

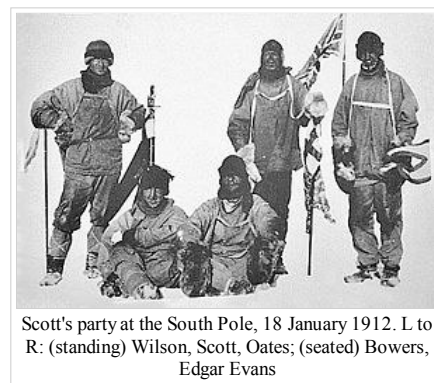
Terra Nova Expedition

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The **Terra Nova Expedition** (1910–1913), officially the British Antarctic Expedition 1910, was led by Robert Falcon Scott who had previously commanded the Discovery Expedition to the Antarctic in 1901–04. The expedition's popular name is taken from its supply ship, *Terra Nova*. The main objective, as expressed by Scott in his prospectus, was "to reach the South Pole and to secure for the British Empire the honour of this achievement".^[1] The expedition had further objectives in scientific research and geographical exploration and, although it was a private venture, it had unofficial blessings from the British Government (which contributed half its costs), the Admiralty and the Royal Geographical Society.

The expedition carried out a comprehensive scientific programme, and explored Victoria Land and the Western Mountains. An attempted landing and exploration of King Edward VII Land was unsuccessful. A journey to Cape Crozier in June–July 1911 was the first extended sledging journey in the depths of the Antarctic winter.

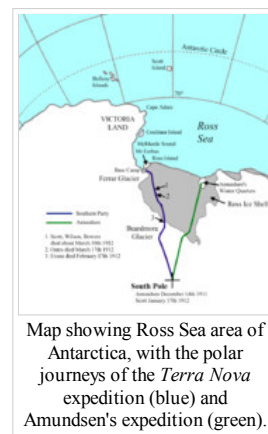
The appearance in the south of Roald Amundsen's Norwegian party turned Scott's polar quest into a race to reach the South Pole first. In the main journey of the expedition Scott led a five-man team which reached the Pole on 17 January 1912, to find that Amundsen's team had preceded them. All else, including Amundsen's achievement, was thereafter overshadowed by the deaths of Scott and his companions on their return from the Pole. Their records, retrieved by a search party eight months later, ensured that their story would be known. Different views have been voiced about the issues that contributed to the disaster, and the expedition is the subject of continuing controversy, with Scott personally either vilified or lauded.



Scott's party at the South Pole, 18 January 1912. L to R: (standing) Wilson, Scott, Oates; (seated) Bowers, Edgar Evans

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Map showing Ross Sea area of Antarctica, with the polar journeys of the *Terra Nova* expedition (blue) and Amundsen's expedition (green).

Preparations

Background

Scott's Discovery Expedition had made a significant contribution to Antarctic scientific knowledge, but had been less successful in terms of polar exploration, only achieving a Furthest South of 82° 17' S. The expedition had, from Scott's viewpoint, an aspect of unfinished business, which was reflected in his belief that McMurdo Sound, *Discovery's* former base, was his own "field of work" to which he and he alone was entitled to return.^[2] Scott resumed his naval career in 1906 but continued to nurse ambitions of returning to the Antarctic, with the conquest of the Pole as his specific target. A particular spur, which converted ambition to action, was the near miss recorded by Ernest Shackleton's Nimrod Expedition, 1907–09. Shackleton had opened up a road to the Pole from Scott's *Discovery* base, via the Beardmore Glacier to the Polar Plateau, and had turned for home at 88° 23' S, less than 100 geographical miles (112 statute miles, 180 km) from the Pole. This use of Scott's base, in breach of an undertaking not to do so,^[3] had soured relations between them, and increased Scott's determination to surpass Shackleton's achievements.

As he made his preparations Scott had no reason to believe that his polar journey would involve a contest. A concurrent Australian Antarctic expedition

under Douglas Mawson would be working in a different sector, and Roald Amundsen, a potential rival, had declared his plans for an Arctic voyage.^[4]

Personnel

Of the 65 men that formed the shore and ship's parties, chosen from 8,000 applicants,^[5] six were *Discovery* veterans and five had been with Shackleton on *Nimrod*. Lieutenant E R G R ("Teddy") Evans had been the navigating officer on *Morning* during the *Discovery* relief operation and was appointed Scott's second-in-command, abandoning plans to mount his own expedition and transferring his financial backing to Scott.

The Admiralty was generous in providing Scott with officers and men. Among the serving naval personnel recruited, in addition to Scott and Teddy Evans, were Lieutenant Harry Pennell, who would take over the ship once the shore parties had landed, and two Surgeon-Lieutenants, George Murray Levick and Edward L. Atkinson. Circumstances were to put Atkinson in command of the shore party for much of 1912 during a difficult period. Ex-RN officer Victor Campbell, known as "The Wicked Mate", was one of the few in the party who had skills in skiing and would lead the Northern Party.^[6] To Scott's satisfaction the Admiralty gave him a virtually all-RN lower deck, including the Antarctic veterans Edgar Evans, Tom Crean and William Lashly.

Two non-naval officers were appointed: Henry Robertson Bowers, known as "Birdie", a lieutenant in the Royal Indian Marine, and Lawrence Oates ("Titus"), an Army captain from the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. Oates, independently wealthy, volunteered for the expedition and paid £1,000 into its funds.

