

The University of Edinburgh

School of Geosciences

Institute of Geography

A SCOT OF THE ANTARCTIC:
THE RECEPTION AND COMMEMORATION OF
WILLIAM SPEIRS BRUCE

M.Sc. by Research in Geography

Innes M. Keighren

12 September 2003

Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work.

12 September 2003

Abstract

2002–2004 marks the centenary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Led by the Scots naturalist and oceanographer William Speirs Bruce (1867–1921), the Expedition, a two-year exploration of the Weddell Sea, was an exercise in scientific accumulation, rather than territorial acquisition. Distinct in its focus from that of other expeditions undertaken during the ‘Heroic Age’ of polar exploration, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, and Bruce in particular, were subject to a distinct press interpretation. From an examination of contemporary newspaper reports, this thesis traces the popular reception of Bruce—revealing how geographies of reporting and of reading engendered locally particular understandings of him. Inspired, too, by recent work in the history of science outlining the constitutive significance of place, this study considers the influence of certain important spaces—venues of collection, analysis, and display—on the conception, communication, and reception of Bruce’s polar knowledge. Finally, from the perspective afforded by the centenary of his Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, this paper illustrates how space and place have conspired, also, to direct Bruce’s ‘commemorative trajectory’—to define the ways in which, and by whom, Bruce has been remembered since his death.

Acknowledgements

For their advice, assistance, and encouragement during the research and writing of this thesis I should like to thank Michael Bolik (University of Dundee); Margaret Deacon (Southampton Oceanography Centre); Graham Durant (Hunterian Museum); Narve Fulsås (University of Tromsø); Stanley K. Hunter (Scottish Exhibitions Study Group); Theodore J. Karamanski (Loyola University Chicago); Steven MacDiarmid (*The Sunday Post*); Murdo J. S. Macdonald (University of Dundee); Kenny Mathieson (*The Herald*); Graeme Morton (University of Edinburgh); Murray G. H. Pittock (University of Strathclyde); Russell A. Potter (University of Rhode Island); Peter Speak (Scott Polar Research Institute); David H. Stam (Syracuse University); and Deidre C. Stam (New York Center for the Book). Particular thanks are due to the Arts and Humanities Research Board and to the staff of the British Library Newspaper Library; Edinburgh University Library (Special Collections); Glasgow University Archive Services; the Royal Geographical Society; the Royal Scottish Geographical Society; the National Library of Scotland; the National Museums of Scotland; and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

For their enthusiasm and skilful guidance, I am sincerely grateful to Geoffrey N. Swinney and to Charles W. J. Withers.

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Introduction

A man of the type of Dr William S. Bruce has simply enormous local influence, and stimulates the mind of young Scottish scientists. Transfer him to England and the influence is greatly reduced (*Edinburgh Evening News* 6 December 1909).

In the Main Hall of the Royal Museum on Edinburgh's Chambers Street, a banner hangs from the first-floor gallery. "Polar explorers", it reads. "Who do you think were the heroes? Scott? Amundsen? Nansen? Shackleton?" The title of the exhibition, commemorating the centenary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (1902–1904), proffers an alternative: "William Speirs Bruce: The First Polar Hero". This legend is, I would argue, both striking and problematic. Was Bruce—a polar scientist and oceanographer who completed thirteen high-latitude expeditions during a thirty-year career—really a hero? Did he enjoy the public acclaim and press attention afforded to his contemporaries? Or, perhaps cynically, does this exhibition's title misrepresent Bruce? Is Bruce, as it were, being remade? Is his story being revised to appeal to a public, particularly the Scottish public, in the centenary of his Antarctic Expedition?

In engaging with these and other questions, this thesis seeks not only to address the complex notion of heroism but also, more particularly, to contemplate from a constructivist perspective Bruce's exploratory career, his popular reception, and his commemoration. In so doing, I hope to make clear that situation, both spatial and temporal, mattered not simply to the *production* of Bruce's polar knowledge, but also to its *reception*—to the way the way in Bruce was encountered, understood,

accepted, or repudiated by his contemporary public. Moreover, in observing Bruce from the vantage point of the centenary of his Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, I intend also to consider how the memory of Bruce, how his position in collective consciousness, has been expressed in, and has been reshaped by, commemorative and memorial practises. From an examination of biographical writing, memorial exhibitions, and other acts of remembrance, I endeavour to explore “how memory in the guise of its representations changes over time, over space and between different people” (Withers 2004). In tracing what is, in Olick’s terminology, the “commemorative trajectory” of Bruce, I hope to make clear that the way in which Bruce has been remembered, the role he has occupied in popular memory, has not only varied with time and across space, but has also been purposely modified in order to serve particular agenda (Olick 1998, 385).

This thesis is not about the history of Antarctic exploration, or about the conduct of Victorian and Edwardian science *per se*, but is, rather, an investigation of ‘situatedness’. From the spatial and temporal particularity of Bruce’s polar science, through the locally inscribed production, dissemination, and reception of that work, to the socially and geographically located nature of Bruce’s commemoration, this study is inspired by recent work in the history of science which has emphasized the constitutive significance of ‘place’. It is to this work, and, in particular, to its geographical focus, that I turn now in order to place this study in its wider intellectual context.

Exploring the situated nature of scientific knowledge: tracing the spatial turn

The authority of science has, at least since the Enlightenment, rested on its claim to objective, disembodied, and spatially transcendent knowledge (Shapin 1998). So firm has been the conviction that science “is an enterprise devoid of local particulars”, that to ask whether “the *location* of scientific endeavour...[can influence] the *conduct* of science” appears illogical (Livingstone 2000, 285. Emphasis in original). Since the 1960s, however, work in the philosophy and sociology of science has challenged established views of scientific activity—showing it to be not merely subjective, but also embodied and situated spatially.

Among the first and most significant contributions to the reappraisal of the nature of science was Thomas Kuhn’s *Structure of scientific revolutions*, published first in 1962. Aspects of his work on the social construction of science were adopted and adapted during the 1970s by, among others, David Bloor and Barry Barnes—members of the ‘Edinburgh School’ of sociologists, and initiators of the ‘strong programme’ in the sociology of science (Golinski 1998). The Edinburgh School advocated an ambitious sociological engagement with the study of science, arguing not simply for a description of science as a social activity, but for a causal understanding of “the very nature and content of scientific knowledge” (Bloor 1976, 1). For the proponents of the strong programme, scientific knowledge was conceptually no different from other forms of human belief; it was an inherently social product, “made up, just like fairy tales and nursery rhymes” (Demeritt 1996, 484). The ideas of social construction advanced by the Edinburgh School, and the attendant pluralistic and relativistic understanding of scientific practise and knowledge making, were, for Shapin, “an important way of opening up the possibility

of geographical sensibilities” (Shapin 1998, 6). Indeed, if science was to be understood as an embodied activity—“the outcome of local patterns of training and socialization”—an attention to the geography of science, to the sites in which it occurred, was prerequisite (Shapin 1998, 6).

This geographical perspective on science has, since the work of the Edinburgh School, become increasingly local in its focus. From studies of science at the national and regional scale, the spatial gaze has shifted to examine individual sites of scientific activity (Withers 2001). Analyses of the production and display of scientific knowledge in such diverse locales as the domestic laboratory, coffeehouse, pub, and ship have exposed how the practises of science, the acts of witnessing and of warranting, are embedded in local contexts (see, for example, Secord 1994; Shapin 1988; Sorrenson 1996; Stewart 1999). For Livingstone, the spatially particular nature of science is apparent most explicitly in the “different repertoires of practical rationality” employed in geographically discrete sites of knowledge making (Livingstone 2002, 16). Since different spaces of scientific activity have, historically, observed “different understandings of what passed as evidence, demonstration, proof, objectivity, and...truth” the making of knowledge was, and is, a profoundly local and spatially inscribed affair (Livingstone 2002, 16). The point here is not to promote a deterministic explanation of scientific knowledge—to argue that the spatial situation of science *prescribes* its practise and products. It is, rather, as Livingstone suggests, to show that “space matters in the conduct of scientific inquiry” (Livingstone 2002, 8).

From the body of work on the situatedness of scientific endeavour, it is possible to advance the idea that there exist geographies of science—that science cannot and should not be seen as set apart from space but, instead, part of it; that science is “and always had been locally produced; constructed, contested, negotiated

and consumed” (Naylor 2002, 494). If the production and warranting of scientific knowledge is taken to be locally particular, one might enquire to what extent the reception of knowledge is similarly set in local context.

The geographical sensibility which has influenced profoundly the study of science ‘in the making’ has, more recently, become apparent in work on the reception of scientific ideas—in particular, studies of the reception of Darwinism, Einsteinian relativity, and Newtonianism, and on the reading of Robert Chambers’ *Vestiges of the natural history of creation* (see, for example, Glick 1974; Livingstone 1992, 1997, 2003; Numbers 1998; Rupke 2000; Russell 1991; Secord 2000). These studies highlight spatial variations in the reception of scientific knowledge, and demonstrate how its infiltration is contingent on, among other factors, the social, religious, political, and economic contexts manifest at particular geographical locations, at specific points in time. The recognition that in discrete spatial contexts, “works of scientific scholarship are differently received on account of cultural, political, ecological and other particularities” has important implications for understanding the movement of scientific ideas and how they are understood in particular sites of encounter (Livingstone 2002, 26).

To consider the popular and academic reception of Bruce in light of this work is, then, to explore these contexts—to engage in an inherently geographical activity. Unlike Chambers, Darwin, Einstein, or Newton, however, Bruce was not advancing a single scientific idea or concept but was, rather, presenting a large body of polar work. Bruce was, moreover, addressing an audience composed not only of his scientific contemporaries, but also of the wider public. This thesis is, therefore, in the *spirit* of the spatial turn in reception study, rather than an embodiment or exemplar of it. Whilst attention to the sites in which Bruce and his Scottish National Antarctic Expedition

acquired scientific knowledge (onboard the *Scotia* in the Weddell Sea) and where those data were analysed (at the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory) is an important component of this study, my principal focus remains the encounter between Bruce and the public, the venues in which that exchange occurred, and the influence of spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts on the popular understanding of Bruce and on his later commemoration and memorialization.

Geographies of reception: recovering the popular understanding of Bruce

Unlike many of his contemporaries who “published accounts of their experiences addressed not only to their scientific colleagues...but also to a popular audience”, Bruce did not issue a popular narrative based on his exploratory endeavours (Rozwadowski 1996, 429).¹ As a consequence, apart from occasional lectures and exhibition displays, the public encountered Bruce, and the work of his expeditions, almost exclusively through newspaper reports. From an examination of contemporary press coverage, I endeavour, then, not only to recover and to reconstruct the popular understanding of Bruce, but also to demonstrate that there were different geographies of reporting and of reading—that is, in different locations, Bruce was not only written about differently but was also read about and understood differently (Secord 2000, 153). It is my claim that the public’s engagement with the press was profoundly local. Rather than being shared and universal, the public’s understanding of Bruce, being informed by the press, was peculiar to the spatial and temporal context of its inception. In short, as I hope to illustrate, location mattered to how Bruce was received and understood.

¹ Bruce *did* prepare a popular account of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, but owing to a fire, which destroyed the original typeset, and a subsequent lack of funds, the text was not printed until 1992—more than seventy years after Bruce’s death (SPRI MS 356/46/147).

Archival sources and methodology: newspapers as a reliable witness

In an exploratory career spanning three decades, Bruce amassed at his Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory an unrivalled collection of polar literature and of biological and geological specimens from the Arctic and Antarctic—materially and metaphorically his life’s work. When obliged to close the Laboratory in 1919 owing to lack of funds, Bruce was forced to disperse his collections. The Laboratory’s library was presented to the University of Edinburgh, its maps and photographs to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, and its natural history specimens to the Royal Scottish Museum (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10b).² Other papers relating to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition and to the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory were, following Bruce’s death, deposited at the National Library of Scotland and at the Scott Polar Research Institute at the University of Cambridge (Swinney 2001).

Much of the extant work on Bruce has been based on an analysis of the archival collections of the Scott Polar Research Institute and of the Royal Scottish Museum (see, for example, Bruce 1992; Speak 1992c, 1997, 1999). Following recent curatorial work at Edinburgh University Library, however, the wealth, diversity, and research potential of its collection of Bruce’s private papers has become evident.³ A preliminary catalogue prepared by Swinney (2001) has allowed the material—spanning the late 1880s to Bruce’s death in 1921—to be examined systematically, and to be used to illuminate the periods of Bruce’s life poorly represented in other collections. It is from an engagement with this previously underexploited resource that this thesis is, in large part, based.

² At each site, miscellaneous paperwork—including correspondence, diaries, lecture outlines, and assorted typescripts—was also deposited.

³ The William Speirs Bruce collection at Edinburgh University Library comprises approximately 1,000 volumes from the library of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, and perhaps as many as 3,000 manuscript documents (Swinney 2001).

In tracing the popular reception of Bruce, extensive reference has been made to twenty-one albums of press cuttings amassed by Bruce and by James G. Ferrier, Secretary to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (EUL Gen. 556; EUL Gen. 1667–1685). These albums contain cuttings relating to Bruce's expeditions, and to the subject of polar exploration more generally. Comprising press reports from Argentina, Canada, England, France, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, and the United States, these volumes permit a more comprehensive survey of the contemporary reporting of Bruce than has hitherto proven possible. It would be injudicious to suggest, however, that these collected reports represent an exhaustive compilation of all that was written about Bruce in the British and foreign press, or, indeed, that the articles which they contain had been selected and retained without bias. These volumes simply constitute the most complete record of the contemporary newspaper treatment of Bruce and thus provide a basis from which to infer the popular understanding of Bruce and his expeditions. It is on this statement, however, that the credibility of this study rests. Although this thesis is situated in the framework of reception theory—which concerns itself not with texts *per se*, but with readers' actualization and interpretation of them—the use of newspaper reports is, in this context, complicated not only by vagaries of reading, but also by the vicissitudes of writing. To appreciate how the public understood Bruce (to examine how he was received) it is necessary to interrogate the medium by which the encounter between Bruce and the public was facilitated—the press. Yet the extent to which newspapers represent a simple proxy of public opinion is uncertain. To base a reconstruction of the popular understanding of Bruce on press reporting demands attention not only to the practise of journalism—and to the way in which, and by whom, newspapers were read—but also, and perhaps more significantly, to more abstract debates concerning

the value and validity of the term ‘public’.

Reading the press: Habermas and the public sphere

Work by Jürgen Habermas on the emergence in eighteenth-century Europe of a politically engaged and opinionated bourgeois society has highlighted the importance of the press as a forum for the formulation and articulation of public opinion (Habermas 1989). Concomitant with the emergence of this novel public was the development of spaces for debate—what Habermas has termed the ‘public sphere’ (Raymond 1999). The public sphere, which comprised a variety of non-political venues—including gentlemen’s clubs, professional associations, coffee houses, and salons—was an arena in which “the ‘public’ first assumed a recognizably modern shape” (La Vopa 1992, 79). Central to the emergence of the public sphere was the development of print culture, where newspapers, books, and journals acted as organs of information and as spurs to political debate. Access to these cultural products, and to the sites of discussion, was not, however, universal. Whilst periodicals and newspapers “appealed to a reading public crowded with gentlemen farmers, free professionals, merchants, shopkeepers, and craftsmen”, they were inaccessible to those members of society who could neither read them nor afford to buy them (La Vopa 1992, 106). Ironically, Habermas has argued that it was the development of a populist, accessible, and increasingly commercial mass media during the mid-nineteenth century that engendered the degeneration of the public sphere as a democratic and representative forum (Calhoun 1992).

For Habermas, “Ever since the marketing of the editorial section [of a newspaper] became interdependent with that of the advertising section, the

press...[became] a gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere” (Habermas 1989, 185). The commercialization of the press during the nineteenth century, and its control by a small number of media elites who believed that ownership of a “mass-circulation paper...gave [them] power over public opinion”, reduced the importance of newspapers as the province of public colloquy (Boyce 1978, 31). As newspapers became “bearers and leaders of public opinion”, as opposed to representatives of it, or mere ‘vessels’ for it, their readership was no longer an active and engaged community, but was, instead, a passive audience (Habermas 1974, 55). At this juncture, it is worth considering whether Habermas’s public—comprised, as Terrall has it, “variously of ladies and gentlemen, provincial amateurs, bourgeois householders, men and women of letters, journal subscribers, government officials, and other men of science”—is, as it were, populist enough (Terrall 2000, 239). Although the public, in Habermas’s formulation, represents a diverse collective, it is also an elite. It was to a different public, larger and amorphous, that the commercial press of the mid-nineteenth century appealed, and it is this public which constitutes this paper’s focus.

Habermas’s identification of what he describes as “the structural transformation of the press” has significant implications for the use of newspapers as source material (Habermas 1989, 186). If, as Habermas suggests, the press had, from the middle decades of the nineteenth century, ceased to reflect public opinion and, instead led it, a significant disparity might exist between what newspapers reported and what the public believed. It is important, therefore, to regard newspapers as informants of public opinion, rather than as mirrors of it. As a consequence, an analysis of press reporting can only point to the popular reception of Bruce, rather than recover it *in toto*. This epistemic gap between newspaper reports and popular

understanding is further complicated by the act of reading itself. Reading is profoundly hermeneutic since, as one historian of the book notes, different readers invest “even a fixed text...with new meaning” (Chartier 1992, 50). For de Certeau, “Whether it is a newspaper or Proust, the text has a meaning only through its readers; it changes along with them; it is ordered in accordance with codes of perception that it does not control” (quoted in Chartier 1992, 50).

A distinction exists between the text *as written* and the text *as read*. To infer the public understanding of Bruce from newspaper reports alone risks, therefore, what Rose has termed the “receptive fallacy” whereby “the critic assumes that whatever the author put into a text—or whatever the critic chooses to read into that text—is the message that the common reader receives” (Rose 1992, 49). This philological presentism ensures that, as Darnton has it, “our relation to...texts cannot be the same as that of readers in the past” (Darnton 2001, 161). Indeed, as Wright has argued, “The book [or any historical text] was not composed for us; it was composed under certain circumstances, by a certain author, for a certain public” (Wright 1895, xx). The use of newspaper reports requires careful attention, therefore, to these circumstances—to the way in which articles were written, and to the way in which they were read. This is, I suggest, a fundamentally geographical concern, for, in different locations, the same event may have been reported on and read about differently—reflecting not only “geographies of reading”, but also geographies of reporting (Secord 2000, 156). It is important, consequently, to regard the public’s engagement with the press as a geographically located event and, as far as is practicable, to consider newspaper reports with reference to their local social contexts.

Summary

In contemplating the value of newspapers as a basis on which to reconstruct the popular understanding of Bruce and his expeditions, it is apparent that, despite their important contribution to public edification, press reports cannot be regarded as unproblematic textual records of contemporary opinion. To attempt to recover such opinion from newspaper reporting—to understand how Bruce was understood—demands attention not only to how he was commented on, but also, more particularly, to which newspapers reported him, the rhetoric they adopted, and the audience to which their reports were addressed. Before engaging with the newspaper treatment of Bruce, however, this thesis begins with a brief biography—identifying the events that appear to have fashioned Bruce’s idiosyncratic engagement with polar science. From an examination of Bruce’s student training, his polar apprenticeship, and his exploratory career, I hope to reveal the complex network of personal relationships and experiences that both sustained and compromised his polar endeavours. Situating Bruce’s Scottish National Antarctic Expedition in the broader context of the ‘Heroic Age’ of polar exploration, I chart the evolution and articulation of his distinctive approach to polar science and contrast it with the dominant discourse of Antarctic exploration—the ‘race to the pole’.⁴

⁴ For Kirwan, the ‘Heroic Age’ of polar exploration (taken to be the period between the International Geographical Congress in London in 1895 and the return of Ernest Shackleton’s British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1917) was, in part, the product of a newly dominant media (Kirwan 1959). The ‘Heroic Age’ was an era during which a polar explorer could become “almost overnight a public hero, his name a household word” (Kirwan 1959, 253–254).

William Speirs Bruce: a life in context

William Speirs Bruce was born in London on 1 August 1867, the fourth child of Samuel Nobel Bruce, a Scottish physician, and his Welsh wife Mary Lloyd (Rudmose Brown 1923; Speak 1992c). Bruce passed his “quiet and uneventful” childhood at 18 Royal Crescent, in Holland Park, where he lived (together with his seven siblings), and was educated until the age of eleven (Rudmose Brown 1923, 19). Bruce’s domestic tutelage, conducted under the guidance of his paternal grandfather and aunt, was complemented by daily visits to Kensington Gardens and, on occasion, to the South Kensington Museum.⁵ For Rudmose Brown, Bruce’s first biographer, these informal outings ignited in Bruce a passion for the natural world: “he was taught to work hard and to delight in simple pleasures” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 19). Bruce continued to develop his interest in natural history throughout adolescence, despite being the subject of “derision among boys of more urban interests” at Norfolk County School which he attended as a boarder between 1879 and 1885 (Rudmose Brown 1923, 20).⁶ Despite his passion for the natural environment, Bruce emerged from his schooling with little clear idea of what he might do next.

⁵ Although Samuel Nobel Bruce recalled his son having made trips “into the Natural History Museum, which was not far off”, it is probable that he was referring to the South Kensington Museum, on Exhibition Road, from which the Science Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum were later formed (quoted in Speak 2003, 23). At this time, the Natural History Museum (then part of the British Museum) was located in Bloomsbury and was, as Rudmose Brown reveals, “too far off for the children to visit” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 19).

⁶ These dates are taken from Speak (2003).

An Edinburgh enlightenment

On his return from Norfolk County School, Bruce, perhaps galvanized by paternal persuasion, chose to embark on a career in medicine. In 1885, Bruce enrolled at University College School to prepare for the matriculation examination of University College, London.⁷ In the summer of 1887, at his third attempt, Bruce passed the College matriculation examination and secured a place to study medicine in the autumn term (Swinney 2002b). Before beginning his course, Bruce made what was to be a life-altering decision—he travelled north to Edinburgh to attend a pair of vacation courses in natural science. Beginning on 1 August 1887, Bruce’s twentieth birthday, the six-week courses, conducted under the direction of Patrick Geddes (1854–1932), included sections on botany at the Royal Botanic Gardens, and on natural history at the recently-established Scottish Marine Station in Granton (EUL Gen. 1649 77/1; Swinney 2002b).⁸ It was whilst studying at Granton (Figure 1), on the south shore of the Firth of Forth, that Bruce, under the tutelage of John Arthur Thomson (1861–1933), then lecturer in natural history at the University of Edinburgh’s Medical School, was first introduced to oceanography (Speak 2003). This field of inquiry would become his passion.

Situated in an inundated quarry on the foreshore at Granton, the Scottish Marine Station—comprising a floating laboratory known as the *Ark*, a steam yacht, *Medusa*, and a pair of rowing boats, the *Dove* and *Raven*—not only “cradled oceanography during its infancy” but also inspired in Bruce an enthusiasm for oceanographical science (EUL Gen. 1649 77/1).

⁷ Situated on Gower Street in Bloomsbury, University College School was little more than one minute’s walk from the British Museum. It is probable that Bruce took full advantage of its proximity.

⁸ The vacation courses were one of a series of Edinburgh Summer Meetings organized by Geddes during the 1880s and 1890s. These were, as Swinney notes, “the first summer schools ever held in Europe” (Swinney 2002b, 294).

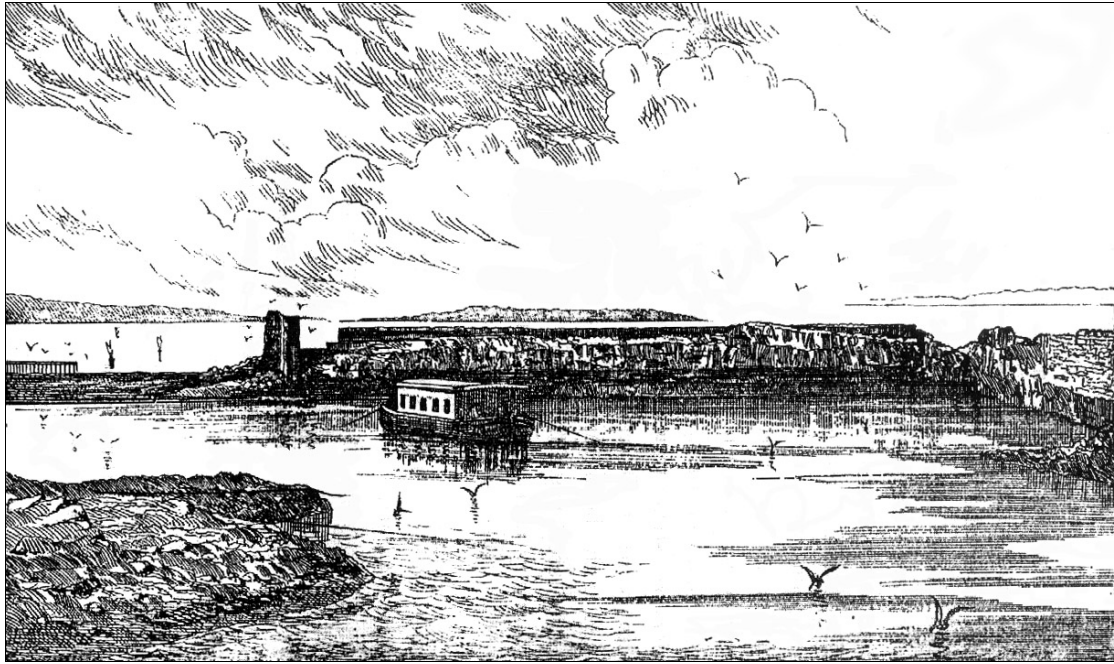


Figure 1. The *Ark* and the Scottish Marine Station (Cunningham 1884, 6)

Whilst at Granton, Bruce encountered two men who were later to have a profound influence on his life: Hugh Robert Mill (1861–1950), then the Marine Station’s physicist and chemist, and the naturalist John Murray (1841–1914), the man who had proved instrumental in persuading the Scottish Meteorological Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh to establish the Station (Moore 2002).⁹ Murray (Figure 2) was, at this time, working for the Challenger Commission, superintending the publication of the scientific reports of the H.M.S. *Challenger* expedition (1872–1876), on which he had served as naturalist.¹⁰

⁹ It is unclear, precisely, where, and at what time, Bruce and Mill first met. While Speak suggests that the pair were introduced “possibly through Geddes”, it seems more probable that they met whilst working at the Scottish Marine Station (Speak 2003, 25). In the year of its founding, an anonymous donor endowed three Elective Fellowships in the University of Edinburgh for work on chemistry, botany, and zoology at the Station. In 1884, Mill was awarded the Fellowship in Experimental Physics and Chemistry, with an annual stipend of £100 (Mill 1951). From 1887, Mill, in addition to his work at the Station, lectured in geography and physiography at Heriot-Watt College—a position he held until 1891.

¹⁰ Murray and Bruce shared not only an enthusiasm for oceanography, but also, to an extent, parallel life histories. Murray, as Bruce, came to Edinburgh “ostensibly to study medicine”, but, after a change of heart, instead “joined a whaler as surgeon for a seven-month voyage to the Arctic” (Deacon 1971, 336). Mill recalls Murray as having had “a very kindly disposition which he compelled himself to conceal under the mask of rough manners, and gruff voice and much sailor-language, very shocking to the highly proper scientific world of Edinburgh” (Mill 1951, 44).

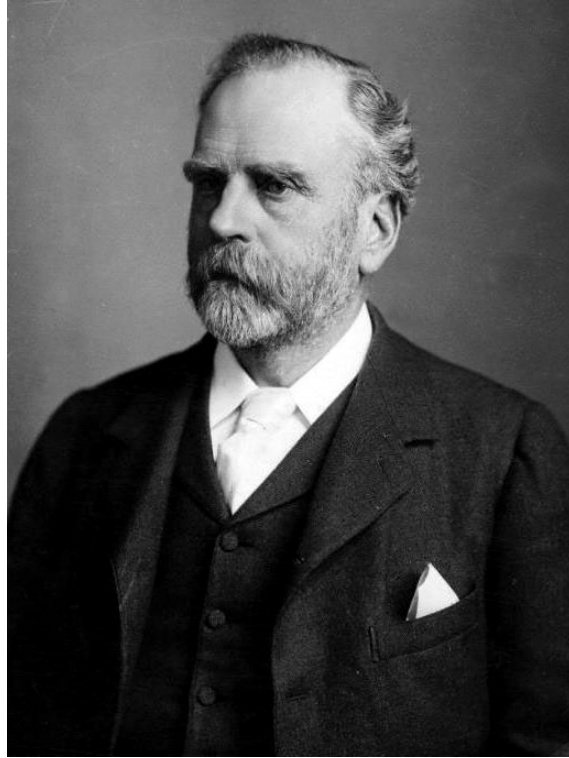


Figure 2. Sir John Murray, c. 1910. Courtesy of Hulton Getty / the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network.

The *Challenger* expedition (Figure 3), one of the most “successful and significant voyages of the nineteenth century”, had, on its global circumnavigation, completed the most comprehensive marine research programme yet undertaken. More significantly, it conducted the first systematic scientific work in Antarctic waters (Pinet 1992, 17).¹¹ The expedition’s marine collections, dispatched to Edinburgh at intervals during the voyage, were distributed to a number of eminent scientists for comment and analysis (Fogg 1992). A genuinely international effort, scientists were selected to work on the expedition’s specimens and data “irrespective of nationality and purely on the grounds of merit” (Deacon 1971, 367). The production of the expedition *Report*, and the bulk of the scientific analysis, was conducted by a small team of researchers, under the direction of Murray, at the Challenger Office, at 32

¹¹ Although scientifically successful, the expedition proved stressful and unpleasant. Of the ship’s complement of 240 scientists and crew, fully one quarter jumped ship and “eight more died or went mad” (Bryson 2003, 241).

