



**THE JAMES CAIRD SOCIETY**



# THE JAMES CAIRD SOCIETY



## **JOURNAL** Number Seven

*Antarctic Exploration*



*Sir Ernest Shackleton*

**OCTOBER 2014**

# The James Caird Society Journal – Number Seven

## October 2014

Welcome to another Journal and *what* an auspicious time this is! As many of you will know, the Society has arranged (or jointly-arranged) many ‘Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition’ (ITAE) 1914/16 Centenary events over the next three years. Undoubtedly, the highlight will be the Westminster Abbey Commemoration Service to be held on Friday 20th May 2016.

Tim Jarvis’s *Shackleton Epic Expedition* set the scene for our celebrations. His successful ‘double’ crossing of the Southern Ocean and South Georgia in early 2013 was followed by three gripping one-hour documentary programmes on ‘Discovery Channel’ broadcast far and wide. I propose to feature Tim’s ‘replica’ expedition in Journal Number Eight (April 2016).

‘Number Seven’ focuses on another expedition - Trevor Potts’s *In the Wake of Shackleton Expedition* (1993/4). This unsupported sea-crossing was as remarkable as it was dangerous. I have left Trevor to tell you his story. His tale sets the scene for an exciting project your editor, on behalf of the James Caird Society (and the Scott Polar Research Institute), has been involved with over the past three years, or so.

The ‘Shackleton Boat Project (2014)’ is nearing fruition. Trevor has gifted his boat, *Sir Ernest Shackleton*, to SPRI for permanent public display outside the Institute building in Cambridge. The boat provides a dramatic visual aid celebrating, above all, the extraordinary journey of the Boss and his crew in the James Caird between 24th April and 10th May 1916.

I have been liaising with Trevor and between us a plan of restoration has been set in motion. Trevor’s input has been invaluable. For many years the boat has sat outside Trevor’s workplace - a sweeping hillside campsite overlooking the Island of Mull – in the wind and rain. Now, as I write this, it is under cover and being pampered back to its former glory. It is hoped that in September/October 2014 the little boat will be transported by road to Cambridge.

On behalf of the JCS, your Committee has donated £3000 towards the project costs. It is a great and fitting work of collaboration between the Society and SPRI. In addition, JCS members Alastair and Ginny Woodrow have made a most generous donation of £5000. Ginny is one of Harding’s daughters. In making this gift they stated, ‘*Harding McGregor Dunnett, founder of the James Caird Society, would have been delighted that the ‘Sir Ernest Shackleton’ has been donated by Trevor Potts to the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge University, for permanent public display. In 1993 the boat, a replica of the ‘James Caird’, was built by Trevor and his team. In December 1993/January 1994 he carried out the first and only unsupported re-enactment of Shackleton’s epic boat journey across the Southern Ocean from Elephant Island to South Georgia.*’ I should add that The Woodrows were instrumental in funding the original construction of the boat in 1993 and, therefore, played an important part (along with a few others) in making the *In the Wake of Shackleton Expedition* possible.

*The Shackleton Centenary Book (2014)* (edited and published by me in January, on behalf of the JCS) unashamedly celebrates Shackleton’s many extraordinary polar achievements, not least the ITAE. In ‘Number Seven’, to avoid duplication, I include a few original articles which I hope you will find interesting. To my mind they offer another ‘angle’ and/or insight on things ‘Shackleton’.

A few years ago I had the privilege of accompanying our President to Ramsgate. We visited the home of Dame Janet Stancomb-Wills. This lady was a *tour de force* in her Kentish community and, also, an unstinting supporter of Sir Ernest. Laura Probert, a local author and historian, most generously sent me a copy of an article she had written on the great lady. I reproduce it here, complete with a few photographs taken by your editor on our visit in July 2010.

'Breaking news' is how best I can describe Peter Green's contribution. It is always exciting to learn more of the Shackleton legacy. Peter Green's little paper on Oscar Montell is a revelation. I hope his early research into the crew of *Endurance* will blossom in the months ahead and I am grateful for his willingness to inform the Society of his findings to-date.

2010 was a busy time for your editor. In addition to Ramsgate, I found myself (plus daughter) in the wonderful city of Cardiff. Whilst Alicia was being interviewed for a place in Drama School, I happened upon the National Museum of Wales. I wandered in and asked at Reception, 'Do you have anything 'polar' on display?', whereupon it was my good fortune to meet Tom Sharpe (Department of Geology) who was, at that moment, arranging a temporary polar exhibition. Tom has since become a member of the JCS and is a great Shackleton fan. What is more, he is a geologist *par excellence*. He has produced, for this Journal, an excellent paper on the geology of Elephant Island. We often forget that the earliest polar expeditions involved some serious scientific research and Shackleton's expeditions were no exception.

There are articles featuring Shackleton's Whisky and Shackleton's *Encyclopaedia Britannica* – written by Nigel Watson and Meredith Hooper respectively. Both tell of Shackleton the whisky 'connoisseur' and literary man. Michael Smith's essay on Irish polar greats is a must-read. Bob Headland gives us a most interesting 100-year history of the church at Grytviken. John Youle offers a wonderful insight into polar philately.

Sadly, Number 'Seven' has little space for the usual comprehensive book reviews. However, I have listed the many good books to have emerged since 'Number Six' was published in March 2012. I offer, too, a brief resume of each. For those familiar with the internet, purchasing the books is straightforward. Simply click on to [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and type the book title into 'Search'. I receive many letters and emails from readers of the *Journal*. Thank you for your feedback and comments. I have selected just a few for your delectation.

Stephen Scott-Fawcett FRGS  
August 2014



# Contents

## Articles

- **A Very Generous Woman** – an overview of the life of Dame Janet Stancomb-Wills by Laura Probart. 6
- **The ‘Heroic Age’ of Antarctic exploration** by Stephen Scott-Fawcett. 10
- **Standing on the Edge of History** – the story of Oscar Montell and his brief time as a crew member on Endurance by Peter H. Green. 17
- **On the Rocks on Elephant Island** – a professional account of the geology of this famous, desolate, place by Tom Sharp (Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales). 21
- **In the Wake of Shackleton (the log of Sir Ernest Shackleton - Elephant Island to South Georgia)** – the first-hand account of an unsupported journey in the Sir Ernest Shackleton from 24th December 1993 to 16th January 1994 by Trevor Potts. 33
- **Shackleton’s Whisky** – the remarkable discovery of a stash of booze at Cape Royds by Nigel Watson (Executive Director, Antarctic Heritage Trust). 44
- **The Greatest Treasure In The Library (Shackleton’s Encyclopaedia Britannica)** by Meredith Hooper. 50
- **Ireland’s Antarctic Explorers** – by Michael Smith 57
- **Grytviken Church** by Bob Headland 63
- **Polar Philately** by John Youles 66

## Recent Books and Résumés

71

- **Operation Tabarin** by Stephen Haddelsey (with Alan Carroll)
- **Shackleton’s Epic (Recreating the World’s Greatest Journey of Survival)** by Tim Jarvis
- **Banjo** by Samantha Wynne- Rydderch
- **Shackleton (By Endurance We Conquer)** by Michael Smith
- **From Pole to Pole (Roland Amundsen’s Journeys in Flight)** by Cameron
- **Birdie Bowers** by Anne Strathie
- **The Storied Ice( Exploration, Discovery and Adventure in Antarctica’s Peninsula Region)** by Joan N. Boothe
- **Hoosh** by Jason C. Anthony
- **Hold Fast: Tom Crean** by David Hirzel
- **Shackleton’s Whisky** by Neville Peat
- **Shackleton (Antarctic Odyssey)** by Nick Bertozzi
- **Mertz and Me (by Basilisk)** by Anna Lucas

## Letters to the Editor

73

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Please note that the views expressed, in the Journal do not, necessarily, represent an official view or stance of the Society, the Editor or the JCS Committee. Copyright of all articles, essays and reviews is vested in the authors.

## **Acknowledgements**

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The portraits on the inside of the rear main cover are by Katy Longuet (Ernest Shackleton, Frank Hurley and Frank Wild) and by Ghilsiane Tillier (Tom Crean). The portrait of Frank Worsley is, also, by Ghilsaine Tillier.

The source of the studio portrait of Worsley, Shackleton and Crean (signed) is unknown. It is too good not to include so the Editor offers thanks 'to whom it may concern'.

The images of Ramsgate are courtesy of Laura Probart and the Editor. The portrait of Oscar Montell is by kind permission of Peter H.Green.

The images and drawings contained in Tom Sharpe's article are reproduced courtesy of the author and of the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow.

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The photographs contained in Nigel Watson's article on 'Shackleton's Whisky' are courtesy of the (New Zealand) Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZAHNT).

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# A very generous woman – by Laura Probert M.A.

East Court, the imposing green tile-hung house on the corner of Brockenhurst Road in



*East Court in Ramsgate*

Ramsgate, was built in 1889 for William Henry Wills, later Lord Winterstoke, the tobacco magnate from Bristol. Its position on the Eastcliff provided a wide view of the Channel, with France just visible towards the south on a clear day. Miss Janet Stancomb-Wills, the niece and adopted daughter of Lord Winterstoke, nursed him through his final illness and when he died in January 1911 Janet and her sister Yda Richardson were heirs to about £1million, a vast fortune in those days. Janet inherited East Court and lived there until her death in 1932.

Janet Stancomb-Wills was Ramsgate's first lady mayor and its greatest benefactress. She was said to have had a strong character, but was very kind. In Roland Huntford's biography of Shackleton she was described as:-

*"A formidable head of an impressive household – she was extremely well-built- had an upright carriage, and an ample chest which showed off jewellery to good effect."*

In these days of political correctness it is perhaps right for us to consider exactly how the Wills family amassed their vast fortune. In the 18th century when slave-produced tobacco was imported to Bristol from the American Republic the family gradually bought up existing Bristol firms, and by the late 18th century were involved in a number of charitable activities in the Bristol area.

It was not until the Crimean War that cigarettes were smoked in any great quantity by the British, and they generally became popular in 1870. This was the age when it was not considered "the done thing" to smoke in front of ladies, and there was no smoking permitted on trains.

In 1901 thirteen British tobacco businesses, including WD and HO Wills, formed the Imperial Tobacco Company to fend off competition from the American Tobacco Company. Sir William Henry Wills was chosen as their first chairman, and held this position until his death.

## A life serving Ramsgate

Janet inherited her uncle's house in Ramsgate. She also inherited his 513-ton steam yacht Sabrina and his London residence at 25 Hyde Park Gardens. Janet also inherited Baron Winterstoke's collection of diamonds, plate and paintings, twenty-four of which were handed over to the Bristol Art Gallery, given to the city by her uncle, where they can still be seen today.

Janet spent the first half of 1911 sorting out her uncle's affairs but was anxious to move on. She decided to sell the yacht Sabrina "As I shan't have the heart to use her." She moved to Ramsgate later that year and was always a commanding presence in the town, being driven round in one of her Rolls-Royce cars.

In the early decades of the twentieth century Ramsgate was a very different place, with a busy harbour full of trawlers and Thames barges, and crowds of holiday makers. Janet obviously

loved the town and devoted the rest of her life to looking after the people of Ramsgate.

Encouraged by a local vicar to join the Education Committee, Janet was the first lady member to be appointed to Ramsgate Town Council in 1913. Councillor Bradley decided to resign rather than stand against her, because in opposing her he thought he would not be behaving as a gentleman ought towards a lady!

Following the outbreak of war in August 1914 Ramsgate's harbour was out of bounds and the fishermen left to fish in other waters off the Devonshire and East Anglian coast. Many of the town's men left to join the navy. East Kent suffered severely during the first war from aerial combat and bombardment because of its position on the direct route between the Belgian coast and London. There were 119 air raids on Ramsgate alone and three bombardments from the sea. Many houses were left empty, as families fled inland to stay with relatives in safer locations. Janet lent Ramsgate Town Council a large sum of money to compensate for the loss of rates. There were few summer visitors or day trippers. As a result many families who normally relied on the visitors for their income were desperately short of money, although the nine million troops in transit must have helped some local businesses to survive.



*The Lord Winterstoke fire engine 1915*

Janet's interest in the town's Fire Brigade began in May 1915, when the first Zeppelin raid on the town made her aware of Ramsgate's inadequate provision against fires. She presented the first motorised fire engine to Ramsgate in October 1915, and named it Lord Winterstoke after her uncle. The fire brigade appointed Miss Stancomb-Wills an honorary Chief Fire Officer.

On 17th December 1920 a sculpture called *Destiny*, by the sculptor Gilbert Bayes, was unveiled in Albion Gardens as the Ramsgate Peace Memorial, which Dame Janet presented to the town. The statue has her eyes closed 'looking' as her sculptor said 'beyond to a greater vision of the future'. This Grade II listed memorial was restored in 2004.

In January 1922, The Mayor of Ramsgate Borough Council, Alderman Arthur Larkin, proposed that Dame Janet be given the Freedom of the Borough "in recognition of the signal service which she has rendered to this borough" and for "the many acts of benevolence and generosity towards the people of Ramsgate" and for her "noble example displayed in the difficult days of the war". Mayor Larkin praised Dame Janet's bravery in remaining in the town during the First World War despite the fact that her house was especially exposed to danger from air raiders and bombardment from the sea. She also provided comforts and essential items for those who sought shelter in the air raid shelters in the cliffs.

Dame Janet was the first name to be inscribed upon Ramsgate's Roll of Freemen of the Borough. The townspeople subscribed towards the cost of the casket which would contain the scroll. A small panel on the front of the casket displayed the Borough Coat of Arms, and on the reverse the Star of the Order of the British Empire conferred on Dame Janet in 1919, for her generosity to the war effort in helping to fit out ships for the Royal Navy.

Over two thousand townsfolk attended the opening of the Winterstoke Gardens on Ramsgate's Eastcliff on June 20th 1923. Special attention had been paid to the choice of plants, scented varieties being favoured so that blind war veterans could enjoy the gardens as well.

## A fitting tribute

When Dame Janet became the first woman Mayor of Ramsgate in November 1923 she focused on the two most pressing issues – unemployment (especially during the winter months) and on whether Ramsgate Corporation should take over the running of the Royal Harbour.

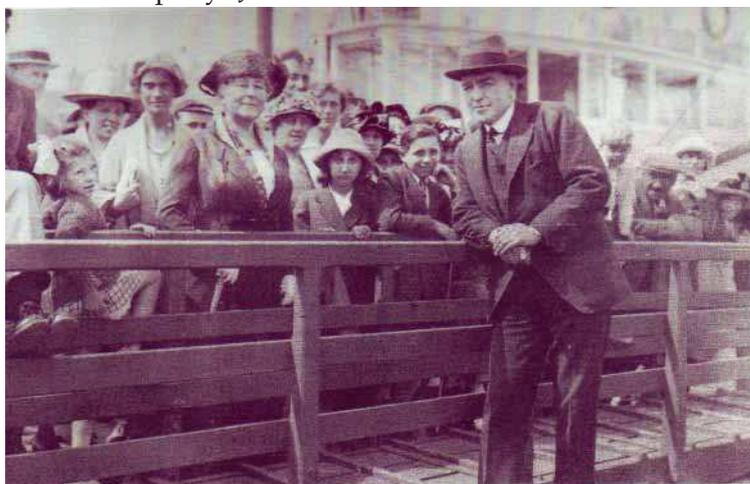
At a banquet to honour the ex-mayor in November 1924 Dame Janet announced that in commemoration of her year in office she was giving Jacky Baker's farm to the town to provide "a new lung" for the borough which would be appreciated not only by those alive then but by their children's children.

In thanking Dame Janet for her generous gift Councillor Larkin, the Deputy Mayor, said "She had done so many things for Ramsgate that it was perhaps not altogether surprising that her year in office was to be commemorated in such a gracious way. Ramsgate was the first Kentish Borough to choose a lady mayor and it had been a fine experiment."

## Good causes to the end

Of course Dame Janet did not just have interests in Ramsgate, she continued to support many of her uncle's charities and good causes, especially in the Bristol area, but also found many worthy causes of her own to support.

From early 1913 onwards Shackleton sought financial backing to enable him to launch his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914-1917, which would carry the British flag across the continent from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea by way of the South Pole. The largest contribution came from James Key Caird but Shackleton also obtained funds from the British government, the Royal Geographical Society, and Dudley Docker of the Birmingham Small Arms Company. Janet Stancomb-Wills had also befriended Sir Ernest and also helped to



*Dame Janet greeting Sir Ernest*

fund his expedition, although the amounts of money Dame Janet gave to Shackleton have never been disclosed. Shackleton acknowledged the generosity of these private donors by naming geographical features after them, including the Caird Coast and the Stancomb-Wills Promontory.

Disaster struck this expedition when its ship, *Endurance*, was trapped in pack ice and slowly crushed, before the shore parties could be landed. As the ice thawed, Shackleton and his men hastily abandoned all non-essential supplies and took to the three lifeboats, which Shackleton had christened the *James Caird*, the *Dudley Docker* and the *Stancomb Wills*, after the expedition's sponsors. After a voyage fraught with peril they arrived at the desolate *Elephant Island* six days later, the first time the men had set foot on land since leaving *South Georgia* nearly a year and a half before.

Ernest Shackleton came to Ramsgate early in July 1917 to give a talk about his expedition. Miss Stancomb-Wills presided over the meeting and chose the local *Sailors' Home*, which was very busy helping shipwrecked sailors during the war, as the most suitable organization to benefit from the collection made at the lecture.

The *Thanet Advertiser and Echo* of 7th July 1917 reported that Sir Ernest Shackleton related, in

a simple conversational style, the heroic deeds of the brave men who had accompanied him to the Antarctic, which helped the audience to forget for a few minutes the drama of the European War on their doorstep. Although these men were out of touch with the rest of the world for eighteen months, on their return to England thirty four of them had enlisted, and were serving at the Western Front or at sea.



Alexandra Shackleton

Shackleton frequently put in at Ramsgate to see Dame Janet, and their conversations were sometimes interrupted by the sound of gunfire from Flanders drifting through the window. Dame Janet remained Sir Ernest's confidante and corresponded with him until his death in the South Atlantic in 1922.

Dame Janet's health began to fail in the late 1920s and she was forced to resign from some of her committees. She died in her bedroom at East Court in Ramsgate in August 1932. Following her funeral service at St. George's Parish Church in Ramsgate, she was cremated at Golders Green crematorium.

Unfortunately Dame Janet did not live long enough to see another of her projects completed. The Dame Janet School in Newington Road was opened in September 1933 by Florence Dunn, Mayor of Ramsgate, who had been a close friend of Dame Janet. The school which bears her name is one small reminder of all that Dame Janet did for Ramsgate.

THREE ADVERTISEMENTS  
ECHO JULY 7, 1917.

THE POLAR EXPEDITION.

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON AT RAMSGATE.

The only lecture given by Sir Ernest Shackleton since his return from the Antarctic, thrilled a crowded audience at the West Cliff Concert Hall, Ramsgate, on Friday.

Miss J. Stancomb-Wills, who presided, had been given *carte blanche* by Sir Ernest to select the organisation she thought most suitable to benefit by the lecture, and in her opening speech, in which she introduced the famous explorer as "a man who is a man," she explained that she thought the Sailors' Home the most appropriate and deserving institution she could select.

Clearly and concisely, Sir Ernest Shackleton, in a simple, conversational style, related the heroic and devoted deeds of the brave men who accompanied him on that part of the expedition which came to grief with the loss of the *Endurance* in the Weddell Sea.

It was a relief and a thrilling pleasure for the overcrowded audience to listen to acts of heroism completely out of the ordinary, which took their thoughts for the time being from the drama of the European War to the more exhilarating war waged by the gallant band of explorers against the elements of Nature. Under orders from the Admiralty, the *Endurance*, which Sir Ernest had offered to place at the disposal of the Government, sailed on the eve of the outbreak of war, but, although from Oct. 26th, 1914, until May 20th, 1916, the men were without news of the outer world, they returned in time to take their part in the conflict, and thirty-four of them are now serving at the Front or at sea.

Though, at the outset, the expedition was doomed to failure when the *Endurance* became immovably fixed in the ice drifts, yet the explorers were able to carry their scientific discoveries to a very useful point, and the photographs brought back—many of them were projected on the screen during the lecture—showed that the expedition had been well "worth while."

The *Endurance* became the plaything of gigantic forces—some idea of the immense pressure of the ice was disclosed by the fact that solid pieces, 150 square miles in extent, were encountered—and on October 27th, 1915, the ship had to be abandoned, finally sinking on November 20th. After this the party encamped on the ice, often narrowly escaping death by the onslaught of huge bergs, or a cleavage of the ice on which they lived and slept. On one occasion, Sir Ernest narrated, the ice gave way at night, and one man who was thrown from bed into the icy water was rescued only ten seconds before the ice met again with a terrific crash.

Eventually, the party reached Elephant Island, sleeping again on solid land for the first time for one and a half years. They had saved the ship's three boats, one of which was named after Miss Stancomb-Wills, who was throughout a great friend to the expedition and followed its progress with the keenest interest and devotion.

In the second part of the lecture, Sir Ernest Shackleton dealt with the wonderful exploits of the six men who accompanied him to South Georgia, in the attempt to seek relief for the remainder of the party left on Elephant Island. Arriving on the wrong side of the island, after a terrible voyage, they had to cross over by land—a feat previously regarded as impossible—in order to reach the whaling station. On the way they had to slide down a precipice 900ft. high. "We had had our trousers on for nearly ten months," said Sir Ernest,

# The 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic Exploration

## An overview by Stephen Scott-Fawcett FRGS

The phrase '**Heroic Age/Era of Antarctic Exploration**' was first coined by Rev J.Gordon Hayes in his book *The Conquest of the South Pole* (1932). It referred to a period of exploration from 1906 to 1931.

Today, most polar historians adopting the phrase would extend the 'Heroic Age/Era' back to 1895 (when the 6th International Geographical Congress declared the exploration of the Antarctic Regions, 'the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken') and end it in 1922 (at the conclusion of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Quest Expedition, during which its leader died).

The notion of an '**Era**' or '**Age**' of exploration is inevitable, perhaps, for between 1898 and 1922 there was a concerted effort by some European and Antipodean countries to dispatch major Antarctic expeditions within a relatively short space of time. The idea of an '**Heroic**' Age or Era was given credence by the fact that many personalities emerged from these forays into the 'Great White South' – men like, Adrien de Gerlache de Gomery, Carsten Borchgrevink, Erich von Drygalski, Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Henry Shackleton, Roald Amundsen, Frank Wild, Douglas Mawson, Edward Wilson, William Speirs Bruce – to name just a few. Interestingly, many of the protagonists reappeared in different expeditions, so great was the pull South.

Whereas before 1895 only the distant coastline of Antarctica had been glimpsed by the likes of James Cook, Thaddeus von Bellinghausen, James Weddell, Dumont d'Urville, Charles Wilkes, John Balleny and Sir James Clark Ross; after 1895 things got serious as attempts were made to venture beyond the coast, into the interior of 'terra incognita'. Would they discover a huge frozen continent, mountain ranges, scattered ice-bound islands or yet more sea?

The most famous accounts of the heroic trail inland are reasonably well-known (ie the story of Scott, Shackleton and Amundsen). Less well-known are the exploits of the Norwegian, Borchgrevink; the Scotsman, Bruce and the Australian, Mawson, to name just a few.

On these epic expeditions, inadequately equipped and often ill-prepared explorers attempted apparently unattainable objectives at the risk of their lives in the harshest environment on planet Earth.

Many kept journals in which they wrote up their daily experiences. Some of these were re-worked and published upon return to civilisation. Others lay forgotten for years gathering dust indefinitely. Others were lost for ever.

That Rev J Gordon Hayes saw parallels between these polar expeditions and the heroes of ancient Greece is understandable and attractive. Arguably, however, it is true to say, perhaps, that too much emphasis on the 'Heroic Age' has led to some undervaluation of the heroism of earlier and later explorers, such as James Weddell, James Ross, Erich von Drygalski.

The achievements of the 'Heroic Age' were considerable. In 1886 a map of Antarctica issued by John Murray showed only the barest stretches of coastline along the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula and around the Ross Sea. Some sections of 'coastline' reported by Charles Wilkes were, in fact, large floating ice shelves and not really coast at all. In 1922 a map was issued by The Times newspaper. This showed a massive increase in knowledge. Whilst considerable extents of the coastline remained unknown, much of the Ross Sea and Antarctic Peninsula had been charted in detail together with new coast discovered on the east side of the Weddell Sea.

When the 'Heroic Age' ended in 1922 much still remained to be learned about Antarctica's

geography, let alone climate, glaciers, minerals and natural history. All these issues were to become the focus of renewed scientific research in the late 1950's and continue to the present day. All the same, by the end of Shackleton's ill-fated Quest expedition the transformation of knowledge from Murray's map of 1886 had been remarkable.

## **A Résumé of Antarctic Personalities and Expeditions 1897-1922**

Some highlights:

*Adrien de Gerlache (1897-99)*

*Carsten Borchgrevink (1898-1900)*

*Erich von Drygalski (1901-03)*

*Nils Otto Gustav Nordenskjold (1901-04)*

*Robert Falcon Scott (1901-04)*

*William Spiers Bruce (1902-04)*

*Ernest Shackleton (1907-09)*

*Roald Amundsen (1910-12)*

*Nobu Shirase (1910-12)*

*Robert Falcon Scott (1910-12)*

*Wilhelm Filchner (1911-12)*

*Douglas Mawson (1911-14)*

*Sir Ernest Shackleton (1914-16)(17)*

*Sir Ernest Shackleton (1921-22)*

### **Adrien de Gerlache (1897-99)**

*Belgian Antarctic Expedition on the Belgica.*

- Visited South Shetland Islands, mapped coast segments.
- Ship beset in pack ice for 12 months & became the first exploring vessel to winter over, south of the Antarctic Circle.
- Earliest photographs of Antarctica taken.

### **Carsten Borchgrevink (1898-1900)**

*British Antarctic Expedition on the Southern Cross.*

- Visited Balleny Islands and examined a stretch of coastline (Victoria Land).
- Landed at Cape Adare on 2/4/99 and raised British flag.

- Built hut ('Camp Ridley') and wintered over – the first scientific party to do so on the Antarctic continent. Established mid-winter hut 'Stone Hut'.
- First to use kayaks and sledge dogs.
- Nicolai Hansen (Norwegian zoologist) died on 14/10/99. Buried at cape Adare.
- Visited Auckland Islands & Macquarie Island on return.
- Scientific investigations included zoology, geology, meteorology & terrestrial magnetism.

## **Erich von Drygalski (1901-03)**

### *German South Polar Expedition on Gauss.*

- Gauss was the second vessel to winter over.
- Discovered Wilhelm II Land.
- Made ascents in tethered hydrogen balloon on 29/3/02, reaching 480m altitude and relayed observations to ship by telephone.
- Separate scientific party spent 16 months on sub-Antarctic island (Iles Kerguelen). Freed sledge dogs – progeny survived until 1929!