On the advice of Fridtjof Nansen Scott recruited a young Norwegian ski expert, Trygve Gran. In pursuit of his intended mixed transport strategy he appointed Cecil Meares to take charge of the dog teams, and also recruited Shackleton's former motor specialist, Bernard Day, to run the motor sledges. Oates would be in charge of the horses, but as he could not join the expedition until May 1910, Scott instructed Meares, who knew nothing of horses, to buy them, with unfortunate results for their quality and performance.^[7]

To carry out his scientific programme Scott selected a more experienced staff than that which had served on *Discovery*. The chief scientist and zoologist was Edward Wilson, Scott's closest confidant among the party, who had proved himself on the *Discovery* expedition not only as a scientist but as a brilliant illustrator, a firm friend to all and a hardy polar traveller. His scientific team included some who would enjoy later careers of great distinction: George Simpson the meteorologist, Charles Wright, the Canadian physicist, and geologists Frank Debenham and Raymond Priestley. T Griffith Taylor, the senior of the geologists, and biologist Edward Nelson completed the team – apart from the anomalous appointment of Apsley Cherry-Garrard as assistant zoologist. Cherry-Garrard had no scientific training, but was a protege of Wilson's. He had, like Oates, contributed £1,000 to funds,^[8] and would distinguish himself both as a traveller and as a sensitive chronicler.^[9] Herbert Ponting, the photographer, left a vivid visual record.

Finance

Unlike the *Discovery* expedition, which had been financed jointly by the Royal Society and the Royal Geographical Society, the Terra Nova Expedition was organised as a private venture. Half of its estimated total cost of £40,000 was met by a government grant, the balance by public subscription and loans.^[10] It was further assisted by the willingness of many firms to supply, free of cost, a range of provisions and equipment.^[11] The fund-raising task was largely carried out by Scott, and was a considerable drain on his time and energy, continuing in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand after *Terra Nova* sailed from British waters.

By far the largest single cost was the purchase of the ship *Terra Nova*, for £12,500 plus the cost of refitting. The *Terra Nova* had been in Antarctica before, as part of the second *Discovery* relief operation. Scott wanted to sail her as a Naval vessel under the White Ensign and to ensure this he obtained membership of the Royal Yacht Squadron for the sum of £100. He was thus able to impose Naval discipline on the expedition, and as a registered yacht of the Squadron, *Terra Nova* became exempt from Board of Trade regulations which might otherwise have deemed her unfit to sail.^[12]

Expedition: General plan

The plan for the expedition was to cover three Antarctic seasons and was as follows:

- **Season 1, 1910–11.** A shore base would be established in the Ross Island area as a home for the expedition and as a laboratory. Exploration and scientific work would begin: land parties would explore King Edward VII Land and/or Victoria Land, while a geological party worked in the Western Mountains. The main body of the shore party would meanwhile focus on laying depots of stores on the Ross Ice Shelf (then known as the "Great Ice Barrier" or "Barrier"), in preparation for the next season's Southern Journey.
- **Season 2, 1911–12.** The South polar journey would be the central activity of the second season. All available personnel would assist, though not all would travel. The journey would follow Shackleton's 1908 trail across the Barrier, ascending the Beardmore Glacier, then across the Polar Plateau and thence to the Pole itself. Scientific and geological work would continue, at the base and on the journey.
- **Season 3, 1912–13.** An optional third season would see the completion of the scientific programme. If the first southern journey should fail, a further attempt on the pole might be tried, if practical.

Terra Nova would not winter in Antarctica. After unloading shore parties, stores and equipment, and transporting the exploring parties to their landing grounds, it would return to New Zealand. It would make an interim visit to the base in January–February 1912 to bring fresh supplies and replacement personnel, returning for the final time in January 1913 to bring the expedition home.

The key to the successful accomplishment of this programme would be the effectiveness of Scott's mixed transport strategy. Ponies and motor traction in Antarctic travel had been pioneered by Shackleton on his 1907–09 expedition. Scott thought ponies must have served Shackleton well, and he was impressed by the potential of motors. However, Scott always intended to rely on man-hauling for the bulk of his polar journey,^[13] with the other methods being used to haul loads across the Barrier, enabling the men to preserve their strength for the later Glacier and Plateau stages. In practice the motor sledges were only briefly useful, and the ponies' performance was hindered during the early stages through a mix-up over snow-shoes, and later by their age and poor condition.^[14]



Leader of the expedition, Robert Falcon Scott.



An Oxo commercial sponsorship for the expedition.



The *Terra Nova*, photographed in December 1910 by Herbert Ponting.

While his own experiences on *Discovery* had made him dubious of their reliability,^[15] Scott's writings show that he recognised that, in the right hands, dogs could be very effective,^[16] and as the expedition developed, he became increasingly impressed with their performance.^[17]

First season, 1910–11

Voyage out

Terra Nova sailed from Cardiff, Wales, on 15 July 1910. Scott joined up with the ship in South Africa and took her on to Melbourne, Australia, where he left to continue fund-raising. *Terra Nova* proceeded to New Zealand, arriving on 28 October. Waiting for Scott in Melbourne was a telegram from Roald Amundsen, informing him that the Norwegian was "proceeding south"^[18] – it had been thought that Amundsen was planning an Arctic expedition; the telegram was the first indication that Scott was in a race.^[19] Scott's outward reaction was phlegmatic – neither he nor his wife mentioned the matter in their journals, and he proceeded with his fund-raising work in Australia.^[20] He rejoined the ship in New Zealand, where additional supplies were taken aboard, including 34 dogs, 19 Siberian ponies and three motorised sledges. The overloaded *Terra Nova* finally left Lyttelton Harbour on 26 November 1910.