Queen Street.¹² For Rozwadowski, the *Challenger* expedition, and the work of the Challenger Office, served to “delineate the bounds of modern oceanography” (Rozwadowski 1996, 409). Under Murray’s guidance, oceanography “was elevated to a science” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 305).



Figure 3. *Tow-net washing*, 1894. Original watercolour by Elizabeth Gullard used to illustrate the *Challenger Report*. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

In Edinburgh, Bruce took up residence, at a guinea per week, in the newly-opened University Hall at 2 Mound Place, Scotland’s first student hall of residence (Swinney 2002b).¹³ Envisioned by Geddes (Figure 4) as “a community of students from different academic disciplines living together and co-operating with one another

¹² Between 1885 and 1895, the Challenger Office issued a fifty-volume account of the expedition and discussion of its collections. The text, *Report on the scientific results of the voyage of H.M.S. Challenger during the years 1872–76*, “set the programme for decades of oceanographical research” (Rozwadowski 1996, 410).

¹³ University Hall, opened in May 1887, operated independently of the University of Edinburgh and was entirely self-governing. Its residents, acting as “wardens or masters”, were permitted to vet potential residents, stipulate the house rules, and supervise the domestic staff (Pinkerton 1978, 7). Indeed, in one incident, Bruce and his fellows voted that one of the residents of University Hall “should be heaved out” for having brought home a girl one evening (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 25).

in managing their environment”, University Hall was an experiment in social living and also a forum in which Geddes’s catholic interests were expressed (Pinkerton 1978, 6–7).¹⁴ Clearly impressed both by Geddes, and by his experience at Granton, Bruce abandoned his planned studies in London and enrolled at the University of Edinburgh to study medicine. In Edinburgh, cradle to the infant science of oceanography, Bruce had found his niche: there was “no better place in Britain for the aspiring polar scientist and explorer” (Speak 1997, 19). To describe Bruce, on his arrival in Edinburgh, as an ‘aspiring polar scientist’ is, however, problematic. Whilst Bruce’s passion for natural history is evident and traceable from boyhood, his interest in, indeed his awareness of, polar science emerged only gradually.



Figure 4. Portrait sketch of Patrick Geddes, c. 1890. Courtesy of University of Dundee Archive Services.

¹⁴ 2 Mound Place, part of Geddes’s scheme to “transform the whole of the Old Town into a new cultural and educational centre”, was the first of several halls of residence established by Geddes and his wife, Anna (Welter 2002, 235). By the mid-1890s, University Hall had expanded to include additional buildings at Mound Place and at Riddle’s Court in the Lawnmarket (Pinkerton 1978).

Beginning his medical studies in October 1887, Bruce gained instruction in natural philosophy from Peter Guthrie Tait (1831–1901), in anatomy from William Turner (1832–1916), in botany from Isaac Bayley Balfour (1853–1922), and in natural history from John Arthur Thomson, under whom he had studied at the Scottish Marine Station (Burn Murdoch 1923b; Rudmose Brown 1923; Swinney 2002b).¹⁵ From these men, each eminent in his field, and from his association with Geddes, Bruce gained “a width of outlook that made his interest range over the whole field of science” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 21). The diversity of Bruce’s scientific interests, and the quality of his training, prepared him commendably for a career in oceanography—“a science that focuses the attention of many physical, chemical, and biological fields on the understanding of a geographic place” (Rozwadowski 1996, 409). As at University College, however, medicine failed to hold Bruce’s attention and, from his second year in the city, he spent what time he could assisting Murray in his work at the Challenger Office (EUL Gen. 1647 47/11). Here, under the guidance of Murray and of John Young Buchanan (1844–1925), who had served as chemist on the *Challenger* expedition, Bruce received an unparalleled instruction in the theory and practise of oceanography.¹⁶ It was in this environment, at once exciting and pioneering, that Bruce gained a foundation in natural science, advanced his interest in the marine environment, and honed his analytical skills. In Edinburgh, Bruce found “his bent as a naturalist and threw himself wholeheartedly into his work” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 21).

Although Bruce “worshiped the scientist in Murray” he was also, as were

¹⁵ Both Murray and Mill had also studied under Tait. Indeed, it was Tait who recommended Murray to Charles Wyville Thomson (1830–1882), leader of the *Challenger* expedition, as a suitable candidate for the post of naturalist (Deacon 1971; Mill 1951).

¹⁶ From the *Challenger* expedition, “the greatest of all oceanographical enterprises”, Bruce was presented with a paradigm of marine research, a model he would later apply to his Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (EUL Gen. 1649 77/1).

many of his contemporaries, influenced profoundly by Geddes and by his novel perspective on the topics of ecology, biology, education, and social reform (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 28). Geddes, who was, for Mill, “the most inspiring influence in Edinburgh in the early ’eighties”, attracted a multitude of enthusiastic followers (Mill 1951, 24). In his time in University Hall, Bruce was drawn to Geddes’s ideas and subsumed into his “crowd of devoted disciples and servitors” (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 26).¹⁷ Among Geddes’s many interests, his desire to revive a Celtic nationalism proved particularly attractive to Bruce. Whilst teaching at University College Dublin in 1881, Geddes had been inspired by the vigour of Irish nationalism, and was keen to encourage a similar resurgence of nationalistic spirit in Scotland. Geddes, who envisioned a Celtic Revival in which art would be used to redefine a Scottish cultural tradition, succeeded in inspiring a number of artists to depict scenes from Scots history and folklore (Caw 1990).¹⁸ One particular enthusiast for the Celtic Revival was the Dundonian artist John Duncan (1866–1945) whom, in the early 1890s, Geddes employed to decorate the common room of Ramsay Lodge, part of University Hall, with a series of murals (Caw 1990). In this revivalist milieu, Bruce, despite having been born, as Burn Murdoch joked, “within the sound of Bow Bells”, developed a passionate affinity with Scotland—an enthusiasm that was eventually to engender an “estrangement with his family in England and disenchantment with English institutions” (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 25; Speak 1997, 19).

In the spring of 1891, Bruce, and fellow medical student Riccardo Stephens,

¹⁷ Whilst at University Hall, Bruce met Thomas B. Whitson, “one of Geddes’ right-hand men” (Burn Murdoch 1923c, 272). Whitson, partner in the Edinburgh accountants Messrs Whitson and Methuen, served as accountant and treasurer to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Through Whitson, Bruce met James G. Ferrier, an employee of Messrs Whitson and Methuen, who was later appointed honorary secretary to the Expedition (Speak 1992b; Swinney 2002b).

¹⁸ The Celtic Revival (also referred to as the ‘Celtic Renaissance’ or ‘Celtic Twilight’ movement) found literary expression in Geddes’s short-lived journal *The evergreen: a northern seasonal* (Swinney 2002b). Published in four volumes between 1895 and 1896, the journal included contributions from the celebrated Scottish novelist William Sharp (1855–1905) who wrote under the pseudonym Fiona Macleod (Caw 1990).

moved from Mound Place to the newest of Geddes's halls of residence at Riddle's Court on the Lawnmarket (Swinney 2002b). Here, Bruce met William Gordon Burn Murdoch (1862–1939), an artist and piper, who was to accompany Bruce on his first polar voyage (Burn Murdoch 1923b).¹⁹ Having served as a demonstrator for John Arthur Thomson since 1888, Bruce was invited by Geddes to lecture on zoology at his 1892 Edinburgh Summer Meeting—the course which Thomson had taught in 1887 (EUL Gen. 1647 47/11; Swinney 2002b). In a formative half-decade Bruce had, then, progressed from pupil to preceptor. His medical studies languished, but his interest in biology, zoology, oceanography, and meteorology flourished. Bruce was, for Speak, “now ready for polar exploration and polar science” (Speak 1997, 19).²⁰ When considered retrospectively, the five-year period during which Bruce was a student in Edinburgh was of pre-eminent importance; the people with whom he associated, and the practical experience he gained, together served to define him as scientist, oceanographer, and Scot. By chance, rather than by design, Bruce found himself at the prime locus of polar and oceanographical science in Britain—a unique environment that refined his scientific method and directed his exploratory desire.

A polar apprenticeship

In Britain, Northern Europe, and North America, the 1890s saw a renewal of interest in Antarctic exploration—a resurgence that came, as Mill records, “neither from the zeal of men of science, the fostering care of Governments, nor the wealth of millionaires. It was due to plain business men, seafarers willing to undertake a

¹⁹ Burn Murdoch was employed by Geddes to superintend Riddle's Court during its refurbishment and to complete a series of friezes in the Revivalist style (Swinney 2002b).

²⁰ It is misleading to suggest that Bruce was now ready for polar exploration. It is, perhaps, more accurate to suggest that he was now ready to undertake systematic fieldwork in an exploratory context (Swinney 2003a).

speculative voyage like the merchant adventurers of old” (Mill 1905, 369). Galvanized by the decline in Arctic waters of the bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*), Scottish and Norwegian whalers, aware that James Clark Ross (1800–1862) had reported what were thought to be bowhead whales in Antarctica during his expedition with H.M.S. *Erebus* and *Terror* in the 1840s, dispatched whaling fleets to assess the commercial potential of the southern ocean (Baughman 1994; Kirwan 1959).²¹ It was commerce, rather than science, which “gave the first boost to Antarctic exploration” (Kirwan 1959, 220).

In 1892, Mill was appointed Librarian of the Royal Geographical Society. Among his first tasks was to “draw up a set of Instructions for Naturalists visiting the Antarctic Regions” (Mill 1951, 137). In the autumn of that year, Mill was contacted by Benjamin Leigh Smith, a philanthropic veteran of Arctic exploration who had recently persuaded Robert Kinnes owner of a Dundee whaling concern, “to take out young naturalists as surgeons” on a expedition that was then being planned to the Weddell Sea (Mill 1951, 137). Looking for the Society to assist in outfitting the Expedition for scientific work, Smith also sought recommendations for suitable candidates to serve as naturalist. As Mill recalls, “It was then that I thought of a young medical student, William Spiers [sic] Bruce, whom I knew as a shy, modest fellow, with an overmastering passion for collecting specimens of Natural History” (Mill 1951, 137).²² With Mill’s backing, Bruce was offered and (despite having to abandon

²¹ In 1874, two Peterhead whalers, David and John Gray, had published a pamphlet—*Report on new whaling grounds in the southern seas*—in which they discussed the financial viability of an Antarctic whaling operation (Findlay 1933). Their paper, based on an analysis of the logs and published accounts of Antarctic explorers, concluded “it is established beyond doubt that whales of a species similar to the right or Greenland whale found in northern high latitudes exist in great numbers in Antarctic waters” (quoted in Baughman 1994, 26). In addition to its oil and blubber, the bowhead whale (also known as the Greenland right whale) was prized for its baleen plates—the longest of any whale species. Baleen from a single whale, which were used in the manufacture of such diverse items as fishing rods and corsets, “could be worth as much as £2000–3000” (Speak 2003, 28).

²² Mill also recommended Charles W. Donald, who served as naturalist on the *Active* (Mill 1905, 1951).

his medical studies without having graduated) accepted the position of Surgeon and Naturalist on board the *Balæna*, one of four ships comprising the Dundee Antarctic Expedition (1892–1893).²³ Bruce was accompanied on the voyage by Burn Murdoch who, although serving as artist and Assistant Surgeon, was required to fund his own passage (EUL Gen. 1647 47/-).²⁴

Before departing on the Expedition, Bruce was invited by Murray to sail with him and Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834–1919), the influential German biologist, on Murray's yacht *Medusa*, "to acquire more thoroughly the practical handling of oceanographical apparatus" (EUL Gen. 1649 77/3). Following this, Bruce and Burn Murdoch raced north to Dundee in early September to sign their ship's articles. Mill, who had journeyed from London to witness the departure of the Expedition, recalls the experience thus:

Half an hour before the ship sailed, Bruce lounged up, 'All ready,' he said. The steward asked him, 'Where is your bedding?'—the first intimation that he had had to supply his own requirements in that respect. He appealed to me in despair—he had no money, and I had not enough to do any good; but Coates generously presented a five-pound note, a bystander showed the way to the nearest ship-chandler's, and Bruce returned triumphant with full equipment just in time (Mill 1951, 138).²⁵

Despite this hesitant beginning, Bruce appears to have accepted with alacrity the responsibility of conducting the first real scientific work in Antarctic waters since that

²³ The Dundee Antarctic Expedition included four whalers: *Active* (Captain Thomas Robertson, later skipper of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition); *Balæna* (Captain Alexander Fairweather); *Diana* (Captain Robert Davidson); and *Pole Star* (Captain James Davidson) (Mill 1905).

²⁴ Burn Murdoch was commissioned, and was paid in advance, by the London publisher Longmans, Green & Co. to write and illustrate a book about the voyage. His volume, *From Edinburgh to the Antarctic: an artist's notes and sketches during the Dundee Antarctic Expedition of 1892–93*, was subject to criticism by the Dundee press, who objected to Burn Murdoch's disparaging description of the *Balæna*'s skipper, Alexander Fairweather (see Chapter 3).

²⁵ Andrew Coates was uncle of James and Andrew Coats [sic], the principal financial backers of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (Speak 2003).

of H.M.S. *Challenger*—he was doubtless keen to prove himself to his mentors.²⁶

When the *Balæna* sailed from Dundee on 6 September 1892, “amidst a scene of great excitement”, she was truly voyaging into the unknown: no member of her staff or crew had visited the Antarctic, few had any idea what to expect (Mill 1905, 372). The extent to which Antarctica was both a literal and figurative *terra incognita* is amusingly recalled by Bruce’s description of the *Balæna*’s first encounter with a peculiarity of southern waters:

I was called on deck to see, as I was told, some small seals. They were swimming with rounded backs just below the water and only their head above it. What the sailors had taken for seals were really penguins, with their silky hair-like feathers looking like wet fur. The sailor refuses to recognise feathers in this closely fitting fleece, black on the back and white on the breast (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 1/1).

After several weeks reconnaissance in the Weddell Sea, the expedition failed to locate any bowhead whales, and, despite an abundance of “finners, hunchbacks, bottle-noses and grampuses”, lacked the correct equipment to secure them (Mill 1905, 373).²⁷ In an effort to spare the Expedition from financial ruin, the crews set to work capturing, slaughtering, and processing thousands of seals—harvesting blubber and skins whilst working, as one whaler reported, “literally up to the neck in blood” (quoted in Mill 1905, 373). Bruce, who assisted in this enterprise, found it sickening: “The carnage was awful, the...ships killing twenty to thirty thousand seals” (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 1/1).²⁸

²⁶ Bruce maintained a connection with his Edinburgh mentors throughout his journey; he had with him works by Geddes, Mill, and Thomson (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 55).

²⁷ As Burn Murdoch recalls, “we...tried our harpoons on these ‘finners’...and might as well have tried to dry-fly for the Scotch express” (Burn Murdoch 1923a, 33).

²⁸ In spite of these unpalatable tasks, Bruce was evidently smitten by the beauty of his surroundings, as is clear in his description of the seas around the South Shetland Islands: “A blood-red glow was shed upon the snow-capped mountains, above the clear horizon was a soft purple canopy of cloud, green and yellow lights shone in the clear horizon, every piece of ice was tinted with an infinite variety of colours, the cliff faces of the great icebergs standing out in rich orange colour against the clear horizon.

Despite the taxing nature of the voyage, and the exasperating character of the Expedition's skippers "who had no mind to waste time that could be turned to money", Bruce employed the skills he had acquired at the Challenger Office to undertake some useful scientific work: "I was able to bring back records which included several soundings down to depths of 300 fathoms, a series of observations on the salinity and temperature of Antarctic waters...using for the first time in Antarctic Seas a reversing thermometer. I also gathered a considerable quantity of surface plankton and took systematic meteorological observations" (EUL Gen. 1649 77/1). As Bruce later noted, however, "The scientific work of the expedition was not done in very favourable circumstances; commerce was the dominating note. A great deal more might have been done for the geology and biology of these Antarctic Regions if some opportunities for landing had been afforded me" (Bruce 1896, 507). Despite collecting considerable oceanographical and meteorological data, Bruce's zoological investigations were curtailed by what was, for him, the "short sightedness of the whaling captains" who refused to "allow the naturalists to secure skins and skeletons for scientific purposes" (EUL Gen. 1649 77/3).²⁹ Many of the zoological specimens Bruce did succeed in securing were, however, confiscated by the *Balæna's* skipper, Alexander Fairweather, and presented to the British Museum (EUL Gen. 1647 47/-).³⁰

Such tribulations aside, the Dundee Antarctic Expedition made, arguably, the

Then the sun rose again, the richness of the tints vanished like a transformation scene that exquisitely tinted drapery was changed into a scene of dazzling splendour, each berg was a marble temple, which reflected its image in the glassy sea, and the beautiful sheathbills fanned the limpid air with their wings of creamy whiteness" (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 12/162).

²⁹ Bruce's dispiriting experience on the *Balæna* was not uncommon. As Rozwadowski notes, "Producing scientific knowledge about the deep ocean during the nineteenth century required scientists to integrate their work with existing marine practices, technologies, and social settings. They had to seek the cooperation of captains, officers, and common sailors who had priorities and interests quite different from their own" (Rozwadowski 1996, 410).

³⁰ Bruce suspected that Fairweather had sold specimens, "which he obtained through no excretion of his own", to the British Museum (EUL Gen. 1647 47/-). Bruce's suspicion might have been well founded. In 1893, Fairweather sold one of the Expedition's Emperor penguins to the Royal Scottish Museum for £5 (Swinney 2003a).

most significant contribution to the scientific understanding of Antarctica since the work of the *Challenger* expedition, and, as was reported in *Nature*, “demonstrated the immense results which would accrue from a purely scientific expedition” (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 1/1). More significantly, however, the Expedition instilled in Bruce a passionate desire for further Antarctic exploration, and a conviction that science, rather than commerce, should be its motivation. Indeed, so great was Bruce’s disappointment at “having his scientific work hindered at every turn, mocked and jeered at”, that he and Burn Murdoch debated whether “to tip the old man [Captain Fairweather] overboard or slit his throat” (Burn Murdoch 1923a, 56).

The lure of the south

On their return to Dundee, on 30 May 1893, Bruce and Burn Murdoch, “still smelling of seal oil”, were provided accommodation by Patrick and Anna Geddes at their home at 17 Westfield Gardens (Speak 1992a, 23; SPRI MS 100/13/2).³¹ From here, Bruce wrote to Mill, describing his desire to return to Antarctica: “I am burning to be off again anywhere, but particularly to the far south where I believe there is a vast sphere for research. The taste I have had has made me ravenous” (SPRI MS 100/13/3).³² Within a week of his return, Bruce was actively planning an expedition to South Georgia where he hoped to complete a geographical and geological survey of the island, and conduct meteorological and biological observations over the course of a

³¹ Between 1888 and 1919, Geddes held the Chair of Botany at University College, Dundee, but lectured only during the summer terms (Macdonald 2000).

³² Bruce argued that “more can be done in the south than the north & that many of the supposed terrors & impossibilities do not exist, & that the believe [sic] of their existence has simply arisen from want of knowledge of these parts” (SPRI MS 100/13/4).

year (Speak 2003).³³ In late summer 1893, Bruce travelled to London where he laid his plans before the Royal Geographical Society and Roger Tuckfield Goldsworthy (1839–1900), then Governor of the Falkland Islands (Speak 2003; SPRI MS 100/13/4; RSGS ARC. 4.2/2). Bruce was, at this time, virtually penniless; it was only “the loan of a fiver, or perhaps two” from Burn Murdoch, that allowed him to “get his evening clothes out of pawn, and appear before the Great Old Scientists, of whom he was rather in awe, at their dinners and meetings, and make some show” (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 58–59).

In September, Bruce attended a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Nottingham where he reported the results of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition and discussed his proposed journey to South Georgia.³⁴ Bruce’s remarks, reported in *The Times* (20 September 1893), attracted the attention of the London publisher Edward Arnold (1857–1942). Arnold wrote to Bruce in October:

I understand that you are actually contemplating a voyage of discovery in those southern regions, and I should esteem it a favour if you could find the time to write to me about your plans, for the subject is one that has a great fascination for me. I cannot claim even to have set foot on the ice floes, but I have been shooting (in perfect summer weather) as far north as Lat 70° and felt the craving to get right away to the Arctic, so I can sympathise to some extent with the feelings that no doubt are prompting you.

It is possible that I might be of some service to you in a business capacity, should your expedition crystallize into reality, and have its natural issue in a book (EUL Gen. 1647 46/1a. Underlining in original).

³³ Bruce’s enthusiasm for further Antarctic exploration was dampened only by doubt as to his father’s health and well-being. In a letter to Mill, Bruce revealed, “Were I to follow out my own inclinations I should launch forth immediately [and] endeavour to carry out some of my plans, but I have to consider my father’s years are increasing, & that he finds the work he as to do too much for him, & consequently have to consider which is the best way I can assist him & the family in the future” (SPRI MS 100/13/4).

³⁴ Recalling the experience to Mill in 1895, Bruce wrote, “I offered my services, if funds could be provided by other enthusiasts, to devote my time & energies to Antarctic Research, & the Association gave me hearty acknowledgement. My offer is still in the field & I am ready to start tomorrow, if opportunity be given me” (SPRI MS 100/13/6).

Despite the passion, conviction, and enthusiasm of his argument—and the proffered support of Arnold—Bruce was unable to secure funding for an expedition to South Georgia.³⁵

The value of Bruce's scientific work aboard the *Balæna* was brought to the attention of the Royal Geographical Society in an address by Murray on 27 November 1893 (Murray 1894). Murray, who had campaigned vocally for further Antarctic exploration since his return from the *Challenger* expedition, cited Bruce's discovery of "metamorphic and even sedimentary rocks" (obtained whilst dredging in the Weddell Sea), as supportive of his hypothesized southern continent and as a spur to further investigation (Murray 1894, 10; Yelverton 2000).³⁶ In concluding his address, Murray called for a national expedition to Antarctica—one to be conducted, by the Royal Navy, "over three summers and two winters" and with science, rather than commerce, as its impetus (Murray 1894, 25). Murray noted that "A dash to the South Pole is not...what I now advocate, nor do I believe that is what British science, at the present time, desires. It demands rather a steady, continuous, laborious, and systematic exploration of the whole southern region with all the appliances of the modern investigator" (Murray 1894, 25). Although it would be imprudent to attribute this renewed interest in Antarctic exploration solely to Bruce's work on the *Balæna*, he did provide an important indication of the scope and value of work that remained to be undertaken.³⁷

³⁵ In 1893, the British Association for the Advancement of Science awarded Bruce a grant of £50 "towards scientific research in the Antarctic Regions" which was contingent on his securing a passage to Antarctica (EUL Gen. 1647 47/11).

³⁶ As Yelverton notes, "When John Murray addressed the RGS meeting in November 1893, almost nothing was known about the Antarctic" (Yelverton 2000, 3). Indeed, only a few glimpses of land had been made along the circumference of the Antarctic Circle. The question for Murray's audience was, then, "what these scattered sightings represented. Were they mere islands or fragments of the mythical seventh continent?" (Yelverton 2000, 4).

³⁷ With characteristic enthusiasm, and perhaps mindful of his own influence on him, Patrick Geddes was later to credit Bruce as the progenitor of the 'Heroic Age' of polar exploration, dubbing him "the actual initiator of this now world-wide movement of Antarctic Exploration" (SPRI MS 101/43).

In an effort to bolster his finances, Bruce returned to Edinburgh in 1894, and offered tuition in physics, chemistry, botany, and zoology to undergraduates in preparation for their First Professional Examinations (EUL Gen. 1647 47/10). In addition to tutoring, and in an effort to “make a few guineas to carry on with”, Bruce and Burn Murdoch lectured (Figure 5) “to this society and the other, in little towns and big towns” on their Antarctic Expedition (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 59). Often speaking together, Bruce addressed the scientific work of the voyage, whilst Burn Murdoch discussed “the æsthetic aspects of the oceans and the Antarctic ice effects, a very easy and endless subject to speak on” (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 60).

By 1895, Bruce appears to have lost hope of undertaking further high latitude exploration. In January he applied for the post of curator of Raffles Library and Museum in Singapore. His application was supported by testimonials from, among others, Mill, Murray, and Geddes. In support of Bruce, Geddes wrote, “I have never known any young naturalist whom I should recommend with such complete confidence for the task of foreign collecting and museum curating. I am sure that his single-minded devotion to science would result in the most important accumulations” (EUL Gen. 1647 47/11). Despite the strength of these testimonials, the curatorship was offered to an entomologist (Swinney 2003a). By the early summer of 1895, however, Bruce secured a post that better suited his desire for high latitude experience—*locum tenens* at the Ben Nevis Observatory (SPRI MS 100/16/6).³⁸

³⁸ Whilst a student in Edinburgh, Bruce had been given the opportunity to visit the Ben Nevis Observatory by Alexander Buchan (1829–1907), who had worked on the Challenger *Report* and who had been in the audience for Murray’s address to the Royal Geographical Society in November 1893 (Rudmose Brown 1923).

GRANTON PARISH GUILD

**'A VOYAGE
TO THE
SOUTH POLE,'**

**BY
Mr. BURN MURDOCH
AND
Mr. W. S. BRUCE,**
With Specimens of Deep-Sea Life
By Mr. IRVINE.

*** LIME-LIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS. ***

TUESDAY, 20th FEBRUARY 1894,
At **EIGHT** o'clock, in
GRANTON PUBLIC SCHOOL.

W. A. BELL, Esq., in the Chair.

Admission --- THREEPENCE.

William Nimmo & Co., Printers, Leith.

Figure 5. Handbill advertising a lecture delivered by Bruce and Burn Murdoch to the Granton Parish Guild. *A voyage to the South Pole* was, perhaps, a title more enticing to an audience than the factually accurate *A voyage to the Weddell Sea*). Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

Antarctica by proxy

Opened on 17 October 1883, the Ben Nevis Observatory (Figure 6)—which comprised the High Level Observatory on the mountain’s summit, and the Glencoe Station at its foot—was, for meteorology, what the Scottish Marine Station and the Challenger Office were for oceanography. Here, under the supervision of Robert Traill Omond, “an original genius”, hourly meteorological observations were conducted and, when weather permitted, examination of the mountain’s flora and fauna undertaken (Mill 1951, 112). Whilst at the Observatory, Bruce was introduced to Robert Cockburn Mossman (1870–1940) “a born meteorological genius”, then an observer at the Glencoe Station (Mill 1951, 113). Mossman later served as meteorologist and magnetic observer on the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. In September 1895, Bruce was offered a permanent position at the Observatory, and accepted with enthusiasm. Relaying the news to Mill, Bruce noted that in overwintering at the Observatory, “I shall...in a miniature way, be experiencing the rigours of a polar winter & trust to be more than ever fitted for the duties of an Antarctic Meteorologist & Explorer” (SPRI MS 100/13/6).³⁹

³⁹ During his winter at Ben Nevis, Bruce was gifted a pair of skis by Burn Murdoch, who had had them imported from Norway (Burn Murdoch 1923c). Bruce, who became an accomplished skier, was later president of the Scottish Ski Club, which was founded in the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory (Rudmose Brown 1923; Speak 2003). The experience Bruce gained at the Ben Nevis Observatory was applied to the establishment, during the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, of a meteorological station in the South Orkneys (see Swinney 2002c).



Figure 6. *Tower covered with ice crystals after great storm. MacDougal and Neill the cook.* Photograph depicting the Ben Nevis Observatory during winter. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

At intervals during his tenure at the Ben Nevis Observatory, Bruce returned to Edinburgh where, with Burn Murdoch and the Norwegian whaler Henrik Johan Bull, he conceived plans for an expedition to Antarctica that might, in establishing a whaling station on South Georgia, and in providing an opportunity for extended scientific exploration, “unite the interests both of Science and Commerce” (RSGS ARC. 4.2/2b). The scheme, which was put before Murray, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, and the Edinburgh whalers Christian Salvesen & Co., failed to arouse sufficient interest and was abandoned. It is interesting to note, however, that despite his experience on board the *Balæna*, Bruce was willing to accompany a second whaling expedition if it provided an opportunity of further Antarctic research.

In early 1896, Bruce, still at the Ben Nevis Observatory, was contacted by a representative of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who was seeking a naturalist to accompany an expedition to Repulse Bay in northern Canada. The expedition was to

be led by the Scottish naturalist and ornithologist William Eagle Clarke (1853–1938), who was later to contribute to the ornithological sections of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition's *Report*. Although Bruce was eager to acquire further high latitude experience, he was concerned that the commercial aspects of the voyage might well limit the work of naturalist. In a letter to John Scott Keltie (1840–1927), then Secretary to the Royal Geographical Society, Bruce wrote, "I consider Antarctic work before all other but cannot refuse any good offer in the meanwhile & find that the Antarctic is not coming off for a year. I told Col. Feilden [the Hudson's Bay Company representative] that I would not go in any other position than Naturalist pure & simple. I am determined to have no *Balæna* business ever again" (EUL Gen. 1647 46/1b). Tellingly, in his draft contract with the Hudson's Bay Company, Bruce stipulated: "That all objects of Natural History, Photographs, Meteorological Observations, Scientific Notes, Journals, obtained and prepared by Mr Bruce be deemed to be his property and that he be allowed to take them away without let or hindrance when leaving the ships, except articles traded by the company" (EUL Gen. 1647 46/1c). Despite these careful preparations, the expedition to Repulse Bay never materialized.

