

MEMORIALS OF ENDURANCE AND ADVENTURE:
EXHIBITING BRITISH POLAR EXPLORATION, 1819 - c.1939

Katie Murray

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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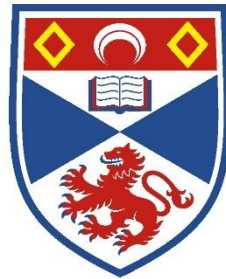
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Exhibiting British polar exploration, 1819 – c.1939

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

20th March 2017

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Abstract

Over eighty polar-themed exhibitions were held in Britain between 1819 and the 1930s, a time of intense exploration of both the Arctic and Antarctic. These varied from panoramas and human exhibits to displays of 'relics', equipment, photographs and artwork, waxworks and displays shown as part of a Great Exhibition. This period also saw the creation of the first dedicated polar museums. These displays were visited by thousands of people throughout the country, helping to mediate the subject of exploration for a public audience.

Despite this, the role exhibitions played in forming popular views of the polar regions has not been fully assessed. This thesis addresses this gap. It is the first to consider all the polar exhibitions held during this period as a collective body, making it possible to study how they developed over time and in response to changing circumstances.

The thesis uses a variety of archival sources to both reconstruct the displays and place them in their historical and museological contexts. The study shows that exhibitions evolved in response to changes both in the museum sector and in exploration culture. It demonstrates that, while they were originally identified with the shows of the entertainment industry, polar exhibitions began to take on more of the characteristics of museum displays. At the same time their dominant themes changed; the natural world was relegated in favour of ideas relating to the human experience of the regions such as heroism, adventure and everyday life in an exotic environment. While other media may have been more effective in disseminating ideas about exploration, visitors could find the experience of visiting an exhibition more compelling. This thesis contributes to our understanding of this distinct role that exhibitions played in presenting the polar regions to the British public.

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List of abbreviations

BM:	British Museum
NHM:	Natural History Museum
RGS:	Royal Geographical Society
RSGS:	Royal Scottish Geographical Society
SOL:	Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory
SPRI:	Scott Polar Research Institute
USI:	United Service Institution

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

*'Yesterday I went on an Antarctic expedition. I got as far as the south magnetic pole. I saw the regions of eternal ice. I marvelled at the gorgeous sunset effects behind mountains on which the snow has not melted since the Glacial Epoch. I revelled in the hot sunshine and, by way of contrast, realised what the Polar four months' darkness is like. For the sum of one shilling, aided by the exercise of a little imagination, you can do the same.'*¹

This *Daily Mail* journalist had not, in fact, been to Antarctica, but only as far as Temple Pier in London, where the explorer Ernest Shackleton was hosting the Nimrod exhibition. Shackleton had recently returned from a two-year expedition to Antarctica and, on his arrival back in Britain had arranged a display illustrating this endeavour. Among the artefacts that had so inspired the writer's imagination were the remains of a sledge that Shackleton and his companions had used to drag their food, fuel, tent and sleeping bags on a celebrated journey into the interior of the continent where they almost succeeded in reaching the South Pole. The sledge was displayed alongside assorted other objects representing the voyage, such as Primus stoves, skis, taxidermy penguins and seals, scientific specimens and a gramophone, as well as photographs and artwork depicting both the events of the expedition and dramatic polar landscapes.²

This kind of display was not unprecedented. A couple of years earlier, as Shackleton was organising his expedition, the public had been able to visit his offices to view a display of the equipment he was planning to use. Before that, between 1904 and 1905, an exhibition commemorating Robert Falcon Scott's voyage on the *Discovery* had toured towns and cities throughout Britain. The previous century, audiences had visited a number of shows depicting the efforts of explorers to discover a Northwest Passage

¹ *Daily Mail* (30th September 1909).

² Exhibition catalogue (1909), 'The British Antarctic Expedition 1907-09', *Sir Ernest Shackleton collection*, DC.

through Arctic Canada. In fact, Shackleton's 1909 display was just one of over eighty polar exhibitions held in Britain between 1819 and 1939.

Exhibitions were thus one of the mediums through which the public encountered the polar regions. Along with other media such as newspaper articles and voyage accounts, they helped to both generate and reinforce the popular perception of exploration in these parts of the globe. They presented images that would come to define it in the public consciousness: icebergs, glaciers, the Northern (or Southern) lights, polar bears or penguins, Inuit peoples, men dressed in fur clothing, ships beset in the ice, sledges, dogs and skis. In this way, as Anders Houltz has commented in reference to modern polar museums, exhibitions 'actively participated in shaping the narratives of polar discovery.'³

Despite this, the role exhibitions played in forming popular views of exploration has not been fully assessed. The thesis is intended to address this gap.

