

## Mana Expedition plaque unveiling, Darlington, England

Susie Stephen

On a bright and sunny day in April earlier this year, a plaque was unveiled in Darlington, County Durham, England at the site of a former home of Katherine Routledge (née Pease). The plaque commemorates the *Mana* Expedition and the work of Katherine Routledge, both little known facts in the town of Katherine's birth.

The large Pease family that Katherine was born into established a number of estates in Darlington during the height of the Industrial Revolution. Each estate was built around a substantial house and Katherine spent part of her childhood in a residence named Southend, which now operates as Bannatyne's Hotel.

The plaque was designed in keeping with English Heritage standards, in the traditional blue color, and was unveiled on April 20th by Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg, Katherine's biographer (*Among Stone Giants*, Scribner's 2003). Direct descendants of Katherine were present, along with members of the Pease family and local Quaker community.

Prior to the plaque unveiling, an impromptu tour of the hotel and gardens was led by manager John Price. For

many of the Pease family, it was an opportunity to tread the wooden floorboards of the house once again and review recent renovations to the building.

At the unveiling itself, words were spoken by Dr. Van Tilburg, Sir Joseph Gurney Pease, and Susie Stephen, who initiated and organized the event. During the afternoon tea served by the hotel, memories were shared and conversations held discussing the Pease family, the Routledge family, the *Mana* Expedition and Rapa Nui.

The plaque now takes a prominent place on the heritage trail in Darlington, and placed in the entranceway to the hotel it is one of the first things in view on approach to the main doors. It is hoped that the plaque will inspire visitors to look up the *Mana* Expedition, Katherine Routledge and Rapa Nui, ask a few questions and realize that yes, even in a small town in the north east of England, there is a connection to the South Pacific and to Rapa Nui.

*For more information, please contact Susie Stephen at [rapanuiuk@gmail.com](mailto:rapanuiuk@gmail.com)*



Pictured left to right: Peter Bucknall (Katherine's great-nephew), Sir Joseph Gurney Pease (Katherine's second cousin), Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg (Katherine's biographer) and Susie Stephen (event organizer). Photograph courtesy of *The Northern Echo*, Darlington.