

**From:** Robert Stephenson <antarctic-circle@comcast.net>  
**Date:** December 31, 2012 12:22:14 PM EST  
**To:** SouthPole-sium  
**Subject:** **A possible SouthPole-sium v.2**

**For those who attended the SouthPole-sium in Jaffrey in June: Happy New Year!**

That event was intended to be a one-time affair but many of you asked "when's the next one going to be?" or words to that effect.

A few weeks after the event I met with some people at Keene State College and asked about having a second SouthPole-sium on its campus. I also looked into the idea of having a major Antarctic art show at the College's excellent gallery. I also floated this idea with former and present people at the National Science Foundation's 'Artists and Writers Program.' Enthusiasm was muted.

As the summer turned into the fall I increasingly concluded that doing another SouthPole-sium near Jaffrey and organizing a major art show would be a lot of work involving a good bit of *deja vu* all over again. Perhaps that should be put on the back burner.

While at the annual gathering in Athy, Ireland, at the end of October, I had some conversations with Falcon Scott (RFS's grandson) and an idea came forth to us. Falcon and Jane have a self-catering holiday operation (Loch Shuna Lodges) at Eilean Buidhe, Craobh Haven, not far from Oban on Scotland's west coast.

They don't have enough accommodation to handle more than 8 or 10 but Falcon says there are numerous B&Bs and other accommodation in the area. There's also a village hall in Ardfern that could serve as a venue as well as Lunga House which is less than a mile from Jane and Falcon's. The pub at Ardfern--The Galley of Lorne Inn--has a large function room that could also serve as a venue.

Here's what Falcon said in a recent e-mail:

I have been thinking about the SouthPole-sium 2013 or 14, and think a good idea would be for it to be held at Lunga House, which is less than a mile from us here on Eilean Buidhe, Craobh Haven. Lunga is a very unusual historic house and occupies a stunning location looking west over the sea and the islands of Nether Lorne. Occupied until about two years ago by the current Laird Colin Lindsay-Macdougal, who retired to a smaller house on the estate, it is currently leased to Les and Meg Macleod who run it successfully as a wedding venue. Colin, I know, would love to be involved in such a gathering, and Lunga House would be a brilliant and exotic (scottish style) venue. There is a pub in Craobh Haven (also owned by Les and Meg), and another in Ardfern which has a conference room, and there is also a large new village hall in Ardfern too. The grand ballroom in Lunga House is quite big too. There is plenty of accommodation locally especially

low season as well. I think you can find it all on google. The Craobh Marina owners, Kip Marina, also hosted a Birdie Bowers Lecture and Dinner in Greenock last week, so they might be interested too.

and in one that came in today:

"There are quite a lot of interesting places to visit that are not that far away as well. There are boat trips from Craobh (to see the Gulf of Corrievreckan, the most extreme and dangerous tidal race in the world, between Jura and Scarba, the wildlife includes eagles, seals, and sometimes whales + lots of bird life - this trip is spectacular). Also, the canal basin at Crinan, Kilmartin standing stones (6,000 years old), the old slate quarries at Easdale and Seil, the Isle of Mull which may include beautiful Iona (with St. Columba's Cathedral), and Staffa - with world famous basalt pillars and Fingals Cave (of Mendelssohn fame), and the Treshnish Islands - to see puffins close-up, - and perhaps some serious highland scenery and history in Glencoe. For those with too much energy, Cruachan is our nearest Munro (mountain over 3,000 feet) at 3,695ft - it's a good climb!"

So here are some possibilities:

- **Hold SouthPole-sium v.2 in Scotland at and around Jane and Falcon Scott's. Make use of Lunga House, the Village Hall or the Galley of Lorne Inn in Ardfern or some other nearby place as the main venue. Make use of local accommodation and possibly some "local hosts" as in Jaffrey.**
- **Have it go for 3-4 days, very informal, sessions interspersed with opportunities to see and do things nearby.**
- **Have some options for other places to congregate before or after. (See below)**
- **One banquet dinner (Scottish theme) along with some entertainment, with the rest of the meals more on one's own than in Jaffrey.**
- **As at Jaffrey, no one gets paid for participation and everyone pays whatever the price turns out to be (to cover venues, some food and drink, perhaps some rental equipment).**
- **Keep the focus on Antarctic books and history.**
- **David Stam did such a good job moderating (out of the blue) a session in Jaffrey, that we might try the same concept here. Three or four attendees might moderate some subject-specific sessions.**
- **Hold it sometime between early May and mid June, 2014.**