The aim of the study is to place polar exhibitions in their historical and museological contexts. This will help to shed light on the means by which the subject of exploration was mediated for a public audience. It will show how displays evolved; an 1820s exhibition both looked different and emphasised different themes to one held in 1909 or 1930.

One specific research aim is to investigate the role of these displays within the exploration culture of their day. Another is to explore the relationship between polar exhibitions and the wider entertainment and museum sectors of which they were a part. The thesis will also examine what aspects of exploration were prioritised in order to appeal to the general public. This will be determined by studying the contents of exhibitions, combined with a close reading of catalogues and other associated literature. Further, it will include an assessment of how significant the role of exhibitions was in disseminating ideas about polar exploration. To this end, both their accessibility and the visitor response, as recorded in newspaper reviews and various ephemeral sources, will be examined.

³ Anders Houltz 'Displaying the Polar Nation: Nordic Museum Exhibits and Polar Ambitions' in Sverker Sörlin, *Science, Geopolitics and Culture in the Polar Region: Norden Beyond Borders. The Nordic Experience* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 293-327., 296.

The thesis takes 1819 as its starting point. The previous year the British navy had, after a hiatus, resumed polar exploration by sending two expeditions to the Arctic: voyages which, on their return, were immediately commemorated in panorama form. The endpoint is 1939. The Second World War also marks a watershed in British polar history as the country established a permanent presence in Antarctica. By this time a dedicated polar museum had been established in the form of the Scott Polar Research Institute and temporary exhibitions were no longer as important.

There are some limits to this analysis. First, due to practical constraints, it focuses exclusively on Britain: on British polar endeavours and their reception by British audiences. It is possible that other countries with both a history of polar exploration and an exhibition culture, such as the United States, held similar displays.

Secondly, the thesis does not evaluate the impact of other types of activity in which the British engaged in the polar regions, such as whaling, sealing, fishing and fur trapping. These also had an impact on the way the polar regions were exhibited. Whalers, in particular, are known to have contributed artefacts and specimens to museums. In addition, it was often whaling captains who were responsible for bringing Inuit peoples to Britain for the purposes of display.⁴ These industrial activities, however, were rarely depicted in exhibitions. As they were ongoing they were never of any particular topical interest, unlike the departure or return of an exploratory expedition. In addition, the whaling industry was self-supporting and self-financing, thus there was less need for the favourable publicity or fundraising opportunities that exhibitions provided.

It is also beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the wider relationship between exploration, collecting and museums. These had been linked since at least the 1770s when Captain James Cook donated specimens collected on his voyages to the incipient British Museum (BM).⁵ In the period under question, explorers continued to be tasked

⁴ Matthew Jarron, 'From Dundee with the Whalers: Visual Representations of the Arctic and Antarctic' presented at *Polar Visual Culture: An International Conference* (University of St Andrews, 2011); Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914* (Manchester, 2000), 137.

⁵ Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Nashville, 1979), 46.

with bringing back physical material, which was then distributed to both national and local museums nationwide.⁶

The concerns of the museum sector were different from those who organised temporary exhibitions, however. Though museums did display polar material, this was not used to depict the subject of exploration but rather to illustrate scientific principles. Polar specimens were organised according to a taxonomic system of arrangement and spread across different departments. For example, in 1827 the BM (erroneously) placed taxidermy Arctic birds in a gallery of 'British Zoology' and later amongst other 'North American birds', while the 'Esquimaux dresses, implements and utensils' brought back by the same expedition were shown alongside the products of other North American indigenous groups.⁷ Such displays will not be considered in this thesis.