In June 1896, Mill recommended Bruce as naturalist for the third season of the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition (1894–1897) to the Arctic archipelago of Franz Josef Land (*Zemlya Frantz Iosefa*). Organized and led by Frederick George Jackson (1860–1938), a game hunter and adventurer, and financed by the newspaper proprietor Alfred Charles William Harmsworth (1865–1922), the Expedition sought to undertake a complete scientific investigation of the islands and, more significantly, "a nearer approach to the North Pole than had hitherto been accomplished" (McClintock 1899, xi). In a hurried note to Bruce, Mill wrote that Arthur Montefiore Brice (1859–

1927), Secretary to the Expedition, “was in here today wishing to know of a man who would go out in the Windward as naturalist for the second half of Jackson’s expedition. I suggested you & he proposed to telegraph to ask you. It would be a case of only a few day’s [sic] notice, but if your heart is still set on the polar regions it might be a good chance. Let me know what you decide, & if I can help you I will in any way” (EUL Gen. 1647 46/41a). With little time to deliberate, Bruce accepted Mill’s offer and presented himself, four days later, at Mill’s London home.⁴⁰ On 9 June 1896, Bruce sailed as naturalist on the *Windward*.

The Expedition did not prove, for Bruce, particularly enjoyable or successful. Given the limited time in which Bruce had to amass scientific equipment and experimental apparatus for the voyage, he was forced to depart before having secured all the items he required—those he was unable to obtain were to be forwarded to him, on a later ship, by Brice. Brice failed, however, to dispatch any additional equipment, thereby curtailing Bruce’s scientific activity. In a heated letter to Harmsworth, Bruce wrote: “The formalin...was only one of the many things that were not sent out to me. Lines, tow-nets, or tow-net material, dredging and trawling apparatus, reversing deep sea thermometers, deep sea water bottles, were all of equal importance. For the lack of these (whether through misadventure or neglect) the scientific work of the expedition has been seriously impaired. In looking over the zoological specimens I find that some of the most valuable have been destroyed for want of sufficient formalin” (EUL Gen. 1647 46/41c. Underlining in original). With echoes of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, Bruce’s scientific work was often interrupted by the Expedition’s *de facto* aim: game hunting.

Despite the scientifically unsatisfying nature of the Expedition, Bruce gained

⁴⁰ Mill records that Bruce had arrived “without an article of luggage, without even an overcoat. ‘Everything in the way of warm clothing will be ready for me on arrival,’ he said. So we fitted him out for a long, cold voyage with what I could spare from my own things” (Mill 1951, 140).

both personally and professionally from his time in the Arctic. In addition to contributing to his store of polar experience, Bruce established friendships that endured throughout his exploratory career.⁴¹ Chief among these was his unexpected meeting, on his arrival in Franz Josef Land, with the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930) who, to Bruce’s astonishment, was ensconced in the Expedition’s camp at Cape Flora. In what was, for Rudmose Brown, “one of the most dramatic events in the history of Arctic exploration”, Nansen (whom, it was thought, had died during his attempt to reach the North Pole in the *Fram*) had been sighted on an ice floe four miles from the Expedition’s base (Rudmose Brown 1923, 69). Together with his companion Fredrik Hjalmar Johansen (1867–1923), Nansen had been offered refuge by Jackson. Nansen, who later advised Bruce on the outfitting of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, became a close friend. Bruce returned to London on 3 September 1897, and spent the following winter in Edinburgh where, in addition to working on his specimens, resumed demonstrating for John Arthur Thomson’s classes in zoology.

Andrew Coats and His Serene Highness Albert, Prince of Monaco

Bruce’s next opportunity for Arctic research came as a result of the intransigence of Clements Robert Markham (1838–1916), President of the Royal Geographical Society. In the spring of 1898, Andrew Coats (whose family owned the successful Paisley textile manufacturer J & P Coats Ltd) invited Mill to accompany him as scientific observer on a sporting trip then being planned to the Barents Sea (Mill 1951). Although Mill secured the approval of Keltie, the Society’s Secretary,

⁴¹ Bruce’s companion on the *Windward* was David Walter Wilton (c. 1873–1940), who was later to serve as zoologist to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Evidently impressed by Wilton, Bruce wrote to Mill, noting: “I think we shall get on first rate” (SPRI MS 1325/7/2).

Markham refused Mill's application for leave, arguing "The proper place of a librarian is in the library" (Mill 1951, 141). On the recommendation of Mill, Bruce was accepted as a suitable replacement, and sailed with the expedition aboard the yacht *Blencathra*. The *Blencathra*, impressively outfitted for scientific research, provided Bruce his first opportunity for relatively untrammelled polar science; he was, both literally and figuratively, "in his element" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 79). On the expedition Bruce "Did some trawling & dredging townetting [sic] when possible shot birds, bears, seals, walrus. Took physical observation" (SPRI MS 1325/7/9).

Bruce's good fortune was to continue when, on its return to Tromsø in northern Norway, the *Blencathra* berthed alongside the *Princesse Alice*—"the finest oceanographical research vessel of the day" (Speak 1999, 202). Owned by His Serene Highness Albert, Prince of Monaco (1848–1922), the *Princesse Alice* was shortly to depart for Spitsbergen. Bruce and the Prince enjoyed an instant rapport, and Bruce was invited to join the ship for her journey north.⁴² Working alongside several leading marine scientists, including John Young Buchanan, his instructor at the *Challenger* Office, Bruce undertook an extensive series of oceanographical, meteorological, biological, and geological observations—adding to his practical polar experience. Bruce returned to Spitsbergen aboard the *Princesse Alice* the following summer. He had now completed "one summer in the Antarctic Regions, [and] three summers and one winter in the Arctic Regions" (SPRI MS 441/16). In the dozen years since his arrival in Edinburgh, Bruce had become one of Britain's most experienced and comprehensively trained polar scientists.

⁴² In a hurried letter to Mill, informing him of his posting on the *Princesse Alice*, Bruce was barely able to contain his enthusiasm: "You know what it will be on board this ship, what real revelling there will be in zoological & physical work" (SPRI MS 1325/7/9).

The national expeditions

The revival of scientific interest in the Antarctic which had been encouraged, in part, by the Scottish and Norwegian expeditions of the 1890s, had, by the middle years of that decade, reached maturity. Following Murray's address to the Royal Geographical Society in November 1893, Bruce presented a paper to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society on the desirability of a national Antarctic expedition. At the conclusion of Bruce's address, the Society's chairman, James Geikie (1839–1914), was sufficiently motivated to conclude: "the Royal Scottish Geographical society resolves to give its hearty support to the promotion of further exploration in the Antarctic. The Society's Council is of [the] opinion that at the present time a properly equipped Government Expedition would, with the increased advantages of steam and modern appliances have every prospect of successful exploration in the South Polar Regions" (RSGS ARC. 4.2/2b). Following this resolution, the Society appointed an Antarctic Committee "consisting of Dr John Murray, Professor James Geikie, Dr Buchan, and Mr J. G. Bartholomew", to draft, and submit to the Government, a proposal for a national expedition to Antarctica (RSGS ARC. 4.2/2b). The Committee, complemented by delegates from ten scientific societies, was later to assist in the establishment of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition.⁴³

In the same year, the Royal Geographical Society's Antarctic Committee was advancing plans for an expedition similar to that proposed by Murray in his 1893 address. Despite being under the enthusiastic direction of Markham, the Committee languished "in a dormant state" until it was given impetus by the proceedings of the

⁴³ The Committee included delegates from the Royal Society, the Royal Physical Society, the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, the Stirling Natural History and Archaeology Society, the Scottish Meteorological Society, the Edinburgh Geological Society, the Glasgow Geological Society, the Scottish Microscopical Society, the Dundee Naturalists' Society, and the Perthshire Society of Natural Science (RSGS ARC. 4.2/2c).

Sixth International Geographical Congress, held in London in July 1895 (RSGS ARC. 4.2/2d). The future of Arctic and Antarctic exploration featured prominently on the Conference's agenda, and it was into this enthusiastic and receptive environment that the Norwegian explorer Carsten Egeberg Borchgrevink (1864–1934), having “hurried halfway round the world at his own expense”, brought news that, on 24 January 1895, he, along with Leonard Kristensen (captain of the appropriately-named *Antarctic*), had made the first confirmed landing on the Antarctic continent (Huntford 1999, 49). For Huntford, the landing at Cape Adare was “the first step on the road to the Pole” (Huntford 1999, 49). One of their first acts on landfall was to erect a post “carrying a box painted with the Norwegian flag”—a simple and patriotic gesture that was, however, to prefigure the conduct and spirit of Antarctic exploration for the next twenty years (Kirwan 1959, 221). Enthused by Borchgrevink's achievement, and by several conference contributions on Antarctica, the Congress proposed:

that the exploration of the Antarctic regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken. That, in view of the additions to knowledge in almost every branch of science which would result from such a scientific exploration, the Congress recommends that the scientific societies throughout the world should urge in whatever way seems to them most effective, that this work should be undertaken before the close of the century (Mill 1951, 141–142).

This resolution—framed by Mill, who acted as Secretary to the Congress—has been viewed as marking the beginning of the ‘Heroic Age’ of polar exploration. The race to the South Pole had begun.

By 1898, in an effort to more effectively secure funding for the proposed national Antarctic expedition, the Royal Geographical Society, together with the Royal Society, formed a Joint Antarctic Committee. The Committee, on which Murray and Markham were leading representatives, was often the scene of passionate debate

and was, as Mill records, clouded by a “tangle of jealousies, misconceptions and mistakes” (Mill 1951, 144).⁴⁴ Murray and Markham disagreed, irreconcilably, on the outfit and purpose of the expedition. Whilst Murray believed that the expedition should comprise two ships staffed predominantly by civilian scientists, Markham was of the unshakable conviction that the enterprise should be exclusively naval and that it should, in the first instance, use only one ship (Kirwan 1959; Mill 1951). As Kirwan reveals, “Murray found Markham’s proposal unpalatable and from that moment [November 1899] he withdrew unobtrusively from further discussion of the arrangements” (Kirwan 1959, 234).⁴⁵ Markham, now with free rein, pursued his polar project and enjoyed considerable fund-raising success—securing, in one instance, £25,000 from the industrialist Llewellyn Longstaff (Huntford 1999). Having, by the close of 1899, amassed approximately £40,000 from public subscription, Markham approached Her Majesty’s Treasury, and was awarded the sum of £45,000 (Huntford 1999). With finance now substantially in place, and a ship, the *Discovery*, under construction in Dundee, it remained simply for Markham to select the staff and crew of the British National Antarctic Expedition.

Shortly after his return from his second voyage with the Prince of Monaco in 1899, Bruce, alive with desire for further polar research, wrote to Markham, proposing himself as leader of the British National Antarctic Expedition. In a letter dated 16 April 1899, Bruce outlined his professional credentials and scientific experience:

⁴⁴ In his private journal for 27 October 1899, Markham recorded a typical Committee meeting: “Lord Lister is a feeble chairman. All the time wasted by Wharton and Murray in futile chatter. Murray’s conduct looks as if he is trying to do any harm he can. This Committee will strangle the Expedition with red tape, if not checked” (RGS Sir Clements Robert Markham Special Collection 1/14).

⁴⁵ Shortly before Murray withdrew his service, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society had applied to be represented on the Joint Committee. In a letter from the Royal Society’s secretary Michael Foster (1836–1907), the Royal Scottish Geographical Society’s application was refused (RSGS ARC. 4.2/1a).

For the past seven years I have been training myself with a view of making myself more efficient in Polar Service. I have spent one summer in the Antarctic Regions, three summers and one winter in the Arctic Regions, and more than a year on the summit of Ben Nevis in charge of the Observatory. I am a 'ski' runner & have taken part in sledging expeditions (SPRI MS 441/16).

Although Markham agreed to meet with Bruce, who was due to visit London later that month, there was little real prospect of him securing the post of leader. Markham, in his text *Considerations respecting the choice of a leader of the Antarctic Expedition*, had stated: "The appointment of a leader to the Antarctic Expedition is the most important step of all. He should be a naval officer, he should be in the regular line and not in the surveying branch, and he should be young, not more than 35; but preferably some years younger than that" (RGS Antarctic Archives 3/2/1). Of these criteria, Bruce, then thirty-one, satisfied only the last. After some months, in late 1899, Bruce was offered, and rejected, the position of naturalist onboard the *Discovery*. Bruce believed that, with the experience and expertise he had gained in five polar expeditions, he was primed to realize his plan, conceived whilst onboard the *Balaena*, of a purely scientific expedition to the Weddell Sea—an enterprise that might, in both form and function, better represent the ideals that he espoused.

Plans for Scottish National Antarctic Expedition were officially revealed by Murray on 22 March 1900, in an address to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. Although the news failed to create a sensation, it was the subject of much discussion in the Scottish press. For *The Scotsman* (23 March 1900), there was "much to be said for the proposal that Scotland should reserve for itself a special part in the task of attempting to unlock the 'secret of the Antarctic,' which is to mark the opening of a new century". For the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (23 March 1900), the proposed expedition "would assuredly be a great Scottish triumph". The news was, however,

received less favourably by Markham, who, as Bruce recorded, regarded the Expedition with “suspicion and antagonism” (EUL Gen. 1651 101/5). In a brief but pointed note to Bruce, dated 23 March 1900, Markham wrote:

I am very sorry to hear that an attempt is to be made at Edinburgh to divert funds from the Antarctic Expedition, in order to set up a rival enterprise. Such a course will be most prejudicial to the Expedition which is much in need of more funds. A second ship [bound for Antarctica] is not in the least required. It is not true that the whole area is not provided for. If the Germans do not undertake the Weddell Quadrant, it will be undertaken by our Expedition as a first object. I do not understand why this mischievous rivalry should have been started, but I trust that you will not connect yourself with it” (SPRI MS 441/16).

Markham’s uneasy relationship with Bruce had now become actively hostile: fearing for the financial security and press celebrity of the British Expedition, Markham embarked on what Bruce described as a “campaign of calumny against the Scottish Expedition” (EUL Gen. 1649 77/3).

Despite Markham’s interference, the Treasurers of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition secured financial contributions from all quarters of Scottish society, including “some little orphans who had saved their halfpennies to help the Expedition” (EUL Gen. 1651 101/5). The Expedition’s principal investor was, however, James Coats (brother of Andrew Coats, with whom Bruce had sailed on the *Blencathra*). The Coats brothers together contributed some £30,000, thereby doing “for Scotland, what Mr. Llewellyn Longstaff did for England” (EUL Gen. 1651 101/5).⁴⁶ By autumn 1901, with sufficient funds now in place, Bruce began work

⁴⁶ Despite repeated appeals, the Treasurers of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition failed to elicit any funding from the British Government. The Expedition was, then, funded exclusively by private subscription. As Bruce later recorded, “It is unnecessary to state that the Imperial treasury, although it handsomely supported the English project, denied similar help to the Scottish one. The only Government help the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition received was a set of the Challenger Volumes from the Stationary Department, and a handful of instruments from the British Meteorological Office, and grudgingly granted a set of instruments from the Admiralty” (EUL Gen. 1651 101/5).

selecting a suitable vessel for the Expedition.⁴⁷ Unable to acquire the *Balaena*, given its “exorbitant” price, Bruce selected a Norwegian whaler, *Hekla*, and, under the direction of the naval architect George Lennox Watson (1851–1904), who contributed his services without charge, had it refitted for Antarctic work (Rudmose Brown 1923, 101).⁴⁸ Renamed the *Scotia*, the ship sailed from Troon, on the west coast of Scotland, with little fanfare (it being the Sabbath) on 2 November 1902. With its departure, the decade-long hiatus in Bruce’s Antarctic career came to an end. For one newspaper correspondent who witnessed the departure: “The Scottish Expedition is not setting out on a wild, extravagant dash for the South Pole, but rather on a patient, economical voyage of investigation and discovery. The results may not affect prices on the Stock Exchange, but they will surely add to the world’s store of scientific knowledge, and help men to an understanding of many things which, even in the twentieth century, remain mysteries” (EUL Gen. 1672).

Although framed in opposition by Markham, the British and Scottish National Antarctic Expeditions were, for Bruce, “cooperative rather than competitive” (EUL Gen. 1646 19/20). In scope, method, and motive, the work of the *Discovery* and the *Scotia* was dissimilar yet complementary. Although scientific research was a primary spur to both expeditions, it was subordinate on the *Discovery* to geographical exploration and, indeed, discovery. Where the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition reflected the apotheosis of Bruce’s approach to polar science (representing the intellectual inheritance of Buchanan, Mill, Murray, and the Prince of Monaco), the

⁴⁷ By this time, Markham’s opposition to the Expedition appears to have softened. Writing to Bruce in 1901, Markham apologized for “replying angrily when you announced your expedition” and noted magnanimously “I now can see things from your point of view; & wish you success” (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10d). Bruce was, however, rather suspicious of Markham’s conversion. In a letter to Colonel Bailey, then Secretary to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, he noted, “I rather feel inclined not to make too much of Markham’s letter considering the very strong attitude he has taken in the past” (RSGS ARC. 4.2010e).

⁴⁸ Bruce was aided in the selection of *Hekla* by Nansen and the Norwegian naval architect Colin Archer, designer of the *Fram* (Rudmose Brown 1923).

British National Antarctic Expedition was driven by two occasionally conflicting motives: the Royal Geographical Society's desire for territorial discovery, and the Royal Society's call for scientific research (Kirwan 1959).

With science as its principal object, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition stood in contrast to the dominant exploratory discourse—the race to the pole. As Bruce noted, “Personally, I am not a pole hunter and I do not believe in urging men on till they drop in order to get a mile further north or south than somebody else, but I do believe in an effort to get to know the unknown wherever or whatever it is and thus add to the wealth of human knowledge” (EUL Gen. 1646 19/20). It was Bruce's focus on science, and his store of polar experience, that ensured the success of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition.⁴⁹ Yet it was the scientific accomplishment of this “peaceful and unobtruding campaign, devoid of glamour and thrilling glory” which ensured that it was Scott (who with the British Expedition had penetrated the Antarctic continent), rather than Bruce, who returned to a hero's welcome (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, xiv). As one newspaper later commented, “Had he [Bruce] devoted himself to dramatic displays he might have fared better; it is his misfortune that he is able only to point to a record of solid work unobtrusively performed, and that does not count for much in these days when the sensational and theatrical are in the ascendant” (*Evening Express* 10 January 1910).

⁴⁹ For the Expedition's Committee, the *Scotia*'s principal achievements were:

1. “The bathymetrical survey of the South Atlantic Ocean and Weddell Sea between 40° S. and 74° S., over a sea track of about 9,000 miles, over which no ship had previously sailed.
2. The study of the Physics and Biology of that sea, including trawling in depths of fully 2,500 fathoms (about three miles deep) in high southern latitudes within the ice pack. This is a feat that has not been accomplished by other expeditions up to this date.
3. The study of Antarctic Meteorology and Magnetism—the meteorological work certainly being second to one.
4. The Exploration of Antarctic Lands.
 - (a) The highly detailed survey of Laurie Island, South Orkneys (probably the most detailed map of any definite area in the Antarctic Regions).
 - (b) The mapping of 150 miles of the coast-line of the Antarctic Continent, now known as COASTS LAND, and previously entirely unknown” (EUL Gen. 1653 165).

Summary

Throughout his exploratory career, scientific inquiry remained, for Bruce, the essence of polar study. Focused on what he termed “the golden chain of science”, Bruce sits uneasily within what is now understood as the ‘Heroic Age’—a time of adventure, and of territorial acquisition, on the road to the pole (Bruce 2002, xiii). Bruce’s idiosyncratic engagement with polar science reflected his student training in Edinburgh, his apprenticeship served on five polar voyages, and the significant and influential friendships he cemented. Bruce’s oceanographical passion—forged in the disciplinary crucible of the Challenger Office, and moulded by Buchanan, Coats, Mill, Murray, and the Prince of Monaco—found ultimate expression in the planning and successful execution of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Yet the actions of Bruce’s detractors (those who conspired, wittingly or unwittingly, to challenge his work) were also a prompt to his exploration and his approach to science.

Bruce’s dissatisfying experience aboard the *Balæna*, and his frustration with the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition, engendered a passion for a purely scientific expedition to Antarctica, run on terms of his choosing. The actions of Bruce, Fairweather, and Jackson, despite acting in opposition to Bruce’s supporters, were formative influences in the evolution of his scientific ethos and in the genesis of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Had it not been for Markham’s rather cavalier treatment of Bruce, the final spur to the Scottish Expedition, Bruce might never have been sufficiently motivated, nor handsomely supported, to plan and to mount a second expedition to Antarctica. Bruce, as scientist and explorer, must, then, be understood in those terms—as a node in a complex network of personal relationships that informed his understanding of, and his work in, the Polar Regions.

It is to the reception of Bruce's polar work that I turn now. With reference to work by Riffenburgh (1991a; 1991b; 1993) and David (2000), I reflect on the press treatment of Bruce, and consider the ways in which he was represented during three polar voyages: the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition, and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. Focussing particularly on the development of William Thomas Stead's (1849–1912) 'new journalism', Chapter 3 considers the intimate connections between polar exploration and press sensationalism during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and examines the degree to which particular cultures of journalism, and specific rhetorical styles, influenced the representation of polar explorers and scientists (Baylen 1972).

Of poles and pressmen: reporting William Speirs Bruce

On 15 July 1840, *The Times* recorded in sober and matter-of-fact style that an “interesting rather than important geographical discovery has been made this year in the Southern Antarctic Ocean, of an island or continent with a coast of 1,700 miles from east to west”. This distinctly undramatic report—describing the simultaneous discovery of the Antarctic continent by Charles Wilkes with the United States Exploring Expedition (1838–1842), and by Jules Sébastien César Dumont d’Urville with *L’Astrolabe* and *Zélée* (1837–1840)—in no way prefigures the fevered and sensational press coverage which typified later polar reportage. In a relatively brief period during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the way in which British and American newspapers reported the Polar Regions and, as a consequence, the way they were perceived by their readership, changed radically—a shift that Riffenburgh attributes to a single event: “the discovery of the fate of the Franklin expedition” (Riffenburgh 1993, 29).

From sublime to sensation: the poles in popular understanding

For nineteenth-century explorers and the public, the encounter with the Polar Regions, particularly the Arctic, was negotiated within a framework of specific aesthetic conceptions. Drawn from traditions in European art and philosophy, particular notions of beauty and of the relationship between nature and society influenced the way in which the high latitudes were perceived, written about, illustrated, and discussed

(Spufford 1996). The Victorians, as Loomis records, “inherited images of the Arctic that had already been conditioned by the...English response to the Sublime” (Loomis 1977, 96). The sublime—which was given its modern interpretation by Edmund Burke in *A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* (1757)—refers, broadly, to the aesthetics of grandeur, and to the emotions of awe, marvel, and surprise engendered by particular landscapes (Riffenburgh 1993). The sublime dominated descriptions of the Arctic. The northern high latitudes were regarded without question as “somehow vaster, more mysterious, and more terrible than anywhere else on the globe” (Loomis 1977, 96). This understanding of the Arctic as somewhere grand and terrible yet also a place that might “exalt the human mind and soul” was rehearsed and reinforced in travel narratives, newspaper reports, illustrations, and in literary fiction, most notably in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (Loomis 1977, 99). From autumn 1854, however, sublimity was replaced by sensation, when the fate of Sir John Franklin’s expedition in search of the North-West Passage was revealed.

When Franklin sailed from London on 19 May 1845 with H.M.S. *Erebus* and *Terror*, it was with the confident knowledge, shared by the British establishment, that a route would finally be pioneered from the North Atlantic to the Beaufort Sea (Riffenburgh 1993). For Loomis, “The Franklin Expedition was not simply carrying the Union Jack into the Arctic; it was carrying Western man’s faith in his power to prevail on earth” (Loomis 1977, 104). Such was the confidence of the press and public in the abilities of Franklin’s expedition, that it was not until 1848 that, as Riffenburgh has it, “it began to occur...that Franklin, his two ships, and all of his men had utterly disappeared into that strange, cold world of the north” (Riffenburgh 1993,

25).⁵⁰ Franklin's expedition had become trapped by advancing ice on 12 September 1846. Intense cold and lack of supplies forced the surviving officers and crew (105 of the original complement of 128) to abandon the ships and travel south on foot in search of the nearest settlement (Loomis 1977). Despite resorting to cannibalism, no member of the party survived the journey. News of this disaster did not, however, reach Britain until 1854, when Scots explorer John Rae, who had lead one of several expeditions in search of Franklin, reported to the Admiralty the unpalatable truth that not only were Franklin's party dead, but that they had engaged in the morally-questionable practise of cannibalism (McGoogan 2002; Withers 2001). Rae's report—based on information provided by Inuit hunters who had discovered the remains of Franklin's party along the shores of King William Island—was subsequently published in *The Times* and created a public sensation (Loomis 1977; Riffenburgh 1993). The news that Franklin's men were dead was greeted with shock; the suggestion that “From the mutilated state of many of the corpses and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource—cannibalism—as a means of prolonging existence” was met with incredulity (*The Times* 23 October 1854).

The horror and disbelief provoked by Rae's intelligence was reflected in a series of articles published by Charles Dickens in his periodical *Household Words*. Dickens doubted the veracity of the Inuit, whom he described as “a gross handful of uncivilized people”, and, moreover, questioned the reliability Rae's report (quoted in Loomis 1977, 108). After its initial revulsion, however, the press, apparently unwilling even to entertain the possibility that “the best of British manhood” had engaged in cannibalism, ignored Rae's account (Loomis 1977, 109). It was only

⁵⁰ H.M.S. *Erebus* and *Terror* had been extensively modified following their Antarctic cruise with James Clark Ross. Fitted with steam-driven screws, a novel departure for an Arctic vessel, the ships represented the acme of maritime technology (Sale 2002).

gradually, over the course of several years, that the British press and public finally accepted Rae's grim revelation—a recognition that was to change the Victorian's perception of the Arctic. For Riffenburgh, “Knowing that the Franklin expedition had disappeared forever was terrible, yet sublime. But knowing that the men of the expedition had died slowly of scurvy and starvation was different. The reality and proximity of the horror had eliminated the sublimity” (Riffenburgh 1993, 31). The dreadful truth of Franklin's fate made grand and romantic representations of the Arctic (e.g., Figure 7) appear unhappily naïve. As David frames it, “The *frisson* of fear resulting from the sublime representations of the Arctic created by artists and narrative authors now seemed inappropriate in the face of a tragedy on an unparalleled scale” (David 2000. Emphasis in original).

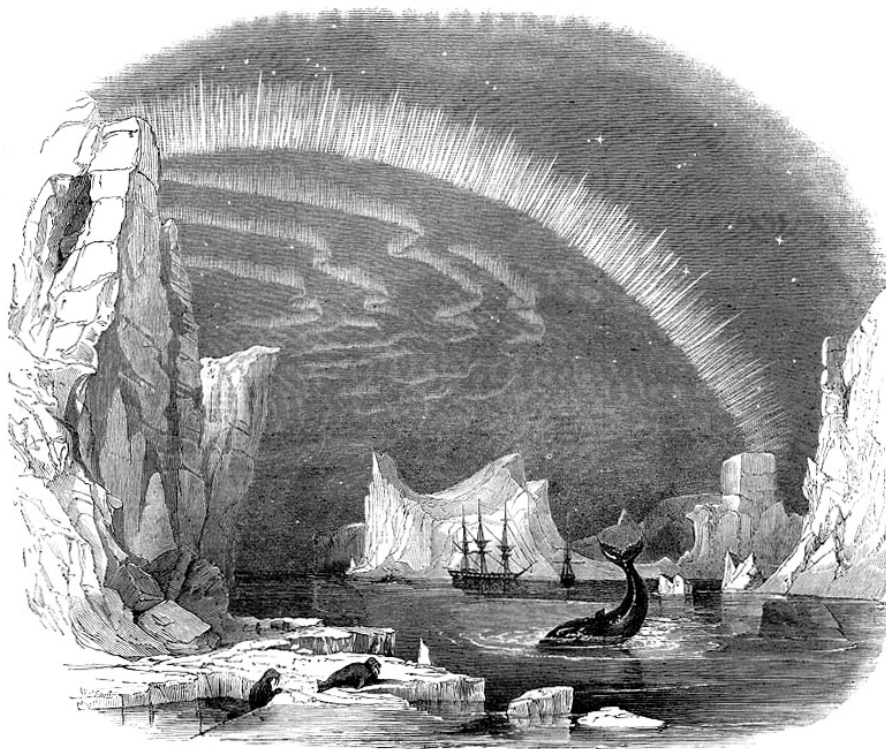


Figure 7. *Icebergs and the Aurora Borealis*. An engraving depicting H.M.S. *Erebus* and *Terror* in the Arctic Ocean. *The Illustrated London News* 13 October 1849. Courtesy of Russell A. Potter.

Franklin's expedition marked not only the demise of the Arctic sublime, but, perhaps more significantly, facilitated the subsequent sensationalization of exploration. To

appreciate this transition more fully, it is necessary to examine the nature of the popular press during the nineteenth century and to consider the way in which it engaged with polar exploration.

