

Sydney Midwinter 2018

The ANARE spirit was much in evidence at the Sydney Midwinter gathering this year, even if numbers were a little down. On hand were 28 expeditioners, partners and guests, and our number included two from the British Antarctic Survey. After two MWDs in the Blue Mountains, we moved back to a city location at Epping Hotel, starting a little earlier so it did not run so late.

The event opened as usual with homers, followed by a group photo and our high-speed AGM. The current committee (Lucinda Coates, Kirstie Fryers, Col Christiansen, Rowan Butler, Margaret Whitelaw and David Ellyard), agreed to go around one more time and we are to be joined by Warwick Williams as our "new blood".

After the welcomes, we moved to the traditional toasts. As MC, David Ellyard moved the Toast to ANARE, which was responded to by Damien Macey, son of the legendary LEM Macey (Mawson '54 etc) and a regular attender at our dings. As senior expeditioner", Trevor Olrog proposed the Toast to the Expeditioners, responded to by our most recent returnee in the person of Rowan Butler who occupied the club Berth last summer.

To keep us up to date with Antarctic activities, we enjoyed a high quality video provided by the Division, covering the highlights of the past season.

Our guest speaker was Dr Patricia Selkirk, the noted Antarctic botanist. Patricia's presentation on the plant life of Macquarie Island was very appropriate in the year we are marking 70 years of research there. Awarded the Australian Antarctic Medal in 2004, Patricia was one of the first women scientists to spend substantial time conducting field work on Macquarie Island.

And not just Macca. Between 1979 and 2005 she took part in 18 field trips to the Antarctic and Sub Antarctic islands with Australian, French and New Zealand national polar expeditions including Macquarie and Heard Islands, Iles Kerguelen, the Windmill Islands and McMurdo Dry Valleys. Patricia's overview of the ecology of Macca was

fascinating, with insights into the impact of climate change on that island, and the remarkable recovery of the flora following the eradication of the feral rabbits, rats and mice.

At the close of her talk, we were able to announce with great pleasure that Patricia is to be the recipient of the 2018 Phillip Law Medal, awarded by the ANARE Club in recognition of an outstanding contribution made to the Antarctic Community. That she has surely made.

The Call of the Years closed out the evening as usual. Last man standing was Trevor Olrog (Macquarie '65 and Wilkes '67), though he was closely pressed by John Rankins and David Ellyard, both Mawson '66

David Ellyard