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Antarctic Exploration

Sir Ernest Shackleton

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Shackleton and a friend (Oliver Locker Lampson) in Cromer, c.1910. Image courtesy of Cromer Museum.
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The Centennial season has arrived. Having celebrated Shackleton’s British Antarctic (Nimrod) Expedition, courtesy of the ‘Matrix Shackleton Centenary Expedition’, in 2008/9, we now turn our attention to the events of 1910/12. This was a period when 3 very extraordinary and ambitious men (Amundsen, Scott and Mawson) headed south, to a mixture of acclaim and tragedy. A little later (in 2014) we will be celebrating Sir Ernest’s ‘crowning glory’ – the Centenary of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic (Endurance) Expedition 1914/17. Shackleton failed in his main objective (to be the first to cross from one side of Antarctica to the other). He even failed to commence his land journey from the Weddell Sea coast to Ross Island. However, the rescue of his entire team from the ice and extreme cold (made possible by the remarkable voyage of the James Caird and the first crossing of South Georgia’s interior) was a remarkable feat and is the reason why most of us revere our polar hero and choose to be members of this Society.

For all the alleged shenanigans between Scott and Shackleton, it would be a travesty if ‘Number Six’ failed to honour Captain Scott’s remarkable achievements - in particular, the important geographical and scientific work carried out on the Discovery and Terra Nova expeditions (1901-3 and 1910-12 respectively). We should remember that it was Scott’s selection that gave EHS his first opportunity to journey south. That first journey changed Shackleton’s life. Following his premature return from the Discovery expedition (and against all the financial and political odds) Shackleton returned south three more times (the Nimrod, Endurance and Quest expeditions). On these occasions he went as leader.

In tribute to Captain Scott (and his companions, Edward Wilson, Henry (Birdie) Bowers, Lawrence (Titus) Oates and Edgar Evans) I include some colour images of the Scott Memorial, Plymouth, taken by me in June 2011. They form the centre-fold of this Journal. The superb murals and words inscribed on the stonework are an eloquent epitaph. Scott had attained the Pole but, in the process, had become Shackleton’s ‘dead lion’.

Scott’s ‘rival’ for polar priority (the enigmatic Roald Amundsen) will feature in the next issue of this Journal (Number Seven). Given that the Norwegian was the first to achieve the geographical South Pole he clearly deserves attention. His legacy to the Heroic Age is distinctive, if a little unsettling. We British have preferred to concentrate on our own polar heroes who epitomise the true Edwardian ‘bulldog’ spirit of courage and endurance in the face of adversity and uncertainty.

As for Douglas Mawson, it is just as well the Australian declined Scott’s invitation to join him on his ‘last’ Expedition. Instead, he opted to lead his own national expedition. The team set off for colder climes in 1911 and returned home somewhat battered and nearly beaten three years later. Had Mawson agreed to go on Scott’s latest expedition there is a chance he would have been chosen for the fated Pole sledge party (who knows?). Mawson was a senior scientific (geologist) member of the Nimrod expedition (1907-9). Anna Lucas (University of Tasmania) has written an excellent essay in this issue exploring Shackleton’s role in the launch of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (1911-14).

There was a lot of positive feedback about Wordie’s detailed article on sea-ice in ‘Number Five’. It seems clear that members like to get their ‘teeth’ into the nitty-gritty. In this issue, I include a lengthy article on Shackleton’s visit to Chile in 1916 (in particular, the period from early July to early September). I have received, over the years, many requests that we should highlight the important role of the Chilean Government (not least the Chilean Navy) in the rescue of the men on Elephant Island. Although much has been written in South America on this subject I believe it deserves closer attention here, in Britain.
Readers of ‘Number Three’ will recall my article on Walter How. Many members seemed pleased that, at long last, Shackleton’s ‘below decks’ men were getting a look in. This is becoming the fashion among contemporary polar authors - Meredith Hooper’s *The Longest Winter* (John Murray, 2010) is a case in point (see the book review in this issue). Recently, I have had the great pleasure and privilege of meeting Walter’s daughter, Doris Warren (née How). She is 93 years young and as bright as a button. I have Grace Turzig (How’s niece) and Marilyn Crane (Doris’s daughter) to thank for making this possible. In this issue I reproduce a transcript of my interview with Doris. I include, also, a transcript of a local newspaper report (*Tottenham & Edmonton Weekly Herald*, 1956). A short piece written by Ken Hill (Antarctic Club) on the events of Friday, 19th June, 1964, when Walter and five remaining members of the *Endurance* expedition attended a special function in their honour at the Houses of Parliament, will be published at a later date.

Continuing the ‘below decks’ theme I am pleased to be able to reproduce a lecture (undated) given by Perce (Percy) Blackborow to Bolt Street School, Pill, Newport (Gwent) and the Y.M.C.A. In common with Walter How, Perce rarely spoke about his experiences. However, his great friend, Headmaster Latimer Jones, persuaded him to put something down on paper – he declined to go on the radio. More background information is available on [http://www.enduranceobituaries.co.uk/blackborow.htm](http://www.enduranceobituaries.co.uk/blackborow.htm)

There are many recently-published polar books to excite the mind and some of the best are reviewed at the end of this issue. I do urge you to go out and purchase a copy – they make compelling reading and are a worthy addition to any serious polar book collection.

I am grateful for the many letters and emails I receive following the publication of each Journal. I have reproduced some of the more interesting ones for the benefit of all.

I apologise to those who have sent in some excellent articles which I have not included in Number Six. The limited space available prevents me from publishing everything in one issue. However, please be assured that they will have an airing in the next issue (Number Seven) due to be published late 2013/early 2014. It will be worth the wait. Highlights will include: Ireland’s Antarctic explorers; J Foster Stackhouse and the 1914 British Antarctic Expedition; Janet Stancombe – Wills; Frank Hurley (before *Endurance*); Tannatt Edgeworth David; Kathleen Shackleton and the Hudson Bay Company; Trevor Potts’s ‘In The Wake of Shackleton Expedition’ (1993) – to name but a few.

Finally, please note that in June 2011 my private email (googlemail) was hacked and life ground to a halt for a while! If anyone wishes to contact me about the Journal or a general/specific polar-historical issue, kindly use the new JCS email address set up specifically for this purpose – [jamescairdsociety@live.co.uk](mailto:jamescairdsociety@live.co.uk)

*Stephen Scott-Fawcett FRGS*
*Editor, JCS Journal*
*March 2012*
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The James Caird Society Journal is edited by Stephen Scott-Fawcett MA (Cantab), FRICS, FRGS, Apartment 6, Sutherland House, CROMER, Norfolk, NR27 0AQ. Tel: 01263 515808.

All academic/historical/editorial enquiries, please, to the above postal address or to the new electronic address - jamescairdsociety@live.co.uk.
(website- www.jamescairdsociety.com)

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The Scott Memorial (Plymouth) photographs were taken by the editor (June 2011).

Rorke Bryan kindly provided the excellent images of the Antarctic ships which illustrate his article.

The editor would like to thank John Mann for granting permission to reproduce Perce Blackborow’s lecture (http://enduranceobituaries.co.uk/blackborow.htm).

As usual, Roderick Dunnett’s input has been invaluable (see the ‘Shackleton in Chile’ article). Roddy provides, also, a useful link from the JCS website to a synopsis of the Journal and its highlights.

Jaime Sepulveda, Director of La Revista Marina Valparaiso, (email - revismar@vtr.net) kindly gave his permission to reproduce the article on Pardo and Shackleton by Filippi Parada.

On a visit to interview Doris Warren (née How) your editor took various photographs (some are published here). He was given, also, certain family photographs (copies) and these appear in the ‘How’ article, courtesy of Doris and her daughter, Marilyn Crane.

The photographs in Anna Lucas’s article are by kind permission of: the John King Davis Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, the State Library of Victoria (John King Davis & Shackleton on board Nimrod); The Royal Geographical Society (party setting off for the ascent of Mt Erebus); the Mawson Antarctic Collection, South Australian Museum, Adelaide (Mawson & Shackleton in the Expedition Regent Street office).

In ‘Number Five’ (pages 41 & 80) I failed to acknowledge T.Griffith Taylor’s contribution and to thank Ann Savours for drawing my attention to the Aurora Australis headed paper found by him at Cape Royds in January 1911 (on which was T.G.T’s inscription dated 16th October 1960).
Perce Blackborow – the popular stowaway

It’s the stuff of fantasy. To stow away on a ship destined for a known land is one thing. It’s what all 19 year-old young men dream of doing – especially if one ends up on a paradisiacal tropical island. But to secret oneself away in a ship bound for a mysterious land of ice, extreme cold and possible sea monsters – is quite another thing. One can only imagine the thoughts that raced through Perce Blackborow’s mind as he lay hidden in the hold of the Endurance as the ship slipped away from Buenos Aires on its way South.

Blackborow had met William Bakewell (an American sailor) in Buenos Aires and both were without work. Whereas Bakewell succeeded in joining Shackleton’s crew, young Perce’s application for employment was turned down, principally on account of his age and inexperience. That didn’t stop him, however.

Three days out of port the youngster was found but it was too late to turn back, Shackleton’s mind must have been torn. No doubt he was irritated by this new, unwanted, liability but one cannot help but imagine the Boss secretly admired the youngster for his single-minded audacity (a man after his own heart, perhaps?). EHS gave him the position of steward and commented to the youngster that if anyone had to be eaten in the future, the stowaway would be first on the menu (presumably communicated with a wry smile)!

As it turned out, Blackborow worked diligently and uncomplainingly as they sailed ever southward. The cold became extreme and, perhaps inevitably, the youngster suffered most from the frost’s nip. So much so, in fact, that he became an invalid by the time the men had spent 4 months floating with the currents on the Weddell Sea ice floes, once the Endurance had been lost.

As a ‘reward’ for his efforts, Shackleton allowed the young Perce to be the first to crawl and then be carried onto Elephant Island – a kind of ‘badge of honour’. Sadly, the lad had to have the toes on his left foot amputated on Elephant Island (carried out by the Expedition’s surgeons, Macklin & McIlroy, on 15th June 1916) and upon rescue it took 3 months of hospitalisation in Puntas Arenas (Chile) before he could entertain returning home to England.

The story goes that when, eventually, he arrived back in his homeland, Wales, he avoided the welcoming party arranged for him at the local train station by leaving the rail carriage the ‘wrong’ side and cutting across the railway tracks. He then made a bee-line for his house.

In 1917 the War still raged and he volunteered for the Royal Navy. His lack of toes ruled him out of active service, however. Undeterred, he joined the Merchant Navy and served until 1919, after which he became a boatman in Alexandra Docks (Newport (now Gwent)) and supplemented the family income by fishing.

Having married a local girl (Kate Kearns) Blackborow fathered six children (4 boys, 2 girls) although, tragically, two of the boys died very young.

John Blackborow (Perce’s grandson) writes, ‘My Grandfather was a very likeable man. He was a pillar of strength to his family and had a great presence. Shackleton and the Expedition moulded his character and Shackleton stressed to him the need for education and knowledge and encouraged him to use the ship’s library. In later years my Grandfather owned a number of encyclopaedias and encouraged his children likewise’.

It is seems likely that Shackleton took the young stowaway under his wing and treated him, to some extent, as his own son. Unmistakably, Shackleton made a lasting and very positive impression on the Welshman.
In subsequent years various Expedition members gave public talks (Charles Green (the cook) is believed to have given in excess of a thousand lectures worldwide). Perce, however, was quite the opposite. He spoke rarely about his Antarctic adventures and declined offers to go on the radio. He was, however, persuaded (finally) to address youngsters at a meeting of the YMCA Boys Club in Newport. We know this because we have copies of his handwritten transcript to prove it (see image). It was a lecture delivered after which, at the same meeting, the film 'The Voyage of the Quest' was shown.

(Much of the above background information is taken from 'The Endurance Obituaries' © John F.Mann - see www.enduranceobituaries.co.uk, Ed)

A TALK BY PERCE BLACKBOROW

'I have been asked to come here this evening to talk to you about the leader of the Expedition, the film of which you are about to be shown. I propose to give a brief summary of the life of this great explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and also to relate a few of my own experiences while serving under his command. More able tongues than mine have eulogised this great organiser and leader whose proud boast it was that he had never lost a man.

Sir Ernest Shackleton was born in Ireland in 1874. The spirit of adventure was strong within him at an early age, for while at school he often made his way to the docks and cast longing eyes at the ships. Eventually, he persuaded his father to apprentice him aboard a sailing ship. At the age of 16 he made his first voyage around Cape Horn in a sailing vessel. After serving his apprenticeship he became an Officer in sail and steam ships and subsequently Sub-Lieutenant R.N.R.

About this period in the life of Lieutenant Shackleton (1901) Captain Scott was preparing to lead an expedition to the Antarctic, to which return Shackleton was appointed as Third Officer.

During the first months on the Antarctic continent, whilst on various marches and base-laying operations, Captain Scott quickly singled him out as a man of untiring energy and initiative and, finally, selected him as one of his two companions to accompany him on the first long land journey ever made into the interior of the Antarctic continent. This was really the first attempt to march to the South Pole. These three gallant men were away from their base for a little over 92 days and had reached 82° 17' South (about 450 miles from the Pole). On their return journey Lieutenant Shackleton had the misfortune to contract scurvy – that dreaded scourge of early Polar explorations. He was invalided home much against his will. But his activities in Polar research were not finished, however, for we find him two years later organising and preparing to lead his own expedition South.

Lieutenant Shackleton possessed that rare quality given to few of us – the gift of leadership. In 1908 he sailed south again in the ‘Nimrod’ as the leader of the British Antarctic Expedition, during which he obtained valuable scientific results. Amongst these he established the true position of the South Magnetic Pole and surpassed all previous records in marching to within 97 geographical miles of the South Pole. On this great journey he left his base on October the 29th 1908 and with three companions marched into the unknown towards the Pole. After travelling south for 71 days shortage of food compelled them to return but with the great
satisfaction of knowing they had planted the Union Jack at Latitude 89° 23′ S which was, as I say, just shy of the Pole. He arrived back at his base after having been away for 117 days. For these services to the cause of science he was knighted by the King and decorated by various other countries. In 1913 he was occupied in writing a book, lecturing and preparing for the next expedition.

Now we come to his great ambition – in July 1914 he led an expedition south again. This was one of the ‘Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expeditions’. The object of this expedition was the very ambitious idea of crossing the Antarctic continent via the South Pole from the shores of the Weddell Sea to those of the Ross Sea, a distance of over 1000 miles. We left the island of South Georgia (the last outpost of civilisation) on December the 5th 1914 and sailed towards the Antarctic continent, expecting to meet the pack-ice in four or five days. Actually, we met the pack on our second day out. This was very disturbing to our leader for, although he had been warned by the whalers of bad ice conditions, he had expected a little better than this.

Here, perhaps, I had better give you an idea of what pack-ice is like. It is the advance guard of the sentinels of the South, great expanses of ice of varying thicknesses from 1 to 20 feet – not with an even surface as you may think but ridged and turreted from the action of winds and pressure.

After pushing, charging and fighting our way through this heavy pack for 400 miles (at one mile an hour) we sighted the Great Barrier on January the 8th (1915). This is a great wall of ice which rises in height from 20 to 500 feet and practically encircles that barren land of mystery called the Antarctic Continent. After emerging into open water we sailed along the Barrier to Coats Land (discovered by Bruce in 1904).

New land was discovered on January the 14th to which Sir Ernest Shackleton gave the name of ‘Caird Coast’. Proceeding along the Barrier, on past Luitpold Land (discovered by Filchner in 1912) we were now about 50 miles from where our leader considered he would find a safe landing on the Barrier, establish his base and winter quarters.

Here, we encountered very heavy pack-ice and could not move one way or another. On January the 27th the ship was so beset that it was decided to draw the fires, economise on coal and wait to see if the pack would open up. After waiting for ten days open water showed within half a mile of our ship. The fires were lighted, steam was raised and an effort made to escape from the clutches of the ice. We continued at this for about two weeks without avail and on February the 22nd we were definitely frozen in. Now began a tedious time of waiting to be freed from the ice. Time went smoothly enough. The dogs were taken to live on the floes; seal-hunting journeys were organised to ensure a good supply of meat. We played games (football and hockey) on a large floe. By the end of April the sun had left us, not to be seen for another ten weeks. This is the long polar night which, as you know, continues for longer periods the further one may go into higher latitudes.

Towards the end of July and throughout August our surrounding floes were the centre of heavy pressure. Our stout little ship resisted this pressure, except for damage to the rudder. Pressure subsided and things went quietly for another two months until October the 27th, subjected again to heavy ice pressure, our little ship was finally overwhelmed and crushed. Orders were given to abandon ship and we camped on the ice 69° South with the nearest land 350 miles away. The Boss called us together and told us our true position and his intention to march across the ice to Paulet Island, hauling our three lifeboats and stores by relays. We commenced our march on October the 30th, the temperature being minus 8 degrees Fahrenheit.
After three days marching the attempt was abandoned owing to the terrible surface of the pack. We were going through a bad time about now, low temperatures and about 8 ounces of daily food rations.

I like to think of our leader as I recall him at this time. His hopes and ambitions had all been shattered yet he was cheerful and went out of his way to impart some of the cheerfulness to others. He had a genius for keeping men in good spirits and, need I say more, we loved him like a father.

We were now established in what we called ‘Ocean Camp’ and here we remained until December the 23rd, when it was again decided to attempt to reach the land. After covering only eight and a half miles in nine days we were forced to give up, as the ice we were travelling over was a succession of pressure ridges and rotten ice. We now retreated half a mile to find a suitable floe and this encampment was christened ‘Patience Camp’. Here we lingered for three and a half months.

In the middle of January (1916), we had experienced the worst blizzard of our stay on the floes (lasting a full week) but it had hastened our northward drift towards land and the open sea. At the end of March we were 60 miles from land and sighted Mount Haddington, a high mount of Joinville Island.

Our leader explained to us that the risk was too great for us to attempt to reach this land and it was with mixed feelings that we watched it disappear below the horizon. Our next hope – for a landing place - was Elephant or Clarence Islands which were 100 miles north of us. The ice was now beginning to show much movement. We could feel the swell of the sea. Open water was beginning to make its appearance all around and we had to keep constant watch that our little home did not break up and let us in for an untimely bath (with the attendant dangers to our food and boats).

We were, therefore, constantly on the move and waiting for clear water in order to launch boats. On April the 9th the water was sufficiently clear for this purpose. The first night it blew a gale and we sought the shelter of the pack again. After a very trying period (eight days in all) we landed on Elephant Island (one of the South Shetland group) 62° South. Sir Ernest Shackleton gave me the great honour of being the first man to land. It was the first landing ever made on Elephant Island.

All the company had suffered severely from exposure and frostbite, several of us being in a very bad way. Although we had landed on a most inhospitable icy land, it was a glorious sensation to have the feel of solid earth under us for the first time in 16 months.

Our leader was not content to remain inactive but was continually thinking of ways and means of communicating with civilisation - it was impossible for all 28 of us to attempt the next boat journey to inhabited land (which was 1000 miles distant).

On April the 24th he started on his desperate venture. With five others he set sail in a small lifeboat in an attempt to reach South Georgia, over 800 miles away across the most tempestuous seas in the world. After 16 days of grim battle with the elements they finally reached South Georgia. Having rested a while they crossed the island. I ought to mention that we were
marooned on Elephant Island for four and a half months.

Meantime, Sir Ernest had been making desperate attempts to reach us, but owing to the unsuitable vessels at his command, he was unable to force the pack which encircled the island and it was not until the fourth attempt that he was able to rescue us (August the 30th 1916).

His work was not yet finished for news had reached him that the Ross Sea (Party) ship ‘Aurora’ had broken away (from the base) and left a group of ten men, he was to have met after his proposed crossing of the Antarctic continent, stranded at their winter quarters.

He felt it his duty to go to the relief of these men. The ‘Aurora’ had arrived back in New Zealand and arrangements were already being made for the relief of the marooned party.

In December 1916 Sir Ernest left New Zealand in the ‘Aurora’ and, after an uneventful run to the Ross Sea, landed at Cape Royds to learn that the party had faithfully carried out operations of base-laying. Unfortunately, there had been the loss of three lives (including that of their leader Captain Macintosh).

Although the actual purpose of the Expedition had failed he had vindicated himself in the eyes of the world as a great leader and maintained his reputation.

Arriving back in England in May 1917, the Boss threw himself wholeheartedly into the cause of the country still at war. Although not generally known at the time, in the early months of 1918 he was engaged in propaganda work which had, for its object, the promotion of goodwill between this country and South American Republics.

At the conclusion of this work, Shackleton was appointed a Major in charge of winter equipment with the Royal Expeditionary Force in Northern Russia. He resigned his Commission at the conclusion of hostilities. He was then engaged in lecturing and writing his book on the ill-fated Trans-Antarctic Expedition. As he himself said, he soon tired of this and his thoughts turned again towards polar research.

The remainder of Sir Ernest’s activities in polar research will be revealed in the book ‘The Voyage of the Quest’.

My impression of Sir Ernest Shackleton:-
He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, possessed of a very generous nature with which he combined extraordinary powers of endurance and hardihood. He was optimistic even when things looked blackest, this inspired those who served under him.

These attributes, and what he had accomplished, made him, I think, one of the greatest explorers in history.'
Walter How – Able Seaman on Shackleton’s Endurance

In Journal Number Three (April 2007), Pages 63 – 66, I presented a short essay on Walter How, AB, with the valuable assistance of Grace Turzig, Walter’s ‘favourite’ niece (daughter of Cissie Jane Turzig (nee How)). I have known Grace for over 10 years (she lives near me in North Norfolk) and it has been a wonderful treat to chat many times with her about her uncle’s exploits down south on the Endurance expedition (1914/17) and to talk about Walter’s huge respect for Shackleton.

Walter Ernest How (1886-1972) married Ellen Vearey and produced three daughters: Florence (Flossie), Doris and Edna (in that order). Tragically, Edna died of diphtheria at the tender age of only 7 years. As for Florence, she sadly died of cancer at the still-young age of 60 years. Doris Warren (nee How), however, continues to thrive bright-eyed and mischievously at the not quite-so-young age of 93 years, the sole female survivor of the How family. She resides in a wonderful care home at Woodham Ferrars, Essex. Her only child, Marilyn Crane, lives just a stone’s throw away and keeps a regular and loving eye on mum.

On a rainy Saturday in July 2011 I found myself travelling to Essex, along with a rather excited Grace, to meet Marilyn and, after a lovely lunch, to go and visit Doris for a chat about her life and, in particular, to learn a little more about her dad – Walter How.

I think it is fair to say that Doris is a total marvel! Despite her advanced years she is ‘on the button’ and had me, Grace and Marilyn in stitches on more than one occasion. She spoke about her beloved and sadly-missed dad with undisguised and deep affection. She talked with disarming honesty about her childhood, her relationship with her sisters and her love for her daughter.