Creating a sensation: the press and polar exploration

Although newspapers had been produced in Britain since the seventeenth century, it was not until the middle decades of the nineteenth that, facilitated by the social, technological, and political changes of the Industrial Revolution, a truly popular press emerged (Williams 1978). Whilst improving literacy and advances in print technology increased the audience for, and potential reach of the press, it was the abolition of the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act of 1819 that permitted the development of inexpensive, mass-circulation newspapers (Wiener 1988). The Stamp Duty, which subjected “every periodical containing news or comments on the news” to a tax of four pence, effectively ensured that “a mass press could not legally or viably exist” (Riffenburgh 1993, 23). The repeal of the Act in 1855 (which coincided with extensive newspaper coverage of Franklin’s expedition) and the subsequent elimination of duty on paper in 1861, meant that “for the first time since the reign of Queen Anne the press was completely free of fiscal restrictions” (Altick 1998, 354). From the 1860s, therefore, many leading titles, including *The Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily News*, and *The Daily Chronicle*, were able to reduce their cover price to one penny. Although the advent of the penny press brought newspapers within the financial reach of the majority of the population, publishers made little effort to appeal to lower-class readers. As Altick suggests, these newspapers remained “what they had always been, papers for the upper and the substantial middle classes” (Altick 1998, 355).

The appointment of William Thomas Stead as editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette* in 1883, marked a significant turn in the history of the British press (Baylen 1972). Under Stead's guidance, the *Gazette* appropriated the typographical and rhetorical practises of the American press—including such innovations as “bold headlines...maps, pictorial illustrations, special articles and interviews”—in an attempt to appeal to a popular audience (Baylen 1972, 375). Stead's ‘new journalism’ had, in addition, a social and political remit: it was Stead's intention that the *Gazette* should “lead the leaders of public opinion” and “interpret the aspirations of the dumb classes to the vocal classes” (Baylen 1972, 374). Stead's campaigning on such issues of concern as prostitution and Britain's naval strength, explored in a series of sensational exposés, succeeded in securing policy changes from the Government (Boyce 1978). The increasing influence of the *Gazette* and other titles in the new journalistic tradition on British political life rested on the belief that “the press [was] more representative of the will of the people than Parliament” (Baylen 1972, 384). Yet, as Schalck notes, since “these papers had a combined circulation of less than a million, it is obvious that most ordinary Englishmen did not read them” (Schalck 1988, 74). The extent to which such newspapers were genuinely representative of those for whom they claimed to speak was, clearly, limited.⁵¹

Despite Stead's failure to achieve for *The Pall Mall Gazette* the mass readership he desired, his model of journalism engendered the Americanization of the British press: sensational reporting was combined with populist and accessible copy, engaging and digestible page layouts, and numerous illustrations. In the later nineteenth century, these stylistic innovations were applied with equal enthusiasm by the proprietors of British and American newspapers who, in reporting polar

⁵¹ It is important to recognize, however, that circulation figures do not, necessarily, equate to levels of readership.

exploration, “saw opportunities to increase circulation by stimulating the creation of heroic myths” (David 2000, 83). Although the press had reported on exploration in Africa and the Arctic throughout the nineteenth century, it was not until the 1880s, facilitated by the rapid expansion of the railway and telegraph networks, that the press was able to report such news in a timely fashion. The influence of Stead’s new journalism, and advances in the technology of news gathering and dissemination, coincided with the race for the North Pole—an era during which the most sensational Arctic expeditions were mounted, and the “myth of the explorer” was fashioned (Riffenburgh 1993, 2).

Among the first pressmen to recognize and to exploit the public interest in polar exploration, evident during and since the search for Franklin, was James Gordon Bennett (1841–1918), editor of *The New York Herald*. Bennett—whose team of ‘foreign correspondents’ included Henry Morton Stanley, whom Bennett dispatched in search of David Livingstone (Driver 1991)—sent reporters on a number of expeditions to the Arctic. One such journalist, Martin T. Maher, accompanied the *Juniata* in its search for Charles Francis Hall’s ill-fated *Polaris* expedition (1871–1873) (Riffenburgh 1991a).

Hall, who had been provided \$50,000 by the United States Congress to make an attempt on the Pole, succumbed to delirium four months into the voyage and died soon afterwards. A subsequent autopsy showed high concentrations of arsenic in Hall’s body—perhaps administered by one of his companions. After Hall’s death, command of the expedition passed to the *Polaris*’s master Sidney Budington, who, after his refusal to proceed further north, struggled to control his near-mutinous crew. On the return journey, *Polaris* struck an ice floe and began to ship water. In the ensuing mêlée, several members of the crew sought refuge on the floe. Soon after,

Polaris broke free from the ice and, as a result of strong winds and currents, was driven away from the floe and its unhappy castaways. The stranded crew remained on the floe for six months until 30 April 1873, when they were rescued by the *Juniata*'s sister ship *Tigress*. Maher's report of the search for Hall's expedition, "perhaps the first Arctic account ever written specifically for immediate publication in a newspaper", relayed a thrilling tale of high-latitude heroism, courage, and death (Riffenburgh 1993, 72). In so doing, Maher established a precedent for future Arctic reporting—the rhetoric of the sublime was replaced by the sensational, the heroic, and the tragic.

Concomitant with this 'sensationalization of the Arctic' was the depiction by the press of explorers as heroes. The popular appetite for tales of danger and of discovery was contingent on, and contributed towards "heroic myth creation" (Riffenburgh 1993, 5). Nineteenth-century polar exploration satisfied many of the criteria of heroism traditionally associated with military endeavour (David 2000). Indeed, John Ruskin, in his discourses on war, considered heroism to be a combination of "individual effort, a spiritual dimension requiring acts of dedication and trust, and clearly defined gender roles in which men went to war and women and children waited patiently at home for their return" (David 2000, 109–110). As Riffenburgh notes, polar exploration "perfectly fit these criteria" (Riffenburgh 1993, 6). Explorers and expeditions that did not conform to these heroic ideals were, however, often distorted by the press in order to do so. In reporting Adolf Erik Nordenskjöld's expedition in search of the North-East Passage (1878–1880), for example, *The New York Herald* transformed "what was actually a scientific expedition...to the status of a thriller" (Riffenburgh 1993, 72). In the last decades of the nineteenth century, a symbiotic relationship developed between explorers and the

press. Whilst the former enjoyed the financial support and publicity provided by newspapers, the latter benefited from the increased circulation engendered by the promotion of heroic myths and sensational tales (David 2000).

The Dundee Antarctic Expectation: reporting *Terra Australis Incognita*

The sensational rhetoric and tales of heroism that had become a staple of Arctic reporting by the close of the nineteenth century were, however, largely absent from the press treatment of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition. Unlike the Arctic, which captured “British people’s fascination”, the Antarctic was, in popular imagination, a literal and figurative *terra incognita* (David 2000, 1). Although the Antarctic was to become the prime arena of heroic endeavour during the twentieth century, it remained in the last decade of the nineteenth, abstract and enigmatic—a lure to science, but an unknown and unknowable quantity to the press and to the public. In this context it is, perhaps, unsurprising that press coverage of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, rather than emphasizing its more perilous or thrilling aspects, focused instead on relaying a description of the novel zoology, geology, and meteorology encountered during the voyage.

When viewed in retrospect, the significance of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition is evident: it completed the first systematic scientific work in Antarctica since H.M.S. *Challenger*, and was an important spur to later exploration. At the time of its departure, however, the Expedition’s significance lay not in its prospect for scientific novelty, but in its potential to “restore a once important industry [whaling] to its old footing” (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 August 1892). The Expedition had, in consequence, enormous local importance. From being Britain’s foremost whaling port

in the 1870s, Dundee had experienced a precipitous decline as, over the course of several years, “the whaling fishing at Davis Strait...[proved] practically a failure” (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 August 1892). That the Expedition might serve to open up new and potentially fecund whaling grounds was, as one newspaper put it, “the earnest wish of all who have the prosperity of the port at heart” (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 August 1892). The local significance of the Expedition was reflected in its restricted press coverage. Unlike Bruce’s later Antarctic voyage, which attracted the interest of the nation and foreign press, reports on the Dundee Antarctic Expedition were confined, almost exclusively, to the newspapers of Dundee’s principal publisher, John Leng & Co. (Scott 2003). The Expedition was also reported, less extensively, in *The Dundee Courier & Argus* (31 May 1892). Leng’s papers—the *Dundee Advertiser* and *The Evening Telegraph*—enjoyed a large circulation, and were read “throughout the counties of Forfar, Perth, and Fife, as well as over the north-east of Scotland” (North 1989, 534). Despite their wide readership, both papers were intrinsically provincial and were, in their editors’ view, “calculated rather for local utility, than for political discussions” (North 1989, 416).

In their treatment of the return of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, the *Advertiser* and *Telegraph* reflected the expectation felt by Dundee’s populace. In an effort to obtain news of the Expedition at the earliest opportunity, two reporters from the *Telegraph* were dispatched in a small vessel to the mouth of the Tay to await the arrival of the *Balæna*. The correspondents had with them a number of carrier pigeons which they dispatched at intervals to the *Telegraph* Office to “keep the sub-editors in Bank Street acquainted with their movements” (*The Evening Telegraph* 30 May 1893). The *Balæna* entered the Tay on the afternoon of 30 May 1893, and in the short time it took to reach Dundee, “several hundred people had assembled at the entrance

to Camperdown Dock to see her berthed” (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893). Whilst the majority of those waiting at the dock were friends and relatives of those on board (Figure 8), many were simply attracted “out of curiosity to see the vessel which had just returned from practically unknown regions” (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893).



Figure 8. *Balæna* entering the dock at Dundee. *Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893.

It is possible, however, that what the press reported as a large and expectant gathering was, in reality, rather more muted. In his recollection of their return in the *Balæna*, Burn Murdoch writes: “Then the Firth of Tay and Camperdown Dock and Dundee—no display. Our expedition you must remember was only Scottish and industrial, with merely a limited scientific importance” (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 57). Whatever the size and enthusiasm of its reception, the fact that, in respect of identifying new whaling grounds, the expedition had proved a failure was somewhat ignored by the press. The *Balæna*’s captain Alexander Fairweather attempted to put a positive gloss on the Expedition, stating: “we have...reached the Tay with flying

colours, for although unsuccessful in finding the object we had set our hearts upon, we have had the good fortune to return with a full ship, containing the produce of some 6000 seals, with more oil than our tanks can contain” (*The Evening Telegraph* 30 May 1893).

Given the Expedition’s limited commercial achievements, much of the press coverage was concerned with the scientific work undertaken during the voyage. In this regard, Bruce became the *de facto* spokesperson for the Expedition and his influence is evident in the sparing, though informative, character of the press reports. On their first evening in Dundee, whilst guests of Patrick and Anna Geddes, Bruce and Burn Murdoch were joined at dinner by a “pale young reporter” from the *Advertiser* (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 57). After several clarets, Bruce and Burn Murdoch forgot the reporter and returned to their perennially favoured topic of conversation—their nemesis Alexander Fairweather. When the pair eventually noticed the reporter enthusiastically transcribing their conversation, they warned him against taking “too much liberalism” (Burn Murdoch 1923d, 57). Something of Bruce and Burn Murdoch’s displeasure with the opportunities provided for science on the Expedition did, however, permeate the *Advertiser*’s report. The majority of the press coverage was, by contrast, rather matter-of-fact. The following extract is typical:

After a comparatively short passage, on December 16th—latitude 59.18 south, longitude 61.01 west—the first iceberg was met. It was of enormous dimensions and tabular. Another was seen on the same evening. At this time the air was thick with Cape pigeons, petrels, and mollyhawkes. What was most observed about the birds was their tameness. They apparently had neither seen a vessel or a human being before and the result was that their capture was effected with utmost ease. In all directions whales could be seen but unfortunately each back was tipped with a fin, showing that it was not the species which the Dundee men were in quest. (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893).

Such copy reflected Bruce's belief that "the expedition was a pleasant one, and although there was no experience of a thrilling and sensational type, day after day produced something new" (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893). Although difficult to determine precisely what the readers of the *Advertiser* and *Telegraph* understood of the Expedition, it was clearly portrayed by the press not simply as a significant scientific success—which allowed "much light...[to] be thrown on these far-off regions"—but also, and perhaps more tellingly, as an important Dundonian effort (*Dundee Advertiser* 31 May 1893). As Bruce later noted, "Great interest was taken...not only by the citizens of Dundee but by scientific societies and men of science" (EUL Gen. 1649 77/3).

Bruce, keenly aware of the importance of the press in facilitating the dissemination of his novel Antarctic knowledge, prepared an article detailing the Expedition's activities which he forwarded to Hugh Robert Mill immediately on his return to Britain. In a hurried dispatch to Mill from Portland Roads in Dorset, where the *Balæna* had stopped to recoal before returning to Dundee, Bruce wrote, "Enclosed is an article which if not too late you might see if any paper will take....Please erase anything that appears unseemly" (SPRI MS 100/13/1). Bruce's article, which was published in *The Times* (27 May 1893), allowed a wider public to engage with the work of the Expedition. The fact that the article was reproduced verbatim prevented the journalistic mediation which might have placed particular emphasis on the more obviously exciting aspects of the voyage, rather than presenting a straightforward description of the work undertaken. Yet, as Bruce later conceded, "it is not the account of work done that people want to hear, but a narrative bristling with hairbreadth escapes & thrilling adventures" (EUL Gen. 1646 34/18). The extent to which press coverage of the Expedition contributed to popular edification appears to have been

limited. As Bruce later noted, “It is wonderful what a great number of people there are who seem to have no conception at all as to what and where the Antarctic is. I never realised this ignorance until I returned in 1893 from my visit to the Antarctic Regions, when so-called educated people would insist upon asking me ‘How far north did you get?’” (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 12/163).

An interesting postscript to the coverage of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition was the passionate indignation aroused in Dundee by Burn Murdoch’s 1894 narrative of the voyage—*From Edinburgh to the Antarctic*. In his account, which met with “anything but a friendly reception in Dundee seafaring circles”, Burn Murdoch made patent his displeasure with Alexander Fairweather and bemoaned the conditions under which he had been required to work (*The Evening Telegraph* 19 October 1894). In an interview with the *Telegraph*, Thomas Robertson (captain of the *Balæna*’s sister ship the *Active*, and, later, skipper of the *Scotia*) made clear his distaste for Burn Murdoch and, by implication, expressed admiration for Bruce:

It seems to me that while some investigators [e.g., Bruce] pride themselves in roughing it, men of the Burn Murdoch type expected all the luxuries of an Atlantic liner, equipped like a floating hotel, and opportunities for posing as a sort of Nansen in slippers. That was not in the programme of the Dundee Antarctic expedition, so he vents his spleen on the whalers, and in act on all Dundonians (*The Evening Telegraph* 19 October 1894).

What is again emphasized in this report is the local significance of the Expedition. In object, outfit, and spirit, the Expedition personified Dundee, and Burn Murdoch’s book, which was in the opinion of Robertson “full of twaddle and borrowed phrases, and of inaccurate statements from end to end”, appeared to be an attack levied not only on the captains of the Expedition, but on Dundee itself (*The Evening Telegraph* 19 October 1894). This reflects, I suggest, a particularly local, and to some degree

personal, interpretation of Burn Murdoch's book. Read in a different context, *From Edinburgh to the Antarctic* could be seen simply as an engaging and exciting description of a voyage in unknown regions and of its associated privations. The particular significance of Burn Murdoch's book when read in the context of Dundee's declining whaling industry, makes apparent the hermeneutic significance of place in the act of reading (cf. Secord 2000). Just as the reporting of the Dundee Antarctic Expedition was spatially particular, so was the reading of its press coverage and voyage narrative. In different contexts, then, the Expedition was reported on and was read about differently.

The Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition: a sensational interlude

In the early 1890s, Alfred Harmsworth, publisher of a number of successful periodicals, visited the United States in "a search for journalistic inspiration" (Harmsworth and Pound 1959, 161).⁵² At the time of Harmsworth's visit, the American explorer Robert Edwin Peary (1856–1920) was preparing an expedition to northern Greenland. Peary's journey, which was sponsored by *The New York Herald* and *The Sun*, instilled in Harmsworth a desire to orchestrate a similar British expedition (Riffenburgh 1993). Before returning to Britain, Harmsworth telegraphed Frederick George Jackson, a young adventurer with whom he was acquainted, and agreed in principle the plan of what would become the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition to Franz Josef Land (Jackson 1894; Harmsworth and Pound 1959). Despite Harmsworth's claim that the expedition was in no way connected with his publications, and that "So far as I am concerned it is a personal hobby", it is evident

⁵² Harmsworth's periodicals, whose combined circulation exceeded 1,750,000, included *Answers*, *Comic Cuts*, *Forget-Me-Not*, *The Wonder*, *Home Sweet Home*, *Illustrated Chips*, *The Marvel*, *The Sunday Companion*, and *Under the Union Jack* (Harmsworth and Pound 1959).

that he sought to emulate the circulation success enjoyed by *The New York Herald* and *The Sun* following their support of Peary's expedition (quoted in Harmsworth and Pound 1959).

Although the Expedition's stated aim was to explore and to map Franz Josef Land, both Harmsworth and Jackson were eager that an attempt should be made on the North Pole (Jackson 1894). It was this aspect of the Expedition that attracted the greatest public interest—an enthusiasm reflected in extensive press coverage. Despite Harmsworth's insistence that the Expedition was independent of his publications, he dispatched two of his own journalists (Charles John Cutcliffe Hyne and Herbert Ward) with the Expedition to provide exclusive reports. Moreover, shortly before the departure of the Expedition, Harmsworth acquired *The Evening News and Post* (his first newspaper), and it was this publication that benefited most from his association with the Expedition (Riffenburgh 1993). For the wider press, the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition was profoundly heroic and nationally important. *The Times* (10 July 1894) described Jackson as “a modern Ulysses”, and Clements Markham spoke of the Expedition as an enterprise that would “worthily uphold British credit and renown” (*The Times* 11 July 1894). Unlike the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, which had local rather than national significance, the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition had, in its pursuit of the North Pole, an objective that drew the interest of the press and of the wider public.

The attainment of the North Pole was an unrealistic objective. Although Harmsworth might well have viewed the Pole as a reward for his investment in the Expedition, he was, in the event, presented with something rather more unexpected—the Arctic equivalent of Stanley's meeting with Livingstone. Six weeks before Bruce arrived at Franz Josef Land with the *Windward*, the members of the Jackson-

Harmsworth Expedition had unexpectedly encountered the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen.⁵³ Almost three years before, on Midsummer's day 1893, Nansen had departed from Christiania on board the *Fram* (Nansen 1897). The plan for the voyage was to allow the ship to be frozen in the Arctic pack ice near Alaska, and to drift, as the ice cap responded to currents, to northern Greenland, passing the Pole *en route*. The novel and daring nature of the voyage, and the fact that there were few other expeditions then at work in the Arctic, ensured that the Expedition received extensive press coverage throughout Europe. The British press, in particular, was fixated on Nansen, "who came to embody everything that was heroic about polar exploration" (David 2000, 115). The press paid special attention to Britain and Norway's common Viking heritage in order to portray Nansen as an honorary Briton, and to laud him as an example of "everything that British manhood should aspire to be" (David 2000, 115).

In September 1893, the *Fram* entered the pack where she remained, frozen and drifting, until May 1896. On 26 February 1895, Nansen and Johansen left the *Fram* and set off with dog sleds and kayaks to "undertake a journey northwards—if possible to the Pole" (Nansen 1897, 73). On 8 April 1895, the pair reached 86°10'N—the most northerly latitude then achieved—but were prevented from progressing further by the dogs who were suffering exhaustion. When Nansen and Johansen finally met with Jackson (Figure 9), they had had no communication with the outside world for almost three years. During this time, the European and North American press had been rife with speculation about the fate of Nansen and the *Fram*; it was widely assumed that the former was dead, the latter crushed. When news of Nansen's fate reached the press it seemed, as Kirwan has it, that Nansen and Johansen were "men returned from the

⁵³ Although well acquainted, Jackson failed to recognize Nansen who was masked by a shaggy beard and by layers of accumulated grime "which a winter's endeavours with warm water, moss, rags, and at last a knife had sought in vain to remove" (Nansen 1897, 461–462).

dead” (Kirwan 1959, 204). This was the most sensational and unexpected news from the Arctic since that concerning the fate of Franklin.



Figure 9. The celebrated meeting of Nansen and Jackson at Franz Josef Land (Nansen 1897, 462).

Nansen and Johansen returned to Norway on 13 August 1896 on board the *Windward*. Even before she had dropped anchor in the harbour at Vardö, Nansen and Johansen departed in a small launch for the telegraph office—eager to dispatch the almost one hundred messages that they had amassed since their departure. When the telegraph operator recovered his composure after realizing who his customers were, he began to relay the news. As Nansen recalls, “the instrument began to tick and tick, and to send though the country and the world the news that two members of the Norwegian Polar Expedition had returned safe and sound” (Nansen 1897, 504–505). Despite Harmsworth’s close connection with these events, he was denied exclusivity of reporting. Prior to his departure, Nansen had reached an agreement with *The Daily Chronicle* who paid £4,000 to be the first to publish his account of the Expedition

(David 2000). Harmsworth was, however, able to take advantage of the interest aroused by Nansen's return by publishing a series of letters from Nansen and extensive Expedition reports in *The Evening News and Post* and his recently-established second newspaper, *The Daily Mail* (Riffenburgh 1993).

It is difficult to overstate the degree of press and popular interest aroused by the safe return of Nansen. Almost a year after Bruce arrived in Franz Josef Land, he received from Harmsworth a consignment of "all the newspapers and magazines so you will be able to read what a sensation the meeting of Nansen and Jackson created, indeed it was the chief topic of conversation for months" (EUL Gen. 1647 46/41b). These reports proved of particular interest to Jackson, a rather vain man, who examined them at length. In his diary for 17 June 1897, Bruce recalls:

All the evening J[ackson] does nothing but read The Sketch, Daily Mail, Illustrated London News & Weekly Times. Yesterday evening he again spent about 2 hours admiring his own photos with a look of satisfaction on his face, the only time I have seen him beam more is when he is reading his own book (EUL Gen. 1646 39/3).

Harmsworth was eager to maximize the public interest aroused by the return of Nansen, and suggested that Jackson and Bruce should return to Britain in kayaks, rather than on the *Windward*. There was no justification for this request other than that it would provide further sensational copy. Replying to Harmsworth's suggestion, Bruce was unable to suppress a vituperative outburst:

Personally I would never have dreamt of undertaking such an absolutely foolhardy thing as to risk coming home in a Kyak [sic], unless it were a dire necessity, and even then I should have started never expecting to come through. An Esquimaux in his Kyak and a man who has never been in one in his life have two very different chances, and I should not even hold out much hope for an Esquimaux undertaking such a voyage (EUL Gen. 1647 46/41b).

Once again, what Bruce had hoped would prove a valuable scientific expedition had been lessened by the contrary motivations of the Expedition's organizers. Jackson's penchant for hunting and Harmsworth's desire for publicity served to strengthen Bruce's desire, formulated whilst on board the *Balæna*, for a truly scientific expedition to Antarctica, unimpeded by questions of commerce, sport, or sensation. If it was, indeed, heroism and sensation that the press and public sought, they were to be disappointed by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition.

No heroes, no sensation: reporting the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition

The expedition is described as the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. It does credit to Scotland, but Scotland will be shamed if these spirited sons of hers are balked in a design that is honourable not only to them but to their country. It is a national expedition, too, for these young Scotsmen are animated by no parochial aims. But it is beyond everything else a scientific expedition (*The Scotsman* 23 September 1902).

In the months following his return for his second expedition to Spitsbergen with the Prince of Monaco, Bruce gave more serious consideration to his long-envisioned Antarctic expedition. Towards the close of 1899, he discussed his plans with Buchanan, Burn Murdoch, Murray, and Omond. Of the four, only Murray seemed to doubt Bruce's prospects; the others, convinced of Bruce's abilities, contributed sufficient funds to enable him to "proceed with a definite program for the exploration of the Weddell Sea" (EUL Gen. 1651 101/5).⁵⁴ In March 1900, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society agreed to provide what "patronage, encouragement, and assistance" Bruce might require, and to divert its fundraising efforts (which had, until then, been directed towards the British National Antarctic Expedition) in favour of

⁵⁴ Murray was later persuaded that since the public had "got into the way of giving" following their support of the British National Antarctic Expedition, it might, indeed, prove possible to accrue sufficient funds for a Scottish expedition (*The Scotsman* 23 March 1900).

Bruce's proposed expedition (RSGS ARC. 4.2/1b). Having secured the backing of the Society, and having been gifted £500 from Andrew Coats, Bruce felt confident that he could now make public his plans. It was at a meeting of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in Edinburgh on 22 March 1900, where Bruce was due to deliver a report on Spitsbergen, that Murray, as President of the Society, officially made known the plans of what was to become the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition.⁵⁵

Despite this proclamation, the Expedition appears to have attracted little press interest outside Edinburgh. This is not to suggest that news of the Expedition failed to disseminate. The two newspapers that reported Murray's announcement, *The Scotsman* and the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, both published by John Ritchie & Co., had large circulations and were read throughout Scotland. The *Dispatch* in particular was sent "to agents in all parts of Scotland by the afternoon trains", so although the reporting of the Expedition's unveiling was local, its reading was national (North 1989, 464). *The Scotsman* and *Dispatch* adopted a similar tone in their reporting of Bruce's proposal. Each emphasized the quality of Bruce's character, and noted the desirability of instigating a Scottish expedition that would complement "what might be called...[the] Imperial Expedition" then being organized by the Royal Geographical Society (*The Scotsman* 23 March 1900).

The Scotsman, in one elegant and prophetic sentence, conveyed the essence of Bruce's character, and in so doing made clear his suitability for leading such an

⁵⁵ It was Bruce's belief that "The work to be done must not be pole hunting, not covering the ground, but a systematic scientific survey of as much of the Antarctic as possible. We must sound, towneet, dredge and trawl; study the physical conditions of the air, ocean, the ice and the land; work out the geology, zoology, botany and bacteriology of the regions traversed; make careful and accurate surveys of any land visited. Magnetism, meteorology, geodesy, everything of scientific interest and importance in fact must be studied. If it is necessary, hardships & trials must be undergone, and those who take part in such an expedition will be ready to bear much, but these should be avoided, where possible, for the fewer the difficulties, the better the results obtained. It is good solid work that we want, not tales of suffering, privation & death" (RSM W.S. Bruce papers 1/1)

expedition: “Mr W. S. Bruce, who, in his explorations of the earth’s surface and climate, has perhaps covered more degrees of latitude than any other man of his generation, is not a Scot who is likely to be daunted by cold and distant prospects of success when he has a scientific goal in view” (*The Scotsman* 23 March 1900). Here is emphasized, I suggest, three important facets of Bruce’s character, aspects that were reprised in, and even characterized, his later press treatment: his exploratory experience, his stoic devotion to science, and his Scottishness.⁵⁶ The *Dispatch* expressed similar sentiments: “If anybody is capable of overcoming all obstacles in the cause of Polar exploration, that man is Mr W. S. Bruce, whose enthusiasm in the cause is unbounded” (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 23 March 1900).

During the next eighteen months, Bruce, in addition to making preparations for the Expedition, toured Scotland addressing various organizations and scientific societies on his plans. These meetings were typically reported on by the local press. As a consequence, popular awareness of Bruce and of the Expedition grew incrementally throughout 1900 and 1901. What was emphasized most frequently in these reports was the Scottish nature of the Expedition. In detailing Bruce’s address to the Philosophical Society of Glasgow, the *Glasgow Herald* gave special attention to the comments of Archibald Douglas Campbell (President of the Society): “Every one knows that there was a Scotchman at the North Pole, and they hope there would soon be one at the South Pole. (Laughter.) Exploration neither in the extreme north nor the extreme south could be done without preparation. He hoped, therefore, that the lecture would rouse great interest in the Scottish Expedition, and that they would be able to give Mr Bruce a prospect of being able to fulfil his wishes to the utmost extent” (*Glasgow Herald*, 28 November 1900).

⁵⁶ Only very occasionally was it noted that Bruce was born in London.

The press coverage of the Expedition which during the period of fundraising had been rather sporadic increased markedly as the departure date of the Expedition neared. From the testing of meteorological kites on the Braid Hills, to the exhibition of Russ, the Expedition's Samoyed sledge dog, at a dog show in Edinburgh's Waverley Market (he took second place in the variety class), all aspects of the Expedition's preparations were reported on. The Expedition's inadequate funding is a common theme of these reports. Despite the generosity of the Coats brothers, the Expedition had insufficient funds to complete two summer seasons in the Weddell Sea. In seeking additional finance, Bruce and the press together appealed to patriotism in noting the Scottish character of the Expedition. The *Edinburgh Evening News* reported Bruce's appeal that "those interested in the work of research...[should] come forward and make the expedition a credit not only to Scotland but to the Empire" (EUL Gen. 1672).⁵⁷ For *The Scots Pictorial* (11 November 1902), it was "not yet too late for Scotsmen interested to see that the Scottish Expedition should not be driven to the barest economy, and that it should set out with at least as fair a chance as the expeditions of other nations". The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (2 November 1902) expressed its view that "in the interest of science and patriotism, it is to be hoped that Mr Wm. S. Bruce and his staff will be able to wrest more secrets from these cold latitudes". The previous week, *The Scotsman* (23 October 1902) had emphasized the Expedition's Scottish credentials: "Though the venture is the result of private organisation and enthusiasm, it partakes largely of a national character, for the money has been raised in Scotland, the ship had been all but rebuilt in Scotland, the scientific staff and crew, with perhaps one or two exceptions, are Scotsmen. Scotland has thus done her share in the work which is going forward in the Antarctic". Readers of these

⁵⁷ In several instances, the source and date of the press cuttings collated by Bruce and by Ferrier are unrecorded. In this event, I make reference to their archival location rather than their original newspaper source.

newspapers could be in little doubt that the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition was a representative not only of science but also of Scotland and, perhaps more significantly, that it was one's patriotic duty (for Scotland and the Empire) to contribute monetarily to its success.

