we'd pay a visit. Jonathan had been in touch with the present occupants—it's been split up into flats—and we were invited to tea. The Pettegrews were very welcoming. A nearby guesthouse had been arranged for us

('Beachy Rise') which proved perfect. We went around the corner to *The Ship* for dinner (scampi for me) and walked around the very compact and attractive shopping district (shops on the ground floor; flats above) called Meads village. (Why aren't such sensible pedestrian-scale developments built these days?)

Friday 2 November 2007. After breakfast we walked into Meads village (admiring the design of it—everything one would need was right there), then a block or two away to 14 Milnthorpe Road where we took photos in the daylight. Continuing on we walked down to the seafront and along King Edwards Parade until we came to the **Grand Hotel**. It's been renovated recently and is, indeed, quite grand. Shackleton's signature (dated 4th Aug 1917, just after *Endurance*) appears on the endpapers of the hotel's history, which the people at reception kindly xeroxed for us. He also drew a map of his Nimrod plans on the hotel's letterhead which was displayed at the National Maritime Museum's recent Antarctic exhibit. After a coffee we got a cab, returned to our guesthouse and retrieved our luggage and went on to the railroad station, soon on our way to London. We arrived at Victoria and walked to our hotel, the St George in St George's Drive. Not the greatest but it's only one night. Soon we're back at Victoria and on the train to Sydenham Hill where we walk quite a ways to **12 Westwood Hill**, where the Shackletons lived when Ernest was a student at Dulwich. Like the Eastbourne house, it's been divided into flats. Fortunately, one was for sale and we managed to get in to have a look. Took a photo of the fireplace which indeed is shown in a photograph taken when the Shackletons lived there. We got a minicab near the rail station and set off for another 'Antarctic site,' the **Sir Ernest Shackleton Public House** in Tulse Hill, not far off. After a lot of looking the cabbie concluded that the pub was no more. The site was surrounded by a fence and construction was underway. We should have gone there last year! We had the cab take us on to Dulwich village, which I hadn't been to before, not far from Dulwich College. Attractive village-like assortment of shops. Went to the pub (Crown and Greyhound) and had a pint, killing time before going to Dulwich College for the **James Caird Society** AGM, talk and dinner. In time we walked there and had a fine evening, seeing many friends and acquaintances (and sitting only feet away from the *James Caird*). Back to London by train and to our hotel.

Saturday 3 November 2007. Nice bright day. Went to breakfast and had to queue on the stairs! That's a first. But it was a good breakfast in the end. Headed out, passing **Sir Clements Markham's** house at 21 Eccleston Square (taking photos on the way) and on to Victoria. Tube to Notting Hill Gate and walked to **29 Palace Court**, yet another Shackleton house. I knew there was one in this street but only recently learned the number. It is now owned by Brigham Young University and used as its London study center. By tube to Green Park; walked to Hatchards, then to Sotherans where we met the new 'Stuart Leggatt' (Mark James) and bought a book or two. Back to Green Park tube station where Jonathan and I parted ways, he heading to Essex, I think, and I to Waterloo to take a train, off to spend the weekend with Martin and Margaret Henderson. Got off in Alton where I was met by Martin. We drove to the Mill House and were welcomed by Margaret, Anna and a new pup, Salli. After a bowl of soup, Martin and I drove into Winchester to the College to try to find a plaque commemorating **Apsley Cherry-Garrard**. The Cloisters is full of plaques but none for Cherry, although there was a nice

one for Mallory, lost on Everest. We asked at the Porter's Lodge with no success, but were sent off to Cherry's old house—Kenny's—where the master's wife showed us framed photos of the classes Cherry was in and there he was. Back to the Mill House. Tea and then a drink and a fine dinner (duck). Before dinner we drove into New Alresford to see the Guy Fawkes fireworks and bonfire.

Sunday 4 November 2007. A relaxing Sunday. Spent some time on the computer arranging a car and accommodation for the coming week and checking e-mail. A delicious lamb for Sunday lunch; warm enough to eat outside. Helped Martin do some hedge trimming and put away the garden furniture.

Monday 5 November 2007. Martin and I caught the 9:48 train to London, parting ways at Waterloo. I took the tube up to Liverpool Street Station, then the train to Stansted. Had lunch in the airport then picked up a Ford Focus at Alamo Car Rental and drove for an hour or so to Sudbury where I had a booking at the **Old Bull Hotel** at £50 for the night. Walked around the town which is reasonably attractive. The market square is probably the best feature. Gainsborough was from here and there is a museum in his house. Had dinner in a quite nice Indian restaurant (Ballington Valley Indian Cuisine; chicken tandoori). Being the actual Guy Fawkes day there were fireworks going off through the evening.