Apart from the sheer joy and privilege of meeting such nice and interesting people as Doris, my main motive for visiting her was to try and discover, first hand, a little more about her father’s life, in particular away from the Antarctic. I wasn’t disappointed.

For me, the story of Shackleton wouldn’t be complete without some understanding of the men he selected to follow him into the cold and dangerous climes of the Great White South. Above and below decks, the Boss’s men all shared a common destiny and, I believe, every single one of them deserve a share in the history books.

My interview with Doris lasted 20 minutes or so. I didn’t want to tire her too much and it was getting near tea-time! I reproduce, below, a transcript of that interview. For expediency and clarity, I have changed a few words and switched the order of one or two things. I believe, however, the result is a faithful record of what Doris had to say about her dad and some of her treasured memories.

I hope you will enjoy reading what Doris had to say. I should just add - it seems clear to me that Walter’s favourite daughter holds Shackleton in very high esteem, as does Grace and many of the later generations of his men.

Stephen Scott-Fawcett FRGS
An Interview with Doris Warren (née How),
daughter of Walter How on 16th July 2011 at Woodham Ferrers, Essex. 
(Also present - Marilyn Crane (Doris’s daughter) and Grace Turzig 
(Walter’s niece))

Stephen Doris, what are your earliest memories of Walter?
Doris In the mornings my dad used to come round the house and make us all a cup of tea. He used to knock on the bedroom door and call out, ‘Do Do, where you’ve been?’ and then he used to attend to you just like the old servants used to do it. Then he would say ‘I am really a good old dad! You could rely on him for anything. I am sad he has gone now’.

Stephen I should think you were very proud of him when you found out about his exploits in the Antarctic.
Doris Yes I was.

Marilyn Tell Stephen about when dad met you at school - that time when he had his sailor’s uniform on.
Doris Oh yes, one day when he was off duty he came to see me at school. He was standing there near the gate and I said to the teacher that brought me out ‘There is my dad’. She said, ‘No it isn’t, it is a bus conductor!’ His hat had a white top and he looked really smart’.

Marilyn That was when you were only 10, mum, wasn’t it? He used to work on the Thames looking after someone’s yacht.
Doris Yes, that was somewhere near Charing Cross. He always looked after me. We used to go across the road and go down into the square there and he would buy me some fruit.

Stephen So what did you think when you heard that your dad had been on a very famous expedition? Did he talk very much about his experiences in the Polar Regions and being with Shackleton?
Doris No.

Stephen Why do you think that might be Doris?
Doris ‘I don’t know. Perhaps he was a naughty boy!’ (Much laughter from Marilyn & Grace)

Stephen I’m not so sure about that, Doris! Actually, he was never in trouble and was highly regarded by Shackleton and the others.
Doris Yes, that is true.

Stephen Maybe Walter just felt his experience down south was something he didn’t really want to shout about?
Doris Maybe he wouldn’t stand any nonsense.

Stephen Did you ever ask him any questions about his Antarctic experiences when you were older?
Doris I did, but he never told me anything.

Stephen Nothing at all?
Doris No, he never was like that. He wasn’t one to boast. However, he used to put his speech on a bit!

How (middle) with his father (right) and an unknown gentleman (left).
Stephen  Please explain.
Doris  Sometimes he spoke very ‘la-di-dah’!
Stephen  Where did he speak posh? When he was speaking to important people? Or just to anybody?
Doris  When he was on the television.
Marilyn  He was on ‘Ask Pickles’, the Wilfred Pickles show.
Stephen  That’s interesting. Of course, many people put on a special ‘radio or television’ voice on such occasions. It is quite normal, really. Walter was a very capable artist wasn’t he, Doris?
Doris  Yes he was. He also made ‘ships in bottles’ models.
Stephen  Did he do this at home when you were a little girl?
Doris  Yes, I used to see him making ship models with little tiny masts. Then he would put them in the bottle and put a bit of putty in there and then spread it all out and then the boat goes in. Then sometimes it wouldn’t behave itself in the bottle. (Stephen, Marilyn & Grace all laugh).
Stephen  Did he say some choice ‘naval’ words when this happened?
Doris  ‘Mm…..’
Stephen  Doris, tell me a little bit about his wife, Ellen, Did they get on?
Doris  Yes, they were very happy. They had a bit of an argument sometimes when dad had been on the bottle.
Stephen  Was he a heavy drinker? Did he have problems with it?
Doris  Oh no.
Marilyn  Walter only had a drink on occasions and for the good times.
Doris  It was his birthday this Christmas.
Stephen  Christmas Day? Can you remember what year Walter was born?
Doris  ‘I believe it was around 1886’
Stephen  That would be 12 years after Shackleton was born.
Doris  Yes. They worked well together.
Stephen  Did they?
Doris  Apparently they did.
Stephen  How do you know that, Doris?
Doris  It was in a book I read about him.
Stephen  The ‘Fisher’ biography do you mean? The one in which your father did all the pen & ink thumbnail illustrations?
Doris  It is in the libraries isn’t it?
Stephen  Yes, it is. It is a much-respected book and gives a useful insight into Shackleton’s life. Remind me, Doris, when were you born?
Doris  ‘1918’
Stephen  1918! So Walter would have only just returned from the Antarctic? Aha - so you were a ‘love baby’! He was returning from the Antarctic and you were the end product of many years of ‘manly’ frustration! (Doris, Marilyn & Grace all laugh).
Doris  Quite possibly!
Stephen  Would you say that your father had a good sense of humour? It seems to be very strong family trait! Was he a cheerful person?
Doris Yes. He was a good dad.

Stephen Sadly, you lost one of your sisters, Edna – the youngest.

Doris Yes, she was just 7 years old. She died of diphtheria.

Stephen You had, also, an older sister – Flossie (Florence) is that right?

Doris Yes, she died when she was 60 years old. She had cancer.

Stephen Where did she live?

Doris She lived in Ashford, Kent.

Stephen In your childhood did you ever go on any family holidays? I realise that holidays weren’t very affordable in those days.

Doris We went out for day visits. Some people never got one.

Stephen Do you remember any specific family trips?

Doris If my dad had been working in a house in the country he would somehow get to know someone and we would go and visit them.

Stephen Oh, I see. Do you have any memories of where you went or what happy time?

Doris We always had a happy time because my dad played the banjo.

Stephen Did he play it at home often?

Doris Yes.

Stephen Did he sing too?

Doris Yes.

Stephen Did Walter have any favourite tunes?

Doris Oh yes - lots of favourite songs, yes.

Stephen Can you remember any of his favourite songs, Doris?

Doris One was very cheeky, I remember that. My mum told him off!

Stephen Maybe he sang and played it when he was down South and the men were missing their women?

Doris Most probably. My mum, Nellie, used to sing, too.

Stephen Her name was Ellen wasn’t it?

Doris ‘Nellie’ she went by.

Stephen Walter was at sea for a large chunk of his life, wasn’t he, Doris? Can you remember what kind of jobs your dad did after his return from the Antarctic? He had intended to return to the Antarctic with Shackleton on the Quest but he pulled out at the last minute because his dad died (your paternal grandfather) – September 1921, I believe.

Doris I never remembered him, my grandfather, that is. My dad used to look after a boat (on the Thames). The last job he had was looking after this big sailing boat. It was open to the public as a kind of maritime museum and had models of ships on display.

Stephen Wally loved ships. He would draw and paint them endlessly, in addition to model-making.

Doris He had that museum boat job when he was retired. Before he retired he used to do building work - decorating and maintenance.

Stephen The 1920’s through to the 1950’s were difficult economic times for many. Did you notice this when you were growing up?

Doris Yes -they were difficult times because there were three of us children for a while (Flossie, Doris & Edna).
Stephen Yes, I remember you said that. Sorry to ask you the question but can you recall those sad events, when you lost your sister Edna? It must have been hard losing a sister at that age?

Doris It was because she used to be my mate.

Stephen How did your other sister, Flossie, react to the loss?

Doris She was the bossy-boots. *(Doris laughs).* She used to say ‘I will tell mum if you don’t do so and so’.

Stephen So, how would you describe your relations with Flossie?

Doris ‘They were all right at times. My Grandma once told me that if Flossie was a bit down in the dumps she used to take her over to the Golf Course near Enfield. Does Grace remember?’ *(Grace nods affirmatively)*

Marilyn It was Bush Hill Park.

Doris You used to go *(Doris talking to Marilyn)*

Marilyn To see Auntie Ginnie.

Doris She used to go there.

Stephen So you got on okay with Flossie?

Doris I didn’t get on all that well with her as she was a bit bossy with me. She was all right, though.

Stephen Do you think your dad loved all his daughters just as much?

Doris I am afraid I was the favourite.

Stephen Grace has told me that when she was little she sometimes used to sit and talk to your dad because he was a very kind man. I think Grace was the favourite niece and you were the favourite daughter!

Doris Yes.

Stephen Did Walter have any other hobbies apart from looking after his lovely family, painting and making ships in bottles?

Doris He used to act the fool sometimes. *(Everyone laughs).*

Stephen Do you mean that he was a bit of a comedian?

Doris Yes, yes.

Stephen Did he used to put on a bit of a performance?

Doris Oh gosh, yes.

Stephen Should he have been on the stage, Doris?

Doris He should have been!

Stephen Do you have any recollection of when Walter was given lots of attention by the media and when there was meeting of the last six survivors of the *Endurance*? There was a special event held on the Thames.

Doris Yes, I remember. On one occasion I was all dressed up like a dog’s dinner! I had to walk all the way there.

Stephen I am sure that he was very proud of his achievements for his family.

Doris He was

Stephen In October 1968, the last three surviving men (Walter, Lionel Greenstreet & Charles Green) met at Portsmouth to celebrate the commissioning of the latest Royal Navy’s Antarctic survey ship, HMS *Endurance*, in Portsmouth. Do you remember, Doris?

Doris Yes, that’s right. I didn’t attend on that occasion. He was so happy to meet his friends and be made a fuss of.
Stephen: Doris, isn’t there anything salacious or slanderous you wish to say about your dad before I end this interview? (Doris, Marilyn & Grace all laugh). Walter was the perfect gentleman it seems.

Doris: Yes, he was my dad.

Stephen: We are all very proud of what your dad did in the Antarctic and it is wonderful to hear your memories of a man who clearly loved his family and did his best to make their lives happy and their needs met. One day soon I hope to write about your father. I think it is time that the polar men who worked ‘below decks’ got some recognition too. Do you agree, Doris?

Doris: Yes, I do, very much.

Stephen: I believe Walter kept in touch with some of his mates from the Endurance in later years?

Doris: He was particularly friendly with Billy Bakewell. He kept in touch also, with Perce Blackborow and Lionel Greenstreet. In later years, Mr. Greenstreet’s nephew, Richard, used to come and see us regularly.

Stephen: Doris, you may not recall but I first met you at a James Caird Society Dinner at Dulwich College about 10 years ago, you were at a table with the Greenstreet family. It has been a pleasure to meet you again. Thank you for sharing your memories of Walter.

Doris: That’s all right, thank you.
Tottenham Man Tells Story of Shackleton Expedition

For more than forty years, Mr Walter How, of Birkbeck Road, Tottenham, has been ‘sitting on’ one of the most exciting stories ever told. This week, following a television appearance, this seventy years-old sailor broke his long silence, and, in an interview with a Weekly Herald reporter, he gave a graphic account of his adventures as a member of the Shackleton trans-Antarctic Expedition of forty one years ago (Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 1914-17 – Ed).

Mr. How was one of the twenty eight members of the expedition of whom there are now only about eight survivors.

Anxious to contact the old pals he had not seen for many years, Mr. How wrote to Wilfred Pickles who arranged a surprise meeting of survivors of the expedition for his ‘Ask Pickles’ television programme.

Exactly forty years ago this Tuesday (17th April*) Mr. How was marooned on a sea of ice nearly eight hundred miles from the South Pole, with Shackleton and the men he met again on the Pickles programme (*in fact, according to Hurley’s diary, the men first arrived at Elephant Island on 15th April 1916 – Ed).

Both Mr. How and his sixty six years-old wife (Ellen How (nee Varey) – Ed) have lived in Tottenham for more than half-a-century, but they are modest people living a quiet life and have never sought fame.

Mr. How has always been a seafaring man. He started as a boy and by the time he grew up he had sailed most of the seas. It was in January 1914 that Sir Ernest Shackleton announced his Trans-Antarctic expedition. He hoped to sail to the edge of the ‘unknown continent’ of the Antarctic, then trek across the icy wastes to the South Pole and beyond to a ship waiting at the other side of the continent.

Another try

To this day, no explorer has ever seen that part of the unknown land that Shackleton hoped to cross but at the end of this year a Dr Fuchs hopes to get a team together to try and succeed where Shackleton failed (Vivien Fuchs and an advance party left England in November 1956 and was to achieve the first crossing of Antarctica in the austral summer 1957-8 during the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition – Ed). Mr. How met him recently and gave him a few ‘tips’.

Mr. How saw Shackleton’s advertisement for seamen and applied for a job. Shackleton told him, ‘You’re just the type of man I want’.

So Mr. How said ‘Goodbye’ to his wife and set off as an able seaman aboard the ‘Endurance’, a sailing ship of three hundred and fifty tons with auxiliary engines, from London, on 1st August 1914.

Three days later war was declared. Shackleton went to the Prime Minister and the Admiralty and told them he would abandon his expedition and offer his services for the war effort but the Prime Minister told them to go (in fact, the Admiralty sent a somewhat terse telegram to Shackleton’s saying, simply, ‘Proceed’ - Ed).

‘Endurance’ sailed on, carrying seventy dogs and two motor sledges that were made in Tottenham at the J.A.P factory (J.A.Prestwich Industries, an English engineering factory named after John Alfred Prestwich which made, amongst other things, internal combustion engines (‘J.A.P’
The last call on the outward journey was a desolate whaling port in South Georgia from which the ship sailed at the end of December 1914 for the Weddell Sea. A few weeks later the ship entered thick pack-ice.

**In pack – ice**

They sailed on slowly until February, when the ‘Endurance’ was frozen solid in the pack-ice. The crew tried to hack a channel through the ice with pick-axes but it was impossible.

Mr. How still remembers every detail of that dreadful winter. ‘The ship’s timbers were creaking under the great pressure of ice on her sides’ he said. ‘Heavy gales were blowing and we found it a one-sided battle against nature. The odds were against us, the ship was buffeted about by the increasing pressure of the ice’.

‘On 27th October (1915) the ship was hopelessly crushed. Shackleton ordered us to leave her and we lowered three small boats on to the ice, with tents, dogs and supplies. We dumped everything we could lay our hands on over the side and moved it to safety. Then the ship went down with a mighty groan and we were stranded on moving ice floes in the middle of the Weddell Sea, three hundred and fifty miles from the nearest land’.

For *just under* six months the explorers were at the mercy of the wind, tide, ice and snow as they drifted more than three hundred miles and then trekked to the edge of the ice pack. They took the boats and, after eight days of rowing and sailing, reached Elephant Island so called because elephant seals go there to breed. It was a lump of volcanic rock about three hundred yards long and fifty yards wide, sticking out of the icy sea ten feet at its highest point (*here the reporter is getting a little confused. He is describing the landing point at Cape Wild and not the whole of the island which is 29.2 miles long and 16.8 miles wide. It covers 215 sq miles and is 2,799 ft at its highest point. It is on the archipelago of the South Sandwich Islands (61°8’S 55°07’W – Ed)*).

**No hope of rescue**

‘We landed on the island after a nightmare trip but we were all alive and this was to be our home for more than four months,’ said Mr. How. ‘We had no hope of rescue, for the island is too far south to be in the track of any shipping. It was just a lump of barren rock and we lived on seals and penguins. Shackleton took a party of five in our biggest boat in an attempt to break through the ice-clogged sea to South Georgia 750 miles away. They made it seventeen days later, after terrible privations but landed on the wrong side of the island. They climbed snow-capped mountains and struggled across glaciers to reach the one small whaling station that was the only sign of life on the other side’.

Shackleton got the manager of the whaling station to sail a ship to rescue the twenty two men still left on Elephant Island. Half way there the ship’s engines failed and it had to put back to the Falkland Islands. Another ship was sent, then another – both failing to push through the pack-ice to the castaways. But Shackleton and his men who travelled on all three ships (*Frank Worsley and Tom Crean - Ed*) would not give up and put out in a fourth ship.
'I shall never forget the rescue,' says Mr. How. 'We were having dinner on Elephant Island – limpets and sea-weed. The cook was just dishing it out when the watch shouted ‘Ship-Ho!’ and twenty two men rushed out!'

Mr. How and his crewmates arrived back in London two years and three months after they set out – and just in time for our winter, on which he comments, ‘For the first six months in Tottenham I felt older than I had felt on the ice-pack’.

And now, he’s just an old-age pensioner who still makes a few ships-in-the bottles and does oil paintings – always of ships.

‘If I was a young man, I’d go again’, he says.

_Tottenham & Edmonton Weekly Herald_ (Friday 20th April 1956)
Launching Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914: Shackleton’s role explored

Anna Lucas, School of English, Journalism and European Languages, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

Introduction
The South Pole was a prize still waiting to be claimed when Ernest Shackleton was planning his British Antarctic Expedition (BAE) 1907-1909. He had already faced the extreme cold, the bite of relentless wind, menacing crevasses and privations of reduced rations, hunger and illness that confronted polar explorers, when he accompanied Captain Robert Falcon Scott on the National Antarctic Expedition (NAE) 1901-1904. While the elusive prize was too enticing and the challenge too great to ignore, when developing strategies for polar success with the BAE, he acknowledged the enhancement that could be provided by a scientific programme run as a parallel pursuit to his primary goal. Shackleton discussed scientific options with experts, including Professor T.W. Edgeworth David, a Welsh geologist lecturing at the University of Sydney. David nurtured a profound interest in Arctic and Antarctic matters and was able to obtain extra funding of £5000 for Shackleton from the Australian government. Through David, the young Douglas Mawson, then a lecturer at the University of Adelaide with a recently completed doctoral thesis in geology, learnt of Shackleton’s plans.

This paper reflects on the inspiration and practical support, despite misunderstandings, that Shackleton provided for Mawson, who subsequently led the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE), 1911-1914. It gives a comparative outline of the two expeditions, BAE and AAE, and highlights examples of Shackleton’s direct and indirect influence on Mawson’s planning, networking and choice of men, equipment and supplies.

Shackleton’s BAE and its influence on Mawson
After securing financial backers for his proposed expedition, Shackleton bought S.Y. Nimrod and appointed Rupert England as captain. As his first officer (later captain), he engaged John King Davis, a well-qualified and well-travelled seaman, an Englishman of Irish ancestry (Fig.1). Shackleton had progressed from merchant seaman to the Royal Naval Reserve to third lieutenant on Scott’s NAE, which was essentially staffed by naval personnel. From these he now chose among his own team Frank Wild and Ernest Joyce, with whom he had worked on the NAE, who resigned their naval commissions to join him. A new acquaintance, Philip Brocklehurst, volunteered financial support in return for Antarctic adventure and was asked to learn surveying techniques, to be able to determine latitude and longitude.1 Alfred Reid was chosen as the BAE’s London-based administrator.

Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen, then serving as Minister with the Norwegian Legation in London,1 had successfully developed products and techniques to facilitate Arctic journeys. As Scott had done, Shackleton discussed Antarctic plans with the revered Nansen but ignored his advice to abandon the use of ponies.

in favour of using only dogs and skis. While making preparations, he remembered lessons learnt on Scott’s NAE. Adequate provisions and prevention of scurvy were priorities. The careful choice of qualified men who could withstand the extreme conditions was vital. A pre-fabricated hut that could be quickly erected was chosen in favour of a building that had to be built from loose materials. His own account of the BAE was published in *The Heart of the Antarctic* and supplementary interpretations have been made by his biographers.

Mawson, when he heard of Shackleton’s plans, saw an opportunity to travel on the expedition’s ship to make glacial and geological observations in an otherwise inaccessible Antarctica to compare to those of pre-Cambrian glacial sediments in South Australia. He met Shackleton in Australia, when the latter briefly visited Adelaide en route to Sydney and, after explaining his interest and proposing a round trip on the ship, was surprised when later offered the position of physicist for the duration of the BAE. This appointment gave Mawson months of valuable experience and he gained great insight into some of the requisite preparations for an Antarctic expedition, the logistical challenges to consider and the opportunities for scientific observations and further exploration. He also observed Shackleton interacting with the media when in port, in action on board ship and on the ice, facing unexpected problems, making decisions.

After travelling from London, a restocked and overloaded S.Y. *Nimrod* left Lyttleton harbour in New Zealand for Antarctica on 1 January 1908. To conserve fuel it was towed by S.S. *Koonya* to a point just south of the Antarctic Circle. As the little ship confronted huge waves, Mawson was oblivious to its passage. Desperately seasick, he sought refuge in a lifeboat on the cold deck of *Nimrod* until first officer Davis offered him some sustenance and persuaded him to go below. This meeting with Davis, after David and Shackleton, provided another important addition to Mawson’s budding network of career contacts.

Professor David was to act as scientific advisor, accompanying the expedition to the ice then returning to Australia, but his interest in glacial activity and geology prompted him to negotiate a revised contract with Shackleton, enabling him to stay with the BAE. With the unfamiliar title of ‘physicist’ sitting uneasily with him, Mawson may have preferred the designation of ‘assistant geologist’ to Raymond Priestley or to Professor David. Philip Brocklehurst had already been given the position as Priestley’s assistant but Mawson need not have worried; as ‘physicist’ and mentored by David, he was given plenty of scope for geological exploration as well as some insight into planning a comprehensive scientific programme, which he could later expand and modify for the AAE.

On arrival in Antarctica, stores were landed and a hut built at Cape Royds. The internal spatial arrangement provided a separate compartment as a retreat for the leader, with several cubicles for the rest of the men to share; Shackleton established a hut routine; a roster was set for nightwatchman, cook and messman; a nutritious diet with fresh food was provided in an attempt to avoid scurvy, which was then little understood and defined as a deficiency disease. The men were kept busy with scientific observations, maintenance of equipment, sledging gear and clothing. Entertainment to bolster their spirits through the long dark winter was provided with live amateur theatrical performances and music from the gramophone; they were fêted on their birthdays and important anniversaries were commemorated. All team members were expected to be involved in the physical work and to have some input

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into community efforts. Previous Arctic and Antarctic explorers had established a tradition of collaborative production of expedition newspapers. Shackleton had edited The South Polar Times, the NAE’s newspaper, and aimed to improve on that with the BAE’s book Aurora Australis. Mawson’s contribution “Bathybia” was a fantasy about Antarctic explorers who “dragging the sledges onward towards the southern goal” face a series of unexpected encounters. Thick vegetation, subterranean streams, volcanic cones, giant exploding fungi and various monsters are described in what was perhaps a whimsical comment on Shackleton’s forthcoming attempt to reach the South Pole.