In the week before the Expedition departed, the press were invited to Troon where the *Scotia*, after her refit at the Ailsa Shipyard, was berthed. The Expedition was due to sail from the Clyde on 25 October 1902, but provisioning the ship with supplies had become a "hideous nightmare" and departure was delayed until 2 November (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 13). Some quarters of the Scottish press appear to have been unaware of this delay since, as Mossman et al. record, "on the 25th of October...we were depicted by the illustrated papers as steaming majestically down the Clyde, surrounded by a fleet of gaily-bedecked yachts and other craft" (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 13). Those journalists who did attend the tour of the *Scotia*, and who met with her scientific staff, appear to have been impressed by her outfit and purpose. One correspondent, as was noted in Chapter 1, seems to have captured the spirit of the Expedition: "The Scottish Expedition is not setting out on a wild, extravagant dash for the South Pole, but rather on a patient, economical voyage of investigation and discovery. The results may not affect prices on the Stock Exchange, but they will surely add to the world's store of scientific knowledge, and help men to understand of many things which, even in the twentieth century, remain mysteries" (EUL Gen. 1672).

Bruce appears to have been eager not only to appeal to the patriotism of the Scottish public, but also to arouse local pride. In a letter to an Aberdeen newspaper, most likely *The Aberdeen Free Press*, Bruce, under the *nom de plume* 'Argonaut', wrote that of the *Scotia*'s complement of thirty-nine staff and crew, fully eleven were

from Aberdeenshire (EUL Gen. 1672). In so doing, Bruce added an important local dimension to what was a national enterprise. In this way, I suggest, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition acquired an added significance for what might be termed the newspaper public of Aberdeenshire—it was seen as local *and* national.

The *Scotia* slipped her moorings on the morning of 2 November 1902, and, with the crew giving a hearty rendition of Auld Lang Syne, headed south into the uncharacteristically placid waters of the Irish Channel (Rudmose Brown 1923). This rather anonymous departure, with “no send-off, no visits from royalty and no cheering crowds” was, ironically, one of the few occasions on which the Expedition was criticized by the Scottish press. One local newspaper, scandalized that the sanctity of the Sabbath had been disrupted, questioned what had become of Scotland “when a ship can sail on the Sabbath with pipes playing and people singing not psalms, but profane songs” (quoted in Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 14). The following day, the *Scotia* put in at Dublin where the staff and crew spent an enjoyable and diverting few days.⁵⁸ The Expedition appears to have enjoyed a warm and encouraging reception in Ireland. *The Northern Whig*, reporting the Expedition’s layover at Dublin, noted: “Ireland is the original home of the Scots. Is it therefore too much to hope that those of Scottish descent will do something to forward this vast educational project?” (EUL Gen. 1672). The *Scotia*, now fully stocked, left Dublin on 9 November. At dinner that evening, being the birthday of King Edward VII, Bruce proposed His Majesty’s health. The King was toasted “with acclamation, and all joined in singing the National Anthem so dear to every Briton” (EUL Gen. 1672). This event makes clear, I argue, the nature of Bruce’s Scottish nationalism. Rather

⁵⁸ In one excursion, the staff visited the chemical and bacteriological laboratory of Messrs Guinness—a resource which “amply repays the outlay spent upon it in the excellence which it ensures in the quality of their products” (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 14). The staff’s enthusiasm earned them two barrels of porter.

than seeing Scotland as an entity independent of, and apart from, Britain, Bruce considered Scotland as a central component of Britain and of the wider Empire. As he later noted: “Scotland is not a dependent country, but an individual nation working hand in hand on at least an equal footing with her partners in the Great British Federation” (Bruce 1908, 196). Bruce’s perspective on Scotland’s national identity was not unusual. Morton makes clear, for example, that “Scottish national identity in the Victorian and Edwardian period...coexisted with a strong sense of loyalty to the British monarchy, British Empire, and British constitution” (Morton 2001, 443).

The enthusiasm expressed by the Scottish and Irish press and public at the departure of the Expedition does not appear to have been mirrored in England. The sailing of the *Scotia* went unreported by almost the entire London press, including *The Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily Express*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, and *The Pall Mall Gazette*. The Expedition was, however, reported on frequently and in detail by *The Times*. This disparity indicates, I suggest, that the Expedition’s insubstantial press coverage in England reflected editorial decisions rather than a genuine ignorance of its progress and departure. Although it is probable that the coincidence of the Scottish and British National Antarctic Expeditions diminished the reporting of the former, a brief examination of the frequency with which the two were reported on by *The Times* (Figure 10), shows, with the exception of an imbalance in 1901, a general equity of coverage.

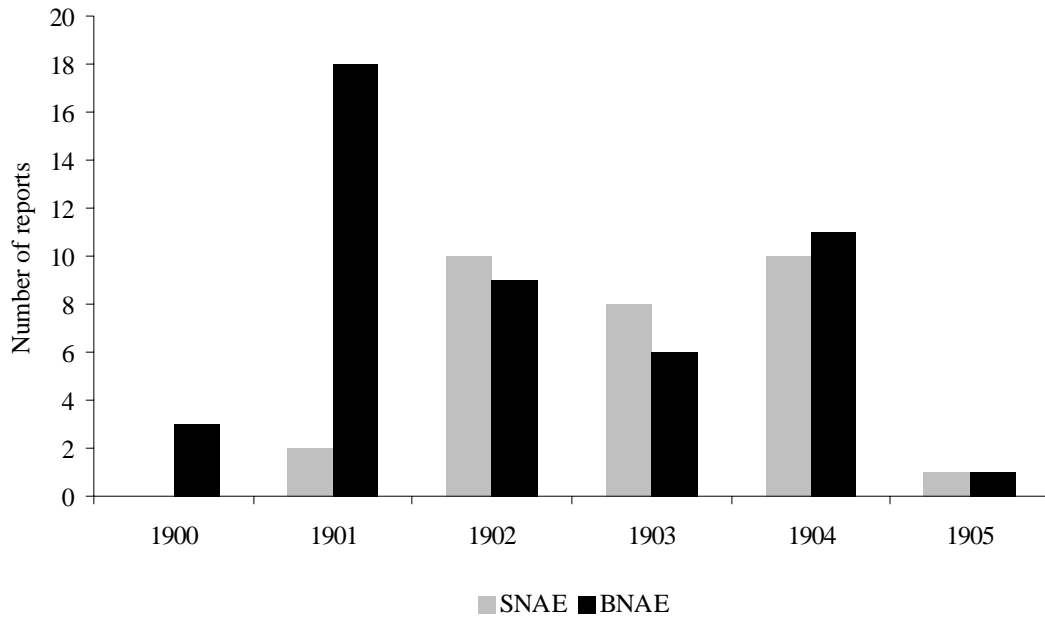


Figure 10. Reporting of the Scottish and British National Antarctic Expeditions by *The Times* 1900–1905.

On 6 January 1903, after a brief layover at Madeira (where the Royal Scottish Standard, which flew from the *Scotia*'s foremast, was mistaken for a quarantine flag), the Expedition arrived at the Falkland Islands. It was from here that the staff dispatched the collections they had amassed on their southward journey and sent final letters home. This was the last opportunity Bruce had to appeal to the Scottish public's munificence. In one letter, published in *The Scotsman* (25 February 1903), Bruce wrote: "I only hope, now that we have been able to raise the money to equip an excellent ship and secure a crew for one complete year's work, that friends at home will see us through for the second year. If everybody who has been patriotic and enthusiastic enough to subscribe would now secure one additional subscriber the second year would be secured". In a sympathetic letter, published the previous day, Burn Murdoch wrote: "This Scottish expedition is so thoroughly complete and, in my mind, so much superior in organisation to any other expedition that it is to be sincerely hoped that subscriptions may come in still, so as to allow it to stay out a

second year; and so add to our knowledge of the construction of our little world and the circulation of its wind and water and magnetic currents, and...to add honour to the flag they carry at their fore peak, the red lion rampant” (*The Scotsman* 24 February 1903). With these final appeals for funding, the *Scotia* departed the Falkland Islands on 26 January, headed for Antarctic waters and, as a consequence, journalistic obscurity.

On 18 February, the *Scotia* crossed the Antarctic Circle and, in celebration, “grog was served all round” (Bruce 1992, 64). By this stage in the voyage, systematic scientific work had begun—hourly meteorological observations, depth soundings at regular intervals, ocean temperature and salinity measured at various depths, seafloor samples obtained, and trawls for marine organisms performed. By the middle of March, the austral summer was nearing its end, and the *Scotia* was continually threatened by encroaching pack ice. In order to avoid becoming trapped and, perhaps, crushed by the ice (a fate that befell Otto Nordenskjöld’s ship *Antarctic*, lost in the Weddell Sea during February 1903), Bruce decided to find a safe harbour for the *Scotia* in which she might pass the winter. On 25 March, the *Scotia* reached Laurie Island, part of the South Orkney Islands, and dropped anchor beside a rocky outcrop, which Bruce named Ailsa Craig after the dramatic volcanic plug in the Firth of Clyde which had been the Expedition’s last view of Scotland. Bruce took to a small boat and explored closer inshore. The first bay which Bruce reconnoitred (dubbed Buchan Bay for Alexander Buchan the meteorologist who had provide Bruce the opportunity to work at the Ben Nevis Observatory) was considered too exposed to shelter the *Scotia* and, as a consequence, a neighbouring inlet was selected. Captain Robertson guided the *Scotia* into its newfound harbour (named Scotia Bay) and weighed anchor (Rudmose Brown 1943). She was to remain there for eight months.

Although it had been Bruce's intention to remain in open water throughout the winter and to continue oceanographical observations, he was able to adapt his plans and maintain a rigorous scientific programme, a programme that was, perhaps, more complex and ambitious than could have been attempted on board ship. From the end of March, work was begun on constructing a scientific station on Laurie Island (Figure 11), on establishing a magnetic observatory, and on erecting a cairn to act as a reference point for survey work.



Figure 11. Omond House from Scotia Bay, c. 1904. Courtesy of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

Combined with the continued meteorological observations and dredging (which was conducted through holes in the now-frozen Scotia Bay), the demands on the staff and crew were considerable. On occasion, however, time was set aside for “ski-running or football” (Bruce 1992, 83). The work of surveying, observing, and collecting continued throughout the winter and into the spring. By the end of November, the ice in Scotia Bay had thawed sufficiently to allow the ship to return to open waters. A

small team, lead by Robert Mossman, remained at the meteorological observatory (named Omond House, for Robert Omond the superintendent of the Ben Nevis Observatory) while the *Scotia* returned to the Falkland Islands to recoal. *En route* to the Falklands, the staff and crew of the *Scotia* marked the birthday of Queen Alexandra by raising the Royal Scottish Standard and the St Andrew's flag—an act that again emphasized the Expedition's Scottish *and* British character.

The *Scotia* reached the Falkland Islands on 2 December 1903, where a year's accumulated mail and newspapers awaited the crew. One letter, from the Expedition's Secretary James Ferrier, contained the welcome news that James Coats had agreed to contribute sufficient funds to facilitate a second summer's work.⁵⁹ Ferrier also wrote that he had enlisted the Scottish novelist John Joy Bell—famous for his humorous short stories, including the recently published *Wee Macgregor* (1902)—to write a sympathetic article for the *Glasgow Herald* that might inspire further public contributions (SPRI MS 101/40/1). Bruce was eager to cable news of the Expedition to Edinburgh and, since the Falkland Islands lacked a cable, he accompanied the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's ship R.M.S *Orissa* to the Uruguayan capital Montevideo. After a short layover in Montevideo, Bruce proceeded to Buenos Aires to await the arrival of the *Scotia* and to make preparations for her refitting.⁶⁰ Perhaps to Bruce's bewilderment he, and the Expedition, were welcomed with fevered enthusiasm by the Argentine capital's press, public, and politicians—a reception excelled only by that which marked the Expedition's return to Scotland.

Bruce's first call on arrival at Buenos Aires was to the British Consulate where he was "received with great cordiality" by A. Carnegie Ross, the British Consul (EUL

⁵⁹ It is unclear whether Bruce read this letter before he departed for Buenos Aires.

⁶⁰ Bruce was scandalized by the high price (49s 9d per ton) demanded by the Admiralty to recoal the *Scotia* at the Falkland Islands. He chose to redirect the ship to Buenos Aires where "I got coal at half the price and regretted very much that owing to this I was driven out of a British Colony and forced to refit in a foreign country" (EUL Gen. 1646 24/14).

Gen. 1646 24/14). In discussions with Ross and the British Minister W. H. D. Haggard, Bruce made clear his desire to pass the operation of Omond House to the Oficina Meteorológica Argentina so that meteorological observations on Laurie Island might be continued after the end of the Expedition. Ross arranged an appointment with Walter G. Davis, the Welsh director of the Oficina. In the interim, Bruce was put in contact with Francisco Pascasio Moreno, director of Museo de La Plata (EUL Gen. 1646 24/14; Speak 2003). Moreno, whom Bruce had met in Britain before the departure of the Expedition, was, in personality and interests, an Argentine equivalent of Geddes—he became, as a consequence, an important and enthusiastic aid to Bruce (EUL Gen. 1646 24/14; Swinney 2002a).⁶¹ Moreno accompanied Bruce in his discussions with Davis, and, after meetings with the Argentine Minister of Agriculture and, perhaps to Bruce’s consternation, the President and Vice President of the Republic, it was concluded that Argentina would assume responsibility of Omond House and continue the Expedition’s meteorological observations.

Bruce’s enthusiastic reception by the Argentine authorities was mirrored by extensive and frequent press coverage. Bruce and the Expedition were reported with alacrity by Buenos Aires’s leading (and rival) English-language newspapers *The Standard* and *The Buenos Aires Herald*.⁶² Owned and edited by Thomas Bell, member of a wealthy Scottish family, *The Herald* was first to report the arrival of Bruce, on account of him being “an old-time college mate of a member of the [newspaper’s]

⁶¹ Bruce had written to Moreno from Montevideo: “As I am quite a stranger in Buenos Aires, might I, knowing your keen interest in Antarctic Exploration, ask your friendly help & advice” (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10). Interestingly, Moreno had been contacted by Clements Markham in 1900, who had asked him to lobby the Argentine Government to establish three meteorological stations at Ushuaia, Staten Island (Isla de los Estados), and the South Shetland Islands in order to complement the meteorological observations of the British National Antarctic Expedition (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10c). Although unable to establish the trio of meteorological facilities Markham desired, Moreno arranged the construction of a magnetic [sic] observatory on Staten Island (Swinney 2003b).

⁶² Reports were also carried in Spanish-language newspapers, including *La Nacion*, but these (with the exception of those which contained illustrations) were not retained by Bruce and are, as a consequence, absent from the volumes of press cuttings.

staff” (*The Buenos Aires Herald*, 16 December 1903). Under the headline FROM THE FROZEN SOUTH, Bruce was described as “a gentleman highly educated, having great experience in the work with which he is connected, is dark complexioned, tall, robust, in perfect health and apparently 40 years of age” (*The Buenos Aires Herald*, 16 December 1903).⁶³ This depiction of Bruce was neatly captured in a caricature (Figure 12) which appeared in *El Gladiator*, a weekly Spanish-language newspaper.

⁶³ Bruce was, in reality, thirty-five.



Figure 12. *Doctor Roberto Bruce*. An ironic and, perhaps, ironically titled caricature of Bruce. *El Gladiator* 8 January 1904. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

Keen to celebrate the arrival of Bruce and the Expedition, the British expatriate community in Buenos Aires organized a series of entertainments, which culminated in a gala banquet at the city's Grand Hotel—this despite the objection of one resident who believed that “a banquet on a hot night is more Purgatory than pleasure, and it takes a lot to move men from their cool houses and gardens to suffer the unpleasant proximity of perspiring waiters” (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 3 February 1904). Despite the likely proximity of perspiring waiters, almost one hundred guests acquired tickets for the banquet. As *The Herald* (24 December 1903) reported:

The applications for seats have been numerous and it is evident that a great number of the British Community intend to show by their presence the warmth of their welcome to Mr. Bruce and his colleagues and their recognition of what these explorers have so quietly done and the credit they have brought their country's flag. Scotchmen will be interested in knowing, and the Scotch will surely be there to a man, that the 'Scotia' brings her own piper.

From this brief paragraph, it is apparent that whilst the Expedition had a special appeal to those Scots living in Buenos Aires, it was, in its slow, plodding, rigorously-scientific spirit, regarded as a credit to the entire British community—an approval enthusiastically displayed at the Expedition's celebratory banquet. For the banquet, which was held on 29 December 1903, the Grand Hotel was decorated in “white and green to suggest ice” (*The Buenos Aires Herald* 30 December 1903). For *The Standard* (30 December 1903), “Rarely had there been a more enthusiastic gathering witnessed than that which assembled...to do honour to Dr. Bruce [sic] and his brave officers”. In addition to the principal representatives of the British community, Bruce and the officers of the Expedition were joined at dinner (Figure 13) by a contingent of Argentine dignitaries including Lord Mayor Casares, Admiral Barilari, Colonel

Nunes, Port-Prefect Garcia, and Francisco Moreno. After the meal, which ranged over nine courses, the Expedition's piper Gilbert Kerr discoursed a series of jigs, reels, and strathspeys which aroused "indescribable enthusiasm" among the guests (*The Standard* 30 December 1903).

"After the cigars had been lighted", the British Minister, W. H. D. Haggard, rose, and, addressing Bruce and his officers, hoped that

the warmth of their reception would contrast with the chilliness of the regions from whence they came recently; that he was proud to welcome them in the name of the British community of Buenos Aires (Cheers) on the accomplishment of their heroic task which would be of such use to science and which reflected such honour on the name of Scotland; he said he did not think that anywhere else outside of British Dominions Mr. Bruce would find such a representative gathering to welcome him; he saw before him Englishmen, Scotchmen (Cheers) and men of British decent born in Argentina, and this brought him to mention the fact that he hoped...that a co-operation between Mr. Bruce and the Argentine authorities now under consideration would lead to a continuance of studies [which] under Mr. Bruce's superintendence had already afforded results of such value to science (Cheers) (*The Buenos Aires Herald* 30 December 1903).

This speech was notable not only for the enthusiasm which it embodied, but that, for the first time, the work of the Expedition had been described as 'heroic'. Whilst at one level, Haggard's comments might be regarded merely as an effusive expression of admiration, brought on by food, music, and alcohol, they reflect, I suggest, the genuine pride and approval with which one overseas British community viewed the Expedition. Although of particular significance to the Scots of Buenos Aires, the Expedition was seen, in the first instance, as British. For Haggard, and for those gathered at the Grand Hotel, Bruce and his staff were, indeed, heroes.

On 30 December, the staff and officers of the *Scotia* were invited to the Scotch Church Hall (Figure 13) where they were entertained, in typically Scottish fashion, by

the St Andrew's Society of the River Plate. *The Standard* (31 December 1903) reported that "the programme and general proceedings were essentially Scots; the music...was all Scots, the songs were Scots". On the same evening, the crew of the *Scotia*, having been excluded from the St Andrew's Society's conversazione (and from the previous night's banquet), attended entertainments (Figure 13) "designed and arranged for them" at the Sailors' Home (*The Buenos Aires Herald* 30 December 1903). Public enthusiasm for Bruce and the Expedition was not, however, confined to these organized events. Bruce's efforts to take a daytrip to explore the Parana River Delta, for example, were abandoned on account of him being "fagged out by the autograph beggars who besieged all of the *Scotia* party with post cards" (*The Buenos Aires Herald* 30 December 1903). The minutia of the *Scotia*'s refit (the cost of which was largely borne by the Argentine Government) and of the movements of her staff and crew were reported on in great detail—*The Herald* and *The Standard* frequently vying to outdo one another.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ In one instance, *The Herald* (5 January 1904) wrote: "The suggestion of the 'Standard' that the *Scotia* is badly in need of beer seems rather mean to several readers. The *Scotia* expedition has need of money most, not booze, dinner etc. The 'Standard' evidently cannot distinguish a serious expedition of scientists from a picnic party."

Fiesta á los expedicionarios del « Scotia »

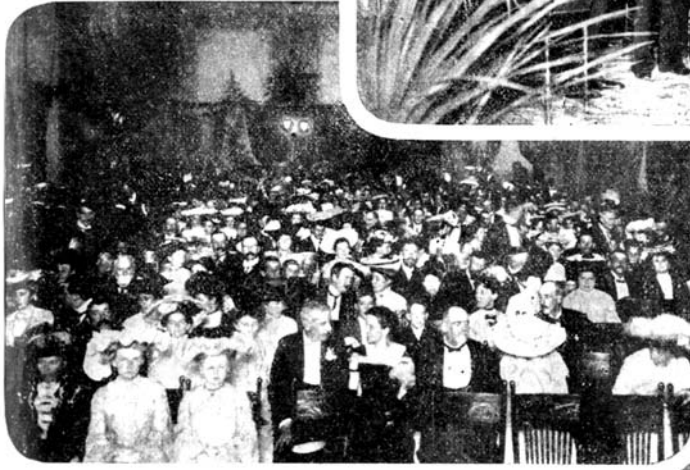
En uno de los salones del Gran Hotel, se realizó la semana última el banquete con que lo más distinguido de la colonia inglesa, obsequió al Dr. Bruce jefe de la expedición polar efectuada en el vapor Scotia.

Fue un acto simpático y de estricta justicia, pues bien se debía ese homenaje al intrépido expedicionario que ha vivido durante varios meses en la región de los hielos persiguiendo descubrimientos científicos y explorando aquellas regiones. Como se sabe, el Dr. Bruce ha de-



LA COMISIÓN DE FESTEJOS

jado instalado en Stelend un observatorio magnético cuya posesión ha dado al gobierno argentino, previo un arreglo especial de condiciones, entre las cuales se halla la de que el Ministerio de Agricultura mantenga en aquel punto un personal competente, á objeto de continuar



LA CONCURRENCIA EN ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY

estudiando y haciendo las observaciones pertinentes.

La demostración hecha al doctor Bruce ha sido soberbia.

La falta material de espacio nos impide consignar la lista de los asistentes, pero se hallaban reunidos todos los residentes ingleses de alguna significación en la banca y en



EL BANQUETE EN EL GRAND HOTEL

el comercio. La sobremesa se prolongó hasta hora avanzada entre la amable *causerie* de los concurrentes.

—La conferencia que el doctor Bruce dió en el local de la St. Andrew's Society, despertó natural interés, congregando numeroso público ávido de oír la descripción de las regiones desconocidas y tan de actualidad en estos últimos tiempos.

El doctor Bruce, que tiene excepcionales condiciones de conferenciante, empezó por historiar á grandes rasgos las diversas expediciones polares, su organización y objeto y la utilidad que prestan para entrar luego á describir minuciosamente con variedad de detalles amenos las peripecias de su expedición.



FIESTA EN EL SAILORS' HOME

Figure 13. Images from an unidentified Spanish-language newspaper depicting the reception of Bruce and the Expedition. Clockwise from top: banquet at the Grand Hotel, entertainments at the Sailors' Home, and a conversazione at the St Andrew's Society. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

Refitted and with a full supply of coal, the *Scotia* left Buenos Aires on 21 January 1904, reaching Laurie Island on 14 February. The ship arrived just in time—the overwintering party were to have begun rationing their supplies the following day. Despite the unenviable prospect of another winter spent on Laurie Island, Mossman remained at Omond House where he was joined by three Argentine scientists who were “somewhat downcast at the bleakness and desolation of the prospect” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 172). To mark their arrival, the Argentine flag was hoisted above the survey cairn in an unofficial ceremony of possession.⁶⁵ On 22 February, the Expedition sailed for Scotia Bay, and headed south towards the Weddell Sea. It was Bruce’s intention to continue his oceanographical observations in as high a southern latitude as the pack ice would allow.

On 3 March, Captain Robertson, observing from the crow’s-nest, sighted land. This stretch of the Antarctic coast, running from 72°30’S to 74°S, was named Coats Land in recognition of James and Andrew Coats, the Expedition’s chief subscribers (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002). The enthusiasm aroused by this discovery was, however, short-lived. On 7 March, the *Scotia* was trapped by advancing pack ice and faced the “not altogether enticing” prospect of spending the winter frozen in the Weddell Sea (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 122). Despite this setback, scientific work continued and, in an effort to raise spirits, a football match was played on the pack. In a frivolous and impromptu experiment, Gilbert Kerr donned full Highland dress and serenaded an Emperor penguin with “lively reels...[and] melancholy laments” in order to gauge its reaction. The penguin was singularly unmoved, but the event provided the Expedition with an iconic image,

⁶⁵ Meteorological observations on Laurie Island have been conducted, under Argentine supervision, ever since—making Omond House (since replaced by Base Orcadas) the longest continuously manned scientific station in the Antarctic. As Fogg records, “It has provided a unique long-term record of maritime Antarctic weather of great importance as a base line for studying climatic change” (Fogg 1992, 295).

the piper and the penguin (Figure 14), which reflected its unique character.



Figure 14. Gilbert Kerr with an Emperor penguin off Coats Land, 1904. Courtesy of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

By 14 March, the *Scotia* had finally escaped the pack ice—the result of favourable winds, the judicious use of “tonite and gunpowder”, and the enthusiastic stampings of the crew (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 123).⁶⁶ It was now evident that the brief southern summer was approaching its end, and it was decided “not to force the *Scotia* again into the pack” (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 124). The *Scotia* remained in the Weddell Sea until the end of March, before heading north for Cape Town, via Gough Island in the South Atlantic. The *Scotia* reached Cape Town on 5 May, where she was received with keen interest by the local scientific establishment and by Walter Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of the Cape Colony. On 10 May, Bruce, under the auspices of the local Philosophical

⁶⁶ A little more than a decade later, in the same region of the Weddell Sea, Shackleton’s ship *Endurance* was claimed by the ice (Speak 2003).

Society, delivered a lecture on the Expedition's history and findings to a "large audience of ladies and gentlemen" (*The Cape Times* 11 May 1904). The popular enthusiasm aroused by the Expedition in Buenos Aires was, however, less effusive in Cape Town. When the *Scotia* departed on 24 May, many of her staff and crew had developed severe colds—their period in the Antarctic having isolated them from infection.

After a journey of approximately 33,000 miles, the *Scotia* returned to the Firth of Clyde on the morning of 21 July 1904. Accompanied by "a long triumph of flag signals, fog-horns and escorting vessels, and cheering crews" the *Scotia* sailed up the Clyde and anchored off the Marine Biological Station at Millport, on the island of Cumbrae, where she received a telegram of congratulations from King Edward VII (Rudmose Brown 1923, 212). Stepping ashore, Bruce was greeted by John Murray with the words "Well, Bruce, you're half an hour late, but I'm glad to see you" (quoted in Rudmose Brown 1923, 212). Unlike their rather low-key departure, the Expedition's return was attended by a large and enthusiastic gathering of press, invited guests, scientific dignitaries, and the public. After a speech by Murray in which he praised the subscribers to the Expedition for having done "a very great patriotic service to their country, second only to that of Mr Bruce and his brave comrades", Bruce was presented the gold medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and Captain Robertson the silver medal (*Glasgow Herald* 22 July 1904).⁶⁷ The officers and scientific staff of the *Scotia*, all "in the pink of condition, and bronzed as Spaniards" attended an open-air lunch together with some 400 guests, many of whom had travelled on a specially-chartered train from Edinburgh (*Dundee*

⁶⁷ Bronze replicas of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society medal were, some weeks later, presented to all the scientific staff (Rudmose Brown 1923).

Advertiser 22 July 1904, Speak 2003).⁶⁸ The almost palpable emotion, pride, and enthusiasm of the day is, perhaps, best captured by Burn Murdoch's recollection:

For once, for a few moments, we were by ourselves—a nation—a Bruce had started the expedition. Scotsmen had financed it, Scotsmen manned it, and in Scotland a Scottish crowd watched it return, in breathless astonishment at the depth of waves of national feeling, waves that mayhap often beat, and beat high in our ancestors' bosoms, but to us were strange and astonishing.

I venture to say that of all the thousands on that exquisite summer day, who watched the return of the *Scotia*, there were not more than one or two who had ever experienced deeper emotion (Burn Murdoch 1908, 37).

The enthusiasm which attended the return of the Expedition was reflected in the following day's press reports. The *Dundee Advertiser* (22 July 1904) spoke of the Expedition as "a Scottish undertaking and a national achievement", whilst *The Daily Record & Mail* (22 July 1904) noted that the crew of the *Scotia* had "secured for Scotland an honourable place in the records of Antarctic investigation". *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (30 July 1904) was more lyrical; it described the *Scotia's* staff and crew as "our small but determined band of heroes" who had braved "that southern fringe of land...which we speak of with bated breath as the Antarctic". The *Magazine's* reportage is, here, distinct from that of the mainstream press. Depicted as heroes, Bruce and his men were said to have "seen and conquered" Antarctica—the "most fearsome spot on the surface of the globe" (*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 30 July 1904).⁶⁹ This is indisputably *not* how Bruce regarded the Expedition and it would appear that, despite Bruce's attempts to indicate the contrary, it was seen and reported on by the *Magazine* in heroic and sensational style. Quite why the *Magazine*

⁶⁸ The crew of the *Scotia* appear to have been excluded from these activities.