During the first days of December, a heavy storm almost ended the expedition before it had begun; at one point, with the ship taking heavy seas and the pumps having failed, the crew had to bail her out with buckets.^[21] She survived, with the loss of two ponies, a dog, 10 tons^[22] of coal and 65 gallons of petrol.^[23] On 10 December she met the southern pack ice and was halted, remaining for 20 days before breaking clear and continuing southward.^[24] The delay, which Scott attributed to "sheer bad luck",^[25] had consumed sixty-one tons of coal.^[25]

Cape Evans base

Arriving off Ross Island on 4 January 1911, *Terra Nova* scouted for possible landing sites around Cape Crozier at the eastern point of the island, before proceeding to McMurdo Sound to its west, where both *Discovery* and *Nimrod* had previously landed. *Terra Nova* headed for a cape remembered from the *Discovery* days as the "Skuary",^[26] about 13 miles (21 km) north of Scott's 1902 base on Hut Point. Scott hoped that this location, now renamed Cape Evans, would be accessible by sea for a longer period than Hut Point where ice conditions were such that ships could become trapped, as had happened with *Discovery*. At Cape Evans, the shore parties disembarked with 17 ponies, 32 dogs, 3 motorised sledges (one of which was lost during unloading), some 30 tons of stores, and a prefabricated accommodation hut measuring 50 ft x 25 ft (15 m x 7.7 m), which was erected and made habitable by 17 January. The hut still stands at Cape Evans today, although it should not be confused with Scott's earlier *Discovery* hut at Hut Point which was used by the Terra Nova Expedition as a starting point and shelter for Barrier journeys.



Inside Scott's Hut at Cape Evans. (modern photograph)

Depot laying, 1911

The aim of the first season's depot-laying was to place a series of depots on the Barrier from its edge (Safety Camp) down to 80° S, for use on the polar journey which would begin the following spring. The final depot would be the largest, and would be known as One Ton Depot.^[27] The work was to be carried out by 12 men, the 8 fittest ponies, and two dog teams – ice conditions prevented the use of the motor sledges.



Scott's *Discovery* hut at Hut Point, used as a shelter and stores depot during the *Terra Nova* expedition.

Due to the late arrival, the season was well-advanced, so preparations had to be hurried. Departure was rushed, without time for proper training or acclimatisation for the animals, who had suffered severely on the sea voyage. Progress was slower than expected, and the ponies' performance was adversely affected because the Norwegian snowshoes they needed for Barrier travel had been left behind at Cape Evans. A blizzard held the party up after they had established Corner Camp, 40 miles (64 km) from Hut Point. Scott sent the three weakest ponies home from there (two died en route), and pressed on with the remaining five ponies and the dogs, with whose performance Scott was increasingly impressed.^[28] As they approached their target latitude, Scott became concerned that the remaining ponies would not make it back unless the party turned immediately. Against the advice of Oates, who wanted to go forward, killing the ponies for meat as they collapsed,^[29] Scott decided to lay One Ton Depot at 79° 29' S, more than 35 miles (56 km) north of its intended location. This discrepancy would be of significance during the return polar journey, 12 months hence.

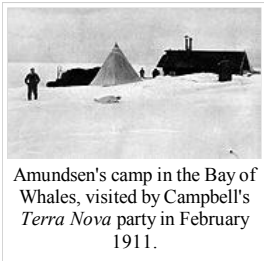
Scott returned to Safety Camp with the dog teams,^[30] and waited for the slower pony party to arrive. When they did, one was in very poor condition and died shortly afterwards. Much worse was to follow, for as the surviving ponies were crossing the sea ice near Hut Point, the ice broke up. Despite a determined rescue attempt, three more ponies perished.^[31] Of the eight ponies that had begun the depot-laying journey, only two returned home.

Winter quarters, 1911

By mid-April 1911, the depot-laying journeys were complete, the first geological expedition to the Western Mountains had taken place, and Campbell's party had departed for Victoria Land (see Northern Journey section). A party of 27 settled into the Cape Evans quarters for the dark polar winter. The main activities were continuation of the scientific programme, planning the forthcoming polar journey; maintenance of equipment, preparation of rations, lectures on various topics, entertainments, the production of the *South Polar Times*, and the *Winter Journey to Cape Crozier*.

Main expedition journeys, 1911–12

Northern Party



Amundsen's camp in the Bay of Whales, visited by Campbell's *Terra Nova* party in February 1911.

The expedition's programme included a plan to explore and carry out scientific work in King Edward VII Land, to the east of the Barrier, and a party under Victor Campbell was organised for this purpose, consisting of Campbell, Priestley, Levick, Abbot, Dickason, and Browning. The party had the option of exploring Victoria Land to the north-west, if King Edward VII Land proved inaccessible.^[32]

On 26 January 1911, Campbell's party left in the ship and headed east. After failing to find a suitable landing site on the King Edward VII Land shore, Campbell decided to sail to Victoria Land. On its return westward, *Terra Nova* encountered Amundsen's expedition camped in the Bay of Whales, an inlet in the Barrier. Amundsen was hospitable, prepared for Campbell to camp nearby and even offered him help with his dogs,^[33] but Campbell declined, and returned with his party to Cape Evans to pass on this news to Scott. Campbell's group then became the "Northern Party", and sailed northwards to be put ashore at Robertson's Bay, near Cape Adare, where they built a hut close to Norwegian explorer Carstens

Borchgrevink's old quarters.^[26]

The Northern Party spent the 1911 winter in their hut. Their summer 1912 sledging plans could not be fully carried out due to the condition of the sea ice and their inability to discover an interior route. *Terra Nova* returned from New Zealand on 4 January 1912, and transferred the party to Evans Coves, a location approximately 250 miles (402 km) south of Cape Adare and 200 miles (322 km) northwest of Cape Evans. They were to be picked up on 18 February after the completion of further geological work, but due to heavy pack ice, the ship was unable to reach them. The group, with meagre rations which they had to supplement by fish and seal meat, spent the winter months of 1912 in a snow cave which they excavated themselves on Inexpressible Island.^[34] Here they suffered severe privations – frostbite, hunger, and dysentery, aggravated by extreme winds and low temperatures, and the discomfort of a blubber stove in confined quarters.