The value of community projects such as this as a boost to morale would have been noted by Mawson, and all members of his own expedition were encouraged to contribute to the AAE’s newspaper the Adelie Blizzard. He would also have noted the logistics involved in organising activities and the limitations revealed; advantages and disadvantages of using a motor car, ponies, dogs and men for hauling heavy supplies packed on sledges became evident. Sledging parties were sent out on separate journeys with detailed programmes of instruction and a return date to observe; contingency arrangements to deal with situations threatening to impede progress were outlined. Support parties assisted with depot laying of food and essentials for the return journey. Coordination of ship’s and shore parties’ timing was crucial.

When planning his own expedition two years later, Mawson would have recalled these and many other features of the BAE. The construction and spatial arrangement of the hut were partially emulated by the AAE huts at Cape Denison, rosters were set, activities organised and depots laid. Mawson chose to use Greenland dogs rather than ponies. Motorised transport on the AAE was limited to a few hauling trips with the “air-tractor”, the two-seater aeroplane converted to a wingless motor sledge after a crash landing prior to departure from Australia. Exploratory sledging journeys were planned, but mindful of limitations imposed on the ship’s schedule by seasonal conditions and vagaries of weather, Mawson also drew up contingency plans.

On his first sledging expedition with the BAE, Mawson, with David and others, successfully made the first ascent of Mt Erebus in March 1908 (Fig. 2). The need for crampons and adequate footwear was impressed on Mawson when Brocklehurst, one of the support party, suffered such severe frostbite to his toes that amputation was necessary. Some months later, Mawson, with David and Alistair Mackay attempted to determine the location of the South Magnetic Pole. Away from the relative comfort of the hut for over four

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10. Mawson, D. and McLean, A. (eds) 2010. The Adelie Blizzard (facsimile). The original, collated in Adelie Land, Antarctica, 1913 was not published, overshadowed by news of other polar events and the outbreak of World War I. In preparation for the centenary of the AAE, a facsimile of the Adelie Blizzard has now been produced with original annotations and other fascinating details.
months, they experienced growing irritability in the testing conditions. As they made their way to the coast, their tempers became more noticeably frayed, but the timely arrival of the ship on 4 February 1909 to return them to Cape Royds brought relief from intensifying hostilities. Mawson’s diaries reveal that his own level of tolerance for the personal foibles of others was low, but a mental note would have been made that stamina, tolerance and flexibility were desirable attributes in future sledging companions. Mawson was more than glad to see the ship arrive, but as he rushed impetuously to the shoreline to greet *Nimrod*, he crashed through the snowbridge covering a crevasse; his fall to about 18 feet was fortunately, but painfully, broken by an icy ledge. It was not his first fall. ‘Crevasses found by falling in’ he had written in his diary on 20 December 1908.12 Davis came ashore and, after bridging the crevasse with a piece of timber, descended on a rope to assist in Mawson’s rescue.13 The danger presented by unseen crevasses was one aspect of BAE experiences that was not sufficiently impressed on Mawson. Despite these and other encounters, a blasé attitude to crevasses and a deep-seated resistance to skis would persist - with fatal consequences on the AAE.14

Shackleton and his polar party returned on 28 February 1909 after reaching 88°23’ South, 162° East, forced to turn back by diminished supplies, about 97 geographic miles from the South Pole.15,16 Though the validity of his reported coordinates was initially queried by some members of the Royal Geographic Society, his achievement was ultimately accepted as a great advance in polar exploration. At this ‘furthest south’ point, he raised the Union Jack. Just prior to *Nimrod*’s departure from English seas in 1907, Shackleton had been presented with a flag by Queen Alexandra and a medal by King Edward VII when the royal entourage inspected his ship at Cowes. This demonstration of royal approval of the BAE and the knighthood conferred on its leader in December 1909 after his return to England could only have been further inspiration to the young and ambitious Mawson. It was the Heroic Era of polar exploration - a time to hoist national flags and to make territorial claims. Australia was a young nation, still part of the British Empire but officially emerging from colonial status to a Federation, in 1901, of states and territories. Yorkshire-born Mawson, educated in Sydney, was not atypical of his contemporaries in finding inspiration in British success while promoting Australian endeavour, in a dual patriotism. Mawson was granted the right to claim Antarctic territory in the name of King George V, crowned in 1911 as Edward’s successor. After his return from the AAE in 1914, Mawson too was knighted.

In addition to official reports the publication of an illustrated book, directed to the general reader and supplemented with public lectures, had become an expected consequence of any notable expedition, especially if that expedition had been partially funded by private donations. As well as an acknowledgement of support, an informal and informative account was potentially a source of additional revenue, needed to negate unforeseen expenses incurred during the expedition. With a New Zealander, newspaper reporter Edward Saunders, as ghost-writer, Shackleton produced *The Heart of the Antarctic* in 1909. Again Mawson was able to note the process from the sidelines. He later used the same London publisher, William Heinemann, for his own book *The Home of the Blizzard* 17 and asked Archibald McLean, the AAE’s doctor and editor of the *Adelie Blizzard*, for help editing chapters written by expedition members and choosing images for illustration.

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14 Lieutenant Belgrave Ninnis, fell to his death in a crevasse after treading through a snowbridge over which Mertz, on skis, and Mawson, riding on a sledge, had crossed moments before. The rejection of skis (which would spread the load and therefore facilitate the traverse of hazardous snowbridges) was common to several explorers who were unfamiliar with this mode of travel, but the use of skis was a key contributing factor in Amundsen’s successful attainment of the geographic South Pole in December 1911.
Lecture tours were also customary after polar expeditions. Shackleton had his lectures translated into French and German to deliver to European audiences and illustrated his talks with lantern slides and kinematograph pictures. A darkroom had been incorporated into the design of the BAE hut design because Shackleton knew that documenting wildlife, geographic features, activities and achievements with photographic images was essential for illustrating reports, lecturing and, more importantly, fund-raising. This realisation led Mawson to engage professional cameraman Frank Hurley as official photographer for the AAE. Hurley produced a brilliant comprehensive record in photographic stills, stereo images and kinematograph film. Like Shackleton and others, Mawson would also engage in lecture tours and, after the AAE, he travelled throughout Australia, England and North America.

Development of plans for Mawson’s AAE
Mawson had absorbed a lot of information from his BAE experience, but was confident that he could develop better scientific programmes to implement in Antarctica. Though a second expedition with his former leader did not eventuate, Mawson benefitted from Shackleton’s BAE example and from the practical and logistical help given by him when Mawson was organising his own expedition.

In 1910 Mawson travelled to Europe to meet other scientists and, when in England, met Shackleton, who had just returned from a series of lectures, to discuss the possibility of another expedition. Over the next year, the differences in their personalities made for a strained working relationship, but decades later Mawson gave a positive response when replying to a set of questions from one of Shackleton’s biographers, Margery Fisher. He stated that his initial impression was of ‘an attractive and interesting personality’. He added that Shackleton was ‘a born optimist and overflowed with energy’.

Shackleton was interested in Mawson’s proposal to conduct a scientific adjunct to a future polar expedition. He allowed Mawson the use of his London office and introduced him to likely sponsors. Shackleton’s recently acquired expertise was invaluable, but as his other enterprises drew his attention away from Antarctic interests or away from England, his commitment to a joint Antarctic expedition wavered as he continually modified his personal plans. He asked the young geologist to assess mines that interested him in Hungary, then left for a lecture tour of America and Canada. Mawson made the assessments and met with other Antarctic explorers in Europe before reporting to a non-committal Shackleton in America. Here, Mawson’s simmering impatience finally erupted with his demand for an agreement, duly signed by Shackleton. By the end of 1910, Shackleton conceded that he would not be able to return to the Antarctic the following year, but offered his support for Mawson’s own venture.

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Hurley accompanied Shackleton on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914-1917 with *Endurance*. It was an expedition fraught with high adventure and danger, which produced dramatic, iconic images representing the Heroic Era of polar exploration.

In his address to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in January 1911, Mawson proposed an Australian Antarctic Expedition as soon as possible to forestall territorial claims by other nations. He drew attention to the potential scientific and economic benefits there and cited the BAE experience of himself and another Australian, Bertram Armytage, as evidence that ‘Australians are just as well fitted constitutionally to stand the vigorous conditions of life in high latitudes as are people of colder climates’. With the approval of the AAAS, Mawson travelled again to England where one target for funding was the assemblage of wealthy Australians in London for the forthcoming coronation of George V. Shackleton generously facilitated his plans with continued access to the Regent Street office (Fig.3.), with recommendations for suppliers of essential equipment and provisions, more introductions and more suggestions for funding. Mawson found soliciting funds and donations from potential sponsors a demeaning experience, but his archived papers are testament to his determined approach. From the London office, in a note to Edinburgh-based oceanographer W.S. Bruce, another associate of Shackleton, he confided ‘... so much remains to be done in the way of finance down here. I have had a most awful time – and sincerely hope I shall never have anything like it again. Life isn’t worth living to go begging’. Bruce was supportive; he loaned the AAE oceanographic equipment and instructed Davis in operational details.

Coming from a little known explorer whose leadership credentials were unsubstantiated, Mawson’s numerous, persistent applications for donations often met with polite rejection. Scott, still intent on claiming the South Pole, was also planning another Antarctic expedition in 1910, drawing on both institutional funds and private donations. Mawson was offered a position on Scott’s team but, after discussions, declined the offer. As an associate of Shackleton, he was considered by some to be in opposition to Scott, but his goals were very different from those of both these men. As a scientist, he wanted to observe Antarctic conditions and, as an extension of those observations, to investigate the economic potential of resources there. However, planning for the provision of transport, equipment, supplies and personnel was common to all Antarctic ventures and they competed for available funds from the same sources. In May 1911, Mawson’s finances were significantly boosted by the intercession of Shackleton, honouring his promise of support for the expedition. The outcome of an agreement with his friend Lord Northcliffe, owner of the Daily Mail, was the launch of a highly successful appeal by Shackleton, on Mawson’s behalf, for £12,000. ‘Magnificent response’ reported the newspaper the next day: ‘Half the amount already subscribed’. Shackleton’s endorsement of the AAE had a magical effect, or so it must have seemed to Mawson who, as a consequence of that endorsement, suddenly had the purchasing power he craved.

Mawson drew on the experience of some BAE personnel. He appointed the man he had met as Nimrod’s first officer as captain of the AAE’s ship. Captain Davis gave an interesting account of the events leading to the purchase of S.Y. Aurora, providing an example of his shrewdness which was to be an ongoing asset to Mawson. Another of Shackleton’s experienced men, Alfred Reid, was appointed administrator for the AAE; Philip Brocklehurst was given power of attorney and the resilient, competent veteran Frank Wild was chosen to lead the AAE’s Western Base. Ernest Joyce, later dismissed – perhaps undeservedly - by Mawson for drunken behaviour, did not accompany the AAE, but did give advice to the appointed dog handlers, Xavier Mertz and Belgrave Ninnis in Hobart. Shackleton introduced

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21 Mawson, D. to W.S. Bruce, 28 April 1911. SPRI, WS Bruce Collection.
24 Joyce later participated in Shackleton’s 1914-1917 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition as one of the Ross Sea Party.
Ninnis, who had been hopeful of joining Scott’s or Shackleton’s expedition, to Mawson in London;²⁵ Mertz had applied from Switzerland, possibly inspired by one of Shackleton’s lectures there.

Norwegian suppliers for the wooden sledges, fur sleeping bags, finnesko footwear and wolfskin mitts were recommended by Shackleton. He also presented the AAE with equipment from the BAE which included two sledges, a sledgemeter and sledgeging thermometers; a spectroscopic camera and a plate camera; two sewing machines and a cooker; deep sea thermometers and a brass water-sampling bottle for oceanographic work; a theodolite and a hypsometer for determining position. He introduced Mawson to Campbell Mackellar, an enthusiastic, loyal supporter and family friend; through him a network of possible benefactors was presented. Mackellar also supplied the AAE with a comprehensive library of books that was to be greatly appreciated by men confined to the hut for days during Antarctic blizzards.

By June 1911 plans for the AAE were considerably advanced. Ensconced in Shackleton’s London office, with an administrator familiar with the necessary processes, offers of substantial donations of food and other supplies, increasing revenue and a reliable ship’s captain, Mawson held a stronger position, but his correspondence does not reflect cognisance of these advantages. He was stressed, pre-occupied with non-productive negotiations, pressed for time and focused on impending responsibilities. He was obliged to return to his teaching position in Adelaide, verify grants from Commonwealth and State governments and, as leader, to oversee the appointment of expedition personnel from Australia and New Zealand.

On 2 December 1911, Mawson sailed in an overloaded S.Y. Aurora from Hobart, Tasmania. Like Shackleton, he chartered a second ship, but the purpose of S.S. Toroa was not to tow S.Y. Aurora but to supplement the despatch of food and equipment to the Macquarie Island base where a wireless relay station was established for transmission of messages from Antarctica to Hobart. S.Y. Aurora then sailed to Commonwealth Bay where the huts for the AAE’s main base were built at Cape Denison. The western base, under the leadership of Frank Wild, was set up on the Shackleton Ice Shelf, 1500 miles away. From these three bases, the implementation of a scientific and exploratory programme, inspired in no small part by Shackleton, began.

Conclusion
Mawson’s participation in Shackleton’s BAE gave him first-hand ice experience, essential for making effective decisions in the preparation of his own Antarctic expedition. It showed the novice explorer what could be done; it introduced him to more experienced men, some of whom became involved with the AAE. The leadership styles of the two men differed. Both were respected - not least for their vision and the personal energy they both expended in pursuit of their individual visions. The quality of their courage and determination was not in question, but Mawson, perceived as more aloof and critical, never quite gained the warm devotion that Shackleton inspired in most of his men. Shackleton’s generosity in sharing his hard-won expertise provided Mawson with immediate contacts for supplies, and his endorsement of the AAE generated a stream of funds and donations.

It is clear that Shackleton’s inspiration and support was manifest in many facets of Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition.

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Shackleton in Chile – 1916

The story of Shackleton’s journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia in the *James Caird* is well-attested – so, too, the remarkable feat of his crossing of the island. What is less well-known, perhaps, is the sequence of extraordinary events that unfolded subsequently - once the Norwegian whalers at South Georgia had recovered from the shock of the Boss’s reappearance and Shackleton, Crean and Worsley had regained some semblance of ‘normality’.

Three attempts were made to bring back Frank Wild’s marooned group. However, each time the ice and wind beat the would-be rescuers back to port. Finally, a fourth attempt was made with the considerable help of the Chilean Navy (the Chileans having been involved in the third attempt also). This time, the effort was met with success.

On arrival of the whole *Endurance* group in Chile on Sunday 3rd September 1916 the scene was set for celebration. The jubilant mood of both officialdom and the public was instant and infectious. Chile welcomed its hero ‘Sir Shackleton’ and his brave team, unreservedly. This was in sharp contrast to the apparent indifference of the powers-to-be in Great Britain who, at the time, were focused on a fearsome war raging in Europe.

Somewhere in the midst of all the overwhelming celebrations, stood Luis Pardo, proud commander of a small and unassuming vessel called *Yelcho* - now suddenly thrust into the limelight. In South America the rescue of the Englishmen from Elephant Island and Pilot Luis Pardo’s role in this daring success became the stuff of Chilean naval history.

Throughout July and August 1916, before the final successful rescue attempt, Shackleton curried favour with the Chilean authorities and the general public at large – pleading for their help to rescue his marooned men. Exhaustive visits to powerful people were made and many speeches were delivered.

This article gives an account of some of the events in South America – from when Shackleton first arrived in Chile seeking help to when his Elephant Island men were rescued and arrived in Chile. In a later Journal I propose to expand on this remarkable story and give a detailed account of events/celebrations in Chile before most of the *Endurance* men left for war-torn Europe.
The article is in three distinct parts:
Firstly, there is a short introduction by Duncan Campbell and Gladys Grace. They have an abiding interest in promoting the reputation of Luis Pardo and have sent your editor many interesting items (not least contemporary local newspaper articles) concerning Shackleton’s time in Chile and, in particular, the role of Luis Pardo.

Secondly, Roddy Dunnett and Neile Webb have drawn my attention to a fascinating website ‘Patagonia Bookshelf’ (http://patlibros.org/mts) where some real ‘Shackletonian’ gems can be found, not least an evocative lecture given by Sir Ernest on 13th July 1916, (as reported by ‘The Magellan Times’). This speech is reproduced, verbatim, for your enjoyment. It is a wonderful insight into how Shackleton ‘wooed’ his audience so masterfully.

Thirdly, thanks to the editorial skills of Roddy Dunnett (indicated thus […] in the text), there is an article written by Alfonso M. Fillipi Parada in La Revista Marina (a bi-monthly Chilean naval journal, translated by Jesus Galdo). This highlights the role of both Luis Pardo and Shackleton in the rescue and challenges the tendency for the Yelcho’s captain to be ignored by history.

A Short Introduction

It was while researching a Chilean English-language newspaper (The Magellan Times, Punta Arenas, 1914-1936) that Duncan Campbell and Gladys Grace found a set of news reports on the rescue of Shackleton’s expedition from Elephant Island in 1916. Plainly, the story had gripped the imagination of the local community, which was generous in its support of the rescue effort. Lectures, fund-raising and receptions were reported extensively. Since Punta Arenas was in effect the “front-line” for news of these events, Duncan and Gladys decided to transcribe the reports for their web-site. Little did they know that three years later, in 2005, they would receive an invitation to share lunch with the explorer’s granddaughter, Hon. Alexandra Shackleton, on her visit to Chile.

One aspect that shone clearly through these Punta Arenas newspaper reports was Shackleton’s gratitude to the Chilean Navy for its generous assistance, and his praise for the captain of the rescue vessel, Navy officer Luis Pardo. Gladys remembered how she had learned about him and the rescue ship Yelcho as a schoolgirl in Punta Arenas (the city also has named a street after Pardo). Subsequent research at the Chilean National Library (The South Pacific Mail, Valparaiso, 1913-1993) has found reports of equally enthusiastic receptions two weeks later in Santiago and Valparaiso. There also, Shackleton’s speeches paid glowing tribute to the rescuer of his 22 stranded companions.

In the light of these compelling findings, it was surprising to see that Shackleton’s biographers have largely minimized Pardo’s role as commander of the Yelcho on the rescue voyage. One Chilean reaction to this omission had been published in a Spanish-language journal (“Shackleton versus Pardo”, by Navy Captain Alfonso Filippi in Revista de Marina, 2000), but there was nothing similar in English on the Internet. Duncan and Gladys felt it was important to redress the balance, by adding a segment about Pardo to their web-site. They welcome Stephen Scott-Fawcett’s initiative to examine and publish these first-hand accounts of Chile’s role in 1916 in the pages of the James Caird Society’s Journal, where they will certainly reach a wider English-speaking audience.
A report in “The Magellan Times” 
on 13 July 1916

Introductory speech by the Rev. J. C. Cater.

‘Señor Gobernador, Ladies and Gentlemen: I have been asked to preside on this most interesting occasion and to introduce to you our distinguished visitor Sir Ernest Shackleton, and his two comrades, Captain F. A. Worsley and Mr. Tom Crean (applause). I think we all know the object of Sir Ernest’s visit to this place, and I am quite sure that we shall learn from his own lips tonight with what measure of success he has met with regard to the carrying out of that object. In the name of the British Community, and, I think I may venture to add, in the name of all the citizens of this place, we give Sir Ernest and his two comrades a most hearty and cordial welcome to Punta Arenas (loud applause). Should the object of his visit meet with ultimate success I think we, of Punta Arenas, will be glad to know that we have, perhaps, in some small measure rendered assistance towards the successful issue of our guest’s visit here. I will now call upon Sir Ernest to deliver to us his lecture(loud and prolonged applause).

‘Sir Ernest Shackleton’
(Greeted with enthusiastic ovation)

‘Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen: The chairman has just made some remarks as regards the object of my visit to Punta Arenas and I am only too sorry that I did not realize before that from Punta Arenas there was an opportunity of making a journey to rescue my comrades. Since I arrived in this city I have not only received practical help. Within 24 hours of my arrival, steps were taken spontaneously to equip a vessel for the rescue of my men and only yesterday a further proof of this practical sympathy was given to me by a message from the president of Chile through the Governor of this Territory offering to put their tow boat ‘Yelcho’ at my disposal (loud applause). To the British Association of this place I shall never be grateful enough. Whether we are successful or not in saving these men, I lie always under a debt of gratitude to you all. I feel that we are going to rescue them, and I hope that within a fortnight or three weeks’ time, the twenty-two men at present on Elephant Island will be here fit and well to give you their hearty thanks themselves for the way in which your help has been forthcoming.

I am going to give you a lecture now but unfortunately I have nothing with me in the way of slides to show you, as they are all on Elephant Island; but when I come back I hope to bring them with me and let you see them. The chairman who has just called upon me possesses a certain brevity of his own, which reminds me: — In the old days when I used to lecture in the small British towns, a chairman once came up to me and said: «Thank you very much for this lecture, the slides were lovely!» I don’t want to praise our chairman of tonight, but he is a capital chairman. Ten years ago he was my chairman when I was standing for Parliament and he was just as brief as he is now. I know a chairman who, when introducing a speaker to whom it had been arranged to allow twenty-five minutes for discourse, said ‘Mr. Smithkins will give his address’. Mr. Smithkins rose and said, ‘Mr. Smithkins’ home address is 14 Piccadilly, and I wish you all a good night’. You get all sorts and conditions of chairman. This has got nothing to do with the Polar Regions. I remember after lecturing at a certain place one of the Aldermen came around to me and enquired, ‘How is it you make a scientific lecture so interesting?’ I replied, ‘I just pick out the most stupid looking man in the audience (laughter) -not here, of course, (more laughter) to whom I address myself, then, if I see a gleam of intelligence cross his face, I know I am on safe ground’. Looking at me he glaringly observed, ‘I thank you, for it seemed that you were addressing me the whole time’.
You know there are such things as pemmican and also penguins and they sometimes get a mention. A certain chairman told me that he had loved to see the little ‘pemmicans’ running about in the picture.

Once when I was lecturing in the United States there were 25 people in the hall - there must have been an accident, I am sure (laughter) - but you are not? (laughter).

And before I proceed with my lecture I would like to give you just two more anecdotes so that you may be able to form an idea of the sort of lecture you may expect.

I once lectured for the School of Harrow, for which they gave me a pretty handsome fee and a good reception. On the strength of this I tried Eton College. I said I was prepared to lecture down there for the same some of so-and-so, plus expenses. I received the following reply, ‘In answer to yours etc., this is five times as much as we pay for a really first-class lecturer’ (laughter).