⁶⁹ In *The voyage of the Scotia*, Rudmose Brown noted his belief that the Antarctic was "a world in which the forces of nature are too tremendous to overcome, and must be resignedly be bowed before in the hope that they will suffer him [the Antarctic traveller] to come and pass again unscathed" (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 41).

advanced this particular interpretation is not immediately apparent.

Unlike its departure, the return of the Expedition attracted the attention of the London press—the events at Millport were reported on by the *Daily Express*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Evening Standard*, the *Morning Advertiser*, *The Morning Post*, and *The Times*.⁷⁰ These articles were, in essence, factual records and lacked the editorial assessments which characterized the Scottish newspaper treatment of Bruce and the Expedition. For readers of these newspapers, the Expedition was presented as an important scientific enterprise, crewed by “intrepid explorers”, rather than as a significant national achievement (*The Daily Mail* 22 July 1904). It is, perhaps, unsurprising that there should have been a difference in emphasis between the Scottish and English press, but the fact that this was so, encouraged what might be called a geography of understanding. In different parts of Britain, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition was reported on, and was understood, in distinct ways. In Scotland and in England, the Expedition had particular meanings. For the English press and public, the significance of the Expedition lay in its scientific accomplishments, whilst in Scotland, the Expedition acquired an additional significance—by doing credit to science, it had done credit to Scotland.

Summary

The tradition of sensation and of heroic myths which typified the reporting of the Polar Regions during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was, to a notable degree, absent from the press engagement with Bruce and with his expeditions

⁷⁰ It is possible that *The Daily Mail*'s decision to report the return of the Expedition was influenced by Alfred Harmsworth's close connection with Bruce. In later years, when attempting to excite press interest in his Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate, Bruce noted that “I am almost inclined to write to Lord Northcliffe [Alfred Harmsworth] who I think would pay some personal attention to anything I wrote, to see if the ‘Daily Mail’ would not help to run things” (SPRI MS 356/46/83).

(particularly the Dundee Antarctic Expedition and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition). In his desire to pursue science rather than adventure, Bruce failed to satisfy the apparent popular appetite for tales of heroism and of sensation. Yet it is clear that Bruce and his expeditions, despite their resolutely scientific character, were reported on extensively, and aroused significant popular interest. It would be inaccurate to suggest, therefore, that because Bruce did not fit the myth of the explorer as hero, he was absent from public consciousness. In much the same way that Nansen had been appropriated by the British press as representative of a specific masculine ideal, so Bruce came to represent, for the Scottish press, a particular facet of the Scottish character—self-reliant, independent, resolute, dedicated, and, crucially, unaided by the Government in London. The image that the Scottish press had created of Bruce contributed significantly to the way he was understood by the Scottish populace. Yet the encounter between Bruce and the public also occurred in more tangible venues: the lecture theatre, the exhibition hall, and the museum. It is to these sites that I now turn in order to appreciate more fully how Bruce and his expeditions were received by the public, and by Bruce's scientific contemporaries.

Situating the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition

The work of Bruce and of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition can be regarded as having occurred in, and having been dependent on, certain significant spaces. These venues—the sea, the ship, the laboratory, the lecture theatre, the museum gallery, the exhibition hall, the journal, the book—are important nodes in a network of knowledge making and consumption and are, to varying degrees, representative of what Livingstone has termed spaces of expedition, manipulation, circulation, and presentation (Livingstone 2002). That these sites, defined both by their social and locational setting, constitute what might be thought of as a geography of knowledge production and reception appears, initially, counterintuitive. The point here, as was noted in Chapter 1, is not to promote a deterministic explanation of knowledge making—to argue that the spatial situation of Bruce’s scientific work prescribed his practise and products. It is, rather, as Livingstone suggests, to show that “space matters in the conduct of scientific inquiry” (Livingstone 2002, 8). Just as Bruce was, in a sense, a product of his own “social and intellectual local context”, so too was the science of his Expedition (Withers 2001, 218). In what follows, I consider the significance of these spaces, the way in which they operated, their relation to one another, and their influence on the conception and communication of Bruce’s polar knowledge.

Spaces of production

Like many of their contemporaries, the scientific staff of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition divided their time between the field and the laboratory. This familiar distinction between the site of collection and the venue of analysis was, for the Expedition, rather less definitive. Here, the ocean was the field, and the ship the laboratory. More than that, however, the *Scotia* was also, to borrow from Sorrenson, an ‘instrument’ in itself (Sorrenson 1996). Replete with sounding gear, trawling apparatus, and sampling equipment, the *Scotia* was a tool designed and constructed to probe the Weddell Sea. Although an epistemic distance separated the sites in which data were collected, and knowledge made, the physical distance between these spaces was, literally, nothing. The field and the laboratory became, practically speaking, part of the same space.

The *Scotia* was fitted with two laboratories: the well-lit deckhouse (Figure 15), designed for “the execution of...delicate microscopical and other examinations”, and, beneath that, a second laboratory intended for zoological work (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 7). Having lost several undeveloped photographic plates to heat and salt water during the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, Bruce had ensured that the *Scotia* was also equipped with a dark room, “fitted up in the most complete and modern fashion” (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 7). Although the Expedition was accompanied by an artist, William Cuthbertson, photography was an important tool—it was used to create an immediate record of specimens, landscapes, and of the day-to-day work of the staff and crew (see Munro 1999).



Figure 15. Rudmose Brown (botanist), Wilton (geologist), and Harvey Pirie (geologist and medical officer) in the main laboratory of the *Scotia* (Rudmose Brown 1923, facing page 96).

Being a relatively small vessel, the *Scotia* was crowded with scientific instruments and associated apparatus: an automatic sounding machine was perched on the roof of the deckhouse laboratory, whilst wet- and dry-bulb thermometers hung from posts projecting eighteen inches from the ship's side, in order to avoid the "heat from the engines and air currents from the galley and cabins" (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 8). These meteorological instruments were complemented by three thermographs (which produced continuous records of temperature), a hair hydrograph (to indicate humidity), two barometers, three barographs, a black-bulb thermometer (used to measure solar radiation), and a marine rain gauge. Meteorological observations were conducted every four hours (this increased to hourly once the Expedition reached Antarctica), hauls for plankton were taken daily, and soundings made at regular intervals. Almost 600 samples of seawater, "for determining salinity, specific gravity, and temperature", were collected and

analysed during the two-year voyage (EUL Gen. 1649 77/1).

There were, however, practical limits to the scientific work that could be undertaken on board the *Scotia*. The richness of the trawls, for example, ensured that much effort was expended simply on preserving the specimens rather than on analysing them. As was remarked later in *The voyage of the Scotia*, “a full account of even one haul might fill this book” (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 19). The laboratory’s small dimensions were also a hinder to its operation. On occasion, “jars, basins, bottles, and odds and ends” filled the laboratory until it was “truly a chaos” and impeded efficient working (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, 45). Being at sea also brought particular problems. Despite the use of a swing table, which, to a degree, compensated for the pitch and yaw of the *Scotia*, Wilton’s attempts to measure the density and salinity of seawater samples were often compromised in heavy seas, whilst the bacteriological investigations of Harvey Pirie were hampered by mould spores which pervaded the ship and contaminated growth cultures (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002). On one occasion the deckhouse laboratory was almost lost to fire when a pan of sealing wax, which had been left to simmer, ignited. Given that 1,000 gallons of methylated spirits were stored nearby, it was fortunate that the *Scotia* was not destroyed. Despite the difficulties and occasional dangers associated with work on board ship, a significant proportion of the analysis and description of the Expedition’s collections was undertaken in the *Scotia*’s laboratories. As with the *Challenger* expedition, however, much of the real scientific work began when the *Scotia* returned to Scotland. As Rudmose Brown records, “The return of an exploring expedition does not mark the completion of its work. In some respects it entails the beginning of the most difficult and certainly most responsible part of its task” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 213).

81°N to 74°S: the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory

Never before have I seen such riches in Antarctic fauna collected together in one place; and knowing as I do how hard it is for a museum but recently founded to obtain material from the great sea depths, my wonder over your treasures was intense (EUL Gen. 1656a).

Before the departure of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, Bruce gained the use of a single-story building adjacent to Surgeons' Hall, on Edinburgh's Nicholson Street, where he stored the specimens amassed during five polar expeditions. Originally a laboratory of the Royal College of Surgeons, the building was used for a time by John Arthur Thomson, before being passed to Bruce (Swinney 2003b). From 1902, the building served as headquarters to the Expedition, and from there Ferrier administered the Expedition's finances, publicity, and correspondence, and received specimens dispatched by Bruce at intervals during the voyage. When the *Scotia* returned to Scotland in July 1904, its scientific collections were unloaded at Troon and were transferred by the scientific staff to Edinburgh. Reporting the transport of the Expedition's specimens, which comprised "about 200 barrels, cases, and packages", *The Times* (10 August 1904) noted: "It is calculated that several years will be occupied in the classification of the immense animal and oceanographical specimens". Bruce was eager to begin work on the collections and, as Rudmose Brown recalls, "grudged the time that a [planned] lecture tour would entail [and]...flatly declined to write a general book on the expedition such as the public expect" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 215). Bruce's belief that since the Expedition "was purely a scientific enterprise with no pole-hunting sensation" it would not appeal to the public, would seem, in retrospect, rather misguided (Rudmose Brown 1923,

215).⁷¹

Bruce was rather more anxious to present news of the Expedition to the scientific community. In August 1904, he attended a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Cambridge. Bruce was due to present on 21 August, but to his chagrin, and to his audience's disappointment, his lantern slides failed to arrive, and his talk was postponed to the following day (*The Times* 22 August 1904, 23 August 1904). Despite this setback, Bruce's address "gave much satisfaction", and this experience appears to have inured him to prospect of a popular lecture tour (EUL Gen. 1673). A programme of lectures was hastily arranged for the autumn and winter of 1904, but Bruce became seriously indisposed by influenza and was invalided until the spring of 1905. Rudmose Brown and Harvey Pirie were required to lecture in Bruce's stead. Unfortunately for their purposes, the lecture series coincided with the celebrated return of the British National Antarctic Expedition and an associated nationwide lecture tour by Scott. As Rudmose Brown recalls, somewhat unhappily, "There was little demand for...[the *Scotia's*] story in comparison with the tale of an attempt at the Pole" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 215). Despite this rather pessimistic interpretation, newspaper reports of Rudmose Brown's lectures indicate significant public interest. The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (1 December 1904), for instance, reported that "Thrilling tales of modern adventure cannot fail to draw listeners, and the Synod Hall, Edinburgh, was crowded last night to hear the story of 'The Scotia in the Antarctic Seas'". The *Dunfermline Press, and West of Fife Advertiser* (17 December 1904) described Rudmose Brown's address as "very interesting and instructive", whilst, for the *Evening Express* (21 December 1904), it was "a very interesting story", enhanced by "limelight and cinematograph pictures

⁷¹ In this regard, Rudmose Brown describes Bruce as "wrong and...short-sighted" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 215).

[which] lent an added charm to the narrative”. Despite the brevity of the lecture tour, which was restricted to a few dates in Scotland’s larger towns and cities, efforts were made to maintain public awareness of the Expedition—some rather frivolous. In January 1905, for example, the *Scotia*’s surplus flour was baked into bread “in order to test the condition of the flour after two years’ voyage” (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 25 January 1905). Those who tasted the result proclaimed it “as sweet as a nut” (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 25 January 1905).

Bruce’s continued illness meant that the task of dispersing the *Scotia*’s collections to specialists for description and analysis fell to Ferrier, Harvey Pirie, and Rudmose Brown. As with the *Challenger* expedition, the *Scotia*’s specimens and data were dispatched to an international team of experts (approximately thirty individuals) in preparation for the publication of the scientific *Report* (*Edinburgh Evening News* 15 January 1907).⁷² Although several analyses were published first in learned journals, ensuring a rapid dissemination of the Expedition’s data, Bruce was keen to bring them together in a single work, a synthesis of the *Scotia*’s findings—his literary and scientific apotheosis.

The building beside Surgeons’ Hall, now named the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, was a hub of activity and the centre of a network of knowledge exchange and scientific analysis. Despite being “low in the ceiling, with a sagging floor and ill lit”—patently ill-suited for its purpose—the Laboratory was an important site of knowledge making and of display (Rudmose Brown 1923, 249). Equipped with scientific instruments for the study of the Expedition’s specimens, the Laboratory served also as a museum, providing “facilities to British & Foreign investigators to examine & work at the...material” (EUL Gen. 1652 108/1). Divided between an

⁷² The Expedition’s surplus stores were sold in an effort to raise money for the publication of the *Report*. Furs which had been collected during the voyage proved difficult to store and were sold to the American explorer Robert E. Peary for his final attempt on the North Pole (Rudmose Brown 1923).

Arctic and an Antarctic Room, the Laboratory's specimens were arranged thematically, occasionally as dioramas. The Antarctic marine organisms were shown, for example, "both in systematic arrangement and bathymetrically as a section through the life zones of the Southern Ocean" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 250).

By the summer of 1905, Bruce was sufficiently recovered to attend the fourth International Ornithological Congress in London, where he was due to talk on the ornithological collections of the Expedition. As *The Times* (17 June 1905) recorded, however, "What should have been the most popular address, indeed one of the few in which any really new material was to be published, fell through because Mr. Bruce arrived an hour or so late". When Bruce did appear, perhaps somewhat breathlessly, it was to discover that Edward A. Wilson, zoologist to the British National Antarctic Expedition, had taken his place. Despite Bruce's insistence that the Scottish and British Expeditions were "cooperative rather than competitive", his vexation at this course of events can be imagined (EUL Gen. 1646 19/20).⁷³ Better luck attended his visit to the Exposition Coloniale Nationale in Marseilles the following summer. Organized by the Prince of Monaco, the Exposition was attended by representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Monaco, and the United Kingdom. As was noted in *The Scotsman* (2 June 1906), "One striking feature is the strongly Scottish character of the exhibit"—the Fishery Board for Scotland, the Marine Biological Association of the West of Scotland, and the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory all contributed displays. The exhibit of material from the *Scotia* appears to have been particularly impressive; it was awarded the Grand Prix by the exhibition's jury, reflecting the high esteem in which Bruce and the Expedition were held by the international oceanographical community (*Glasgow Herald* 24 September 1906).

⁷³ Bruce delivered his lecture on 18 June, and, as *The Times* (19 June 1905) records, it proved "much the most remarkable address given during the week".

The award of the exhibition prize was fortuitous since it shortly preceded the publication, in October 1906, of *The voyage of the Scotia*—a popular account of the Expedition written by Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown. Although calculated to “bring before a larger public the aims and the work” of the Expedition, *The voyage of the Scotia* did not resort to the “drama and thrilling glory” which typified contemporary expedition narratives (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, xiv). In an era when there was “still a lurking tendency to judge an expedition of exploration largely by the sensational character of its adventures”, *The voyage of the Scotia* offered an apology to readers who might regret that the Expedition members “were not more frequently at death’s door during the two years of the *Scotia*’s voyage” (Harvey Pirie, Mossman, and Rudmose Brown 2002, xiv). Although lacking sensation, the volume appears to have been well received. In a brief review of the work, in which it was described as “excellent” and “beyond praise”, *The Athenæum* (27 October 1906) observed:

There is something delightful in the irrepressible spirit of nationality which pervades the book. Mr. Bruce states in his preface that the volume is for Scots throughout the world; the first wintering party are filled with regrets that they cannot claim the Orkneys as a Scottish possession while even the penguins on the flow [sic] are treated to the skirl of the bagpipes, and photographed during the infliction.

Despite the passage of ninety-seven years, similar sentiments were expressed in a recent review which followed the volume’s republication as part of the centennial celebrations of the Expedition:

A vein of understated nationalism runs through the volume: the crew debate claiming the austere South Orkneys for Scotland, not the Empire, and are miffed at the Lion Rampant being mistaken for a quarantine flag. Very much a period piece—racism and medical cocaine, for example—but

a truly interesting one (*Scotland on Sunday* 5 January 2003).

With the publication of *The voyage of the Scotia*, and with the Laboratory's success at the Marseilles exhibition, 1908 was something of an acme—Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition experienced a greater prominence than they had at any time since their return from Antarctica.

Bruce's hope that the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory might continue the legacy of the *Challenger* Office and of the Scottish Marine Station became more concrete with the official inauguration of the Laboratory on 16 January 1907.⁷⁴ The Scottish press were invited to tour the Laboratory prior to its opening and were unanimous in their praise for its collections and purpose, but undivided in their concern as to the fabric of the building. *The Scotsman* (17 January 1907) noted enthusiastically that “the Laboratory...may be regarded as ‘the cradle of oceanography’”, yet complained that “the ‘shed’ which has to do service as the museum and workshop...[is] not flattering to our national pride”. For the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (15 January 1907), despite the Laboratory's “somewhat limited accommodation”, “for a real biological oceanographical exhibition there is nothing in the United Kingdom that comes close to this”. With similar sentiments, the *Edinburgh Evening News* (15 January 1907) described the Laboratory as being “absolutely unique of its kind as it is the first attempt in Great Britain to start an oceanographical laboratory and museum on a permanent basis”.

Combining as it did elements of display and of research, the Laboratory was neither wholly a museum nor solely a research institution. This dual identity (Figures 16, 17, and 18) was commented on in the press: “the laboratory is more after the style

⁷⁴ Midway though the inauguration—which was attended by, *inter alios*, the Prince of Monaco, William Turner, and John Arthur Thomson—the electric lights fused. The ceremony was continued “in the blaze of fifty candles planted in beer bottles” (Rudmose Brown 1923).

of a workshop than an exhibition...[though] there is much to interest laymen...and excite the curiosity and admiration of the least scientifically inclined” (*Edinburgh Evening News* 15 January 1907). The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (15 January 1907) put it succinctly: despite having “a stronger appeal to the scientist than for the general hunter of museums...the layman cannot fail to be impressed”.



Figure 16. Bruce beneath the skeleton of an Albacore in the crowded Antarctic Room of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, c. 1910. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.



Figure 17. Specimens laid out for examination, c. 1910. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

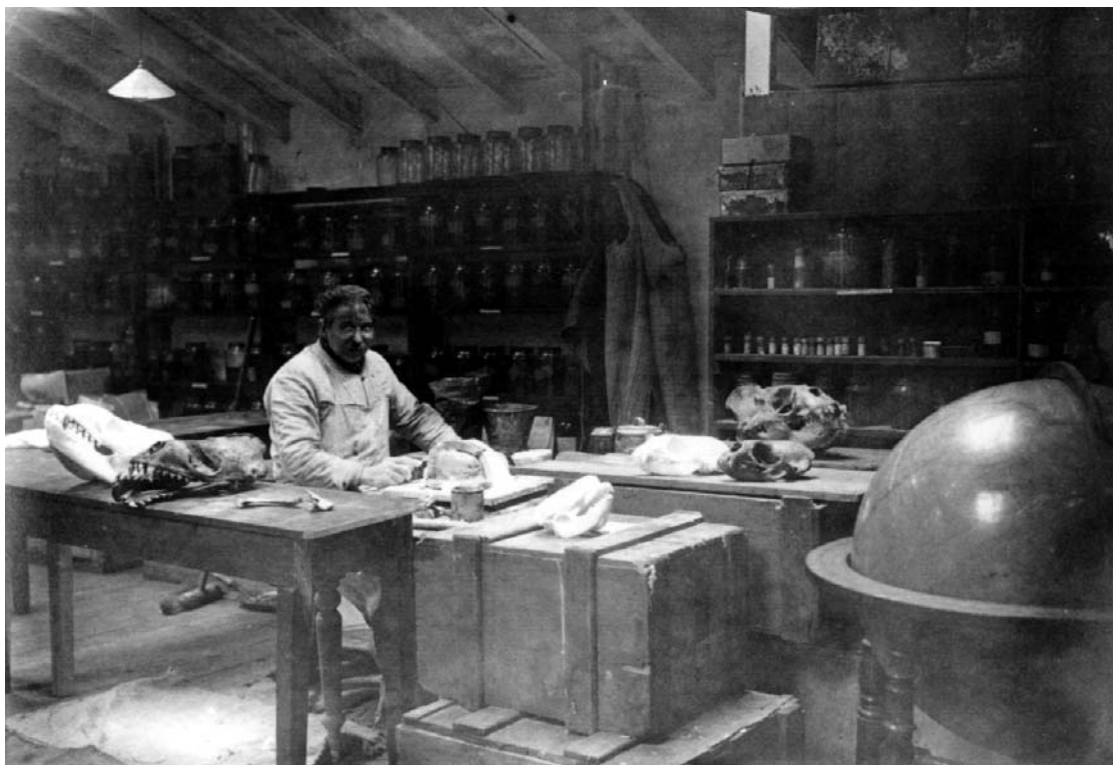


Figure 18. Technician preparing a mould of a seal skull (perhaps Leopard of Crabeater), c. 1910. Courtesy of Edinburgh University Library.

From 1907, the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory was both a public and a private space—a site of knowledge making and of display.⁷⁵ Uniting specimens from “all latitudes, 81 North to 74 South”, the Laboratory provided Bruce and his team of scientist with the opportunity to appreciate their collections in context, and to have “the whole subject, as it were, in a nutshell” before them (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 15 January 1907). The Laboratory received, then, not only the physical inheritance of Bruce’s polar expeditions, but also the intellectual legacy of his scientific mentors. The product of the particular social and intellectual context in which Bruce worked, the Laboratory reflected the local (the Challenger Office and the Scottish Marine Station) and was shaped by the international (the Prince of Monaco’s Musée Océanographique in Monaco and Institut Océanographique in Paris). Although it is possible to see the influence of what Shapin terms “local patterns of training and socialization” in the work of the Laboratory, it is important, I suggest, to understand its operation, practises, and products as being both local and international (Shapin 1998, 494). The oceanographical science conducted at the Laboratory was part of a local tradition, but it also contributed towards the emergence of a novel international scientific discipline. The local *and* the international context mattered, then, to the scientific work of the Laboratory.

A little more than seven weeks after the inauguration of the Laboratory, the University of Aberdeen “showed its sense of fitness” by presented Bruce with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree (Rudmose Brown 1923, 220).⁷⁶ In conferring the degree, Professor Kennedy, Dean of the Faculty of Law, wished that “this degree had

⁷⁵ The public nature of the Laboratory became, on occasion, an annoyance. In a letter to Bruce in 1910, Ferrier complains: “I’ll attend to everything here if that infernal bell would only stop ringing. I refer to the door-bell” (SPRI MS 101/40/15).

⁷⁶ In June 1906, Bruce accompanied the Prince of Monaco on a third voyage to Spitsbergen (SPRI MS 356/46/2). When they returned to Scotland in September 1906, Bruce and the Prince were invited to the quartercentennial celebrations of the University of Aberdeen, where the Prince received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his services to oceanography (Rudmose Brown 1923).

a more material sound to it. It seemed too tame and domestic for one in whom the ardent spirit of the Elizabethan explorers seemed to live again....He [Bruce] has equalled them in ardent daring in the line of adventure and research for their own sake, in the constant effort to add new provinces to the domain of science” (*The Scotsman* 10 March 1907). Kennedy’s eulogistic address, which again emphasized Bruce’s contribution to science and to nation, appears to have enthused his audience—Bruce’s ascent to the platform was accompanied by a hearty rendition of *Scot’s Wha Ha’e*.⁷⁷

(Re)presenting the Expedition: venues of presentation, sites of struggle

In January 1908, the first instalment of the *Report of the scientific results of the voyage of S.Y. “Scotia” during the years 1902, 1903, and 1904: under the leadership of William S. Bruce* was published by the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory. Priced at one guinea (equivalent to £60 today), the volume, dealing with the meteorological, magnetic, and tidal results of the voyage, was well received by the press and by the scientific establishment. Reporting its publication, *The Aberdeen Free Press* (20 February 1908) described the work as a “monument of patient and intelligent industry...[which] reflects the greatest credit on British science”, whilst the *Glasgow Herald* (30 January 1908) noted that

This amply-paged and beautifully printed volume—learned-looking without as well as within—constitutes not only a valuable contribution to science, but also, in its immense store of precisely determined data, constitutes material wherefrom...will be deduced not a few conclusions of

⁷⁷ “Scots, wha ha’e wi’ Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 220).

great practical as well as theoretical value. Altogether, the volume is a credit to British scientific research. It seems a pity that it was not a credit to British State support thereof as well.

The *Herald's* comments mark an interesting departure in the press treatment of Bruce and of the Expedition. Until this point, the fact that the Expedition had been funded entirely in Scotland, without the support of the Government, had been reported with a certain measure of pride. From 1908, it was so no longer.

Exploring a frigid region

The publication of the first volume of the *Report* all but exhausted the Laboratory's remaining funds. Bruce estimated that a further £3,000 (approximately £180,000 at today's rates) would be required in order to secure the production of the remaining six planned volumes (EUL Gen. 1652 108/1). In an effort to elicit public support, Bruce wrote a series of letters to the press in August 1908, explaining the Laboratory's parlous financial state and emphasizing the Expedition's inequitable treatment by the Government. In a brief but pointed epistle, Bruce wrote:

It may be pointed out that the British Government has not been kind to Scottish [Antarctic] enterprise. The English Expedition was supported by public subscriptions, and after the sum of £45,000 had been raised the Government was induced to place a similar sum at the disposal of the Joint Committee of the Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society. In some quarters it is believed that the Discovery Expedition was a British naval expedition; this idea is entirely erroneous. The English Expedition sailed as a merchant service vessel under the blue ensign.

The *Scotia* was also supported by public subscription, and sailed, as did the *Discovery*, as a merchant service vessel under the blue ensign. But the British Government refused to help the Scottish expedition, and, in contrast to the English expedition, its people received no Government recognition or rewards of any kind after their return. The Scottish expedition is, in fact, the only one of the six Antarctic expeditions—namely, Belgian, German, Swedish, French, English, or Scottish—that has

not received any financial help from its Government (*The Times* 10 August 1908).

What is significant here is not Bruce's dissatisfaction with the Government's treatment of the Expedition but the fact that, for the first time, he describes the British National Antarctic Expedition as the 'English expedition', thereby framing it in opposition to his Scottish Expedition. Writing to the *Glasgow Herald* the following day, Bruce not only reiterated his frustration at the Government, but, perhaps in a final appeal to patriotism, made explicit a fact had until then remained publicly unavowed:

one of the objects of the expedition has been to assert the nationality of Scotland by showing that a scientific expedition could not only be conceived in Scotland, but could also be organised in Scotland, be carried out by Scotsmen, and that the results could be published in Scotland (*Glasgow Herald* 11 August 1908).

With a few succinct letters to the press, Bruce had ensured that the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition gained an additional, novel significance. No longer was it simply a scientific enterprise that reflected credit on Scotland, it became a material representation of Scotland's relationship with England, a metaphor for the Government's miserly treatment.

Bruce's appeals met with a sympathetic response from the newly-established St Andrew Society (of which he was an honorary member) and from the Scottish Patriotic Association (see MacKemmie 1909, 1910). The first and most vociferous reply came, however, from the socialist intellectual John Morrison Davidson in an article he wrote for *Reynolds's Newspaper* (then edited by the Scots-born James Henry Dalziel). Under the headline SCOTIA REDIVIVA: 'DISCOVERY' V. 'SCOTIA', Morrison Davidson spoke in heated terms of the "neglect of Scotland":

Just as usual! The Scots are simply ‘not in it’ whenever they have the audacity to assert their distinctive nationhood. The ‘Predominant Partner’ recognises no nationality save that of the ‘boys of the bull-dog breed.’ To the normally constituted John Bull, Scotland is a largeish [sic] shire, or at most Province, to the north of England, famous for its deer-forests and grouse-moors. What on earth, he reasons, if he reasons at all about the matter, has a community of northern gillies and gamekeepers to do with fitting out scientific expeditions to the South Pole, or any other Pole? True, the labours of both expeditions [the *Discovery* and the *Scotia*] were of equal meteorological importance, but what of that? Since when was Scotland Mistress of the Seas, jointly or severally? She may have once been a Nation, but now she is the Happy Hunting Ground of England’s Nimrods [hunters], and ought to have no higher aspiration than to furnish them with brutal ‘blood-sports’ in due season.

But this sort of thing cannot be endured for ever, even by the meekest and most Anglicized of Scotsmen. As matter of fact, the Fiery Cross of Scottish Nationalism is quietly being passed from hand to hand, and Dr. Bruce’s manly protest in the ‘Times’ cannot fail to give fresh impetus to the laudable efforts of the Young Scots [Society] to recover their country’s long-lost Parliament and Independence (EUL Gen. 1984).

Although an explicit attack on ‘Balmoralization’ (the cultural romanticization of the Scottish Highland’s that followed Queen Victoria’s purchase of the Balmoral estate in 1848), Morrison Davidson’s article not only makes apparent the emergent desire for Scottish political and financial impence, but also demonstrates the way in which the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition was adopted as a convenient figurehead for the nationalist cause.

Eager to capitalize on this expression of support, Bruce submitted a claim for £3,000 to the Government Grant Committee of the Royal Society on 8 December 1908, but, despite the relative modesty of his request, his application was rejected (EUL Gen. 1652 108/1). Encouraged by the award of £20,000 in August 1909 to Shackleton’s debt ridden *Nimrod* expedition, Bruce submitted a second request (for £6,800) in October 1909 to the Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith.⁷⁸ On this occasion, the application was accompanied by a detailed dossier setting out the

⁷⁸ In a letter of 12 April 1909, Bruce remarked on his poor financial straits: “I am struggling very hard just now to keep the Laboratory afloat” (RSM Harvie-Brown collection 5/88a).

