

Dr Reginald Koettlitz Sledging Flag from the National Antarctic (Discovery) Expedition

Gus (Aubrey) Jones

A flag that journeyed to the Antarctic with Captain Scott, and has been lying forgotten under a bed for 25 years, has been carefully restored for its owners.



Dover's famous polar explorer, Dr Reginald Koettlitz, was senior surgeon on Scott's first expedition to the Antarctic, commonly known as the Discovery Expedition, named after the ship which took them south (see previous newsletters).

The officers and scientists had official sledging flag designs prepared by the organising committee on the instructions and supervision of Sir Clements Markham, president of the Royal Geographical Society.

Dr Koettlitz, following research of the Koettlitz family in Prussia, designed his personal sledging flag showing the family crest and distinctive colours. This silk flag was created by his French wife, Anne Marie.

Following his death in Cradock, South Africa, the flag was returned to his brother Maurice who resided at the family home, Charlton House, Dover, and later became the property of Ulrica Koettlitz who lived in Lydden. She gave it to her niece, Ann Koettlitz, who has looked after it ever since. Ann is married to Gus (Aubrey) Jones, author of the Koettlitz biography, *Scott's Forgotten Surgeon*.

Due to its fragile condition it was impossible to display and thus remained under a family bed for many years. It was decided, after the launch of the biography in Dundee on board Discovery, to conserve the flag in order that others can benefit from viewing such an historical artefact from the heroic period of polar exploration.

The National Trust Textile Conservation Studio at, Blickling, Norfolk, agreed to take on the project and following a month's delicate work by skilled textile conservationist Claire Golbourn the flag was ready to be framed. On the advice of the NT studio Gus and Ann approached Wayne Dodds of Fine Frames, Melton Constable, Norfolk, who completed the project using his skill and expertise to ensure the flag was free of contaminants. Wayne was born in Folkestone and knows Dover well.

At last the Koettlitz sledging flag can be displayed, loaned to museums, or just enjoyed by the Koettlitz family and seen by the people of Dover, through the Society newsletter.