## **Nils Otto Gustav Nordenskjold (1901-04)**

### *Swedish South Polar Expedition on Antarctic.*

- Shore party wintered over on Snow Hill Island.
- Mapped coastline around Antarctic Peninsula.
- Sledged to 66 degrees S (east of Peninsula).
- Antarctic wintered at South Georgia. Ice prevented its return to Snow Hill Island. 3 men attempted to reach base via Hope Bay but forced to winter on Bay with minimal supplies (1903).
- Antarctic was crushed by the ice pack and ship's company wintered over at Paulet Island. One man died. All three parties (Snow Hill Is/Hope Bay & Paulet Is) rescued in 11/03 by Argentine Navy.
- Expedition carried out an extensive scientific programme on the Falkland Is and Tierra del Fuego.

## **Robert Falcon Scott (1901-04)**

### *British National Antarctic Expedition on Discovery.*

- First extensive exploration on land in Antarctica.
- A separate sledge party (comprising Scott, Wilson & Shackleton) reached 82 degrees 16.5 min S.
- Examined coastline around Ross Island.
- Wintered at Hut Point.
- 1902-03 Discovery remained ice-bound in McMurdo Sound. Relieved by Morning (1902-03).
- 4/2/04 – ascended 250m in tethered balloon (first over continent).
- Discovery freed from the ice by Morning & Terra Nova (1903-04).
- Visited Balleny Islands and Macquarie Island.
- First to use electric light in Antarctica (power provided by windmill).
- Expedition carried out a comprehensive scientific programme and prepared a detailed series of maps and views.

## **William Speirs Bruce (1902-04)**

### *Scottish National Antarctic Expedition on Scotia*

- First oceanographic exploration of Weddell Sea.
- Mapped some coastline.
- Wintered on Laurie Island (South Orkney Islands) and set up meteorological observatory (1/4/03) – oldest one (still in use today). Island fully mapped.
- Engineer (Alan Ramsey) died 6/8/03.
- Visited other sub-Antarctic islands,
- Expedition carried out a comprehensive scientific programme, made cinematographic films and sound recordings.

## **Ernest Henry Shackleton (1907-09)**

### *British Antarctic Expedition on Nimrod.*

- Wintered over at Cape Royds, Ross Island.
- Nearby volcano – Mount Erebus (3799m) climbed to summit 10/3/08.
- Shackleton & 5 others sledged to within 180 km (97 miles) of the South Pole on 9/1/09 (and took possession of the ‘Polar Plateau’ for King Edward VII. Insufficient supplies curtailed their progress & only just made it back to the ship (it was sailing away without them at the time!)
- Discovered approx 800 km of ‘new’ mountain ranges flanking Ross Ice Shelf to the south side (Trans- Antarctic Mountains).
- Professor Edgeworth David reached region of South Magnetic Pole (16/1/09) and took possession of Victoria Land for Britain.
- First experiment using motor transport (Arrol Johnston) – limited success.
- Cinematographic film of penguins and seals made.
- First ‘stamp’ used – (NZ stamp overprinted ‘King Edward VII Land’). Shackleton first Postmaster.
- First book written printed and published in Antarctica, *Aurora Australis*, 100 made. About 20 known to remain (fetch circa £25/30k at auction).
- On outward journey Nimrod was towed 2700 km from NZ by Koonya (Capt Frederick Pryce Evans) to conserve coal. Koonya was the first steel vessel to cross the Antarctic Circle.

## **Roald Amundsen (1910-12)**

### *Norwegian Antarctic Expedition on Fram.*

- Wintered over at ‘Framheim’ at the Bay of Whales on the Ross Ice Shelf.
- 5 men reached the South Pole on 14/12/11. Used dog sledge and claimed South Polar Plateau for Norway (King Haakon VII Land)[Roald Amundsen, Olav Bjaaland, Helmer Hanssen, Helge Hassel & Oscar Wisting].
- Discovered Queen Maud Mountains.
- Kristian Prestrud explored King Edward VII Land and took possession for the King of Norway on 7/12/11.
- Some oceanographic observations were made in the South Atlantic.
- The expedition produced a cinematographic film of some of their work.

## **Nobu Shirase (1910-12)**

### *Japanese Antarctic Expedition on Kainan-Maru.*

- Failed to penetrate Ross Sea ice pack. And returned to Sydney to winter over (1910-11).
- Eventually reached the Bay of Whales (Ross Sea) and sledged across part of the Ross Ice Shelf (1911).
- Also landed on King Edward VII Land, sledged 250 km inland and claimed the land sighted for the Emperor (28/1/12).

## **Robert Falcon Scott (1910-12)**

### *British Antarctic Expedition on Terra Nova.*

- Wintered over at Cape Evans.
- 5 men reached the South Pole on 17/1/12 by man-hauling [Robert Scott, Henry (Birdie) Bowers, Edgar Evans, Lawrence (Titus) Oates & Edward Wilson]. Discovered Amundsen's tent and evidence that the Norwegians had reached the Pole 33 days before! All 5 perished on return journey.
- Extensive exploration and scientific investigations carried out (biology, geology, glaciology, meteorology, geophysics) along the Ross Ice Shelf and on Victoria Land.
- Separate party (lead by Victor Campbell) wintered over at Cape Adare (1911) and Evans Cove (1912). Discovered Oates Land.
- Herbert Ponting made first moving picture of an Antarctic expedition. Also prepared colour photos.
- Deployed a telephone between Cape Evans and Hut Point.
- Established a Post Office using NZ stamps overprinted 'Victoria Land'.
- Mules, ponies, tractors and dogs used for transport + man-hauling.

## **Wilhelm Filchner (1911-12)**

### *German South Polar Expedition on Deutschland.*

- Visited South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands. Explored coastline of SG.
- Charted part of the Antarctic south coastline along Weddell Sea.
- Discovered the Filchner Ice Shelf.
- Ship beset in the ice pack for 9 months.
- Original intention of expedition was to cross the whole of the Antarctic continent.

## **Douglas Mawson (1911-14)**

### *Australasian Antarctic Expedition on Aurora.*

- Discovered and explored King George V Land & Queen Mary Land – claimed for the British Crown in 3/12.
- Shore parties wintered at Cape Denison (on Shackleton Ice Shelf – leader = Frank Wild). Stayed occupied into Spring 1913.
- Mawson, Ninnis & Mertz undertook sledge journey into the south interior. Ninnis & Mertz perished. Mawson returned to Cape Denison & missed the departure back to Australia of ship.
- Frank Wild explored Adelie Land and sledged to the South Magnetic Pole with Eric Webb

(21/12/12). They both carried out extensive scientific investigations.

- Separate party (leader = Ainsworth) sent 23 months on Macquarie Island. Made the first detailed scientific investigations there. Mapped the island. Introduced sheep. Wireless stations set up at MI and CD as a relay. First contact made with Antarctica on 25/9/12.
- Expedition intended to take first aeroplane to Antarctica but it crashed on test flight in Australia. Was transported south for use as an 'air tractor' instead (ie wingless).
- Small quantity of silver and gold were detected. A meteorite was found.

## **Sir Ernest Shackleton (1914- 17)\***

### *Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition on Endurance.*

- Attempted first crossing of Antarctic continent but en route (via Falklands & South Georgia + successfully mapping part of the Caird Coast) the ship was beset in the pack ice in the Weddell Sea and sank on 27/10/15.
- Company escaped in 3 salvaged lifeboats re-named James Caird, Dudley Docker & Stancombe-Wills (to honour the 3 main sponsors of the expedition).
- Eventually ended up on Elephant Island. Made camp by up-turning the Dudley Docker and Stancombe Wills to act as a roof.
- Shackleton decided to take 5 men (Worsley, Crean, McNeish, McCarthy, Vincent) in a modified James Caird across the Southern Ocean to seek help from the whalers on South Georgia (approx 1450 km away).
- Arrived on the 'wrong' side of SG Island. With Worsley and Crean, Shackleton made the first crossing over the mountainous interior to arrive at Stromness and help from the disbelieving whalers.
- Back on Elephant Island, Frank Wild was in charge. All remaining company believed that Shackleton would bring help.
- Shackleton organised (in the end) 4 relief expeditions to try and rescue the men left at Elephant Island. Eventually, the men were rescued with the help of the Chilean Navy and the ship *Yelcho* on 30/08/16.

### **\*Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (Ross Sea Party, 1914-17) on Aurora.**

- To support Shackleton's attempt to cross the continent, a separate expedition was sent by Shackleton to the Ross Sea under the leadership of Aeneas Mackintosh. The intention was for a party of men to march across the Ross Ice Shelf from the coast at McMurdo Sound to the foot of the Trans-Antarctic Mountains (Beardmore Glacier), laying food and supply depots.
- Landed (via Macquarie Island) at Cape Evans (Scott's old hut on the Terra Nova expedition). Intention was to land supplies in Scott's hut and winter over on the ship. Very early on in the process of establishing the base, the *Aurora* was blown out to sea by a storm, drifted hundreds of miles and became beset in the pack ice for 10 months. 10 men were marooned at the hut with scant supplies, in real terms.
- Using great initiative (and scavenging abandoned items at Hut Point (Discovery 1901/4) and Cape Royds (Nimrod 1907/9)) the men improvised and managed to lay depots along the proposed route (little realising Shackleton's fate in the Weddell Sea).
- In the process three men lost their lives – so, whilst Shackleton never lost men under his DIRECT command he did lose three men in one of his expeditions.
- The *Aurora*, once freed from the ice in 3/16, returned to NZ (Lyttleton) for a refit and, with Shackleton on board, relieved the survivors at Cape Evans on 10/01/17.
- Note that the leader (Mackintosh) - against the advices of others- risked a walk across young ice in May 1916 from Hut Point to Cape Evans, having been stranded by the weather on

his return from the Ross Ice Shelf. The weather turned nasty and he was lost, along with his travelling companion.

## Sir Ernest Shackleton (1921-22)

### *Shackleton-Rowett Antarctic Expedition on Quest.*

- Shackleton became unsettled at home, missing the challenge of the Frozen South. With the help of his friend and businessman (Rowett), Shackleton found an excuse to return to his beloved South Georgia and the White Continent. Very early on the journey, at South Georgia, Shackleton died (05.01.22). Frank Wild assumed command. The ship continued into the Weddell Sea. No real discoveries were made. Elephant Island revisited.



*A postage stamp commemorating Shackleton's German lecture tour 1910*

# Standing On The Edge of History

Peter H. Green

The personnel who accompanied Shackleton on the 1914-17 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition have been well-documented over the years. Their names are very familiar to students of the Heroic Age: Wild, Worsley, Hurley, Crean, Orde-Lees to name but a few. However, the list is incomplete. A new name needs adding to the roster: Oscar Montell.



*Oscar Montell in 1917*

He has been overlooked thus far because his role was not a pivotal one - beginning in Millwall Docks and ending in Buenos Aires. His story is only a footnote to the main events, his contribution far less than those of the chief protagonists, but nevertheless he did play a part in one of the greatest adventures in Antarctic history.

At this point I should explain my own involvement in this story. I am not a historian, or a Shackleton scholar. My interest is personal. My mother, Joan Green (née Montell) passed away in December 2013, aged 84. She was very keen on family history, and would never pass up an opportunity to share it with people. A tale she frequently told, no more than a teasing headline really, was that her Uncle Oscar – her father's brother - once sailed with Shackleton, but had “jumped ship” in South America, for reasons unknown.

She didn't have any more details than that - it was just one of those vague, colourful, but possibly apocryphal stories that many families have. A superficial glance through the indices of a few Shackleton books, and intermittent searches on the internet over the years never backed up my mum's assertions, so the story remained unverified. But when she passed away, I felt compelled to try a little bit harder to establish the facts, and to either confirm or reluctantly disprove her story. Fortunately, new content is being added to the internet all the time, search engines are drilling deeper into the data, and indexing more and more of it. Consequently, in 2014 my renewed my digital research was much more fruitful.

This much I already knew: Oscar Sylvanus Montell was born in Hull on 29th September 1892, to a Swedish immigrant father (John Magnus Montell), and an English mother (Mary Ann Shearsmith Tresize). Given the era, and geographical location, it was perhaps inevitable that he would one day earn his living from the sea – and so, like several of his brothers, he became a trawlerman.

The first gem I found was on a page in the diary of Frank Hurley, as documented in the CD-ROM Shackleton's Photographer, by Shane Murphy<sup>1</sup>. The entry for 24th October 1914 reads:

Montell (Seaman) goes same way as 'the Entertainers.' Houlder Bros ditto.

This was a most exciting development, and spurred me on. Montell is not a very common name, at least in the British Isles. But, it was only a surname. Reading more of the diary, it was apparent that the 'Entertainers' were Oswald Barr and Joe Irving<sup>2</sup>. The entry for 16th October reads:

One of our sailors (O.Barr), an entertainer at the Palladium, contributed to the festivities.

## **The entry for 17th October states:**

A brief, but enjoyable concert was provided by Miss Kathleen Knight, with Irving, of our ship being recalled for a concertina solo.

## **The entry for 23rd October notes that:**

Barr & Irving absent without leave all this week. Capt. Worsley fined and discharged them, arranging their return to London via Houlder Bros steamer.

Then I came across Caroline Alexander's book, *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*<sup>3</sup>. In it, she quotes Captain Worsley:

"Irving was cut with a sword on top of his head & Barr had had a large ower pot broken in his face." Significantly, shortly after Shackleton met his ship, the names Irving and Barr, along with two others now forgotten, disappear from the ship's roll.

The disappearance of other un-named crew members was another good sign. The fact that these men were described as 'forgotten' was more worrisome. I took it as an indication that I might not find what I was looking for.

Being a Shackleton novice, I realised that to make any further progress, I needed some expert help, and approached the James Caird Society. I sent a posting to the Forum, which led to a private e-mail exchange with Roderic Dunnett in which he encouraged me in my research, and added a few suggestions for other sources I should check. I resolved to find a crew list for *Endurance* at the point of her departure from the UK. Eventually, I landed on the website of the National Archive at Kew, looking at a summary of document reference BT 99/3175/394.

From the summary, it isn't clear what exactly this document is, but the names on the page were ones I was becoming increasingly familiar with:

**Ship: *Endurance*; Official number: 136698.**

**A Cheetham; rank/rating, 2nd Officer; age, 49; place of birth, Liverpool; previous ship, *Terra Nova*.**

**W Howe; rank/rating, Able Seaman; age, 32; place of birth, London; previous ship, *Charles*?**

**C J Green; rank/rating, Ships Cook and Steward; age, 28; place of birth, Richmond; previous ship, *Andes*.**

And when I scrolled down to the bottom of the list, my heart performed a cliché and literally skipped a beat:

**Oscar Montell; rank/rating, Seaman; age, 22; place of birth, English; previous ship, *Lord Heneage*.**

I was now 99% certain that Uncle Oscar was indeed part of Shackleton's team in the initial stages of the expedition. But I knew I had to see the original document, to see if there were any other clues which would elevate the proof to 100%, so I ordered a copy of this specific portion from the National Archive. (Copyright for this resides with the National Archive, so I cannot reproduce it here.)

There are three sections on the page:

**(Part I.) Seamen who have failed to join, deserted, or otherwise left the Ship.**

**(Part II.) Deaths of Members of the Crew.**

**(Part III.) Substitutes engaged.**

In Part I., "have failed to" is crossed out. It is unclear if this is an artefact of the scanning process or a mark on the original document. This section has a single entry:

## **Jeffrey Douglas G.**

He is listed as the 1st Officer, signing the agreement on 30th July 1914. Under the heading, 'Particulars Of Leaving The Ship' it records that on 8th August in Plymouth, he 'Transferred to "Aurora"'.  
Part II. is blank.

Part II. is blank.

In Part III., are the details of ten men:

**Greenstreet Lionel**  
**Macklin A.H.**  
**McIlroy J.A.**  
**Marston G.**  
**Macauley T.**  
**Crean Tom**  
**Hussey L.D.A.**  
**Clark R.S.**  
**Montell Oscar**  
**Vincent John**

Oscar Montell's address is listed as "39 Scarboro' St, Hull". This address matches that recorded in the 1911 census for my great uncle. His age matches too – give or take a couple of months. On 8th August 1914 (the 'Date and place of signing the agreement') he would have been 21 years, 10 months and 10 days old. This section also notes that he was last discharged from the Hull-based sidewinder trawler Lord Heneage (H.27), in 1914.

For me, these facts sealed the deal. My mother's story was true. She would have been delighted. I wondered if there was a further level I could take my research to. Could I find any photographic evidence with which to ice the cake? The picture accompanying this article was taken in 1917, close enough to 1914 to be a reasonable basis for comparison purposes if I found a candidate photograph. And I did, on the website of Getty Images<sup>1</sup>. (For copyright reasons, I cannot reproduce the image here.) The accompanying caption reads:

**1st August 1914: Irish explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton (1874 - 1922) waves goodbye as his ship SS Endurance leaves Millwall Docks for the Antarctic.**

Shackleton is holding onto the rigging, doffing his cap to the crowd. Behind him, Captain Worsley is gesturing likewise. On the extreme left of the frame - almost cropped from it – is a young man standing near a lifeboat. He is wearing a jumper with sleeves rolled up to the elbows. He appears to be squinting in the sunlight. His V-shaped hairline is very distinctive. It is Uncle Oscar.

Why he left the ship in Buenos Aires is unclear. I do not know if there are any clues in the diaries and journals of those who were on board Endurance during the voyage south. I suspect this level of detail is indeed lost to history. But at least the man himself is not.

Oscar Montell passed away in March 1983.

desert, or otherwise leave the ship, are to be returned with this form.  
 o entries or marks of any kind are to be made in the Book.

(Part I.)—~~Seamen who have sailed to join, deserted, or otherwise left the ship.~~

Reference No.	Christian and Surnames at Length.		Date and Place of signing Agreement.		Capacity; if Mate or Engineer, No. of his Rating or R.P.Z.	PARTICULARS OF LEAVING THE SHIP		Report of Character.		If this Dis. A is not forwarded with this form, state the reason.	
	1.	2.	Date.	Place.		3.	Date.	Place.	7.		8.
1	Jeffrey Douglas G.	Joggin	Poplar London	1st Officer	8/5/19	Plymouth	Shanghai to Canton	V.S.	P.S.		
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											

(Part II.)—Deaths of Members of the Crew.

Date.	Place.	Christian and Surnames of Deceased.	Sex.	Age.	Rating.	Nationality (stating birthplace).	Last Place of Abode.	Cause of Death (see "Procedures").

(Part III.)—Substitutes engaged.

Reference No.	Christian and Surnames at Length.	Age.	Nationality (if British, state birthplace).	ADDRESSES.		Ship which he last served, and Year of Discharge (interior).	Date and Date of signing the Agreement.		Date and Date of signing the Agreement.	Amount of Wages at date of signing of Agreement.	Amount of Wages at date of signing of Agreement.	Signature of Officer below whom the substitute was engaged.
				(1) Part of Present Address, and Home Address.	(2) Present Address at date of signing of Agreement.		Year.	Month.				
1	Greenstreet Lionel	25	English	(1) 5 Markham Road Sutton, Surrey	(2) 193 Markham Road Sutton, Surrey	193	Markham	8/1/19	15/1/19	£10		H.L.
2	Maacklin A.H.	24	Scottish	(1) Greenlegh, Witley, Blackburn	(2) Greenlegh, Witley, Blackburn	1914	Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
3	McAlroy J.A.	32	Irish	(1) Grafton, Moseley, West.	(2) Grafton, Moseley, West.	1914	Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
4	Marston S.	32	English	(1) 11 Evelyn Mansions, Brunswick Rd.	(2) Postern London W.		Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
5	Macaulay Y.	37	Irish	(1) 312 Commercial Rd. Blackham London	(2) 312 Commercial Rd. Blackham London		Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
6	Cream Tom	34	do	(1) 11 Mount Pleasant, Blackburn, Lancs.	(2) 11 Mount Pleasant, Blackburn, Lancs.		Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
7	Grassley L.D.	33	English	(1) 24 Leighton, Blackburn	(2) 24 Leighton, Blackburn	1913	Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
8	Clarke R.S.	32	English	(1) 34 Barlow St. Hull	(2) 34 Barlow St. Hull	1914	Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
9	Marshall Oscar	32	English	(1) 6, Bean St. Hull	(2) 6, Bean St. Hull	1914	Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.
10	Vincent John	30	"				Blackburn	1/1/19	1/1/19			H.L.

1. If the cause of death is from Disease, the name or nature of the same should be stated.  
 2. When the cause of death is Accidental, the circumstances attending the accident should be fully stated.  
 3. If at the time of an accidental death the vessel sustained any damage, loss of gear, cargo, &c., the nature of such damage or loss should be stated, if no damage or loss was sustained it should be so stated.  
 4. If a British subject state Town or Country of birth, and if born in a foreign country, state whether a natural born British Subject, or naturalized.

# On the rocks on Elephant Island

Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP

There's always a wave of excitement on board ship when Elephant Island comes into view, usually as a lumpy grey wedge rising out of the lumpy grey Southern Ocean beneath a lumpy grey sky. Approaching from the South Orkney Islands, more often than not in wind conditions within the upper quartile of the Beaufort Scale, the sight of land is a welcome one. Last season (January 2013), this was especially the case as the winter sea ice denied us access to the South Orkneys and we spent eighty-four hours ploughing headlong through a storm from South Georgia to Elephant Island. We consoled ourselves with the thought that the James Caird took sixteen days going the other way in 1916.

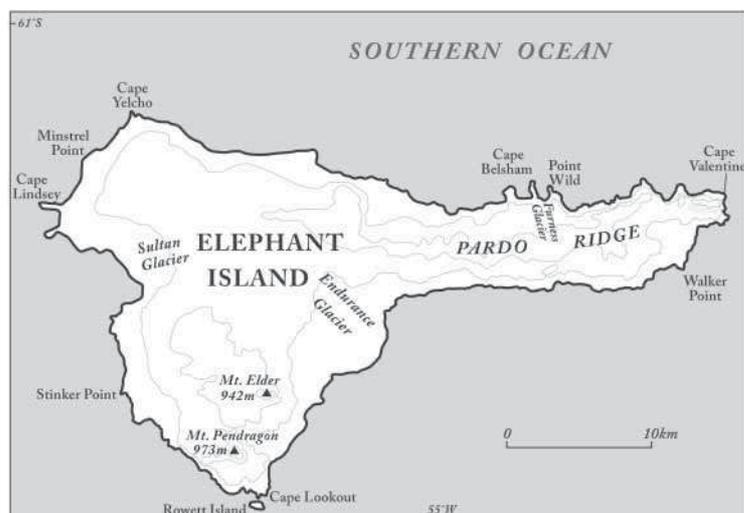


Figure 1

Elephant Island, and its companion islands of Clarence, Cornwallis and Gibbs would demand attention for their spectacular ice and rock scenery alone, but of course the extra frisson comes from Elephant Island's Shackleton association - its role as a refuge to twenty-two members of the Endurance expedition between 16th April and 30th August 1916. Almost completely covered by ice, Elephant Island is a wild, windy, desolate and spectacular place, an impression enhanced by the scattering of large tabular icebergs, derived from the Weddell Sea ice shelves away to the south, in the surrounding waters. Elephant Island is the largest of a group of two large and five smaller islands, lying just south of latitude 61° S, about 780 miles WSW of South Georgia. With a length of 29 miles and a maximum width of 17 miles, Elephant Island rises steeply to its highest point of about 3,200 feet near the southern tip of the plateau-like western half of the island. Along the northern coast, a high, steep ice-covered finger of land, Pardo Ridge, fifteen miles long but less than four miles wide, extends eastwards to end at Cape Valentine. Two large glaciers descend from the roughly triangular western half of the island; the Sultan Glacier flowing westwards, and the Endurance Glacier which flows eastward, reaching the sea to the south of Pardo Ridge.

## Science and exploration

Island groups often have a fascinating geological story to tell, and the Elephant Island group is no exception. The most northeasterly of the South Shetland Islands, Elephant Island sits at the junction of several of the Earth's tectonic plates, movements of which led to the opening of the Drake Passage some 35 to 40 million years ago.

The first observations on the geology of Elephant Island were made by Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874-1960), of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition as their ship, *Antarctic*, sailed by the island in 1902. He saw that the rocks were similar to those of the South Orkney Islands, and suggested, correctly, that they were metamorphic rocks, rocks which have been changed by heat and pressure deep within the crust of the earth. In his 1906 report in the *Bulletin of the Geological Institution of the University of Upsala*, he wrote: "Elephant and Clarence islands with adjacent small islets form a group of striking likeness to the South Orkneys. Unfortunately the geology

of the Elephant-Clarence group is completely unknown, but I fancy that, once surveyed, these islands will be found to form a connecting link between the westerly South Shetland Islands and the South Orkneys”.

In this he was broadly correct; the rocks of Elephant Island are closely related to those of much of the South Orkneys and to the rocks of Smith Island, the most westerly of the South Shetland Islands.

Further observations of Elephant Island’s geology were made from the sea by David Ferguson (c.1857-1936), a Glasgow geologist working as a prospector for Christian Salvesen, the Scottish whaling company which had leased the mineral rights in the region. Between 1911 and 1915, Ferguson

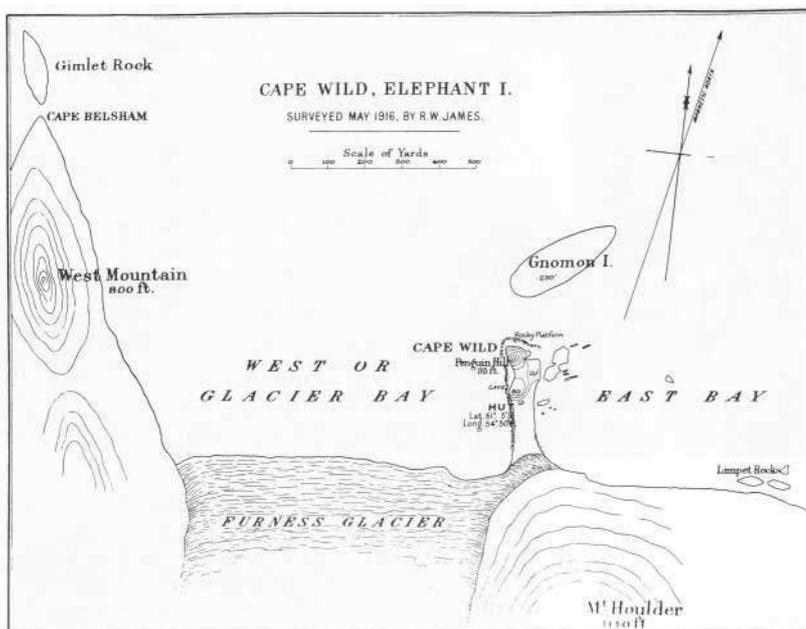


Figure 2

made several geological expeditions on behalf of Salvesen in South Georgia, the South Orkney and South Shetland Islands, and on the Antarctic Peninsula. Ferguson’s Second Salvesen Prospecting Expedition of 1913-14 sailed close to Elephant Island, but he was unable to land due to bad weather. He did note, though, that “the rocks at the S.E. corner of the island are light gray to dark, and more or less banded. The gray rocks appear to be stratified, as the bedding is uniform, but some of the darker rocks may be bedded lavas ..... much of the island appears to be formed of stratified sediments”. Unfortunately, Ferguson was misled by the prominent banding, which is of metamorphic and not sedimentary origin.

