

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE

VOLUME 8, NO 9, WINTER 2019/20

The Association's 27th Year

Contents

Notes and News: 2020 AGM and Conference; Carlton & Chellington Society;
Society publications ~ *page 2*

Articles:

Bedfordshire's Polar Heroes:: TREVOR STEWART ~ *page 3*

BLHA Spring Workshop on GIS: DES HOAR ~ *page 20*

Publications Received ~ *page 22*

History in Bedfordshire is published by the

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk

For HIB: Editor: Ted Martin, 2A The Leys, Langford, Beds SG18 9RS

Telephone: 01462 701096. Email: ed.martin39@btinternet.com

For BLHA: Secretary: Clive Makin, 32 Grange Road, Barton Le Clay, Bedford MK45

4RE: Telephone: 01582 655785

Contributions are very welcome **and needed**: please telephone or e-mail the Editor
before sending any material.

All rights reserved. Copyright © 2019/20 BLHA and contributors

ISSN 0968-9761

Notes and news

Rather appropriately most of this Winter issue is devoted to Bedfordshire's polar explorers and I am very grateful to Trevor Stewart for permission to use his material.

Advance information on the 2020 AGM and Conference, Saturday, 20 June 2020, to be held at the Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue,

Bedford (disabled access; parking) on the subject of '*Life on the Home Front in Bedfordshire during the two World Wars*'. The conference starts at 10am and finishes at 4pm; lunch and a Bedford tour are from 12.30–2pm. Speakers will cover life in the towns and villages in Bedfordshire during those wars: Paul Brown will tell of Leighton Buzzard and Robert Billington of Willington while Richard Galley talks on Bedford's Highlanders in the morning session on WW1. Stuart Antrobus will talk on the Women's Land Army and Dr Kathryn Walker on Luton in the afternoon WW2 session. The international keynote speaker is Dr Vernon Williams, Emeritus Professor of History, Abilene Christian University, Texas, USA, who will talk on Anglo-American relationships locally in WW2.

There will be book sales and signings plus displays and stalls. The cost is £23, including buffet lunch and coach transport for the tour. The Conference is hosted by the Bedford Historical Record Society supported by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society.

Carlton & Chellington Society. We have had the sad news that the Carlton & Chellington Society will dissolve at the end of 2019. Over the years they have produced an excellent *Newsletter* containing interesting articles, by Mike Pratt, based on his research, which we have been pleased to reprint. Happily, Mike Pratt has told me that a skeleton staff will continue to take care of their archive and hopefully continue their input to Bedfordshire's local history. They tried for a year to get new members to join the committee without success. If we want our societies to continue, members *must* contribute. Some societies exist only because of the efforts of just two or three members and, when they run out of steam, the society folds. But there is some good news: in October a new society, Shillington History Society, joined BLHA.

Society publications. There are many good publications produced by our local history societies and it occurs to me that, once they have had their initial publicity and reviews in this and other similar publications, and the first sales, the local history world moves on and the society is left with stock which then sells only slowly. So I propose to have a publications list in every issue of *HIB* where these publications will appear with as many contact details as possible for as long as possible, so that the titles are kept before the public. Hopefully this will help our Societies with their sales. Please send me details of any publications you would like included. I will trawl back in *HIB* to pick up details of previous publications. This list will not include publications from commercial publishers and will start in the Spring issue. **Ted Martin**

Bedfordshire's Polar Heroes

It must surely be pure chance that there were five polar explorers with connections to our town or county who had important roles in the explorations of Antarctica led by both Captain Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton. It is appropriate that these heroic exploits are recalled.

George Percy Abbott

George Abbott was born in London in 1880 but his parents moved back to their home town of Northampton when he was just a few weeks old.

Abbott joined the Royal Navy just three days after his 15th birthday on 13 March 1895 and, unusually, then followed a distinguished career in each of the three services.

His first taste of fame was to be at the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901 when, as an Ordinary Seaman, he was selected to be one of the young naval ratings to pull the gun carriage bearing the coffin of the Queen. A horse carrying a senior army officer in the procession got excited and broke away from the parade. Abbott fell out from his place on the pulling ropes, recaptured the horse, calmed it and returned it to its rider, potentially saving casualties. For his gallantry he was awarded the Royal Victorian Medal (the funeral procession can actually be viewed at www.britishpathe.com).

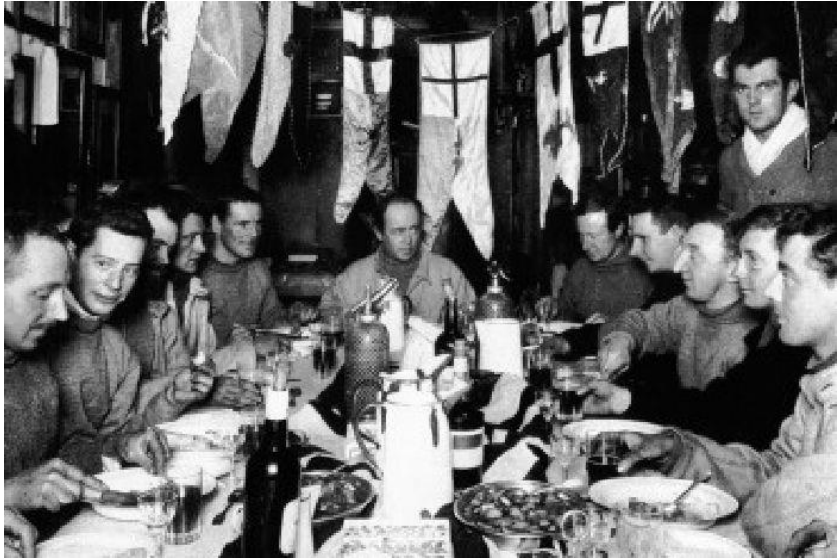
Abbott eventually achieved the rank of Petty Officer, Unarmed Combat Instructor. His athletic prowess made him a natural instructor in swimming, boxing, jumping and running. He was also one of the leaders of the Naval and Military Tournament at Olympia for many years and judo champion of the Navy.

