

Newsletter Four – September 2019



Welcome from the Chair

Since the birth of Sir Edmund Hillary a hundred years ago, it is remarkable that the impact of his life continues for so many people. His extraordinary adventures are still fascinating, and we continue to learn from them. In the past three months, as more than fifteen groups of school leaders and seniors visited, the connections formed reinforce the value of Hillary House as an important place of heritage and learning.

In July we were privileged to share in celebrations of Sir Ed's birth centenary with other organisations that also honour and continue his vision. We recognize that a great deal of planning and hard work by the Hillary Centenary Committee was behind the various celebratory events. In particular, it was wonderful for some of our trustees to have the opportunity to share these celebrations with Sir Ed's family. Our trust also contributed to these celebrations, with our mini Mt Everest event and open home on his actual birthday, Saturday 20 July, creating further memories. We acknowledge support from Z Energy Central and South Auckland, BlueSky Trust, Pub Charity and our Rotary volunteer marshals.

The ongoing challenge to enable us to continue to maintain his legacy at Hillary House is funding and, in the meantime, we acknowledge and thank those who support us.



At Parliament, from left front: trustees Kathryn Harvey, Connie Miller, Robin Houlker, Gail Thomson, Shauna Eldridge, Hillary Helper Bernadette Phillips. Back: Karcher NZ Mike Roberts, DofE/Hillary student Olivia Cody-Matheson

The week that was ... Sir Ed's centenary

In a week of celebrating Sir Edmund Hillary's birth centenary, as well as our own event, our trustees focused on reaching out to others who promote his legacy.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes' incredible explorations were enjoyed by several of our trustees who attended the Himalayan Trust gala dinner in Auckland on Wednesday 17 July. MC Te Radar started with a wonderfully humorous 'Antarctic' health and safety briefing and throughout the evening made many marvellous links to Sir Ed's dry, practical humour.

Our chair, Robin Houlker, was frantically busy all day Friday with various media, resulting in good uptake – see [browse media stories \(https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/news-stories\)](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/news-stories). A fresh burst of energy was needed for our event at Hillary House on Saturday 20 July, which would have been Sir Ed's 100th birthday. At 8.30am on a chilly Saturday morning, a dump of snow outside the House went some way towards a sense of a mini Mt Everest.

This was followed by an afternoon open home and *Sir Ed's Antarctica* exhibition inside the House, with photographer Jane Ussher and Shaun Higgins, curator from Tamaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum. Four new storyboards, just installed ready for the event, provided a marvellous pictorial record of Sir Ed's Antarctica and will remain

on display until our next open home on [20 October](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house) (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house>). For one of our trustees, Connie Miller, the birthday had a special significance. She was joined at Hillary House by her father, Bob Pinker, an Antarctic veteran.

The busy week continued as some of the trustees made their way to Wellington for the Sir Edmund Hillary Centenary Committee function at the Beehive. We were fortunate to have with us Mike Roberts, MD of Karcher NZ, which sponsors Hillary House as a Place of National Significance within Karcher's international cultural sponsorship programme. Olivia Cody-Matheson, Duke of Edinburgh/Hillary gold level student, who contributed an hour a week to the House last year, was also with us.

Everyone enjoyed the presentations by the prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, actor Sam Neill, who was a personal friend of Sir Ed, his children Sarah and Peter Hillary, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Waikato and the poet laureate Selina Tusitala Marsh. All reflected on Sir Ed as New Zealand's most iconic mountaineer, explorer and philanthropist.



Bob Pinker, Antarctic veteran

It's like visiting Scott Base after 60 years

Bob Pinker's recent visit to the House was significant. It was an opportunity for him to reflect on his journeys with Sir Ed to Antarctica, and to share this with his daughter, Connie Miller, a Hillary House trustee.

Between December 1956 and January 1965, Bob did a total of nine trips south, including the Trans-Antarctic Expedition led by Sir Ed in the *Endeavour*, sailing from New Zealand to the Ross Sea. Bob had four trips to McMurdo Sound, where he was involved with building Scott Base and restoring the Scott and Shackleton Huts. He was also involved in bringing back the second *Endeavour* from the USA, and did another four years aboard and five trips south.

Bob says the most interesting story about the building and opening of Scott Base is that they failed to take a flag pole, and Sir Ed subsequently pulled the old flag pole back to Scott Base behind a Fergusson tractor. A famous photo showing him in the tractor with *Endeavour* in the background features in our planned Auckland Heritage Festival [Sir Ed's Antarctica exhibition](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house) (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house>) on 20 October.

The building of Scott Base was a military effort, Bob says. "At that time, we all had patches promoting our duties, and they were on my shirt at the Hillary 100th birthday celebration." In the photo above he is wearing patches for the Hillary expedition south for TAE (Training and Education) on the *HMNZS Endeavour*. His Scott Base patches relate to IGY (International Geophysical Year) work by the NZ Department of Scientific & Industrial Research teams.

When Bob visited the House for Sir Ed's Centenary on 20 July, he found it quite different from visiting the original home decades before it was moved from Remuera. Gone were the 1960's fixtures and fittings, door trims and locks he remembered – all now upgraded to meet current building requirements.

