

Paintings tell the tale of Antarctic explorers

SAMANTHA GEE

On canvas, the polar expedition ship Terra Nova sits atop a stormy Southern Ocean, headed for Antarctica with the explorer Robert Falcon Scott on board.

The oil painting is one of 16 by Nelson artist Sean Garwood, that tell the stories of the explorers who set foot on the southernmost continent more than 100 years ago.

Garwood said he wanted to create a visual narrative of the pioneers who survived their passage through the turbulent ocean to create a life in Antarctica's polar conditions.

The artist spent 10 days on the ice in November 2015 as part of Antarctica New Zealand's artist programme. After 16 months painting in his Nelson studio, the series is now complete and will be exhibited for the first time in Christchurch in October.

This month, a selection of the paintings were featured on a collection of New Zealand Post stamps commemorating the Historic Huts of the Ross Dependency. *Blow The Wind Southerly* depicts the beginning of Scott's journey with the Terra Nova insignificant in turbulent seas during a storm after leaving Port Chalmers in Dunedin.

"It is all about the ocean, not the ship, the ship is insignificant in terms of the power and the energy of the Southern Ocean. They nearly lost Terra Nova, she was damaged and they didn't think that they would actually survive."

It had been a dream realised for Garwood to visit Antarctica. He spent the best part of 27 years at

sea as the skipper of a deep sea fishing trawler and remained captivated by the beauty and hostility of the ocean.

"When you spend time in the Southern Ocean, you always look further south and think, well the next step is Antarctica."

His paintings include Scott and Shackleton's huts, the expedition ships Nimrod and Terra Nova as well as many of the explorers' belongings from inside the huts.

It was too cold to paint in

"When you spend time in the Southern Ocean, you always look further south and think, well the next step is Antarctica."

Sean Garwood

Antarctica, so Garwood worked around the clock during his time there, photographing everything he could then drawing and sketching the huts to be used as references in his painting.

He spent about 36 hours awake in each hut, documenting his surrounds and taking in as much information as he could.

"That was quite intense getting all the material that I needed because you don't get a second chance at it, you are not going to go down there again."

Upon his return to Nelson, choosing the subjects for his

paintings was the most difficult part of the process. He then spent 16 months painting the Antarctic scenes, it's the most time consuming series of work he has ever completed.

Worn leather boots, the wood burner in Shackleton's hut, bottles of condiments and letters written to those back home feature in his paintings.

It had been "mentally challenging" but at the same time "very satisfying".

"The challenge was getting the mood of the paintings so that people can feel the cold, brutal climate through the canvas."

He described the well-preserved huts as being like "time capsules" with more than 20,000 artefacts in Scott's Hut alone.

There was also a clear contrast between the two huts. While Shackleton's Hut felt warm, welcoming and was full of natural light, Scott's Hut was dark, gloomy and had a depressive air about it.

The first thing Garwood noticed when he entered Shackleton's Hut was the coal range at the opposite end of the room. It would become the subject of one of his paintings. Having spent nearly a month on each painting, there was a sense of relief the series was now complete.

"This particular exhibition came together nicely, it is not very often that I look at a painting and say I am satisfied with it."

It was important to Garwood that his works were historically accurate.

There were no photos of Shackleton arriving on the Nimrod at Cape Royds and only a few grainy black and white photos of the ship itself so Garwood



Nelson artist Sean Garwood with paintings he produced as a result of his trip to Antarctica.

MARTIN DE RUYTER/NELSON MAIL

researched as much as he could and used his imagination, the end result was his interpretation of the explorers' arrival.

Garwood said his style was classic realism, and his preferred

medium was oil, which suited the historical documentation of the Antarctic explorers.

His style was very similar to that of his late father Michael Garwood an "amazing artist" who

was a great influence in his life.

Garwood's has dedicated the exhibition to his father, who died in September at the age of 82.

"He influenced me in terms of style, I always looked up to Dad as

the absolute benchmark in my work," he said.