The first opportunity to examine the geology in detail, albeit of just one small part of the island, came in 1916 when a geologist spent four months camped on the north coast. His research was, however, limited by a distinct lack of resources and transport, and his visit was more enforced than planned. Nevertheless, James Mann Wordie (1889-1962), one of Shackleton’s twenty-two men marooned at Point Wild through the winter of 1916, was able to publish the first detailed description of Elephant Island’s rocks in 1921.

Following a geology degree at Glasgow University under Professor John Walter Gregory whose Arctic experience and connection with Scott’s Discovery Expedition was Wordie’s first contact with polar geology, Wordie moved to St John’s College, Cambridge. There he was recruited for the Imperial Transantarctic Expedition on the recommendation of Raymond Priestley who had been south with both Shackleton, on the Nimrod Expedition, and with Scott on his Terra Nova Expedition.



Figure 3

Wordie’s geological work on the expedition began when the Endurance reached South Georgia. During November 1914 while the ship was at Grytviken he was able to collect samples of the rocks from various places on the island and begin mapping their distribution to gain an understanding of the island’s rock sequence and its much-folded structure. But once the Endurance entered the Weddell Sea pack ice, rocks were few and far between. Wordie had to make do with whatever



Figure 4

of two different kinds of granite, as well as other igneous rocks, grit, and several different sandstones in one bird. On another occasion a young Emperor penguin contained half a pound of pebbles up to an inch across. Even these were able to shed some light on the regional geology; rocks like granite, grit and sandstone indicate a continental source, rather than an oceanic island where the rocks would usually be dark lavas. Unfortunately, these Emperor-sourced samples, along with the specimens Wordie collected on South Georgia, were lost to the bottom of the Weddell Sea when the *Endurance* was crushed and sunk.

came up with the dredge, with pebbles from the stomachs of Emperor penguins, and with the occasional dirty iceberg. Shackleton wrote, in *South*: “The geologist was making the best of what to him was an unhappy situation; but was not without material. The pebbles found in the penguins were often of considerable interest, and some fragments of rock were brought up from the sea floor with the sounding-lead and the drag-net.”

The pebbles from the Emperor penguins could contain a range of rock types; on one occasion Wordie records finding pebbles

With the *Endurance* gone, science, of course, took second place to survival during the next six months as the men camped on the ice then eventually took to the boats. Arriving at Cape Valentine on 15th April 1916, they were much preoccupied with getting ashore for the first time in sixteen months, getting fed and watered and assessing the site, but during their short time there Wordie did manage to make some geological observations and collect half a dozen specimens. And a few days later, as the three boats sailed along the north coast of Elephant Island from Cape Valentine to their new campsite at Cape Wild, Wordie was taking note of the geology, recording the attitude of the tilted layering in the rocks exposed along the coastline. With the help of Frank Wild, he later sketched a rough map of the coast, which he described as “about as inhospitable as one could well imagine”.

Cape Wild (61° 06'S, 54° 52'W) lies about seven miles west of Cape Valentine on the north coast of Elephant Island. Named by Shackleton after his second-in-command, but not an inappropriate descriptive name for this windswept headland, Cape Wild comprises a rocky point called Penguin Hill or Lookout Point about 80 feet high which is joined to Elephant Island by a shingle and boulder spit about a hundred yards long. Immediately off the tip of Cape Wild, and rising about 250 feet, is a jagged wedge-shaped island, Gnomon Island, which resembles the shadow-forming arm of a sundial. At the landward end of the spit, a precipitous icy slope rises 1100 feet to Mount Houlder, called South Mountain by Shackleton's men.

To the west, a bay about three-quarters of a mile wide is backed by the steeply-descending Furness Glacier which calves icebergs into the bay. The steep, serrated profile of the western side of the bay is formed of West Mountain, 800 feet high, finishing at Cape Belsham, with a rocky islet, Gimlet Rock, offshore.

Shackleton's party came ashore on the eastern side of the shingle spit and set up camp beneath two of their upturned boats at the southern end of Lookout Point after considering alternatives such as digging an ice cave at the



Figure 5



Figure 6

type from the local bedrock and which had been deposited from the melting of a once more extensive Furness Glacier or brought in by grounded icebergs. Wordie recognised that the shingle spit is actually not a marine depositional feature at all, but is the right lateral moraine of the retreating Furness Glacier. On his 27th birthday in April 1916, a few days after the James Caird had set off for South Georgia, Wordie spent the afternoon on Lookout Point sketching the scenery and collecting specimens from the beach shingle, which included “over a dozen pieces of granite, syenite, etc”, igneous rocks which, we now know, do not occur in the bedrock of Elephant Island. A few days later, on 4th May, he was able to collect specimens from rock outcrops at Cape Wild, “a dozen or so fairly representative rocks. The rocks are unfortunately very monotonous - metamorphic schists - and the amount of rock accessible is extremely small”, he wrote.

When rescue came, on 30th August 1916, it was sudden and their departure was rapid. In less than an hour, they were off of their rocky headland. Wordie wrote: “The end was rather a hurry ... it was best to cut and run. And so all my beach exotics are left behind: the only rocks I have are those in situ. But can one complain? - My notes are safe and every man is safe”.

Although glacial erratics are generally helpful indicators of regional geology, or at least of that region traversed by the glacier, bedrock samples from known localities are of more use to the geologist; it may be that Wordie had to make a snap decision on which specimens to take with him and so chose those of greater scientific value. He brought back some thirty specimens from Elephant Island, six from Cape Valentine and the remaining twenty-four from Cape Wild, and these survive today in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. In his excellent biography of Wordie, Michael Smith states that Shackleton was specific in his instructions that no specimens from the expedition were to be given to the British Museum. Why Shackleton did this is not clear and to my mind, as a museum curator, this deserves further research. Nevertheless, it seems likely the rock specimens went to Glasgow where they could be examined and described by the foremost petrologist of the time, George Walter Tyrrell, a lecturer at the university there.

Towards the end of the expedition, when all were safely back in Punta Arenas, Shackleton unexpectedly gave Wordie authority to write up the expedition’s scientific results. That he succeeded in producing what he did is remarkable considering that most of the specimens and notes were lost with the sinking of the *Endurance*. A summary of the scientific results was first published as Appendix 1 in Shackleton’s now famous 1919 account of the expedition, *South*. In this, Wordie says little of his geological work, although he does make reference to the ‘very extensive collections’ he made during his month on South Georgia and says that he had begun

foot of South Mountain or using a sea cave on the west side of the point. With four months here, Wordie had plenty of time to examine the geology, although access to anything other than the immediate area was limited by the impassible terrain. An experienced alpinist, Wordie did try to climb the icy slopes of South Mountain, but its steepness and the lack of proper climbing equipment defeated him. He reckoned, though, that with ropes and the right equipment, the interior of the island could be reached via the eastern edge of the Furness Glacier.

He regularly combed the beach for interesting rocks, mostly glacial erratics, or “exotics” as he called them, loose rocks which differed in appearance and

mapping the island. With the ship trapped in the ice, Wordie admits that “the geologist suppressed all thought of rocks” and turned his attention to a study of the sea-ice and other oceanographic work. Wordie’s paper on sea-ice in fact turned out to be one of his most significant contributions from the expedition, published in summary in the Appendix in South as well as in the Geographical Journal and in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1921. It has also more recently been reprinted in the James Caird Society Journal.

Wordie’s main geological paper, “Shackleton Antarctic Expedition, 1914-17: geological observations in the Weddell Sea area” was read at a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 20 June 1921 by his old professor at Glasgow, J.W. Gregory. In it Wordie outlined the expedition’s intended geological plans: “The original plan of the Shackleton Expedition, had it been realised, would have yielded geological results of no little value. The base would have been on Coats Land, and next in importance to crossing the Antarctic continent was the projected geological sledging trip across the Wilhelm Barrier, westwards from the head of the Weddell Sea to the southern continuation of Graham Land. Had it been carried out, it would of course have settled finally the relationship of Graham Land to the rest of Antarctica. The besetment and destruction of the Endurance, however, put an end to the original plan, and no landing was ever made either on the eastern or on the southern side of the Weddell Sea”.

However, he was able to state that the specimens dredged from the floor of the Weddell Sea suggested that the geology of Coats Land resembled that of Victoria Land more than that of Graham Land.

Turning to Elephant Island, he wrote: “That the otherwise unfortunate Shackleton Expedition should have at last reached terra firma here is, therefore, a matter for congratulation; though the work which could be done by a shipwrecked party was necessarily limited, it nevertheless has value, seeing that it provides the first scientific account of the group”.

The geological description of Elephant Island was based on Wordie’s observations while there and on the specimens he collected, the first from the island. Six of the specimens are from 200 yards SSE of Cape Valentine and the remainder from three localities at Cape Wild: from Point Lookout; from the east side of Point Lookout; and from the southeast corner of the spit. Most have a number scratched onto them by Wordie in order that he could record their original location, and one has an arrow, presumably recording an original orientation. I recently had the opportunity to examine the specimens at the Hunterian Museum and was surprised to find that Wordie had returned with a significant weight of rock in good-sized hand specimens, not small rock chips as I had expected. This meant that they were large enough to be cut and thin sections prepared for microscope examination, a standard procedure for identifying the minerals making up the rocks. G.W. Tyrrell was a specialist in the examination of rock thin sections under the microscope, but he struggled to make sense of Wordie’s Elephant Island rocks, describing them as “of obscure origin and relations” and “of rather puzzling character” presenting “considerable difficulties in mineral identification and determination of origin”.

Based on his own and Tyrrell’s examination of the specimens, Wordie considered the Elephant Island rocks to be different from those of the other South Shetland Islands or the South Orkneys, although he did recognise some resemblance to some rocks of the South Orkneys. From



Figure 7

Ferguson's observations of Clarence Island in 1913, Wordie thought that it was geologically similar to Elephant Island.

Wordie's rocks from Cape Wild and Cape Valentine are dark grey, blue, and grey-green metamorphic rocks called phyllites. They have a fine layering or banding and a dark silvery-grey or green reflective surface caused by the development of minerals such as chlorite. Chlorite is an iron and magnesium alumino-silicate mineral, and forms when the original rock, perhaps a sedimentary rock, is buried within the crust and subjected to particular levels of pressure and temperature. Different minerals can grow in rocks of the same initial composition depending on the temperatures and pressures to which they have later been subjected. With increasing temperature and pressure, first chlorite, then biotite, and then garnet develop in the rocks.

The process of metamorphism and the resultant growth of new minerals often produce a wavy layering or banding in the rocks. This might be due to differences in the chemical composition of the original materials or may be the result of the segregation of different minerals growing in the rocks during metamorphism. This banding, which geologists call a foliation, can be tilted and folded by earth movements, and measuring the attitude of this foliation in different places and plotting it on a map can help build up a picture of how the rocks are folded and of the sequence of events that deformed the rocks.

Layering in the Elephant Island rocks had been noticed by Ferguson who mistook them for sedimentary rocks in 1913, although Andersson in 1902 had recognized them as metamorphic. Wordie's landings at Cape Valentine and Cape Wild in 1916 allowed details of the foliation to be recorded from the rocks in outcrop, and he was also able to note the attitude of the foliation even while sailing along the northeast coast of the island to Cape Wild. At Cape Valentine, he saw that the rocks were tilted towards the southeast at about 30° from the horizontal but to the south of there they were sloped south. Along the north coast between Cape Valentine and Cape Wild the rocks are tilted in the opposite direction, to the north, and range from vertical to about 30°, while at Cape Wild itself they slope towards the NNW at about 60°. He also noted that the foliation was folded like a concertina at the foot of Mount Houlder. The overall trend of the rock layering (known as the strike) is roughly northeast-southwest.

Erosion of steeply tilted and foliated metamorphic rocks often produces steep jagged and serrated peaks, islands and outcrops. Describing the mountains along the north coast of Elephant Island, Wordie likened their jagged outline to a "frayed cardboard edge". Similar features can be seen also at Rowett Island at Cape Lookout at the southern end of the island and at Shag Rocks, a group of islets to the west of South Georgia.

Cape Wild, now known as Point Wild, has changed significantly since 1916. When Wordie was there, the front of the Furness Glacier lay immediately at the landward end of the spit. Today the glacier front is about half a mile further back, and erosion due to the resultant change in tidal currents has substantially narrowed and lowered the level of the shingle spit. This, along with waves generated by iceberg calving from the Furness Glacier washing across the spit, has no doubt been responsible for the complete removal of any trace of occupation by Shackleton's men as the British Joint Forces Expedition found when they visited Point Wild in 1970-71. Similarly, that same forces expedition examined Cape Valentine and found no signs of occupation there either. As Shackleton's party themselves realised, the beach at Cape Valentine is swept by storm waves and so it is not surprising that there is no sign of occupation remaining.

It was to be another Shackleton expedition that next visited Elephant Island, although Shackleton himself was not on board: he died when the ship reached South Georgia in the early stages of the expedition. The Shackleton-Rowett Expedition of 1921-22 included a Canadian geologist, George Vibert Douglas (1892-1958). Douglas was born in Montreal and joined Shackleton's Quest Expedition soon after graduating in 1921 from McGill University.

Having sailed from London on 17th September 1921, the *Quest* was plagued by engine trouble and put into Rio de Janeiro for repairs. While she was there, Douglas and the expedition's naturalist George Hubert Wilkins (1888-1958), who was later to make the first Antarctic flight in 1928, continued south on an oil transport ship to South Georgia. They were able to spend sixty-eight days there during which Douglas conducted an extensive reconnaissance survey of the island's geology, building on previous work by David Ferguson and James Wordie. The lack of maps of a suitable scale for geological mapping meant that Douglas had to produce a base topographic map on which to record his geological observations. This was especially to be the case with his work on the smaller islands visited briefly by the expedition after leaving South Georgia, such as Elephant Island. He wrote: "It was found to be seldom possible to do accurate and close geological mapping owing to the limited time that was available for work ashore. Maps of the areas had to be made, as those of the Admiralty are of too small a scale to do more than provide a skeleton upon which the larger scale sketches can be based. The sketches were generally the result of a rapid reconnaissance with plane-table or compass and pace, or in some cases simply a freehand sketch from the summit of a ridge".

Following Shackleton's death on board the *Quest* at Grytviken on 5th January 1922, Wild took the ship southeast into the Weddell Sea pack ice and after several attempts to push south and briefly being beset, set out for Elephant Island which they sighted on 25th March. They were treated to a stunning view of the island that evening as the sun set; Wild wrote: "Both Elephant and Clarence Islands seemed to be afire, a rosy glare rising from each of them to the sky. Over Cape Wild lay a reddish golden glow, and the whole appearance of the island was beautiful, giving the impression of the most peaceful calm, a condition very foreign to Elephant Island".

The *Quest* sailed southwest between Cornwallis and Clarence Islands and overnight along the southeast side of Elephant Island. Unable to find a suitable landing site on that coast, they found some shelter in the lee of a small spit at Cape Lookout at the southern tip of the island, and anchored there on 26th March to the north of a jagged islet which they named Rowett Island after the expedition's sponsor.

Although their intentions were primarily to stock up on seal blubber to supplement diminishing coal supplies, which they did by killing seven elephant seals, Douglas went ashore to examine the rocks. He collected thirteen specimens here, seven erratics from moraines on either side of a glacier to the east of the spit, and six from along the crest of a rock ridge to the east of the glacier. The following day, having sailed along the west coast of Elephant Island, Douglas was landed at Minstrel Bay about four miles northeast of Cape Lindsey on the northwest coast of the island where he collected four specimens of grey phyllites along the shore north of Minstrel Point.

On the expedition's return to the UK on 16th September 1922, Douglas spent five months at the Scott Polar Research Institute which was then based in a room at Cambridge University's Sedgwick Museum of Geology in Downing Street, sorting his collections and working on the geological reports of the expedition. Douglas wrote a brief summary of the expedition's geological work which he read at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on 13th November 1922 following Frank Wild's account of the expedition, and three months later he gave a fuller description of the geological results in a lecture to the Geological Society on 7th February 1923. But after drafting a paper on the topography and geology of South Georgia and one on the Tristan da Cunha group, he returned to North America to begin a PhD at Harvard University, leaving most of the expedition geology reports unfinished.

The specimens collected on the expedition were presented to the British Museum (Natural History) in 1927 (accession number 1927, 1250) by John Quiller Rowett, Shackleton's old school friend who had largely financed the expedition, and when the museum published the report on the geological collections in 1930, most of it was written by geologists other than

Douglas, including a chapter on deep-sea deposits and dredgings, by Douglas' sister, Alice. An astrophysicist, she was based at Rutherford's Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge while helping with her brother's material. The detailed description of the rocks of South Georgia was written by G. W. Tyrrell of the University of Glasgow and that of the Elephant Island rocks by Cecil Edgar Tilley of the University of Cambridge.

Both Tilley and Tyrrell had developed considerable expertise in the examination of rocks in thin section under the microscope. Tyrrell in particular had, by 1930, published a number of papers on the rocks of South Georgia, the South Shetland Islands and Graham Land, based on specimens brought back by David Ferguson. He had also contributed a section on his microscopic study of the rocks to Wordie's 1921 paper on the geological work of the Endurance Expedition. Tyrrell and Tilley must have had Douglas' South Georgia and Elephant Island specimens available to them for study soon after the expedition's return as their initial findings were reported by Douglas to the Geological Society meeting in February 1923.



Figure 8

Wordie attended Douglas' Geological Society lecture in February 1923, and in discussion following the lecture, Wordie "remarked that the [Quest Expedition] rocks from Elephant I. were of the same nature as the few specimens collected by the shipwrecked Endurance party in 1916, and the island may, therefore be regarded as composed throughout of crystalline schists in different degrees of metamorphism", and in this he is largely correct.

The seventeen rocks collected on Elephant Island by Douglas and described by Tilley in 1930 are amongst the expedition's specimens now in the Natural History Museum in London. Tilley showed that while the grey phyllites at Minstrel Bay on the west coast of Elephant Island were similar to those collected by Wordie at Cape Wild on the north coast, they were distinctly different from those collected at Cape Lookout on the south coast. The metamorphic rocks, called schists, from the south of the island were much more varied in composition, and the minerals they contained showed that they had been subjected to a much greater degree of change by heat and pressure than those in the north. Rocks at both places had started life as sedimentary rocks, strata laid down under the sea, as layers of sandstone and mudstone in the north, and as sandstone, mudstone and limestone rocks in the south.

The Elephant Island group was visited again in January 1928 by the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition when Olaf Holtedahl (1885-1975), Professor of Geology at Oslo University, landed, after some difficulty, at Cape Lloyd on the northeast coast of Clarence Island. The thirty-six specimens of rocks he collected here, the first samples from Clarence Island, were given in 1937 to the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow University. The rocks are very similar to those of Elephant Island and have the same general northeast-southwest trend.

In 1936, as part of the Discovery Investigations, RRS Discovery II landed two scientists at Cape Bowles at the southeast tip of Clarence Island, and the following year, on 2nd November 1937, James W. S. Marr (1902-1965) collected rock specimens from Gibbs Island. Marr had been to the Elephant Island group before; in 1921 as a student at Aberdeen University and a patrol leader for the 1st Aberdeen Scout troop, he was chosen by Shackleton to join the Quest Expedition as cabin-boy. After that expedition he returned to Aberdeen University and graduated with a zoology degree in 1925, joining the Discovery Investigations as a marine biologist in 1928, serving initially on the RRS William Scoresby. The Discovery Investigations were largely biological and oceanographic cruises and the scientific staff generally did not include a geologist. Nevertheless, rock samples were collected and these were the basis of a 1945

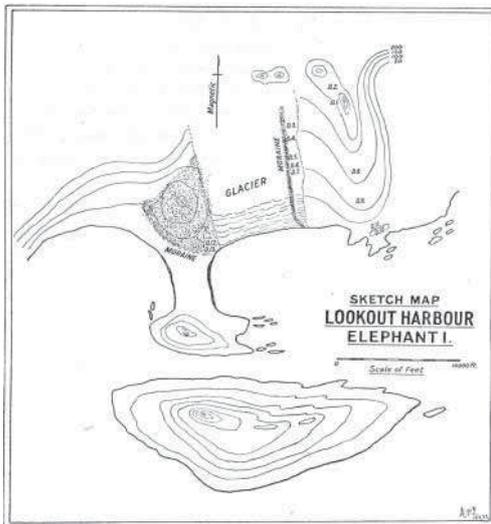


Figure 9a



Figure 9b

most notably a series of Brazilian expeditions in the 1990s.

report by Tyrrell based on a substantial collection in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. Marr's specimens from Gibbs Island (and the linked Narrow Island) proved to be of particular interest. For while the eastern part of Gibbs Island was formed of rocks similar to those of Elephant Island, the western part was made of dense, dark green rocks called serpentinite.

## From continental drift to plate tectonics

The modern era of geological research on the Elephant Island group began in 1970 with a visit by the US-based Scottish geologist Ian Dalziel. He was put ashore from the US Icebreaker Glacier in January 1970 at Stinker Point on the west coast of Elephant Island where he remained for five days, probably the first person to camp on Elephant Island since Shackleton's men in 1916. Dalziel's team from the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory at Columbia University visited the Elephant Island group again on the US Research Vessel Hero in 1974-75 and once more in 1975-76. The 1970s also saw two British forces expeditions to the Elephant Island group, the Joint Services Expeditions of 1970-71 and 1976-77, both of which made geological collections. Geologists from over half a dozen countries, including British Antarctic Survey staff in the 1980s, have worked on Elephant Island since then,

This modern period of research has coincided with a revolution in our understanding of how the Earth works, and geologists today have a reliable model of the Earth's internal processes into which they can fit their field observations of rocks on the ground. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, geology was a bit like stamp collecting; a rock from here, and a rock from there, but no real understanding of why certain rocks occurred where they did and not elsewhere, or why phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanoes are broadly limited in their global distribution to discrete zones. Since the mid 1960s we have had a developing framework that makes sense of many disparate observations and pulls these together into a global theory. The idea is that the Earth's outer layer is broken into about a dozen large fragments and many smaller ones, called plates, and that these are in continuous movement relative to one another. The theory of plate tectonics develops a much earlier idea of continental drift.

Throughout most of geological time, the Earth's continental rocks have been carried across the surface of the globe by the processes of plate tectonics, as new volcanic ocean floor develops, breaking up pre-existing continents and moving them around until they collide with one another and crumple to form mountain chains like the Himalayas. Perhaps the most significant event in the geological history of Antarctica is how it came to be isolated from its surrounding continents over a period of about 160 million years.

Some 250 million years ago, Antarctica was at the heart of a huge supercontinent which geologists call Pangea. The southern part of Pangea, comprising today's southern continents of Antarctica, South America, Africa, India and Australia, is called Gondwana. Two hundred million years ago, at the beginning of the Jurassic Period, Gondwana began to break apart into our modern continents, a process which eventually, about 40 million years ago, saw Antarctica separate from South America. With the opening of the Drake Passage, the Southern Ocean completely surrounded Antarctica for the first time. This thermal isolation by the Southern

Ocean and its cold Antarctic Circumpolar Current, coincided with a time of falling global temperatures and led to the development of the Antarctic Ice Sheet.

As Gondwana began to break up as South America and the Antarctic Peninsula moved westwards away from Africa, continental rocks along its western margin (what is now the west coast of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula), were pushed over the dense dark volcanic rocks of the ocean floor to the west. The ocean floor rocks descended back down into the interior of the Earth, a process called subduction, and started to melt. Some of the molten rock rose back up to the surface to erupt from volcanoes, while some solidified deep underground to form rocks like granite.

These subduction zones, where continents and ocean rocks meet, are marked on the sea bed by deep ocean trenches. Sediments washed into these deep trenches can be subjected to enormous pressures when they are scraped off and plastered on to the continental edge where the ocean floor descends. This can result in sedimentary sandstones and mudstones becoming metamorphic phyllites and schists as new mineral crystals grow under increased temperatures and high pressures.

This was how the rocks of Elephant Island formed, originally as sediments in a subduction zone along the edge of Gondwana, which were then scraped off and stuck onto the edge of the continent. Some of the Elephant Island schists contain a blue mineral which forms only under conditions of very high pressure but (relatively) low temperature, such as are found at about 15 km depth in a subduction zone. The dense, dark green rocks discovered by Marr on Gibbs Island are from a sliver of deep ocean floor rocks ripped up as subduction proceeded.

The rocks of Elephant Island belong to a suite of rocks which geologists call the Scotia Metamorphic Complex. They are found, as Andersson surmised in 1902, not only on most of the Elephant Island group but also on the Smith Island at the southwestern end of the South Shetland Islands and on the South Orkney Islands. The rocks can be dated using radioactive elements within certain minerals, and these tell us that on Elephant Island they formed between about 90 and 110 million years ago. On the South Orkney Islands similar rocks are dated to about 180-200 million years and on Smith Island they are only 50 million years old. So the rocks all date from the period of Gondwana break-up. This also coincides with the dates of volcanic activity caused by subduction in the Andes and in the Antarctic Peninsula which lay to the east of Elephant Island at that time.



Figure 10a

Prior to the opening of the Drake Passage, the continental blocks which make up South Georgia and the South Orkney Islands were situated adjacent to Tierra del Fuego. As Antarctica separated from South America, the Scotia Sea was formed as a new plate, the Scotia Plate, opened up, rolling back eastwards and dragging the South Georgia and the South Orkneys blocks with it. During this process, Elephant Island was rotated clockwise by about 45° into its present orientation.



Figure 10b

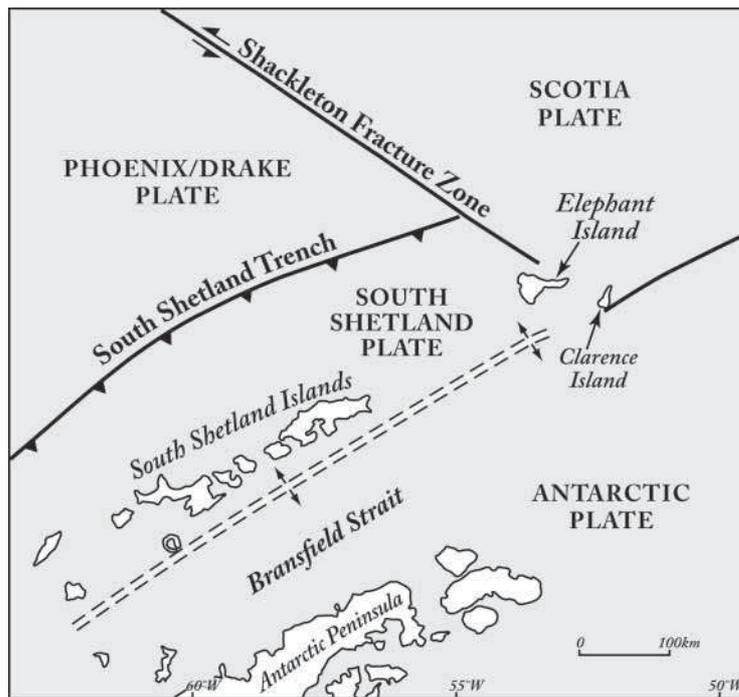


Figure 11

Wordie brought back the first rock samples from Elephant Island; he would no doubt be astonished by what we have learnt about it since.