Because he was so fit and strong, he was chosen to be one of the Petty Officers from the Royal Navy to go on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's last and fatal expedition to the South Pole in 1910.

He was assigned to the northern party which was six strong and commanded by V L A Campbell. Their main tasks were to collect scientific data and set up supply depots for the returning Pole assault party. Training included swimming for an hour in an open-air pool during November.

They sailed on the *Terra Nova* in 1910, leaving Dunedin, New Zealand. The priest of the Seamen's Mission there, Rev A N Falconer, presented George with a copy of the New Testament on his departure. Incidents like the time the party was holed up in an ice cave for three months in total darkness during the Antarctic winter with relatively no food contributed to George's later ill-health.

It was George who went out to kill a seal for the men to eat but although he succeeded, while wrestling with the animal, his knife slipped and he managed to sever the ligaments of four fingers on his right hand. Although the expedition's surgeon Levick treated the injury with great skill and care at the time, George was never able to bend the fingers of his hand more than an inch again.



Scott's party in the Antarctic

Despite his fitness and immense physical strength, the rigours of the expedition undermined his health and left him scarred. When he returned, he was one of 33 who received the 1910-14 Antarctic Medal and he also spent some time in a Royal Naval Hospital suffering from mental fatigue (a fate which befell many of those who spent long periods in the Antarctic). He was eventually invalided out of the navy and sent to a public hospital, as a result of which he lost his service pension.

Former polar colleague Cherry Garrard (see page 5) worked hard publicly campaigning against the Government's treatment of those who had once been considered heroes and he even paid for some of the treatment needed by his friend. Abbott was eventually permitted to join the army on 2 August 1914, just two days before outbreak of the First World War

There are no records of his war service so he probably did not go to France. He transferred to the Royal Air Force in 1919 and it is known that he was a Warrant Officer (mechanic) (and a Petty Officer when he served at RNAS Chingford) at Cranwell School of Training and Sheffield aircraft repair depot.

On 1 February 1919, he was posted to GQ RAF in France and was later an instructor at the Boys' Training School at Eastchurch and also at the Armament and Gunnery School. His final posting was to RAF Henlow here in Bedfordshire where he learned to fly and was commissioned and promoted to Flying Officer. He served there for many years, test-flying aircraft which at that time had open cockpits.

A week before his death in November 1923 he flew from Henlow to Castle Ashby in Northamptonshire to give a lecture on his Antarctic experiences. He was reported to have lost his goggles and his helmet during the flight and, as a result, he contracted a very heavy cold which he could not fight off and which developed into pneumonia which killed him at the young age of 43.

George was given what almost amounted to a state funeral. There was a full parade through Henlow led by the band of the Royal Air Force and a guard of honour with a special train taking the coffin and all 600 personnel from Henlow to Northampton for the burial service: 300 men volunteering to pay their own expenses to pay their last respects to this inspirational and popular man. He was buried with full military honours at Northampton General Cemetery on 26 November 1923 following a service at All Saints Church. All the shops in Northampton town centre were closed as a mark of respect. It was described in the local press as one of the most imposing funerals ever seen in Northampton.

His widow moved back to Northampton where she became a domestic science teacher and died in 1992. Their only son Donald Roy, who was only 4 at the time of his father's death, later joined the Fleet Air Arm and was killed in a flying accident while test-flying a new aircraft over Lee-on-Solent in October 1950.

There is a memorial to George Abbott in St Andrew's Church, Henlow, and a memorial plaque in the chapel at RAF Henlow, but a blue plaque could not be placed on his home because his bungalow was demolished when the airfield at RAF Henlow was extended.

Abbott Mount in the northern foothills of Victoria Land and Abbott Peak on the north side of Mount Erebus in the Antarctic are named after him.

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

Apsley Cherry-Garrard was born at 15 Lansdowne Road, Bedford, on 2 January 1886. 'Cherry' as he was to become known was the son of Major-General Apsley Cherry (later Cherry-Garrard), commanding officer of the barracks at Kempston and Evelyn Edith Sharpin, the daughter of a Bedford doctor whose family home still stands at 1 St Paul's Square. The young Cherry-Garrard was a

shy somewhat introverted character, happy in his own company but constantly living in the shadow of his accomplished military hero father.

After his education at Winchester College and Oxford it became clear that medical problems would prevent him from embarking on an army career to emulate his father and, being interested in Antarctica, he determined to join Scott on his *Terra Nova* Expedition of 1910. Upon acceptance, Cherry-Garrard was given the job of assistant biologist responsible for collecting the eggs of Emperor Penguins.

In July 1911, Cherry and others man-hauled a sledge over 60 miles across the ice from base camp to Ross Island to collect eggs. Frozen and exhausted, they had their tent ripped from over their heads during a terrible blizzard and for two days the men lay in their sleeping bags with the snow deepening over them. They sang hymns and simply waited to die but, miraculously, the blizzard subsided and the tent was discovered a few yards away caught up on some ice.

The group returned to base in terrible physical condition and Cherry says 'that it was so cold that all of his teeth shattered'. He was then given the job of laying supply camps for the returning party that attempted to reach the South Pole. On 26 February 1912, Cherry made one last run-out with supplies hoping to meet up with his companions. They did not arrive and he finally gave up waiting.

