



News release: Franklin Expedition wreck discovery

OTTAWA, September 9, 2014 • John Geiger, Chief Executive Officer of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS), is hailing the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition's discovery of one of the ships belonging to the 1845-48 British Arctic Expedition commanded by Sir John Franklin.

"This is one of the two most important undiscovered shipwrecks in the world. The discovery of a Franklin expedition ship raises the possibility that some of the enduring mysteries surrounding the expedition's destruction can be solved," said Geiger, who as RCGS Head of Expedition has been participating in the search in Victoria Strait.

"It's a wonderful and exciting discovery that promises to shed more light on the ill-fated expedition's final months, weeks, and days," said Geiger, co-author of *Frozen In Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition*. "The Franklin expedition, and the search to understand its fate, is at the foundation of Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic."

The Government of Canada's search for the lost Franklin ships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, has been led by Parks Canada and augmented by Canadian leaders in exploration, assembled through the auspices of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, including The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, One Ocean Expeditions, Shell Canada and the Arctic Research Foundation. The latter had a dedicated research platform, the RV *Martin Bergmann*, involved in the search. All participants carried the RCGS expedition flag.

"For over 150 years the fate of the Franklin Expedition has remained a mystery. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is delighted to have taken part in this historic find and congratulates its partners on the success of this year's expedition. Our team and its search speak to our collective expertise in history, science and the sovereignty of our great country. We are proud to be Canadian," said Geordie Dalglish, a Director of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Chair of its Northern Committee.

One Ocean Expeditions Managing Director and 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition partner Andrew Prossin said, "this is a great moment for Canada and Canadians. This was truly a Canadian effort combining our special spirit, know-how and innovation. It is something that we at One Ocean Expeditions are truly proud to have been a vital part of."



Also a participant in the RCGS partnership, Robert Blaauw, Arctic Theme and Policy Manager at Shell Canada, said “Shell is proud to be associated with the successful expedition that found one of the missing Franklin ships. This discovery is of key importance to Canadian and British history and is also a celebration of Arctic exploration. Through its partnership with The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, Shell Canada looks forward to sharing the great story of the Franklin Expedition in schools throughout Canada.”

Speaking as the Chair of the Arctic Research Foundation and RCGS partner, Jim Balsillie added “this is obviously a major achievement for everyone involved, one that I see as a beginning, not an end. My hope is that with this new and important milestone, Canadians can build a stronger knowledge base and engagement with the Arctic. It’s a landscape that has shaped Canadian history, influences our safety and security and holds enormous promise for the future of our Northern communities and the country as a whole.”

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society is Canada’s centre for geography and exploration. Founded in 1929, the RCGS is dedicated to promoting geographic literacy through its education program, Canadian Geographic Education, and to making Canada better known to Canadians and the world through its publications, awards, lectures and research and expedition grants.

For further information please contact Deborah Chapman, Communications Manager at The Royal Canadian Geographical Society at 613 745 4629 ext. 160, chapman@rcgs.org www.rcgs.org and www.canadiangeographic.ca.