Borchgrevink's hut at Cape Adare. (modern photograph)

In early April 1912 Edward Atkinson, in command at Cape Evans during the continuing absence of the polar party, attempted to take four men up the Victoria Land coast to relieve Campbell's party. Atkinson's group set out on 17 April, but the attempt failed, beaten by the weather.^[35] The Northern Party survived the winter in their icy chamber, and set out for Cape Evans on 30 September 1912, a journey which included a crossing of the difficult Drygalski Ice Tongue. Browning was very ill, and Dickason almost crippled by dysentery, but the whole party managed to reach Cape Evans, after a perilous journey, on 7 November.^[36] Geological and other specimens collected by the Northern Party were retrieved from Cape Adare and Evans Coves by *Terra Nova*, in January 1913.

Western geological parties

First geological expedition, January–March 1911

The objective of this journey was geological exploration of the coastal area west of McMurdo Sound, in a region between the McMurdo Dry Valleys and the Koettlitz Glacier.^[37] This work was undertaken by a party consisting of Griffith Taylor, Debenham, Wright and P.O. Evans. They landed from *Terra Nova* on 26 January at Butter Point,^[38] opposite Cape Evans on the Victoria Land shore. On 30 January, the party established its main depot in the Ferrar Glacier region, and then conducted explorations and survey work in the Dry Valley and Taylor Glacier areas before moving southwards to the Koettlitz Glacier. After further work there, they started homewards on 2 March, taking a southerly route to Hut Point, where they arrived on 14 March.

Second geological expedition, November 1911 – February 1912

This was a continuation of the work carried out in the earlier expedition, this time centring on the Granite Harbour region approximately 50 miles (80 km) north of Butter Point.^[39] Taylor's companions this time were Debenham, Gran and Forde. The main journey began on 14 November, and involved difficult travel over sea ice to Granite Harbour, which was reached on 26 November. Headquarters were established at a site christened Geology Point, and a stone hut was built. During the following weeks, exploration and surveying work took place on the Mackay Glacier, and a range of features to the north of the glacier were identified and named. The party was due to be picked up by the *Terra Nova* on 15 January 1912, but the ship could not reach them. They waited until 5 February before trekking southward, and were rescued from the ice when they were finally spotted by the ship on 18 February. Geological specimens from both Western Mountains expeditions were retrieved by *Terra Nova* in January 1913.

Other geological work

Further geology was carried out by the Northern Party, by the polar party on the Beardmore Glacier, and by a party which climbed Mount Erebus during the closing weeks of the expedition, in December 1912.^[40]

Winter journey to Cape Crozier

This journey was the brainchild of Dr. Edward Wilson. He had suggested the need for it in the Zoology section of the Discovery Expedition's Scientific Reports, and was anxious to follow up this earlier research. The journey's scientific purpose was to secure Emperor Penguin eggs from the rookery near Cape Crozier at an early embryo stage, so that "particular points in the development of the bird could be worked out".^[41] This required a trip in the depths of winter to obtain eggs in an appropriately early stage of incubation. A secondary purpose was to experiment with food rations and equipment in advance of the coming summer's polar journey.^[42] Scott approved, and Bowers and Cherry-Garrard accompanied Wilson when the party set out on 22 June 1911.



Emperor Penguins

No previous expedition had attempted such a long journey during the Antarctic winter. Cherry-Garrard described the 19 days it took to travel the 60 miles (97 km) to Cape Crozier as "a horror", in which gear, clothes, and sleeping bags were constantly iced up. On 5 July, the temperature fell below −77 F (−60 °C) – "109 degrees of frost – as cold as anyone would want to endure in darkness and iced up clothes".^[43] Sometimes the daily distance travelled was no more than a single mile.

At Cape Crozier the party built an igloo from snow blocks, stone, and a sheet of wood they had brought for the roof. They had arrived early enough to collect several Emperor penguin eggs, but conditions were appalling. Their igloo shelter was almost destroyed in a blizzard with force 11 winds, as they lay in their sleeping bags for three days. The storm also carried away the tent upon which their survival would depend during their return journey, but fortunately this was recovered, half a mile away. Refusing to abandon their specimens despite the difficulties and dangers they were facing, the group returned to Cape Evans on 1 August. The three eggs that survived the journey went first to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington,^[44] and thereafter were the

subject of a report from Dr. Cossar Stewart at the University of Edinburgh.^[45] They failed, however, to provide proof of Wilson's theories.^[46]

Cherry-Garrard afterwards described this as the "worst journey in the world",^[47] and used this as the title of the book that he wrote in 1922 as a record of the entire Terra Nova Expedition. Scott called the Winter Journey "a very wonderful performance",^[48] and was highly satisfied with the experiments in rations and equipment: "We are as near perfection as experience can direct."^[49]

South polar journey

On 13 September 1911, Scott revealed his plans for the South Pole journey, a return distance of 1,766 miles (2,842 km) from Hut Point,^[50] with an estimated duration of 144 days. Sixteen men would begin the journey, using motor-sledges, ponies and dogs for the Barrier stage to the Beardmore Glacier, during which the dogs would return and the ponies would be shot for food. Thereafter, twelve men in three groups would ascend the glacier, using man-hauling. Only one of these groups would carry on to the pole; the others would be supporting groups who would be sent back at specified latitudes. The composition of the polar group would be decided by Scott during the journey. It was a complex plan, depending on intricate calculations of speeds, distances and rations consumed.

