

THE ROYAL PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (SCIO) CHARITY NO. SC015557



217th Lecture Series 7.30pm - 31st October

Professor Keith Millar

“A downright, thorough-going catastrophe” the loss in the Arctic of the 1845 ‘Franklin Expedition’



ABSTRACT

In May 1845, a Royal Naval expedition under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin set out to establish a North-west Passage through the Arctic to the Pacific Ocean. Success was anticipated so that the nation was shocked first by the disappearance of “the Franklin expedition”, then the discovery that all 129 officers and men had died, some having resorted to cannibalism in an attempt to survive. It remains the greatest single loss of life inflicted upon Polar exploration.

The lecture will describe the history of the expedition and how present-day forensic analysis, meteorological data and Inuit oral history handed down by those who witnessed the disaster has explained the fatal outcome. The discovery in 2014 and 2016 of the expedition’s missing ships may answer the question of whether Sir John Franklin and his crew found the route of the North-west Passage before meeting their end.

BIOGRAPHY Professor Keith Millar is Emeritus Professor in the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences of the University of Glasgow. His past research included the effects of anaesthetic agents, head injury and inflammation on cognitive function. His continuing research concerns the health of Royal Naval crews of the nineteenth century.

LINKS

https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/archiveofnews/2016/september/headline_486504_en.html

**All lectures take place in Lecture Theatre K3.25, John Anderson Building,
University of Strathclyde, Rottenrow East, Glasgow G4 0NG.**

Non-members welcome

The John Anderson Building is in the pedestrianised area between Rottenrow and Rottenrow East. Free car parking is available behind the building. From High Street enter Rottenrow East at the Barony.

Refreshments will be served at 9.00pm.