■ *Sean Garwood's Antarctica. The Arts Centre Christchurch - 2 Worcester Boulevard from October 6 to 9.*

Bid to replace 135-year-old telescope

SARA MEIJ

The Nelson Science Society is fundraising for a new telescope as its historic Cooke telescope is ready to retire.

The 135-year-old Cooke telescope has been at the Cawthron Atkinson Observatory at Clifton Terrace School for nine years.

Nelson Science Society president Jenny Pollock said the Cooke telescope was given to the society by the Cawthron Institute in 1969.

It was placed at a little observatory on Observatory Terrace off Princes Drive.

"Sadly, when parts now fail, they can't be replaced and reluctantly the decision has been made to retire it."

Jenny Pollock

After that it spent some time from 1981 at an observatory close to Piper's Park until it was moved to the Cawthron Atkinson Observatory in 2008.

Pollock said the historic Cooke telescope was "much loved" by the society.

"Sadly, when parts now fail, they can't be replaced and reluctantly the decision has been made to retire it," Pollock said.

She said the society was looking



Nelson Science Society member Robert Rea at the Cawthron Observatory in Marybank, Nelson. The Society is fundraising to buy a new telescope as the current one is 135-years-old.

BRADEN FASTIER/NELSON MAIL

to raise \$15,000 in total for a "21st century" telescope to replace the old one.

Pollock said \$6000 was already promised by anonymous society members, leaving the society to raise another \$10,000.

"Something like a Celestron 14" or a Meade 14" telescope will give us nearly eight times more light gathering capacity than the existing telescope."

That would enable them to see fainter objects like nebulae and

galaxies in detail more easily.

"We can use filters to observe extra details, and combat the increasing effects of light pollution extending the useful life of the observatory."

Pollock said another advantage of a new telescope was the computer controlled mount that would enable a quicker location of astronomical targets.

This means more objects could be easily viewed in a night.

She said this would free

up astronomers' time to educate the public about what they were seeing during the monthly viewing nights.

Pollock said the society was giving the retiring telescope back to the Cawthron Institute Trust Board, which would place it on permanent display in a new wing that is to be built at the Cawthron Institute.

Donations can be made through the crowd fundraising page givealittle.co.nz.

Wheely fun day at Nelson Central School fundraiser

HANNAH BARTLETT

Despite the early Daylight Saving start, Nelson children didn't appear two tired to race through Central School classrooms for an annual biking event.

One hundred-and-forty children, and their bikes, wheeled up to Nelson Central School for the Central Crank fundraiser.

Children cycled a mini mountain bike course through the grounds, classrooms and corridors, and down the front steps of the school.

Organiser Belinda Crisp said they had 40 more children taking part than last year.

"It's not something you do every day so it's super exciting for the kids to be able to break the rules, legally."

"Nelson is a really active community and Nelson Central is a particularly active community, and riding a bike is a really good thing to do. So making it fun, riding a bike, on sunny day, you can't beat it."

The event raises money for the school's Year Three camp, ensuring there are enough funds to allow all children to attend.

"We've got sausages, seafood, baking and coffee, but really it's just a participation day for the kids," Crisp said.

"We've recommended costumes [and] there's a few out there but I



Oil Stedman, 9, on the ride of his life at the Nelson Central School fundraiser yesterday.

LUZ ZUNIGA/NELSON MAIL

think the parents might be the ones who have mostly got into it."

She said parents were invited to take part in their own race at the end of the event.

"They have to ride children's bikes so I think that's going to be highly competitive."

Principal Pip Wells was on the side of the track, cheering children on as they sped down a ramp on the school's front steps and taking photos.

"We've got a wonderful school and it's good to be able to share it and give everybody the opportunity to have a really active family-filled day."

She said they were really pleased with the turnout, particularly given they had to postpone it because of the previous weekend's weather.

"It's just fun - good food, good company, and good fun for the kids, so you can't go wrong."



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