

Antarctic Heritage Trust (New Zealand)

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MEDIA RELEASE

Date: **20 October 2014**

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NOTEBOOK FROM CAPTAIN SCOTT'S LAST EXPEDITION FOUND IN ICE IN ANTARCTICA

A photographer's notebook left behind a century ago at Captain Scott's last expedition base at Cape Evans, Antarctica, has been discovered and conserved by New Zealand's Antarctic Heritage Trust.

The Trust's conservation specialists found the notebook outside Scott's 1911 Terra Nova base. Each year the summer snow melt around the building causes variations in run off patterns, exposing the notebook for the first time in more than 100 years.

The notebook is a "Wellcome Photographic Exposure Record and Dairy 1910". It belonged to George Murray Levick (1876-1956), surgeon, zoologist and photographer, his name clearly written in the opening pages.

Levick was a part of Scott's 1910-1913 expedition and a member of the Northern Party. The notebook contains his pencil notes detailing the date, subjects and exposure details for the photographs he took during 1911 while at Cape Adare before undergoing a harsh winter in an ice cave on Inexpressible Island.

"It's an exciting find. The notebook is a missing part of the official expedition record. After spending seven years conserving Scott's last expedition building and collection, we are delighted to still be finding new artefacts," said Nigel Watson, Antarctic Heritage Trust's Executive Director.

The notebook's binding had been dissolved by 100 years of ice and water damage allowing the pages to be separated and digitised before repair. Close examination reveals links between the notations in the notebook and photographs held by the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge and attributed to Levick.

Each page of the notebook has been conserved by the Trust back in New Zealand before being rebuilt back into sections and sewn back together. The cover has been reconstructed. The notebook has been returned to Antarctica; one of 11,000 artefacts at Cape Evans.

In 2013 the Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZ) discovered photographic negatives left in Scott's 1911 Cape Evans expedition base. In 2010 the Trust discovered three crates of whisky and two crates of brandy under Ernest Shackleton's 1908 base during conservation work.

Images of the notebook: <http://www.nzaht.org/aht/Levicks-notebook/>

Video of the conservation process: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pchT_WBw8Pw

Background to Antarctic Heritage Trust media release 20 October 2014

Photos & Credits (*High Resolution photographs for in-paper use available on request*)

1. Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZ) conservators, Lizzie Meek, Programme Manager, and Aline Leclercq, Paper Conservator in the conservation laboratory, Canterbury Museum, New Zealand. © Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZ) www.nzaht.org
2. Pages 59B and 60A from the diary that show Levick's notations: Priestley, Dickason and Browning set a fish trap and Campbell with theodolite. www.nzaht.org
3. Priestley, Dickason and Browning set a fish trap. © P48/14/112 Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge
4. Campbell with theodolite. © P48/14/119 Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge
5. The notebook, after conservation treatment. © Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZ) www.nzaht.org
6. A self-portrait of George Murray Levick smoking a pipe and reading on his bunk in the hut at Cape Adare, Antarctica. © P48/14/5 Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

Background to the conservation process

George Murray Levick's notebook required specialist conservation treatment. The Antarctic Heritage Trust (New Zealand) engaged French Paper Conservator Aline Leclercq to undertake the meticulous task of conserving the notebook. This involved separating each individual page, stabilising and cleaning the pages, rebuilding the notebook into sections before sewing the book back together and reconstructing the cover remnants. Conservation treatment provided the opportunity to digitise each page of the notebook. This allows for a more comprehensive study without risking the fragile object.

Scott's 1910-1913 expedition and The Northern Party

Information on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's 1910-1913 expedition can be found at: www.scottslastexpedition.org

Levick was a part of Scott's 1910-1913 expedition and a member of the Northern Party. The Northern Party of six men summered (1911-1912) at Cape Adare. The Northern Party is notable for their surviving the winter of 1912 in a snow cave before sledging back to the Cape Evans base. Incredibly all, alive. Further information available at: <http://www.scottslastexpedition.org/expedition/science-in-the-first-winter/>

Antarctic Heritage Trust

The Antarctic Heritage Trust (New Zealand) is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for the conservation of five historic sites in the Ross Sea region of Antarctica including Ernest Shackleton's, Robert Falcon Scott's and Edmund Hillary's expedition bases through its Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project. Work is currently centred on conserving artefacts from Scott's 1911 expedition base and conserving Scott's 1902 expedition base.

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