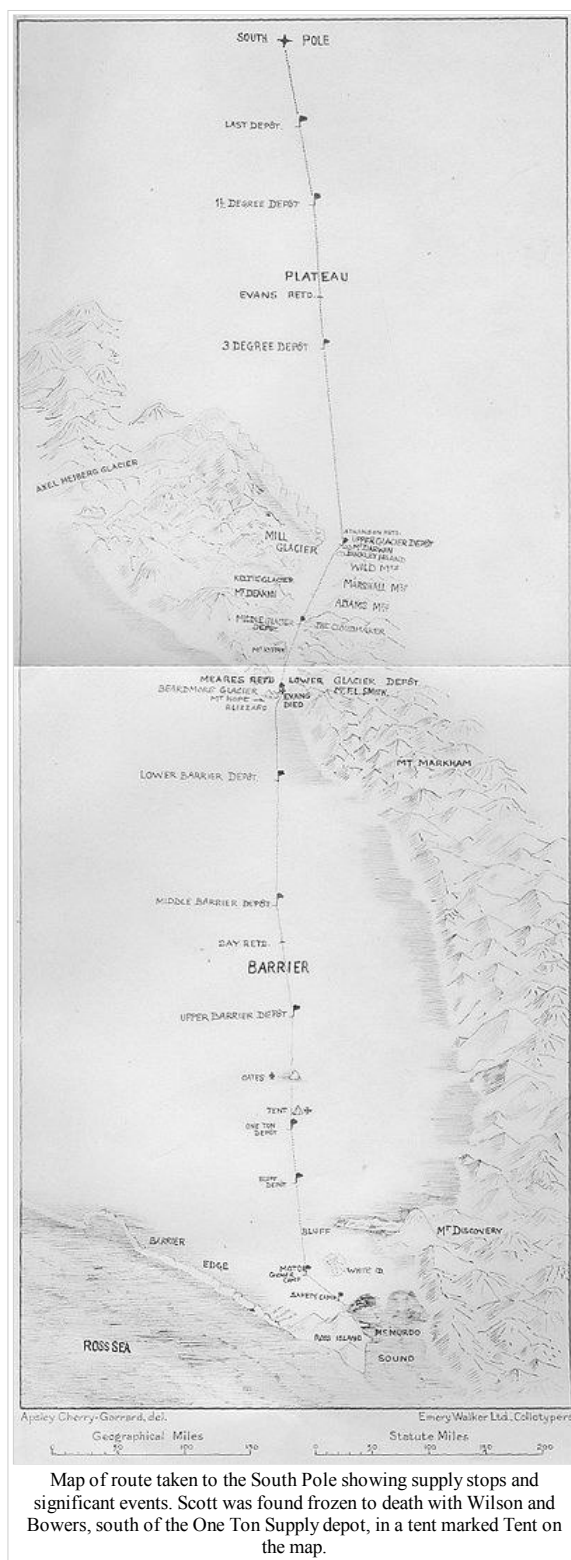
The Motor Party (Lt. Evans, Day, Lashly and Hooper) started from Cape Evans with two motor sledges on 24 October, to haul loads to latitude 80°30'S and wait there for the others. By 1 November both motor sledges had failed, the second after 54 miles (87 km),^[51] and the men man-hauled 740 pounds (336 kg) of supplies the remaining 150 miles (241 km) to their assigned location, reaching it two weeks later. The other parties, which had left Cape Evans on 1 November, did not catch up with them until 21 November. Poor weather and variable pony performance had slowed their travelling speeds.

Day and Hooper returned to base on 24 November. The dogs had been due to return here, but because of the slow pace Scott decided to take them further, informing Simpson of this by message.^[52] On 4 December the expedition was camped close to the Gateway (the passage from the Barrier to the Beardmore Glacier) when a blizzard struck, forcing the men to camp until 9 December and to break into rations intended for the Glacier journey. When the blizzard lifted, the remaining ponies were shot (four had been dispatched earlier) and the meat depoted or added to sledging rations. On 11 December, Meares and Dimitri turned back with the dogs. It had been Scott's original intention that the dog teams be rested and saved for scientific journeys in the third season, but in view of their superior performance on the polar journey he now began to consider using them to assist the polar and support parties home.

The remaining 12 men ascended the Beardmore, and on 20 December laid the Upper Glacier Depot. There was still no hint from Scott as to who would be in the final polar party. On 22 December, at latitude 85°20'S, Scott sent back Atkinson, Cherry-Garrard, Wright and Keohane as the first support party. Scott gave Atkinson further verbal orders concerning the dogs, asking him to ensure that One Ton Depot was resupplied, and to bring the dogs further south to assist the polar party home.^[53]

The two remaining parties continued south, in good conditions, and made up some of the time lost on the Barrier stage. On 4 January 1912, at latitude 87°32'S, Scott made his decision on the composition of the polar party – *five* men (Scott, Wilson, Oates, Bowers and Edgar Evans) would go forward while Lt. Evans, Lashly and Crean would return as the last supporting party. The decision involved complicated recalculations of weights and rations – everything had been based on four-men teams. Before departing, Evans was given new, more specific orders about the dogs being brought south. During the supporting party's return journey Evans became seriously ill with scurvy. From One Ton Depot he could not march, and was carried on the sledge by his comrades to a point 35 miles (56 km) south of Hut Point.^[54] From there, on 18 February, Crean walked on alone for 18 hours to reach Hut Point, and by a stroke of fortune found Atkinson and Dimitri there with dog teams, preparing for the One Ton supply mission (see section below). A rescue party was formed, and Evans was brought to Hut Point, barely alive, on 22 February. Lashly and Crean (but not Atkinson) were later awarded Albert Medals for their life-saving efforts.^[55]

The polar group continued towards the Pole, passing Shackleton's Furthest South (88°23'S) on 9 January. Seven days later, about 15 miles (24 km) from their goal, Amundsen's black flag was spotted and the party knew that they had been preceded. They reached the Pole the next day, 17 January 1912, and discovered that Amundsen had arrived there on 14 December 1911. He had left a tent, some supplies, and a letter to King Haakon of Norway which, in a polite note, he asked Scott to deliver.