Expedition's achievements; illuminating, "in terms adequate and by no means overstrained", its unequal treatment by the Government; and making clear the necessity of completing the scientific *Report* (*Glasgow Herald* 10 January 1910). As Rudmose Brown recalls, however, "The application was refused with a promptitude [that was] almost startling" (Rudmose Brown 1923, 252). The refusal of the Government to submit to Parliament a vote for assistance to the Expedition "raised indignation in Scotland"—a passion that was inflamed further when, in January 1910, Scott was granted £20,000 for his second Antarctic expedition (Rudmose Brown 1923, 252–253).

The Treasury's rebuttal was reported with unanimous outrage by the Scottish press. For the *Glasgow Herald* (10 January 1910), it was "a Treasury blunder" and typical of the Government's "step-fatherly treatment of Dr Bruce"; for *The Courier and Argus* (10 January 1910) it was "another slight added to the many...already experienced at the hands of the present Government"; for *The Evening Times* (10 January 1910) it was "an object lesson...[in] the inequity of the Government's action"; and for the *Evening Express* (10 January 1910), it represented "chilling neglect". *The Weekly Scotsman* (15 January 1910) put it simply: "Scotland has never explored a more frigid region than that surrounding the Treasury". Perhaps the most strident comments were, however, those of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (10 January 1910):

A notorious piece of favouritism has added another black mark against the Government, and Scottish hecklers will not be doing their duty to their country if they don't ask that the case of Dr Bruce and the Scottish explorers in general shall be seen into. Captain Scott was later than Dr Bruce and the Scottish explorers in asking for Government support, but the Government, without rhyme or reason, put the last first, and gave Captain Scott what they had already refused Dr Bruce. This is nothing short of a slap in the face for Scotland, and those who habitually tear the

tartan over little or nothing, have now something of real moment to growl about.

The habitual tartan tearers did, indeed, begin to growl. In view of the impending general election, the Scottish Patriotic Association, the St Andrew Society, and the Scottish Rights Association published a joint letter calling on Scottish candidates to vow their support for “the claims of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition upon the Government for a Treasury grant” (*The Evening Citizen* 10 January 1910). Almost at once, the Expedition had become an election issue. On 10 January 1910, Charles E. Price, Bruce’s constituency Member of Parliament, rose in the House of Commons and asked the Treasury’s spokesman, Arthur Dewar, whether he “approved of the niggardly way the Government had treated Dr Bruce’s request for funds” (*The Scotsman* 11 January 1910). Dewar replied to the effect that “Dr Bruce ought to be supported as far as possible by everybody, but the Government was only the custodian of the public purse. They had no right to fling about money. (Cries of ‘Scott’ and ‘Shackleton.’) It might be a case for a grant...(Cheers.)” (*The Scotsman* 11 January 1910).

Support for Bruce was not, however, universal. An editorial in *Nature* (13 January 1910) was, for example, rather critical: “we think that in a matter of this kind it is undesirable to appeal to the Scottish public ‘to stand up for this and other Scottish rights.’ The claims of an expedition to support from the State...must surely be scientific and not political”. A further particularly pointed attack came from *The Field* (15 January 1910): “Dr Bruce is certainly entitled to sympathy in his disappointment. But it is highly regrettable that he should countenance, not for the first time, attempts to introduce petty national divisions into work which demands united British enterprise”. Bruce dismissed this assail as “scurrilous & unsportsmanlike, below the

belt altogether, & evidently inspired by Sir Clements Markham” (RSM Harvey-Brown collection 5/88). Bruce’s suspicion that *The Field’s* editorial reflected Markham’s influence was not, perhaps, without foundation. Markham’s journals reveal that he entertained the editor of *The Field* on several occasions, and as late as 1912, Markham described Bruce as an “indolent charlatan”—demonstrating that, rather than mellowing with age, his dislike of Bruce had matured (RGS Sir Clements Robert Markham Special Collection 1/14). In general, however, Bruce’s supporters were more vocal than his detractors.

On 18 March 1910, Bruce—accompanied by John Young Buchanan, Hugh Robert Mill, Burn Murdoch, Ferrier, Rudmose Brown, and John Arthur Thomson—made a special representation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George (SPRI MS 356/46/8). Lloyd George was sufficiently impressed by Bruce’s deputation to grant the Laboratory £3,000, on condition that the balance (£3,800) be raised from public subscription in Scotland. Bruce accepted the money with enthusiasm, but was aware that, after the Laboratory’s liabilities had been cleared, he would be left with only £800 to complete the scientific *Report*. Although Bruce and Price continued to seek the outstanding £3,800 from the Treasury, it was evident that further popular support was necessary. To that end, efforts were made to raise the Expedition’s prominence.

Exhibiting the Expedition

An opportunity for Bruce to enhance public awareness of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition came with his appointment early in 1910 to the organizing committee of the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry. Designed

to “create a greater public interest in Scottish History and Literature...[and to] celebrate the memory of distinguished Scotsmen”, the Exhibition was held to endow a Chair of Scottish History and Literature at the University of Glasgow (*The Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official catalogue* 1911, 57). Conceived originally by a “few enthusiastic patriots”, keen to enhance the teaching of Scottish history and literature, the Exhibition provided an important forum in which to present to the public the work of the Expedition (Kinchin and Kinchin 1988, 96). Ranging over sixty-two acres of Glasgow’s Kelvingrove Park, the Exhibition included several new buildings (predominantly in the Scottish Baronial style), extensive gardens, several amusement rides, and recreations of archetypal Scottish, Laplandic, and West African villages—complete with native inhabitants.

In January 1911, Bruce was allocated space in the Kelvin Hall (Figure 19), for an “exhibit of Antarctic relics and furnishings” (*Glasgow News* 10 January 1911).⁷⁹ Being in Paris for the inauguration of the Prince of Monaco’s Institut Océanographique, Bruce passed responsibility for the preparation of the exhibit to Ferrier (SPRI MS 101/20/17).⁸⁰ On the evening of 20 April 1911, a large and interested crowd gathered in Drummond Street (at the rear of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory) to watch as two large furniture vans were filled with “stuffed penguins, sharks, and other specimens” prior to their departure for Glasgow (*Glasgow Herald* 21 April 1911). Having returned to Scotland by April 1911, Bruce spent a busy few days at the Kelvin Hall superintending the setting-out of the Laboratory’s exhibit. So completely did Bruce involve himself in the preparations, that Ferrier was compelled to write: “Remember that the Government grant is most

⁷⁹ The Hall was built in memory of the Scottish physicist William Thomas Kelvin, who had died four years previously.

⁸⁰ Of his visit to the Institut, Bruce noted: “It is a sumptuous Palace of Oceanography. Poor old S.O.L.! But perhaps the day will come yet!” (SPRI MS 101/20/17).

important. However interesting and necessary the exhibit may be. As if you did not know that!” (SPRI MS 100/40/39).



Figure 19. The Concert Hall (left) and the Kelvin Hall (right), 1911 (Kinchin and Kinchin 1988, 112)

Occupying the west wing of the Kelvin Hall, the exhibit was centred around two dioramas: one showing “Antarctic Seals...in natural surroundings”, the other depicting bird life “on the cliffs and beaches of Jessie Bay, Laurie Island” (*The Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official catalogue* 1911, 160). The dioramas were complemented by specimens obtained during deep-sea trawls, and an associated display of scientific instruments and equipment. As was noted in the Exhibition catalogue, “All these collections are well labelled, and a careful study of the specimens, instruments, etc., along with their labels, will give a very complete idea of what the scientific work and results of the Scottish Expedition have been” (*The Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official catalogue* 1911, 160).

The Exhibition opened on 3 May 1911, and proved an immediate success—*The Daily Record & Mail* (4 May 1911) thought it likely to “attract the most interested attention of the general public”. Although Bruce remained in Glasgow for several days to ensure the smooth running of the exhibit, he was obliged to return to the Laboratory to continue work on the *Report*. Before he left, however, Bruce gave a guided tour of the exhibit to members of the Glasgow Health Culture Society, during which he “spoke in a racy manner of the habits of the different birds and mammals in the two large cases” (*Glasgow News* 6 May 1911). After Bruce’s departure, responsibility for the exhibit was passed to a young man named Montgomerie, whom Bruce had hired for the duration of the Exhibition. Although employed primarily to sell a range of commemorative postcards of the Expedition, an important task in furthering public awareness of the *Scotia*’s voyage, Montgomerie was required to guide visitors around the exhibit—a role he performed with notable incompetence. After visiting the Exhibition in June 1911, Ferrier wrote to Bruce: “Looked in frequently at the exhibit, and have, I think, bucked up the young man a bit. Once when I went in I found Montgomerie ‘polishing the brasswork.’ Another time I caught him completing the sale of one of the large scientific volumes to an American Professor” (SPRI MS 101/40/42).

When finally closed to the public on 4 November 1911, the Exhibition’s total attendance was calculated at 9,369,375 (Kinchin and Kinchin 1988). This figure makes clear the popular appeal of the Exhibition and indicates its significance in presenting to the public the work of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. In 160 days, the Expedition had engaged with an audience equal to, or perhaps greater than, that which it had during the preceding decade. This encounter was not, however, unmediated. Presented in a context in which Scottish history and achievement were

significant themes, the Expedition's national credentials were attributed greater significance than were its scientific accomplishments. Although the Expedition as exhibited in 1911 was not materially different from that reported on by the press in 1904, the meaning attached to it was distinct. In little more than five years, Bruce's statement that "While 'Science' was the talisman of the Expedition, 'Scotland' was emblazoned on its flag" had, in a sense, been reversed (Bruce 2002, xiii). For the Scottish public in 1911, the Expedition had come to embody, I argue, a certain national spirit—it was now a cultural talisman. In the Kelvin Hall, the work of the Expedition was not only represented in a specific way but was also consumed in a particular manner. The context of its presentation, and the venue of its reception, ensured that the Expedition was seen as a credit to Scotland first, and to science second.

On 10 February 1913, a telegram was received in London reporting the shocking and unexpected news that on their return from the South Pole, Robert Falcon Scott and five companions from his *Terra Nova* expedition had died (*The Manchester Guardian* 11 February 1913). For the press, and for the public, the tragedy of this event surpassed that of all previous polar disasters. As one newspaper put it, "In all the history of Arctic and Antarctic exploration there has been no fatality to equal the death of Capt. Scott and his men" (EUL Gen. 1648 68/4). Scott's death was the first significant British calamity of the 'Heroic Age' and, as such, elicited expressions of sympathy and regret from all parts of the country.⁸¹ A fund was instigated by *The Scotsman* to allow the Scottish public to demonstrate their support, and an Antarctic exhibition was organized in Edinburgh by Bruce and by Burn Murdoch. Designed to

⁸¹ In a letter to Rudmose Brown, Bruce wrote: "Personally I feel the whole business [Scott's death] is a colossal blunder and that Scott, Bowers, Wilson and possibly Oates too should never have been allowed to die with the base camp 155 miles off...[but] I am afraid it is no use making public any criticism of this kind but I feel very strongly that these men should have returned home alive and well" (SPRI MS 356/46/58).

“generally stimulate Antarctic interest in Edinburgh if not in Scotland and...[to] show the people in the South that we are not rivals”, the exhibition ran for ten days but, as Bruce recalls, did “wonderfully well” (SPRI MS 356/46/59; 356/46/60). This exhibition marked the last major public display, during Bruce’s lifetime, of material from the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. It was not until 1979, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Expedition’s return, that another exhibition was staged. By then, the achievements of the Expedition had, in Speak’s view, “largely been forgotten” (Speak 2003, 133).

Summary

Although physically separate, the *Scotia*, the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, and the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, together constituted a network of spaces that served to define the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. These and other locals, each with a unique social, intellectual, political, and cultural completion, exerted an important influence on the accumulation, analysis, display, and dissemination of the Expedition’s polar knowledge. Rather than being situated in a *single* space, the Expedition was a product of a complex geography. At different times, and in different ways, each venue, whether one of production or of presentation, contributed not only to the work of the Expedition, but also to the way in which it was received and understood by the public and by the scientific community. Space mattered—albeit differently—to the operation, presentation, and reception of the Expedition.

Remembering to forget William Speirs Bruce

Scotland...is very good at forgetting people. Its heroes of empire, in this age of ‘empire embarrassment’, are shuffled into dusty corners in the hope that they will eventually disappear from public consciousness altogether (*The Times* 16 December 2000).

After the success of the exhibits at Glasgow and Edinburgh, and following a nationwide lecture tour in autumn 1913, Bruce renewed his “vigorous campaign for money to finish the *Scotia* results” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 255–266).⁸² An appeal to the Treasury in January 1914 proved unsuccessful, and Bruce chose instead to lobby Parliament directly—pursuing, what he termed, “a fight to the finish in the House itself” (SPRI MS 356/46/114). In April 1914, Bruce and Ferrier wrote to more than 100 Members of Parliament, seeking their support in an attempt “to hammer the Treasury” (SPRI MS 356/46/111). Again, Bruce was sustained in his endeavours by his constituency Member of Parliament, Charles E. Price. Price agreed to table a question in Parliament once sufficient support had been garnered, and Bruce predicted “a ‘bonnie fecht’ in the House” (SPRI MS 356/46/115). As Rudmose Brown recalls, however, “the big fight that Bruce was preparing for never took place” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 256). The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 ensured that Bruce’s campaign was surpassed by more pressing concerns.

During the first winter of the War, Bruce struggled to keep the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory open. In a letter to Rudmose Brown, Bruce revealed the

⁸² Bruce’s tour included lectures at, among other venues, the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, the Cardiff Naturalists’ Society, the Manchester Geographical Society, the Royal Geographical Society, and the Wimbledon and District Scout Association (EUL Gen. 1651 95/11).

gravity of his situation: “The whole burden of this place is on my shoulders and I have many accounts to settle. The best I can hope to do is to keep it alive until happier times” (quoted in Rudmose Brown 1923, 284–285). Despite his extensive experience of high-latitude oceanography, Bruce was refused War work by the Admiralty and, in desperation, accepted an offer from Burn Murdoch to manage the St Abbs Whaling Company’s base in the Seychelles. Bruce arrived at Mahé in April 1915 to find the Company in a poor state—the War had disrupted shipping routes and had made the acquisition of additional finance difficult (Speak 2003). There was little Bruce could do to affect a rescue, and the Company was liquidated in August of the same year. When Bruce returned to Scotland in 1916, he reopened the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory and “alone, without any clerical help, tried his best to push on with the *Scotia* scientific results” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 285). The Laboratory’s financial state became increasingly grim and in June 1917, Bruce wrote in desperation to Rudmose Brown: “both the Laboratory & myself are on their beam ends & I don’t know how much longer either of us can remain afloat. God help me & my family if S.O.L. goes after my life’s best work [has gone] on it!” (SPRI MS 356/46/193).⁸³

Bruce and the Laboratory remained afloat until winter 1919, when Bruce was admitted to hospital suffering physical and mental exhaustion. An operation in December 1919 briefly restored his vigour but, following a final voyage to Spitsbergen in summer 1920, his malaise returned and he was confined to bed.⁸⁴ Surviving long enough to see through the publication of the seventh and final volume of the scientific *Report*, Bruce died on 28 October 1921 at Liberton Cottage Hospital in Edinburgh, aged 54. On 2 November, the nineteenth anniversary of the *Scotia*’s

⁸³ At this time, Bruce was employed by the Admiralty to revise its Sailing Directions charts—a task for which he received a daily stipend of 10/- (approximately £16) (SPRI MS 356/46/193).

⁸⁴ This voyage was one of a series of expeditions made by Bruce in connection with the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate—a speculative commercial venture that sought to exploit Spitsbergen’s mineral resources (see Speak 2003).

departure, a small group of mourners—representatives of Bruce’s polar expeditions and of Edinburgh scientific community—gathered for his funeral, “the simplest of services”, where Bruce’s coffin, in a gesture to his nationalism, was draped in the Royal Scottish Standard and St Andrew’s Cross (Rudmose Brown 1923, 293). Following cremation in Glasgow, Bruce’s ashes were scattered in the Southern Ocean on Easter Monday 1923. After an interval of almost twenty years, Bruce had returned to the South.

Commemorating Bruce

He went before his time and his achievements fell far short of the goal at which he aimed, but Bruce’s life has left a deep mark in the world. Success, even if measured only in fulfilment, was in large measure his. Vision and imagination coupled with great energy and strength of purpose made him a practical man in the truest sense of the term. Without money and starting without influence he raised large sums, organized successful expeditions, and advanced every aspect of polar research; a full life and a useful one (Rudmose Brown 1923, 304).

On his death, Bruce underwent, figuratively speaking, a curious and complex transformation: from occupying a place in contemporary consciousness, he became, instead, a component of popular memory. Just as Bruce had, in life, spatially, socially, intellectually, nationally, and temporally particular significance, so too, in death, had the memory of Bruce. The way in which Bruce has been remembered is, I suggest, a product of similar local circumstance. Whilst newspapers provide a valuable insight into how Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition were understood at different times, and in different places, practises of memorialization and acts of commemoration—being “memory in the guise of its representations”—demonstrate what Bruce has meant to groups and individuals since his death (Withers 2004). From

an examination of these representations, this chapter considers Bruce's 'commemorative trajectory'—examining how, by whom, and, perhaps more significantly, why Bruce has been remembered.

In black and white: Rudmose Brown's recollections

Biography has for long been an important medium in the transmission of images of scientist and ideas about science (Shortland and Yeo 1996, xiii).

In autumn 1923, the London publisher Seeley, Service & Co. issued a new series of travel and adventure narratives. Among such titles as *In witch-bound Africa*, *Persian women & their ways*, and *Unconquered Abyssinia*, Rudmose Brown's biography of Bruce, *A naturalist at the poles*, appeared rather unremarkable. The volume's significance lay, however, in advancing a representation of Bruce that has coloured all subsequent interpretations of him, including this thesis. It would be misleading to suggest, however, that *A naturalist at the poles* presented an essential and uncomplicated portrait of Bruce. It did not. Bruce was well into his 30s by the time he met Rudmose Brown and, as a consequence, Rudmose Brown relied on Burn Murdoch to contribute chapters to the biography detailing Bruce's student days and his early explorations.

The Bruce depicted by Burn Murdoch and by Rudmose Brown contrast in some fundamental respects, but it is the latter's interpretation that has proved most enduring. Burn Murdoch's Bruce is one of "wiry endurance", capable of completing a sixty-mile walk in a day without apparent effort (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 28). He is also a joker, keen on impersonation, and with "the readiest smile for the mildest attempt at jest" (Burn Murdoch 1923b, 30). The Bruce that Rudmose Brown recalls is,

by contrast, rather less effusive, more serious, and somewhat dour. For Rudmose Brown, Bruce often “appeared mournful, for he was a great dreamer and had little aptitude for the trivialities of social intercourse” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 297). Bruce was, moreover, “not a ready speaker”, and his public lectures “tended to wander” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 298). Even to his friends, Bruce appears to have remained enigmatic: “Burn Murdoch and I were probably the two men who knew him best, but yet even to us his extreme reticence seldom relaxed. There seemed to be a barrier which no man, and certainly no woman, ever crossed. He seldom if ever spoke of his family and his childhood, rarely of his private concerns, and never of his philosophy of life” (Rudmose Brown 1923, 297). It was *this* Bruce—earnest, unsocial, and focused on his work—that came to define the way in which he was subsequently represented and understood. Rudmose Brown’s biography served, therefore, to fix a particular Bruce in popular memory.

Anniversaries of the Expedition: commemorative aides-mémoire

Despite the publication of Rudmose Brown’s biography, Bruce’s popular profile declined precipitously from the 1920s and although he was actively remembered by the polar scientific community—as demonstrated by occasional references to him in the Scott Polar Research Institute’s journal *Polar Record* (Figure 20)—there appears to have been relatively little public attention devoted to him until the fiftieth anniversary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition in 1954. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the few newspaper articles that reported the anniversary noted how quickly the achievements of the Expedition had been forgotten: “In two years of exploration and oceanography some 23,000 miles had been covered, and yet few

Scots to-day can name the ship or the leader of the expedition” (*Glasgow Herald* 21 July 1954).

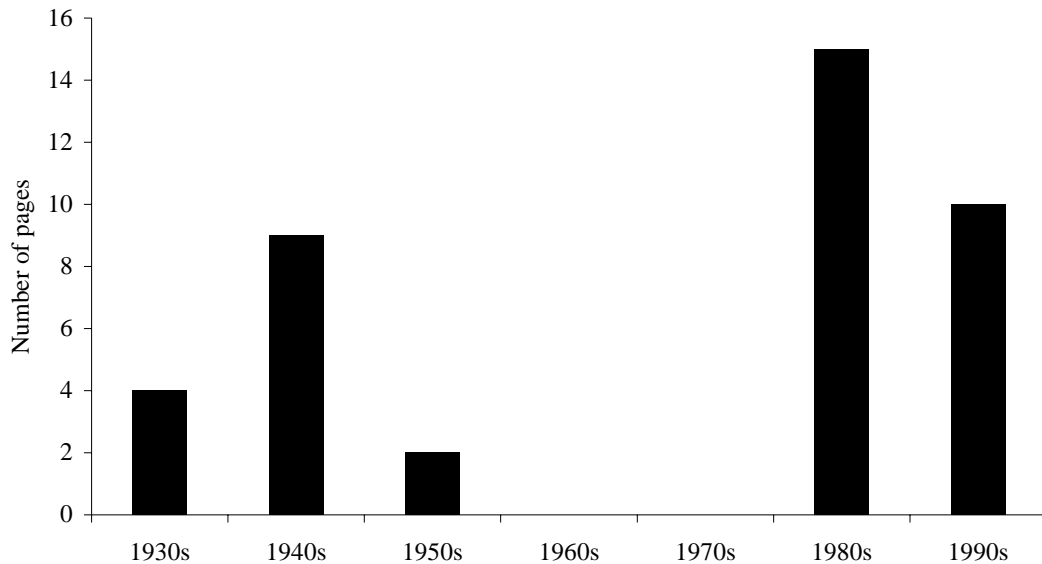


Figure 20. Pages of *Polar Record* on which reference is made to Bruce, 1930s–1990s.

In an article published the same year in the *University of Edinburgh Journal*, Ronald Miller, professor of geography at the University of Glasgow, asked “how many Scotsmen who have heard of Scott and Shackleton, and indeed Nansen and Amundsen, could say who William Speirs Bruce was?” (Miller 1954, 47). Pondering this national amnesia, Miller further inquired:

Was it the fault of Bruce?—of his preoccupation with scientific tactics as opposed to the team-work which now seems to be necessary for great ventures in the modern world?—or did the fault lie with Scotland? Had the virtue gone out of her? Can we now match the galaxy of stars of first magnitude that so brilliantly lit the Edinburgh scene last century? (Miller 1954, 47).

Miller’s is an interesting question. Why, indeed, had Bruce and the Expedition slipped from popular memory? The reason, I suggest, has less to do with the fundamental memorability of Bruce and of the Expedition, or with Scotland’s

willingness to recognize their significance, but rather that both Bruce and the Expedition were eclipsed by the sensational and more overtly heroic exploits of Scott and Shackleton. In a way that Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition never did, Scott and Shackleton permeated the public consciousness. Ready heroes, Scott and Shackleton satisfied a particular popular appetite for tales of adventure, bravery, and sacrifice and came, therefore, to personify specific national characteristics. Synonymous with, and perhaps representative of, ‘Britishness’, Scott and Shackleton were not only more widely known at the time of their expeditions, but their national significance has also been continually reiterated and reinforced in a variety of cultural products: literature, theatre, film, and television. Through acts of commemoration, the place of Scott and Shackleton in popular memory has been assured—their status as an embodiment of the “gentleman-hero” secured (Bloom 1993, 112). Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition represented something rather different. Although seen as heroic at certain times, and in specific places, they failed to elicit the same national resonance as had Scott and Shackleton. The fact that the voyage of the *Scotia* did not become part of Scotland’s folklore, that the exploits of Bruce were not relayed to each new generation of Scots, ensured that Bruce’s significance was diluted and that, by degrees, he departed from popular memory.

Bruce did not, however, disappear entirely. In 1957, *The Sunday Post* printed a cartoon strip (Figure 21), in its children’s *Funland* section, giving a potted history of Bruce’s life and of the Expedition. Tenth in a series entitled *Scotland the brave*, the strip belies Bruce’s apparent obscurity. Perhaps intentionally, Bruce’s reappearance coincided with Vivian Ernest Fuchs’s (1957–1958) Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Fuchs, who pioneered a route across Antarctica that had originally been

proposed by Bruce, carried with him (at the request of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society) the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition's flag which, in recognition of Bruce, he flew at the South Pole. Although relatively minor, these inter-anniversary acts of remembrance served to propagate the memory of Bruce. It was not, however, until the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Expedition, that a genuine attempt was made to re-presented Bruce and the work of the *Scotia* to a wider public.

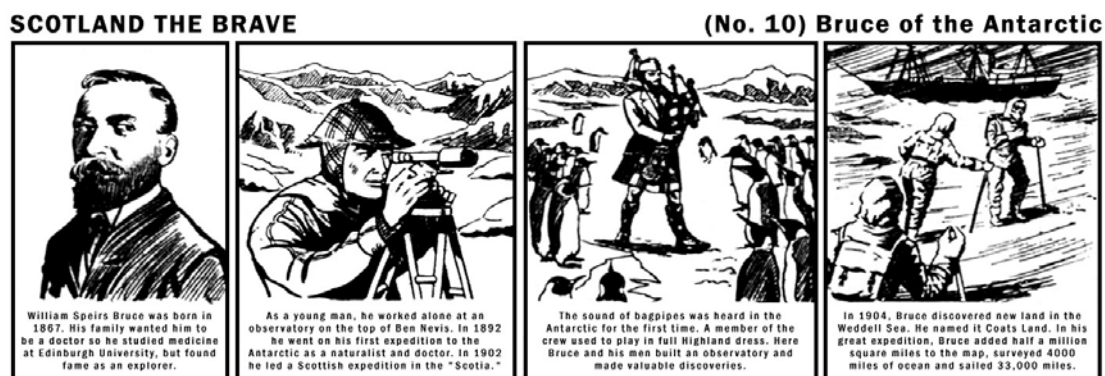


Figure 21. Cartoon strip depicting Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition. *The Sunday Post* 14 April 1957.

During 1978, to mark the Expedition's seventy-fifth anniversary, the University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum staged a seven-month travelling exhibition. Entitled *Scots in the Antarctic*, the exhibition—then the largest commemorative act yet organized—was designed to resemble the interior of the *Scotia*, with exhibits and dioramas visible through mock portholes. Following an introductory lecture by Ronald Miller, who had written about the Expedition during its fiftieth anniversary, the exhibition was opened on 15 May 1978 (GUAS Acc 2041/20).⁸⁵ Exploring two main themes, the Expedition's scientific accomplishments and its distinct Scottish character, the exhibition drew heavily on Rudmose Brown's

⁸⁵ In recognition of their links with the Expedition, funding for the exhibition was provided by Guinness and by J & P Coats Ltd (GUAS Acc 2041/23).

biography and, as such, advanced a particular representation of Bruce.⁸⁶ The exhibition brochure, for example, described Bruce as “a private person who often appeared morose, a dreamer, unused to social conversation, quiet and dedicated to his task” (GUAS Acc 2041/23).

When, in July 1978, the exhibition was discussed on the BBC Radio Scotland programme *Good morning Scotland*, Bruce was described as a “cold scientist” (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10f). This depiction was, however, disputed by one of the exhibition’s contributors, Jessie Wilson—daughter of the Scottish physicist Charles Thomson Rees Wilson, with whom Bruce had been acquainted. Wilson revealed that her family had always regarded Bruce as “a remarkably good and interesting man—very friendly...gentle and pleasant” (RSGS ARC. 4.2/10f). This recollection contrasted markedly with the Bruce that was presented by the exhibition, but at this stage the exhibit had opened, and its text, and its interpretation of Bruce, was fixed.

After four months at the Hunterian Museum, the exhibition was transferred to Broughty Castle Museum in Dundee and then to the Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (GUAS Acc 2041/26). Coinciding with the republication of *The voyage of the Scotia*, the exhibition appears to have rekindled significant national interest in Bruce and the Expedition. Eager to capitalize on this renewed public awareness, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society incorporated the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition into its 1984 centenary celebrations. Although not specifically a Society expedition, the links between the two were emphasized to highlight the “part played by adventurous Scots [and the Society] in exploring the Antarctic” (*Glasgow Herald*, 3 July 1984). It is apparent, however, that the Society’s role in the expedition might have been overstated. In one newspaper report, it was recorded that “It was the

⁸⁶ Intriguingly, when the exhibition was being planned, Bruce’s daughter had written to the organizing committee “requesting that her father’s nationalism should not be associated with the current S.N.P. viewpoint” (GUAS Acc 2041/26).

society, now in its centenary year, which sponsored the 36 Scots, led by Dr William Bruce of Edinburgh, when they set out from Troon” (*Glasgow Herald*, 3 July 1984). Given that the Expedition was funded largely by the Coats brothers, that Bruce had selected his own ship and crew, and that he had borne sole responsibility for the publication of the Expedition’s scientific results, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society should be seen more as a promoter and champion of the Expedition rather than as its sponsor. Although it would be imprudent to suggest that the Expedition had been appropriated by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in the way it had been by the St Andrew Society in the 1910s, it was clearly intended to serve as a figurehead for the Society’s centenary. From this time, the Society became, as it were, the *de facto* custodian for the memory of Bruce and has, in this role, been the primary instigator of the Expedition’s centenary celebrations.

