

ANNUAL REPORT TO ICOMOS FROM
THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR HERITAGE COMMITTEE (IPHC)

2000 - 2001

MEMBERSHIP

Dr Susan Barr (Norway - President/Chair), Dr. Peter Boyarsky (Russia), Paul Chaplin (New Zealand), Dr Rosamunde Codling (United Kingdom), Prof.dr. Louwrens Hacquebord (Netherlands), David Hart (South Africa), Jean-François le Mouël (France), Doug Olynyk (Canada), Dr Michael Pearson (Australia), Dr. Urban Wråkberg (Sweden).

Corresponding members: Jaco Boshoff (South Africa), Geoff Ashley (Australia), Professor Colin Pearson (Australia), Angie McGowan (Australia)

Several of the members have established consultative networks in their own countries to ensure wider representation and sources of expertise.

It is expected that other countries **that have an active interest in heritage work in the Arctic and/or Antarctic** will nominate representatives to the committee.

FOUNDING MEETING

The Committee was declared to have been founded on 1st November 2000 after email collaboration and agreement on statutes. The founding meeting was held at the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) Cambridge University on 10th & 11th May 2001. This meeting ratified the appointment of Susan Barr (Norway) as President. Paul Chaplin (New Zealand) was appointed as Secretary General and it was agreed that both would act as the Working Group for the committee to conduct inter-sessional work.

The statutes as previously approved were endorsed in principle but it was considered necessary to revise some aspects of them to avoid an area of ambiguity and to present them in a more orderly manner. The revised version was later approved by email communication.

Various aspects of heritage work in the polar regions were discussed. Of major concern was the fact that there is no recognised way of defining what a “historic site” is and much significant historic material is under threat because it’s historic value is not accepted. For this reason the IPHC has formulated a statement which it hopes will be accepted by those with management responsibilities in polar regions.

A guiding principle for the work of the International Polar Heritage Committee (IPHC) is that all evidence of previous/finished human activity in the polar areas has a potential significance for the documentation and understanding of the history of these areas and should be expertly assessed with an eye to possible designation as a cultural heritage site before being altered or removed.

It is hoped that by applying this principle unnecessary loss of valuable cultural heritage information due to hasty decision-making will be avoided.

Other decisions made at the meeting included,

- Concepts for the imagery of the IPHC (logo, etc) were agreed and artwork is now being produced.
- The compilation of a data base of known experts in the various fields of polar conservation. This will enable IPHC to assist those working in polar heritage protection activities to identify others with specialist expertise.

- The compilation of a systematic list of historic sites in both the Arctic and Antarctic. This information exists in many existing data-bases but it is fragmented and variable in the information available. Such a list will hopefully emphasise the full extent of historic resources in polar regions.
- The IPHC has begun to work with relevant external groups including government and non-government agencies: International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) to the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) and the Antarctic Heritage Trust (UK & NZ). Both the IASC and the CEP have acknowledged the value of the IPHC and its availability as a non-partisan expert advisory body.
The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – Arctic and various national polar agencies have been sent information about the founding of the IPHC.
Moves will also begin to connect with many other agencies which share some of the interests of the IPHC. These include the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), The Getty Foundation, The US National Science Foundation (NSF) - Department of Polar Programmes Historic section.
- Another task for the IPHC will be to develop an appropriate set of standards for cultural heritage protection in the polar regions. It is proposed to do this by relevant modifications to existing ICOMOS charters.

CURRENT WORK PLANS

1. A web-site is being produced in order to help create linkages between those working to protect polar heritage in the Antarctic and Arctic. It is hoped that this will ultimately include a bibliography of relevant published material by including links to other sites.
2. A brochure is being produced to promote the activities of the committee and to advise those working in the field of polar heritage protection of the expertise and information available through the IPHC.

GENERAL

1. Funding for the Norwegian based Secretariat and the majority of these projects is being provided by the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage.
2. An information paper about the IPHC has been presented to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative meeting. The paper which identified the expertise offered by the Committee also offered this as a resource to the CEP. This was positively received. Similarly the IPHC was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the IASC and associated Arctic Scientific Committees.
3. Heritage at Risk. A section on polar heritage risks has been written for this ICOMOS publication.
4. A series of more technical papers are now being considered for publication within the ICOMOS system. It is expected that these will also have value for use in other ways.

Susan Barr
President - IPHC

Paul Chaplin
Secretary General

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