

# World traveller

**Hugh Kendrick (Proper 1953-57) reports**

**T**he last time I wrote was for the 2003 edition of the OE magazine. We are still in Anacortes in the Pacific Northwest of the US. OEs are always welcome. But please email us first (contact details are in the 2009 OE magazine article on page 48) as we are still travelling a lot! (See photos, starting on page 3).

Africa safaris have continued to be regularly on the travel agenda, although it's now over a year since our last visit to friends in Zimbabwe where it has become even bleaker. We've been fascinated enough by the uniqueness of Madagascar to make two visits – everything, flora, fauna, seems to be indigenous. Some progress in fighting 'slash and burn' agriculture was evident between our trips, but it remains a very poor country.

We spent a joyous Epiphany in Ethiopia and travelled from the ancient north to the tribal south where warfare still persists. We 4-wheeled in the Sahara in Niger. The beauty of the Sahara and the rapidity with which the landscape changes were awe-inspiring. We saw a Gerewol ceremony of the Wodaabe nomads. Here the men dress in their best finery and are heavily made up. The women choose their partners as the men dance and sing in a long line in the heat of the day – shows stamina! Amazing sight.

There have been two cruises to Antarctica: one on a working Russian icebreaker deep into the Ross Sea to see Emperor penguins. We spent a lot of time breaking through the dense pack ice but also spent hours on end with the Emperors and their chicks, some still on the feet of their parents. The other cruise was a circumnavigation of South Georgia of Shackleton fame, starting in the Falkland Islands.

The trip was led by Sir Peter Harrison, who wrote the definitive book on seabirds. The scenery is breathtaking, with a glacier every mile of the coast, and the density of wildlife incredible – mostly penguins, of course (literally tens of millions) but also uncounted hundreds of fur seals, elephant seals and albatrosses – wanderers, black-browed, grey-headed, and light-mantled sooties, to name a few, and petrels – snow and giant – skuas and prions. A bird watcher's paradise. Someone once said: "When God takes a holiday, she goes to South Georgia"! Some of us hiked the first and last parts of Shackleton's epic crossing, but we left out the middle part! The return voyage was punctuated with gale force winds and 40-foot swells! Antarctica is indescribably beautiful and defies comparison with anywhere else on the planet.

We toured Turkey two years ago – wonderful people, food, and archaeological sites – and saw our first total solar eclipse. It was an amazing sight that everyone should strive to see. This year we went to Mongolia to see our second, this time in the remote Altai mountains near the Chinese, Russian, and Kazakhstan borders. A spectacular location that included literally kilometres of petroglyphs [images incised in rock]! We camped in central Mongolia and were awed by the limitless rolling steppes under the endless blue skies of Chinggis Khan. And we visited the sites of dinosaur finds in the Gobi desert.

We also spent a month in northwest India, in a part of Jammu and Kashmir, called ▶

◀ Ladakh. It is Tibet-like, arid with wonderful clear air, many fascinating Buddhist temples, and the western end of the Indian Himalayas. We actually started in Amritsar, on the border with Pakistan, to visit the Sikh's Golden Temple, an amazing experience. And then on to the Dalai Lama's headquarters in Dharamsala.

In 2006, I went alone (Wendy has vetoed any more camping on snow!) on two treks in Pakistan's north-east corner, near the borders with China and India. The first, in the beautiful Hunza Valley, was to see Nanga Parbat, one of Pakistan's five 8000m peaks. The Hunza Valley is the site of the Pamir Knot, the nexus of five of the earth's great mountain ranges: the Hindu Kush, the Great Himalaya, the Karakoram, the Pamirs, and the Kun Lun. There are many – I counted over 30 on my map, mostly unnamed, peaks over 7000m in this area. On the way, we drove in small jeeps up a very hairy road clinging to the mountain side! The second trek, with an English group because no US companies were running Pakistan trips then (and certainly not now!), was up the Baltoro glacier to Concordia, a major junction with other glaciers. Here are four peaks over 8000m, including K2, the second highest mountain on earth. Together with tens of peaks over 7000m, this is the premium place on the planet for viewing those magnificent mountains I love so much! During these trips I drove over the famed Karakoram Highway four times. The last time, we had to cope with more than 20 landslides. It gives new meaning to the word 'highway'!

We've also been to the Pantanal in Brazil, hiking in La Reunion, watched polar bears in Churchill (Canada) and grizzly bears feasting on salmon in Vancouver, British Columbia, toured Sri Lanka, hiked in Tuscany, France, and Spain, hiked in Mexico's Copper Canyon, and watched grey whales calving in a lagoon off the Baja coast of Mexico. The list of places to visit is long. But we've called a halt for now until the financial world settles down. We are starting to take our grandchildren on some of these trips and look forward to resuming soon their introduction to more of the world's natural wonders.

We keep in touch with the many friends we made during 25-plus years at SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation, a research and engineering company) through quarterly meetings of an 'old boys' club I helped found, and where we enjoy the company of spouses who are as interesting as, if not more so, than our erstwhile colleagues! Bill Fleming, Nick De Morgan, Mike Patterson, Patrick Lousada, and I talk about a Proport reunion in the US, but so far, it's all talk!

**See photos, starting on next page > > >**



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# PHOTOS FROM OUR TRAVELS

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