Amundsen's earlier arrival, while a grave disappointment, was not wholly unexpected. Amundsen was based in the Bay of Whales, further south than Scott, and was relying wholly on dogs with which he and his countrymen had great expertise. Scott's mixed hauling strategy was tougher on the men, and meant a later start until weather was moderate enough for the less hardy ponies.^[56]

After confirming their position and planting their flag, Scott's party turned homewards the next day, and for three weeks made reasonable progress, averaging 14 miles (23 km) per day. The season was advancing, however, and temperatures were falling below −20°F (−29°C), when snow tended to become hard and coarse, losing its ability to lubricate the bottom of skis so that pulling the sledges became increasingly difficult. On 7 February, they began their descent of the Beardmore, but were finding travel harder and had difficulty locating their depots. Despite this, Scott ordered a half-day's "geologising", and 30 pounds (14 kg) of samples were added to the sledges. Edgar Evans's health was deteriorating rapidly – a hand injury was failing to heal, he was badly frostbitten, and is thought to have injured his head after several falls on the ice. All the party were suffering from malnutrition, but as the largest man, Evans felt this most. Near the bottom of the glacier he collapsed, and died on 17 February.

On the Barrier stage of the homeward march the party suffered from some of the most extreme weather conditions ever recorded in this hostile environment.^[57] This, allied to increasing weakness through dehydration, malnutrition and possible incipient scurvy, was enough to defeat them. As the march progressed the pace slowed, and it became harder to eke out rations between depots. The average distance between the depots was 65 miles, which, not allowing for bad weather, meant that the party had to average over nine miles a day. The food and fuel in each depot gave a full ration at this speed for a week. The best march of the southern party on the Barrier was approximately nine miles falling in the later stages to as low as three miles. This failure to maintain the higher speed was due to Oates's failing condition. Oates, carrying an old war wound and crippled by frostbite, became increasingly incapable, and on or about 17 March (Scott had lost track of dates), while apparently lucid, stepped outside the tent with the thereafter famous words, "I am just going outside and I may be some time." This deliberate sacrifice^[58] was not enough to save the others. Scott, Wilson and Bowers struggled on to a point 11 miles (18 km) south of One Ton Depot, but were halted on 20 March by a fierce blizzard. Unable to advance, although each day they attempted to do so, their supplies ran out. Scott's last diary entry, dated 29 March 1912, the presumed date of their deaths, ends with these words:

Every day we have been ready to start for our depot *11 miles* away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity but I do not think I can write more. R. Scott. For God's sake look after our people.^[59]

Attempts to relieve the polar party, 1912

Re-supply of One Ton Depot

Scott had ordered the re-supply of One Ton Depot in instructions to Meares, repeated to Simpson, immediately before setting out on the polar journey. These orders required the transportation to the Depot of "five XS (Extra Summit) rations,^[60] or at all hazards three, ... and as much dog food as could be carried, the depot to be laid by 10 January 1912".^[61] When Atkinson returned to Cape Evans on 28 January, he learned that the minimum three rations had been depoted but that the requested dog food depot had not been laid.^[62] He decided to take the two outstanding rations to One Ton himself, but apparently took no action over the dog food.^[63]

The emergency that arose from Lt. Evans's rescue from the Barrier changed Atkinson's plans, and the role of re-supplying One Ton fell, by default, to Cherry-Garrard.^[64] He would be accompanied by the skilled dog driver Dimitri Gerov. Atkinson did not yet have fears for the polar party's safety, as Scott was not overdue and, when last seen on the Polar Plateau by Evans, had been travelling in good order and on schedule. Atkinson's verbal orders to Cherry-Garrard, remembered and recorded later, were "to travel to One Ton Depot as fast as possible and leave the food there. If Scott had not arrived before me, I was to judge what to do", and to "remember that Scott was not dependent on the dogs for his return, and that the dogs were not to be risked".^[65] Atkinson's written account supports this.^[66]

Cherry-Garrard left Hut Point with Dimitri and two dog teams on 26 February, arriving at One Ton on 4 March and depositing the extra rations. Scott was not there. With supplies for themselves and the dogs for 24 days, they had about eight days' waiting time before having to return to Hut Point. The alternative to waiting, moving southwards, would in the absence of the dog food depot mean killing dogs for dog food as they went along, thus breaching Scott's, "not to be risked", order (but within Cherry-Garrard's brief from Atkinson to, "judge what to do"). However, Cherry-Garrard decided to wait for Scott. On 10 March, in worsening weather, with his own supplies dwindling, and unaware that Scott's team were fighting for their lives less than 70 miles (110 km) away,^[67] Cherry-Garrard turned for home, reaching Hut Point on 16 March. Atkinson would later write, "I am satisfied that no other officer of the expedition could have done better",^[66] but Cherry-Garrard was troubled for the rest of his life by thoughts that he might have taken other actions that could have saved the polar party.^[68]

Final relief effort

After Cherry-Garrard's return from One Ton Depot without news of Scott, anxieties slowly rose. Atkinson decided to make one more journey to try and reach the polar party, and on 26 March set out with Keohane, man-hauling a sledge containing 18 days' provisions. In very low temperatures (−40°F, −40°C) they had reached Corner Camp by 30 March, when, in Atkinson's view, the weather, the cold and the time of year made further progress south impossible. Atkinson recorded, "In my own mind I was morally certain that the (polar) party had perished".^[69] He and Keohane then returned to Hut Point.