Today, 40 million years after the opening of the Drake Passage, the arrangement of the tectonic plates in this region is quite different. Elephant Island now sits at the junction of two small plates where they meet along the line of a major fault, the Shackleton Fracture Zone, and close to the edge of the Antarctic Plate. Movement along this fault, which is the boundary between the Scotia Plate to the northeast and the South Shetland Plate to the southwest, is dragging Elephant Island to the WNW at about 7 mm a year, relative to the Antarctic Peninsula. This means that Elephant Island is now about 70 cm (or over two feet) farther west than it was in 1916. It is now almost one hundred years since

Figure 1. Outline map of Elephant Island.

Figure 2. Map of Cape Wild by Reginald W. James of the Endurance Expedition, May 1916. The Furness Glacier has receded since 1916 and now lies near the bottom edge of this map.

Figure 3. Point Wild from the west. Lookout Hill is to the left (photo: Tom Sharpe)

Figure 4. Looking towards the south end of Lookout Hill, with Gnomon Island beyond, from the east shore of the spit, Point Wild, Elephant Island (photo: Tom Sharpe)

Figure 5. The sheer face of Mount Houlder at the southern end of the spit at Point Wild, with the front of the Furness Glacier to the right (photo: Tom Sharpe)

Figure 6. Wordie's Elephant Island specimens in the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow. . (photo: Tom Sharpe; reproduced courtesy of the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow).

Figure 7. One of Wordie's rocks from Cape Wild. Note the reference number scratched by Wordie on the specimen. (photo courtesy of the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow)

Figure 8. Some of the thin sections prepared for microscope study by G.W. Tyrrell from Wordie's Elephant Island specimens. (photo: Tom Sharpe; reproduced courtesy of the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow).

Figure 9a. Douglas' 1922 sketch map of Lookout Harbour (Cape Lookout) and Rowett Island at the southern tip of Elephant Island. The numbers refer to locations of rock samples he collected.

Figure 9b. Glacier, moraine and ridge at Cape Lookout where Douglas collected rock samples on 26 March 1922, viewed from the southwest. The glacier has receded uphill from its 1922 position on the shoreline (photo: Tom Sharpe)

Figures 10a and 10b. Garnet schists (10a) and folded greenschists (10b) at Cape Lookout, southern Elephant Island (photos: Tom Sharpe)

Figure 11. Map of tectonic plate boundaries near Elephant Island.

## Acknowledgements

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# In The Wake Of Shackleton Expedition

## Log of "Sir Ernest Shackleton" Elephant Island to South Georgia

### 24 December 1993 -16 January 1994

It all started in the autumn of 1991 when Robert and I were discussing what to do next, it was two years since we had kayaked across the Bering Strait, the first non-Eskimos to do this and possibly the first people ever to do this. We had not exactly been stagnating for the two years but we did feel that as we were both now over 40, it was time to get on and do another expedition. It was definitely time for me to do another sailing trip as I had not done any serious sailing since my single handed cruise back from the Azores in 1986 (Bulletin June 1987). It was decided that it had to be a trip in an open, engineless boat rather than a yacht. We were loosely talking about a trip up to the Bering Strait area, and a light shallow draft open sailing boat could be beached and pulled clear of the water, on some of the remoter uninhabited islands. Of course once we started to talk seriously about open boats Shackleton's Boat Journey immediately came to mind and the rest, as they say is history.

Shackleton had planned what he called the last great adventure, "To cross the Antarctic continent from one side to the other via the South Pole." During his 1908/9 expedition he marched to within one degree of the pole. Later Amundsen and then Scott had reached the pole, Scott and his companions perishing on their return along their outward track. Shackleton planned to cross from the Weddell sea to the Ross sea using food dumps that would be placed by a party marching south from the Ross sea. As we now know Shackleton's ship "Endurance" was crushed in the ice and the party never managed to get ashore. After about a year on the ice, the twenty eight men eventually managed to sail the three ship's boats to Elephant Island, off the North East of the Antarctic Peninsular. The only hope of rescue was to sail one of the boats the 800 miles to South Georgia to get help from the whaling fleet stationed there. They arrived at Stromness in May 1916. (See "SOUTH" - Ernest Shackleton and "SHACKLETON'S BOAT JOURNEY" - Frank Worsley, both in the C A Library)

The main objective of our expedition was to sail a "replica" of the "James Caird" from Elephant Island, to South Georgia a distance of about 800 miles. A secondary objective was to cross the mountains of South Georgia from King Haakon Bay to Stromness, following Sir Ernest Shackleton's route. The "replica" called the "Sir Ernest Shackleton" was a copy of the original hull shape and was rigged with a very similar sailing rig, of standing lug mizzen, dipping lug mainsail and a working jib, giving approximately the same sailing performance as the "James Caird". The interior and the decking of the boat however were totally different. A watertight deck was fitted in place of the canvas, packing cases and sledge runners that Shackleton had used. The rowing thwarts, which obstructed movement down below in the "James Caird" were left out and in their place watertight bulkheads were substituted to give structural strength. Bunks, navigation lights, a radio, batteries and a wind generator were also fitted. Half a ton of lead pigs were bolted below the cabin sole for ballast, rather than the stones that Shackleton



*Going about*

and his crew slept on. Originally we had planned to navigate by sextant but the thought of missing South Georgia in an engineless boat with doubtful windward ability was too frightening to contemplate seriously, and we borrowed a Magellan GPS. With a four hours on and four hours off watch pattern, the next twelve days tended to merge together into a long tiring cold slog. The lifeboat drogue had to be deployed for the first time on the 29th at 2000, after having been hove too for much of the day with NW force 7 which was impossible to beat into. The wind was up to the top end



*Trevor at tiller (half way)*

of a force 7 (at a guess) right on the nose and the seas were big and confused, we lay to the drogue for 23 hours and had made 3.3 miles according to the walker log. When we did get going at 1900 on 30th we had an easterly wind force 2/3 with a very confused sea, the wind eventually veered to a sw when we gybed at 0400 on the 31st. During the night we had a solitary seal playing around the log line, it was approximately 300 miles from the nearest land. Eventually at 1000 on the 31st we had to deploy the drogue again with a westerly force 8 it was a very uncomfortable day with a +3m swell fortunately the wind moderated back to a 2/3 after six hours when we could sail again but the swell had increased 5/6m which meant progress was slow and uncomfortable. During the early evening a school of about twenty hour glass dolphins (2m black with white markings in the shape of an hour glass) played around in the waves and showed us quite convincingly that they were in their element and we were most definitely not in ours. New years day dawned and we were flying along at 4/5 knots under full sail, surfing down a moderate 2m swell. During new years day the swell increased in size as the wind increased with frequent snow showers to about force 5/6, when we eventually progressively reefed down to three reefs in the main and one in the jib, with the mizzen down. The night of the 2nd of January was particularly bad with a very heavy but unseen swell in the dark, making life very uncomfortable.

There were frequent snow showers during the night making it very cold on deck with a fair amount of icy spray flying around, down below it was so incredibly bumpy and noisy sleep was impossible. On the 3rd of January we had to put the drogue out again in a southerly gale with very big seas up to 5m with breaking tops. During the evening a red ship was seen travelling south but we received no reply from the VHF (we found out later that it was not working owing to condensation inside). We managed to get the drogue up after only four hours when the wind moderated to a sw5 and sailed with reefed jib and mizzen in very steep broken seas. During the night it was again very, very noisy down below and extremely bumpy with the boat continually falling off waves or having broken waves surfing down both sides of the boat. For most of the voyage, conditions below were damp but not excessively cold (no ice), even though no heating was used. After a particularly cold night watch it was sometimes very difficult to get warm before turning out for the next watch four hours later.

The crew were not affected by seasickness, but the cramped fetid conditions sometimes made some of the crew a bit queasy especially at meal times. The largest waves encountered were 6/7m but that was only the occasional rogue, usually in a gale the main swell rarely rose above 4/5m. The cooking arrangements of a single burner camping stove set into a hole in the cabin sole, with a tubular metal surround for the pan were not interrupted at any time by the boat's motion. We were able to heat up tins of food for a hot meal at any time. As all the water had to be carried, very little dried food was taken, all the main meals were standard tins from the supermarket. We were surprised at the lack of sea mammal life observed during the passage, only seeing the occasional lone dolphin or seal away from land. Once or twice a fin was seen or at night a whale was heard blowing off. The one exception to this was a school of about twenty hourglass dolphins that played around the boat for a while.

## **Arrival at South Georgia**

As we approached South Georgia we had had another rough night with very confused seas, with 5m waves coming at us from different angles. The sea had eventually died down a bit from the very steep and dangerous braking waves of the previous afternoon, when we were

lying to a sea anchor. It had been a very dark night, with total cloud cover making steering the boat even more difficult in the midst of the unseen monsters noisily crashing over the boat. We sighted the Willis Islands off the north west tip of South Georgia at 0600 on the 4th of January on our 11th day at sea. The snow clad tops rising majestically out of the mist about 30 miles away were our first sight of land for almost two weeks.

At first, as the dawn was breaking we could see a hazy white object on the horizon, in the distance it was impossible to tell whether it was the top of a snow capped mountain, a low flat cloud or a huge tabular iceberg. A cold shiver ran down my spine at the thought of an iceberg, was it a huge tabular ice sheet, miles away on the distant horizon, or worse, was it a much smaller flat topped berg, much closer? The view through the binoculars gave nothing away. If it was land it should be at least thirty miles away and no danger, but if it was ice we would need a large alteration of course to avoid it, if only it would get light soon. As the dawn slowly broke it became obvious that what we could see were the clouds over South Georgia with the reflection of the snow on the mountains making them look white, like icebergs. Eventually as it became fully light the dark mountains became discernible under their snowy caps. The GPS gave us a fix and just before 8am the course was altered from E, to ESE heading straight into King Haakon Bay, 33 miles away. Four hours later we were lying to a sea anchor in a severe WSW gale with a horizontal blizzard driving across the water. This new course meant that we were sailing along the wave troughs, with the waves beam onto the boat. It was a very uncomfortable and noisy point of sailing especially for Vic and Robert trying to get some sleep down below, at times we were rolling our gunwales under as the waves crashed against the side of the boat. The wind speed gradually increased over the next four hours with each successive snow squall until eventually it was blowing a full gale with a blizzard.

Driving the boat into these conditions was extremely cold wet work, it eventually became impossible to open the eyes in the driving snow. Ski goggles helped in the beginning but eventually the snow was so thick that the build up of wet snow on them made it impossible to see anything. With a rising 15ft cross sea, there was no hope of making our planned land fall at King Haakon Bay. The breaking waves would surely have capsized us. We could only lie to the sea anchor and drift slowly downwind hoping to keep stern on to the breaking seas. Relative peace returned but it was short lived, the drift was taking us onto a treacherous lee shore, where after about 10 hours we would be dashed onto the rocks of the Willis Islands. It was ironic that the weather had forced Shackleton to land on the exposed South coast of the island, now we were being forced, for our lives to avoid it. The next 10 hours were a dangerous balancing act with the drogue holding us stern to the breaking sea, the storm jib driving us on for steerage and the rudder trying to force us at about 30 degrees from our natural but fatal drift angle.

This was the longest day of my life, eventually after a nerve wracking day we cleared the islands by half a mile, and managed to tuck in behind the land at about 2100 hrs. After a further seven hours of sailing along the more sheltered north coast in a rapidly dying wind, we rowed the



*Trevor with drogue*

last two miles in the dark, escorted by a small group of fur seals, into the shelter of Elsehul Bay about 10 miles from the Willis Islands. After 12 nights at sea the boat journey element of the expedition had almost come to an end. It was not quite Shackleton's route, he had landed on the exposed south west side of South Georgia at King Haakon Bay. The weather was against him, in his desperate attempt to get help for his stranded expedition. Ironically by force of weather we had landed on the sheltered north west side, that Shackleton had been heading for. At 4am we gently lowered the anchor to

a cacophony of night time chatter from a multitude of roosting seals, penguins and sea birds.

It was a very emotional moment when after two years of planning with many set backs and financial hardships we had finally realised our dream and re-sailed Shackleton's Boat Journey. Fortunately it was dark when Robert and I shook hands and the tears welling up in my eyes could not be seen. As the first light of dawn was breaking we tidied up the boat prior to our first "night" at anchor, when it started to snow heavily. We had to empty the boat of personal kit and pile it onto the deck, before we could get everyone down below to sleep. When we finally surfaced about 10 hours later all our personal kit was covered in a two inch layer of snow, subsequent day time temperature was 4C, we had arrived at South Georgia! Early the following morning we tuned into world service radio for the first time for over a week, hoping to hear the news.

Just as I switched on the announcer said "and now we go over to the London Boat Show". The very first item was a report of our expedition from the "James Caird" (Shackleton's original boat) which was on display at the show. We spent a wet, muddy day, walking round the beach area trying to dodge the vicious fur seals guarding their territory and harem. On the beach we found three tri pots used for rendering down seal blubber, as evidence of a previous more barbaric age.

The secondary objective of crossing the island on foot from King Haakon Bay to Stromness would now be difficult as the expedition would have to get back to King Haakon Bay to start the land journey. NW winds for the next few days prevented any attempt to sail back round the headland and it was decided to sail the 40 miles downwind to Stromness, Shackleton's eventual destination. We had been warned that it could be very dangerous to sail down the NW coast as an offshore wind of gale force coming off the glaciers could easily blow us out to sea. This may not appear so terrible except that our little boat was basically a converted rowing boat with no deep keel and only had a draft of 56cm (22"). It did not beat to windward very well and it may not have been possible to regain land if we had been blown far out to sea. As it happened we were becalmed for some of the first day and only covered 18 miles in 8 hours. We took the opportunity to sail into Sitka cove and anchored for the night with a line ashore onto a rocky outcrop. One of the biggest problems for coasting on South Georgia is the giant kelp which can be 20/30m long and so thick and dense it can stop a ship. We managed to slide over the top of much of it, but it was hard work, and anchoring in it was fraught with danger.

Eventually after another days sailing we tacked very slowly into Leith Harbour passing the British Antarctic Survey ship the "James Clark Ross" as she was coming out. We tried to talk to her on the VHF without any success (we still did not know our radio was not working) but we all waved. The Whaling Station at Leith Harbour is one of the largest and best preserved on South Georgia and we spent a fascinating day looking around. The wooden flensing plan used for dismembering the whales is still in a remarkable condition. Lying forlornly high and dry on the side of the plan were three small whale catchers tugs, complete with rusted engine and steel and lead ballast pigs. The row of 10' tall pressure vessels for cooking the oil from the bones is still intact underneath the plan, directly below the big bone saws on the top level. The meat packing plant is still identifiable with conveyor belts and freezing plant and generating plant. There were whole sheds full of shaped firebricks to fit the wide



*Trevor in Shackleton's original bath at the Whaling Station Master's house, Stromness.*

range of coal fired stoves that heated the buildings. Although the plant was Norwegian run, most of the heavy equipment was British made with instruction labels in English.

In the 1960's the plant was run by the Japanese for a few seasons and there were many handwritten Japanese labels pinned up alongside machinery or on the shelves in the store rooms. The whole place had a distinctly eerie air about it as it creaked and groaned in its death throes. Standing alone at the small windswept graveyard, with its rows of white cement headstones above the graves of British seamen and Norwegian whalers was a particularly ghostly experience. The shivers were not entirely due to the biting wind on the back of the neck. In some ways I would be very glad to move on, away from the final death throes of this barbaric settlement with its reminders of a very bloody industry. Yet it had the fascination of a time capsule and my morbid curiosity knew no bounds.

Two days later we set off to sail the 6 miles or so into Stromness to where Shackleton had staggered up to the Managers Villa in 1915. As we tacked about two miles against a biting wind whistling down the mountainside from the small glacier hanging above the station, disaster nearly struck - the captain was momentarily knocked out. Vicky was at the helm pretending that it was a race for the line at the end of the north sea race, Chris was in the cockpit trimming, Robert and Trevor were at the mast manhandling the dipping lug. Having been extremely safety conscious whilst at sea, now having a relaxed sail between harbours, no one was wearing a lifejacket or harness when the gaff was dropped onto Trevor's head. Just as Robert was lowering the sail and Trevor was undoing the tack, a gust of wind caught the gaff and it hit Trevor's head rather like a large baseball bat. With a flush deck, no guard-rails, water temperature of 1 C and an unconscious person over the side, the consequences could have been disastrous. Fortunately there was no blood and no visible damage other than a big lump. Trevor was very quiet for the rest of the day!

The next day was spent sorting out the mountaineering equipment ready for the attempt to reverse Shackleton's forced march across the mountains. Trevor, Robert and Chris set out with 30kg packs containing ropes, Ice axes, crampons and enough food for six days, with the intention of completing a double crossing of the mountains and glaciers, ending back in Stromness. Mild, very wet weather with open crevasses, deep wet-snow on the glaciers, and a threat of wet snow avalanches eventually beat us. This coupled with heavy packs laden with a weeks supply of food and a shortage of time, resulted in us retreating after two nights camped on the Fortuna Glacier and a further night camped in a cave on the beach in Fortuna Bay. While we were enjoying ourselves on the glacier Vicki cleaned the ship re-packed stores and generally looked after the boat. She also managed to moor the boat across the corner of the old jetty at Stromness to catch the katabatic wind from the mountains. The LVM wind generator then fully charged the batteries ready for us to send telexed reports back to the newspapers on the INMARSAT C communication system. The INMARSAT C was very useful and allowed us to keep more or less in constant touch with the UK by fax or telex. The main problem with it, was that it would not work if the battery was less than about 75% fully charged as it needed a surge of power to send messages.

## **Arrival at Grytviken**

After the attempt on the mountain crossing and a visit to the BAS summer station at Husvik the expedition sailed to Grytviken to visit Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave. Here first contact was made with officialdom when a "visiting yacht" charge of £40 was levied! Contact was made with the Khlebnikov when it arrived but unfortunately there was no one onboard who could make a decision to carry us back to Port Stanley. A public holiday in America prevented any contact with the only person at Quark Expeditions Inc. who could make the decision and she sailed without us. Arrangements were made with the Oil Mariner which was re-supplying the King Edward point garrison to carry the boat back. HMS Newcastle on routine patrol, agreed, after consultation with the MOD to carry the four expedition members back to Port Stanley

THE DAILY MIRROR, Tuesday, December 5, 1916.

THE REAL CRUX OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION—See Page 2

# The Daily Mirror

CERTIFIED CIRCULATION LARGER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER DAILY PICTURE PAPER

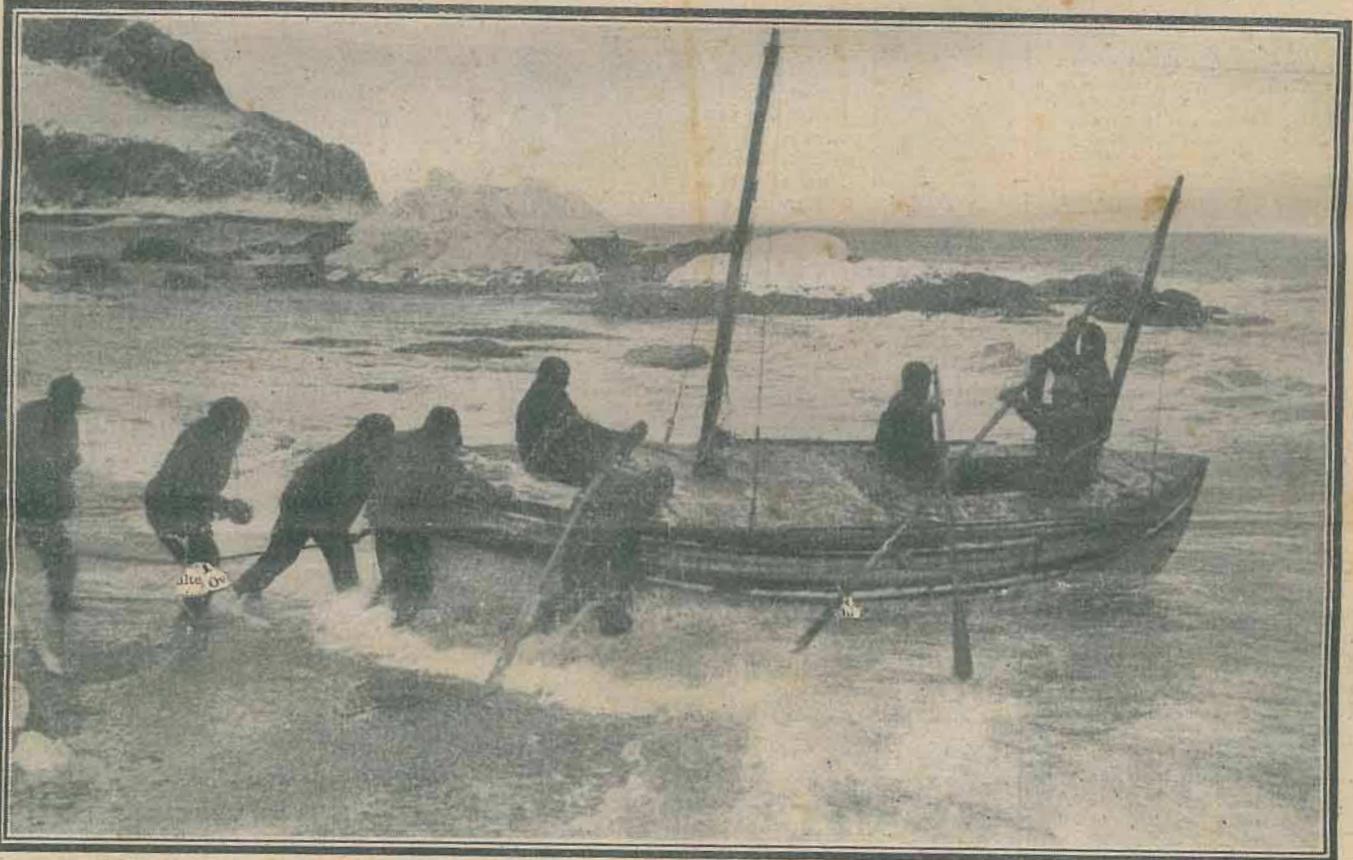
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Registered at the G.P.O.  
as a Newspaper.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1916

One Halfpenny.

ONE OF THE MOST HEROIC RESCUES IN HISTORY: SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON'S 750-MILE VOYAGE IN A SMALL BOAT.



No writer of books of adventure has ever conceived such a wonderful story as that of Sir Ernest Shackleton's voyage across the Atlantic from Elephant Island to South Georgia. Four days after the expedition had landed he left in a small boat with five volunteers—Captain Worsley, Tom Crean, MacNish, Vincent and McCarthy—to seek aid for his comrades, and here the party are seen setting out on their perilous errand.

"We decked her with sledge runners, box lids, and canvas, and made her as seaworthy as we could, but she seemed a crazy craft in which to sail 750 miles through the ice and gales," said Mr. MacNish. They had to land on the wrong side of South Georgia, and Sir Ernest and two others marched to a whaling station over glaciers and across mountain ridges and snowfields. This is the first time the island has been crossed.



After being driven out of the ice hole, the party lived on this inhospitable spot on Elephant Island until rescued by Sir Ernest. In the background are glaciers from which avalanches were always threatening to break away and fill the bay and, by the

waves created, to sweep them off the spot. Here some of the explorers are seen skinning Gento penguins, their principal food for four and a half months. All the photographs of the expedition appearing in this issue are exclusive to *The Daily Mirror*.

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# The Daily Mirror

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## SAVED AT LAST! SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON RETURNS TO ELEPHANT ISLAND.



Fearing that the Yelcho, the Chilean Government steamer, might overlook the spot where they were sheltering, the men lit a smoke fire to attract attention, and conveyed to the water's edge the personal belongings which they had saved together with all records of the expedition, photographic plates, and cinematograph films.



Mr. Frank Wild, second in command. He has had a wide experience of Antarctic travel.



Mr. Frank Hurley, who took the wonderful photographs which are published exclusively in *The Daily Mirror* to-day.



Sir Ernest Shackleton, leader of the Imperial Transantarctic Expedition.

with other passengers from the garrison. A charge of £350 per person was levied with a further £350 for the boat, documents indemnifying the Navy were signed to this effect. During the passage back to the Falklands a signal was received by the Newcastle informing them that our boat could not now be carried back by the Oil Mariner for "operational reasons". Subsequent enquiries revealed that the Oil Mariner had space to carry the boat but were prevented from doing so because of this signal from the MOD.

## **Arrival at the Falkland Islands**

During the week that the expedition was in the Falkland Islands waiting for the flight back to Brize Norton a number of attempts were made to find out what was happening to the boat, no one could tell us anything. One attempt was made to see the Governor but he was too busy to see us.

## **Arrival at Brize Norton**

The team arrived back at RAF Brize Norton at 0630 on Sunday 30 January 1994. A press conference was arranged for 10am when interviews were given to the National Newspapers and the Press Association. On Monday 31 January there were reports in the Guardian, Telegraph and Times.

## **The Future**

Nearly three thousand photographs were taken with six different cameras using a selection of lenses, also 7 hours of video tape were taken. There is plenty of material available to sponsors for publicity purposes. The main priority after the expedition has been to raise a further £15,000 to pay off the expeditions' debts. Much of this has been raised with the sale of photographs and video material. A major nautical book publisher has approached the expedition asking for discussions over the book rights. The video will be made into a 30 minute television documentary and a longer version will be available for sale. The boat arrived back in May through the generosity of an organisation who must remain nameless. The boat is now available for publicity purposes. The first booking was at the Wooden Boat Show at Greenwich on the first weekend in June when a number of slide shows were given.

## **Finally**

The expedition could not have taken place without the support of a large number of people, who contributed much needed money and equipment but also the even larger number of people who contributed lots of time and energy in getting this project off the ground. Thanks also go to the very many people who offered advice and good wishes and finally a great debt is owed to family and friends for their continued support.

## **Crew**

- *Skipper:* **Trevor Potts**
- *Navigator:* **Vic Brown**
- *Photographer:* **Robert Egelstaff**
- *Mountaineer:* **Chris Smith**

The "James Caird" is on permanent display at Dulwich College in South London, during term time it is usually possible to make arrangements with the college to see her.

"Sir Ernest Shackleton" was strip planked with 18mm Yellow Cedar and coated with epoxy resin and fibreglass. Length on deck 23' 10", Beam 6'6", sitting head room approximately 3', internal ballast 500 kg in 50 kg lead pigs. Sails by Hoods comprised of standing lug mizzen, dipping lug main, working jib, storm trysail and storm jib all of which were used at some stage. Paint was all supplied by International Paints Ltd. Waterproof were supplied by Splashdown and lifejackets by Crewsaver.

