

Wednesday,
17th, February 1982 ...

JOHN MILARD
18-86 BROADWAY AVENUE
TORONTO, ONTARIO
CANADA M4P 1T4

Mr. K.D. Holmes ...

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I am indebted to a couple of people for your name, and for the round about way this letter reaches you.

My interest in Antarctic affairs began in the early 1930's, and over the years I have collected a fair amount of information and material.

I am presently doing a survey on the 'Aurora Australis', the book produced by the members of Ernest Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition, 1907-1909. I am trying to locate all existing copies, the names of the original and subsequent owners, how, when, and from whom they acquired their copies. The wording of any inscriptions, signatures, or notes, by Shackleton, other members of the Expedition, or others. The covers for the book were made from Venesta board, which was taken from the Expedition's packing cases. The outsides of the cover boards were cleaned and finished, but the insides were left in their natural state. So sometimes, words, or parts of words, of the original packing case markings appear on the insides of the cover boards. These are of interest, because they provide good identification marks for individual copies. Information about the amount of material produced and the number of copies bound is rather conflicting, hopefully, one of the results of this survey will give us a truer picture. As far as we know no copies were sold by the Expedition, but each member received a copy and copies were given to friends and benefactors.

I have received some information that a Mr. K.D. Holmes had purchased a copy of the 'Australis' from Maggs Bros., in 1970, said to be Frank Wild's copy. If this is true, and you do have a copy, I would be most pleased if you would be willing to assist the survey by sending me the above-mentioned information. If it is Frank Wild's copy, do you have any information as to who owned it, before you purchased it? I have a reference to Charles W. Cooper, "Town & Country, or forty years in private service with the aristocracy", Lovat Dickson, London 1937, pages 147-148. Mr Cooper mentions his friendship with Frank Wild, and says, he received a copy of the 'Australis' from Wild. Whether this was Wild's own copy or another one I don't know. As far as I can make out this happened between Wild's return to Britain after the Expedition, until he departed for Australia to join Mawson's Expedition, 1911-1914. Mr. Cooper, further states, that Wild told him that only 25 copies were made up, and that each member of the Expedition received a copy, and there was one each for the British Museum(now the British Library) and the Royal Geographical Society. I have sent enquiries to the Library and the RGS, the RGS says they don't have a copy of the 'Australis', and I am still waiting to hear from the Library. I haven't read Mr. Cooper's book, I only have photo-copies of the two pages, sent to me by Mr. H. King, the Librarian, The Scott Polar Research Institute, who has been very helpful and encouraging. Not having read the book I don't know if Mr. Cooper wrote his Memior or Autobiography from memory, or if he kept a Journal, because a fair number of people did his day. In any case, I think the number 25 is to low, it wouldn't allow for enough copies for the members of the Expedition, never mind those that were given to Friends and Benefactors of the Expedition, for which there is plenty of evidence.

I have been following up all available leads, no matter how small, and making numerous enquiries for this survey. So you may, or already have heard from Maggs Bros., because I wrote to them, and to a number of other book dealers that I have done business with in the past, for any assistance they could provide for this survey.

It was only by a fluke that I discovered that you had served with the British Antarctic Survey. I was going through the Indexes to the Polar Record, looking for references to members of Shackleton's Expedition, when I came across your name. On looking up the

reference I found it referred to a report on BAS Activities and that you had been at Stonington Island for 1964-65 and 1965-66, as Geologist. It was Mr King, at the S.P.R.I., who suggested that I send you this enquiry vis the BAS.

All information received will be held in confidence, eventually, hopefully, I will be able to publish the information I have collected. If and when I do, I will send you a copy of the entry for your copy, for correction, additions and approval for publication.

Any help you can provide for this survey, would be sincerely appreciated.

I am,

yours sincerely,

John Millard

25 Church Grove,
Little Chalfont,
Amersham,
Bucks, HP6 6SH.

19th May, 1982

John Millard Esq.,
18-86 Broadway Avenue,
Toronto,
Ontario,
Canada, M4P 1T4.

Dear Mr Millard,

AURORA AUSTRALIS

Apologies for the delay in responding to your letter of 17th February, 1982 seeking information on the Aurora Australis; my records have been "archived" in an attic and I have spent quite some time overseas.

I am pleased to hear of your interest in the AA and I share your obvious excitement in tracking down the copies.

Yes, I did have Wild's copy and I attach copies of relevant letters giving details of how I acquired it and evidence that Maggs had at least one other copy in 1970. I sold mine at Sotheby's, Chancery Lane on 9th June, 1978 (lot 301) - back numbers of their sale records show that several copies passed that way, but I no longer have the details. It fetched £1,300 and went to an American buyer (perhaps through Cavendish Rare Books) who later contacted me. I shall write to him to advise of your interest and shall suggest that he contact you to exchange information. Please get in touch if he hasn't responded after a fair time. He promised to pass on any information he gained but hasn't done so. I would be pleased to hear of your eventual findings. Presumably you know of the copy in Christchurch Antarctic Museum Library, New Zealand.

My colleague, Neil Marsden, of "Polar Books" (38, Llwyn Estyn, Deganwy, Conwy, Gwynedd, LL31 9RA, Wales) may know about other copies - worth writing first for the fun of his address !

Good luck with your search.

Yours sincerely,



K.D. Holmes

K.S. Copy