

**US COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS FEATURE ANT-ARCTIC EXPLORERS.** In a block of four commemorative stamps issued in September 1988, the US Postal Service has honoured four US southern polar explorers. Designed by Dennis Lyall, who was responsible also for the 1986 Polar Explorers issue, the stamps feature portraits of Nathaniel B. Palmer, Charles Wilkes, Richard E. Byrd and Lincoln Ellsworth. Each portrait is accompanied by an icy scene showing the explorer's means of travel (Palmer's and Wilkes's ships, Byrd's and Ellsworth's aircraft), and a map of Antarctica with route traced in. The stamps retail at \$1.00 per block or 25 cents each. (Source: Stamp news USA, US Postal Service, Washington DC: release 58.)

**FRANKLIN BODIES YIELD ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BACTERIA.** The bodies of two seamen, William Braine and John Hartnell, who died on Sir John Franklin's expedition of 1845–48, have been found to contain dormant bacteria which are resistant to modern antibiotics. Exhumed for scientific examination from their graves on Beechy Island, and subsequently reburied, the seamen are thought to have died of lead poisoning from canned food. The bodies yielded six strains of intestinal bacteria of the *Clostridium* group, of which two proved resistant to currently-used antibiotics. Dr. Kinga Kowalewska-Gro-

chowska of the University of Alberta, in a report given at a recent meeting of the American Society for Microbiology, suggested that the presence of heavy metals in the tissues may have contributed to the resistance of the organisms, and that environmental pollution by heavy metals may generally be a factor in the development of bacterial resistance to antibiotics. (Source: Article by Pierce Wright, *The Times*, 26 October 1988).

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PENGUINS.** The First International Conference on Penguins was held in the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 16–19 August 1988. Organized by John Darby (Otago Museum) and Lloyd Davis (Zoology, University of Otago), the meetings were attended by over 80 research workers from Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Netherlands, South Africa, USA and West Germany. In the keynote address Dr Bernard Stonehouse (UK) drew attention to the recent shift in research interest from land-based to sea-based studies, made possible by radio-monitoring. Papers covered the history of penguin research, breeding biology and demography, behaviour, foraging and energetics, feeding and brood reduction, metabolism, techniques for monitoring penguins at sea, population fluctuations and recent fossil discoveries. A volume of edited papers will be published in 1989.

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## Obituary

**JAMES EDWARD CAMERON** died on 11 October 1988. Mr Cameron worked for more than 10 years in the library of the Scott Polar Research Institute as a voluntary curator of maps and charts. His quiet helpfulness will be remembered fondly by all at the institute.

**JOHN RICHARD GREEN** died in Lisbon on 29 May 1988, aged . Born in the Midlands on 28 May 1922, John was brought up and educated in Birmingham. During World War II he served with the army, reaching the rank of captain. In October 1949 he joined the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS) becoming winter base leader at Deception Island in 1950 and at the Argentine Islands in 1951. On returning from the Antarctic he was appointed Assistant SECFIDS in the Stanley office of FIDS, and later elevated to SECFIDS, a post he held until 1962. He was transferred to the London Office of British Antarctic Survey as Operations Officer until 1967, when the post was abolished. Subsequently he worked for

Outward Bound and for Antarctic tour operators. On retirement he settled in Cornwall. One of the most colourful characters ever to serve with either FIDS or BAS, even in disastrous situations John always had both an infectious smile and the most plausible of explanations why things had 'gone so wrong'. He had a great sense of humour and was recognized by all of us as being the Survey's most distinguished practical joker. John will ever be remembered for his part in the now famous 'tussock wine' hoax, retold by Sir Vivian Fuchs in his book *Of ice and men*. For this innocent prank the Royal Navy never forgave him, and all RN ships subsequently visiting Stanley were warned to beware. His fund of stories, some quite true but most embellished in minute detail, helped to transform many a dull evening into one of hilarity. His popularity on the Antarctic cruise ships was assured; he held audiences in the palm of his hand and completely captivated them.

R. J. Adie