The main cash sponsors were the Gryphon Oil field Consortium, comprising of Aran Energy, Santa Fe, Clyde Petroleum and Kerr-Magee. Built by McNulty Traditional Boatbuilders of South Shields. For more information of her construction there is a four page photo article in issue No. 11 of the Boatman Magazine (Jan/Feb 1994)

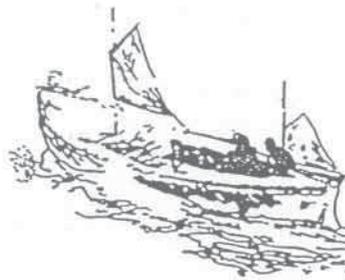
Trevor went back to South Georgia in March 2000 as part of the Shackleton Memorial expedition and successfully completed the route Shackleton's party took from King Haakon Bay to Stromness, via the Trident Ridge and Breakwind ridge. In the spirit of Shackleton they completed the trek without skis, snow shoes or pulks. During the last 10 seasons Trevor has completed over sixty trips on various expedition cruise ships to the Antarctic Peninsula. At least 12 of these have included round trips to South Georgia and Elephant Island.

The replica of the James Caird is currently at Trevor's Croft Campsite on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula. Talks are underway with a view to the boat being donated to the newly refurbished Polar Museum at the Scott Polar Museum in Cambridge.

*Trevor Potts November 2010*



*Trevor kneeling on top of 'Sir Ernest Shackleton'*



In the Wake of  
**Shackleton**  
Expedition

Elephant Island to South Georgia

Please reply to: Trevor Potts; Expedition Leader

5 May, 1994

Mr. Harding McG Dunnett  
4 The Close  
Eliot Vale  
Blackheath  
London  
SE3 0UR

Dear Harding,

Please find enclosed a copy of the May 1994 issue of the BOATMAN which has a ten page colour article giving details of the "In the Wake of Shackleton Expedition". Without the generous support of individuals like yourself expeditions like this would not be possible.

On behalf of all the expedition members please accept our grateful thanks for your support which did so much to enable the expedition to take place.

Your sincerely,

TREVOR POTTS  
Expedition Leader.

COPIES TO:- Four Gryphon Companies, Zaz, Eddie Shackleton, Nick Barker, Andrew Harvey, Blashford Snell. I have two copies left which I may send to Gilkes, and Duncan Carse. Is there anyone I have forgotten? I asked the Boatman to send me 12 which they did at no charge. They are on the newstands at the larger John Menzies, W H Smiths etc and I am sure I could get some more complimentary copies from them when I see them at the Wooden Boat Show.

British Telecom are quite welcome to use the photographs free of charge for as long as they like. The expedition would like the originals back and would retain copywrite to use them or sell the use of them in the future to third parties.

In the Wake of Shackleton  
Expedition Leader: Trevor Potts, 31 The Villas, St Mary's Stannington, Morpeth, Northumberland



*The 'Sir Ernest Shackleton' stored at Kilchoan*



*Robert Egelstaff & Trevor Potts on 'Sir Ernest Shackleton'*

# Shackleton's Whisky

Nigel Watson, Executive Director, Antarctic Heritage Trust

Whisky and Shackleton. Two words you would not expect to be forever linked, for Sir Ernest Shackleton was not known as a big drinker. The association is even more surprising given he came from a teetotal home and, in his youth, marched as part of the temperance movement. However, on a summer's day in Antarctica in 2006, a startling discovery forever linked the legendary explorer with the famed Scottish dram.

As the Nimrod sailed north from Ross Island in March 1909 little could Shackleton imagine how history would play out at his expedition base. A compact, wooden building nestled on the edge of an Adélie penguin colony at Cape Royds, it would be visited within a few years by Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition. Shackleton would have been surprised that he himself would be back on Ross Island nearly a decade later, in January 1917, as part of a relief mission to collect the survivors of the Ross Sea Party of his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition who had endured so much hardship in laying depots for his own proposed crossing of the continent. When the expedition shut the door at Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds for the final time they also closed the heroic-age of Antarctic exploration.

For forty years Shackleton's hut stood with just the penguin colony for company until Ross Island was visited again in the late 1940's. From the 1950's New Zealand undertook the caretaking role at this heroic site. As both the United States and the New Zealand Antarctic programmes became established, the building was occasionally occupied during the brief Antarctic summers by penguin scientists who up until the mid-1960's used it as their living quarters. With increasing appreciation of its historic status, occupation ceased, entry became controlled and is now strictly subject to permit.

In 2002 the Antarctic Heritage Trust in New Zealand which cares for the site launched its Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project. The purpose was to comprehensively save the historic explorers' buildings and the thousands of artefacts still in situ at the historic huts. A conservation plan was launched in 2003 at the very docks from which Nimrod departed Lyttelton, New Zealand. The NZ Prime Minister Helen Clark together with the James Caird Society President Alexandra Shackleton undertook the honours. It was a symbolic and most welcome pledge of funding



support from the James Caird Society at that event. The task of raising the significant funds for a detailed programme of works then began in earnest, with support secured from governments, institutions and individuals worldwide. Britain's former High Commissioner to New Zealand, Martin Williams

*Shackleton's hut, Cape Royd's, Ross Island with Mt Erebus in the background, 2006. ©nzaht.org*

(a James Caird Society member) worked tirelessly to help the Trust in this task over many years.

When the British Government was not forthcoming with financial support for the Project the Trust's patron Sir Edmund Hillary spoke out to support the cause. Beyond his Everest fame, Sir Ed had led the Ross Sea Party of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1955-1958. The intent was to support the first crossing of the Antarctic continent by the Englishman Vivian Fuchs. It was the trip conceived half a century earlier by none other than Sir Ernest Shackleton. When Sir Ed determinedly drove his Massey Ferguson tractor to the South Pole he somewhat exceeded the brief, becoming the first to reach the South Pole overland since Robert Falcon Scott nearly half a century earlier.

Sir Ed's iconic name was a magnet for the international media, not least when a 2005 international news headline read 'Conqueror of Everest says he saw Shackleton's ghost'. That 2005 NZPA article read:

Sir Edmund Hillary has backed the preservation of Sir Ernest Shackleton's hut in the Antarctic – because of an eerie encounter with the British pioneer's phantom. Conservation work begun last week on the Nimrod hut, overlooking a bay at Cape Royds, Ross Island, has spirited significance for Sir Edmund, who described seeing an apparition when he first visited [some 50 years previously].

In a video promoting the project, the patron of the Antarctic Heritage Trust said it was an experience that had a profound effect on him. "I'm not a person who really sees things very much but when I opened the door I distinctly saw Shackleton walking towards me and welcoming me," he said. "It's the only time I can ever remember something like that so I have a very warm feeling indeed for Shackleton and for his hut and I really believe Shackleton's hut must be preserved. Shackleton has always been my hero. I still admire enormously his courage and skill in moments of danger".

Sir Ed no doubt liked the unregimented style Shackleton possessed. It was a trait he could relate to. Sir Ed's experience entering the building at Cape Royds and seeing the spirit of Shackleton rise and walk towards him with his hand outstretched in greeting, half a century after Shackleton departed, was obviously a powerful moment in his life. Little did Hillary know that Shackleton's other spirit – the Rare Old Mackinlay's whisky – lay buried in the ice beneath the building, below the very floorboards on which he was standing.

In seeking support to save Shackleton's Antarctic legacy, the Trust also turned to the one man in New Zealand who had the same level of respect (or mana as New Zealand Maori call it) of Sir Ed. That man was Sir Peter Blake. Winner of multiple round the world Whitbread sailing races, holder of the Jules Verne sailing round the world record, winner of the America's Cup and committed environmentalist, Blake had grown up with heroes including Shackleton and Hillary. He also embodied the same spirit. Blake was keen to help profile the expedition bases and planned to sail to the Ross Sea in his boat Seamaster and visit Shackleton's hut amongst other sites. Tragically, he was murdered aboard his boat in the Amazon before he could do so. However, this was not to be the end of the Blake connection. <sup>3</sup>

Implementing the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project has been complex, demanding and satisfying. The Trust commenced the work at Shackleton's expedition base in 2004. Never had a heritage conservation project of this scale in a polar environment been attempted. The exacting work involved carefully planned measures to safeguard both the building and the extensive artefact collection, which comprises an eclectic range of Edwardian supplies. For four years from 2004 to 2008, in a world first, the Trust's international teams of conservators worked summer and winter in Antarctica saving the collection. This involved carefully recording, packaging and transporting objects across the sea-ice early in the summer from Cape Royds

to New Zealand's scientific base, Scott Base. There, in the Trust's purpose built conservation facility, successive winter teams of the Trust's conservators painstakingly conserved 6142 objects of every conceivable material. In early spring, each batch of objects conserved over the winter were returned to Royds. Here the summer teams would carefully unpack and return objects to their location before collecting the next batch of objects for conservation. The process continued year in and year out. Every object needed to be carried by hand to and from the tracked Haggglund vehicles parked on the sea ice over a rocky ridge behind the building. It was demanding, tiring work much like unloading the provisions and supplies must have been a century before for the crew of the Nimrod.

During the Antarctic summers the Trust's teams included archaeologists, heritage carpenters and conservators worked onsite undertaking building conservation work and conserved artefacts that were too delicate or big to move, such as the Mrs Sam stove and acetylene lighting unit. Specific building work involved recladding the roof and relaying the battens, inserting battens to prevent the loss of the insulation between the worn tongue and groove exterior weatherboards, relining Douglas Mawson's laboratory and removing and replacing contemporary doors and windows with historically accurate timber materials based on the original architectural drawings which the Trust had sourced.

The big challenge in making the building weatherproof was to stop the snow ingress. Under the leadership of the Trust's Programme Manager, Al Fastier, a number of steps were taken. The first was to painstakingly remove and conserve (before returning) the original stores provision boxes packed around the building. They were degrading and had created an environmental hazard for the local wildlife. Then the teams undertook the heavy work of drilling into the permafrost and inserting metal and plastic sheets both directly below and around the perimeter of the building to ensure the summer melt flowed around, rather than underneath, the building. The surrounding gradients were also reworked to assist with drainage at the height of summer.

4

Having effectively 'turned off the tap' the most demanding job was to remove the ice which had accumulated under the building over the last century. It was dark, constricted and a difficult space to work in. The teams worked tirelessly over several seasons to remove over forty cubic metres of ice from beneath the building. It was during this process that various objects including the whisky and brandy crates, left behind a century before, came to light. Encased deep under the building in the shadowy ice they were first sighted in the last few days of the summer season in early 2006.



*Conservators at work on the Shackleton collection at Scott Base. © nzaht.org*

The following summer season, 2006/2007, the team dug deeper into the ice to expose the cases. One of the team members was Sir Peter Blake's son, James Blake. James had grown up in Britain and New Zealand. He had come to in Antarctica in the presence of Sir Ed and the New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, to launch an Antarctic youth ambassador programme for a foundation established in his late father's name. As part of the programme, James stayed on to assist the Trust's conservation efforts. Fittingly, it was James, who spent two weeks lying prone under the building and, with Al Fastier, carefully chipped away at the ice around the boxes just enough to expose the crates and confirm the original makers and possible contents

– Mackinlay’s Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky. They did not attempt to remove the whisky crates.

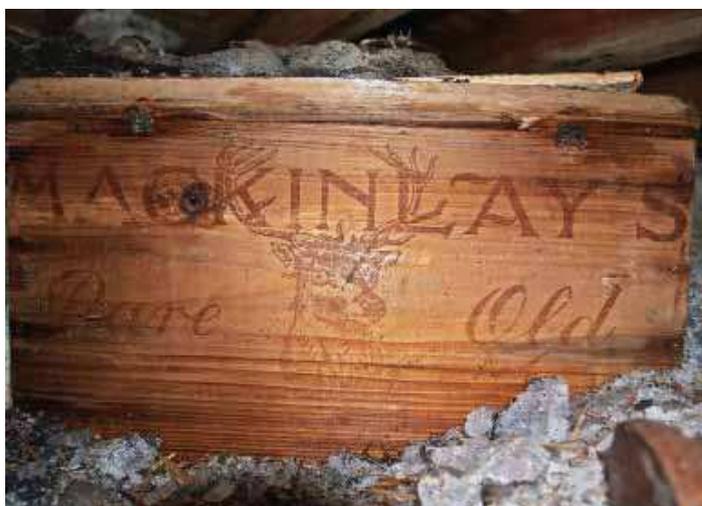
The Mackinlay’s whisky brand, although no longer produced, was now owned by Scottish distiller Whyte & Mackay. In the first contact with Whyte and MacKay, it was not clear how they would respond to the news of the find. It was a stroke of fortune that the key contact, was a fan of Shackleton’s, knew about Mackinlay’s having supplied whisky to Shackleton’s expedition and possessed and clearly treasured a letter from the Boss thanking Mackinlay’s for it. That man was Whyte & Mackay’s master blender Richard Paterson.

In the 2007/2008 season a further investigation of the crates was undertaken. At that point, it was strongly suspected that beneath the ice in the cases were bottles containing whisky and brandy. The decision was made to excavate the crates the following season but the task was deferred when helicopter support to remove the crates to Scott Base was unavailable late that season.

There was genuine debate on what to do with the find and whether, as some believed, following the initial announcement on its find there was any further benefit to be gained from it. The Trust’s UK consultant Martin Williams remained indefatigable in his efforts to highlight the importance of the find and to ensure steps continued towards the whisky’s recovery. In the last days of the summer season of 2009/2010 three whisky crates and two brandy crates, somewhat more than originally expected, were finally carefully excavated by the Trust from under the building. For the first time in a century they were exposed to daylight.<sup>5</sup>

Trust’s press release ignited a media storm. Fuelled by the enthusiasm of Richard Paterson – known as ‘the Nose’ – whose proboscis has been insured for more than two million US dollars, the whisky side of the story burst into life. The online news footage of the excavation received over a hundred thousand hits in a matter of days. Over nine hundred stories ran worldwide. Competing offers to produce a documentary flowed in. The long lost brandy however was largely ignored; it seems the world does not particularly care for that drop. One whisky crate was flown back from Antarctica to New Zealand under permit. Media interest was at a fever pitch and the crate was given VIP treatment on board the US Air Force C-17 Globemaster and through New Zealand customs. The x-ray machine gave the Trust’s Artefact Manager, Lizzie Meek, the first insight of what the crate held. She couldn’t contain her smile.

In order to access the bottles presumed still to be intact, the ice within the crate needed to be removed. In recognition of the intense public interest, the Trust arranged for this to take place in a purpose-built cool room in a public gallery at Canterbury Museum. Here it was slowly defrosted under Lizzie’s careful gaze and in the full glare of the world’s media. It was



*The Whiskey crate exposed from the ice underneath Shackleton’s hut at Cape Royds. ©nzaht.org*

tremendous pressure for any heritage professional and Lizzie handled it magnificently. Slowly, like a drawn out Christmas present unwrapping over several days, eleven bottles of the 114-year old whisky were revealed from the defrosted case, still sheathed in their paper and straw packaging. The smell of whisky from a leaking bottle permeated the cool room. Adélie penguin feathers and Antarctic scoria emerged from between the bottles and their coverings as the ice melted. To everyone’s delight the majority of the bottles were undamaged and still full of liquid.

Conservation treatment of the bottle caps, delicate sodden labels and the straw covers, by the Trust's conservators followed. Then, in order to further their restoration and protection, the bureaucratic procedure to allow three bottles to be returned to Scotland for scientific analysis began. It was a protracted and delicate process throughout 2010 to secure the necessary consents and permits. It occupied much of my time. Finally, with the paperwork in order, Richard the Nose Paterson, together with the owner of Whyte & Mackay, Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya, flew to New Zealand in January 2011 to transport the extraordinary find.

With a permit from the New Zealand Government and a documentary film crew in tow they transported three bottles to Scotland, on Vijay's private jet, for scientific analysis by Whyte & Mackay and The Scotch Whisky Research Institute. For security, and a touch of drama, Richard padlocked himself to the chilled box containing the bottles as he departed. Providentially the remaining bottles in Canterbury Museum were spared in the devastating Christchurch earthquake of February 2011 which caused so much damage and destruction in the city and indeed closed the Museum for many months.

Finally, in a unique opportunity for the whisky world, the bottles were subjected to sensory and chemical analysis in Scotland to establish the flavour and composition of a product manufactured a century earlier. In doing so it unlocked a flavour whose recipe had been lost. When he came to nose and taste the whisky, Richard was stunned. It was not only, he stated a privilege, honour and a highlight of his career. With a bit of dramatic PR spin, he declared it "a gift from heaven to whisky lovers of the world". The whisky was spectacular. Not only had it remained unspoiled for so long in such extreme conditions, the whisky delivered a surprise. The light floral taste was not what was expected of heavy peaty whiskies dominant of those times. A scientific paper followed. The abstract notes the find "significantly changes our understanding of the quality and character of Scotch malt whisky produced by our distilling forefathers".

In April 2011, after internal debate within Whyte and Mackay on whether to proceed with a commercial replication, Richard Paterson successfully created an exact replica of the century-old whisky. Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky was re-born. The fifty thousand run of whisky coined the 'The Discovery' proved so popular that in late 2012, a second edition of a hundred thousand bottles, 'The Journey', was released. It differs slightly in the blend but substantially in the packaging. A percentage of sales of both editions are pledged to the Antarctic Heritage Trust. It has already meant a substantial six figure donation to the Trust's conservation work in Antarctica and will help preserve Shackleton's Antarctic legacy into the future. Many James Caird Society members may recall Richard Paterson's presentation at a Society dinner in May 2012 on the subject of the whisky.

By December 2012 the three whisky bottles were returned to New Zealand. With the rest of the bottles already back in Antarctica, in January 2013 the 'Shackleton whisky' story came full circle when the New Zealand Prime Minister John Key repatriated the three



*Antarctic Heritage Trust Artefact Conservation Programme Manager Lizzie Meek inspects the straw wrapped whisky in the custom built coolroom, Canterbury Museum, New Zealand. ©nzaht.org<sup>6</sup>*



*A thawed bottle of Mackinlay's whisky in original paper wrapping. ©nzaht.org<sup>7</sup>*

bottles of original whisky tested in Scotland to the Trust's conservation team at Scott Base. Some seven years on from the initial find, and after all the media interest, the return of the whisky on a cold day in late January at the bottom of the world still ranked as the day's fifth top news story internationally.

In the final stage of a remarkable journey for the world's best aged and travelled whisky the original crates were returned from Scott Base to Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds for posterity, in accordance with the permit conditions.

The National Geographic Channel's Expedition Whisky documentary, and author Neville Peat's excellent book, *Shackleton's Whisky*, both recorded the whisky's journey from obscurity to worldwide attention. Meanwhile, whisky lovers the world over are enjoying the replica whisky. They are in good company. According to media reports the whisky has been gifted to, and by, heads of state and royalty.

So whilst most people still may not be aware of Shackleton's Nimrod expedition, or the Antarctic Heritage Trust's painstaking work to conserve his legacy, many will be aware of the explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton and his now famous whisky found a century later in Antarctica. Given his formative years, it is not a legacy Shackleton would have ever thought likely. Nonetheless, it is one worth raising a glass to. Just be sure to add ice.

More information:

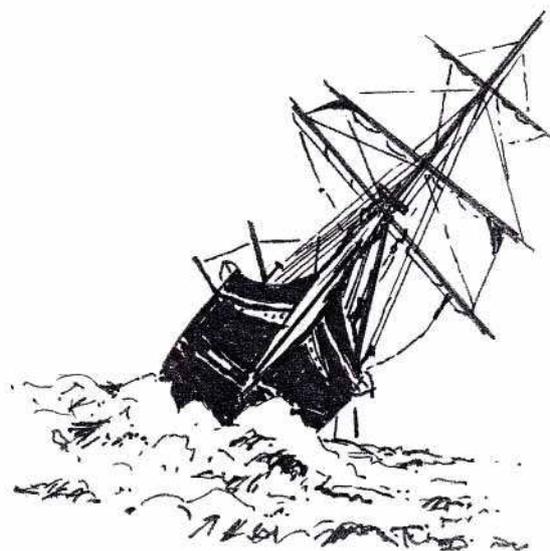
<http://www.nzaht.org/AHT/TheGreatWhiskyCrateThaw/>

Sensory and Chemical Analysis of 'Shackleton's' Mackinlay Scotch Whisky *Journal of the Institute of Brewing*, 2011, Vol 117, Issue 2.

*Shackleton's Whisky*, Neville Peat, Longacre, 2012.

*Expedition Whisky*, National Geographic, DVD.

Mackinlay's Shackleton whisky on sale globally.



# The greatest Treasure In The Library: Shackleton's Encyclopaedia Britannica

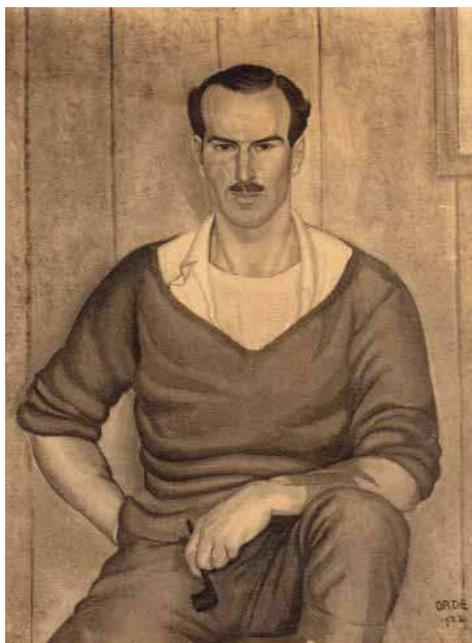
Meredith Hooper

Arriving in New Zealand direct from Ross Island and Captain Scott's British Antarctic Expedition on 3 April 1912, the scientist Griffith Taylor achieved some quick shopping: 'essential toilet articles'- razors and hairbrushes, plus two geology text books in German. The Eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica published by the Cambridge University Press was tempting. India paper pages turning with a pleasing slight crackle, the binding, paper and lightness were all fine, Taylor thought. This latest version of the E.B. cost £28, nearly a tenth of the £300 salary for his year's work in Antarctica, and he'd already spent nearly £5. Taylor decided against.<sup>1</sup>

The Eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica was already in Antarctica. Within months of going on sale a complete set left London in July 1911 donated by writer and philanthropist Campbell Mackellar to Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition. By the end of January 1912 the volumes were lined up in Mawson's Winter Quarters hut at Commonwealth Bay<sup>2</sup> that minimal foothold on the almost uncharted, barely glimpsed coast of Antarctica west of Cape Adare.

Antarctica was still a fearful, dramatic mystery. A few clusters of humans had managed to live briefly on the continent, if indeed it was a continent. Yet the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, symbol of the values and achievements of all that appeared to count as 'civilisation', a shining embodiment of the human spirit, was already here, in place. Acme of the art of publishing and marketing expertise - in a small, crowded temporary wooden building, blizzard swept, buried in snow drifts, clinging to the edge of the great unknown - men could read the best of what there was to know about what was worth knowing.

'Since any encyclopaedia worthy of the name must take all knowledge for its province' the editors at the Cambridge University Press explained, over half a million subject headings had been compiled to guide readers, and 40,000 article headings. The First Edition published in three volumes in 1768-1771 had expanded to the Ninth in twenty-five volumes published from 1875 to 1889, and the Tenth, in 1902-1903.



Frank Bickerton

But now the Eleventh, published in 1910-1911, was excitingly innovative. An organic unity. Information, no longer to be presented in dictionary form, was placed under 'natural headings'. 40,000 articles could settle any argument. Satisfy any craving for a fact. Inform, educate, delight, engage. Fill hours, expand horizons. Articles on the human body, on science, on the history of ideas, on ancient religions, cities, geographical features, famous men and women, foreign cultures, warfare, novelists, sport. Polar enthusiasts could go to Volume 21 PAY to POL, pp 938 -972 on the 'Polar Regions' written by the Royal Geographical Society geographer and admirer of Shackleton, H.R.Mill, covering key topics from discovery and expeditions, to geology, flora and fauna, to ice conditions and maps. The fraught subject of scurvy, Vol. 24, SAI to SHU, laid out current disputed medical thinking: was the cause absence of certain constituents in food, or presence of some actual poison? Whatever the cause the single remedy of fresh

vegetables secured both prevention and cure. Given the Eleventh edition's newly established principle of 'natural headings' both 'gangrene' and 'frost-bite' were discussed in Volume 18, ME to MUM, under 'Mortification', (ie a local death in the animal body), with advice to surgeons on where best to amputate.

By August 1914 two further sets of the Eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica were journeying to Antarctica, gifts to Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans Antarctic Expedition. One set to the Ross Sea, the other to the Weddell Sea. Each from donors with personal experience of their value. Each a tangible connection between Douglas Mawson's harsh expedition, now ended, and Shackleton's, yet to come.

The Ross Sea party were given their set by John King Davis, the thoughtful, responsible master of Mawson's expedition vessel Aurora. Shackleton's plans to cross Antarctica starting



*Frank Hurley*

from the Weddell Sea included a second party laying depots towards the Pole from the Ross Sea area. But, arrived at Ross Island, Aurora, now the Ross Sea party's expedition ship, broke away from her winter moorings in March 1915 to drift north still loaded with essential equipment and provisions. The ten men left marooned ashore took over Scott's old Cape Evans hut. By good fortune the Encyclopaedia had been landed and 'there was not a man of the party who did not make frequent and eager use of the volumes'<sup>3</sup>. During a desperate second winter, seven men only having survived, the Encyclopaedia helped sustain desperate minds; blubber-stained finger prints evidence of much used pages - Anaesthetics, Money, the Motor Vehicle, Miniatures - with portraits of the pretty 'Kitty Parsons' and 'Miss Free'. To their rescuers in January 1917 the condition of the Ross Sea survivors - wild-looking, feral, their speech jerky - was horrifying. Voyaging home in Aurora, captained again by Davis, the Ross Sea party remnants made a presentation. Davis had given them an elegant version of the Encyclopaedia, bound in black limp calf with gold tooling. Now he received it back '...as a reminder of his kindness...in originally thinking of us' Each of the rescued men signing his name.<sup>4</sup>

Heading south to the Weddell Sea in Endurance in 1914 Shackleton considered the Encyclopaedia an asset to his cabin. The donor might not have been known to the ship's company although expedition photographer Frank Hurley, featuring the E.B. lined up next to Shackleton's typewriter in a fine 'still-life', knew him well. Frank Bickerton and he had both been members of Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition. Bickerton hired aged 22 as aircraft mechanic for Mawson's Vickers monoplane went south in charge of the 'air-tractor' after the aircraft's crash during a fund-raising display. As one of six chosen to stay for an unplanned second winter at Winter Quarters Bickerton knew, intimately, the importance of the Encyclopaedia Britannica in miserable conditions. On return to England in March 1914 he was hired by Shackleton to manage his expedition's air-driven sledges. But - war imminent - Frank Bickerton joined up; and made his thoughtful contribution to those who would have been his companions.