In October and November of that year a team led by Cherry-Garrard and Atkinson started a search for Scott, Bowers and Wilson and finally found them dead, frozen in their tent, just 12 miles from where Cherry had been waiting. His decision to leave haunted him for the rest of his life for, although purely following orders, he constantly tormented himself with 'should I have gone on, or should I have waited'.

Cherry-Garrard recounted his experiences in his book *The Worst Journey in the World*, still recognised as a classic and said to be the greatest adventure story ever written. He died in London in May 1959 and is buried in Wheathampstead Parish Church where there is also an impressive memorial to him. A blue plaque in memory of Apsley Cherry-Garrard's birth was unveiled in Lansdowne Road, Bedford, on Wednesday, 17 November 2010.

Aeneas Lionel Acton Mackintosh



Mrs Annie Mackintosh with Aeneas (in black roll neck shirt at the back), George, Alexander and Isobel, taken In India c 1887.

The Mackintosh clan is an ancient Scottish family originating from the Inverness area. Their home is Moy Hall, 10 miles south of the city.

Aeneas Mackintosh's father Alexander (also known as Alistair) was a direct descendant of the Chieftains of Clan Chattan. Alexander died in India in 1902 and had Aeneas not vanished so tragically in 1916 he would undoubtedly have become the 31st Chief of the Clan.

Like so many other Scots of the time, Alexander went out to India in the second half of the 19th century, some records say that he was an indigo planter, others that he was actually in the Indian Civil Service. However, while there he met and, in 1878, married Annie Lavinia Jane Berkeley who had been born in India to English parents in 1856.

Aeneas Mackintosh was born in India on 1 July 1879.

Annie Mackintosh and her six children, Aeneas, Isobel, George, Alexander, Charles (but always known as Berkeley) and Eric all arrived in Bedford,

without their father, in 1891. All of the children except Eric had been born in India but he was delivered in Norwood, London, in June 1890 just a few months before the family came to Bedford.

It is not known why this split occurred but it seems to have been permanent because after his name appeared on the birth certificate of Eric, the father is not mentioned again in any further family records.

Why was Bedford chosen as their new home? Well almost certainly this was because of the high quality of education being offered by the two Harpur Trust boys' schools in the town. Aeneas and his brothers all attended Bedford Modern School, located then in the town centre, variously between 1891 and 1903. Isobel was educated at home.

On arrival in Bedford the family settled first at 40 St Leonards Avenue in St John's Parish. In 1894 they all moved to 29 Clarendon Street, but by the time of the 1901 Census, Aeneas, Alexander and George had all left home to pursue their own careers.

Aeneas left the school in the autumn of 1894 and took up a tough merchant navy apprenticeship serving on the ships *Cromdale* and *Mount Stewart* in which he advanced to Third Officer. In 1899 he was appointed junior officer on RMS *Victoria* of the P and O company obtaining both his First Officer and Master's Certificates while serving on this ship. By all accounts he had become a 'cultured, well-spoken, debonair man with refined manners, but not afraid of hard labour'.

He remained in the service of P and O until he was given leave of absence to join Ernest Shackleton's *Nimrod* Expedition to the South Pole in 1907. Before the expedition left, Aeneas was also commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve.

Nimrod sailed on 11 August 1907 with another Bedfordian, Frank Wild of Eversholt, as second in command (see page 15). Mackintosh appears to have immediately impressed both Shackleton and his fellow officers with his strong will and determination and he was short-listed for a place on the party due to march to the pole. However, shortly after his arrival at McMurdo Sound on 31 January 1908, he had a dreadful accident, which cost him his right eye.

Contemporary reports of the incident say that Aeneas was unloading sledging equipment using the on-board hoist when the loading hook swung round and hit him in the face. The injury was so serious as to necessitate the immediate removal of the eye by the



expedition doctor, Eric Marshall, using only some improvised surgical equipment. This accident also meant that Mackintosh lost his possible place on the shore party since he was sent back to New Zealand for further treatment and to recuperate. He did not rejoin the expedition until January 1909 and then only participated in its closing stages. Shackleton wanted him to take over as Captain of the *Nimrod* but the injury had not healed sufficiently for him to accept this responsibility.

On his return he was to have yet another brush with fate for when *Nimrod* got stranded in the ice some 25 miles from base camp, Mackintosh and three sailors decided that they would walk across the ice to reach the huts. With the terrible weather conditions, the sea ice melting all around them and each one suffering from severe snow blindness, it was readily acknowledged by the expedition leaders that the group were indeed lucky to survive. This good fortune would not hold out for ever !

On his return to England in June 1909 Mackintosh was discharged by P and O due to his sight problems but was later invited by Shackleton to become a member of an unsuccessful gold mining expedition to the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe.

He then took himself to the Cocos Islands in the South Pacific searching for lost Spanish treasure, again with no success. With no other real prospects of employment Aeneas then agreed to accompany Douglas Mawson on a trip to Hungary but this expedition never materialised.

Desperately searching for work, in 1911 Mackintosh accepted the post of Assistant Secretary to the Merchant Navy Guild in Liverpool and moved to live in the city.

During his time in Bedford, either while at school or periods of leave at home, Aeneas had got to know Gladys Campbell the beautiful youngest daughter of the late Lt-Colonel John Ronald Campbell of the Bengal Staff Corps (died 1891) and his wife Louisa Sutherland Campbell.

Gladys a talented artist had three sisters, Helen, Ada, Grace, and two brothers Robert and Walter and the family had lived for a number of years at The Lindens, 65 Bromham Road, now demolished.

Although his own family had left Bedford by then, on 15 February 1912, Aeneas returned from his new home at Cloughton on Merseyside to marry Gladys Campbell. The ceremony took place at Holy Trinity Church, Bromham Road, not far from the home of the bride. Gladys was 23 and Aeneas 32. She was given away by her elder brother, Robert, and her witness was younger brother, Walter. The best man was Dr Eric Marshall the physician who had operated on the eye at McMurdo Sound and had clearly remained in touch with his former colleague. The organist was the bridegroom's youngest brother, Eric.