The other one happened in Scotland (laughter). That’s nothing to laugh about. I had just given a certain lecture for charity, so thought I was justified in giving one for myself. I hired a hall at Leith for the sum of £5, spent £2.10.0 on advertising the event, and then the fateful night arrived. I was living at Edinburgh so treated myself to a cab down to Leith, thinking I would easily be able to spring it out of the proceeds. The only people in the hall were a drunken man, an old woman and two children. (The place would seat at least six hundred.) Before starting I went outside where the conveyance was waiting to take me back to [Edinburgh] again when I was ready, and I said to the cab-man, ‘If you can get somebody to hold your horses for you, come and hear the lecture’. He said, ‘I ken I am a’ richt where I am’, so I returned to the hall and went on with the lecture right through to the bitter end, occasionally witnessing the entrance of another victim through the ever – open door. The total proceeds were 25/-. It cost me £7.10.0 and my cab fare etc. down from Edinburgh. When I got home that night my wife asked me how the lecture had gone off. I told her there were twenty-five people inside when I finished the lecture; 25 at 1/- each, that’s 25/-. ‘Well’, she said, ‘You’ve got to take 2/- off that because I sent the cook and one of the maids’.

Sir Ernest Shackleton’s Lecture

‘And now I will leave these personal reminiscences and proceed with the lecture. I am not going to start right from the beginning, the preparation of the vessel etc: suffice it say that out of 5,000 good men I managed to pick fifty for the expedition. Some of them had been with me before. Tom Crean was with me fifteen years ago when I was with Captain Scott; he was with Captain Scott on another occasion; however, that is another story.

We set out from Buenos Aires, and from the 26th October 1914 until the 20th May 1916 we heard no news whatever from the outside world, because whilst we were at South Georgia no letters came along. We sailed from the latter place on the 5th December 1914, and the object of the expedition was to try and cross the Antarctic Continent from one sea to another. I had another ship the ‘Aurora’ on the other side of the Continent and she was to land a party at McMurdo Sound in order to lay dépots to meet us crossing the Continent. Meanwhile the ‘Endurance’ would return to civilization and await the news that we had arrived on the opposite side to the starting point. I have had a map drawn which we shall put onto the screen to show you the route that the expedition would be expected to take. In Punta Arenas - here, I am sure you will be glad to see it - covered with figures as it is. One minute, I have got some Spanish here - (loud applause): ‘Apague la luz’ – ‘La primera vista’ (on the chart he indicated the route saying) We would go from South Georgia - here - land here and then cross the Continent. This is the first 800 miles of unknown land. We would then follow a route made by Captain Scott and myself, then right down here - arriving on the far side of the Antarctic Continent. My other ship would by then be in New Zealand. And that was to be
the first crossing of the South Polar Continent; but providence ordained otherwise and we did not get so far.

Now then, segunda vista, please. The second map when it comes along will be drawn to a bigger scale showing the same Antarctic Continent and the place where my ship went to.

Upside down - this is the North Pole not the South Pole! (laughter). Up here is South Georgia and this is the track of the ship’s route down here’ (He proceeded to demonstrate, again, the route across the ice to the other side of the Continent where the ‘Aurora’ from New Zealand arrived, pointing out new land on the chart).

‘On the 5th December 1914 we left South Georgia and three days after entered the pack-ice of the Weddell Sea. Instead of the ice being loose and easily worked we found it very heavy; in fact 1915 was abnormal in the Antarctic region. For fifteen days we picked our way through an extremely heavy pack, in places from thirty to forty feet thick, experiencing much difficulty, in consequence of which our progress was very slow.

On the 10th January (about a month after we left South Georgia) we saw land: Bruce’s position, which we passed by.

We had twenty eight men — but only about twelve of us were sailors, the rest had not been to sea very much and they naturally suffered. But they were very willing to make the best of things and do their best. I remember one of these men was at the wheel one day and there was an iceberg ahead of us. I gave the order to the helmsman «hard a-port». The command was not immediately obeyed, so I asked the man at the helm why he didn’t put her hard a-port. He said, ‘Well, I had to blow my nose, I couldn’t help it’. Still we went along and each day we saw new things and certain signs of land. Finally we sighted land that had never been seen by human eyes. There is a sensation when one sees land that nobody else has ever seen, and that feeling is difficult to describe to you. We continued on our journey, seeking shelter from the north-east gales wherever, and whenever, such protection could be enjoyed. As we went south we noticed a great migration of seals. They evidently knew instinctively what was coming better than we did. The weather and conditions for the time of year were phenomenal, and we very soon recognized that the ice was going to close up, and the winter coming on much earlier than has hitherto been our experience, so there was nothing for it but to make for the open seas again.

We thought we could get through, though our desires were for the South, but on the 17th January 1915 the ice closed about the ‘Endurance’, never to open again except to let her down to the bottom of the sea. We could then see land about ten miles ahead of us, but the circumstances at that time revealed little hope of escape. However, about the middle of February the temperature dropped as low as 19/20 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and with the ice firmly formed about us, we thought we might be able to make a march. We spent a day and a half in trying it, but were unable to effect any appreciable progress. Our coal, which was very valuable, was running short.

All precautions were taken to prepare the ship for the winter. The sledges were put on the upper deck, the cabins down below evacuated and habitations established within easy access to the ice. The ward-room was turned into a cabin, which was afterwards known as the ‘stables’, whilst the galley was referred to as the ‘Ritz’. And then our winter life began. In March 1915 the temperature varied between 25 and 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Everything was properly organized and preparations completed so that at a moment’s notice we could leave the ship, in case of need, and establish our camp on the ice. The dogs were regularly exercised daily to keep them fit, and incidentally, their masters too. When we started we had 60 dogs, but owing to illness 20 of them died. The others were very well looked after - divided into teams of seven or eight dogs in each man’s charge. There was great competition
between these men as to who was going to have the best team. I have seen men go into the
galley and surreptitiously seek out some valuable food for their dogs. The speed at which
these dogs can travel pulling a load of from 100 to 150 lbs. weight is about four miles an hour
and they can keep that up for ten hours. They were wonderful dogs but very jealous of one
another, more especially the dog that happened to be leader; but they were always kept in
order. Now with these dogs we were ready for any emergency should our quarters have to
be shifted.

As we looked towards the south (before the beautiful winter nights drew on) we could see
land, but it was far, far away and there was no chance of getting there. By June we knew
that we were in for a solid drift and that we would eventually reach away to the North. I
may mention our position was latitude 77 South. Then we started to drift to the west - then
to the north. In the beginning of July signs of distant trouble came to us. You must understand
that we were now in a great sea covered with floating ice 20, 30 and even 40 feet thick -
there were huge icebergs in that sea also. When this ice floats on the current, travelling
onwards towards the land, continually adjusting and readjusting itself, the pressure from
the coast is such - the force sets up a terrific pressure of millions of tons - that no vessel can
stand against it but the type specially constructed to go to these regions, and made to lift on
with the ice. As far as that goes, our ship was one of the best ever built. It was built by
Cristiansen of the port of Christiania Norway. It is needless to tell you that Norwegians have
been the greatest builders of Polar vessels as they have been the greatest navigators of the
Polar Regions. It was Amundsen who discovered the north-west passage. Amundsen reached
the South Pole first; and, what the Norwegians don't know about wooden ship-building is
not worth knowing - because they know everything. The finest work possible was put into
the «Endurance», not only for money, but for sheer interest in the cause of our expedition
(and after all, that is the best one can put into anything; interest in the work!) and so if the
pressure had not begun so (sic) prematurely I feel we might have been all right.

But this great pressure of ice tumbling into hills of forty or fifty tons, the distant groaning of
which communicated itself through the intervening ice, caused us anxiety. It came nearer
and nearer and I then realized that my ship would soon become involved. At one time we
used to walkout and watch the effects of this pressure - see the great masses of ice heaved up
and rolling over one another. About mid-July it was about 40 yards away from us; until
finally it knocked its way along towards us, and reached the level of the ship. At about 9
o'clock on the morning of the 1st of August, I went on the floating ice and just as I spoke to
Crean, at about 10 o'clock, the ice split under my feet. I ordered all dogs on board and we
stood by whilst the sickening pressure sent the 'Endurance' before it, sometimes half in the
water, sometimes almost out of the water, one and a half or two miles, when the pressure
ceased and she slid back into the water all right, except for a damaged rudder.

The temperature was then between 10/15 degrees Fahrenheit. From the 1st August last year
to the 20th May this year I never took off my clothes as we had all to be on the alert to be able
to do our share at a moment's notice. We had to keep a strict watch at night - each man
taking his turn - because sometimes the ice opens slightly and coming together again is apt to nip the ship. Everything
was handy in order to get away with the least possible hindrance. Crean was in charge of the sledges and Capt.
Worsley of the navigation and instruments, and every man
knew his allotted place the moment the call came that he
was to abandon the ship. I was still hoping that we should
never have to resort to such measures, but about the middle
of September we found that a great stranded iceberg was
coming down upon us with the current and we only escaped collision with it by about 80 yards.
Early in October the pressure became worse and worse, and one day the ship was suddenly - in ten seconds - thrown on her beam ends without the slightest warning. Think of a big ship like ours, being thrown about like that and you can imagine the force of the ice. Everything was cracking, her beams bent and there was a sign of strain all over the ship, and we thought that was the end.

She was about 7 or 8 feet out of the water, but slid back again, leaking badly. We worked day and night trying to pump her out. She was terribly twisted, her sides being open six inches in every ten feet. We constructed a coffer-dam to help matters but the pressure got at us again and all our work was undone.

On the 25th October the ship lay with her bows driven into one piece of ice and with the natural cross-movement, one could then see her twisting. Her stern-post and rudder were torn out and the keel aft was ripped up by the ice. So we were obliged to abandon the ship and put everything we could on shore, or rather on the ice, where we passed that night. Next morning we saw land and we thought we had a good chance of getting there. About noon on the 26th the pressure became more violent; the ship had also begun to fill. We tried the pumps again; then we felt the beams buckle up, then the ‘tween-decks; the sides of the ship were pierced and I knew that she was doomed. The force of the ice drove the motor engine right through the galley, and the galley through the wardroom, the cabins splintered and the doors jammed so that one could not get through them; the lower part of the ship was pretty well occupied by water. I therefore ordered all hands to get onto the ice again and at five o’clock that evening leaving the flag flying I abandoned the «Endurance» myself for good.

We had to leave our camp because the pressure was becoming more dangerous there, so we found another place where we thought we could camp for the night, but I observed that there was a nasty crack right through that piece and we had to spend the time shifting our stores etc. to a safer piece of ice. Next morning we decided to arrange our equipment and load for the march. We had about forty dogs, the three boats, and stores calculated to be sufficient for the twenty-eight men for fifty days. Whilst we were doing this work our cinematographer started to take photographs of the smashed and sinking ship, when the mainmast snapped and was hurled within a few feet of where he stood, but he never stopped taking the photograph, and if this is developed it will be a very remarkable picture. We have got over 5,000 feet of these moving pictures and I hope you’ll see them some day. Personally I never felt like going on board again: she was a sort of ideal, and with her my ideals disappeared for the time being.

Now when we left the ship we were 346 miles from the nearest land. Apart from our stores we could get no food. We were unable to march very fast, but I thought we might do four or five miles per day at least, so we started out. Unfortunately we found that owing to the pressure ridges, to work the loads was too heavy. As time went on, of course, the stores were becoming shorter, and I thought that if this went on, as we had only 50 days provisions and 346 miles between us and the land mentioned, our difficulties would never end. So I decided to make a camp on the ice where we were trusting all the time for a north-west drift (in the meantime we had been able to return to the wreck and salve about 100 cases of stores), and wait until the summer came so that we could put the boats into the water and pull for the North.

Before I go on there are a few pictures of the Antarctic regions which I have to show you, although they have nothing to do with our Expedition.

(Pictures on the screen showing a couple of huge icebergs).
This is the kind of thing that was all around our small ice camp; we encountered over 125 of these bergs. We had one berg with us from the 17th January 1915 and we had only lost sight of it on the 9th April this year.

So we started drifting north hoping that in a month or two we would get out into the sea and eventually reach land again, but all November passed, and we only did sixty miles per month. Sometimes we had to shift our camp on the floe because the icebergs would come and knock a lump off it; and so the floe on which we were stranded became smaller and smaller, until towards the last it was little bigger than the area of this theatre.

I must tell you that on the 23rd December we left the floe and made another attempt to march but after five days only succeeded in covering nine miles. We marched more by night than day really because during the night a hard crust usually formed, although at times we still sunk up to our knees. We latterly encamped on a drifting floe which we called «Patience Camp» — a good name for it, because all January, February and March of this year were spent on the same piece of ice which also became smaller as it drifter northwards. In March we saw the distant peaks of Joinville Land - about 50 miles intervened between us and this land. The temperature now got very low. A fearful winter blizzard came on through which we passed a whole night long. (Even) worse than that - the food began to get lower. As we were now reduced to one meal per day, and that only a good meal if we managed to catch a seal; we never neglected a single part of that seal - brains and everything went down and if one had to go short on any occasion it was his turn next time, and so on. Every morsel was valuable. The camp was formed of two eight-men tents, three four-men tents, and we had built a galley of snow walls with a bit of canvas and an oar over the opening for a door, and made a stove out of a couple of oil tins. The food was as equally divided as possible, but sometimes there would be a dish of this and a dish of something else; so that to do away with the matter of choice, one man would turn his back and another pointing to the range and the variety of rations would call out «whose is this». The man with his back turned would give a name and so the stuff was allotted. But such is human nature that when one got one's own supply it always looked smaller than the rest.

We were going to make a boat journey eventually and had to economise stores as much as we could. At the end of January we shot our dogs, though we were very sorry to have to do this. There was not much fun in eating the tough old dogs, but the little puppies that had been born with us (like balls of fluff to look at), were pretty tender. I can tell you that fried dog is very fine, although I had more than my share as each man would bring me a fried piece of his own particular dog. But there was one tender-hearted man who could not bear to think of his dog being skinned - they were tough old brutes anyhow - so he had them buried. He saw to this bit of work very carefully but the pressure round about the ice one day threw those dogs about 40 feet into the air (laughter). Here we stayed for a while, but the trouble was that the ice was on the move and any minute might break up. We were able to get an occasional seal and at one time had ‘bagged’ about 500 penguins. The skins of the latter we used as fuel and the blubber from the seals too. Blubber is not a very nice thing to eat but our men had so acquired the habit of chewing a piece of this valuable fuel that I had to order that no blubber was to be taken for food.

The beginning of April this year - between the end of March and 6th April - we saw the peaks of Clarence Island in the South Shetlands, about 70 miles distant.

On the 8th April we had a narrow escape from destruction, a great berg crushed past within 200 yards of us leaving in its wake masses of churned up ice.

At last after blocked in the ice for over one year we managed to get freely afloat, but again our party was very nearly annihilated. That night we pulled our boats up onto a piece of ice about the size of this place here, but with the swell going on in the night, it commenced to
split. I heard a sort of scramble in the men’s tent, and managed to get there in time to pull one of the men out of the water in his sleeping-bag. The ice had opened right under the tent. Next morning it opened more and more and eventually I was the only one left on one part of the ice; a boat had to be brought across to take me off. Later on we found a spot where the three boats and all the men could be got onto the ice and we had something hot to eat and drink. The wind came up from the east and we started to run and pull, so we made our direction west to try and reach Deception Island. That night we came out into open sea almost but the sea was so bad, and the gale so severe, that we had to return to shelter to save ourselves and the boats. The wind increased and during the night a floe-berg got undermined near us and we could hear the water booming under the ice; pieces would every now and then be swept away and the ice got smaller and smaller. I remember one huge berg that came floating along in our direction; it was shaped like some enormous antediluvian monster rising and ducking the swell. But that night there was no chance to run at all, so we had to drift with the ice-floe, still progressing to the west as we thought. When daylight came we got away from the floe and picked our way among the floating ice. That day we passed from 100 to 120 seals basking in the sun. At noon we took our positions, and found that after all our efforts we were ten miles further east than we had been when we started. I realized now that there was no chance of reaching Deception Island so I turned northwards for Clarence Island. The temperature was still well below zero, the wind was fiercer, but sheltering to lee of the pack we ran all night, without anything hot to eat or drink. We were exceedingly happy when the morning came; in a tremendous swell but with an increasing wind behind us we went driving into the seas so that in the afternoon we were racing before a gale towards Elephant Island. I slackened sail to wait for the other boats and before night I decided to heave to and hitch the other boats to our own. All that night we lay in the open sea, the temperature so low that the boats were weighed down by the ice that formed about them. We had to keep continually breaking off the ice and baling out the boats. Most of the men suffered badly and some were suffering from frostbite.

Next morning we could see Elephant Island in the distance, and also Clarence Island. My boat had to be patched with bits of wood and canvas where the ice had holed her. Naturally when the ship was finally abandoned we had to leave all personal belongings behind to enable us to travel as light as we could afford to, and the only chart we had with us to consult was a small one dated 1820 which had been torn out of one of the books. At 4 o’clock with our boats’ noses ducking into the seas we saw signs that told us we were in for another blow, and later the high waves burst into the boats and we were kept busy baking them out all the time. All that night we battled with the wind amidst continuous snowstorms. For a time we lost sight of Capt. Worsley’s boat; he was unable to come up to us in the squall. By the morrow the blizzard had ceased, we could already see the cliffs of Elephant Island. I asked the other boats if they were all right and then proceeded to put on more sail, my object being to get to the other side of the island. The waves were huge - we could here them breaking on the cliffs - and our little boat plunged into the sea so heavily that we had to slacken off a bit. We eventually made the lee side of the island and there I saw a nice looking bay and a bit of beach at the foot of the cliffs. We headed straight for it and ran the boats up. The first thing we did was to quench our thirst for the first time for two or three days. Some of our men were suffering badly from frostbite and exposure, and all of us were completely fatigued. Thus on the 16th April we landed; and this was the first land that we had been on since the 15th December 1914. Well we were unable to stay there long because the high spring tides would cover the beach, but in spite of that I allowed the men to sleep that day.

On the next day we moved 7 miles to westward, where there was another beach, but this beach was worse than the first and could not be seen at high tide. The men however, were not in a condition to go any further, so we started to dig a hole in the ice wall, and in that ice hole now, are twenty-two of my men. I then decided that the only thing to do was to try to reach South Georgia in one of our boats and secure help.
The big-scale map, please! I want to show you clearly the track of the ship to the point where she was sunk, and then to let you follow our journey to Elephant Island.

We were now rather short of provisions because we had started into our sledge stores. When we left the ship everything was abandoned with the exception of scientific records, photographs and the flags that the King and Queen presented to us. All personal gear was left behind - oh, there was one book; an Encyclopaedia Britannica, some of the pages of which made very good tinder for lighting our pipes (laughter).’

(He then followed the track again of the ‘Endurance’, pointed out South Georgia; where the ship stuck in the ice; and the South Pole.)

‘As I was saying, we next decided to try to go from Elephant Island to South Georgia - a distance of about 750 miles. So I called for volunteers and all hands volunteered to go out on this long boat journey. It was too hopeless a feat to attempt in the two lighter boats which were not in very good order for such a journey after the last one; only the 22 feet boat could be used for it, and even this was sadly knocked about. So we tried to make her better, but there was nothing to do it with excepting a few bits of sledge runners, scraps of canvas, and pieces of somebody’s pet oil paintings. Still we improved her a little, although the weather was very bad on the Island and it took us some considerable time to fix her up.

On the 24th April we started away from Elephant Island; there were six of us; three of whom were thrown into the water, but were quickly pulled into the boat although pretty well wet through. The boat then started to ship water, and some of this froze, and we spent our time picking the ice off and baling the slush out of the boat. We only saw the sun three times all the way to South Georgia. On the fourteenth day we sighted the cliffs of South Georgia but the weather became bad with the wind from the North. On the fifteenth day we pitched about in the fiercest hurricane that I have ever heard. The mast bent with the force of it and at one moment we thought it was going to snap but gradually the weather cleared again; we could hear, though not see, the waves breaking on the land. At six o’clock that night the wind came around to the southwest and we had to stand off. Next morning we went back and we realized that it was going to blow again. We had no water and we were pretty weak after fifteen days out without dry clothing and in such awful cold. We eventually succeeded in running her into a little cove, but were too weak to haul up the heavy boat, so all night we held on to her in case of danger, and the following morning did our best to leave her firmly beached. The rudder fell off and went out to sea, yet next afternoon, to our surprise, the rudder came floating back into the little cove; fancy, with thousands of miles before it, to find its way back there. We found this a lonely enough place, but we were obliged to spend three or four days there recuperating on young albatross and whatever we could make up our rations with. While looking outwards one day we were greeted by the great roar of sea elephants showing that there was plenty of food about.

The island of South Georgia had never been crossed by anybody and nobody knew what the interior was like. Two of our men were pretty bad by this time, and I decided that three of us would try and cross the island and leave one man in charge. At three o’clock the following morning Cap. Worsley, Crean and myself started, each man with his share of food and all slung together with a rope. We trudged along for 36 hours, except for half an hour to cook a meal. We went up, and across glaciers, over mountains, up and down all manner of undulations, sometimes travelling at 4,500 feet above the sea level. Our trousers were not very good to begin with but by that time they were not worth anything at all. It was pioneer work crossing that island. At five o’clock in the morning, we had half an hour’s spell. Then we went on; there was a very steep bit of slope to go up. We laboured up that steep slope and said that we would have another spell when we reached the top of it, but when we got there we found ourselves looking down into Stromness Bay, which we immediately recognized. The night before we three had embraced one another, not for the love we had for one another
(laughter) but to keep warm; now at the sight below us we found ourselves excitedly shaking hands with one another. Though we were a considerable way off we could hear the steam whistles blowing down below; that was the first sound of the civilized world we had heard for over one and a half, nearly two years, the scene and the sound from that place were more stimulating than anything to us. We followed our mark but came up against another slope. We didn’t want to climb any more mountains, we were fed up with them (laughter). So we started to make a straight descent. Crean and Worsley lowered me down, they then came sliding down after me. It took us two and a half hours to get down one of the slopes we navigated. We knew our troubles were over and we started down the last bit of the descent with no loss of time. The only way down from that point was by a waterfall, and we came down that waterfall pretty quickly.