The volumes of the E.B. were available to everyone on board Endurance. Apart from the sheer quantity and quality of information, they were ideal for exploring potential new interests, as well as arbitrating arguments and guessing games. The young stowaway Perce Blackborow, Shackleton's steward, was set courses of instruction based on the volumes; later maintaining

that it established a pattern of respect for Encyclopaedias for the rest of his life.<sup>5</sup> Pursuing his favourite topic of buried treasure and undiscovered hoards, Shackleton read extensively the entries on Assyrians, Babylonians, and excavations at ancient sites.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the men brought their own books on board. As well, a generous Mr Facer of Northampton lent 'the whole of his unique polar library'. But - as Shackleton's motor mechanic Captain Thomas Orde-Lees recorded later, Frank Bickerton's thoughtfulness in 'presented the thin paper edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica', became, it was generally agreed, 'one of the most useful gifts on the expedition and one for which we had especially cause to be truly grateful.'<sup>7</sup>

Beset, then squeezed in the pack ice of the Weddell Sea, Endurance began irretrievably breaking up late in October 1915. Decisions had to be made, fast, about what to salvage, what leave. The order came to abandon ship on the 27th. Shackleton's rule of 2 pounds weight of personal gear only per man resulted in a dump heap, 'a heterogeneous collection of dress suits, hats, brushes, combs, portmanteaus, books etc.,' commented Hurley - 'pleasant though useless refinements of civilisation.'<sup>8</sup> With realisation quickly biting that escape across the pack ice to the distant land was not possible, the limit on how much could be kept was revoked. Establishing a way to live on the floating ice was paramount. Trips were made back to 'Dump Camp' to scavenge possessions. Serious, focussed, specific salvaging on the partly submerged Endurance in the weeks before she sank delivered fuel, stores, food, clothing, timber, equipment.

The means to survive physically were priority. But also - the means to survive together, as a group. To stay sane. They were 28 men, and they would have to camp on the moving floes, above the deep ocean just beneath, who knew how long. Something to read was essential. Shackleton's minimal diary for 3 November listed Encyclopedia and Queens Bible as salvaged (10). But individuals also scavenged on behalf of themselves, and the group. Volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica were carried across the floes to what would become Ocean Camp, to be kept with other books under the shelter of the storehouse and galley built as priority for the cook from sails, spars and the wheelhouse. On his 25th birthday, 9th January 1916, physicist R.W. James listed some of their 'little library': Carlyle's French Revolution, Iliad, Anna Karenina, Guy Mannering, Keats and Browning, and '5 vol of Enc Britt brought officially'<sup>10</sup>. But more were tucked around the camp.

Some of the crew - 'the fo'c'sle crowd' as Shackleton called them - were avid readers<sup>11</sup>. Some



*Shackleton's cabin on the 'Endurance'.*

among the ship's officers, scientists and expedition specialists and were not. But the E.B. was a central resource to all. Confined to the floating ice, boredom was increasingly the constant, never varying reality. There was too much time and little to do. 'Lazy day in tent' wrote Hurley in early December, 'reading encyclopedia on

Borneo, Sumatra and Australia'.<sup>12</sup> January 1916, summer's long light impacting sleep, 'thanks to our Encyclopaedia and a pack of cards' Orde-Lees recorded, 'we are able to kill time fairly well.'<sup>13</sup> One dismal night Shackleton kept spirits up by discussing the details of an elaborate plan for their next expedition, after they had survived this one - to Alaska. The five page 'Alaska' article was combed, the Alaska map in Volume 1 A to AND studied.<sup>14</sup>

To Shackleton, the portion saved of the Encyclopedia was truly 'the greatest treasure in the library... continually used to settle the inevitable arguments that would arise.'<sup>15</sup> Precious books, trapped in a drowning ship but pulled to safety. Left lying on the surface of the ice in the need to save weight, to be retrieved again. After abandoning Ocean Camp for another abortive push to distant land, and safety, three trips were made from the new Patience Camp to once again rescue much-wanted possessions, including specifically volumes of the Encyclopaedia. Orde-Lees skiing back to Ocean Camp on 30 January listed 'boots, books, bottles, tins, cases, coats, socks, towels, jerseys etc... littered about everywhere'<sup>16</sup>. Hurley and Dr. Alexander Macklin returning the next day packed Venesta wood sledging cases with the best of the books, and provisions. The final visit, 18 men this time, to retrieve the third boat, but also 'on the prowl... a good few...openly in search of plunder...collecting eatables, clothing and some books.'<sup>17</sup>

For a scientist like James the E.B. allowed him to keep thinking about his subject. 'read Larmor's article on 'radiation' but 'found the mental strain too severe.'<sup>18</sup> Inaction twinned with uncertainty were increasingly difficult to cope with. 'The worse thing is having to kill time. It seems such a waste, yet there is nothing else to do.' Theoretical work, James concluded, was impossible.<sup>19</sup> 'Can't settle to anything' he noted at the end of February. 'Even Geometry studies from E.B. usually most attractive to me fail to allure.' Nevertheless 'I find these Encyclopaedias a great boon. They have many splendid solid articles which are regular textbook.'<sup>20</sup> Again, a week later, 'trying to keep alive mentally on the physical articles in the E.B.'<sup>21</sup>

For Orde-Lees, the E.B. provided much consolation. On the last day of February - so bitterly cold everyone stayed in their sleeping bags- 'too cold on the hands to sew or write much, but we luckily now have most of the volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica brought up from Ocean camp, which afford us all the greatest consolation in the way of reading and provide us with topics of discussion.'<sup>22</sup> A month later, autumn advancing, floes rotting, boats ready to jump into yet destination unknowable, everyone tense, talking, noted Hurley, could take on a surreal quality. He described the process in his shared tent under the April 4th diary entry 'Tent Topics'. Apart from inevitable and daily talk of food, the next meal and the last, 'conversation becomes both voluble & versatile. The recovery of Alaric's treasure. The manufactures, Arts & Crafts of Ancient Egypt, comparisons of the social life of London, New York & Paris recondite channels, where debate ensues on such abstruse subjects as ethical. Politics, the mysteries of light house optics, ship construction. The elusive unknown quality of x etc & disputations are referred to the infallible arbitrament of the Britannica.'<sup>23</sup>

The final harsh culling of all expendable possessions came as the 28 men took to the three small overloaded open boats and launched on the wild sea in the desperate attempt to survive an ocean journey, to reach land. Any land. But when the desolate uninhabited Elephant Island was finally reached on 20 April 1916, and survival began a new phase, Shackleton, Worsley, and four crew in the life boat James Caird attempting to sail to South Georgia, the 22 left behind sheltering on a narrow gravel spit beneath the two remaining boats, upturned - precious books were still with them. Collections of poetry - Keats, Browning, Scott, The Ancient Mariner. A penny cook book 'issued by some school authorities at Kendal...continually being borrowed from its owner, Marston.'

A couple of polar books including Nordenskjold. Quiller Couch, The Pilgrim's Way. The French Revolution. Plus, still - volumes of the Britannica, now 'mutilated,' with 'large numbers of pages missing'<sup>24</sup> Crammed together on the edge of Elephant Island, in the smoky, dirty space under the two boats, reading was very difficult. Mid-winter brought darkness by

mid-afternoon. The few blubber lamps gave minimal light. Nevertheless, for the ever-faithful Lees, 'The Encyclopaedia Britannica fulfils all my requirements in the library line. We have the following five volumes 'A to And' 'Edw to Eva' 'Pay to Pol' 'Pol to Ree' and 'Sub to Tom'. Plus several fragments of other volumes. I read so slowly that I shall never be able to read all that these volumes contain even if we have to stop here for five years which God forbid.'<sup>25</sup>

In June, by rotating the use of a blubber lamp at night, chances to write, and read, improved. Late in July Macklin, ploughing on through the Encyclopaedia - 'a good deal of interesting, though stodgy material noted '<sup>26</sup> no less than 7 blubber lamps going in the hut when we first came in we had only one dim smoky flame.'<sup>27</sup>

Cooped in squalid conditions, next to the same bodies, always the same voices, new topics of conversation needed effort. Food talk (always in deadly earnest), but seldom the war, noted Lees. For the rest, 'discussions on processes described in the encyclopaedia, how things are done and made and semi scientific talk'<sup>28</sup> By August, days lengthening, weather warming, it was possible to get outside more. Walking along the minimal beach with Hurley, James reported he felt like discussing Rutherford's article on 'Radioactivity' in the E.B.<sup>29</sup>

And, of course, the Encyclopaedia was delivering practical services as well as mental food. The excellent quality India paper pages burnt well. Pages were ripped out to light fires, and pipes - tobacco while it lasted, noxious make-shifts thereafter. They wrapped as cigarette papers around whatever ingenious substance desperation could contrive.<sup>30</sup> They were infinitely preferable for certain bodily necessities. Even Orde-Lees, worrying what would happen if paper ran short for diary keeping, speculated whether 'we may be able to write legibly in ink over the printed pages of the Encyclopaedia.'<sup>31</sup>

Tough decisions threatened. No ship had appeared to rescue them. Perhaps the James Caird never reached South Georgia so no one knew they were here. They'd been able to bring little enough on to Elephant Island. Not much was left. On Wednesday 26th July Frank Wild, as leader, called in all the Encyclopaedias and distributed them, one copy per four men. Macklin mourned that his group got 'MED-MUM, 'unfortunately a number I had read pretty thoroughly.'<sup>32</sup> Encyclopaedia volumes were a scarce physical resource: now allocated.

Who monitored the attrition rate in each volume? Who decided what could be culled? Did the dedication in Volume 1 to 'His Majesty King George the Fifth King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas Emperor of India and to William Howard Taft President of the United States of America' survive? Or the clear confidence of the 'Prefatory Note' stating the aim by the University of Cambridge in publishing the Eleventh Edition of 'achieving the high ambition of bringing all extant knowledge within the reach of all class of readers in the hope and belief that it will be found to be a trustworthy guide to sound learning, and an instrument of culture of world-wide influence'<sup>33</sup> - avoid the depredation of single page tearing?

In the tense, harsh months of 1915-1916 when Shackleton and the crew of Endurance struggled to survive, their ship lost, the pages of the Encyclopaedia Britannica were in truth a trusty guide, and, most precisely, as the Editors had confidently claimed, to 'all class of reader'. When the small Chilean rescue tug Yelcho did - to joy and relief - appear off Elephant Island on 30 August 1916, in the scramble to leave much got left behind. There's no record whether any volume of the trusty Encyclopaedia was taken off. Orde-Lees did bring back to civilisation one historic volume of Arctic exploration lent from Mr Facer's valuable library. He'd kept it hidden in his sleeping bag; and was proud to return the only book to survive, to its owner.

Each of the three sets of the Eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica that travelled to Antarctica within such an extraordinarily short time of first publication made significant, countable contributions to the survival - physical and mental - of their readers. But the 29 volumes of Frank Bickerton's gift to Shackleton's Endurance party, their number continually

reducing - the pristine volumes that sank in the Weddell Sea, the well-used blubber-impregnated volumes left on floes, the remnants finally abandoned on Elephant Island - ocean drowned, or ice buried, they were, arguably, the most remarkable.

#### Footnotes

1. Thomas Griffith Taylor, Antarctic Diary Headquarters 1911, letter to his father 8 April 1912, MS 1003/2/79, National Library of Australia, transcribed by John Burnett
2. From 'Library' in list of contents found in Mawson's huts, 1989, Mawson's Huts Foundation
3. John King Davis, High Latitude, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1962, p 277
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# GEOMETRY

702

and  $A', B', C'$  are conjugate points two conjugate elements may be interchanged.

§ 76. Any three pairs,  $A, A', B, B', C, C'$ , of conjugate points are connected by the relations:

$$\begin{aligned} AB \cdot BC' \cdot CA' &= A'B' \cdot BC \cdot CA' = AB \cdot B'C' \cdot CA' = AB \cdot B'C \cdot CA' \\ A'B' \cdot B'C \cdot CA' &= A'B' \cdot B'C' \cdot CA' = A'B' \cdot BC \cdot CA' = A'B' \cdot B'C' \cdot CA' \end{aligned}$$

These relations readily follow by working out the relations in (7) (above).

§ 78. Involution of a quadrangle.—The sides of any four-point are cut by any line in six points in involution, opposite sides being cut in conjugate points.

Let  $A, B, C, D$  (fig. 31) be the four-point. If its sides be cut by the line  $p$  in the points  $A, A', B, B', C, C'$ , if further,  $C, D$  cuts the line  $A, B$  in  $C_1$ , and is so project the row  $A, B, C, C'$  to  $p$  once from  $D$ , and once from  $C_1$ , we get  $(A, B', C, C')$ .

Interchanging in the last cross-ratio the letters in each pair we get  $(A, B', C, C')$ . Hence by § 77 (7) the points are in involution.

The theorem may also be stated thus: The three points in which any line cuts the sides of a triangle and the projections from any point in the plane, of the vertices of the triangle on to the same line are six points in involution.

Or again—The projections from any point on to any line of the six vertices

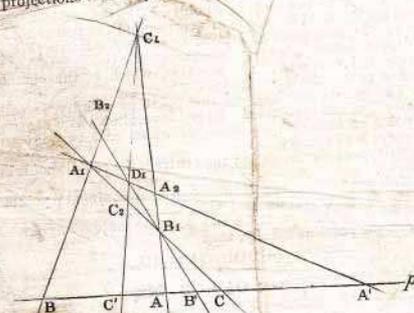


FIG. 31.

of a four-side are six points in involution, the projections of opposite vertices being conjugate points.

This property gives a simple means to construct, by aid of the straight edge only, in an involution of which two pairs of conjugate points are given, to any point its conjugate.

§ 79. Pencils in Involution.—The theory of involution may at once be extended from the row to the flat or in an axial pencil if any line that there is an involution in a flat or in an axial pencil if any line cuts the pencil in an involution of points. An involution in a pencil consists of pairs of conjugate rays or planes; it has two, one or no focal rays (double lines) or planes, but nothing corresponding to a centre.

An involution in a flat pencil contains always one, and in general only one, pair of conjugate rays which are perpendicular to one another. For in two projective flat pencils exist always two corresponding right angles (§ 40).

Each involution in an axial pencil contains in the same manner one pair of conjugate planes at right angles to one another.

As a rule, there exists but one pair of conjugate lines or planes at right angles to each other. But it is possible that there are more, and then there is an infinite number of such pairs. An involution in a flat pencil, in which every ray is perpendicular to its conjugate ray, is said to be *circular*. That such involution is possible is easily seen thus: if in two concentric flat pencils each ray on one is made to correspond to that ray on the other which is perpendicular to it, then the two pencils are projective, for if we turn the one pencil through a right angle each ray in one coincides with its corresponding ray in the other. But these two projective pencils are in involution.

A circular involution has no focal rays, because no ray in a pencil coincides with the ray perpendicular to it.

§ 80. Every circular involution in a row may be considered as a section of a circular involution.

In an elliptical involution any two segments  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  lie partly within and partly without each other (fig. 32). Hence two circles described on  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  without each other intersect in two points  $E$  and  $E'$ . The line  $EE'$  as diameters will intersect in two points  $O, O'$ , which has the property the base of the involution at a point  $C$ , which has the property the base of the involution at a point  $C$ , which has the property the base of the involution at a point  $C$ .

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base in the required point  $C$  for  $OC \cdot OC' = O, O'$ , which is obtained by joining  $E$  or  $E'$  to the points in the given involution is circular. This may also be expressed thus:

Every elliptical involution has the property that there are two finite points in the plane from which any two conjugate points are seen under a right angle.

At the same time the following problem has been solved: To determine the centre and also the point corresponding to any given point in an elliptical involution of which two pairs of conjugate points are given.

§ 81. Involution Range on a Conic.—By the aid of § 53, the points of a conic may be made to correspond to those on a line, so that the row of points on the conic is projective to a row of points on a line. We may also have two projective rows on the same conic, and these will be in involution as soon as one point on the conic has the same point corresponding to it as the same to whatever row it belongs.

An involution of points on a conic will have the property (as follows) from its definition, and from § 5, that the lines which join conjugate points of the involution to any point on the conic are conjugate lines of an involution in a pencil, and the fixed tangent is cut by the tangents at conjugate points on the conic in points which are again conjugate points of an involution on the fixed tangent. For such an involution on a conic the following theorem holds: The lines which join corresponding points in an involution on a conic all pass through a fixed point; and reciprocally, the points of intersection of conjugate lines in an involution among tangents to a conic lie on a line.

We prove the first part only. The involution is determined by two pairs of conjugate points, say by  $A, A'$  and  $B, B'$  (fig. 33). Let  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  meet in  $P$ . If we join the points in involution to any point on the conic, and the conjugate points to another point on the conic, we obtain two projective pencils.

We take  $A$  and  $A'$  as centres of these pencils, so that the pencils  $A(A', BB')$  and  $A'(A, BB')$  are projective, and in perspective position, because  $AA'$  corresponds to  $A'A$ . Hence corresponding rays

meet in a line, of which two points are found by joining  $A, B'$  to meet in a line, of which two points are found by joining  $A, B'$  to meet in a line, of which two points are found by joining  $A, B'$  to meet in a line.

It follows that the axis of perspectivity is  $AB$  and  $AB$  to  $A'B'$ , where  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  meet. If we now take the polar of the point  $P$ , where  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  meet. If we now take the polar of the point  $P$ , where  $AA'$  and  $BB'$  meet.

to construct to any other point  $C$  on the conic the corresponding point  $C'$ , we join  $C$  to  $A'$  and the point where this line cuts  $AB$  to  $A$ . The latter line cuts the conic again in  $C'$ . But we know from the theory of pole and polar that the line  $CC'$  passes through  $P$ . The point of concurrence is called the "pole of the involution," and the line of collinearity of the meets is called the "axis of the involution."

INVOLUTION DETERMINED BY A CONIC ON A LINE.—FOCI

§ 82. The polars, with regard to a conic, of points in a row  $p$  form a pencil  $P$  projective to the row (§ 66). This pencil cuts the base of a pencil  $p$  in a projective row.

If  $A$  is a point in the given row,  $A'$  the point where the polar of the row  $p$  in a projective row.

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If  $A$  is a point in the given row,  $A'$  the point where the polar of the row  $p$  in a projective row.

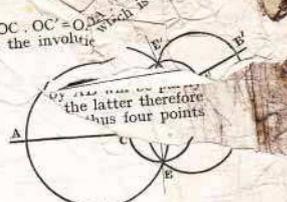


FIG. 32.

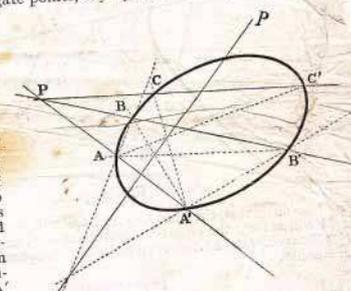


FIG. 33.

Blubber-stained pages torn from the 'Geometry' article in Vol XI of the Encyclopaedia Britannica by the young physicist Reginald James, at Patience Camp. James included the pages in his few possessions when rescued from Elephant Island

# Ireland's Antarctic Explorers

By Michael Smith

The heroic age of Antarctic exploration, the era synonymous with men like Amundsen, Scott and Shackleton, effectively came to an end in 1922 with the death of Sir Ernest Shackleton. His death also brought an end to a remarkable dynasty of men from Shackleton's homeland of Ireland who, during a century of endeavour, left an indelible mark on the history of Antarctic exploration.

Irish people, most notably Shackleton, stand at the heart of Antarctic history, with almost every noteworthy chapter of the story involving men from this small country on the western fringes of Europe. Few other nations can quite match the same rich heritage and it would be impossible to chronicle the history of Antarctic exploration without saluting the outstanding contribution made by the Irish.

The main age of Antarctic exploration, from the earliest sighting of the coastline, lasted just over 100 years and Shackleton aside, included key Irishmen, such as the mysterious Edward Bransfield whose early voyage began the era of exploration and the quintessential unsung hero, Tom Crean. But there were others, such as Francis Crozier, Robert Forde, Patrick Keohane and the colourful McCarthy brothers who also contributed much.

Regrettably, all these men – without exception – shared the fate of being almost totally forgotten in their native Ireland and to some extent, overlooked by historians generally. Even Shackleton, the most famous of all Irish explorers, was not the celebrated figure he is today and his reputation was not fully restored until some 60 - 70 years after his death.

Bransfield is a little known figure who was almost completely overlooked at the time and in the 150 years since his death. Crozier, despite sailing on six journeys to the ice, also disappeared from view and was the only major figure from the navy's rank of Polar commanders of the time who was never awarded a knighthood for his prodigious efforts. Incredibly, Crean spent 80 years in the shadows and his Irish contemporaries in the Antarctic – Forde, Keohane and Mortimer and Timothy McCarthy – were equally marginalised and soon forgotten.

Timing was against the Irishmen who made history in the Antarctic. As mentioned, the era of Antarctic exploration, which began with Bransfield in 1820, effectively came to an end on January 5, 1922 with the death of Shackleton. With striking symmetry, the Anglo-Irish Treaty with Britain, which gave independence to 26 of Ireland's 32 counties, was ratified by Dáil Éireann – the Irish Parliament – two days later.



*Edward Bransfield's pioneering 1820 voyage in the brig Williams to make the first confirmed sighting of the Antarctic coastline. (From a painting by G.W.G. Hunt, courtesy Richard Campbell)*

Crucially, every expedition to the Antarctic in the century from Bransfield to Shackleton was made while Ireland formed part of the United Kingdom and any association with the British around the time of independence was deeply unpopular and highly dangerous. In varying degrees, every journey to the ice during years of exploration was dressed up in the mantle of Imperial endeavour, partly to help generate public and



*Patrick Keohane, the Petty Officer from Cork, who marched to within 350 miles of the South Pole with Captain Scott in 1911. Keohane was forced to flee Ireland during the war of independence and served in the navy during two world wars.*

political support. It hardly mattered that the explorers were not active political figures or buccaneering colonialists. Fridtjof Nansen, the eminent Norwegian explorer, once measured the feats of explorers against the wider political interests of nations and rightly concluded: "It is the man that matters".

Bransfield, Crozier and Shackleton were already dead when the age of exploration ended in 1922 and the survivors from other expeditions were unable to speak openly about their exploits. Apart from Hugh Mill's biography of Shackleton, no books were written about these men and they all remained well away from the public spotlight.

Keohane, who had close links with the coastguard community, fled Ireland during the War of Independence and Crean's brother, a police officer, was shot dead in Cork at the same time. Forde, a protestant, went home to Cork and stayed diplomatically silent. The only man to speak freely about his adventures was the chirpy old sailor, Mortimer McCarthy who lived 12,000 miles away in New Zealand.

Frank Nugent, the Irish mountaineer and Polar historian, wryly observed that for many years their stories were "lost in the selective memories of Irish history writers of the 20th century". Only today, decades after the last explorers passed way, can the stories be talked about openly as Ireland reassesses the role of its explorers.

Ireland's close links with exploring the Antarctic can be traced back to the country's strong seafaring traditions. Over the years Ireland was a mainstay of the British navy, particularly during the long years when poverty at home drove young Irishmen to find work with the army and navy. The names of Irish sailors can be found in the muster rolls for Captain Cook's historic first voyage across the Antarctic Circle and it is estimated that one in ten of Royal Navy seamen during the Napoleonic Wars came from Ireland.

Both Shackleton and Scott relied heavily on tough, dependable and loyal Irish seamen on their Antarctic expeditions. For example, three of the six-man crew of the James Caird – Shackleton, Crean and Tim McCarthy – were Irish and three of the four naval Petty Officers chosen by Scott on the main section of the Terra Nova expedition – Crean, Forde and Keohane – hailed from the province of Munster in the south of the country.

The story of Ireland's role in Antarctic began with Edward Bransfield, perhaps the most enigmatic of them all. He was another skilled seafarer from the small port of Ballinacurra in County Cork whose single journey of discovery to the ice in 1820 launched the century of Antarctic exploration. But we know precious little about



*Robert Forde, the rugged sailor from Cork who was invalidated out of Scott's expedition after suffering severe frostbite in temperatures of -73.3° F (-58° C) but lived to be one of the expedition's last survivors.*



*The ice slope Shackleton, Worsley and Crean descended during the perilous crossing of South Georgia in 1916. After being caught in the open without shelter, the men fashioned a makeshift toboggan from a length of rope and rode down the slope to avoid being frozen to death. (Con Collins)*

of Cape Horn during a routine trade voyage to South America. Smith dutifully reported the findings to the British naval authorities in Chile and Bransfield, an experienced ship's Master, was ordered take Williams south to verify Smith's reports and claim any new land for the King.

The voyage south in Williams, a two-masted 216-ton brig, was an epic feat by any standards. Bransfield sailed unaccompanied into unknown waters with a crew of 30 men on a journey of more than 2,000 miles from Valparaiso which first charted the undiscovered South Shetland Islands. Satisfied with his initial discoveries, Bransfield turned south into the stretch of water between the South Shetlands and the Antarctic Peninsula. The channel, which is about 200 miles long and 60 miles wide, is today known as the Bransfield Strait and a regular thoroughfare for tourist ships to Antarctica.

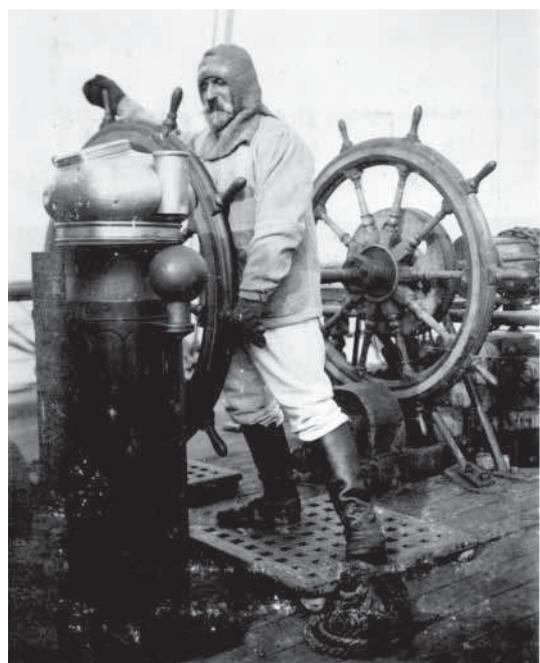
Williams drove south amid icebergs and continuous banks of fog before land was suddenly sighted on January 30, 1820. One Midshipman described the sight as a mixture of "immense mountains, rude crags and barren ridges covered with snow." Further probing uncovered more of the rocky north western chunk of the Peninsula which was named Trinity Land and a 2,500 ft peak was later called Mount Bransfield.

However Bransfield's achievements were soon engulfed in controversy. Unknown to the crew of Williams, two Russian vessels under Thaddeus von Bellingshausen had also entered Antarctic seas on the other side of the continent. On January 27, three days before Bransfield's sighting, von Bellingshausen's ships came within 20 miles of what is today called Dronning Maud Land and reported "ice mountains" and "continuous ice". Crucially, von Bellingshausen did not distinguish the sightings as land. The Russian was apparently unable to confirm his sighting as new land.

The heated dispute about whether it was Bransfield or von Bellingshausen who first saw Antarctica continues into present times. Most historians support the Russian's case, but while

Bransfield, apart from the fact that he was press-ganged into the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, made the first confirmed sighting of the Antarctic coastline and subsequently faded into obscurity. No portraits or photographs of Bransfield have survived, no statues have been erected to commemorate his pioneering voyage and until now no books have been written about him.

Bransfield entered Antarctic history late in 1819 when Williams, a small merchant vessel under the command of William Smith, spotted some uncharted islands to the south



*Mortimer McCarthy, the redoubtable sailor from Kinsale who served at sea for 70 years and made three voyages to the Antarctica in Scott's Terra Nova.*

von Bellingshausen was unsure about his discovery, Bransfield was clear and can reasonably be celebrated as the person who made the first definite and confirmed sighting of the continent.

