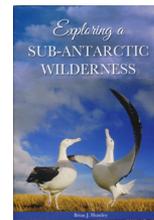


## Exploring a Sub-Antarctic Wilderness

Brian J. Huntley (ed.)

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Recently, a strong heritage-related trend is apparent in traditional countries that have been involved into exploration of polar and subpolar regions within last century. The trend could be classified as a promotion of opening up information about history of national polar explorations in order to disseminate important parts of national polar programmes into general public. Following this line, Antarctic Legacy of South Africa publishes a book of Brian J. Huntley with attracting title *Exploring a Sub-Antarctic Wilderness*.

The book is mainly about the Marion Island, which is the larger one of two islands that are called the Prince Edward Islands. The islands are located almost 1800 km SE of Port Elizabeth (South Africa). The vegetation of the island is tundra-like, formed mainly by lichens, mosses, grasses and ferns. The main indigenous animals are insects along with large populations of seabirds, seals and penguins.

The book is, as Introduction says, 'a personal narrative of the challenges, frustrations and unmatched excitement of working on a remote island wilderness'. In principal, the book is Brian Huntley's diary from the first biological and geological expedition to Marion and Prince Edwards Island that was taken in 1965-1966. It brings a lot of information from daily life on 9 young men (Marion 22 team) who participated in the expedition. Apart of practical aspects of expedition activities including exploration walks to different island ecosystems, field camps and housekeeping duties of the Marion House, the book brings also an overview of research that focused mainly meteorology, ornithology, and botany. Since Brian Huntley worked as botanist, his diary brings a lot of information about vegetation of Marion Island, as well as numerous photographs. Main focus is given to community structure, plant phenology and altitude zonation, pollen analyses from cores, and last but not least, new plant records, such as *e.g.* endemic fern *Polystichum marionense*. In brief, it is an exciting reading for plant biologists and those people involved into historical studies at heritage sites. The book is not focused on plants exclusively, it gives an idea about meteorological investigations, volcanic rocks and penguin colonies studies in the 1960-ies at Marion Island and Prince Edwards Islands as well.

The book is not that sort of scientific book bringing exhausting number of data and their interpretations. It rather focus the background of scientific work in pioneering era with a strong emphasis to personal stories and personal contributions of South African scientists to an early exploration of Marion and Prince Edwards Islands. The fact, that they did a good job in the 1960-ies is reflected in follow-up publications of their results in 1971, 2008 and 2010. The book can be recommended to the specialists working in the field of history of sub-polar/polar explorations, polar plant ecology and vegetation science. The book will undoubtedly attract also attention of students interested in early explorations, human dimension of sub-polar/ polar science, and general public. For this purposes, also electronic version of the book is available having ISBN of 978-0-620-70522-6.

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