As we had not shaved for ten months we had long beards and were very dirty as well. We asked two young boys (I can quite understand their fear) the way to the Manager’s house but they turned around and fled. Mind you none of us were looking what you might call respectable (laughter). We managed to find the Manager’s house, knocked at the door and asked if Mr. Surly was in; the woman who answered it closed the door in our faces after having eyed us somewhat suspiciously. Then Mr. Surly came along; I said, ‘Good afternoon, Mr. Surly, don’t you know me?’ He very coldly responded, ‘Good afternoon, I’m afraid I don’t, unless you are the mate of the schooner ‘Daisy’?’. ‘I am not the mate of the ‘Daisy’’, I said, ‘my name is Shackleton’. He was extremely pleased to see us and at once took us into his house, fed us, and gave us good hot coffee. We had baths, our beards came off, and we felt like human beings once again. The kindness we received there, not only from the manager of the factory, but from everyone at the whaling station, we shall never forget. (Looking at Tom Crean to his right): I think that is one of their suits you have on!’ (Laughter) He’s looking at my boots. (Loud laughter). Yes they came from there also. Capt. Worsley went round with the Norwegian whaler ‘Southern Sky’ and returned to Stromness with the three men we had left on the other side of the Island. On the Tuesday we started out in the same whaler to try and reach my comrades on Elephant Island but failed, as she was not quite suitable for the work.

We returned to the Falkland Islands, and from there went up to Montevideo where the Uruguayan Government lent us one of their trawlers; and in her we managed to penetrate to within 20 miles of where my men are awaiting help. But this iron vessel was too heavy for the work and certain engine troubles increased our difficulties, so we were unable to do any more and had to return again.

In the meantime of course I had wired to England telling them what had happened and received a message in reply to the effect that a relief expedition was coming out; but I thought every minute being precious to us, at the whaling station, we shall never forget. (Looking at Tom Crean to his right): I think that is one of their suits you have on!’ (Laughter) He’s looking at my boots. (Loud laughter). Yes they came from there also. Capt. Worsley went round with the Norwegian whaler ‘Southern Sky’ and returned to Stromness with the three men we had left on the other side of the Island. On the Tuesday we started out in the same whaler to try and reach my comrades on Elephant Island but failed, as she was not quite suitable for the work.

At the time we left Elephant Island there were five full weeks of rations for the men - i.e. ten weeks on half rations - and two seals. They might be able to get penguins also, but I cannot swear to it. So every day counts as to the lives of these 22 men I have left on the island. They are all men with good hearts, and they have got a man, Wild, (who was on Scott’s first expedition, on my last expedition, and now on this one) who IS a man, and I hope you will all see him. He is second in command of the present expedition. He is a man (as a Norwegian once told me) of strong character and he has the confidence of everyone on that island, just as I have his confidence; and these two men here (pointing to Capt. Worsley and Tom Crean) know this as well as I do.

So you can imagine we are anxious right down in our hearts to get these good fellows back; and I must say that it is one of the best moments and times of my life to feel the response that
came up, and the suggestion that the thing should be done right here from Punta Arenas. And it was done quickly. Here, I have received help and encouragement, and I hope to bring the men back to thank you personally, as I know our people at Home will do.

Before I stop I must tell you that an Expedition is being equipped by the New Zealand and Australian Governments to take the other men off from McMurdo Sound. There is no anxiety about these men, all their stores were landed and they have sufficient food to keep them for three or four years.

Our expedition has not been a real success, but that only means putting it off for a time. The business now is the saving of these men I have been speaking about, and when that is done, and I can gather men about me for another expedition, we shall cross the Antarctic Continent. Not only is it the joy of exploring but there are scientific problems to be solved, matters of weather that affect even this country here. The weather is affected by the sea — down here especially, and by this study we come to a better knowledge of what weather may be, its effect on stock and so forth. Apart from that scientific record, there is the desire to see new lands and to be the first to cross new continents. I [know] we have not succeeded this time but success invariably follows failure. My name has been known to the general public for a long time and it has mostly been as leader, but how much depends upon the men! What I do would be small, did we not work well together. Though we did not succeed this time, it means we will.

I appreciate my men on Elephant Island, and the two men I have on my right are fine fellows.’

(Rapid exit of the modest Capt. Worsley and Tom Crean).

Rev. J. C. Cater responds
‘I am sure we have all listened to Sir Ernest with a great deal of interest tonight. The homely way in which he has told us his story has helped to make the lecture all the more interesting. I would ask all of you to give Sir Ernest a hearty vote of thanks for his very instructive as well as entertaining lecture and to join with me in devoutly hoping and praying that the relief ship which is being fitted out here may be successful in rescuing his twenty-two brave comrades on Elephant Island. (Loud and prolonged applause)’.

Sir Ernest Shackleton replied to the vote of thanks and wished everybody ‘Good Night’

‘SHACKLETON VERSUS PARDO’
by Alfonso M. Filippi Parada


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INTRODUCTION: PILOT LUIS PARDO (‘PROTAGONISTAS’)
Luis A. Pardo Villalon was born 20th September 1882 [20 November, according to G.Barros Gonzalez in La Revista Marina, Vol 115/847 Nov Dec 1998, p596ff]. From childhood, he showed a great interest in matters connected with the sea.
FIRST RESCUE ATTEMPT: WITH THE WHALER ‘SOUTHERN SKY’

In South Georgia, Sir Ernest Shackleton was able to charter a small steam whaler along with the equipment to sail to Elephant Island. This [the Southern Sky] was the first ship he used to attempt a rescue of his people; however it failed in its attempt to cross the pack. Various efforts were made to penetrate, but each attempt failed: the closest they managed was 70 miles off. With fuel exhausted, the ship had to return to South Georgia, where there were no more supplies of coal.

Shackleton then chartered a cutter and sailed to the Falklands. From Port Stanley, Sir Ernest sent a desperate plea for assistance to both his country and to the Americans. To his anxious cabled plea for help, King George V responded with typically British phlegm “delighted you have arrived safe and sound in the Falkland Islands. I hope that your comrades on Elephant Island will soon be rescued”. In fact the United Kingdom could do very little to help as it was overwhelmed by the great weight of commitment to the war.

SECOND ATTEMPT: WITH THE FISHING VESSEL ‘INSTITUTO DI PESCA NO.1’

Shackleton’s request for help was taken extremely seriously in Montevideo: the Uruguayan Government, in a noble gesture, placed at Sir Ernest’s disposal a small fishing trawler of not quite 80 tons, named the Instituto de Pesca no.1, under the command of Ruperto Elichiri Behety. This was the second ship to attempt the rescue. The Instituto de Pesca weighed anchor from Port Stanley and headed south. However, 30 miles from her destination the pack was like an insurmountable wall. The ship was prevented from carrying on further. Newly-frustrated, and having failed once again to overcome the frozen continent, they were forced to return to the Falklands.

Pressed for time, Shackleton relentlessly pursued all possible avenues. The cable and telegraph lines vibrated with his poignant calls for help. The British Government proposed to send the Discovery, the very ship associated with Scott. The government of Norway offered the Fram, associated with Amundsen ([and Nansen]; and the United States Government prepared the Roosevelt. But there was no time to wait for these ships, as the southern winter was almost upon them.

Then the corvette Uruguay was requested from the Argentine Government, but that old ship had long been taken out of service.

THIRD ATTEMPT: WITH THE SCHOONER ‘EMMA’

In these dramatic circumstances, Sir Ernest Shackleton, indefatigable and iron-willed in the face of adversity, realized that he had to find an operational base that offered greater resources than Port Stanley. He decided to board a cutter to take him to Punta Arenas; and to rest his hopes on Chile.
In Punta Arenas, with the aid of the British consulate [and members of the British Association in Megallanes (sic) - Shackleton in South], Shackleton contracted the Chilean schooner *Emma*. Of 70 tons, she was the third vessel to attempt this novel but [in that case] unfruitful voyage.

Under the command of Chilean Pilot 2° Leon Aguirre Romero, the *Emma* weighed anchor at noon on 16th July from Punta Arenas, taking Shackleton, Worsley and Crean.

On the first leg of the voyage the *Emma* was escorted and towed by the *Yelcho* under the command of Pilot 2° Luis Pardo, with Pilot 2° Onofre Garcia as watchman. The purpose of the towing, which continued into open sea nearly as far as latitude 60° S, was to conserve fuel in order to increase the range of the *Emma* itself.

The *Emma* was not successful in her attempt: when approaching Elephant Island [about 100 miles distant - Shackleton in South] she began to encounter a great number of icebergs, which made it increasingly difficult to manoeuvre the ship. They could not avoid some collisions with the ice; and in her determined fight the vessel received damage that finally put an end to her attempt.

Furthermore, as they headed back to Punta Arenas, the vessel had to cope with the worst weather conditions that Shackleton had ever experienced during his life as a seaman and explorer [not mentioned in South].

**FOURTH ATTEMPT: WITH THE COASTGUARD CUTTER ‘YELCHO’**
(see Shackleton, *South*, pp 240-241)

Sir Ernest Shackleton remembered that on his visit to Port Stanley he had became acquainted with the Chilean Vice Admiral, Don Joaquin Munoz Hurtado, who had just returned from a visit to London and was now the Director General of the Chilean Navy.

He quickly sought his assistance; and Admiral Munoz Hurtado arranged for the Commander-in-Chief of the naval station in Magallanes, rear Admiral Victor Lopez Salamanca, immediately to provide Shackleton with a ship.

At this time, there were only two of the four Coastguard Cutters at Punta Arenas they could count on: the *Yanez* [which Pardo, according to Barros Gonzalez in *La Revista Marina*, Vol 115/847 Nov/Dec 1998 Page 596ff, had also commanded] and the *Yelcho*.

Even though both ships were completely unsuitable for the winter conditions, they had no option but to select one of them: they opted for the *Yelcho*.

The *Yelcho* was a relatively old ship, constructed in Glasgow in 1906, and had been acquired by the “Yelcho and Palena Company” in 1908.

The vessel had a gross weight of 480 tons with a nominal engine capacity of 64 HP to an effective 300 HP that propelled her at 11 Knots. Her cylindrical coal boiler of 120 pounds had not been serviced since December 1913.

The vessel had no heating, no electrical lighting, no radio, no false bottom, and low bulwarks. To send her to Antarctica was daring beyond belief. The only positive attribute suggesting a successful outcome to the mission was the quality, skill and courage of her crew.

The vessel was prepared for sailing with the greatest urgency and with such stores and material as were available at the time.
The *Yelcho*’s commander was Pilot 1° Francisco Miranda B. He, however, had been taken ill, and needed replacing. Considering the potentially dangerous task of the mission, the naval post headquarters decided to call for volunteers.

The first to present himself was the Pilot Pardo. His relentless determination, tough expression and firm manner made the naval command realize that they were in the presence of a man of extraordinary character.

In truth Pardo did not merely present himself; rather, he *imposed* himself. He laid out the navigation charts and immediately determined the route as if had already been accepted for the position of commander of the *Yelcho*.

He also handed over a list of his choice of men to accompany him on the adventure.

Pilot Aguirre, who had returned from the trip with the schooner *Emma*, was to assist Pardo.

On the 24th August, the crew were replaced and reinforced with those from the *Yanez* who had volunteered to form part of the expedition: three first class stokers and four first grade watchmen - all from Chile’s Maritime Territory - and culminating with a first class engineer from a lighter.

Finally Shackleton, Worsley and Crean embarked, all present on board and ready to weigh anchor.

**Friday 25th August**

At 00:15 hours the *Yelcho* weighed anchor from Punta Arenas and headed towards Picton Isle. From the hardened faces of the crew one could only guess at the probability of success. They took the Magdalena channel at dawn and then the other channel and passages, till they cast anchor in Port Burne at 17:00 hours.

**Saturday 26th August**

06:30 hours: resumed the journey, with good conditions until they cast anchor in Ushuaia at 17:00 hours. In this port Sir Ernest disembarked with his two companions, Worsley and Crean; they received much attention ashore and returned very pleased on board.

**Sunday 27th August**

At 06:30 hours, the *Yelcho* weighed anchor and headed in the direction of Picton Isle, where it cast anchor at 11:15 hours. A gang of men disembarked, led by a watchman: they immediately started loading coal from the Chilean Navy’s coalbunker, loading in all 300 sacks of coal. These filled the coalbunkers aboard the vessel; the remainder they left on the deck.

The *Yelcho*’s coaling capacity was 52 tons in coalbunkers and 20 tons on deck.

**Monday 28th August**

At 03:30 hours, coal loading over, immediately weighed anchor and headed for high seas, taking advantage of the good weather at the time, with barometer reading very high and steady.

During the day, sailed at a constant 10 knots with excellent weather; the barometer reading remained high and there was a chilly South West wind. At noon the astronomical observations corresponding to the meridian were made; continued the voyage without need to alter course.
60 miles from Cape Horn they encountered the first large icebergs. The evening was starry with a clear horizon. The barometer reading remained above 762 millimetres and the thermometer at 3° C, with a stable current from the South East.

**Tuesday 29th August**
They continued the voyage in the same conditions as the previous day. After taking astronomical observations at noon, they confirmed it was not necessary to alter course.

At 17:00 hours, the ship entered the ‘danger area’ of fogs, which are more or less permanent in this region, but which, being affected by the wind direction, can give some minutes of clarity when horizontal visibility can be from 2-5 miles. Pardo’s eyes cut through the fog like a sharp knife, focusing fixedly on the horizon.

150 miles from Elephant Island, the small ship found itself in such thick fog that it had to continue sailing blindly, in imminent danger from being crushed by giant bergs. Pardo navigated, guided only by the instinct of an experienced sailor, although he could not prevent some icebergs colliding with the ship.

However, as there was point in heeding whether the hull was more or less damaged, Pardo pressed on regardless until the fog cleared.

At that point he realised that the pack had receded, leaving the route navigable towards the South. Nevertheless, in the Antarctic winter, everything being uncertain, it was not long before new fog returned to envelop the brave ship.

At 23:30 hours the fog was thick and constant: they were therefore obliged to reduce speed to three knots and maintain strict vigilance. The temperature kept on decreasing and at midnight it was 9°-10° C below zero; the current continued in the same direction.

**THE RESCUE OF THE SHIPWRECKED CREW**

**Wednesday 30th August**
Dawn appeared, with fog giving broadly similar conditions to the previous day. This continued until 05:00 hours; at this point the fog became less dense, providing horizontal visibility of one mile. They then steamed at full speed.

Although the *Yelcho* found itself in a very dangerous area, as much because of the breakers and the shallows as the icebergs and fogs, Pardo preferred to run the risk of continuing the voyage in these conditions, in preference to the greater danger of not arriving that day at the men’s encampment.

Meanwhile on Elephant Island, almost five months since the sailing of the *James Caird*, the dawn of 30th August was clear and cold. The food reserves had begun to diminish disturbingly. Both the expedition’s surgeons [Macklin and McIlroy] had operated on the foot, frostbitten by the cold, of the stowaway Blackborow: his bone had become infected and his health critical. Since his arrival on the Island, Blackborow had been laid up in his damp sleeping bag. Discreetly, Frank Wild had quietly begun preparing to mount his own rescue attempt.

Sailing with extreme caution, Pilot Pardo prepared to navigate through the ice that surrounded the Island. Enforced vigilance was established throughout the ship to try to avoid icebergs, which - due to the combined fog and solar refraction - appeared in the form of black fog and twice the height, looming up dimly on the bow and sides. From 08:00 hours, they encountered the first icebergs, which were small ones. At 09:30 they encountered large icebergs.
At 10:40 hours they spotted the first breakers from the north end of Elephant Island. At 11:10 they recognised the Seal Rocks (as they were called at that time) at an approximate distance of 2.5 miles. At 12:30, they arrived off Elephant Island.

At 13.00 hours Frank Wild was standing serving a ‘hoosh’, a stew concocted mainly of limpets which had been gathered from the pools during low tide, when George Marston, the expedition’s sketcher and painter, excitedly stuck his head into the shelter which they had constructed under the remaining two boats and said:

“Wild, we can make out a ship. Should we light a bonfire?”

Before Wild could reply, there was a stampede in which the shipwrecked men tumbled over one another - according to Orde-Lees - due to the fact that each one, in general confusion and with their mugs of food in their hands, rushed forward simultaneously towards the narrow opening that formed the entrance, crushing each other.

The men could see that the mysterious boat was getting closer, and they were astonished to see it was flying the Chilean flag.

The Yelcho continued circling the island, navigating between many icebergs, with tricky fog and solar refraction, and a visible horizon of 1 to 1.5 miles, with every hand watching on the prow, on the lookout to catch a glimpse of the shipwrecked crew’s camp.

At 13.30 hours, to general rejoicing, the shipwrecked men could be descried, located in a depression, having on one side a mighty glacier and on the other some striking snow-capped peaks, which are very typical of this region.

When the Yelcho was approaching the designated point, you could hear the noise of celebration, rejoicing and cheering of the shipwrecked men. The Yelcho kept running on its engines.

At around 150 metres from the shore, the ship lowered a lifeboat, which Pardo despatched to shore with Shackleton, Crean and four Chilean crew on board. When the shipwrecks recognised them, first the robust figure of Shackleton and then that of Crean, they reacted with indescribable enthusiasm and joyous greetings mixed with loud ‘hurrahs’ and the waving of all sorts of rags of indeterminate colour.

The first boat on returning to the ship brought half the crew as well as some equipment. The rescued men voiced their praise for Chile and its Government. They were already comparing it to classic triumphs of survival, the Canadian, William Bakewell, later recalled.

The second boat to shore fetched the rest of the men and the other half of the equipment, returning to the ship at 01:25 hours. The photographer Frank Hurley was carrying boxes of plates and films that he had buried in the snow.

An hour after the arrival of the Yelcho, all the crew of the Endurance who had found themselves stranded on Elephant Island, along with their modest possessions, were aboard the ship.

THE FOLLOWING WAS DOCUMENTED BY PILOT 2° LEON AGUIRRE ROMERO* IN THE SHIP’S LOG OF THE YELCHO REGARDING THESE EVENTS: [*Skipper of the Emma, here accompanying Pardo and Shackleton aboard the Yelcho]
The large ship’s boat was launched with Shackleton, Crean and four other men aboard. It sailed to the island and returned fifteen minutes later with twelve of the shipwrecked men. Before they arrived onboard, Shackleton informed us that all his men were well and the crew cheered; at which some of the shipwrecked men responded with a great cheer for Chile, the Yelcho and her commander.

We noted the great happiness and emotion of the shipwrecked men. The boat returned to shore to pick up the rest of the people, returning at 01:25 hours. Immediately the boat was hoisted aboard by hand, all the straps being tied down with the help of the shipwrecked sailors, who thus gave proof of their being in good shape.”

At 02:10 p.m.: Frank Worsley wrote “All’s well” in his ship’s log. He had observed the rescue from the bridge of the Yelcho. “At last! 02:15 p.m., full speed ahead.”

At 14:25 hours, they headed north. At 14:45 hours, they threw the Log Line overboard. The fog continued. At 16:00 hours, with a reading N60W, Log Line reading 13, they were in the vicinity of the Seal Rocks, which were approximately two miles distant. During the watch from 20:00 to 24:00 hours, sailed with a moderate breeze from the NW, swell from W, cloudless skies with a cloudy horizon.

At 21:00 hours, finally sailed out of the danger area, always with fog present, a high barometric pressure and low temperature.

Pilot Pardo and his men had rescued the 22 British shipwrecked from Elephant Island in the height of the southern winter, and with all his courage and skill had written a shining chapter in the history of the Chilean navy.

Thursday 31 August
The day began with fair and clear weather with snow showers at times. At 04:00 hours, a slight breeze accompanied them, with low dark clouds and occasional fog, and a swell from the W. At 20:00 hours, the wind changed to NW and the barometer began to fall. During the night, the sea became rough and later turned stormy. This bad weather affected us greatly and accompanied them as far as their entry into to the Magellan Straits.

Friday 1st September
The fog prevented the ship from taking the Beagle Channel, for which reason Pardo decided to go north and take the Magellan straits.

Saturday 2nd September
At 18:00 hours, sighted the Dungenes (sic) and Virgenes lights and maintained course towards the first in order to announce our arrival by telegraph.

However once near the light they could see that it was impossible to send a boat ashore, due to the high winds from the West and the heavy seas. For this reason, the Yelcho had to continue its journey.

Sunday 3rd September
At 16:00 hours the Yelcho cast anchor in Rio Seco, whence it was possible to announce their arrival to the Commander of the naval post in Magallanes: ‘Arrived without problems with 22 fit and healthy shipwrecked men’.

Monday 4th September
At 10:30 hours the Yelcho weighed anchor and headed for Punta Arenas, arriving without problems at 11:30 hours.
RECEPTION AT PUNTA ARENAS

The arrival of the *Yelcho* at Punta Arenas was a popular event. In the city they had lived and shared the tragedy of Shackleton and the details of the suffering of these unfortunate men, who had existed 10 months in the harshest deprivations.

They had also lived in an atmosphere of anguish and apprehension as to the outcome of the expedition of the *Yelcho* given that this might be the opportunity to rescue the shipwrecked sailors, overcome with hunger.

Once the *Yelcho* weighed anchor, with no form of communicating its position or experiences of this round voyage, which was relatively uncertain, the popular sense of apprehension was even greater.

When Pardo arrived with his small, fragile but experienced ship at Punta Arenas, all the town turned up on the quay and the adjacent streets to demonstrate their cordial welcome to the rescued men and their admiration and esteem to the valiant crew of the *Yelcho*.

A public procession was mounted by those public and private institutions which wanted to demonstrate their joy. The British colony in masses crowded on the quay next to those in authority. Individual families vied among themselves for the honour of clothing and entertaining the shipwrecked men.

Pilot Pardo, with his customary simplicity, seemed embarrassed by the well-deserved celebrations with which the population of Punta Arenas triumphantly received them.

There followed a public holiday, including an official reception and meal hosted by the town authorities in the hotel, in which their table companions had the expeditionary members sign autographs on the shirt-fronts of their formal dress. Everyone wanted to entertain them.

Shackleton, moved by the courage and unequalled self-sacrifice of their rescuers, and on the same day as he arrived at Punta Arenas, sent to Admiral Munoz Hurtado the following radio telegram: “It is impossible to express my deep feelings of gratitude, for all that you have done for us, and I wish to place this on the record. Shackleton.”

To which the Admiral replied “Please accept sincere congratulations on the happy conclusion of the enterprise, owed entirely to your own determination and persistence. The Chilean Navy has received the news of the safe recovery of the English sailors as if they were our own people. Munoz Hurtado”.

The mission had been completed successfully and was of outstanding merit if you take into account the fragility of the vessel and the precarious means with which to confront an adventure in the Antarctic seas in the height of winter.

Pardo acted with prudence and intelligence; his determination during the navigation was wise and fitting, and he knew how to take advantage of the favourable circumstances of the weather, thanks to his dexterity and decisiveness.

**Tuesday 5th September**

As commander of the steam tug *Yelcho*, Pardo carried out his duty to present a written report of the voyage to the commander-in-chief of the Post Station, Magallanes.

In it amongst other things he declared: “May I be permitted to present to your honour that this commission culminated in a happy conclusion because of the most effective cooperation of the officials who accompanied me: in particular I should like to praise the Purser, who cooperated with enthusiasm so that he could devotedly attend to the 29 people who had
arranged themselves in the officers’ quarters, and whose task of looking after them was made no easier by the relative shortage of comforts available; and the Chief Engineer, who remained constantly on call at and every stage of the journey carried out his instructions faithfully and to the letter.