"The home now is a great reminder of the great man, but the 1960's look and feeling has been upgraded to a nice modern home, a copy of Ed's homestead - great feeling, but not the same. It's like visiting Scott Base 60 years **after** we built it."



Seniors at the House, with Hillary Helper Christine Foley, left

Hillary House visits spark memories

Memories are rekindled when senior citizens visit us at Hillary House. For Rae Maud, a resident of Mayfair Retirement Village who visited Hillary House in July, a special memory was of dancing with Sir Ed as the band played *Climb Every Mountain*. Browse Rae's story on our website: [Visit to Hillary House jogs memory for 92 year old.](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/browse-media-stories) (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/browse-media-stories>)

Rae is one of many seniors who have visited Hillary House over recent months within the Hillary House [Seniors Visiting Programme](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/visiting-programme). (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/visiting-programme>) Visitors have enjoyed a presentation by Chair, Robin Houliker, on the journey of Hillary House, followed by a tour inside and morning tea in Sir Ed's dining room. Seniors are thrilled to be in the home where Sir Ed actually lived.

Marketer and Hillary Helper volunteer, Christine Foley (above left), has enjoyed making contact with retirement villages throughout the Auckland region promoting Hillary House. "It's been really satisfying to have such an enthusiastic response to our new [Seniors Visiting Information Sheet](#). Since June this has resulted in visits by groups from Highlands and Edgewater, Erin Park, Wattle Downs, Summerset at the Park, Mayfair, St Andrews and The Poynton retirement villages.

Christine says the icing on the cake is when the village residents are brought to visit Hillary House and she is there to help with hosting. "It's a special experience for these residents and for me. The House is abuzz with conversation and shared memories of Sir Ed's achievements and how he has touched their lives. Whether they passed him in the street or met him formally, they remember small details, which we love sharing with others."



Student Leaders from Wymondley Road School interact with Wattle Downs Retirement Village residents

Generations connect at Hillary House

Inter-generational sharing and connection is a powerful tool for learning. When young people and older generations share information, viewpoints and experiences everybody benefits. We saw this powerful dynamic in action when Wymondley Road School and residents from Wattle Downs Retirement Village connected at Hillary House. They told each other stories during the shared name game, and during the tour of the House the student leaders were able to hear how much the seniors looked up to Sir Ed when they were young.

An added benefit from this visit will be when the school choir visits the village later this year, reinforcing these relationships while also building a sense of leadership and contribution to community by these young student leaders. This is a terrific outcome as a result of the facilitators, Trust Chair Robin Houliker and Hillary Helper Bernadette Phillips, deciding to bring the groups together on the same day. Thanks to a small grant from the Otago Papatoetoe Local Board, student leader groups from ten schools in this area have been able to visit in past months.

Other benefits of our [Student Leader Visiting Programme](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/visiting-programme) (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/visiting-programme>) include opportunity for students to reflect upon Sir Ed's impact on their leadership development at school.



Sarah Hillary links with SEHC Art project

An exciting opportunity for both the students of Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate (SEHC) and Hillary House has been an art project in collaboration with the Auckland Art Gallery. Students have visited the gallery and worked with Sarah Hillary to create small artworks on tiles which came from their original home. At the time the house was moved from Remuera, it was impossible to retain the parquet tiles. So, the tiles were lifted and stored with a view to later re-using them for various projects.

As part of the Auckland Art Gallery's Learning and Outreach schools programmes, 18 SEHC students were selected, six each from the Junior, Middle and Senior schools, to visit the gallery with their Art teachers. We acknowledge the support of Iokapeta Magele-Suamasi, Learning and Outreach Manager at the Gallery, our trustee and previous chair, Gail Thomson, along with the SEHC teachers who worked with their students on this project.

Students created artworks that were visual representations of their identity and cultural icons. "It was important to have visual representations of Sir Ed's legacy, interwoven with imagery that was relevant to our students," says Mose Eteuati, HOD Art at the Collegiate.

A number of the artworks have been created and donated by the students as a fundraiser for Hillary House and are on display. They will be sold at our open home as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival, on Sunday 20 October from 10am to 3pm. Visitors can also view the exhibition [Sir Ed's Antarctica](#).



Our stories reflect huge progress in meeting the objectives of Hillary House as both a heritage icon and a place of learning. The forthcoming [open home on 20 October](https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house) (<https://www.hillaryhouse.nz/events-hillary-house>) is an opportunity for you to come and visit us. Our new exhibition *Sir Ed's Antarctica* is interesting because it highlights Sir Ed's commitment to climate change and science in the environment.

Our most important fundraiser since Hillary House opened in 2014 will be at the Gibbs Farm Sculpture Park in November – tickets from Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/gibbs-sculpture-farm-visit-tickets-67120630613>) by pre-purchase only. We trust you will support us and enjoy the incredible experience of Gibbs Farm.

This newsletter highlights the diversity and range of people who have loved their visit to Hillary House and are committed to returning in the future. We are privileged to be able to share their stories with you.

Nga mihi

Robin

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