For the purposes of the thesis, the polar regions will be defined by what can be described as cultural criteria. Areas are polar if they were regarded as such at the time. Today a number of definitions are used to delineate the Arctic and Antarctic. For example, the outer edge of Antarctica is variously considered to be the Antarctic Circle at 66°33'S, the latitude below which the sun will not set on the longest day of the year; the political boundary of 60°S identified by the Antarctic Treaty; or the fluctuating Antarctic Convergence, the northernmost reach of cold polar waters. During the period under question, however, commentators were rarely geographically precise, employing generic terms such as 'the frozen regions', 'the snowy regions', 'the polar seas', 'the North Pole' and 'the South Pole.'⁸ Whether a region was considered polar or not seems to have been determined by factors such as the presence of icebergs, native wildlife and, in the north, Inuit peoples. Therefore, though some exploration took place in regions more properly described as Subarctic or Subantarctic, for example, Hudson Bay and the South Orkney Islands, these were nevertheless considered polar expeditions. The areas most relevant to the thesis are those that were visited by British expeditions during the

⁶ Trevor H. Levere 'Science and the Canadian Arctic, 1818-76, from Sir John Ross to Sir George Strong Nares' in *Arctic* 41(2) (1988), pp. 127-137.

⁷ Museum catalogue (1827), 'Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum', Robertson BF66- D.10 *Alexander Robertson collection*, GU.

⁸ As late as 1912 Shackleton used the term 'The South Pole' to refer to Antarctica when giving evidence at the *Titanic Inquiry*. 'The London *Titanic Inquiry* (18th June 1912)' in *The James Caird Society Journal* 8 (2016), pp. 15-30., 19.

time period in question. In the north, exploration centred on the west coast of Greenland and what is now the Canadian High Arctic: in the south, the Weddell and Ross Seas (Fig.1, 2, 3).

The term ‘Inuit’ is employed throughout the thesis in preference to either ‘Eskimo’ or the contemporary ‘Esquimaux’, except when quoting directly from primary documents. As Ann Fienup-Riordan explains, though some Arctic groups call themselves Eskimo, the indigenous peoples that were frequently encountered by British explorers in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland referred to themselves as Inuit.⁹ Eskimo was a name applied by others and, though the etymology is disputed, it is usually considered to have been derogatory.¹⁰ The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

Expeditions are referred to using the name of the ship or leader rather than their formal title. This follows convention. Titles were often long and similar to that of other voyages. For example, the first decade of the twentieth century saw the departure of the British National Antarctic Expedition (1901), the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (1902) and the British Antarctic Expedition (1907). For the sake of brevity and comprehension, these are referred to as the *Discovery*, *Scotia* and *Nimrod* expeditions. A list of expedition titles, ships and leaders is provided in appendix one.

1.2 Literature Review

The following section surveys the literature that has informed this thesis. It also outlines the gap in scholarship that the study is intended to fill. The brief synopsis given here is supplemented by a more detailed review in each chapter that describes the secondary literature relevant to its specific content. This research has required an interdisciplinary

⁹ Ann Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo Essays: Yupik Lives and How We See Them* (New Brunswick, 1990), 5.

¹⁰ At the time of writing the ‘Edmonton Eskimo’ football team is being called on to change their name by the *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*, an advocacy organisation. ‘Why the name “Edmonton Eskimos” harms Inuit and why it should be changed’, *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*, <https://goo.gl/qqAcz3>, Accessed 27th April 2016.