There is a full report of the wedding in the *Bedfordshire Times* and *Standard* of 22 February 1912 titled: 'Explorer's Wedding—Bedford Officer who was with Shackleton.' The report begins: 'Such was the announcement that a famous Bedfordian, who had dared to fight the frozen south, had ventured to face the unknown perils of the matrimonial state.' (Oh how journalistic styles have changed!)



It went on to record that Mackintosh had been present at Buckingham Palace when the King had bestowed a knighthood on Shackleton and he himself had received the Polar Medal.

After a honeymoon in London the couple returned to their new home in Liverpool where he resumed his duties with the Guild.

The couple's first daughter, Pamela Aileen, was born at New Ferry, very close to Cloughton, on 29 October 1912, but Mackintosh was experiencing real difficulty in settling down to the routine life of office work and longed for an opportunity to go exploring again.

This opportunity was to present itself early in 1914 when Shackleton invited Mackintosh to join his proposed Trans-Antarctic Expedition. He was subsequently appointed leader of the Ross Sea Advance Party whose vital responsibility was to lay supply depots along the expedition route, and to captain their ship the Steam Yacht *Aurora*.

A third Bedfordshire man was to join him in this elite group, as Henry Ernest (always known as Ernest) Wild (see page 17) had been persuaded to join the expedition and to become the storeman and supplies chief to the Ross Sea Party. Ernest was the younger brother of Frank Wild (see page 15) who had previously been to the Antarctic with both Scott and Shackleton and was also about to return. Both were the sons of Benjamin Wild, the village schoolmaster at Eversholt, and both had lived with their parents at the schoolhouse in the village.

Having been appointed to the expedition Mackintosh resigned from his post with the Guild and moved with his family back to Bedford. It is assumed that this was so that his wife could be close to her own family during the years that he might actually be away and also during her pregnancy with a second baby due in November.

In the Spring of 1914 Mackintosh took a tenancy on a recently built house at 43 Beverley Crescent for them all. It was from this address at the end of August 1914 that he sadly said farewell to his family and left for London on the

first part of the long journey south. Although he was truly excited at the prospect of achieving his ambition of 'just one more expedition' he was understandably distressed at having to leave his wife and young family.

On 4 September Mackintosh left London on his own, bound for Australia to pick up the refitted ship *Aurora*. Two weeks later, on 18 September, the remaining members of the Ross Sea Party left Tilbury under the command of Second Officer Joseph Russell Stenhouse.

Arriving in Australia during the second week of October 1914, Mackintosh was horrified to see the condition of the *Aurora*. The repair and strengthening works were not completed and the ship was neither watertight nor seaworthy. There was a major shortage of supplies and equipment and funding had run out, even before the expedition proper had begun.

While he was in Australia preparing the *Aurora*, the couple's second daughter, Gladys Elisabeth, was born at Beverley Crescent on 25 November 1914. She was baptised at Holy Trinity Church on 15 January 1915.

Despite his ongoing concerns about the condition of the ship, Mackintosh set sail from Sydney in mid-December 1914, bound for Hobart and then the final leg of the journey.

Stenhouse and the final members of the crew who had left from Tilbury were to join the ship at Hobart and it was hoped that the shortages of supplies would also be addressed. But that did not happen and, as the final deadline date set by Shackleton approached, Mackintosh knew that it was decision time.

With many reservations and the *Aurora* still in a state of chaos, he reluctantly set sail for Antarctica on 23 December 1914 arriving at Ross Island on 9 January 1915, three weeks later than had been intended.

Mackintosh therefore decided that the depot laying would have to begin immediately and that he would personally take charge of one of the two groups. Before he set out he left precise and explicit instructions with Stenhouse, now in command of the ship, regarding his responsibility to find a safe winter berth for it. These instructions were based on Shackleton's previous experiences with Scott on the *Discovery* and his own aboard *Nimrod*. Under no circumstances was the ship to be allowed to become iced-in: this lesson above all had to be learned and although there was only one safe winter harbouring area in McMurdo Sound, a better protected location within the Sound had to be sought. *Aurora*, under Stenhouse, arrived in the area on 12 March 1915 having left the 12 men of the shore party to their work.

Following his instructions exactly, Stenhouse sought a more sheltered area of the Sound and eventually, after several near disasters, in attempting to land, the ship settled on 12 March 1915 in an inlet not previously used but close to where Shackleton had instructed. The three anchors were set for what

could be a lengthy stay and unloading of stores and supplies began, although it had always been intended that the ship would continue to be the main supply for stores. By April, however, the *Aurora* had been almost wrecked by snow and ice and on 6 May what was left was ripped from its anchors and blown out to sea with no power available and still attached to a large ice flow.

That left a small group of scientists and the members of the depot-laying party stranded ashore on the ice, not knowing what had happened to the ship and with nothing except what they carried and little hope of rescue.

The *Aurora* floated with its attached ice for almost nine months until it managed to break free on 12 February 1916 and drift back to New Zealand arriving there on 2 April 1916.

Completely oblivious of the drama that was unfolding on their ship, the depot laying work continued, but at considerable personal cost. In particular, due to the lack of food and the horrendous weather conditions. The rapidly deteriorating condition of the health and welfare of a number of the members of the party was causing real concern.

Having completed their work, the land party turned for home on 27 January 1916 but the appalling weather meant very slow progress. Their dogs died one by one and the men suffered severe frostbite. The lack of food forced them to resort to catching and eating seals.

