

Today, I'll finish off telling you about some explorers by talking about two British explorers, ROBERT SCOTT and ERNEST SHACKLETON. Unlike the other explorers we've looked at, who went west in order to get to the east, these explorers went south - all the way south, to the ANTARCTIC: the huge area of ice that surrounds the SOUTH POLE. Their big aim was to get to the South Pole, which no human being had ever reached before. They were both part of a 1901 expedition (remember: pronounced 'ex - ped - ish - un'), where they and one other explorer went a long way towards the South Pole, but had to turn back - and Shackleton got very ill on the return trip back to the base camp where the other members of the expedition were. Then Shackleton returned to the South Pole in 1907, and got within 97 miles of the South Pole - the furthest south any human had ever gone. When he got back to Britain, he was knighted, making him SIR Ernest Shackleton, to reward him for his huge achievement.

Then in 1910, Robert Scott made another attempt at getting to the South Pole. This time he had competition. The Norwegian explorer ROALD AMUNDSEN had also put together a team with the aim of getting to the South Pole. The race was on. But it was a race that Scott lost. Amundsen was simply better prepared, relying on dogs (huskies) to pull sleds carrying him and his men and their supplies. Scott relied instead on motor vehicles on tracks to take him to the South Pole - but those broke down in the severe cold, and instead he and his men had to do a lot of walking to get to the South Pole. In the end, Scott and four other men made the final trek to the South Pole. As they got closer and closer, they made out a flag, flapping in the distance - it was the Norwegian flag. Amundsen had beaten them to the South Pole - Scott got to the South Pole on 17 January 1912, while Amundsen and his men had arrived there just before Christmas on 14 December 1911. Here is a film version of the moment when Scott and his men got to the South Pole:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngzofL07FPQ>

The five men turned around and started the journey back to the camp where everyone else was waiting for them. On their way to the South Pole they had dropped off supplies of food that they could eat on their way back - but they missed some of the drop off points, and with all the walking they had to do, they got weaker and weaker while the weather got worse and worse. Scott had given orders that other members of the expedition should go out to meet Scott and the others on their way back, to allow them to be dragged back to base on sleds pulled by dogs - but there was no one came to meet them. One of the five - EDGAR EVANS - died on 17 February 1912. The other four struggled on, but things got worse and worse. In the end, one of the four - CAPTAIN LAWRENCE OATES (pronounced 'oats') - decided to sacrifice himself to give the others a better chance of surviving. They were all in a tent together, huddled against the cold, when Captain Oates got up, went to the tent entrance and walked out into a blizzard, telling the others 'I am just going out for a while. I may be some time.' His body was never found. That was on 16 March. The remaining three

A photograph of a handwritten note on a piece of paper. The handwriting is in cursive and appears to be a final message. The text reads: "we shall shove 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 - Robert Scott. Last Entry - For Gods sake look after our people".

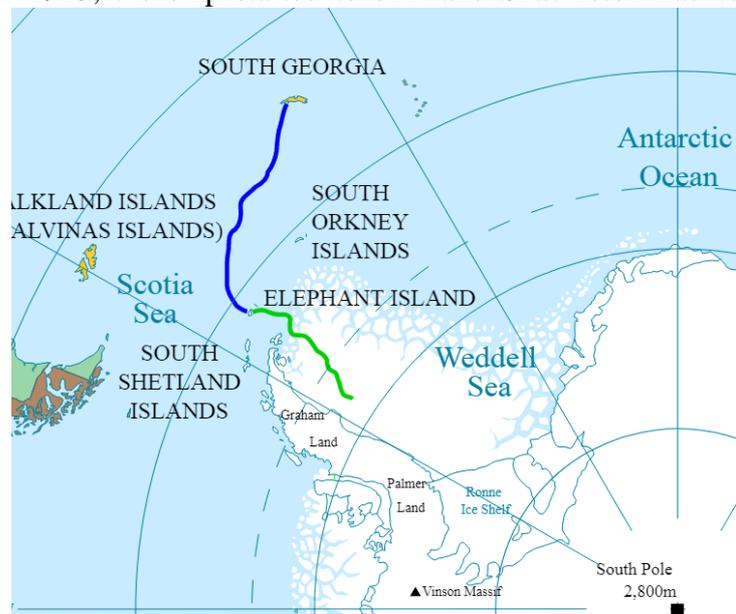
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struggled on, walking another 20 miles before setting up another tent to stay in. They knew the end was near for all of them - it was just too cold and they were too weak. Scott's final entry in his diary - which contained the story of Captain Oates - was on 29 March. It said, 'For God's sake look after our people.' All three died that day or the day after - it looks like Scott was the last to die. A search party found Scott's tent on 12 November 1912, and recovered Scott's diary and other items that he and his men had collected - including the first ever FOSSILS (of creatures embedded in rock) discovered in the Antarctic, which showed that the Antarctic was not always the snowy and icy place it is today. The search party wasn't able to take the bodies of Scott and the others back with them, so they buried them where they were - and Scott's body is still out there in the Antarctic.