The spirit of the *Scotia*: commemorating the centenary of the Expedition

On 4 December 2000, under the headline SCOTLAND’S FORGOTTEN HERO OF POLAR EXPLORATION COMES IN FROM THE COLD, *The Scotsman* reported the launch of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society’s *Scotia* Centenary Programme. The article’s opening sentence, “If ever there was a forgotten hero that man was William Speirs Bruce”, served to mark an important transformation in Bruce’s commemorative trajectory—from ‘cold scientist’, he had become, instead, a ‘forgotten hero’ (*The Scotsman* 4 December 2000). A brief survey of recent newspaper headlines (Table 1) illustrates the extent of this transition; nearly all describe Bruce as either forgotten or as a hero.

**SCOTLAND'S FORGOTTEN HERO OF
POLAR EXPLORATION COMES IN FROM
THE COLD**

The Scotsman 4 December 2000

**FORGOTTEN HEROES OF THE
ANTARCTIC**

The Scotsman 19 March 2001

**POLAR HERO IS GIVEN HIS DUE...
100 YEARS ON**

Edinburgh Evening News 25 March 2002

**SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION HAS BEEN
FORGOTTEN**

The Herald 24 May 2002

**FIGHT CONTINUES TO WIN MEDAL FOR
SCOTS POLAR HERO**

The Scotsman 11 November 2002

**FORGOTTEN BRUCE FINALLY
CELEBRATED**

The Times 16 December 2000

FORGOTTEN SCOT OF THE ANTARCTIC

Edinburgh Evening News 1 September 2001

**EXPLORER'S ANTARCTIC FEAT TO BE
CELEBRATED**

The Herald 26 March 2002

SCOTS POLAR PIONEER HONOURED

The Scotsman 16 September 2002

**CAMPAIGNERS WANT OVERLOOKED
ANTARCTIC EXPLORER BROUGHT IN
FROM THE COLD**

The Independent 16 November 2002

Table 1. Recent newspaper headlines illustrating Bruce's transition from 'cold scientist' to 'forgotten hero'.

Officially unveiled on 7 December 2000 at a reception in Edinburgh, attended by The Princess Royal in her role as Patron, the Scotia Centenary Programme outlined an ambitious series of commemorative events intended not only to "mark the outstanding contribution made to scientific exploration by Scots, both past and present, but also...to highlight the importance of geographical teaching and research" (Jamieson 2003). The Society's proposed programme met with a favourable response from the press. The Scottish journalist Katie Grant, writing in *The Times* (16

December 2000), was particularly effusive: “Surely even the most politically correct Scots will join the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in giving a cheer for William Speirs Bruce...Scotland’s most eminent, and Britain’s least known, polar explorer”. With rhetoric that would not have been out of place a century earlier, Grant continued: “In order to show that our national spirit is strong, why not ring the RSGS...and offer support to this launch of a new Scottish heroic age whilst simultaneously making sure that one of Scotland’s great unsung champions is given his proper place in the history books? Bruce was, after all, the ultimate Scottish patriot” (*The Times* 16 December 2000).⁸⁷

The first stage in what might be termed the rehabilitation of the popular memory of Bruce came on 26 March 2001 with the airing of a BBC Radio Scotland documentary *Poles apart*. Broadcast in the centenary year of British National Antarctic Expedition, the programme sought to illuminate “the largely forgotten Scottish National Antarctic Expedition”, and to bring to public attention the life and work of Bruce (*The Scotsman* 19 March 2001). In his introduction, the programme’s presenter, Mark Stephen, neatly captured the problematic status of Bruce as a contemporary hero: “William Speirs Bruce would have been quite happy to be a forgotten hero—he didn’t see himself as a hero at all, he certainly didn’t look like one. He wasn’t in the steely-eyed, lantern-jawed mould of the Antarctic explorers of the day like Captain Robert Falcon Scott” (*Poles apart* 2001).

With contributions from James Goodlad (author of educational material on Bruce and the Expedition), David Munro (Director of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society), Geoffrey Swinney (curator of the Royal Museum’s exhibition *William Speirs Bruce: the first polar hero*), and Moira Watson (Bruce’s

⁸⁷ What is celebrated here is not the Expedition, or Bruce’s contribution to science, but, rather, their Scottishness.

granddaughter), the programme gave particular attention to Bruce's strong Scottish national identity and to his struggle with the English establishment. Interspersed with readings from Bruce's correspondence, and with associated replies from a suitably Machiavellian-sounding Clements Markham, the programme portrayed Bruce and the Expedition as "typically Scottish" (*Poles apart* 2001). As Stephen suggested, in contrast with the British National Antarctic Expedition, "everything they [the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition] did was done calmly, scientifically...the Scots made it look simple" (*Poles apart* 2001).

In the programme's concluding section, whilst interviewing David Munro at Discovery Point in Dundee, where the British National Antarctic Expedition's ship *Discovery* sits in dry-dock, Stephen pondered: "Would it be terribly mean-spirited of me, parochial perhaps, to wish that we'd been standing at Scotia Point, beside the William Speirs Bruce Visitor Information Centre? Because, when all's said and done, Bruce did enough to deserve it" (*Poles apart* 2001). This is a significant question since it again addresses the disparity in the popular understanding and recognition of Scott and Bruce. The reason that the memory of Scott has endured longer than that of Bruce is, I suggest, less to do with what Scott actually did, but, rather, with the way in which he did it. In the end, Bruce said it best: "what the mass of the public desire is pure sensationalism, therefore the Polar explorer who attains the highest latitude and who has the powers of making a vivid picture of the difficulties and hardships involved will be regarded popularly as the hero, and will seldom fail to add materially to his store of worldly welfare; while he who plods on an unknown tract of land or sea and works there in systematic and monographic style will probably not have such worldly success" (Bruce 1911, 236–237).

The first official event in the Scotia Centenary Programme took place on 19

July 2002, at the Pickaquoy Centre in Kirkwall, where the 113 members of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland performed *South*—a newly-written symphony from the Dundee composer Gordon McPherson, commissioned jointly by the Orchestra and by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. A twenty-three minute musical interpretation of Bruce’s life and of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, *South* evoked “the icy waste in vivid fashion, complete with...a howling wind” (*The Herald* 21 July 2002). One review of the work noted that McPherson “made striking use of individual wind and brass instruments against the glacial timbre of the slow-moving string figures, and incorporated insistent bursts of morse code into the music. The piece built gradually towards a more heroic depiction of the expedition, but one shot through with more melancholy reflections” (*The Herald* 21 July 2002). The work is, indeed, melancholic—charting, as it does, Bruce’s life from the success of the Expedition, through his years of financial struggle, to his eventual exhausted, embittered, and embattled expiration. Although ephemeral, *South* is an evocative act of remembrance. In a way that the plain facts of Bruce’s exploratory career cannot convey, McPherson’s composition, although presenting a particular interpretation of Bruce and of the Expedition, captures something rather elusive and ill-defined—a glimpse of Bruce’s complex character. Whilst other commemorative practises in the Scotia Centenary Programme were, and are, designed to *evoke* Bruce, *South* succeeds, I suggest, in *embodying* him.

The next significant event in the Scotia Centenary Programme, its official launch, was rather more local in its focus.⁸⁸ On 30 October 2002, a lunchtime reception was held at the harbour in Troon, where the *Scotia* had been rebuilt prior to

⁸⁸ Between 5 October and 5 November 2002, the photographic legacy of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition was celebrated in an exhibit entitled *Icy Images*. Staged at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, the exhibition, prepared by Geoffrey Swinney, was in some respects a prelude to *William Speirs Bruce: the first polar hero*, giving, as it did, a brief introduction to Bruce and to the Expedition.

her Antarctic voyage. In this context, the Expedition's centenary celebrations acquired an additional local significance. A joint venture between the Troon Business Association, Associated British Ports, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, the reception celebrated not only the Expedition, but also, more significantly, Troon's important contribution to it. As was noted in the publicity material for an associated lecture, the Expedition's success "was due to the magnificence strength of the ex-whaling ship, the Scotia, which was rebuilt by the Ailsa Shipbuilding Company of Troon". The national significance of the Expedition was, however, more apparent later that day at the Scotia Centenary Dinner held at Glasgow City Chambers. Attended by The Princess Royal and Prince Albert of Monaco (great grandson of Bruce's oceanographical mentor), the Dinner (Figure 22) included the inaugural performance of *The Scotia suite of Scottish country dances*—seven jigs, reels, and strathspeys composed and choreographed by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. The dances, *Antarctic bound*, *Scotia Sea*, *The ice cap*, *Coats Land*, *Bruce's men*, *The piper and the penguin*, and *Speirs Bruce—the pole star*, were intended to evoke the Expedition's important milestones.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ At about this time, the Scotia Centenary Programme came to the attention of the Scottish National Party. In a series of questions to the Scottish Parliament, Michael Russell, Member for the South of Scotland, sought assurances from the Scottish Executive that they would "support the celebrations arranged by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society" (*Scottish Parliament Business Bulletin* 19 November 2002). Despite Russell's request, the Executive replied that it had "no plans to become involved in the centenary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition" (*Scottish Parliament Written Answers* 26 November 2002). Russell tabled further questions in November 2002, and again in April 2003, seeking support for the posthumous-awarding of the Royal Geographical Society's Polar Medal.

Presented to Scott and to Shackleton, but not to Bruce, the Polar Medal came to represent, for Bruce's supporters, Scotland's inequitable treatment by the English establishment. For more than fifteen years after the return of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, Bruce, aided by Charles E. Price and by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, made repeated requests that "the 'Scotia' people should receive the Polar Medal" (EUL Gen. 1656b). At each application, however, Bruce was denied. In a letter to Price, Bruce expressed his vexation: "I cannot see why one set of British subjects in the United Kingdom, subject to the same laws and taxation, should be excluded from certain privileges and decorations which are granted to others. The whole business is on a par with the money grants" (EUL Gen. 1656b). On 1 May 2003, the renewed political impetus which sought the Polar Medal for Bruce evaporated when Michael Russell lost his Parliamentary seat. Although championed by *The Scotsman* journalist Alistair Dalton, the campaign to secure the Medal has, at the time of writing, stalled (*The Scotsman* 11 November 2002).



Figure 22. Members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society performing *The Scotia suite of Scottish country dances* at Glasgow City Chambers, 30 October 2002. Courtesy of Gavin Anderson / the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

Remembering the scientist, creating the hero

Between December 2002 and February 2003, the scientific legacy of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition was celebrated in a second *Scotia* Expedition to the Antarctic. Sponsored by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, and the National Geographic Society, the Expedition comprised an international team of scientists collaborating on a multidisciplinary reconstruction of Antarctic climate history. Working on South Georgia, the nine scientists undertook a month-long programme of geological, geomorphological, glaciological, palaeoecological, and tephrochronological investigations designed to reveal whether the Antarctic leads, or lags, global climatic change. Unlike its predecessor, however, the second *Scotia* Expedition was accompanied by a journalist, Vanessa Collingridge, who sent a series of dispatches to *The Scotsman* (Figure 23),

and compiled a five-part audio diary broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 5 and 9 May 2003.

For science and Scotland

Vanessa Collingridge reports from South Georgia as a group of scientists set off in the footsteps of Scotland's greatest Polar explorer



Whenever you first meet the ice at five o'clock, its ominous blink barely registering in the already sunlit sky of the Antarctic summer. The icebergs stood proud upon the horizon – at least they advertised their presence; more deadly were the growlers floating almost completely submerged beneath the freezing water, ready to puncture the hulls of careless or unlucky sailors.

Ice had been the enemy for those who had sailed these waters before us – Captain Cook, who went “further than any other man” into the Antarctic circle; Captain Scott who became a hero by virtue of his death; and Ernest Shackleton, whose epic failure earned him more fame than success could ever have done. Although we knew their achievements and their stories, it was not these men who called to us like sirens across the Southern Ocean but the quieter voice of a man who gave his life to polar research – William Speirs Bruce.

It's unlikely that you've heard much of this quiet, studious man: he certainly doesn't cut the dashing figure that doubtless helped others into the hall of fame – he was bearded, dour, gruff and intolerant of fools who looked at the ice and saw glory instead of danger. He was also fiercely nationalistic – not for Britain but for the land that had nurtured his passion for research,

for those who looked at the hardships of the polar environment and saw their chance for fame.

Ironically, though, it was Bruce who had helped kick-start the heroic age of polar exploration with its frenzied race to the Pole, by correcting some of the myths and fantasies that had so long been reproduced on Antarctic maps. His careful charts and logs of ocean and coastline data meant that for the first time, explorers had a more complete map to rely upon in their bids for personal glory and national pride. From the 1890s, Bruce had sailed the Southern Ocean as ship's doctor with the Dundee whalers, using the opportunity to record a phenomenal amount of new information on this Terra Australis Nondum Cognita – commonly called Antarctica. By the close of the 19th century, Bruce had become one of Britain's most knowledgeable and experienced polar scientists.

It stood to reason, therefore, that when, in 1901, the Royal Geographical Society proposed a British National Antarctic Expedition Bruce applied, fully expecting he would win a place. But it was not to be. It seems he was just not “Establishment” enough – Dundee whalers were no equivalent to the fine men of the Royal Navy and his reputation as a “prickly Scottish thistle” (even though he was actually born in London) certainly didn't

matter, they were sorely mistaken: the prickly thistle was not one to be down-trodden.

Bruce began organising his own expedition – a rival expedition, not the British National Antarctic Expedition but the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, supported by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the wealthy Paisley textile barons, the Coats brothers. In terms of financial backing, they were mere squibs to the English expeditions; in terms of achievement, however, they were giants.

The Scottish National Antarctic Expedition left Troon on 2 November, 1902, in a specially revamped boat called the Scotia. On board were a team of scientists and sailors who would spend the next two years plying the Southern Ocean in the name of Antarctic research – giving the boat's name to the Scotia Sea and its underwater mountain range, the Scotia Ridge. To the 150 miles of previously unknown Antarctic coastline that they discovered and charted, they gave the name of their Paisley buddies; look closely at the map of the ice-bound continent and you will see “Coats Land” inscribed to this day.

If revenge is a dish best served cold, then Bruce won his revenge for being spurned by the Establishment in one of the coldest places on Earth: two years after leaving Troon, after successfully over-wintering in the ice to extend their capacity for

LEFT: Collingridge and the scientists on the centenary Antarctic

Figure 23. *For Scotland and Science*. Vanessa Collingridge's first dispatch on the second *Scotia* Expedition (*The Scotsman* 4 January 2003).

In reporting the work of the second *Scotia* Expedition, Collingridge's programme, *A diary of climate change*, emphasized the original Expedition's contribution to the contemporary understanding of the Antarctic climate. As one of the Expedition's scientists, Alun Hubbard, noted:

William Bruce is still extremely relevant to what we're doing here today.

He's very much an unsung hero and the work that he did down here may lack the glamour and glitz of the other polar heroes, Shackleton and Scott, but he really did the groundwork, got the base-level data necessary to...quantify the environmental change that we're seeing here today. And, also, his marine and biological work is unsurpassed and without doubt a lot of what we're doing here is based on William Bruce's *Scotia Expedition* (interviewed in *A diary of climate change* 2003).

In a further reinterpretation of Bruce's persona, the programme presented him as "the godfather of climate change science" (Collingridge 2003). This novel appellation makes clear that whether represented as a 'cold scientist', 'forgotten hero', or 'godfather of climate change science', who Bruce is, who he is taken to be, varies not only with time, but also with context. For different social and intellectual groups, at different times, and in different locations, Bruce has had distinct and often dissimilar significance. For the Scottish press, for the Scottish National Party, and perhaps also for the contemporary Scottish public, Bruce is a forgotten hero—his importance due not to what he did (his scientific work), but to the way in which he did it (resolutely, independently, and whilst opposed by an obstructive English establishment). For the members of the second *Scotia Expedition*, however, Bruce was, more significantly, a scientist and, as such, his import derived from his scientific legacy—*what* he did, rather than *how* he did it. It is apparent, therefore, that in death, as in life, there exist different 'Bruces', a commemorative triumvirate: Bruce the hero, Bruce the nationalist, and Bruce the scientist. These Bruces were each represented and celebrated in a trio of commemorative events staged during March 2003, the climax of the *Scotia Centenary Programme*.

On 7 March 2003, some forty or fifty invited guests crowded the Fellows' Library of the Royal College of Surgeons on Edinburgh's Nicolson Street. The eclectic group—which included descendants of the *Scotia's* crew, members of Edinburgh's scientific establishment, royalty, and celebrities—were gathered for the

unveiling of a memorial plaque to Bruce. Intended to mark Bruce's close association with the College, which overlooks the site of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, the plaque, despite being the first permanent and tangible memorial to Bruce, is not publicly accessible. Visible only from within the College grounds, to which public admission is restricted, the plaque is an appropriately covert celebration of a forgotten scientist. A more overt act of remembrance took place, however, later that day at the Royal Museum when its exhibition, *William Speirs Bruce: the first polar hero*, was opened by The Princess Royal and by Prince Albert of Monaco.

Although commemorating the centenary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, the exhibition, unlike that staged at the Hunterian Museum in 1978, was more biographical in its focus—tracing Bruce's life from early childhood, through his exploratory apprenticeship, to his scientific and intellectual apotheosis. A large banner (Figure 24), which viewers encountered before entering the exhibition gallery, situated Bruce in the context of the 'Heroic Age' of polar exploration, and encouraged visitors to contemplate his status as hero. Despite its rather definitive title, the exhibition did not explicitly represent Bruce as a hero—rather it asked its audience to consider Bruce's life and achievements and to determine whether he might, with justification, be accorded heroic status. Whether Bruce is, or was, a hero depends, of course, on how one defines and quantifies heroism.



Figure 24. Entrance to *William Speirs Bruce: the first polar hero* (Author photograph 2003).

In his celebrated 1949 analysis of heroism, *The hero with a thousand faces*, Joseph Campbell, identified, from a broad survey of myth and folklore, a series of acts and events common to tales of heroism. Campbell portioned the lifecycle of the

archetypal hero (Figure 25) into three phases: the departure, in which the hero receives a call to adventure; the initiation, in which he or she faces and overcomes a number of trials; and the return, in which the protagonist makes a perilous, perhaps magical, journey home “in which he is often confronted by every conceivable obstacle and difficulty, before giving his boon to his community, nation, or world” (Riffenburgh 1993, 5). Bruce, I would suggest, fulfilled these criteria—the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, which was successful, unglamorous, and was spared the thrilling trials of contemporary expeditions, did not.

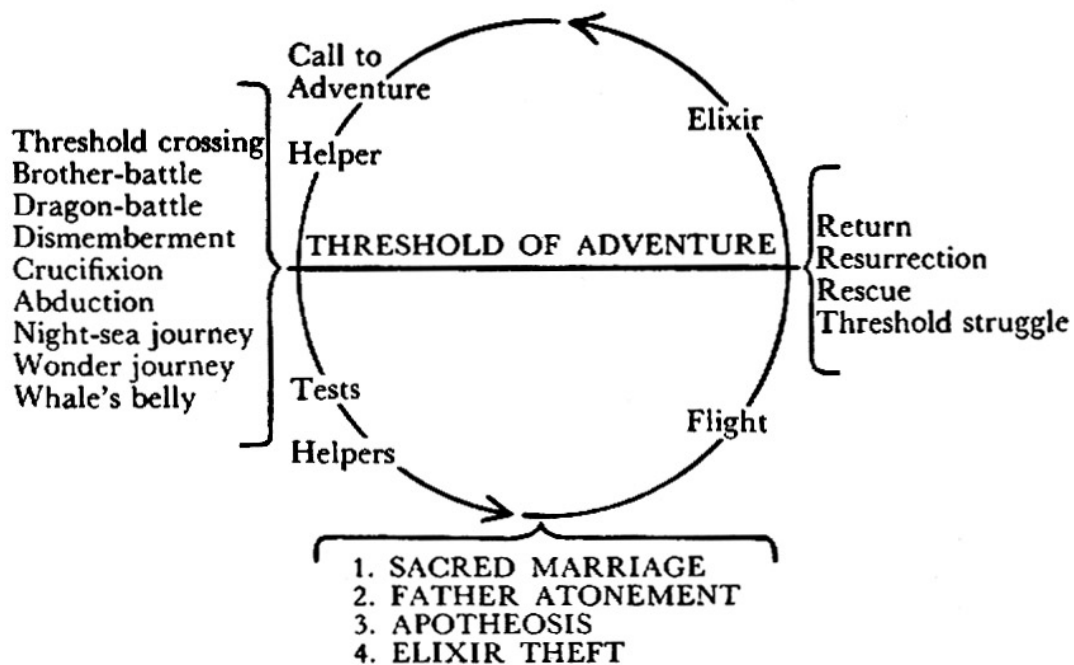


Figure 25. Representation of the hero’s lifecycle: call to adventure, initiation, and triumphant return (Campbell 1993, 245).

For Bruce, the call to adventure came while he was a student in Edinburgh, his initiation, rather than the climatic rigours of the high latitudes, came from an establishment unwilling to assist him—an establishment committed to territorial acquisition rather than to scientific accumulation. His return, in which he presented his “boon to his community, nation, or world”, came with the publication of the

Expedition's scientific *Report* (Riffenburgh 1993, 5). It would be injudicious, however, to suggest that since Bruce can be seen to have satisfied Campbell's criteria that he is, by default, a hero. From what has gone before, from what might be called Bruce's 'heroic trajectory', it is clear that his status as hero—which has varied with situation, both spatial and temporal—is, and was, based on a more complex and locally-particular set of conditions than those prescribed by Campbell. The factors that encouraged the British expatriate community in Buenos Aires to accord Bruce heroic status differ significantly from those that have motivated the contemporary Scottish press to proclaim Bruce a 'forgotten hero'. For the exhibition to describe Bruce as 'the first polar hero' is, I suggest, no more or no less justified than would be dismissing his potential heroic status. *William Speirs Bruce: the first polar hero* did not, therefore, misrepresent Bruce, but rather demonstrates who Bruce is, and what he represents, for the contemporary Scottish public.

Whilst Bruce the 'first polar hero' was being celebrated in Edinburgh, Bruce the scientist, more particularly Bruce the meteorologist, was being remembered at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. On 26 March 2003, Robert Headland, Curator of the Institute's Museum, addressed an invited audience (Figure 26) at the opening of *A century of Antarctic meteorology: 1903 to 2003*—an exhibition timed to coincide with the centenary of the first meteorological observations on Laurie Island. Having contacted the Argentine station at Laurie Island by radiotelephone, Headland was able to report to his audience the current meteorological conditions in the South Orkneys—one hundred years to the day since the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition began weather records on the island. Although an intentionally light-hearted act of remembrance, Headland's address made clear the scientific legacy of Bruce and of the Expedition. It was evidence too that in more than eight decades of

commemoration what was being celebrated was not Bruce's persona *in toto*, but particular aspects of his character—his resolute scientific verve, his strong Scottish identity, and his 'heroism'. Although not a quite a commemorative patsy, Bruce, being a complex, multilayered, and multifaceted individual, was, and is, a malleable figurehead whose significance and importance varies temporally, spatially, and culturally. Being, at once, an oceanographer, naturalist, meteorologist, geologist, and geographer, there is no essential Bruce and there is no essential memory of Bruce. How Bruce is remembered, how his life and work is celebrated, is as much a product of when, where, and by whom he is commemorated as it is a reflection of Bruce *per se*. The memory of Bruce is, to borrow from Corinthians 9:22, all things to all men.



Figure 26. Robert Headland (centre) addressing invited guests at the opening of the Scott Polar Research Institute's exhibition *A century of Antarctic meteorology* (Author photograph 2003).

Conclusion

The world shrinks, but, after all, this is only from the point of view of those who do not look into futurity. Each scientific investigation leads to the discovery of new scientific facts and problems not only unknown, but often entirely unconceived. Newer and wider fields for investigation will offer themselves in the future than in the past; rather, then, should we say, the world expands (Bruce 1911, 254).

This thesis began by considering a problematic seven-word proclamation: “William Speirs Bruce: The First Polar Hero”. In contemplating the accuracy or, more precisely, the validity of this statement, this paper has engaged with questions of heroism, reception, mediation, memory, and commemoration to conclude, perhaps unsatisfyingly, that Bruce was, and also was not, a hero. Such an indefinite and, as it were, inconclusive conclusion reflects a central tenet of this study—that there was, and is, no *essential* Bruce, and that to ask whether Bruce was a hero is to miss something fundamental. Rather than a single, definable, graspable Bruce, there were, and are, a confusing fiesta of ‘Bruces’: Bruce the scientist, Bruce the explorer, Bruce the Scot, and Bruce the nationalist (among others). Moreover, these are also what might be thought of as ‘situated’ Bruces—Bruces who had, and continue to have, unique significance within particular spatial, temporal, and social contexts. That Bruce meant different things, to different people, at different times, and in different places makes clear the importance of location, of site and of social situation, in understanding who Bruce was, how he was received, and the ways in which, and by whom, he has been remembered.

The product of a unique social and intellectual milieu, Bruce reflected, and to

some degree, embodied the cultural and academic concerns of Edinburgh during the 1890s—his formative environment. His resolute scientific focus, drawn from influential mentors such as John Murray and Hugh Robert Mill, and his staunch and vociferous Scottish national identity, aroused by Patrick Geddes, together served to define his idiosyncratic approach to polar exploration. In this respect, Bruce, with his passionate desire for scientific accumulation, rather than territorial acquisition, was distinct from contemporary explorers and was, as a consequence, reported on differently by the press.

The newspaper treatment of Bruce, his press mediation, emphasizes the constitutive significance of place. Whilst Bruce was not actively reconstructed by the press to conform to the myth of the explorer as hero, he was presented and reported in ways that accentuated specific facets of his character. In different locations, different Bruces were written about, and were presented to different publics—exposing, what is, a geography of reporting. The fact that the press engagement with Bruce was spatially varied, and that the audience for each newspaper was essentially exclusive, meant that the popular understanding of Bruce, and his status as hero, was a profoundly local construct. The situated nature of the press reporting of Bruce, and the newspaper public's uniquely local actualization of him, advertise the significance of what are, in effect, intangible social spaces on shaping Bruce's popular reception. Yet the physical spaces in which Bruce acquired his polar data—analysed, presented, and disseminated them—were equally complicit in defining the way in which he was engaged with, and understood, by the public and by his scientific contemporaries.

Bruce's work, his polar knowledge, traversed a complex network of spaces—linking venues of collection, examination, analysis, and display. Underlying each site, each node in the network of accumulation, production, and consumption, was an

intricate tapestry of local social, cultural, intellectual, and political concerns. These factors influenced not only how these sites operated, but also how knowledge, ideas, and, more importantly, meaning travelled between them. Each locale in this circulatory system imprinted itself on Bruce's scientific work and on the public's encounter with it. The spaces in which knowledge was made, synthesized, exhibited, and expounded mattered then—serving not only to mould the knowledge *per se*, but also to mediate its reception. More than Bruce's scientific knowledge alone, however, these sites conspired to define how Bruce and his expeditions were understood, and the meanings and significance attributed to them.

Space, place, and social situation were similarly important in directing the course of Bruce's commemorative trajectory. In much the same way that, during life, Bruce had had particular local significance, so too, since his death, has the memory of Bruce. Post-mortem, Bruce has been variously celebrated, championed, adopted, revised, and remade in a series of commemorative reinventions. The ways in which Bruce has been remembered have, however, less to do with who Bruce was than they do with the characteristics of the social groups in which his memory has been propagated. Bruce's place in popular consciousness, and his associated commemoration and memorialization, have been influenced profoundly by local contexts. Bruce the nationalist, Bruce the cold scientist, and Bruce the forgotten hero, are products of spatially, temporally, and socially distinct milieux. At different times, in different places, and to different people, Bruce has had distinct meaning. These varied representations of Bruce are, therefore, equally valid—reflecting, as they do, not a single, essential Bruce but, rather, the plethora of significance which his situated interpretation has engendered.

The reception and commemoration of William Speirs Bruce are, I suggest, part

of a common process. Although little appears to connect the way in which Bruce was received by his contemporary public to the forms assumed by the centenary commemoration of his Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, they are united by what might be described as the situated making of meaning. Location, both social and spatial, had an important role in shaping Bruce's *personal* trajectory—from the conduct of his science, through the communication of his ideas, to his encounter with the public. At each stage in this process, space exerted a covert, yet inescapable, influence—who Bruce was, how he was received and commemorated, was, and is, not dislocated and spatially transcendent, but, rather, profoundly and importantly, *located*. To know Bruce is, then, to know the spaces within which he was brought into being. It is to acknowledge that space, place, site, and situation impose a constitutive influence not only on the production of scientific knowledge, but also on the reception of ideas, on the making of meaning, and on the creation of memory.

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The Cape Times (Cape Town)

Daily Express (London)

Daily Mail (London)

The Daily Record & Mail (Glasgow)

Dundee Advertiser

The Dundee Courier & Argus (continued as *The Courier and Argus*)

The Dunfermline Press, and West of Fife Advertiser

Edinburgh Evening Dispatch

Edinburgh Evening News

The Evening Citizen (Glasgow)

Evening Express (Aberdeen)

The Evening Telegraph (Dundee)

The Evening Times (Glasgow)
The Field (London)
El Gladiator (Buenos Aires)
Glasgow Herald (continued as *The Herald*)
Glasgow News
The Independent (London)
The Illustrated London News
The Manchester Guardian
Reynolds's Newspaper (London)
Scotland on Sunday (Edinburgh)
Scottish Parliament Business Bulletin (Edinburgh)
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The Scotsman (Edinburgh)
The Scots Pictorial (Glasgow)
The Sunday Post (Dundee)
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