They still had no knowledge of the fate of the ship and were entirely dependent upon their own resourcefulness. One of Mackintosh's group, Arnold Spencer-Smith, soon became physically helpless and had to be sledged. Mackintosh himself was no longer able to pull and could only stagger alongside until he also collapsed and had to be put on the sledge beside Spencer-Smith.

By 10 February they were about 10 miles from their target but a further blizzard halted progress for five days. All supplies and food had now been exhausted and it was impossible for Mackintosh or Spencer-Smith to continue further.

Three men were sent on to attempt to make it to the depot and hopefully collect food and fuel to save the others. Mackintosh and Spencer-Smith were left in a tent under the care of Ernest Wild. The three finally made it to the depot and then back to the tent but another member of the group, Victor Hayward, had now also collapsed.

On 8 March, Mackintosh volunteered to stay behind while the others tried to get Spencer-Smith and Hayward to safety and to the medical treatment that they so desperately needed.

Spencer-Smith died the next day and the rescuing group then set off again to try to save Mackintosh. By 16 March all of the surviving members of the party had reached the base hut and Mackintosh began to show some signs of

a recovery. This was only a temporary respite though as the *Aurora* was still missing with all of the remaining supplies.



Aeneas Mackintosh and Spencer-Smith being hauled on the sledge

It was only the guile and resourcefulness of Ernest Wild that saved the group. Having found supplies that had been abandoned by the earlier Scott expedition and by recycling clothing and using seal oil he was able to keep them alive. The recovery of the sick continued and they were all at least given the time to try to think of a way out of their truly desperate situation. Thin ice would prevent any surface movement to where it was believed the ship was moored.

As he got stronger, Mackintosh became more and more frustrated and impatient and on 8 May 1916 he told his colleagues that he intended to set out across the ice in order to get to base camp and hopefully there find the ship. Despite their objections, he left with Hayward but, within an hour of their departure, they totally disappeared from sight into yet another blizzard. They were never seen again.

When the weather improved, the others went out to search but all they found were tracks leading to the edge of the broken ice. They had either fallen through or had been carried out to sea on a lump of ice that had broken away. Foolhardy or hero? That debate still rages!

The remaining three men waited until 15 July when they considered that it was safe to make the trek to shore base at Cape Evans, and where they would be united with the other surviving members of the depot-laying party.

The total absence of any finance meant that an early rescue attempt was impossible and finally it was only through the combined efforts of the Australian, New Zealand and British Governments, who agreed to fund a complete refit of the recovered *Aurora* and to mount a rescue attempt, that the stranded group of explorers had any hope of being saved. On 17 January 1917 the ship arrived back from New Zealand and pulled alongside the pack

ice near Cape Royde. It gradually worked its way along the coastline to Cape Evans where the survivors were astounded to see Shackleton approaching them. They were astounded, because, after all, the sole reason for their hardship had been to provide the means for him to succeed in his trans-continental march.

What they did not know was that, with the wreck of Shackleton's own ship *Endurance* in the ice, the proposed march did not go ahead. All of the suffering and the sacrifice of the Ross Sea Party had therefore been in vain and unnecessary. One week later the seven survivors of the original 10 members of the group were rescued.

On hearing of the tragic loss of her husband, which because of communication problems, may not have been until February 1917 when the survivors reached New Zealand, Gladys gave up the home in Beverley Crescent and moved back in with her mother and her sisters at 65 Bromham Road. Mrs Campbell died in March of that year.

The unpleasant task of winding up Aeneas's affairs was passed to his sister Isobel Annie Mackintosh and probate was finally granted to her on 21 March 1917. The total value of the estate was £590 0s 10d.

In 1923 on the Isle of Wight the widowed Gladys married Captain Joseph Russell Stenhouse, Mackintosh's second in command and the man who had been left in charge of the *Aurora*. They had a daughter Janet Patricia in 1924.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, Stenhouse rejoined the Royal Navy but was killed when his ship HMS *Sheba* was sunk in the Red Sea in September 1941.

Aeneas's youngest daughter, Gladys married Elwood Bolton in June 1934 and they had a daughter Anne. He was killed on active service with the Royal Air Force in November 1942 and in April 1946 Gladys remarried Lt-Col Reginald Hugh Dowler.

Early in 1941, while their menfolk were away at war and in order to be closer to her cousins, Gladys Senior and her daughters returned to the comparative safety of Bedford, to live at 48 Spenser Road. Aeneas's eldest daughter Pamela joined the WAAF at RAF Cardington and in June 1941 married John Venning at St Paul's Church, Bedford. He was an officer serving in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. They had one son, Mark, born at Spenser Road on 6 September 1942, but tragically John Venning was killed in the 1943 landings in Sicily. There is a memorial plaque to him in St Paul's Church.

While in Bedford, Pamela's sister Gladys worked at the barrage balloon factory at Cardington. Pamela never remarried and died in Wiltshire in June 2000.

Gladys (Aeneas's and now Joseph's widow) returned to the Isle of Wight

after the war and died there in 1972. There is a family memorial in St John's Churchyard, Burgess Hill, which commemorates Annie, Aeneas, George, Berkeley and daughter Isobel.

In April 2015 thanks to the kindness of the current owners, a Heritage blue plaque was placed on the house in Beverley Crescent from where Aeneas Mackintosh said goodbye to his family in August 1914, never to see them again.

Details of the remaining members of the two families are in the Note, which follows.

Note

The Campbell family: The four Campbell girls all attended Bedford High School in Bromham Road but in 1919 after the death of their mother the unmarried sisters Helen, Ada and Grace accompanied by brothers Robert and Walter and the widowed Gladys and her two daughters, all left Bedford to live at Totland on the Isle of Wight, where Gladys married Stenhouse and her eldest brother and sisters were to remain for the rest of their life.