I could say much, too, about the diligence of the crew, who to a large extent were men from the Yanez who accompanied me voluntarily, and whose enthusiasm and zealous commitment to duty are worthy of the highest accolades and praise from their superiors.

**Wednesday 6th September**

The Commander-in-Chief of the post station in Magallanes forwarded Pardo’s report of the trip to the Director General of the Navy, saying: Sir, may I warmly recommend for your consideration the highly satisfactory way in which this officer has fulfilled such a difficult commission, demonstrating at every point great enthusiasm, energy and a professional preparation deserving of the utmost praise. With regard to this Sir Ernest Shackleton has personally expressed to me his immense appreciation of the assistance rendered and the manner which Pilot Pardo accomplished this difficult mission.

Sincere congratulations, Sir, upon the happy conclusion of this expedition, which places in high esteem before the entire world the good reputation of Chile’s navy. May I be allowed to recommend to you that as an appropriate reward for his services you might grant Pardo promotion to Pilot 1°, which is the next grade given that he has completed the pre-requisites and has six years at his present grade?

**Thursday 7th September**

The Director General of the Navy passed the decree of promotion for Pilot Pardo 1° and sent him his congratulations. The Government was informed and they too sent their congratulations through the intermediary of the Ministry of the Navy.

The cabled news reached all parts of the world, detailing this miraculous rescue of human lives, executed against the elements and in the height of the harsh polar winter.

Pardo and his men had completed a feat that astonished the entire world. Disciplined in the strict canons and principles of sacrifice and fulfilment of duty, in truth they were quite astonished at the uproar which greeted them.

The euphoria spread far and wide and it became necessary that the protagonists were taken to the centre of the country so that the right tribute could be paid to them for their remarkable feat.

The same ship, the Yelcho was got ready for Shackleton to embark and to conduct him to Talcahuano and Valparaiso.

**RECEPTION AT VALPARAISO**

The Yelcho arrived in Valparaiso on 27th October, and entered accompanied by a flotilla, saluted by all the ships of the squadron with their crews paraded on their decks, and in the midst of a swarming flotilla of smaller craft which accompanied them into the harbour with their sirens and whistles deafeningly blaring.

On the Quay Sir Ernest Shackleton and Pilot Pardo were awaited by the Governor General of the province, Don Aníbal Pinto, and by the mayor, Vice Admiral Don Jorge Montt, who received both of them amidst the cheers of the local population, who turned out in large numbers.
Finally, the two men, both extraordinarily famous, were received by the President of the Republic, Don Juan Luis Sanfuentes. Shackleton took the opportunity to express appreciation for the help provided by Chile.

**Recognition**

As we have indicated, Pilot Pardo was promoted immediately to the grade of Pilot 1° class.

This, however, was not viewed as a reward, but only a small advancement on his journey through the ranks, since Pardo had fulfilled the requirements for his promotion: he had completed six years in the capacity of Pilot 2°, and he was occupying the first stage on the promotion ladder - so this was rank he was going to reach anyway.

In recognition of his feat a note of special merit was written in the feuilleton of his career, so that it might figure with honour in the daily commemorations of the ships and departments of the Navy.

Moreover, under a statute of 1st May 1818, he was granted an honorary raise of ten years’ service towards his final retirement salary.

Pardo also received the following distinctions: medal of the Illustrious Municipality of Punta Arenas; medal of the Lifesavers’ Corps of Valparaíso; medal of the Society of History and Geography, medal of the Chilean Maritime League, and medal of the Patriotic League of Chile.

For his part in the voyage, the College of Engineering awarded a distinction to Jose Beltran Gamarra, the chief engineer in charge of the *Yelcho*, by a decree dated Saturday 30th September 1916.

Pardo served a further three years in the navy and took his retirement in 1919.

[It was made known that with courtesy but firmness he rejected a £25,000 payment offered by the British Government: he considered that he was not deserving of the gift, because as a sailor of Chile he had only fulfilled a mission assigned to him. He accepted only the medals already mentioned].

The Chilean Government gave him a commission as the Chilean Consul to Liverpool, England.

[Thirteen years later, Lieutenant 1° Pilot (retired) Luis A.Pardo Villalon passed away in Santiago, a victim of bronchopneumonia, on 21st February 1935, at the age of 54].

[Note the discrepancies of age and dates of birth: Filippi Parada here says Pardo died aged 54 but says, earlier, that Pardo was born 20 September 1882, so he must mean 52. G.Barros Gonzalez (in the other article) says Pardo was born 20 November 1882]

**CONCLUSION**

Sir Ernest Shackleton personally thanked those who had saved his life and the lives of his companions, and left testimonials of this gratitude, especially in his work *South*:

‘The Republic of Chile,’ Shackleton wrote in his introduction to *South*, ‘was unwearied in its efforts to make a successful rescue, and the gratitude of our whole party is due to them. I especially mention the sympathetic attitude of Admiral Monoz Hurtado, head of the Chilean Navy, and Captain Luis Pardo, who commanded the *Yelcho* in our last and successful venture.’

Commander Frank Wild also in no uncertain manner after the rescue made public in Buenos Aires his recognition of Pardo and all the crew of the *Yelcho*.
However, writers of the history have not been fair. In vain, you look for the names of Pilot Luis Pardo and his ship the *Yelcho* in the British and American chronicles of the Shackleton expedition. On those rare occasions in which those stories mention the names, and that it was a Chilean ship that carried out the rescue, the manner in which it is written leaves an impression that the boat was *loaned to* Sir Ernest Shackleton, and that he had managed to rescue his companions with no Chilean aid; or that the ship had been *chartered by* Shackleton, who controlled the whole operation.

But you will not find in these chronicles, expressed in plain clarity, the incontrovertible fact that it was a ship of the Chilean navy, **commanded** exclusively by its commander, the Pilot Luis Pardo, taking Shackleton, Worsley and Crean as passengers only.

Pardo carried out a most daring humanitarian feat in rescuing and returning safe and sound the members of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Shackleton Expedition.

As we have already mentioned, it seems a bit strange to record that the active Chilean participation has either been systematically ignored, or - worse still -diminished to no more than a pair of stingy lines of ambiguous writing. The most recent work that we have received (*Endurance* by Caroline Alexander), in 20 pages dedicated to the (Elephant Island) rescue Pilot Pardo is not mentioned even once, nor the presence of any Chilean Commander on the ship that, as she wrote, “the Chilean Government had allowed Shackleton to use”.

One needs to assess this attitude and determine whether it’s simply British pride that forbids acceptance that the Chileans (who look admiringly to the Royal Navy as their mentor) in these unusual circumstances proved themselves even more capable than their teacher - or a patronising manner that occurs habitually on the part of the British Lion towards its loyal and distant friends.

**MEMBERS OF THE CHILEAN ANTARCTIC RESCUE EXPEDITION of 1916:**

**Captain i/c**
Piloto 2º Luis A. Pardo Villalón (repeated just below)

**Officials of the Escampavia “Yelcho”**
Piloto 2º Luis A. Pardo Villalón (Commander)
Piloto 2º Cont. León Aguirre Romero (Second in Command) (also skipper of the Emma)

**Lower Officials**
Maestre de Víveres Mayor Jorge L. Valenzuela Mesa
(Cargo de contabilidad/Pursar)
Maquinista Mayor (Chief Engineer) José Beltrán Gamarra
(Cargo de máquinas/Chief Engineer) (Transfer from navy personnel)
Mecánico 1º (Engineer) Nicolás Muñoz Molina
Mecánico 1º (Engineer) Manuel Blackwood (Transferred from [unnamed] Lighter, 26 August)
Guardián (Watchman) 1º Manuel Ojeda
Marinero 1º (Seaman) Pedro José del Carmen   [Pedro Pairo in G.Barros Gonzalez]
Marinero 1º (Seaman) Galindo Pairo      [Jose del C. Galindo in Barros Gonzalez]

**Personal del Territorio**
Contramaestre 1º (Overseer) José Muñoz Téllez
Herrero 1º (Blacksmith) Froilán Cabañas Rodríguez
Cabo 1º Fogonero (Stoker) Pedro Soto Núñez
Cabo 1º Fogonero (Stoker) Heriberto Caris Cárcamo  [Cariz in Barros Gonzalez]
Lesser Officials
Cabo 1° Fagonero (Stoker) Juan Vera Jara (from the Yáñez, 24th August)
Cabo 1° Fogonero (Stoker) Pedro Chaura (from the Yáñez, 24th August)
Cabo 1° Fogonero (Stoker) Luis Contreras Castro (from the Yáñez, 24th August)
Guardián 1° (Watchman) José Leiva Chacón
Guardián 1° (Watchman) Ladislao Gallego Trujillo
Guardián 1° (Watchman) Hipólito Aris C. (from the Yáñez, 24th August)
Guardián 1° (Watchman) Antonio Colin Peredo (from the Yáñez, 24th August) [Paredes in Barros Gonzalez]
Guardián 1° (Watchman) Florentino González Estay (from the Yáñez, 24th August)
Cocinero 1° (Cook/Chef) Clodomiro Agüero Soto
Mozo 1° (Waiter/Galley Assistant) Bautista Ibarra Carvajal

[TOTAL : 23 (22 in Barros Gonzalez), who omits Cabo 1° Fogonero (Stoker) Luis Contreras Castro (from the Yáñez, 24th August)]

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FOOTNOTE (taken from :Noziglia Barbagelata, Luis, Contraalmirante SN : ‘El Piloto Pardo y Shackleton (Pag Marina)

The performance of the commander and the crew of the Yelcho was a brilliant achievement which deserved the gratitude and praise of the expeditionary team, the national authorities, the town, the press and the British Government.

Pilot Luis Pardo was promoted to Pilot, 1° Class.

At that time the commander of the steam tug Yelcho lived with his family in Valparaiso in a house situated in Capilla Street no. 83, Cerro de la Merced.

As a result of his feat of achievement, a group of Pardo’s neighbours in the district managed to obtain from the municipality the right to change the name of the street: in October 1916, the Capilla Street was renamed ‘Yelcho Street’ in honour of the little ship.

Pardo’s house no longer stands there. After about twenty years it was demolished, along with others, to make room for renovation of the area. Today in its place there is a modern school and a convent to the sacred family of Nazareth, constructed on an embankment closed in by a solid wall. Without doubt, he would have approved of the fact that on the surface of the outside wall a plaque was erected that reminds the future generations that there lived live there of one of our most celebrated peacetime heroes : Pilot Pardo
First, You Have to Find a Ship
Rorke Bryan

It is not quite certain who first sighted the Antarctic continent. The three “established” candidates for the first sighting are Captain Thaddeus Bellingshausen of the Imperial Russian Navy, Edward Bransfield of the Royal Navy, and Nathaniel Palmer, an American sealing captain from Stonington, Connecticut. Bellingshausen was the commander of the 985-ton frigate Vostok, sent out by Tsar Alexander I in 1818-1820 with the 530-ton sloop-of-war Mirnyi to explore the Southern Ocean. On January 16, 1820, their progress was halted by a major ice shelf at 69°21′28″ S, 2°14′50″ W, which was almost certainly the feature now known as the Fimbul Ice Shelf on Princess Martha Coast. Several weeks later the ships were again halted by an ice shelf off the Princess Astrid Coast, close to the Lazarev Ice Shelf. Both ice shelves are part of the Antarctic continent and either should count as continental sightings, but visibility was poor and Bellingshausen probably did not recognize the significance of his sighting.

In November, 1819, Edward Bransfield, the Irish master of HMS Andromache, was temporarily posted to command the brig Williams by Captain Searle, the senior British naval officer in Valparaiso. Williams was owned by William Smith of Blyth who, during a voyage from Montevideo to Valparaiso, had sighted Livingstone Island, one of the South Shetlands. By December 19, Williams with Bransfield in command was back at Livingstone Island and during the next three months explored and charted the South Shetlands and adjacent coasts. On January 30, Bransfield sighted the peaks of the Trinity Peninsula rising to 1850 m at 63°39′S, 60°34′W, the northern part of what is now the Antarctic Peninsula. As Bellingshausen was working with the Julian calendar, this was actually only three days after those of Bellingshausen and Bransfield.

The American candidate, Nathaniel Palmer, was one of many sealing captains from New and Britain who rushed south during the summers of 1820-21 following James Sheffield of Stonington, who visited the South Shetlands on the brig Hersilia in 1819 and reported abundant colonies of fur seals. Palmer, the second mate of Hersilia, returned to the Antarctic in command of the tiny 44-ton sloop Hero, one of the smallest ships ever to visit Antarctica. On November 16, 1820, he “stood over towards the land” from Deception Island to what was either Trinity Island or Trinity Peninsula and next day reached the entry to Orléans Channel at 63°45′S reporting “extensive mountainous country, more sterile and dismal if possible....than the South Shetlands”. Palmer’s sighting occurred fully ten months after those of Bellingshausen and Bransfield, but for close to one hundred and fifty years, Palmer was celebrated in the United States as the discoverer of the Antarctic continent. What is unquestioned is that the first people to land on the continent in February, 1821, were from the American sealer Cecilia commanded by John Davis of New Haven, Connecticut.

While the Russian claim is now well-established, close reading of the journals of Captain James Cook from his circumnavigation with the Whitby cat barks, HMS Resolution and HMS Adventure, would suggest that he was actually the first to sight the continent in late January, 1774. Cook was a very determined explorer and despite miserable conditions on the little Resolution, with “ropes like wires, Sails like boards or plates of Metal and the Shivers froze fast in the blocks” he forced his way south to 71°10′ S, 106°54′W off the Wallgren Coast. Blocked from further progress by heavy pack ice, in clear calm weather Cook was able to see, away to the south “Ice hills whose lofty summits reached the Clowds”. Resolution was about 200 km from the Thurston Peninsula, well within the Antarctic visibility range in clear weather. The sighting seems strong evidence that Cook did sight the continent though, a cautious scientist, he made no such claim and though he believed firmly in the existence of the continent, he also felt that it was most unlikely to be of any value.
Whoever actually discovered the Antarctic continent was unquestionably on board a ship. Only since the Second World War has it been possible to fly directly to the continent; the first plane to fly into Antarctica was a Douglas R4D (Dakota) on January 29, 1947, which flew over 1000 km during Operation Highjump to Little America on the Ross Ice Shelf after a JATO-assisted take-off from the United States aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea. Aircraft have become increasingly important in the intervening years, but even now no country carries out research in Antarctica without relying in large measure on the support of ships. In view of the critical role of ships in Antarctic exploration, it is surprising that, until now, no attempt has been made to gather together information about the hundreds of ships which have worked in Antarctica and their role in successive expeditions. This gap has now been filled by my newly-published book “Ordeal by Ice: Ships of the Antarctic” which includes plans, photos, paintings and maps from many public and private sources around the world in a comprehensive, archival source.* Particularly notable are two original paintings by Austin Dwyer of the American Society of Marine Artists showing Endurance in the mist and the arrival of the James Caird at South Georgia.

Until after the Second World War, few of the ships which worked in Antarctica were designed specially for the task. Some earlier expeditions like those of Cook with HMS Resolution and HMS Adventure, Bellingshausen with Vostok and Mirnyi, and D’Urville with L’Astrolabe and La Zélée, enjoyed substantial official support and could take their pick of available naval vessels. A few private expeditions had access to ships specially designed for polar work like Scott’s Discovery, Von Drygalski’s Gauss, Amundsen’s Fram, and Charcot’s Pourquoi Pas?. Most expedition leaders, however, had to scour the harbours of Europe and North America for cheap, affordable ships which were strong enough to handle the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic ice. Many expeditions were made possible only by collapse of the Arctic whaling industry which lowered the price of redundant wooden Norwegian whaling barques. Although old, tired and often suffering from rot, many performed at least as well in the Antarctic as their expensive, specially designed cousins. Antarctic (Kap Nor), built in 1871, was used by Bull for his circumnavigation in 1896, and by Nordenskjöld on his Swedish expedition, before foundering in the Weddell Sea in 1903. More fortunate was Belgica (Patria) built in 1884 used by Adrien de Gerlache, which survived the first expedition to winter in the Antarctic, eventually to be sunk by German bombers near Narvik in 1940. One of the finest ships ever to serve in Antarctica was Scotia (Hekla) built in Drammen in 1872, and used by William Speirs Bruce for the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, 1902-04, though yacht designer, G.L.Watson who restored her, originally thought that the best thing to do with her is “to fill her with stones and take to Ailsa Craig and sink her”.

The Newfoundland seal fishery was the other source of affordable, robust wooden barques and four of the most famous, built by the Alexander Stephen yard in Dundee were found there. Nimrod, built in 1866, and used by Sir Ernest Shackleton during his epic attempt to reach the South Pole in 1907-09, was the smallest and oldest. No plans of Nimrod have been traced, or of the other Stephen-built ship used by both Shackleton and by Mawson,
Expedition, 1914-16, during which she drifted, rudderless, for many months trapped in ice, before eventually reaching New Zealand with a jury-rudder. Shackleton’s other ship, the famous Endurance (Polaris), launched in 1913 at Sandefjord by the master builder Jakobsen, was an anomaly. She was designed for a consortium including de Gerlache and Lars Christensen, to carry wealthy tourists to the Arctic, but they ran out of money and she remained moored off Sandefjord until bought by Shackleton. Apart from numerous photos showing her struggles with ice in the Weddell Seas, the book also includes newly-drawn sheerlines of Endurance.

With the race to the South Pole finished, it became very difficult to raise funds for “pure” Antarctic exploration. However, C.A.Larsen had initiated a southern whaling industry based on South Georgia in 1905, and after the First World War this expanded rapidly involving both Norwegian and Scottish firms. The industry was initially shore-based, and the main innovation in ships was rapid development of whale catchers, while various old merchant ships were used for oil transport. After the war, Norwegian whalers, increasingly resentful of paying taxes to the Falkland Islands government, started to develop pelagic whaling, penetrating ever deeper into Antarctic waters. Factory ships were needed to process whales at sea, a need initially filled by conversion of old merchant ships, and in 1923-24, C.A.Larsen brought the old Belfast-built Maharonda, renamed the Sir James Clark Ross, south to the Ross Ice Shelf. As the whaling boom took off, these converted ships were replaced by large, much more efficient custom-designed ships, fitted with stern slipways and Hartmann cookers, such as the 11,789-ton Kosmos built by Workman Clark in Belfast. Pelagic whaling also generated a demand for larger, more powerful “Sydhavs” whale catchers with greatly expanded range. Evolution in catcher design during the interwar years was continual, with introduction of features such as gangways linking the navigating bridge to the bow-mounted harpoon gun, and oil-fired engines, and these highly agile advanced catchers eventually provided the prototypes for the corvettes that played such a critical role in the Battle of the Atlantic.

The explosive growth of whaling raised serious concerns about the survival of whale stocks, triggering the far-ranging surveys of the Discovery Committee, initially with Scott’s old Discovery, then with the steel-hulled Discovery II and William Scoresby. The activities of Norwegian whalers searching for new whaling areas also set off a rush to stake out territorial claims. The Australian Sir Douglas Mawson was particularly active using the old Discovery, planting the Union Jack wherever the shore of East Antarctica could be reached, while Lars Christensen relied on a aircraft precariously transported on the tiny sealer Norvegia to claim large areas for Norway. The situation became even more complicated as the United States joined in with large expeditions led by Admiral Richard Byrd, using “Little America” bases on the Ross Ice Shelf. Old wooden barques, City of New York (Samson) and Bear, were used, but Byrd also risked sending steamers Eleanor Bolling and Jacob Ruppert, with thin steel hulls, into the heavy pack ice of the Ross Sea. Territorial angst was stirred further by Japanese and
German whalers who defied international whaling treaties, and by the ominous Nazi expedition with large Dornier flying boats launched by catapult from the 8,488-ton Schwabenland to drop swastika-adorned darts as territorial claims. The United States government decided it was time to become seriously involved and took over Byrd’s third expedition as the U.S. Services Expedition.

A brief hiatus during the Second World War soon ended with attacks by the German raider Pingvin on Norwegian whale catchers and factory ships. These prompted the British government to set up naval Operation Tabarin bases along the Antarctic Peninsula, starting a record of Antarctic activity continuous to the present day. This soon changed into the postwar Falkland Island Dependencies Survey (now the British Antarctic Survey). FIDS was initially supported by a diverse collection of ships including the Falkland Islands mail steamer Fitzroy, the wooden Trepassey from the Newfoundland “Splinter Fleet” and the old American netlayer John Biscoe, but in 1956 the first specially constructed ship, John Biscoe II, was launched in Scotland to start her exceptional 35-year Antarctic career.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the continent, Australia also established permanent research bases in inaccessible East Antarctica, serviced initially by the old, seaworthy, but desperately uncomfortable Norwegian sealer, Wyatt Earp, and then by the specially-designed polar Dan ships of Lauritzen Lines in Copenhagen. The United States also continued its pre-war involvement, mounting several very large naval expeditions to the Ross Ice Shelf, partly as training exercises for possible Arctic defense operations. These were particularly notable for introducing a submarine, USS Sennett to the Antarctic (not very successfully) and also, for the first time, icebreakers. The initial icebreakers were the 6,515-ton Wind-class icebreakers built during the war, but as operations expanded during the International Geophysical Year, 1957, these were followed by the famous 8,450-ton USCG Glacier and later by the 13,190 ton displacement USCG Polar Star and Polar Sea with dual diesel and gas turbine engines.

Activities and international co-operation in Antarctica expanded dramatically with the IGY, involving new participants like the Soviet Union, France, Japan and Belgium, and requiring hundreds of ships for supply and research. Many of these such as the German Polarstern, the BAS Bransfield, Ernest Shackleton and James Clark Ross, and the Australian Aurora Australis, were specially-designed for ice navigation and oceanographic research. This was a period of rapid advance in icebreaker technology with the appearance of features like water-deluge systems to reduce ice friction, azimuthal propulsion and spoon bows and several powerful new icebreakers appeared including the Argentinian Almirante Irizar, the Japanese Shirase I and Shirase II and the 24,000 shp Swedish Oden. However, more controversial was the introduction of shipborne Antarctic tourism, largely due to Lars-Eric Linblad, who brought the Lindblad Explorer to the Antarctic Peninsula in 1971. Tourism expanded very
rapidly and now accounts for some 50,000 visitors each year. Inevitably some of the ships involved are unsuitable for harsh Antarctic conditions and it is often difficult to find a sufficient number of experienced ice captains. A series of accidents and groundings have raised concerns about the safety and environmental impact of shipborne tourism. These concerns peaked with the 2006 sinking of Explorer in the Bransfield Strait (fortuitously without loss of life) and the 2007 visit of the huge 108,865-ton Golden Princess to the Antarctic Peninsula, and resulted the 2010 International Maritime Organization prohibition of ships requiring heavy oil. This has eliminated the use of very large cruise liners and reduced the threat of marine pollution, but it has also created uncertainties for Antarctic research by reducing the amount of support available from large icebreakers and posing serious questions about the future directions of shipping in Antarctic waters.