Figure 1. A North Pole-centred map of the Arctic

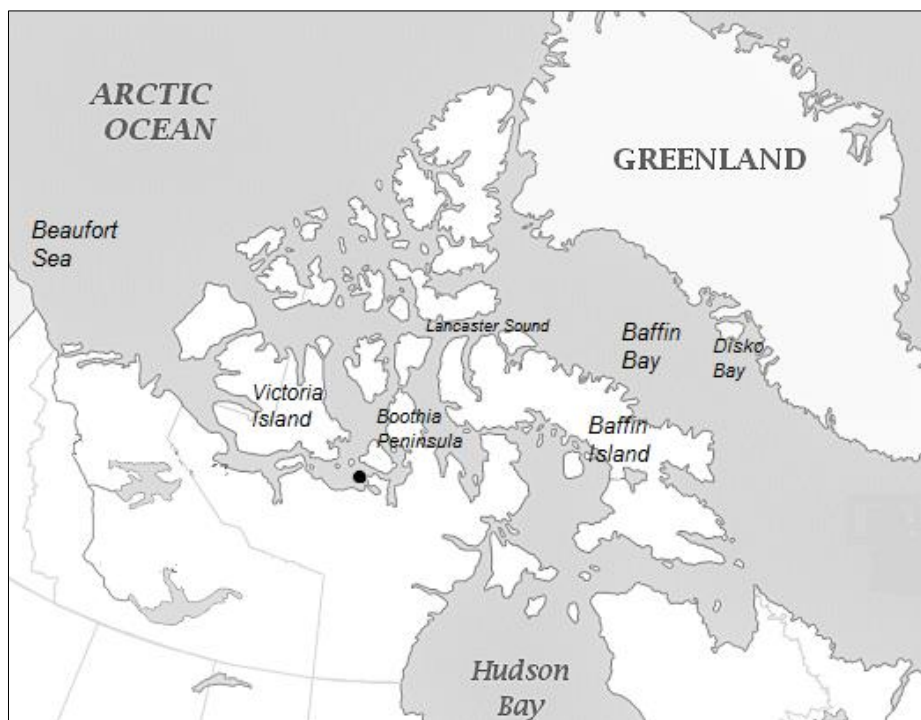


Figure 2. Map of Greenland and the Canadian Arctic
The black dot marks the approximate position where the *Erebus* was found in September 2014.

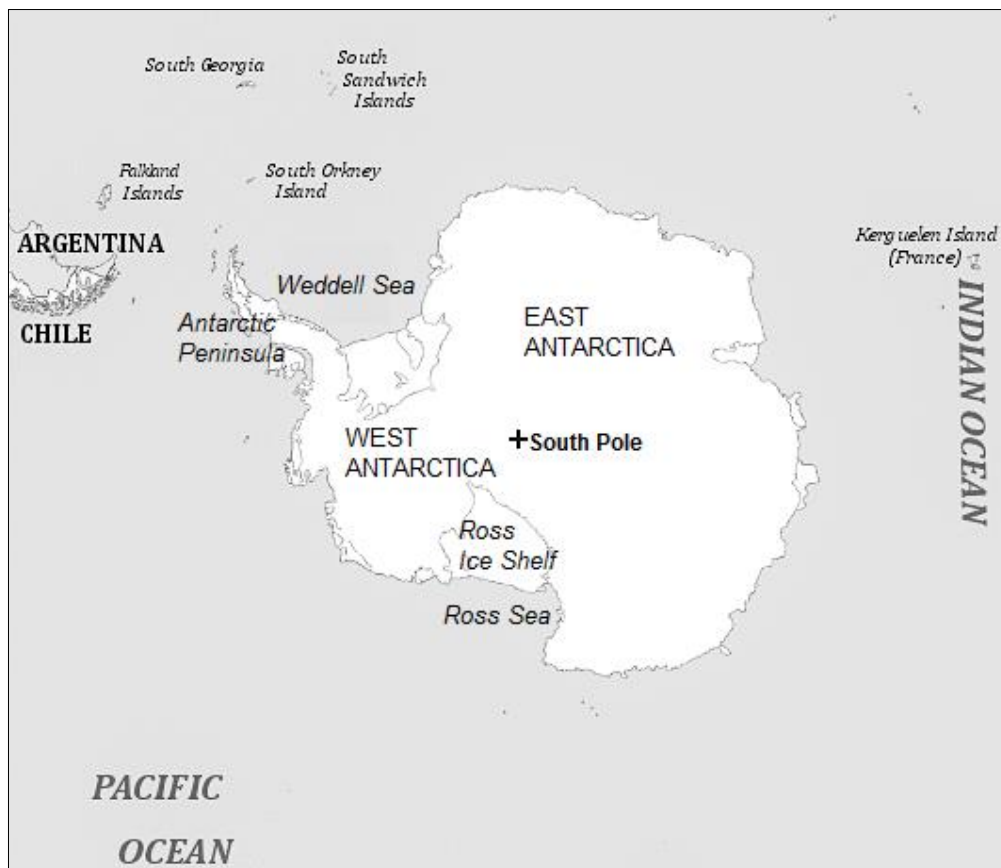


Figure 3. A South Pole-centred map of Antarctica, also showing South Georgia

approach, using works not only from history and museum studies, but also English literature, geopolitics, film studies, and the history of photography.

Polar exploration has fascinated the public historically as well as in the present day. Consequently, numerous texts aimed at the popular market have been published. These are largely descriptive accounts of expeditions and biographies of the personalities involved.

While an understanding of events is essential, the thesis is concerned not with what happened on expeditions, but rather with what Marie-Theres Federhofer has called the ‘mediated nature of exploration’, or, how exploration was understood by the general

public.¹¹ Consequently, scholarship that focuses on the interplay between polar exploration and the domestic sphere is more relevant than studies about the expeditions themselves.