Both boys had attended Bedford School and then went straight on to officer training at Sandhurst. Robert pursued a lifetime career in the East Surrey Regiment retiring with the rank of Major. He died on the Isle of Wight in 1966. Walter joined the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment but later transferred to the Sierra Leone Regiment of the Royal West African Frontier Force. He retired with the rank of Captain and died in Norwich in 1962.

The Mackintosh family: Aeneas's mother was to stay at Clarendon Street with her family until 1903 when she moved to 9 Campbell Road and then 180 Foster Hill Road. She left the area to live in Brighton, in 1910 and died at Burgess Hill, Sussex, in October 1934.

Aeneas's sister Isobel Annie who remained unmarried lived with her mother until 1910 before becoming a nurse living in a boarding house in Brighton, where she died in 1962.

His brother George became a manager with a large export company and died while working in Bangkok in December 1927. He was unmarried. Alexander became a farmer in Rhodesia and died there in 1966. Berkeley went back to India to work for the Indian Government but died in December 1918 while visiting his brother in Rhodesia.

Eric went to Bedford Modern School, then New College School, Oxford, as a chorister. He then returned to finish his schooling at Bedford School. He obtained a position as an Assistant Master at Elstow School (renamed Bedford County School) in Amptill Road, Bedford in 1911 for one year. He married at Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex in July 1913. His bride was Marion Watson who had lived just a few doors away from the Mackintosh family in Campbell Road, Bedford. Eric and Marion lived for a year at Walton and then moved to Brighton to be closer to his mother and his sister. Eric appears to have followed a career as a professional musician and composer but in 1920 he invented and patented the cone system still used today in loudspeakers and was fundamental in the formation of the famous 'Celestion' speaker company. He left the business in 1925, returned to a musical career and died in Cheltenham in July 1970.

Frank Wild

Frank Wild, the eldest of 13 children was born at Skelton, North Yorkshire, on 10 April 1873, where his father Benjamin was the village schoolmaster. After several moves around Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, the family arrived at Eversholt near Woburn in January 1885 where Benjamin had been appointed the Headmaster of the local school.

As a young man Frank had an inquisitive mind and was a member of the local church choir. He was offered a place at York Minister Choir School but sadly this coincided with the family move to Bedfordshire and he had to forgo the opportunity.

He is now acknowledged as the 'absolute giant of polar exploration' being the only person to go on every expedition that left Britain between 1900 and 1922. It would be utterly impossible to attempt to summarise the absolute magnitude of his contribution to polar exploration in just a few hundred words.

On leaving Eversholt School at the age of 15, Frank became a pupil teacher at nearby Woburn. He very soon decided that this was not for him and a year later joined the Merchant Navy, sailing first on board the *Sobraon* from Plymouth to Melbourne. This was the beginning of 11 years' hard sea training in all weathers and in all conditions something that would later stand him in good stead.

In October 1900 Wild joined the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman and this gave him the opportunity to apply to join Captain Scott's *Discovery* Expedition which sailed from the Isle of Wight in August 1901. It was to be three long years before Wild returned home to Eversholt to ecstatic cheers of welcome from family and the village.

He then joined Shackleton on the *Nimrod* expedition of 1907-1909 and was a member of the team that crossed the Ross Barrier and Beardmore Glacier to reach the 'furthest point South'. Wild became Shackleton's closest friend and acknowledged right-hand man and both expressed the wish that when the time came they should be buried together.

In 1911 he went with Douglas Mawson on his *Aurora* expedition and was put in charge of the western base on the Shackleton Ice Sheet. Having formed such a strong bond with Shackleton, it was almost inevitable that Wild would be invited to join the 1914-1916 Imperial Trans-Antarctic expedition as second in command.

After the crushing and sinking of the *Endurance*, the entire crew found themselves stranded on floating ice for six months before they were able to land on desolate Elephant Island. Wild was then left with 21 men for a further six months living under two upturned lifeboats, and surviving only on seal meat, penguin and seaweed before Shackleton and a crew of five were successful in their epic mission to return to rescue the party. Without exception all the men credited their survival to the strength of character and inspiration of Wild.

Returning to the United Kingdom in 1916 he volunteered for war service with the Royal Navy and afterwards joined two former expedition colleagues in a farming venture in South Africa. One final trip to the Antarctic was to

follow in 1922 when he was appointed deputy to Shackleton in the Shackleton–Rowlett expedition which turned out to be poorly equipped and underfunded and it was during this expedition that Shackleton suffered his heart attack and died on South Georgia on 5 January 1922. Wild ensured that the expedition was completed and then returned to South Africa where he remained for the rest of his life, trying his hand at farming, gold prospecting and even mining. Having suffered long periods of ill-health he died almost penniless and little known at Klerksdorp on 19 August 1939 and was later cremated at Braamfontein Crematorium about a mile away. The funeral costs were covered by donations from friends and former employers.

Hardly a hero's end!

Despite his expressed wish to be buried with Shackleton this did not happen and his ashes were actually lost for many years. It was only through the persistence of author Angie Butler that they were found and interred on the right hand side of Shackleton in his grave on South Georgia in 2011. The family grave is in Eversholt churchyard together with a memorial in the church.

Ernest Wild

Henry Ernest, always known simply as Ernest, was the sixth of 13 children and the second son. He was born at Stickford in Lincolnshire on 10 August 1879. His now much more famous elder brother Frank (see above) had been born at Skelton six years earlier.

His father, Benjamin, is said to have been a popular teacher, immaculately turned out but with a mischievous sense of humour. Punishments were regularly awarded and his home was run on the same tough lines, so, if the children received a punishment at school, they could be assured that it would be repeated once they got home. This undoubtedly produced the strong characters developed by all the Wild children.