‘The Longest Winter: Scott’s other heroes’
by Meredith Hooper (Published by John Murray (2010); ISBN 978-0-7195-9580-6)
Reviewed by Seamus Taaffe

The next few years will see a slew of publications on Antarctic topics reflecting the myriad of significant centenaries, including the attainment of the South Pole and Shackleton’s heroic ‘Endurance’ expedition. Interwoven into these great epic tales are the lesser known stories equally important but all too often neglected.

There are few stories which can match that of Scott’s Eastern party for hardship, endurance, enterprise and sheer determination. Surprisingly, the party has received little attention heretofore. Raymond Priestley published his own account in 1914 but a combination of the outbreak of the Great War and the destruction of his publisher’s warehouse by a Zeppelin in 1917 ensured that the party’s story was little told. Katherine Lambert published an admirable account in 2002 with the title ‘Hell with a capital ‘H’ but Hooper’s book advances the study substantially.

It is often forgotten that Scott’s expedition had a number of distinct goals and, aside from the main polar party, exploring parties were planned to go West and East also. The six-strong Eastern party comprised; Lt Victor Campbell, Dr. Murray Levick, Raymond Priestley and Petty Officers Abbott, Browning and Dickason. Originally, the party was to explore and carry out scientific work on King Edward VII Land. Having dropped Scott and the main shore party at Cape Evans Terra Nova headed East. However, landing did not prove possible and Campbell ordered the ship to Victoria Land as Scott’s original order dictated. Famously, they encountered Amundsen in the Bay of Whales on their way and Campbell returned to Cape Evans to advise Scott of the Norwegians’ presence.
The Eastern party then headed to the North, thus becoming the Northern party. Pitching up in Robertson Bay, near Cape Adare, they built their hut close to Borchgrevink’s 1899 hut. We get an excellent sense of the daily routine of the men in the ten months they spent there; the chores in the hut, the taking of scientific observations and the constant maintenance and upgrading of kit in preparation for the spring sledging journeys. As with the main polar party distractions in the long winter’s night was provided by the publication of the party’s own newspaper, *The Adelie Mail & Cape Adare Times*. Contributions came primarily from the three officers - particularly ‘doggerel’. Levick’s paen to the blizzard lamented their utter helplessness in the face of the blizzard:-

‘Hear the wind yell  
Hang on for a spell  
If you let go the rope it may blow you to Hell.’

Hooper’s particular skill lies in her use of the party’s own diaries to draw out their individual characters. Amongst the officers Campbell is the brusque sea dog, Levick the cerebral medic, and Priestley the abstemious geologist. Her understanding of their environment is impressive and, coupled with her empathetic approach, her writing is always engaging - none more so when Priestley (a veteran of Shackleton’s ‘Nimrod’ expedition, the youngest in the party, thoughtful, efficient, reliable and the only scientist) is its focus.

The book carefully establishes the party’s overall place in the *Terra Nova* expedition. Hooper tells their story in the context of Scott and his own endeavours many hundreds of miles away. Scott’s own drama is not allowed to overwhelm the Eastern party narrative. And when the sledging commences the routine of survival drives them on. Ultimately their exploration is frustrated by the relative inaccessibility of the interior and the uncertain condition of the sea ice.

The most extraordinary part of the story is that of their second winter. Brought by *Terra Nova* from Cape Adare to Terra Nova Bay they embark on six weeks of geologizing. When the ship returns to pick them up it is thwarted by the ice and is unable to reach them. As the *Terra Nova* departs for New Zealand without the stranded men they face a winter with only summer sledging clothes and minimal rations. Over-wintering in an ice cave on Inexpressible Island (in cramped, cold and fetid conditions) they survive cheek-by-jowl for six months. Even with their supplies are carefully rationed by Priestley (acting as storekeeper) the necessities didn’t last long. Tobacco was one of the first to go and an extraordinary variety of ever-unlikely materials were smoked, including tea leaves and shavings from the teak sledge meter mixed with the Naval tobacco. They all become consumed with dreams and fantasies about food. In one of the last interviews Priestley gave before his death he opined that he’d never go through the experience again ‘but it has made me value commonplace comforts with lifelong pleasure’.

Their days in the ice cave were spent melting oil from blubber, keeping the fires going and maximising the use of the seal meat which comprised much of their diet. Experimentation was common; Campbell’s stirring of the hoosh with a penguin leg minus its meat was pronounced a success while Priestley’s introduction of seal’s brain (at Abbott’s suggestion) into the hoosh was rated the greatest success of the winter. Physical deterioration was inevitable with the restricted diet, lack of exercise and inadequate clothing and yet they retained their resolve not to break into the sledging rations which were preserved for the following spring (when they would make their dash to Hut Point and safety).

It is an enthralling story wonderfully told in Hooper’s smartly researched and elegant prose. It is a fitting tribute to the six men of Scott’s Northern party.
In Shackleton’s Footsteps:
A return to the Heart of the Antarctic
by Henry Worsley (published by Virgin (2011); ISBN: 978 1905264933
Reviewed by Seamus Taaffe

On the 9th of January 1909 four men stood 97 geographical miles from the South Pole. Cold, tired, emaciated, they had spent 10 weeks reaching this spot and they would soon turn to the long wearisome trudge north, to safety. That achievement and the brave decision of their leader to turn for home and not to risk the lives of his men (and himself) would transform Ernest Shackleton into a global figure. His leadership qualities exhibited by that decision would reverberate over the decades to a point where, in the modern world today, the Boss’s man-management skills are celebrated and taught in business schools the world over.

Henry Worsley (probably a distant relative of Frank Worsley) was so inspired by the deeds of Shackleton that it spurred him on to re-trace the early explorer’s southern journey and to complete the route, the last 97 geographical miles (with some descendants of the original party) in his honour. Some people might decry the relevancy of such modern adventurism given the advances in clothing, diet and navigation. However, the environment of the Antarctic remains harsh and unremitting in the face of modern technology and the inner fortitude, mental resolve and physical toughness required of any polar trekker remains unchanged.

In the opening chapter of Footsteps Worsley recounts his boyhood fascination with polar explorers and his burgeoning interest in Shackleton, in particular. As an adult this passion has become all-consuming. It informs his life and his career as a professional soldier.

Worsley’s juxtapositioning of his daily diary entries with Shackleton’s own story is a clever device. It draws the reader in very quickly and engenders an innate sympathy with the modern party. Their struggle and toil frequently finds echoes in the experiences of Shackleton’s men. This readable account of a modern expedition is very personal too. The author is frank about the tensions that naturally arise in an endeavour of this nature, tensions which an Edwardian such as Shackleton was unlikely to relate. Worsley talks openly about his own physical weakness on New Year’s Day. He admits that his mental toughness cannot compensate for his physical weakness. In contravention of an undertaking to accept assistance if in difficulty he spurns the offer of help from his teammates. He admits to his stubbornness. However, by lightening his load (in consultation with the team) he is able to carry on.

The trials and tribulations of the journey are written in a direct and no-nonsense style. Whilst lacking the poetry of Shackleton’s prose this style is, nonetheless, always engaging. Footsteps tells the story well and for those unfamiliar with the Boss’s ‘furthest south’ it is a very good introduction and should encourage the reader to go and read Shackleton’s own account in ‘The Heart of the Antarctic’.

And what other projects lie in store for the author? In his postscript he reflects on the lessons of the ‘Footsteps’ expedition as well as Shackleton’s own polar record after the return of the Nimrod expedition in 1909. No doubt the call of the ice will continue to summon a certain Mr. Henry Worsley.
Great Endeavour: Ireland’s Antarctic Explorers

Michael Smith has earned a well-deserved following amongst polar enthusiasts. He has written several important books about polar explorers such as the award winning *The Unsung Hero* about Tom Crean, *Sir James Wordie: Polar Crusader* and *Captain Francis Crozier: Last Man Standing?* His latest book *Great Endeavour*, about the Antarctic explorers from Ireland, carries on the tradition of well researched, accessible writing and it does not disappoint.

The author recounts the tales, and contributions, of the Irish men who explored the Great White Continent in the last two hundred years; from Edward Bransfield in 1820, through Francis Crozier in the 1840s to Ernest Shackleton and to modern day explorers such as Mike Barry. Inevitably, much of the material on Shackleton, Crean and Crozier he has covered before, and so, the parts that are most interesting are the sections on four of the men who served under Captain Scott and Shackleton. These were the tough, resourceful seamen who were the backbone of these expeditions. Apart from Tom Crean, the men about whom he writes are Patrick Keohane from west Cork, Robert Forde also from Cork and Mortimer McCarthy from Kinsale - all served with Scott on the *Terra Nova* expedition (1910-13); and Timothy McCarthy, Mortimer’s brother, who served on *Endurance* with Shackleton. Michael Smith has managed to unearth much new material on each of these men. Not an easy task, as most of the ordinary seamen left precious little written record.

Timothy McCarthy was described by Frank Worsley as, “the most irrepressible optimist he has ever met”; some accolade for anyone who suffered the ordeal of the Endurance Expedition. This characteristic, and McCarthy’s extensive experience of handling small boats, made him the obvious choice to accompany Shackleton on the *James Caird* to South Georgia. Of the three seamen on board, he survived the journey in the best shape, so Shackleton relied on him to look after Vincent and McNish whilst Shackleton and the others crossed the mountains to Stromness. What a wait he must have had! Michael Smith recounts the tale that, when Frank Worsley came back to rescue the three seaman, he was greeted by McCarthy saying disappointedly, “Well, we thought the Skipper [Worsley] would have come back”. They failed to recognise Worsley after his bath and shave and mistook him for a Norwegian sailor! Six months after his return to England, Tim McCarthy joined the *Narragansett*, a 9,000 ton oil tanker crossing the North Atlantic. Unprotected from U Boat attack, the *Narragansett* was hit by a torpedo and sank with all hands on 16 March 1917. Timothy did not even live long enough to receive his Polar Medal. This is in contrast to his brother Mortimer, a veteran of the *Terra Nova* expedition, who was still working into his 80s as a night watchman in Lyttelton Harbour. He also had the opportunity of revisiting Scott’s hut with two other survivors of the *Terra Nova* expedition in 1963. What will be special to many readers is the way in which Michael Smith has tracked down obscure material on these men, so his book has photographs of this 1963 visit to the Cape Evans hut by Mortimer and a 1917 ‘memory card’ for his brother Tim. In the same way as he has championed the memory of Tom Crean, Michael Smith has done much to bring the contributions of these Kinsale men to the attention of the wider public and he has been a supporter of placing a bust of the two McCarthy brothers in their home town.
Another little known Irish explorer to whom Michael Smith devotes a chapter is Edward Bransfield. In 1820, he commanded a small two-masted brig of just 216 tons called Williams in search of new land south of the South Shetland Islands. Sailing in an un-strengthened ship without a support vessel “was a remarkable leap of faith”, says Smith. The Williams sailed out into what is now called the Bransfield Strait crossing latitude 63 degrees. On Sunday 30 January 1820 Midshipman Poynter recorded in his journal the sighting of “immense mountains, rude crags and barren ridges…” The Antarctic Peninsula had been observed for the first time. As Michael Smith explains this journal, which confirms the earliest sighting of the continent, was only found in the 1990s and is now in the National Library of New Zealand.

Michael Smith concludes his account of the great endeavours of Irish Antarctic explorers with details of modern day explorers including an account of the ‘South Aris’ (South Again) expedition to re-enact Shackleton’s James Caird voyage and his traverse of South Georgia. After rolling the replica James Caird three times in a Force 10 gale their attempt to cross the Southern Ocean was abandoned but the expedition had more success in crossing the South Georgia mountains- albeit the four-man team took 48 hours to do it and made camp twice. It makes you wonder all over again how Shackleton, Worsley and Crean, with nails hammered into their boots as their only preparation, survived their ordeal.

With the notable exception of Ernest Shackleton, the contribution of Irish men to the exploration of Antarctica has been largely overlooked by historians. This book does much to put the record straight. Michael Smith has rightly gained much praise championing the memory of these Irishmen. In his introduction he describes them “as men of exceptional courage, with seemingly inexhaustible depths of endurance and unshakeable resolve” No-one would argue with that.

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Ordeal By Ice: Ships of the Antarctic

Of the many Antarctic expeditions over the past 300 years, or so, few are remembered by their official titles, most are remembered by their ships. So it is that Scott’s first foray to the frozen continent (1901/4) is often called, the ‘Discovery’ Expedition. Shackleton’s first adventure to the South as leader (1907/9) is usually termed, the ‘Nimrod’ Expedition. Somehow, the ‘British National Antarctic Expedition’ and the ‘British Antarctic Expedition’ (respectively) do not have the same ‘ring’. They are impersonal labels. Expeditions bearing ships’ names, on the other hand, have an identity, a personality almost. For those of us who first discovered Shackleton through the story of the Elephant Island rescue, it HAS to be the ‘Endurance’ Expedition. Who, apart from polar historians, has ever heard of the ‘Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition’ (1914/6)?
Rorke Bryan’s book on the ships of the Antarctic is, quite simply, wonderful. It is beautifully presented, lavishly illustrated and, above all, thoroughly researched. The author is well-placed in presenting us with this weighty tome (the book runs to 560 glossy pages). The son of a merchant sea captain, Bryan has visited many parts of the world during his career with the British Antarctic Survey. He has been involved, also, in environmental conservation and forestry at the Universities of Alberta and Toronto.

As the spiel states, on the inner fly of the book’s dust cover, ships have been of vital importance in Antarctic exploration. Quite apart from the severe challenges of ice-navigation in unknown waters and fearsome tempests, frequently the success of expeditions was determined by the qualities of the ships involved. Who can imagine what would have become of the men on Elephant Island had the little (and aged) Yelcho not finally made a passage through the pack-ice? How did Stenhouse’s Aurora somehow survive endless months of storm and entrapment in the pack-ice before finally, miraculously, making it back to New Zealand? Without the supreme skill of the captain and the durability of a veteran polar ship those members of the Ross Sea Party still alive surely would have perished. Images of Nimrod being towed from New Zealand by the steamer Koonya in mountainous seas leave an indelible impression on the mind. Without these little ships and the extraordinary seamanship of their masters there would have been no history of Antarctic discovery to record.

As for the way expeditions can be ‘shaped’ by their ships, I am minded of the British Graham Land Expedition (1934/7) and its ship, Penola. Despite a reasonably satisfactory survey report prior to setting off south, problems were encountered the minute the vessel headed out into the Atlantic. The entire first season of the BGLE had to be largely curtailed, in fact, simply because the engines kept slipping off their mountings. In mid-Expedition, the ship had to be overhauled comprehensively in South Georgia if it was to stand any chance of going back to Barry Island (Marguerite Bay) to collect the shore party. Had the ship failed to return south in the early part of 1937 the consequences do not bear thinking about. There were no other ships anywhere near Graham Land at the time.

It is not too hard to imagine the affection some (if not all) the explorers felt for their ship at the end of a long voyage.

What is especially pleasing about Ordeal By Ice is the fact that the whole ‘family’ of Antarctic ships is embraced from the earliest times to the present. I was particularly gratified to see that even the tourist cruise ships are included. My first adventure south was in the Kapitan Khlebnikov, a solid, somewhat austere ‘no frills’ Russian icebreaker, with its stern-side helicopter pads and its two attendant ‘Air Vladivostok’ choppers and an engine deck-level swimming pool (more accurately – a water-filled tank that would slop about relentlessly as the vessel ploughed through the 60ft swells of the Southern Ocean). There she is on page 473, crashing her way through (in this case) the Arctic pack. She is a beautiful ship in an ugly sort of way.

This book includes many interesting photographs, scale drawings and useful (coloured) maps. Very successfully, Rorke Bryan presents a convincing and compelling story of polar exploration and its ships. The two are inextricably linked. Anyone who fails to appreciate this fails to understand polar history.

(For more information contact Laura Wilkinson at Seaforth Publishing: 01226 734267: email publicity@pen-and-sword.co.uk)
**Sailor on Ice: Tom Crean**

by David Hirzel (Published by Terra Nova Press (2011)):

Unquestionably, of all the ‘other’ (non-officer) polar men that deserve attention as we now approach the Centenary of Shackleton’s *Endurance* expedition in 2014, Tom Crean stands out. Along with Frank Worsley, it was this durable Irishman who accompanied Sir Ernest over the virginal mountains of South Georgia three days after the *James Caird* had made a final landfall at ‘Peggotty Camp’ at the head of King Haakon Bay.

Of course, we have Michael Smith’s excellent historical book on Crean, *An Unsung Hero* (Headline, 2001) to thank for a first class understanding of the man and his time. David Hirzel’s little book, however, offers a totally different perspective. *Sailor on Ice* is, in fact, a printed segment of a larger story of Crean’s Antarctic adventures told by the author in his on-line audio-drama of the same name. Episodes one and two (of ten) are now available on-line and tell of the sailor’s experiences on Scott’s *Discovery* expedition (1901-4) [follow the author’s website link on www.antarctic-discovery.com].

This book is a print continuation of that story through to the conclusion of Scott’s *Terra Nova* expedition (1910-13). Whilst Shackleton fans will not discover, therefore, anything of *their* man in *Sailor on Ice* they WILL learn a great deal about one of his most trusted and reliable *Endurance* men.

The book reads like a novel. It is not intended to be a mainstream historical account. Rather, it is, in many ways, a passionate and imaginary account of life on the ocean wave and polar ice, as seen through the ‘eyes’ of Crean. Hirzel is very well-informed and his story is extraordinarily convincing. It has all the ingredients of an enthralling drama (the personalities; the long sea voyages; the drama of survival; and the tragedy, too). Familiar polar men come to ‘life’. The daily routine on board ship or in camp is tangible. Whereas the historian will often mention the fact that the ponies were shot for meat (it was a hard fact of life and there is often little else to say or discuss) Hirzel’s book goes much further. The reader truly feels the pain of loss (the bond of man and beast split asunder for the sake of saving weight and avoiding scurvy) and we see the bloodied snow. The only thing this clever book lacks is a soundtrack and the smells!

And by ‘penning’ *Sailor on Ice*, the author has a serious message too. As he points out in his Introduction, ‘The familiar names belong to those who claimed to lead (Franklin, Ross, Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, to name some), but those who lead are nothing without those who come a few steps behind, hauling the gear, pitching the camp, walking the long walk (steadfast, enduring). Without them, there would be no leaders. There would be no survivors, and no story to be told’. Hirzel lists those ‘a few steps behind’ as: Frank Wild, Ernest Joyce, Taff Evans, Bill Lashly, and Tom Crean. It is very good to see that attention to the ‘other’ polar men is finally being paid, something I have been advocating for years. For a good, ‘light’ read on Tom Crean look no further than *Sailor on Ice*.

[The book may be obtained at Amazon.com (http://www.amazon.com/Sailor-Ice-Crean-Antarctic-1910-1913) or through the author’s website. Watch out for the sequel in 2013*]
The Quest for Frank Wild:
Including his Original Memoirs by Angie Butler.
(Published by Jacklebury Press (2011); ISBN: 978-0-9569272-0-0)
Reviewed by Stephen Scott-Fawcett

Frank Wild was no ordinary polar explorer and Angie Butler’s book, *The Quest For Frank Wild*, in no ordinary book. It is a book any self-respecting polar enthusiast MUST buy. Anyone who would consider themselves a fan of Shackleton has to be a fan of Wild, too. Veteran of five historic Antarctic expeditions (*the* expeditions of the Heroic Age, some would say) Frank Wild disappeared from the ‘radar’ after the melancholic return of the *Quest* expedition in 1922. His life, after Shackleton, is little known and his apparent ‘sad’ demise is barely mentioned by polar historians. If it is mentioned at all, the facts are vague, details about his life in South Africa are blurred and wretched rumours abound. Angie Butler now changes all that!

Frank Wild was, metaphorically speaking at least, a giant of a man. He was durable, dependable and totally savvy in all things dangerous and cold. It was no accident Shackleton handed him command of the Elephant Islanders as the *James Caird* sailed off to an unknown future. Nor is it a coincidence that a somewhat prematurely-aged Boss took one Frank Wild as his second-in command as the *Quest* headed along the Thames in September 1921, bound, once again, for South Georgia and the Weddell Sea. Little did Shackleton realise that he would never return. Little did Wild think he would soon be burying his commander and friend and assuming full control and responsibility for the Shackleton-Rowett Expedition. This was the fourth expedition the two men had ‘shared’ and, as we now know, it was to be the last.

Angie Butler’s book is a wonderful work of detection. It is an emotional book, too. The truth about Wild’s last 16+ years (1922 – 1939) is finally revealed. The discovery of Frank’s ashes (Butler’s ‘Holy Grail’) in a room under a chapel at Brabhamfontein Cemetery (a central suburb of Johannesburg) is a sensational result. Suddenly the polar explorer becomes a real person again, not just a memory, a rumour. In her book the author proposes, tantalisingly, that one day, the ashes of Wild might return to South Georgia and Shackleton (to fulfil the wishes of Trix, Frank’s late wife). Wild, referring to Shackleton’s gravesite in his Memoirs, described Grytviken as a ‘romantic spot…..an ideal resting place’. Trix, like Emily Shackleton before, wanted her Frank to find that same ‘ideal resting place’. That is why, on his passing in August 1939, she had her husband’s remains cremated and not buried.

On Sunday 4th December 2011, four months after the publication of *The Quest for Frank Wild*, a gravestone was erected next to Shackleton’s and Frank Wild’s ashes finally ‘came home’. The Hon Alexandra Shackleton reminded us all of her grandfather’s comments about Wild, ‘He is my other self. I love him. He has been a tower and strength’. Such is Angie Butler’s passion for her subject that you could imagine her saying these words, too!

And, as if the quest to know of Wild’s final days is not enough, the ‘crown jewels’ of Butler’s book must surely be the polar explorer’s own Memoirs – published here for the first time.
This is truly a wonderful primary source – one of those rare opportunities for the general reader to ‘hear’ from the horse’s mouth.

The author is to be congratulated on producing, I believe, one of the most important polar books published in recent years. It is beautifully produced, too, with quality paper and some wonderful photographs which are rarely, if ever seen. Inevitably, there is that iconic photograph of Shackleton and Wild chatting on the deck of *Quest*. Please buy this book and if you do (you really should), turn to that photograph (page 16) and meditate on it. Try to imagine the scene: the sounds of the sea; the smell of the ozone; the cry of the gull. More significantly, try to imagine the conversation between these two great explorers, these two great friends. It was possibly their last.