As yet, little attention has been paid to the role of exhibitions in disseminating ideas about exploration. There are no studies that consider them exclusively. Two works have examined the subject as it relates to nineteenth-century Arctic exploration. The first, a chapter in Robert David's *The Arctic in the British Imagination*, provides a comprehensive survey of different types of Arctic display, including exhibits of indigenous peoples, panoramas, gallery and museum displays and the display of native fauna in zoos.¹² David compares the ways these exhibitions portrayed the Arctic and analyses their impact, concluding that as they were inaccessible to most of the population this is likely to have been minimal.¹³ Russell Potter's *Arctic Spectacles* is also concerned with how Arctic exploration was portrayed in visual culture. He considers exhibitions such as panoramas alongside the illustrated press, lantern slide shows, and theatrical productions.¹⁴ Potter examines various themes pertinent to this thesis: the reasons why exhibitions were held, their accuracy, their impact. In addition, he has collated the most comprehensive list of nineteenth-century Arctic exhibitions so far, detailing twenty-four British displays held between 1819 and 1876 (excluding related entertainments such as magic lantern shows and lectures). Potter's list was particularly useful when first embarking on the research for this thesis.¹⁵

My study is indebted to both these texts. They are limited, however, in the extent to which they are able to engage with individual exhibitions. Both works have a broad scope. They consider a range of media other than exhibitions and Potter discusses American displays in addition to British ones. Another constraint is that both focus

¹¹ Marie-Theres Federhofer 'Passagiere des Eises. Polarhelden und arktische Diskurse 1874 [Passengers of the Ice: Polar Heroes and Arctic Discourses, 1874]' in *Acta Borealia* 32(208-211) (2015), 209.

¹² David, *The Arctic*, 130-84.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹⁴ Russell A. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875* (London, 2007).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 211-23.

exclusively on the nineteenth-century Arctic. They do not consider the subsequent period of polar exploration in Antarctica.

In addition to these, a number of studies have examined specific types of exhibition. A great deal of research has been carried out on human exhibits. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people from exotic locales were displayed in shows that ranged from the presentation of an individual to whole 'Colonial Villages', built into Great Exhibitions.¹⁶ These displays were bolstered by an interest in the exotic, the growing study of ethnology, and the burgeoning British Empire that provided a ready source of 'exhibits.'¹⁷ Some of this work looks specifically at displays of indigenous Arctic peoples. Several are aimed at the popular market, such as Kenn Harper and France Rivet's biographies of Inuit individuals who were exhibited in this manner.¹⁸ Michael Costeloe and Robin Wright also provide descriptive accounts of occasions when Arctic peoples were displayed.¹⁹

Scholarly analysis has tended to address questions about the appeal, accuracy and impact of these exhibitions. M. Stopp and G. Mitchell attempt to explain their popularity, concluding that it stemmed from a fascination with the foreign and a desire for reassurance that the 'savage' could be civilised.²⁰ David considers them to have been the most influential of all the different types of Arctic display in shaping public perceptions of the Arctic. He shows that they reached both rural and urban audiences, and appealed to people from all tiers of society.²¹ He concludes, however, that the picture of the Arctic they portrayed was inaccurate, a view supported by Barbara

¹⁶ Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, 1978), 45-48; Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988), 82.

¹⁷ Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (London, 1996), 221-22; Altick, *The Shows of London*, 268; M. Stopp and G. Mitchell "'Our Amazing Visitors": Catherine Cartwright's Account of Labrador Inuit in England' in *Arctic* 63(4) (2010), pp. 399-413., 401.

¹⁸ Neither deal with individuals exhibited in Britain, however. Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life of Minik the New York Eskimo* (London, 2001); France Rivet, *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab: The Events of 1880-1881* (Gatineau, 2014).

¹⁹ Michael P. Costeloe, *William Bullock: Connoisseur and Virtuoso of the Egyptian Hall* (Bristol, 2008); Robin K. Wright 'The Traveling Exhibition of Captain Samuel Hadlock, Jr.: Eskimos in Europe, 1822-1826' in Christian F. Feest, *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1989), pp. 215-234.

²⁰ Stopp and Mitchell "'Our Amazing Visitors'" (2010), 402.