Ernest left Eversholt in 1894 to join the Royal Navy and on completion of 20 years' service he was permitted to join Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914–1917 as a member of the Ross Sea Advance Party led by Aeneas Mackintosh (see page 11). Ernest left London in September 1914 and subsequently sailed to Antarctica from Australia on board the *Aurora* in December 1914.

The main objective of the Ross Sea Party was to lay supply depots to support a group led by Shackleton who would march across the continent.

On 7 May 1915 Wild was one of the group of 10 who were left stranded ashore when the *Aurora* was blown from its winter moorings still holding

much of the party's equipment and stores and was unable to return. With no contact with the rest of the world they were left to improvise in order just to survive and Wild along with Ernest Joyce showed considerable resourcefulness in fabricating clothes and equipment from materials they found left by the earlier Scott expedition. As a morale booster for the smokers in the group Wild invented a mixture of tea, coffee, grass and dried herbs to satisfy their cravings. He played a full part in the successful depot-laying journey and in guiding the crew in their struggle back to its base despite the awful weather, dreadful conditions and poor health of their leader, Mackintosh. Wild took responsibility for nursing one of the party who had become helpless and who died before they reached base and were finally rescued in January 1917. In recognition of his efforts in saving two lives on that journey Wild was awarded both the Albert Medal and the Polar Medal.

The Ross Sea Party objective was achieved but it was ultimately pointless as the proposed march by Shackleton never actually took place!

Mackintosh described him as a 'popular, cheerful, willing soul' and others in the Ross Sea Party said that he was an unassuming man who published no memoirs of his time in the Antarctic or records of his own dreadful experiences. The chief scientist accompanying the Ross Sea Party said of him 'there are some things that have great value and no glitter. Consistent, long-suffering, unswervingly loyal, he made an enormous contribution to our survival and our wellbeing.'

What an interesting prospect though that through all their trials and tribulations Wild and Mackintosh may just perhaps have occasionally spoken together about the green fields of their adopted Bedfordshire.

On his return to England Ernest Wild rejoined the Royal Navy and served first on HMS *Pembroke* and when he died from typhoid in the Royal Naval Hospital in Malta on 10 March 1918 he was the Chief Petty Officer on board the minesweeper HMS *Biarritz*. He is buried in the Royal Naval Cemetery on the island.

When his father Benjamin retired from Eversholt School in 1908, his eldest son Frank purchased the newsagents and stationers in Ampthill Market Square ('the shop under the clock') for him and he ran this until his death in 1915, while his two eldest sons were both away in the Antarctic.

A blue plaque to commemorate the Wild brothers was unveiled on the Eversholt School House on 18 April 2016, Frank Wild's birthday. The school house, the residence of the master and his family, is an early 18th century building, listed as Grade II, of special interest.

So much of the history of the early exploration of the polar wastes appears to have Bedfordshire connections, but why? Bedfordshire is actually a rather

small county, so did these great explorers know of each other before their voyages of discovery began or was it all really pure coincidence?

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all mentioned below for their help in the preparation of the Mackintosh section of this article.

Mrs A Phillips, daughter of Gladys and Elwood and granddaughter of Aeneas, for the use of family photographs and for her valued guidance on the family history. Mr Mark Venning, son of Pamela and John and grandson of Aeneas. Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. Richard Wildman, Archivist, Bedford Modern School. Gina Worboys, Bedford School. Emma Mackenzie, Archivist, Bedford Girls School. Susan Edwards, Bedford Borough Council. Kelly Tyler-Lewis author of *The Lost Men*, the harrowing story of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party, published by Bloomsbury.

Further reading

Abbott

There are no books specifically about George Abbott but so important was he to the morale and survival of those who returned that he has a special mention in every publication on Captain Scott and the 1910 *Terra Nova* Expedition, and in particular in *Antarctic Adventure* by Raymond Priestley. The story of the expedition is also told by one of its members in *South with Scott* by Admiral Sir Edward Evans, RN.

Cherry Garrard

Cherry-Garrard, Apsley: *The Worst Journey in the World* (London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-00-9501-2).

Evans, Admiral Sir Edward: *South With Scott* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1938).

Martin, Ted: 'Apsley Cherry-Garrard, 1886-1959', *History in Bedfordshire*, 6.1, Autumn 2012, which can be downloaded from the BLHA website.

Wheeler, Sara: *Cherry: A Life of Apsley Cherry-Garrard* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002. ISBN 0-375-50328-5.) A fine read which gives a great deal more information about the family's time in Bedford.

Mackintosh

Bickel, Lennard: *Shackleton's Forgotten Men* (2001).

Newman, Stanley (Ed): *Shackleton's Lieutenant* (1990).

Tyler-Lewis, Kelly: *The Lost Men: the Harrowing Saga of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party* (2006).

Frank Wild

Wild, Frank: *Shackleton's Last Voyage* (1923).

Mills, Lief: *Frank Wild* (1999).

Butler, Angie: *The Quest for Frank Wild* (2011).

Ernest Wild

McElrea, Richard and Harrowfield, David: *Polar Castaways: the Ross Sea Party (1914-1917) of Sir Ernest Shackleton* (2004).

Tyler-Lewis, Kelly: *op cit*, above.