Over the years I have arranged houseparties at perhaps a dozen Landmark Trust properties in the UK and Italy. They are just terrific and surprisingly affordable. South of where Jane and Falcon is the Isle of Kintyre. At Saddell, an ancient Scottish site, there are five Landmark Trust properties which if all taken together could accommodate a total of 35 people. If you include the nearby Tangy Mill, another 6 could be accommodated. LT properties may be rented by the week (usually starting on Friday afternoon) or one can do short stays, i.e. portions of a week--Fri, Sat and Sun nights; or Mon, Tues Wed and Thurs nights. So those who wished could go on from Jane & Falcon's to Kintyre (58 miles) for either a short stay or for a week.

Another possibility for before or after is to go to the Isle of Bute where there are several 'Birdie' Bowers' sites. On Bute the Landmark Trust has two adjoining properties that together accommodate up to 19 people. Again, this could be for a short stay or a week.

A third possibility is Gargunnock House, a few miles west of Stirling. I've stayed there twice and it's a gorgeous place accommodating 16 people. Stirling is well served by train from both Edinburgh and Glasgow. There is a Scott memorial window in the cathedral at Dunblane, not far away, and James Wordie is buried near the Castle. One could also use this as a base to visit Low-Latitude Antarctic sites as far away as Dundee and Glen Prosen (where the new polar party monument was just dedicated).

One difficulty with the Landmark Trust houses is that others might make early bookings and not all the properties will be available when we might want them. If we were to go ahead with booking one or more of them we'd have to figure out the logistics of doing so.

This e-mail is being sent to most but not all of those who attended the SouthPole-sium; also to a handful of others. Depending on the response to the questions below, a similar e-mail will (or won't) be sent out to a larger audience of Antarcticans. 56 attended in Jaffrey and we would have been hard pressed to handle many more. If the SouthPole-sium v.2. is to be held I would think that numbers of 25-40 would be ideal. (This wouldn't include spouses or children who might come along and do other things in the region when Antarctic things are being spoken of.)

If it looks like there is sufficient interest to proceed, I will go to Scotland to do a reconnoitre sometime in May 2013 and consult with Jane and Falcon and go around to all the places that might play a part in this. I will also create a website to keep people abreast with how the planning is going.

**Some (but not all) Antarctic sites/sights in Scotland worth visiting:**

See the Google map at <http://goo.gl/maps/9xA4F>

This map also has shows some of the places around Jane and Falcon's, also the various Landmark Trust properties mentioned, tourist information centres, local

sites/sights, Low-Latitude Antarctic sites, etc.

**Some websites:**

Landmark Trust: <http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/>

Loch Shuna Lodges: <http://www.scotland2000.com/lochshuna>

Lunga House: <http://www.lungahouse.co.uk>

VisitScotland - Scotland's national tourism organisation: <http://www.visitscotland.com/>

**Some Distances and Times:**

Glasgow Airport to Craobh Haven: 97 miles, 2 hours 13 minutes.

Edinburgh to Craobh Haven: 136 miles, 3 hour 19 minutes

Craobh Haven to Dundee: 132 miles, 3 hours 16 minutes

Craobh Haven to Saddell, Kintyre: 58 miles, 1 hour 34 minutes

Craobh Haven to Rothesay, Bute: 93 miles, 2 hours 42 minutes

## SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

\_\_\_\_\_ **Count me in! (this in no way commits you at this point)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Could be. Hard to say now. Will need more information. Keep me informed.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Darn! I can't make it or it just won't work for me.**

If you responded "Count me in" or "Could be":

What would your preference be date-wise in 2014? • **Early May** • **Mid May** • **Late May** • **Early June**

Would Spring 2015 be better for you? • **Yes** • **No** • **Doesn't matter**

Would you be interested in sharing a Landmark Trust house beforehand? • **Yes** • **Maybe** • **No**

Would you be interested in sharing a Landmark Trust house afterwards? • **Yes** • **Maybe** • **No**

Which Landmark Trust locations interest you most? • **Kintyre** • **Isle of Bute** • **Gargunnock**

Which Landmark Trust locations interest you least? • **Kintyre** • **Isle of Bute** • **Gargunnock**

Please respond in the next week or so. By the end of January I will send out a second e-mail to you giving an update on the responses.

Regards,

Rob

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