Tuesday 6 November 2007. A long day ahead so started off early. Went mostly on the back roads. Through Long Melford, Cross Green (tiny, very nice little village), Bury St. Edmunds, Brandon to King's Lynn, an interesting market town and port. Stopped to find and photograph the statue of **George Vancouver**, who was on Cook's second voyage. Continued west and then north to Boston where I stopped for lunch. Very busy in the center of the town. Had a pub lunch and spent some time at the St Botolph's Church (or the **Boston Stump**) where there is a plaque commemorating two men who were on Cook's second voyage.

Now on my way to the Cotswolds. Headed south and west. Through Market Deeping, Stamford (worth a stop and stay at another time), around Northampton, Banbury, Chipping Norton, Burford to Northleach, my destination and the home of **Julia Bradford** (and Pansy and Stick), arriving just after dark. Long-suffering Julia has put me up in London for years and now she's moved to this lovely town. She's recovering from ankle surgery and can't drive, so we soon headed off to Cirencester to do some food shopping. Back again, we relaxed over drinks and then had an excellent dinner of pork chops. Her house is at the edge of the village in a very sympathetically designed development.

Wednesday 7 November 2007. Spent most of the day in Oxford. Drove to the Park & Ride and took the bus in. Walked around a bit and checked in at the Bodleian Library and arranged to have a look at its copy of the *Aurora* later in the day. Took a local bus out to Iffley to find **Frank Bickerton**'s birthplace. Only about a mile from the center of Oxford, but almost like a rural village. The house is now a hotel. A little further along is St Mary's Church where he was christened. A real gem. Back by bus to central Oxford. Had a pint and a sandwich and then back to the Bodleian where I spent a half hour or so with the

*Aurora*. By bus back to the Park & Ride and fetched my car. Drove back to Northleach in a circuitous way, seeing a bit of this part of the Cotswolds. Bourton-on-the-Water, the Slaughters, Guiting Power, Bibury, then back to Northleach. Had a relaxing bath, a drink and then Julia and I went up the road to The Wheatsheaf for dinner (fish and chips for me; green curry for Julia).

Thursday 8 November 2007. Set out for Cambridge after breakfast, arriving at my hotel (Warkworth House) about 12:30. Dropped off my bag and drove to Stansted to return the car. Bus back to Cambridge where I was ensconced until Tuesday morning. Had dinner that night at the Mai Thai Restaurant beside Parker's Piece, preceded by a pint at the Clarendon Arms and followed by "The Importance of Being Earnest" (starring Penelope Keith) at the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Penelope didn't seem to project very well.

Friday 9 November 2007. After breakfast headed off to the Scott Polar Research Institute where I was for most of the day. Had lunch with Charles Swithinbank at "The Advocate," formerly "Lawyers." (Next year it will probably be "Barristers.") Worked on transcribing Davis' *Letter from the Antarctic*. Had dinner at the Jinling Noodle Bar.

Saturday 10 November 2007. Walked to the University Library to see an exhibition on 'Travellers and Tourists in Britain.' At noon met up with Wendy Driver, Cathy Cooper, Judy Skelton, Pauline Young, Celine Pickard, the new Friends of SPRI director, and went to the Pantons Arms for lunch. After lunch I went off to photograph Brian Roberts' house, then to the Fitzwilliam Museum. That afternoon the AGM of the Friends of SPRI was held, preceded by a good talk by Tony Soper. After the reception, Mike Tarver and I repaired to the Clarendon Arms for a pint and conversation.

Sunday 11 November 2007. Remembrance Sunday. Watched a ceremony at the war memorial on my way back from buying a ticket at the railroad station. Took a bus to Ely via Newmarket and had a look at the famous cathedral with its amazing lantern rising above the crossing. Went through the local museum and then a bowl of soup at The Lamb. Caught the bus back to Cambridge going the more direct route. Dinner that night at The Varsity (excellent beef kabob).

Monday 12 November 2007. To SPRI to spend most of the day in the archives. Transcribed *The Blizzard*, had a look at the *Adelie Mail*, the *Aurora Australis* and the watercolors done by Davis during Ross's expedition. Walked over to St Johns College to see a small Antarctic exhibit, mostly on the Commonwealth Trans-antarctic Expedition. That night had a pizza at Zizzi. Early rise tomorrow so borrowed alarm clock from Mrs Collins.

Tuesday 13 November 2007. Up around 3:30am to start a long day: Cambridge to Jaffrey, New Hampshire. Start off walking in rain to the station. Took the first train (4:48); arrived Liverpool Street station. Circle Line to Victoria. Gatwick Express to Gatwick. Flew Gatwick to Newark, changed planes, Newark to Boston. Shuttle to T station. Trolley to Government Center. Walked to the Athenaeum where there was a reception and dinner. Walked to Park Street station. Trolley to Auditorium station.

Walked to the Harvard Club just as Travellers was finishing up. Went with George and Nancy Bates to Weston, where I had left my car behind their house. Drove to Jaffrey, arriving about midnight. That must be 30 hours or so on the go. I've got to remember to take a later flight next time, and a non-stop one, too!