Search party

The remaining expedition members^[70] waited through the winter, continuing their scientific work. On 29 October 1912, Atkinson led a search party with mules^[71] to establish if possible, the fate of the polar party, and on 12 November they found the tent containing the frozen bodies of Scott, Wilson and Bowers, 11 miles (18 km) south of One Ton Depot.

Atkinson read the relevant portions of Scott's diaries, and the nature of the disaster was revealed. After diaries, personal effects and records had been collected, the tent was collapsed over the bodies and a cairn of snow erected, topped by a cross fashioned from Gran's skis. The party searched further south for Oates's body, but found only his sleeping bag. On 15 November, they raised a cairn near to where they believed he had died.

On returning to Hut Point on 25 November the search party found that Campbell's Northern Party had rescued itself and returned safely to base on 5

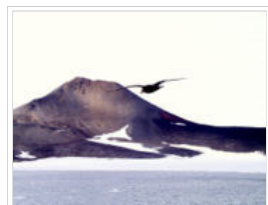


Scott and his men at Amundsen's base, Polheim, at the South Pole. Left to right: Scott, Bowers, Wilson, and PO Evans. Picture taken by Lawrence Oates.

November.

Aftermath

As the senior Naval officer, Campbell assumed command of the expedition for its final weeks, until the arrival of *Terra Nova* on 18 January 1913. Before the final departure a large wooden cross was erected on the slopes of Observation Hill, overlooking Hut Point, inscribed with the five names of the dead and a quotation from Tennyson's *Ulysses*: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield".



Observation Hill, overlooking Hut Point, where the *Terra Nova* memorial cross was erected in January 1913.

The loss of Scott and his party overshadowed all else in the public's mind, including Amundsen's feat in being first at the Pole.^[72] For many years the image of Scott as a tragic hero, beyond reproach, remained virtually unchallenged, for although there were rifts among some who were close to the expedition, including relatives of the perished,^[73] this disharmony was not public. The legend grew as time passed, and was renewed for another generation by the film, *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) and by the 1953 conquest of Mount Everest. There was no real change in public perceptions until the 1970s, by which time nearly all those directly concerned with the expedition were dead.

Controversy erupted with the publication of Roland Huntford's book *Scott and Amundsen* (1979, re-published and televised in 1985 as *The Last Place On Earth*). This book, a sustained attack on Scott which blamed him for everything that went wrong, found a ready acceptance from a more cynical generation, less susceptible to tales of heroism and derring-do. Particular criticism was directed at Scott's supposedly authoritarian leadership style, his poor judgement of men, and a series of organisational failures such as the transport "muddle". It was many years before a counter-attack, led by such as Ranulph Fiennes and Susan Solomon,^[74] began to repair Scott's reputation to some extent.

Polar historians generally agree that Amundsen's techniques, backed by his previous Arctic experiences and his familiarity with ice conditions, gave him huge advantages in the race for the Pole,^[75] but this does not in itself explain the reasons for the catastrophe that overtook Scott's party. Scott's own verdict, written when he was close to death in extreme conditions, blames a copious list of "misfortunes" rather than faulty organisation. His detractors reject this as self-justifying.^[76] Diana Preston's analysis indicates a mixture of causes—faulty logistics and sheer bad luck.^[77]

Given that the likely cause of the deaths of the polar party included starvation and/or scurvy, the question of sledging diets is of interest. The rations carried and consumed by all the sledging parties on the expedition were based on nutritional science as understood in 1910, before knowledge of Vitamin C or the causes of scurvy.^[78] Emphasis was given to high protein content deemed necessary to replace calories burned during the heavy work of sledging, especially man-hauling. In fact, the calorific values of the rations used were seriously over-estimated, although this was not apparent until much later.^[78] The staple daily ration per man was 16 ounces (450 g) biscuit, 12 ounces (340 g) pemmican, 3 ounces (85 g) sugar, 2 ounces (57 g) butter, 0.7 ounces (20 g) tea and 0.57 ounces (16 g) cocoa.^[79] This diet would be supplemented on the Southern Journey by killing ponies for meat once their hauling function was over, but such supplements would not have bridged the calorie deficit for more than short periods.^[78]

See also

- List of Antarctica expeditions
- Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration

Notes and references

- ↑ Crane, p. 397.
- ↑ Letter to Shackleton, quoted by Crane, pp. 335–36.
- ↑ Shackleton had written to Scott on 17 May 1907 stating: "I am leaving McMurdo sound to you" and outlining the various alternatives that he proposed to follow
- ↑ Fiennes, p. 157
- ↑ Evans in SLE Vol II p. 498.
- ↑ Huntford, p. 267.
- ↑ Preston, p. 113 and p. 217. Preston suggests that Teddy Evans was to blame, by keeping Oates busy on the *Terra Nova*, but by May it was probably too late for sending him to Siberia to assist Meares.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard was initially turned down by Scott, but allowed his contribution to stand. This impressed Scott, who was persuaded by Wilson to accept him
- ↑ His expedition book:*The Worst Journey in the World* is a classic of travel literature
- ↑ It is unclear how this figure was arrived at, or how much the expedition actually cost
- ↑ See Lt Evans's account in SLE, Vol II, p. 489, *et seq.*
- ↑ Crane, p. 406.
- ↑ Solomon, p. 22.
- ↑ Crane, pp. 462–64.
- ↑ Preston, p. 50.
- ↑ Scott in SLE, Vol. I, p. 432.
- ↑ During depot-laying, Scott's diary comments about the dogs are usually negative, e.g. 27 January, 17 March. In his entries covering the Southern Journey, their performance is frequently described as, "splendid".
- ↑ There are differing accounts as to the telegram's wording. Cherry-Garrard (p. 82), Crane (p. 423) and Preston (p. 127) all report it as a simple, "Am going south". Lt. Evans, as reported in Solomon, p. 64, gives a rather more courteous, "Beg leave to inform you Fram proceeding Antarctica", and Fiennes and Huntford both use this form.
- ↑ In the film, *Scott of the Antarctic*, Scott receives the telegram in New Zealand while supervising the ship's loading, pockets it unread and discovers its contents after the ship is under way. This is pure fiction.
- ↑ Crane, p. 427.
- ↑ SLE, Vol. I, pp. 13–14.
- ↑ These are Imperial, or "long" tons, 2,240 lb or 1,016 kg
- ↑ SLE, Vol. I, p. 16.
- ↑ In 1901–02, it took *Discovery* 16 days to sail from Lyttleton to Cape Adare; in 1908 *Nimrod* reached the Barrier in 24 days. The 40 days of the *Terra Nova* is by far the longest comparable voyage.
- ↑ ^a ^b Preston, p. 137
- ↑ ^a ^b SLE, Vol. I, p. 89.
- ↑ Fiennes, p. 206.
- ↑ Preston, p. 143.
- ↑ Fiennes, p. 212.
- ↑ It was on this journey that Scott performed his celebrated dog-rescue act when one of the teams fell down a crevasse (Cherry-Garrard, pp. 167–70).
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, pp. 182–196 (Bowers's account of this disaster).
- ↑ Scott's orders to Campbell, SLE, Vol. II, pp. 79–82 (the party was then called the "Eastern Party").
- ↑ Preston, p. 144.
- ↑ SLE, Vol. II, p. 130.
- ↑ SLE Vol II, pp. 312–16.
- ↑ SLE, Vol. II, pp. 155–79.
- ↑ See Scott's instructions, SLE, Vol. II, pp. 184–85.
- ↑ Butter Point was named after a depot containing butter was left there during the *Discovery* expedition.
- ↑ Scott's instructions; SLE, Vol. II, pp. 222–23.
- ↑ Priestley's report; SLE, Vol. II, pp. 350, *et seq.*
- ↑ Wilson; SLE, Vol. II, p. 1.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, p. 305.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, p. 296.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, p. 351–52.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, p. 353–56.
- ↑ Fiennes, p. 260.
- ↑ Cherry-Garrard, p. 350.
- ↑ SLE Vol. I p. 361.
- ↑ SLE Vol. I p. 368.

50. ^ Cherry-Garrard, p. 373.
51. ^ Fiennes, p. 269.
52. ^ Simpson was in charge at Cape Evans while the sledging parties were away, and needed to know the dogs' whereabouts.
53. ^ Orders concerning the dogs were becoming a little confused by now. For a more detailed analysis of this question see Edward L Atkinson article.
54. ^ Lashly's diary, quoted by Cherry-Garrard, pp. 442–62.
55. ^ Atkinson did, however, win an Albert Medal for lifesaving, during World War I, as recorded p. 178 in Sara Wheeler's biography of Cherry-Garrard: *Cherry* Jonathan Cape 2001
56. ^ Amundsen's outward polar journey took 57 days against Scott's 79 days. Amundsen started 12 days earlier.
57. ^ See Susan Solomon's analyses in *"The Coldest March"*.
58. ^ See Scott's diary entry, 17 March, SLE Vol I p. 592
59. ^ Scott's diary, final entry 29 March 1912 in SLE Vol I p. 595
60. ^ An XS ration was food for four men for one week
61. ^ Cherry-Garrard, p. 30 (George Seaver's foreword to 1965 ed.).
62. ^ It is unclear when he knew that no dog food had been taken, but he writes in his report in SLE, Vol. II, p. 300: "... there was no dog food in any of the depots except at Corner Camp, or along any of the route".
63. ^ The absence of dog food at One Ton made it virtually impossible for Atkinson to carry out Scott's orders to him to "bring the dogs south", or indeed the more specific orders which Evans had received, to bring the dogs to 82° or 83°S
64. ^ Meares was on the point of departing with the ship, Wright (Atkinson's first choice) was heavily committed to ongoing scientific work, so Cherry-Garrard was the only "officer" available.
65. ^ Cherry-Garrard, pp. 472–73. Scott had previously made it clear that he wanted the dogs saved for scientific work in the third season.
66. ^ ^a ^b SLE, Vol. II, pp. 298–306
67. ^ See Table of Distances in SLE, Vol. I, p. 632.
68. ^ Preston, p. 210
69. ^ SLE, Vol. II, p. 309.
70. ^ 13 at Cape Evans; Campbell's party of six was still missing.
71. ^ These, a gift from the Indian Government, had been landed from the *Terra Nova* in February. They were of a higher quality than their predecessors.
72. ^ Huntford, p. 526
73. ^ Fiennes alludes to these, pp. 410–22.
74. ^ In *The Coldest March*, based on extensive meteorological research, Solomon attributes the party's demise to the single cause of extreme Barrier weather
75. ^ See, e.g. Crane, p. 426 or Preston, p. 221.
76. ^ Huntford, p. 509.
77. ^ See "The Reason Why" in Preston, pp. 214–28.
78. ^ ^a ^b ^c Preston, pp. 218–19
79. ^ Preston p. 181.

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