‘The South PolarTimes (Volume IV)’


Published by The Scott Polar Research Institute & J & S.L Bonham (2010). ISBN: 978-0-901021-14-4 Reviewed by Ann Savours (Dr. Shirley)

To complement the three beautiful facsimile volumes published in 2002 (SPT I, II & III), readers may be interested to know that the (equally beautiful) fourth volume (SPT Midwinter 1912) has been published in a limited edition of 500 copies by SPRI (owners of the original) and J & S.L Bonham.

During the darkness of the Antarctic winters, officers, scientists and men produced a monthly periodical, both serious and light-hearted, which mirrored scientific work, sledge journeys and amusements during the National Antarctic Expedition 1901-4 in the *Discovery* and Scott’s Last Expedition in *Terra Nova*, 1910-13.

The original issues of the monthly periodicals (now with the Royal Geographical Society/I.B.G and in the British Library) were published in London on the return of the two expeditions (Smith, Elder 1907 & 1914). The first editor was Lieutenant Ernest Shackleton, R.N.R, followed by the Tasmanian physicist L.C.Bernacchi and then by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, who was later to write that classic of polar literature, *The Worst Journey in the World*.

Volume IV, Midwinter 1912, was not published in London, as it contained no illustrations by Dr Edward Wilson and no reports by captain Scott, both of whom has perished on the return from the Pole (although where was not yet known). However, it was edited and illustrated by Cherry-Garrard (the ‘Cheery Blackguard’), helped by Frank Debenham, with photographs, doggerel verse, interesting and amusing contributions by Griffith Taylor (sent in the year before) and other members of the small party at Cape Evans, left in the charge of Surgeon E.L.Atkinson, R.N. There are silhouettes of Atkinson, Tom Crean and ‘Marie’ Nelson, all by Debenham.
This new volume, in keeping with the three earlier ones, reproduces the issue of Midwinter 1912 in facsimile, plus some previously unpublished illustrations by Wilson, with Introduction, commentary and biographical notes, covering all the volumes, by Ann Savours (Dr. Shirley), the Discovery’s second biographer (Bernacchi was her first).

The introduction also outlines literary productions during the long winter nights in the high latitudes of the Canadian Arctic, by Parry’s and other 19th Century British naval expeditions, including the Franklin Search.

There are two appendices on sledge flags, the first by H.G Carr, The Mariner’s Mirror, 1941 and the second by Barbara Tomlinson of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, which bears the charming title ‘Chivalry at the Poles’. The book is designed by Vera Brice.

Along with the recent publication of a facsimile of The Adelie Penguin (see separate review, ed) in 2010 by the Friends of the State Library of South Australia and the Friends of Mawson at the South Australian Museum, we are fortunate to have two such additions to polar literature during the centenary of the ‘Heroic Age’ of Antarctic exploration.

(For more information on how to purchase your copy of SPT IV please see John Bonham’s advisement displayed elsewhere in the Journal. Proceeds from the sale of this volume will support the work of the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, a centre of excellence in the study of the Arctic and Antarctic. In fact, I highly recommend all FOUR volumes now published, they are of stunning quality and a ‘must buy’ for anyone with a serious interest in polar history. As I understand it, only a small quantity of Volumes I, II & III remain available so hurry while stocks last – ed).

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The Adelie Blizzard:
Mawson’s Forgotten Newspaper 1913
Published by the Friends of the State Library of South Australia and the Friends of Mawson at South Australia Museum (2010).

The Adelie Blizzard newspaper (what a clever title!) was produced in Douglas Mawson’s hut during the second, unanticipated, year of the Australian Antarctic Expedition (1911-14). In this lavishly-produced book the pages of the newspaper are reproduced for the first time, complete with editorial annotations and at their original size.

As Mawson’s great granddaughter, Emma McEwin, explains in the preface, the context for the production of the Adelie Blizzard could not have been more difficult. The extra year was unexpected, most of their research programme had been completed, Mawson was struggling to regain his health, two men had died and the wireless operator was mentally unstable. It was a real trial to stay focused on anything. So, the stated aim of the newspaper was ... “the crystallisation of our ideas, and additional means of social enjoyment and ... to voice the spirit of the ... Expedition”. The newspapers included a wide variety of writing from
scientific articles to world news (made possible thanks to the sporadic wireless connection) and advertisements. Each of the four issues from April, May, June, August and October 1913 are reproduced in full facsimile and so it is possible to get a true insight into the minds and daily lives of the men.

The book includes an authoritative 10-page, colour illustrated, introduction about the production of the newspaper by Elizabeth Leane of the University of Tasmania and Mark Pharaoh of South Australia University, and biographies of each of the men.

Three versions of the book have been published; 199 copies are hand numbered and bound in half leather; 450 copies are hand bound in decorated cloth and 300 are in soft covers. It is an essential addition to any serious polar library.

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**Putting South Georgia On The Map**


Back in 2006 (I think it was) Sally Poncet sent out an email seeking financial support for the making of a bronze bust of Duncan Carse. Once made, the bust was to be displayed at the Grytviken Museum, South Georgia. Sally’s appeal fell on fertile ground. With the dedicated support of the South Georgia Association (the SGA administered the Appeal) a superb bust was sculpted by the talented Jon Edgar. On the back cover of Alec Trendall’s book there is a photograph of the author standing, all smiles, beside a focused yet motionless Verner Duncan Carse. The photograph was taken on 12th March 2007 at the official unveiling of the bust. But who was V. Duncan Carse?

Six years ago my knowledge of this man was very limited. Rumour had it that he was a ‘South Georgia man’ who was, on occasions, difficult to deal with and who had ruffled a few feathers of those in high places, not least the Governor of the Falkland Islands.

Carse’s unorthodox style may have lost him a friend or two but there can be no denying he got results. The Ministry for Colonial Affairs (London) certainly felt that he had done a good job.

Between 1951-52, 1953-4 & 1955-56, Carse and a number of small private survey teams (of which Alec Trendall was a member in 1951-52 & 1953-4) completed some excellent work in South Georgia. What is more, the mapping carried out by the South Georgia Surveys (SGS) was achieved on a budget well below what it would have the cost the Government to undertake an official mapping expedition of similar intent.
*Putting South Georgia on the map* is an overdue and beautifully illustrated book. It tells a remarkable story of a unique man whose undisputed ambition was to demonstrate his credentials (through his SGS work) for Leadership of a major trans-Antarctic expedition (see Alec’s article on Carse in the JCS Journal ‘Number Three’ (April 2007)). Together with his small teams of dedicated surveyors, he succeeded in fully mapping South Georgia, making good the earlier ‘ad-hoc’ attempts (mainly by amateurs) to plot the coast and inlets of this magnificent island. Without question the publication of the first coloured map of South Georgia (at a scale of 1:200,000) in 1958 by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys (DOS 610) was the prime achievement of the South Georgia Surveys. This map remained the definitive model until it was superseded by a satellite –based map published by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS (Misc) 12A & 12B) in 2004.

Members will be especially interested to read Appendix 4 as it deals with the epic Shackleton-Worsley-Crean land crossing of South Georgia in 1916. There is an excellent colour map showing the route.

Carse made his Antarctic entrance as a young sailor on board the *RRS Discovery II* in the early 1930’s. In November 1934, at the age of 21, he joined the British Graham Land Expedition (BGLE) 1934/7. He was recruited at the last minute by the BGLE leader (John Rymill) at Port Stanley. On the 2nd December, the Expedition ship *Penola* slipped anchor and headed south, towards Graham Land (known today as the Antarctic Peninsula (part)). As a member of the Discovery Committee, D.C. Borley, put it to the BGLE Advisory Committee chairman, Admiral William Goodenough, ‘(on board was) a schoolboy…anxious to add to his exploring and general experience and, most probably, to get among men of his own standing’. Carse’s BGLE role is largely forgotten (he was restricted to assisting on the ship, as was another young sailor, Norman Gurney, and had no part to play in any of the sledge parties). Even so, in 1939 Carse was awarded the Silver Polar Medal and Clasp in recognition of his services to the BGLE.

Rymill’s expedition clearly made a huge impression on Carse. The SGS have all the hallmarks of the BGLE – its broad methodology and, above all, its total commitment to the task of accurate land-based survey.

Trendall’s book features many beautiful colour plates of the men at work and their subject – the exquisite topography which is South Georgia. The numerous colour maps are very clear and of large-scale. They are hugely informative. The large format of the book is especially pleasing with its uncomplicated language and straightforward presentation (the text is broken into bite-size paragraphs to highlight each salient point).


(This book may be purchased directly from the website www.alectrendall.com.au where the first 15 pages are also available for viewing, free of charge. In case of difficulty with the website, you can contact the author directly by email at info@alectrendall.com.au)
Shackleton’s Dream

I doubt there is a single polar bookshelf anywhere in the world that doesn’t harbour a copy of Sir Vivian (Bunny) Fuchs’s and Sir Edmund (Ed) Hillary’s The Crossing of Antarctica (Cassell, 1958) – the official account of The Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition (TAE) 1955-8. I have a few copies - all signed by V.E Fuchs in 1958, already a famous and favourite polar ‘son’. It is a goodly read, although TAE geologist, Dr P Jon Stephenson, described it at the time as only, ‘a modestly gripping account’. In truth, most official accounts tend to be, well, ‘official’. Stephen Haddelsey’s Shackleton’s Dream, on the other hand, reaches those parts Crossing fails to reach (if you will excuse the cliché). It is a thoroughly researched appraisal of the TAE and covers its historical context, its actuality and, above all, its legacy. It is a great read both in terms of content and style. This magnum opus will go a long way to exploding the myth that only Heroic Age expeditions are noteworthy and exciting.

From the start the reader is swept along an extraordinary sequence of events. We have the preamble - the Trans-Antarctic expeditions that tried to go before and either failed dramatically (for example, Shackleton’s Endurance expedition, 1914-7) or failed to start at all due to a lack of funding and/or political will (for example, Gino Watkins’s plans to cross Antarctica circa 1931). This is followed by a dramatic account of the Advance Party which departed from London in November, 1955, on MV Theron only to nearly suffer the same early fate as Shackleton, in the vice-like grip of an icy Weddell Sea. After battling with countless obstructive ice floes, eight men (under the leadership of K.V.Blaiklock) were left on the southern shore, at Vahsel Bay. How they managed to build ‘Shackleton Base’ with very limited resources (most of the supplies being lost in a storm) and to survive, what Haddelsey aptly describes as a ‘shocking bloody winter,’ beggars belief.

In January 1957 MV Magga Dan, with the main Trans-Polar Party (under the leadership of Dr. V.E Fuchs), arrived at ‘Shackleton’. At the same time, on board HMMNZS Endeavour, the Ross Sea Party (under the celebrity leadership of Sir Edmund Hillary, Fuch’s second-in-command) arrived at McMurdo Sound – and established ‘Scott Base’, at Pram Point – just around the corner from the nascent site of its much larger American cousin ‘Naval Air Facility McMurdo’ (later renamed McMurdo Station).

Like Sir Ernest Shackleton’s original plans in 1914, the intention of the TAE was for a party working from the Ross Sea side to facilitate Fuch’s crossing from the west (by laying depots part way to the Pole). Unlike Shackleton, this was to be done using machines (‘Sno-cats’, older Weasels and (DIY-adapted) tractors). Quite extraordinarily, and quite unlike Shackleton, Hillary’s Ross Sea Party ended up, to all intents and purposes, ‘racing’ Fuchs to the Pole.

This controversial turn of events is coherently described by Haddelsey and makes compelling reading. Somewhere in the heady mix of genuine geographical discovery, (some) serious science and national/political posturing one finds two alpha males vying for ‘Pole position’.
Hillary’s inability to cow-tow to authority and his independent, daredevil, spirit of adventure got him into big trouble with his own paymasters at the conclusion of the TAE. For all his undoubted industry in: (1) making Scott Base a reality; (2) accomplishing the depots-laying he was asked to do and (3) persuading his Government to take the continent seriously (The Ross Dependency Research Committee became established) the newly-crowned Antarctic explorer found himself disenfranchised. As for Bunny Fuchs, a knighthood beckoned and, unlike Hillary, his role as Antarctic mentor was assured. Haddelsey’s discussion on Fuchs’s real motives for the TAE is a revelation. It might appear that the expedition leader was not wholly motivated by science and national prestige. The pursuit of fame and glory in being the first to cross the Antarctic continent seems to have persisted in a corner of his mind (and why not?!).

The author points out, correctly, that the TAE is little remembered these days, despite its manifold achievements and the popular excitement it generated at the time. The advent of the ‘Space Age’ in the late 1950s/early 1960s is identified as one of the main reasons why ‘it was the greatest polar expedition ever forgotten’.

With the internationalisation of Antarctica (aided and abetted by the Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959/ratified in 1961) the popular appetite for polar heroes (preferably dead ones) began to wane dramatically. That said, since the late 1970s there has been a plethora of books written about Shackleton, Scott, Amundsen, Mawson and the like. Haddelsey bemoans this inordinate attention to the Heroic Age at the expense of the equally significant and no-less ‘heroic’ latter-day expeditions, such as the British Graham Land Expedition (BGLE), 1934-7 and the TAE, 1955-8. Whilst the current crop of Heroic Age centenaries will only serve to heighten the imbalance, Haddelsey’s *Shackleton’s Dream* is a timely and compelling study of the TAE. It should go a very long way to redress the balance. Unless new material comes to light in future years, this fine book will surely remain a definitive work. Without question, Bunny Fuchs’s astonishing expedition deserves such a book as this.

[*Shackleton’s Dream* is due for release on (or about) 1st March 2012. There is a 10% discount (off £20 ‘jacket price’) for orders through The History Press website: http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/products/Shackletons-Dream.aspx. Also available through all good bookshops and Amazon etc]

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**From Patricia Ducé, St Leonards-on-Sea**

As Shackleton’s niece I very much appreciate all the work that goes into the James Caird Society and its beautifully produced and comprehensive Journal. Unfortunately I am too old now to get up to any of the meetings but it’s great to be able to know all that goes on. And, of course, I hear much about it from my cousin, Zaz.

Here are some anecdotes. I gather from what my Mother told me, Uncle E was quite a character!

At one point he returned from some expedition somewhere, bringing with him two alligators. One of them was not very well, so he put it in a disused oven on board ship, so that it could rest. Unfortunately, he forgot to tell the cook. The other one survived and they kept it in a bath in their Sydenham home until it got too big, and then they gave it to the London Zoo.

I understand that when a small boy he had the idea he wanted to dig up hidden treasure. So one day he dug up a hole in the garden to ‘look for buried treasure’, and find some jewellery. He was an honest little boy and eventually confessed that he had put it in the hole himself. Presumably, he had raided his mother’s jewel casket!
On one occasion when in later years Uncle E had come back from some distant point, he was quite embarrassed to see a large banner flapping up on the roof of their Sydenham home reading: ‘Welcome Home’. Two of his most daring sisters has managed to negotiate the climb to put it up. What a family!

His Mother, a gentle soul, would say occasionally to his sister, ‘Please, dears, just two of you talk at a time’.

On another occasion he was honoured at a large public reception following his ‘nearest to the South Pole’ expedition in 1909. One of those attending was his old nanny who was quite overcome with it all. She said to him, ‘Ah, Master Ernest, many’s the time I’ve bathed ye’. To which his response was, ‘Well, I’ll be damned if I’ll let you do it now’.

There is one final thing that might interest you. You will remember there was an attempt by a small Irish team some years ago to re-enact Uncle E’s ‘small boat’ journey from Elephant Island*. They had a support ship called the *Pelagic* following them in case they needed to be rescued. There was a telephone number given in the Press for anyone who wanted further information about the attempt. So I rang the number and was surprised to be put through directly to *Pelagic*. I could hear the wind and waves. It was most astonishing. When they heard it was Shackleton’s niece on the ‘phone they were as surprised as I had been to be put through. In the event, the little boat did sink and the team was rescued.

(* This was the Irish South Aris Expedition (January 1997). The sea crossing was overwhelmed by appalling weather (Force 10 gales). However, one of its leaders, Frank Nugent, went on (February 1997) to complete the re-enactment of Shackleton’s South Georgia traverse from King Haakon Bay to Stromness). Ed.)

**From Peter Matthews, Sutton**

I read Dr. Michael Gilkes’s article, ‘It Ain’t Necessarily So – South Georgia Loose Ends’ (Journal Number Five) with great interest, firstly because of its content and secondly because I had the pleasure of making a trip to South Georgia with Dr. Gilkes. It was in 2006, on board *Pole Star* – when the vessel ran aground in King Haakon’s bay. He was most entertaining and informative and kept us all on our toes.

In the article he makes reference to the abandoned 0-4-0 steam engine at Ocean Harbour Station and mentions that its origins are obscure. He guesses that it is probably a German engine. My 103 year old father is still very much alive and retains an almost perfect memory. He is an authority on steam trains and I believe that he may be able to identify the train if Dr Gilkes is able to forward a photograph to me*.

Congratulations on the Journal. It is excellent**.

(*Done! **Thank you! Ed)

**From Peter Matthews (follow-up letter, edited)**

I thought that I would give you an update about the train at Ocean Harbour (formerly New Fortuna Bay) which Michael Gilkes mentioned in ‘Number Five’.

I have been able to confirm that the train was made by Orenstein & Koppel (O & K), Berlin who made many of these narrow gauge trains known as ‘Feldbahn’. They were used extensively in the First World War for moving supplies to the German trenches and at their naval bases in north Germany. After the war the trains were seized as war surplus and I speculate that the train at Ocean Harbour was one of these. I have photos from Michael Gilkes that indicate
the train arrived in SG during the 1919/20 whaling season – so it seems to fit. All this is speculation, however. I am now trying to identify the exact model. It may be a DS30, 50 or 60. I am following various leads.

This whole project has really excited my 103 years old father and one of his friends is going to visit Michael to discuss the train. It is possible the train + line at Ocean Harbour may be the most southerly railway but this needs further verification (sic).

In a recent visit to Stromness Whaling Station (SG) I noticed some railway lines near the Manager’s Villa so I am wondering whether there was also a train there at some stage. I will be in touch with the Carr Museum, Grytviken, to determine if they have any information about this and perhaps more info about the Ocean Harbour train. (31/01/11)

From Malcolm Gerard, Forest Lake, Queensland, Australia
Thank you for sending Journal Number Five of the Society; it has been gratefully received.

As with Journal Number Four, there are some very interesting stories mostly of an historical nature. But the one that I found most rewarding to read was ‘The Natural History of Pack-ice – in the Weddell Sea’. Much of the accounts of expeditions to the Antarctic talk of the problems associated with sea ice. But it is rare to read descriptions of the various ice formations that are encountered. Here is a readable understanding of the terminology, definitions of sea-ice formations and an accompanying glossary provided by Scoresby, the whaler-cum-scientists and the Antarctic Manual by Markham and Mill. There are some accompanying photos but a full set of photos would be helpful: perhaps they are illustrated in the manual. Of course accounts of some of Shackleton’s life are always interesting to read.

It was interesting to read the article ‘Adventures In Antarctic Biography’ by Stephen Haddeley. The author, when referring to Frank Bickerton and J.R.Stenhouse, also expressed the ‘almost equally obscure (the immense achievements of Mawson’s expedition) 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, DSc, LID.*

In all, I find the Journal a very worthwhile read.

(* Malcolm has kindly written an article on Professor T.W. Edgeworth David which will be published in the next Journal (Number Seven). Ed)

From Graham Havard (Swindon)
When I read Roland Huntford’s book on Shackleton I realised there was more to my family doctor than I had known.

I was born in Dundee in 1930 and our family doctor was Dr Macklin – he attended my mother in Craigie Nursing Home and brought me into the world. At the age of 5 years I broke my nose and, again, he attended me in the Dundee Royal Infirmary.

I became aware of Dr Macklin, his features and his strong presence, and I was a bit fearful each time my mother took me to see him at 5 Airlie Place (Dundee). His surgery was part of his home, as was common at the time. I can see him sitting behind his desk – with spectacles and large round face always quiet but a true professional. Strange that my mother never explained his exploits with Shackleton as it was no secret in Dundee.
After I started school I did not see him as he went to Aberdeen, I believe.

I feel a link with that period of history and had I known what I now know my curiosity would have driven me to ask many questions about polar exploration.

Sadly, I read that Dr Macklin was with Shackleton when he died and performed medical duties on the body of his leader. There are no great events today to treasure as was befitting the great explorers of that time. I feel privileged to have been part of his life even though I didn’t know it at the time.

(Alexander Macklin was born in India in 1889. He died in 1967. In 1926 he set up a medical practice in Dundee which continued until 1947 (he served in the Medical Corps on the French & Russian Fronts in World War 1 and in East Africa during World War 2). In 1947 ‘Mack’ moved to the Aberdeen Infirmary until his retirement in 1960. Ed)

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.

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. Of the countless escapades south the main highlights include the endeavours of the following intrepid individuals:

- 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 Henry 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 Henry Shackleton (1914-16)(17)
- Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton (1921-22)

Postscript

Members of the James Caird Society (JCS) are people who are interested in the Polar Regions with its history of geographical and scientific discovery. In particular they wish to honour the memory of Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton, a man whose leadership skills and sheer fortitude in the face of adversity continues to inspire many people today.

Since the publication of Roland Huntford’s learned biographies on Scott, Amundsen and Shackleton in the late 1970s/early 1980s, there has been a fresh and vigorous interest in Shackleton. Often, however, this interest has been at the expense of Scott. Mr Huntford’s impatience with the latter’s ‘amateurism’ and divided focus, in contrast with Shackleton’s clear focus and earthy man-management, has given rise to much debate and no little argument. Who was the best polar man – Scott or Shackleton?
I believe that it is a huge mistake to try and draw a wedge between these two polar ‘giants’. Both men contributed significantly and magnificently to the opening up of the Antarctic continent. Whilst there may well have been some ill-feeling abroad at the time (certainly Scott was pretty unforgiving (and wrong) about Shackleton’s apparent ‘stealing a march’ towards the Pole in 1907/9) these were ‘heady’ times. Alpha male ambitions were riding high. Scott wanted Naval promotion. Shackleton wanted fame and fortune. After their first visit to the White Continent together on Discovery in 1901 both men became Antarctic devotees.

Shackleton’s first foray South was due entirely to Scott’s selection. When, tragically, Scott succumbed to hunger and the cold on the Great Ice Barrier Shackleton was fully aware of his debt to Scott and offered to give a brief eulogy at the memorial service to be held at St Paul’s Cathedral on 14th February 1913. In the event his offer was declined by Kathleen Scott. Whilst Shackleton confessed privately to his wife, Emily, that he felt hurt by this apparent ‘snub’, his offer tells its own story. It tells of Shackleton’s high regard for the fallen explorer and, in this Scott Centenary year, we would do well to reflect on this important truth.
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