Trevor Stewart

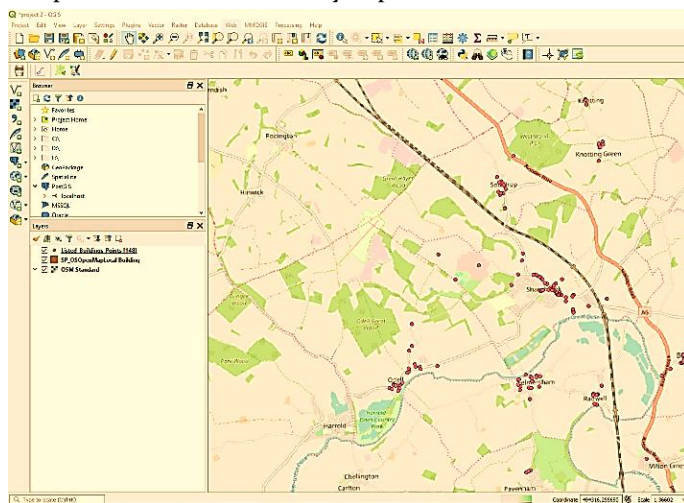
BLHA Spring Workshop on GIS

The BLHA Spring Workshop 2019 was held at Sharnbrook in April. The number of members attending was disappointing, but this did not detract from a full and productive day.

The focus was on using GIS (Geographic Information System) software to support local history research. Rather than repeat the talk given to the 2018 BLHA conference, an introduction to GIS theory and possible applications was given by Matt Tuohy who is using GIS in his research for a PhD at Leicester as well as working with the HER department in Bedford Borough.

The software used is called QGIS and is an open source program which is free to download and install. Experience with other Windows based programs was beneficial to understanding the layout and functionality of the QGIS desktop. Installation of the software and downloading plugins, when needed, proved to be straightforward.

The participants were introduced to various sources of basemap from 'OpenStreetMap' or similar online services. This was reinforced by topographical maps from Ordnance Survey 'Opendata'.



The first section was concluded by adding a third layer comprising Listed Building Information from the HER department. All three layers were rendered so they appear on a composite map. Clicking on an item in a selected layer will give information about that item. It was seen that it is possible to display the HER record and even add datalinks to that page to show your own research. The HER Departments at both Bedford Borough and Central Beds have confirmed that they will provide, under licence to BLHA

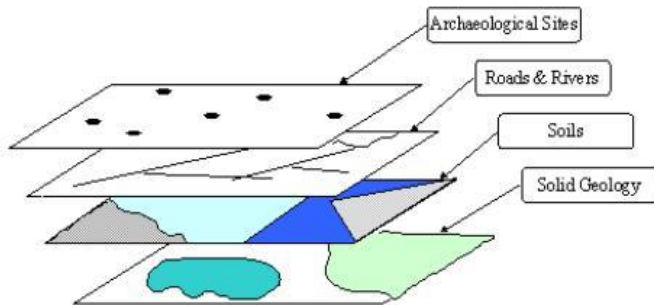
members, data subsets for the area around any specified Parish. This will include Monuments, Listed Buildings, PAS finds from field-walking and metal-detecting.

The next section simulated a series of excavations as we used a handheld GPS to record the coordinates of several trenches in which Iron Age and Roman Pottery had been found. The task was to record the coordinates in a spreadsheet and to use this as a data source for QGIS. The trenches were defined as points onto a new layer and then filtered by pottery type using a simple SQL statement so the results for the IA and Rb layers were distinguishable.

Lunch was a hurried affair as we got back to the nuances of the National Grid! We then wanted to add an image layer. We had an old, hand-drawn estate map of Colworth and had to use a plugin to fit it to the modern map. The technique called 'georeferencing' matches points on the estate map to positions on the basemap.

The program then finds the best fit to overlay the image as a new layer. This technique can be used for survey drawings, aerial photographs or LIDAR image datasets.

Statistical analysis of the data is now possible within QGIS. A new plugin called 'Data Plotly' was used to create histograms of the trench data. The particular value of this approach is that as you float the cursor above a bar on the graph you not only see the data value but the feature is simultaneously highlighted on the map.



The technical part of the workshop was concluded with a session on reporting. This covered the use of the standard Report Designer which is useful for creating project updates and the special plugin QGIS2Web for creating interactive maps for uploading to websites. We used the trench data to create a pottery distribution map where the online user could choose which pottery types to display.

The workshop was concluded with a discussion on how we could use these various techniques to support our specific project needs. We soon found that we could map our data about Anglo-Saxon finds in the Great Ouse valley. We also could define how we would georeference specific churches and then add architectural attribute data, e.g., the type of stone and then use QGIS plus filters to show a map of the status of the different sites. Finally, we explored how we might use a series of layers to create a timeline for demonstrating the research of a House history.

Now we know we can create maps from a simple spreadsheet that contains coordinate values the opportunities for mapping our research are just there waiting to be tackled and fortunately the costs are minimal. **Des Hoar**

Publications Received

Bedford Local History Magazine, No 103, October 2019. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. 78pp + cover. Price £4, obtainable from the Eagle Bookshop, 103 Castle Road, Bedford MK40 3QP or £6 by post from the Editor, Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Articles: 'Bedford by Gaslight: The Bedford and District Gas Company, 1833–1947'; 'Goldington Highfields: A Lost Hamlet', both by Bob Ricketts. 'The Life and Work of Albert Prosser, Architect', by Christine Gibson.

Book Reviews by Bob Ricketts: Robert Bollington, *Willington in the First World War*; Colmworth and Neighbours History Society, *Colmworth and Neighbouring Villages: Then and Now*; Paul Adams, *Secret Bedford*; Dorothy Jamieson, *Willington and the Mowbrays after the Peasants Revolt*; Brian Kerr, *A Certain Degree of Magnificence: People in the Bedfordshire Landscape*.

Book Review by Alan Cox: Alan Crawley and Bob Ricketts, *Bedford History Timeline*.

Passing Through: The Grand Junction Canal in West Hertfordshire, 1791–1841, by Fabian Hiscock, Hertfordshire Publications, 256pp, paperback, £16.99. To be reviewed in the Spring 2010 *HIB*.