

## SYDNEY MIDWINTER 2014

On 28 June the Epping Club was again the venue of the Midwinter gathering of the Sydney Branch of the ANARE Club. The numbers were modest, just over 50, and recent expeditioners were noticeably absent. This continues a worrying trend seen over recent years. Nonetheless, the room was comfortably full, both of bodies and of ANARE spirit. To judge from the level of noise, the swapping of the yarns was at full throttle.

The gathering was enriched by the presence of more than a dozen veterans of “FIDS”, more formally, the Falkland Island Dependency Survey, now known as the British Antarctic Survey (“BAS”). They had many stories stories of living and working at bases on and around the Antarctic Peninsula. Their number included the well-known writer and historian Herbert Dartnell, author of the newly-published “Lost in the Mists”, reviewed in this issue of Aurora.

We were also honoured by the presence of some ANARE luminaries, most notably the legendary “Antarctic Man” doctor Grahame Budd, who first went south in 1954 and so was the “last man standing” in our Call of the Years. In one of the many highlights of the evening, his long-time mate Warwick Deacock recalled how the two of them made the first ascent of Big Ben on Heard Island in 1964.

In the absence of a speaker from the AAD we watched a well-made video covering the highlights of the season.

Our guest speaker was a prominent researcher into global change, Professor Will Steffen from the Australian National University. He spoke from personal experience on “Science and High Latitudes”, having spent time in Greenland and Siberia. He certainly had the full attention of the room as he presented data on how global warming is pushing up temperatures steeply around the North Pole, leading to melting of permanently frozen ground with the potential release of trapped methane, which will worsen the warming.

The smaller numbers let us take our time over the Call of the Years, with those on their feet able to tell the rest of us a bit about what they did and when and where. Our FIDS guests entered whole heartedly into the spirit of it all. As noted above Grahame Budd was the oldest expeditioner present, but the man standing most often was serial offender Graeme “chompers” Currie, whose multiple trips south stretched over nearly four decades.