The news of Scott's death and Oates' sacrifice got back to Britain and had a huge effect - everyone regarded them as brave heroes who represented the best of what Britain had to offer. For Shackleton, the dream of becoming the first man to get to the South Pole was gone - but he and his team could become the first men to cross Antarctica. He put together the money for another expedition to the South Pole, sailing from England in the ship ENDURANCE in 1914, just before WORLD WAR I broke out. On 5 December 1914, the ship approached the bay where Shackleton and his men planned to get off, with the aim of then walking across Antarctica. But then disaster struck - the ship got trapped in ice, and as the ice moved, it pushed the ship further and further away from the bay where Shackleton and his men planned to get off the ship. Shackleton decided to stay put on the ship and see where the



ice would take it - his plan was to wait things out over the winter, and hope that with the coming of spring, the ice would melt and he could redirect the ship back to where it was supposed to go. But on 24 October 1915, the ship started to sink and Shackleton had to abandon it, and take up position on a huge chunk of ice called an ICE FLOE (pronounced 'flo') and again see where the ice would take them. After a couple of months, the ice floe started to break up and Shackleton and his men has to get into lifeboats and head for ELEPHANT ISLAND.



Despite the name, there were no elephants on Elephant Island - there was nothing. And no one knew that Shackleton and his men were there. Once they ran out of food, they would starve to death. And this is where Shackleton did

the thing that means he is still remembered to this day. He picked five men to come with him, and they got into a lifeboat, and on 24 April 1916, they set out for the island of SOUTH GEORGIA where Shackleton knew there was a base with a radio that he could use to call for help, and supplies that would keep him and his men alive. But South Georgia was about 830

miles away - imagine if you had to travel 830 miles in a little lifeboat, sailing through seas that were extremely cold and rough: do you think you would make it? Somehow, amazingly, Shackleton and his men did make it, landing in South Georgia on 9 May 1916. But then they discovered they were on the wrong side of the island - the base they were aiming for was on the other side of the island. They could have gone back out to sea and tried to sail around South Georgia, but Shackleton decided to do something that had never been done by any human being - which was to cross the island on foot, a journey of 55 miles over really dangerous mountains. Taking two men with him, he completed the journey in 36 hours, and was finally able to radio for help. He sent a boat to pick up the other three men he had left behind on the other side of South Georgia, and set about trying to find a boat that could take him back to his remaining crew on Elephant Island. Eventually he found one, and was able to rescue the crew from Elephant Island on 30 August 1916 - about four months after he had left them behind to try to get to South Georgia and get help. It was an amazing achievement, requiring huge courage and leadership - and is the reason why Shackleton is remembered today as one of the greatest Britons who ever lived.

Shackleton and his men got back to Britain in May 1917, while WORLD WAR I was still going on. After the war ended, Shackleton decided he wanted to go back to the Antarctic to explore it some more. Once again, he was able to get the money together for the expedition, and he set out on 24 September 1921. By this time he was 47 years old - pretty old to be exposing himself to the terrible cold of the Antarctic. On 4 January 1922, his ship reached South Georgia, in good shape to sail on to the Antarctic. But Shackleton was in pretty bad shape, and just after midnight on 5 January 1922, he summoned the ship's doctor to check him out, complaining that he was suffering from back pain. Moments after the doctor examined him, Shackleton had a heart attack and died on the spot. He was buried on South Georgia - but as I say, is still remembered to this day as a great leader and hero. Here is a trailer from a brilliant film about Shackleton that was made by Channel 4:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0wKmUUsnC4>