To add to the debate, some of Bransfield's official records were lost and the navy, for reasons which are unclear, turned down his appeal to make a second journey south to explore the new territories. In frustration, Bransfield left the navy, quietly built a career in the merchant fleet and drifted into the twilight. He moved to Brighton in 1848 and died there in October 1852.

After nearly 150 years of obscurity, Bransfield's tomb in the corner of a Brighton cemetery was refurbished in 1999 and now includes the unequivocal declaration: "The First Man to See Mainland Antarctic in January 1820".

Two decades after Bransfield led the way, Francis Crozier of Banbridge, County Down, mapped large chunks of the seas and the continent during the 19th century's greatest voyage of maritime discovery (see James Caird Journal, No 5).

Crozier's outstanding four-year journey with James Ross in the Erebus and Terror between 1839 and 1843 pioneered the route south for the voyages of Shackleton, Scott and Amundsen in the heroic age 60 years later. Many of the familiar names on the Antarctic map – Cape Crozier, McMurdo Sound, Mount Erebus and Ross Island – were named by Crozier and Ross. Crozier, who made six journeys to the ice during a lifetime at sea, subsequently died on the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845 which disappeared in search of the North West Passage.

Almost 60 years would pass before the Discovery expedition under Robert Scott, the first major attempt to explore the deep interior of the continent and the venture which served as the Antarctic apprenticeship for Shackleton and Crean.

Less well known from the same era are Robert Forde and Patrick Keohane who served on Scott's disastrous last expedition (1910-13) and Mortimer and Timothy McCarthy, the brothers who sailed with both Scott and Shackleton – but never together.

The experience of Forde, a seasoned naval petty officer who hailed from West Cork, typified the rigours and durability of Antarctic exploration. He was invalided out of Scott's Terra Nova expedition after suffering severe frostbite in temperatures down to a paralyzing -73°F (-58°C). But he stayed long enough to erect a stone shelter which is still standing after 100 years and is now protected as a site of historical interest. Forde's personal keepsake was a



*Mortimer McCarthy, aged 80, made a nostalgic return to the Antarctic in 1963, exactly 50 years after his last voyage. Mortimer (standing, left) is pictured with two other Terra Nova veterans, Bill McDonald (centre) and Bill Burton. (McCarthy family)*

permanently disfigured hand which forced him to wear gloves for the rest of his life. Forde died in 1959, one of the last survivors of Scott's shore party.

Patrick Keohane, a seaman to his fingertips, sprang from the rugged Seven Heads Peninsula in Cork and marched to within 300 miles of the South Pole with Scott in 1911. Keohane was brought up by the sea and his father, who was coxswain of the local lifeboat, earned fame in 1915 as the first vessel to reach survivors of

the torpedoed passenger ship, Lusitania.

Less well known is that the only major argument recorded during the expedition's over-wintering at Cape Evans in 1911 erupted between Keohane and the middle-class naval officers and scientists over the controversial issue of Irish nationalism. By a cruel irony, Keohane was forced to flee Ireland with his family in 1920 because of his coastguard connections and service in the Royal Navy.

It was Keohane and Lieutenant Atkinson who made the last unsuccessful attempt to trace Scott's doomed party on the journey back from the Pole in fearsome conditions. Months later he was among those who found the frozen corpses Scott, Bowers and Wilson. Keohane served in two world wars and provided first-hand accounts of the expedition to the makers of the 1948 film, *Scott of the Antarctic*. His only child was named Nova after Scott's vessel, *Terra Nova*.

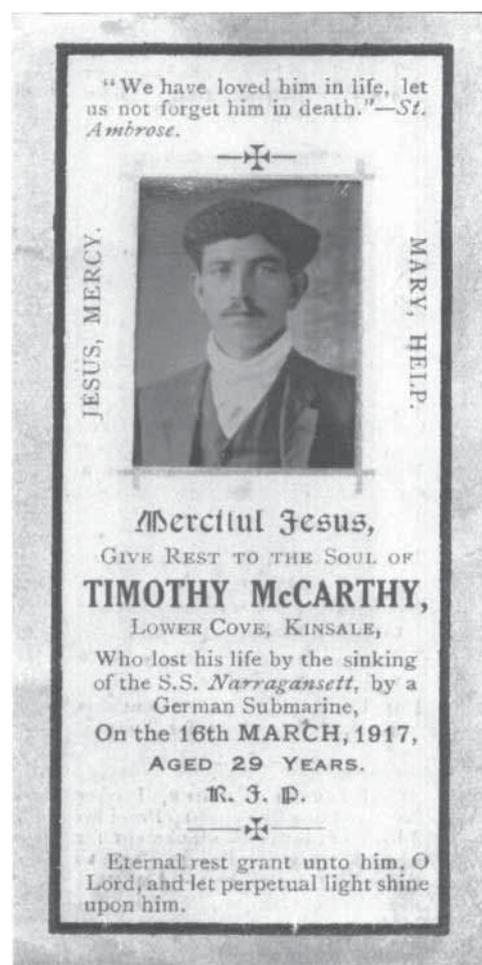
Perhaps the most colourful of the Irish contingent at this time was Mortimer McCarthy from the seaport of Kinsale, County Cork who ran away to sea at the age of 12 and joined Scott's expedition the day before the ship sailed south. He was another highly accomplished seaman made three harrowing voyages to the Antarctic in *Terra Nova* and was still working on ships in his early 80s. Mortimer, an old sea dog with a flowing moustache and a fondness for whisky, made a nostalgic return visit to the Antarctic in 1963 and at 80 years of age was the oldest man ever to set foot on the continent. He died in tragic circumstances in 1967, aged 85, among the last survivors of the *Terra Nova* expedition.

One of Mortimer's more sombre tasks was to collect the Polar Medal awarded his younger brother, Timothy who served Shackleton with great distinction on the *Endurance* expedition. Tim, another highly skilled sailor, was brought up handling small boats in the busy waterways around Kinsale harbour and was a key figure during the voyage of the *James Caird* in 1916. It was Tim who first sighted South Georgia at the end of the epic Caird journey and Shackleton paid full tribute to his abilities. He once wrote: "McCarthy, the best and most efficient of the sailors, always cheerful under the most trying circumstances..."

Sadly, Tim McCarthy was killed in March 1917 later when a German U-boat sank his oil tanker 350 miles off the Irish coast. The McCarthys were one of only two sets of brothers to serve in the Antarctic with Scott and Shackleton, the others being Frank and Ernest Wild. By a cruel twist of fate, both families each lost a brother in the war when Ernest "Tubby" Wild, a member of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party, was killed by typhoid in 1918.

It was not until the early 1990s, long after all the old explorers had died, that Ireland began to reassess and celebrate the feats of these men. Appropriately, it was country's modern day adventurers who led the commemoration by retracing the steps of the pioneers.

The first step came in 1996 with the South Aris expedition (south again) which set out to retrace the journey of the *James Caird* and make the crossing of South Georgia in memory of Shackleton, Crean and Worsley. A replica of the *James Caird*, named *Tom Crean*, was built



*The memorial card for Tim McCarthy, who sailed in the James Caird with Shackleton but was killed in 1917 when his ship was sunk by U-boat. Tim, brother of Mortimer McCarthy, was only 28 when he died, though the card gives his age as 29. (McCarthy family)*



*Tom Crean, the stalwart who served on three expeditions to the Antarctic, photographed for the last time in the late 1930s outside his home, the South Pole Inn, Kerry.*

Shackleton, Crean and all the other Irish characters who left such an indelible mark on history would doubtless be the first to salute his achievement which commemorated decades of great endeavour by generations of Irish explorers in the Antarctic.

but unfortunately the party had to abandon the vessel in ferocious Southern Ocean storms. Fortunately, four of the party were able to complete the traverse of the island.

Mike Barry, an accomplished mountaineer from Tralee in Kerry and member of the traverse team, was driven by an even bigger ambition. Barry wanted to complete the task begun by the likes of Shackleton and trek overland to the South Pole itself. Quietly, without fuss or the fanfare of sponsorship and publicity, the 50-years old Barry walked 731 miles from Hercules Inlet and reached the South Pole on January 21, 2004 – the first Irishman to reach the Pole on foot.



*Mike Barry in 2004 becomes the first Irishman to trek overland to the South Pole. Barry, from Kerry, wanted to finish the great work begun by generations of Irish explorers like Shackleton. (Mike Barry)*

Great Endeavour – Ireland's Antarctic Explorers by Michael Smith, published by The Collins Press, Cork: [www.collinspress.ie](http://www.collinspress.ie)

Michael Smith has written and lectured extensively about the history of Polar exploration. His books include a biography of Sir Ernest Shackleton written for younger readers: *Shackleton: The Boss* (Collins Press, 2004).

Other books:

*An Unsung Hero* - Tom Crean (Collins Press/Headline, 2000);

*I Am Just Going Outside* – Captain Oates (Spellmount 2002);

*Sir James Wordie* – Polar Crusader (Birlinn, 2004);

*Captain Francis Crozier* – Last Man Standing? (Collins Press 2006);

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*Tom Crean* – The Iceman (Collins Press, 2003)

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR: *Shackleton: The Antarctic & Endurance* (Dulwich College, 2000)

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# The Centenary of Church at Grytviken, South Georgia, 1913 - 2013

R. K. Headland, 16 August 2013

On Christmas Day 1913 the church at Grytviken whaling station was consecrated thus its centenary is in 2013. It is one of the few historical buildings on South Georgia and the only one retaining its original function. The initiative for its construction came from Captain Carl Anton Larsen of Sandefjord, Norway, the founder of Grytviken which was the first of six whaling stations on the island. Larsen, who was born in Østre Halsen, eventually became a dual Norwegian and British subject, a citizen of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies, after almost a decade of residence on South Georgia. The Norske Sjømannsmisjon (Norwegian Mission to Seamen) was consulted from the beginning of the project. In February 1910 Larsen invited Ivar Welle, pastor of the Buenos Aires branch of the mission, to visit South Georgia for discussions.

After further meetings in May 1911, which included James Wilson, the newly appointed Falkland Islands Dependencies Magistrate, Capt. Larsen placed an advertisement in the Norwegian press to recruit a resident pastor for the benefit of the whalers. Thus a newly ordained priest, Kristen Løken, from Lillehammer, Norway, was appointed who arrived in Grytviken on 1 April 1912. Larsen provided his stipend. Building a church at Grytviken was discussed by Larsen and Løken and, in April 1913, the idea gained support from the local congregational meeting. Funds were raised by the employees of the whaling station with Larsen donating the largest sum and guaranteeing the balance. These were not only adequate for its construction but also provided such necessary items as: the bells, altar and other ecclesiastic essentials, furnishings, hymnals, vestments, a wind organ, and, rather importantly, a heating stove. Support for the church also came from the companies operating the floating factory Nor and the whaling station at Ocean Harbour which was managed by Lauritz Larsen, brother of Capt. Larsen. As well as being a religious centre the church was also a social one, to house a library for the whalers. The Compañía Argentina de Pesca, proprietors of Grytviken whaling station, declined to contribute and remained aloof from the project.

The church was prefabricated by Strømmen Trævarefabrik, Norway, of a size to accommodate 200 persons. It was designed by architect Adalbert Kielland, son-in law of Capt. Larsen. Lauritz Larsen transported it to South Georgia where erection began on 25 November 1913 by voluntary labour of the whaling station employees. The two bells with appropriate inscriptions, cast in Tønsberg at Larsen's expense, were installed and first rung at midnight on Christmas Eve 1913. For the new church the Bishop of Kristiania (now Oslo) dedicated a record book impressed with the diocesan seal 17 September 1913. This is now preserved in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute (with a facsimile made for the church). The events of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in 1913, when the church was consecrated, were attended by whalers representing all the South Georgia stations.

The religious denomination is the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, part of the Lutheran World Federation in communion with the Anglican churches. Historically several other Christian denominations have used the church, especially for Christmas services. Kristen Løken served from 1 April 1912 to 4 June 1914. Subsequent Norwegian clerics were Frithjof Zwilgmeyer (a theology student, recruited by Andrine, Capt. Larsen's wife) 14 March 1914 to mid 1916, Jon Foen (a verger) between 1916 and 1918, Frederik Knudsen (a pastor) October 1925 to May 1926, Sverre Eika (a pastor) September 1929 to April 1931. Next, after a longer pause, Johan Schrøder Lunde (a deacon) served from 1958 to 1961. The Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Stanley, the Very Reverend Harold Lumsdale, was present on 17 December 1932 to consecrate Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave after a monument had been unveiled by the Governor on 24 February 1928 and occasional Royal Naval chaplains have also held services. The visit of the first bishop is described later.

The Church served several functions other than religious observances during its history. Indeed Løken observed: Christian life unfortunately does not wax strong among the whalers. Many of the ceremonies conducted were funerals, mainly of whalers, prior to conveying them to the Grytviken cemetery. Among other funerals was that of Sir Ernest Shackleton in 1922. Baptisms of babies are also recorded in the Church Register from the earliest in 1913, and it has been used for marriages.

The church was very solidly built and, after the close of the whaling station in 1965, and departure of the last Norwegian caretaker in 1971, men from the British Antarctic Survey station at King Edward Point voluntarily maintained it until their capture and deportation in 1982 by the Argentine Navy (it had provided a civilian refuge during the invasion). General maintenance continued when needed by many of the British detachments stationed there from 1982 to 2001. Following damage by severe winds major repairs and restoration work were accomplished from 1995 to 1998 coordinated by Robert Burton, the Director of the South Georgia Whaling Museum, who wrote a comprehensive report of the operations.

Although it was difficult to visit Norwegian interest in general, and that of Capt. C. A. Larsen's family in particular, continued. On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, on Christmas Day 1988, Hans-Kjell Larsen (grandson of Capt. Larsen) visited to commemorate the occasion. His voyage from Stanley to and from South Georgia, aboard a ship of the Royal Navy, was arranged by the South Georgia government. Communications were, by then, so improved that peels of the bells of Grytviken were transmitted directly to and heard ringing in Norway. Hans-Kjell Larsen took the opportunity to place a bronze bust of Carl Anton Larsen in the church he founded. In this year H.-K. Larsen attended preliminary meetings convened by Nigel Bonner to plan the establishment of a museum on South Georgia.

In 1993 approaches were made to the Norwegian Utenriks Departement (Foreign Office) by the Commissioner (Gordon Jewkes) for involvement and assistance with the church and other Norwegian heritage on South Georgia. In spring 1994 the Archbishop of Canterbury contacted the Bishop of Tunsberg, asking for support for restoring Grytviken church. The result was that the Bishop contacted H.-K. Larsen and a seminar Øya og Kjærka (The Island and Church) was held in Norway later in 1994. A result was that funds of 310,000 Norske kroner (about £ 31,000) were raised from several sources including the C. A. Larsen Memorial Foundation. Finance also came from Norway when a fund 'Enke, Invalide og Alderdompensjon' (Widows, Invalids and Elder Pension Fund), established by C. A. Larsen 84 years previously, was liquidated after its original purpose was no longer needed. The bulk of the funds was transferred to the Bishop for use in maintaining the church, as well as the whalers' cemeteries on the island. Gifts of voluntary labour, money, paint, and other essentials came from a variety of British, Norwegian, and other sources.

Other organizations involved were Øyas Venner (Friends of the Island) founded in Norway in 1997 and the South Georgia Association in Britain (founded in 2001). From its inception, in 2005, the South Georgia Heritage Trust assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the church, as well as for several other projects on the island.

Norwegian interest, particularly of those who had worked there in the whaling days, was strong and two visits organized in 1999. On the first the Fungerende Bishop of Tunsberg, Magne Storli, conducted a service in the church. The Commissioner and Hans-Kjell Larsen were present on this occasion. This, with the second visit, also provided an opportunity to tend to family graves. It was very timely that, just prior to the arrival of the Norwegian parties, Pat and Sarah Lurcock, government employees but acting in a private capacity, had done a thorough maintenance of the several cemeteries.

The current tenure of the church presents a potential conundrum. Although all land on South Georgia is now Crown property that of the church has experienced a variety of perhaps informal circumstances. Capt. Larsen wrote to his wife, Andrine, in November 1913 when the

Church was under construction, Naar jeg forlader Syd Georgia har jeg et minde staaende efter mig her, og haaber med Guds hjælp Kirken skal blive til velsignelse for nogen . . . (When I leave South Georgia I will have a reminder left behind me, hoping by help of the Lord, that the Church will be a blessing to someone . . . ). Larsen expressed an opinion in 1924 when he visited pastor Sigurd Gundersen of the Norsk Sjømannsmisjon in Cardiff, when he greeted him with the comment: Skal vi bytte kirker, Pastor? Min står på Syd Georgia . . . (Should we exchange Churches, Pastor? My one stands at South Georgia . . . ). This was his last contact with the Sjømannsmisjon before Larsen died in the Ross Sea on 8 December 1924.

There is no record of involvement by any of the several companies which successively owned Grytviken whaling station and no indication that, for insurance or any other purposes, these asserted any tenure the church; although it might have been construed as within their leasehold boundaries. No specific assumption of tenure appears in government records. Perhaps the precedence of toleration for a century demonstrates the goodwill associated with the church, from involvement of the first magistrate and tacit acceptance of the continuing interests and actions of Captain Larsen's family. Such a concept may be typified by the statement which appears often in the Government Gazette during many years of early legislation when this was extended to South Georgia: in as far as circumstances permit and local conditions render necessary.

Details are published in Hart (2001) on the history of Grytviken and Compañía Argentina de Pesca, in Hansen (1999) concerning the church, and in Headland (1984) which covers South Georgia generally.

Hansen, Svend Einar. 1999. Hvalfangerkirken. Oslo: Genesis.

Hart, Ian B. 2003. Pesca. Salcomb: Aidan Ellis.

Headland, R. K. 1984. The Island of South Georgia. Cambridge University Press.



*The James Caird faces its greatest challenge, drawing by Ghislane Tillier*

# Polar Philately with emphasis on the Southern Polar Regions

By John Youles

In 1952 Harry (H.E.J.) Evans, received a letter from a stamp collector in the United States asking for help in forming a Society dedicated to the philately of the Polar Regions. Harry put an advertisement in one of the British stamp magazines to which several collectors responded. Harry passed the information on to the US collector and heard nothing more! Harry nevertheless decided to go ahead and formed the Polar Postal History Society of Great Britain (PPHSGB). The first newsletter on two sides of foolscap paper was issued in February 1953 and the fourth issue in July 1953 adopted the name Polar Post.

This was the beginning of organised Polar Philately. In 1956 the North Americans created their own Society - The American Society of Polar Philatelists (ASPP) and their Society Journal Ice Cap News. These two societies were later joined by similar societies in Germany, France, South Africa, Australia, and the Spanish speaking world. It is assumed that similar Societies also exist in Russia, China and Japan but here we encounter major language barriers to exchange of information.

But what is Polar Philately? The founding fathers avoided too strict a definition and thus in general we can say that the term relates to the collecting of postage stamps thematically related to the Polar Regions both North and South or issued for use in these regions, postal items sent to or from the Polar Regions or by Expeditions when travelling to or from the Polar Regions and postcards having a Polar theme. To these can be added polar ephemera such as photographs, signed letters, menus, patches and virtually everything else mainly two dimensional you can think of related to polar expeditions which can easily be displayed together with the truly philatelic material.

And what counts as Polar? Here there is a clear difference between north and south. People permanently live north of the Arctic Circle in Canada, the USA (Alaska), Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Svalbard (which includes Spitsbergen) and Greenland. Iceland has always been excluded although its northernmost point almost touches the Arctic Circle. The North Pole does not lie on land but is covered by sea ice which has now regularly been penetrated by ship. The inhabited land areas are suited to the rules for competitive philatelic exhibiting and the postal history goes back beyond the introduction of the postage stamp in 1840 thanks to all the attempts to navigate the Northwest Passage and the Northeast Passage.

Moving to the south, there has never been a permanent human settlement south of the Antarctic Circle. Purists would say that you should take 60°S as the northern boundary (the area covered since July 1961 by the Antarctic Treaty) or the Antarctic Convergence which would then include South Georgia, also with no permanent population, but not the Falkland Islands or Tierra del Fuego. However, sub-Antarctic islands in the South Atlantic lying as far north as Tristan da Cunha and in the Indian, Pacific and Southern Oceans lying south of South Africa, Réunion, Australia and New Zealand have traditionally been included. We are thus dealing with an area where there are research stations occupied all year round but individual scientists rarely stay there continuously for more than two years at a time.

Antarctic Philately was initially dominated by picture postcards of Antarctic scenes produced after the Belgian Antarctic Expedition of 1897 to 1899 and before, during and after the Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904, the British National Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition 1901-1903, the 1st German Antarctic Expedition 1901-1903 and the 1st and 2nd French National Antarctic Expeditions of 1903-1905 and 1908-1910. At the time there were no post offices in Antarctica and thus postcards and expeditioners' mail

was cancelled at locations in South America, the Falkland Islands, South Africa, New Zealand or Australia as well as other locations on route south.

The first Antarctic postmark (Figure 1) appeared in 1904 when Argentina officially took over the Weather Station on Laurie Island, South Orkney Islands which had been set up by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. The first postage stamp (Figure 2) produced for exclusive use in Antarctica was a New Zealand 1d stamp overprinted "King Edward VII Land" for use during Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition 1907-1909. Ernest Shackleton was appointed Postmaster and equipped with a special postmark for use on board the Nimrod when in the waters of King Edward VII Land and at the Expedition Base at Cape Royds (which is in Victoria Land; Shackleton had not been able to land at his intended location).



Figure 1



Figure 2

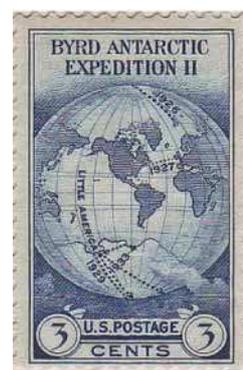


Figure 3

Scott's Last Expedition of 1910-1913 was supplied with the same postmark as used by Shackleton as well as with 1d New Zealand stamps overprinted "Victoria Land". Towards the end of the Expedition a  $1/2$  d stamp was also overprinted "Victoria Land" and sent south on the final relief voyage of the Terra Nova in early 1913. The first truly thematic stamp relating to Antarctica (Figure 3) was not issued until 10th September 1933. It relates to the US 1st and 2nd Byrd Expeditions which are considered to be among the first Antarctic Expeditions of the modern mechanised era.

Language has been the major barrier to researching the Postal History of the Japanese Antarctic Expedition 1912 but in recent years several picture postcards have come to light and an attempt is being made to document them. The 2nd German Antarctic Expedition 1911/12 led to the creation of some scarce to rare postal markings from South Georgia when the postmaster ran out of stamps towards the end of October 1911. E. B. Binnie used a rubber two-line hand stamp reading "Paid ...at / SOUTH GEORGIA". It is estimated that several thousand postal items received this marking but only 66 items are recorded today including pieces, postcards and envelopes.

Two undated cancellers/cachets were carried during Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914 but they were only used alongside or to cancel Tasmanian or Australian Postage stamps when the Aurora returned to Australia in 1912, 1913 and 1914. Some expedition mail was also carried by other ships such as the Koonya from Macquarie Island to Australia. And then we come to an Expedition from which very little contemporary material has survived, the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914-1916 led by Sir Ernest Shackleton. Those wishing to document this Expedition in a philatelic display have to rely heavily on modern commemorative stamps and covers. The last port of call of the Endurance was Grytviken, South Georgia, and a few postal items have survived. The postcard, (Figure 4), bearing a photograph of the Endurance leaving London was sent by Len Hussey to his parents.



Figure 4: Picture and address side of a Post Card sent from Grytvoiken on 5th December 1914 by banjo player Len Hussey to his parents. The picture side shows Endurance leaving London.

The message reads:

*“Dear Mother & Dad, Hope all are well & that the war is not upsetting you all too much. I wish I were there at the front. We're off tomorrow for good, so am afraid you will hear no more nor be able to write to me till our return about 1916. Love to yourselves & Perc & Doll. From your affec Son, Len- ”.*

The card is postmarked South Georgia C DE 5 14 (Postmark SG2), the date Endurance left Grytviiken for Antarctica and a watery grave. The British Antarctic Territory, Chile, Éire, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia are the main source of postage stamps thematically relating to the 1914-1916 Expedition including the heroic boat journey in the James Caird from Elephant Island to South Georgia and the crossing of South Georgia. It is thus possible to document virtually the whole of this Expedition using postage stamps, several of which are based on photographs taken by Frank Hurley (Figure 5).

The final Expedition of the “Heroic” Era is generally regarded as being the Shackleton-Rowett Expedition of 1921-22 during which Sir Ernest died on board the Quest in King Edward Cove, South Georgia on 5th January 1922.

There were only a handful of Antarctic related expeditions between the two World Wars and they are often referred to as belonging to the “Mechanised Era” during which aircraft started to play a major role. The period was dominated philatelically by the 1st and 2nd Richard Byrd Expeditions (1929-1934) with thousands of philatelic items. However we should not forget the British Discovery Investigations 1926-1951, the Wilkins-Hearst Expedition to Deception Island (1928/9), Mawson’s BANZARE (British, Australian, New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition 1929-31), the Lincoln Ellsworth Flights over Antarctica (1933-1937), the British Graham Land Expedition (1934-37) and the German National Socialist Schwabenland Expedition (1938/39).

Towards the end of the Second World War through to the mid 1950s Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom established bases with post offices in the Antarctic Peninsula region, the South Shetlands and the South Orkneys. All three countries have overlapping claims to areas of Antarctica, none of which are recognised by the United Nations or the major world powers (USA, USSR/Russia, and China).

As result of the International Geophysical Year 1956-58 and the entry into force of the Antarctic Treaty in 1961 there has been an exposition in the number of stamp issues relating to Antarctica and the number of Antarctic bases with post offices. In view of financial constraints the number of bases has diminished in recent years but the flood of postage stamps continues unabated, boosted by the International Polar Year 2007/08 and worldwide stamp issues relating to “Preserving the Polar Regions and Glaciers”.

There are several Philatelic Exhibits relating to Antarctica which have won awards at National or International Level but sadly several of them have been broken up and sold in recent years. Exhibits and non competitive displays relating to the Heroic era worthy of mention are "The Swedish South Polar Expedition 1901-1903" by Stefan Heijtz, "The 1901-1904 British National Antarctic Expedition" by Paul Wales, "Charcot in the Antarctic" by Serge Kahn, "Captain Scott's Last Antarctic Expedition – Triumph and Tragedy" and "Shackleton's Antarctic Expeditions" by Trevor Cornford, "Shackleton's Endurance Expedition 1914-1916" by Peter Wordie and "Of Ice and Men: Antarctic Exploration", a thematic display by the late Margery Wharton. Several of these Exhibits/displays have been serialized in Polar Post since 1997 to mark the Centenaries of the various expeditions of the Heroic Era.

If you would like further information on the subject of Polar Philately please visit the Website of the PPHSGB at: <http://www.pphsgb.org/> or write to the Society's Membership Secretary Robert F. McMillan, 46 New Village Road, Cottingham, East Yorkshire HU164NA.

