

Final newspaper of Captain Scott's doomed expedition reproduced

March 31 2011



The last volume of the expedition newspaper, *South Polar Times*, written by the men waiting for news of Captain Scott's return from the South Pole in the Antarctic winter of 1912, has just been published in a limited edition by the Scott Polar Research Institute.

The journal was written and produced during Scott's 1910-13 Terra Nova expedition to Antarctica, during the winter of 1912, when those remaining at the base camp at Cape Evans knew that Scott and his Pole party must have perished somewhere south.

The contributors to the original volume would have been aware that Scott and his companions stood no chance of survival. Although there

are attempts at humour and the text is enlivened with quirky illustrations, the loss of Scott and the other four members of the Polar Party overshadows this issue, put together to maintain morale during the long Polar night.

In 1959, former Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Frank Debenham, who had been the expedition's geologist, said: "It is noticeable that there is no reference whatever to the fate or the personnel of the Pole Party or even of the Northern Party though the preparations for the search next sledging season was the main pre-occupation of all hands."

The volume is filled with humorous tales, verses on food and man-hauling, records of the weather and an article entitled Universitas Antarctica on the men's scientific interests.

This new volume includes a full colour facsimile of the illustrated typescript of South Polar Times, volume IV, dated Midwinter Day 1912. It was originally edited by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, famous as the author of *The Worst Journey in the World*.

The exceptionally bad weather, which was to prove Scott's eventual downfall, was noted even at the base camp. Cherry-Garrard wrote in his editorial: "The winds recorded here last year were considered high, but those of this year have put them to shame, and in many parts the ice has not become strong enough to withstand the Blizzards. The last blizzard, which lasted into its eighth day was a record for Cape Evans which we do not wish to see broken."

South Polar Times IV, held in the Archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, is published here for the first time, with an authoritative introduction by polar historian, Ann Shirley Savours, covering both of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's Antarctic

expeditions.

Extensive explanatory notes on the contents of this and the three earlier volumes of the South Polar Times are accompanied by biographical details on the members of the expeditions who contributed to the original productions and notes on the [expedition](#) vessels Discovery, Morning, and Terra Nova.

Proceeds of the sale of this volume will support the work of the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, a center of excellence in the study of the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Institute houses the world's premier polar library and archives, together with extensive art and photographic collections. Its museum contains displays on both the history and contemporary significance of the polar regions.

Provided by University of Cambridge

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