

Report on study leave visit to the Falkland Islands' Government Archive
28th December 2000 - March 3rd 2001

I am most grateful to the Shackleton Scholarship Fund for enabling me to visit the Falkland Islands during my sabbatical leave. The primary reason for the visit was to examine the Government archives under the supervision of Jane Cameron, the Falkland Islands Government Archivist. The new Archive Building is a splendid place to work and it contains a veritable treasure trove of material for the scholar and researcher.

Other sources of finance from The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, the Continuing Ministerial Director of the Portsmouth Diocese, and the Parochial Church Council of Christ Church, Portsdown, also made it possible for my wife, Christine, to visit the Falkland Islands for two weeks at the end of the research phase of the project.

On my return to the United Kingdom I spent five weeks working in the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, under the supervision of Bob Headland, the Archivist.

The sabbatical leave enabled me to make considerable progress on my research project, which is entitled: *'Where nature is still charge? - An account and appraisal of some aspects of the human involvement with the natural environment of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.'* This research project is providing the material for a submission of a post-graduate doctoral thesis to the University of Portsmouth. The thesis examines the history of farming and agriculture, the history of sealing, the history of whaling and the history of fishing, and it seeks to examine the common elements of these four stories against the background of the impact of humanity on the islands and their surrounding seas.

There is a great deal of primary research material on the Falkland Islands in the Public Records Office in Kew, and also in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute, and during my visit to Stanley I was able to compare and contrast these sources with those held in Stanley. In the course of this process much new material was gleaned from the documents held in the new Archive Building in Stanley.

Whilst in the Falkland Islands I took the opportunity to interview a number of people. These included: The Chief Executive of the Falkland Islands Government; David Lang, the Attorney General; Phylis Rendell, the Head of the Mineral Resources Department; John Barton, the Director of Fisheries; Brook Hardcastle, former Camp Manager of the FIG; Jimmie Forster, from Bold Cove Farm; Tim Blake, formerly of Hill Cove; David Broughton, Andrea Clausen and Becky Ingrams of Falklands Conservation. Bob Reid, the Director of Agriculture, gave freely of his time and he made it possible for me to enjoy a memorable visit to Saledero. Aiden Kerr, from the Agricultural Department, kindly read all the completed sections of my thesis, and he made some very perceptive comments and suggestions. During my visit Jim McAdam was also in the Falkland Islands, and he made comments on various aspects of the project - in particular my article for the next edition of the Falkland Islands Journal which charts the history of trees and forestry in the Falkland Islands. I made a number of visits to farms in Camp - the

most memorable being the visit to Roddy and Lily Napier on West Point. Roddy was able to give me first-hand information on one of the pioneers of sustainable farming in the Falkland Islands -Arthur Felton.

A large number of people provided me with snippets of information and suggestions for further lines of enquiry; they also provided me with generous hospitality. Special thanks go to Les and Agnes Halliday for bed, board and washing, and to Joan and Terry Spruce for the provision of a homely refuge during occasional bouts inclement weather, innumerable meals, and invaluable local knowledge.

My greatest debt is to Jane Cameron - for her unfailing help and support.

I returned to the UK with a vast amount of information and statistics, and this material now occupies fourteen box files in my study. It remains to be seen if I can produce a thesis worthy of all the assistance received and of the story that needs to be told about what human beings have done with the abundant natural resources of the Falkland Islands.

Photocredits: SP at work in Archive Building taken by Jane Cameron in the Reading Room of the Archive Building