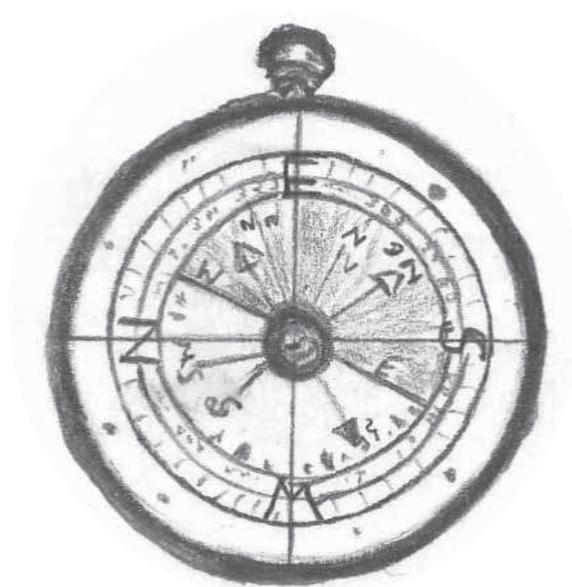
## References:

Shackleton by Roland Huntford, published by Hodder and Stoughton 1985 – ISBN 0 340 25007 0.

The Endurance by Caroline Alexander published by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 1998 ISBN 0 7475 4123 x

Shackleton's Photographer by Shane Murphy - self-published Book on CD-ROM 2001 ISBN 0 970 3148 2-5.

South Georgia – The Provisional 'Paid at/At' Handstamp 1911-1912 by Hugh A. Osborne published by The Falkland Islands Philatelic Study Group, Monograph No 15, March 2013 ©FIPSG (no ISBN Number).



## The "Endurance" Expedition 1914-1916 as depicted on Postage Stamps



*Exercising the Dogs  
6<sup>th</sup> January 1915*



*Discovery of the Caird Coast  
16th January 1915*



*"The Long, Long Night"  
June 1915*



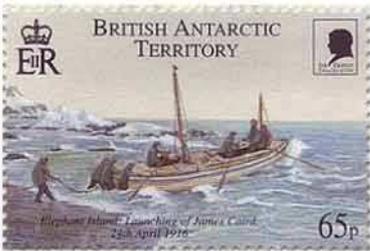
*Endurance crushed 27/10/1915  
sank 21/11/1915*



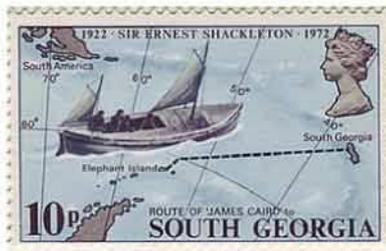
*Man-Hauling the  
James Caird*



*Ocean Camp  
30th October to 23rd December 1915*



*The Voyage of the James Caird from Elephant Island to South Georgia, King Haakon Bay  
24th April to 10th May 1916*



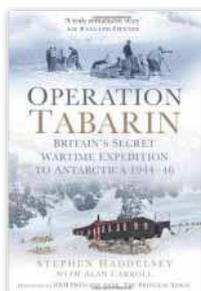
*The Crossing of South Georgia from King Haakon Bay to Stromness 19th and 20th May 1916*



*The Rescue at the 4th attempt of the Elephant Island Party by the Chilean Tug Yelcho captained by Lieutenant Luis Pardo (left-hand stamp) took place on 30th August 1916.  
The Yelcho returned to Punta Arenas in triumph on 3rd September 1916.  
Bedecked with flags, the ship was photographed by local photographer Mr Veiga, (right-hand stamp)*

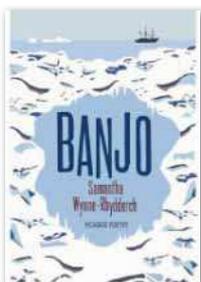
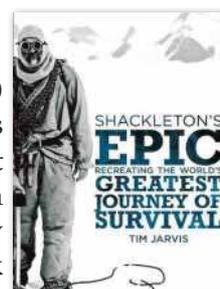
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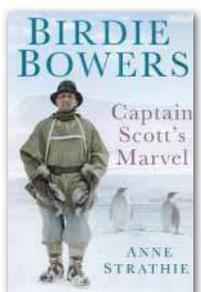
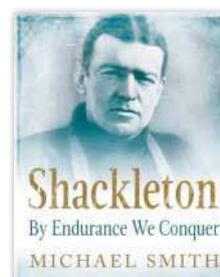
• **Operation Tabarin** by Stephen Haddelsey (with Alan Carroll) – The History Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-7524-9356-5. Stephen Haddelsey is an accomplished polar historian and prolific author. In this book he introduces us to the curious and little-known ‘third front’ of World War Two – Antarctica. This British wartime expedition sought to establish bases on the White Continent to protect the Falkland Islands from Japanese attack and to deny harbours in the sub-Antarctic to the German U-boats and surface-raiders. From this military endeavour Britain’s presence in The Great White became consolidated and set the pattern for things to come. Hardback RRP £18.99.

• **Shackleton’s Epic (Recreating the World’s Greatest Journey of Survival)** by Tim Jarvis – William Collins, 2014 (UK). ISBN 978-0-00-754952-8. This is a lavish book full of wonderful images and superb quality photographs. It is a ‘must-read’ for anyone remotely interested in learning of how modern man coped (or otherwise) with the rigours of Shackleton’s little boat journey and the frozen climb across the interior of South Georgia in 1916. Hardback RRP £25.



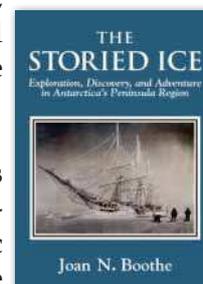
• **Banjo** by Samantha Wynne-Ryderch – Picador Poetry, 2012. ISBN 978-0-330-54466-5. This little paperback explores the role music played in surviving long Antarctic winters. It offers a clutch of fine lyrics, elegies and set-pieces. However, at the heart of this little anthology is a remarkable tale of darkness and light, music and silence. It has been published to celebrate Scott’s arrival at the South Pole in 1912. RRP Paperback £9.99.

• **Shackleton (By Endurance We Conquer)** by Michael Smith- Oneworld, (September) 2014. ISBN 978-1-78074-572-5. Following many years of interest in polar history (and no little number of books) Michael Smith offers this biography of the great man – the first since Roland Huntford’s tome in 1985. Drawing on extensive research of original diaries and personal correspondence the author brings a fresh perspective to our understanding of this complex man and the heroic age of exploration. RRP Hardback £20.

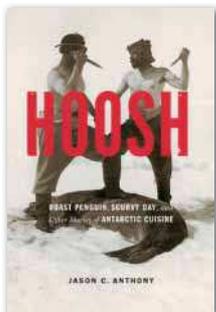


• **Birdie Bowers** by Anne Strathie – The History Press. 2012, ISBN 978-0-7524-6003-1. This is Anne’s first book as sole author and what an excellent read it is! I was at SPRI when she was beavering through the archives as your editor was attempting to progress his PhD research on the British Graham Land Expedition (1934/7). Henry ‘Birdie’ Bowers presents a wonderful image – a stocky bundle of energy and grit – a dour Scotsman for sure. He was, of course, once of the five men to die along with Scott in 1912. This new biography draws on Birdie’s correspondence and journals. It is a moving read, in many ways, for it tells of an hardy, ambitious young naval officer who could always be relied on, often under severe duress, to lift the spirits of his companions. Hardback RRP £18.99.

• **The Storied Ice (Exploration, Discovery and Adventure in Antarctica’s Peninsula Region)** by Joan N. Boothe – Regent Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-58790-224-6. This quality produced book recounts mankind’s dramatic history of discovery in and around the Antarctic Peninsula. The author is to be

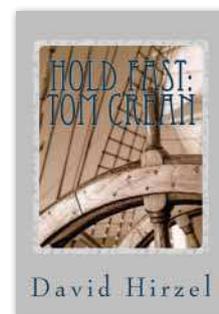


congratulated on providing, in effect, a succinct and accurate account of all things exploratory in this particular region from 1517 to 1959 (when the original Antarctic Treaty was drawn up). Whilst I know for a fact the author could not possibly have considered ALL the archives of the British Graham Land Expedition 1934/7 (this feat has taken your editor 3 years to-date!) her general conclusions about the BGLE are sound and well-balanced. This bodes well for the reliability of the rest of her work. RRP Hardback £22.



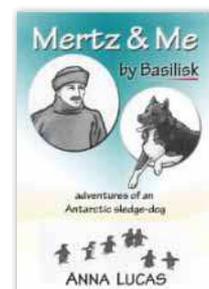
• **Hoosh by Jason C. Anthony**- University of Nebraska Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8032-2666-1. This is an unusual story of polar exploration as seen from the point of view of Antarctic cuisine (hence the title of the book). The author's 'tour' of Antarctic cuisine takes us from (inevitably) hoosh (a porridge of meat, fat and melted snow, often thickened with crushed biscuit) and the scurvy-ridden early expeditions through to the his own pre-planned 300 meals (plus snacks) for a two-person 'modern' camp in the Transantarctic Mountains. This is an entertaining tale as well as an enlightening one. Paperback RRP £18.

• **Hold Fast: Tom Crean by David Hirzel** – Terra Nova Press, 2013. ISBN N/K. This wonderful book follows directly from the author's previous book *Sailor on Ice: Tom Crean* and continues Crean's life-story along the same narrative style. It is a unique approach and relates the story in an exciting and engaging way. As the author explained to me in a recent letter, 'With the exception of a few imagined conversations (clearly identified as such) everything in the book comes from the written record, or from conversations with Crean family members'. Paperback. RRP £11.30 (digital edition [www.smashwords.com](http://www.smashwords.com)).



• **Shackleton's Whisky by Neville Peat** – Preface, 2013. ISBN 978-1-84809-390-4. This is the book to accompany Nigel Watson's article in the 'Number Seven'! But seriously, this is a fabulous book, a story of boozy discovery beautifully illustrated and told. 25 cases of MacKinlay's Old Scotch were discovered under Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds – a remarkable and unexpected legacy of the Nimrod expedition (1907/9). Shackleton was, in fact, a virtual teetotaler. However, he understood his men and knew well the power of the 'odd wee dram' consumed at times of hardship or celebration. 3 cases were lifted from the ice and 3 bottles therein went north to Bonnie Scotland for analysis and near-replication. If you have a spare £100, why not indulge in a replicated bottle of nectar? If you should so choose – find a comfy rocking chair, lean back and dream of Shackleton! Hardback. RRP £16.99.

• **Mertz & Me (by Basilisk) by Anna Lucas** – Fineline Studios (Australia), 2014. ISBN 978-0-646-92123-5 (eBook ISBN 9781310160424). An illustrated children's book written by a sledge dog (assisted by Anna!). It is entertaining and highly educational, full of really useful polar facts. It makes an ideal Christmas gift. Available from Hobart Book Shop ([www.hobartbookshop.co.au](http://www.hobartbookshop.co.au)) RRP AUD 19.95.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**From John Elder, Wellington, Somerset.**

I wish to offer a brief comment on the article 'Shackleton verses Pardo' by Alfonso Parada (Number Six, pp 43-54).

It was good to be reminded of the Chilean Navy's involvement in the rescue of Shackleton's men stranded on Elephant Island in August 1916. This was the fourth attempt, which says a great deal in praise of Luis Pardo's cool bravery, the professionalism of his crew of the steam cutter *Yelcho* and Shackleton's urgency.

However, I do not support the comment in the 'Conclusion'. I think that any omission by individual historians about the role played by Chile in this rescue does not stem from a systematic attempt to downplay the role of the Chilean Navy in general and by Luis Pardo and the crew of *Yelcho* in particular. Certainly, those who were there and the British Government at the time were most grateful for what Chile had done. Parada's article makes this very clear.

Let me add a small footnote to the history. I was a land surveyor charged with producing a map of the Elephant Island group (about 6 islands) in 1970-71 for British Antarctic Surveys (aka UK joint Services Expedition-ed) (Series DOS 610 Sheet 6154 (Ext) 1:200,000). One job was to suggest place names to be put on the map. A large and very prominent ridge extending along the eastern half of Elephant Island had already been named 'Pardo Ridge' to acknowledge *Yelcho*'s captain. I asked that the cape at the north western end of Elephant Island be named 'Cape *Yelcho*'. It is the first point of land Pardo would have seen as his cutter skirted 'Seal Rocks' (now called 'Seal Islands') on 30th August 1916. I made this proposal to the Antarctic Place-names Committee, a part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and they accepted it.

So there are two prominent geographical features on Elephant Island to remember the rescue of Shackleton's men – 'Pardo Ridge' and 'Cape *Yelcho*'; a small and fitting tribute to Luis Pardo and his crew.

[Editor's Note: 'Cape *Yelcho*': 61.001 degS; 55.285 degW. 'Pardo Ridge' is the highest point on Elephant Island and South Shetland Islands (852m). Captain John P. Elder, RE, surveyor of the UK joint Services Expedition to Elephant Island, 1970-71 – was honoured, also, by the UK Antarctic Place-names Committee. 'Mount Elder' is between Endurance Glacier and Mount Pendragon]

**From Malcolm Gerrard, Sydney.**

It was interesting to read the lead article in the Society's Journal (Number Five) 'Adventures in Antarctic Biography' by Stephen Haddelsey. Mr Haddelsey states, '...it is a sad fact that, even today, the immense achievements of Mawson's expedition (the Australian Antarctic Expedition 1911-14) are very little known in Britain.... That (Frank) Bickerton should have been forgotten is regrettable..... that Mawson, one of the most successful of all Heroic Age leaders, should be equally obscure is a little short of a travesty'. Of course, that is not the case in Australia. But more to the point is the obscurity of the 'father of Australian geology' – mentor and lecturer to Douglas Mawson, Professor Sir Tannatt William Edgeworth David, KBE, CMG, DSO, RS, MA, D.Sc, LL.D.

I would like to enlighten members to the 'perfect gentle knight' not only of his exploits in the Antarctic as the leader of a detached party of Shackleton's *Nimrod* expedition (1907-9) to the South Magnetic Pole but also other highlights of his brilliant career as a geologist.

I am indebted to my friend and geologist David Branagan. Much of what is written comes from his classic book, "TW Edgeworth David: A life – Geologist, Adventurer and 'Knight in the Old Brown Hat'", National Library of Australia (NLA), 2005. Professor David Branagan was awarded the 1999 Harold White Fellowship from the NLA for his history of Tannatt William Edgeworth David.

### **From Richard Lines, London.**

An uncle (my father's much older half-brother) as a young Royal Artillery officer in late 1918 was one of the force sent to Murmansk and he met Shackleton in the officer's mess. It was a story he told with pride and became something of a family legend.

In the early 1960s I met Shackleton's grandson Charles, Alexandra's brother, when we were both undergraduates at Magdalen College, Oxford. I got to know him pretty well and I can recall vividly the framed Frank Hurley photographs of Endurance in his room. I lost touch with him after Oxford and it was only many years later that I learned he had died from a brain tumour when he was only 36. I can remember him as a modest man who never boasted about his illustrious grandfather. In 1970 my wife and I settled in the Norwood area (London) just after our marriage and an early walk exploring the area brought us to Shackleton's boyhood home in Sydenham with its blue plaque. Just to complete the circle, as it were, both our sons attended Dulwich College in due course. Our younger son spent a year in the new Shackleton Building in the mid-1990s, shortly after it was opened by Charles's father.

I was at a gaudy dinner for Magdalen contemporaries in March 2012 and several people there remembered Charles with affection.

### **From Bob Burton, Hemingford Abbots.**

I was very interested to read Peter Matthew's letters in the last issue. Firstly, because I was with him and Michael Gilkes on the cruise of the Polar Star that ended on a submerged rock pinnacle in King Haakon Bay. And, secondly, because I was especially pleased to read his father's information on the locomotive at Ocean Harbour and how narrow-gauge 'Feldbahn' were used by the Germans for moving supplies to the trenches in World War 1. According to Ian Hart, the railway at Grytviken was 'Decauville' track as used by the French military for the same purpose on the other side of the Western Front! I look forward to reading Peter's further researches which will, I am sure, interest South Georgia Museum.

I do, however, question whether the Ocean Harbour locomotive was seized as war reparations. There is a photo of it in the Salvesen Archive in the University of Edinburgh dated to 1918 or earlier, and the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission only started operation in 1921, when Ocean Harbour closed.

The Ocean Harbour railway is not the most southerly! It is often forgotten that Ushuaia in Argentina is a little farther south than South Georgia and a steam railway operates there. There was also a railway in the Hektor whaling station at Deception Island. All the South Georgia whaling stations had extensive railways but only Ocean harbour is known to have had a steam locomotive (and previously a horse) to pull trucks. At the other stations manpower and winches were used. I presume the loco (and horse) was used because the main jetty at Ocean Harbour was some 300 metres from the whaling station.

Short railways were constructed at a few Antarctic research stations for moving stores and equipment. I have seen the remain of tracks at Argentinian 'Orcadas' (South Orkneys) and

'Esperanza' (Antarctic Peninsula) stations and the British one at 'Signy Island' (also South Orkneys) which I had great fun helping to build in 1964.

## From Michael J Culham, Farnham Surrey

Here is the photo of the menu I mentioned in my email. It has come out rather well. The original has been signed by both Shackleton and Wild.

My late next door neighbour's father, Gerald Christy, was a literary agent for a raft of, more-or-less, well know people – including Shackleton. Amongst other things he arranged speaking engagements for them – hence the title of the menu 'Shack's famous Christy Minstrels'. Gerald is the rather long-faced individual in the centre – just above the word 'MENU'. His wife is to his right and Ernest Seton Thompson, at the time a well-known writer of both fictional and non-fictional books about wild animals, is to his left. Who the others are I do not know but it would be fascinating to find out. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

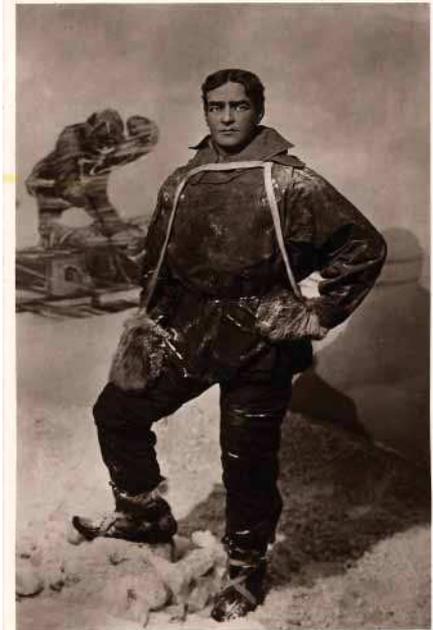


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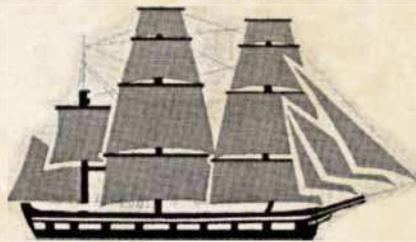
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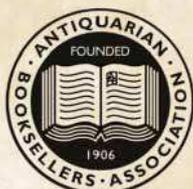
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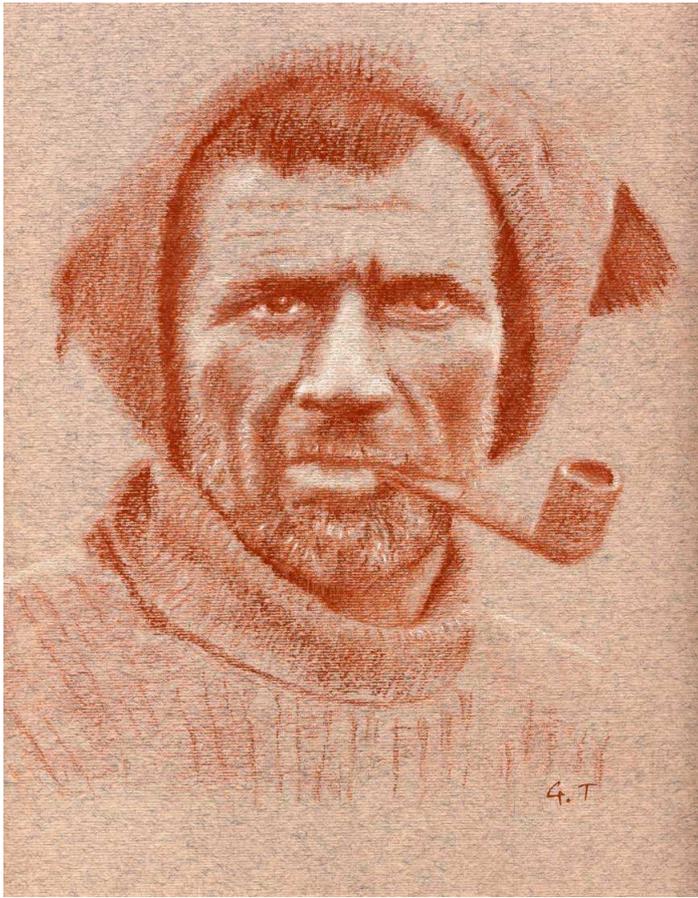
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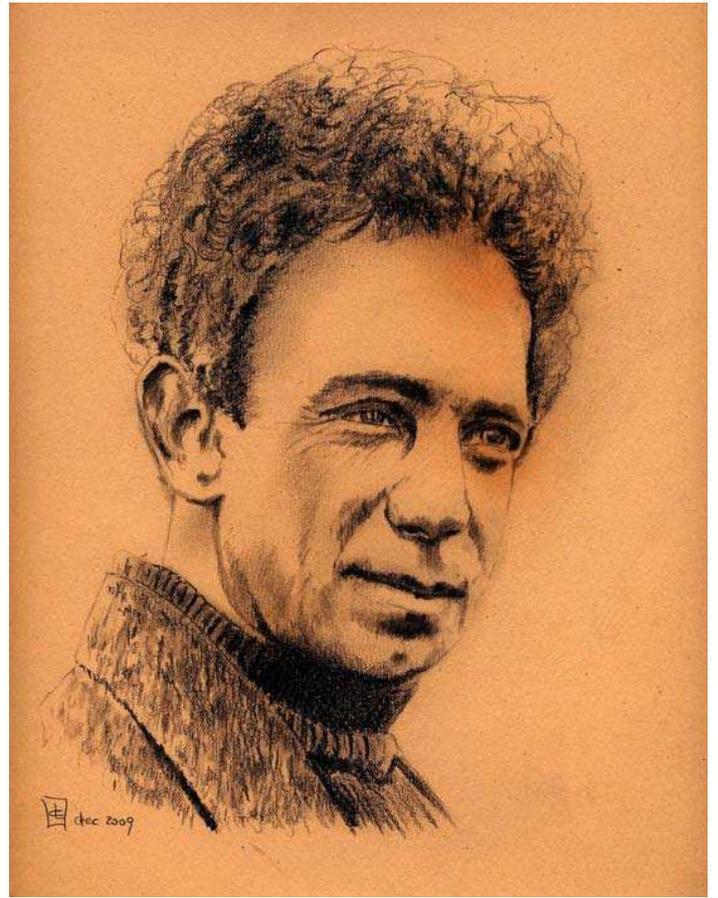
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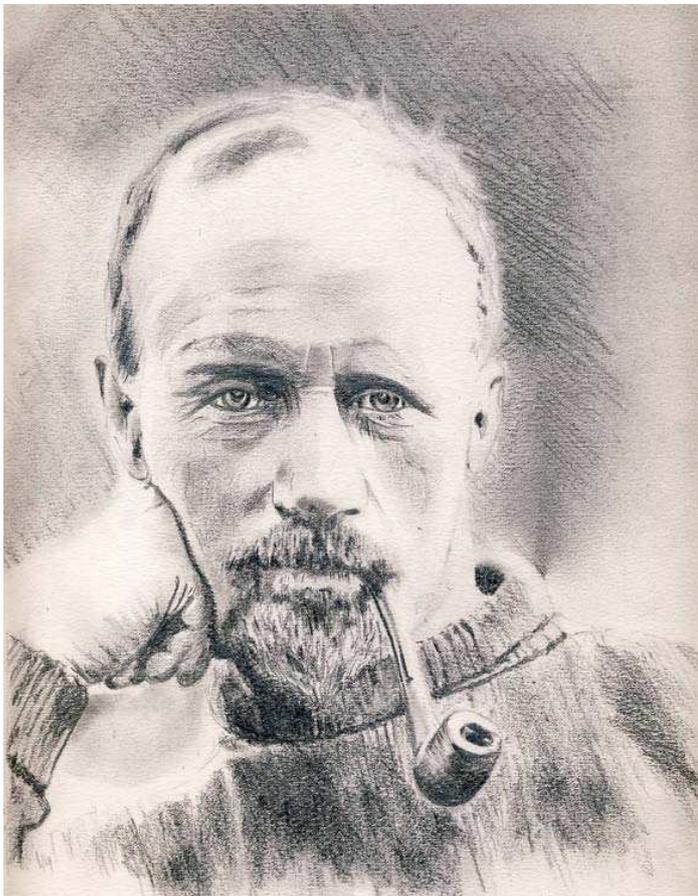




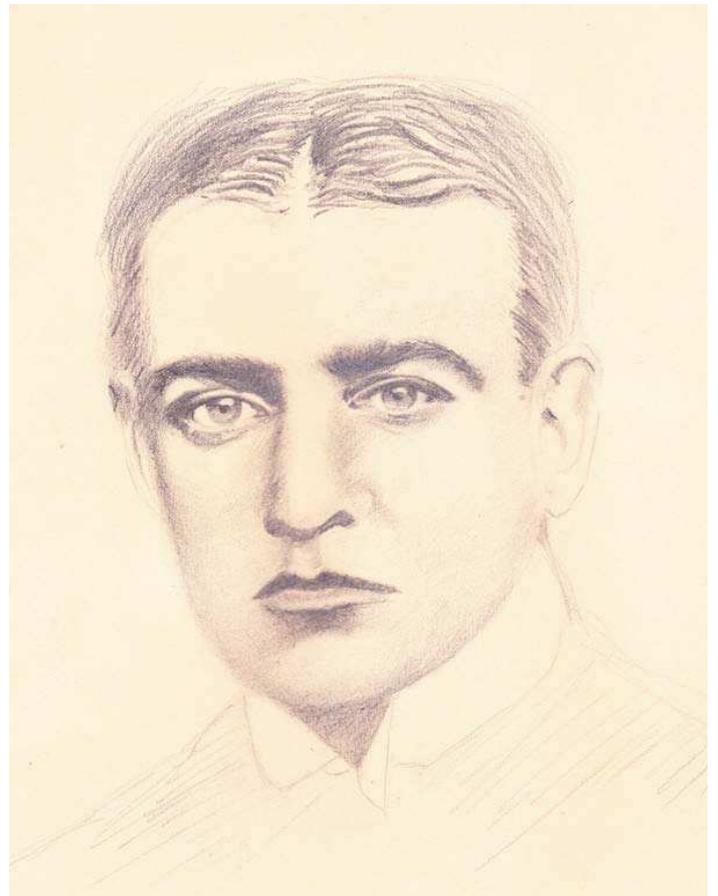
*Tom Crean*



*Frank Hurley*



*Frank Wild*



*Ernest Shackleton*