²¹ David, *The Arctic*, 175-76.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett who also argues that audiences received a distorted impression of Inuit life.²²

A number of works have been published that examine Arctic-themed panoramas. Both David and Potter have studied a number of panoramas in order to ascertain what their dominant themes and images were. While David asserts that they represented the ‘explorers’ Arctic’, concentrating on the endeavours of British travellers, Potter comes to a different conclusion, arguing that their primary focus was the forbidding Arctic landscape.²³ Laurie Garrison has investigated two Arctic panoramas hosted in 1818 and 1850. In her discussion of the first, Garrison argues along the same lines as David, supporting the view that the panorama emphasised ‘inflated tales of achievement and celebrations of courageous explorers.’²⁴ For the second she takes a different approach, analysing both the visual content of the panorama and its accompanying literature for evidence that it acted as propaganda for the Admiralty by implicitly suggesting that further searches for Franklin’s lost expedition were futile.²⁵ Her reading is not entirely convincing; Garrison asserts that the panorama depicts an abnormal level of human activity, which would seem to contradict her argument that the image was intended to insinuate that further efforts to find the expedition were worthless.²⁶ Her deconstruction of the image is instructive, however, and her methods have influenced the way the research for this thesis has been conducted.

As will be explained in the following chapter, these readings are limited in that they are based on a small number of the total panoramas that were actually shown. This thesis takes a more comprehensive view.

Other scholarly consideration of polar exhibitions is usually restricted to a single display or time span. For example, Adriana Craciun considers the reception of displays

²² Ibid., 137; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 'Objects of Ethnography' in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (London, 1991), pp. 386-443., 208.

²³ David, *The Arctic*, 149-51; Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 45.

²⁴ Laurie Garrison 'Imperial Vision in the Arctic: Fleeting Looks and Pleasurable Distractions in Barker’s Panorama and Shelley’s Frankenstein' in *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*(52) (2008). <http://goo.gl/q3B0MV>, Accessed 25th September 2013.

²⁵ Laurie Garrison 'Virtual Reality and Subjective Responses: Narrating the Search for the Franklin Expedition through Robert Burford’s Panorama' in *Early Popular Visual Culture* 10(1) (2012), pp. 7-22.

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

of Franklin relics.²⁷ Huw Lewis-Jones analyses the Arctic displays at the 1891 Royal Naval Exhibition, concluding that they were used as a vehicle for propaganda by lobbyists agitating for the resumption of polar exploration.²⁸ Max Jones and Stephanie Barczewski question how exhibitions that dealt with the events of the *Terra Nova* expedition influenced Scott's posthumous reputation.²⁹

These are useful contributions and the thesis engages with all of them. However, due to disparities in their geographical focus and the time-scale considered, they do not complement each other and cannot be said to form a cohesive body of work on polar exhibitions. In addition, most of these works deal with the nineteenth-century Arctic. Very little has been written about Heroic Age Antarctic exhibitions. In taking a longer view than any previous study, this thesis allows comparisons to be made between displays that are distant in time but linked thematically and between how the Arctic and Antarctic were represented.

If there has been little detailed investigation of exhibitions, the same is not true of other types of media that were used to disseminate information about the polar regions. Exhibitions were just one means by which the public learned about exploration; others included newspapers and periodicals, voyage accounts, lectures, literary fiction, theatrical productions, art, photography and film. Collectively, these promoted certain ideas about both the polar regions and the British men who explored there. There is a body of literature that has traced how these media were used, examining the processes by which images of polar exploration were propagated and the agents responsible for doing so.

Most of this scholarship has focused on print media. Janice Cavell provides a survey of relevant publications: formal voyage accounts, articles in newspapers and periodicals, scientific reports, the text of Royal Geographical Society lectures and government

²⁷ Adriana Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster: Authorship and Exploration* (Cambridge, 2016).

²⁸ Huw W. G. Lewis-Jones 'Heroism Displayed': Revisiting the Franklin Gallery at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1891' in *Polar Record* 41(3) (2005), pp. 185-203.

²⁹ Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2004); Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton and the Changing Face of Heroism* (London, 2007).

publications.³⁰ She argues that, between 1818 and 1859, these recorded a range of responses to exploration which, though they sometimes conflicted, ultimately succeeded in producing ‘a coherent metanarrative of Arctic exploration.’³¹ This narrative centred on the idea that polar exploration was a peculiarly British quest, indicative of the British national character.³²

The majority of studies, however, focus on a single type of publication. Various scholars have discussed formal voyage accounts. Almost all the major polar explorers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries published a popular book about their ventures. These represented the official narrative of the expedition: a narrative which was usually carefully controlled. Crewmembers were obliged to give up any diaries they had kept to discourage their publication, which might give an alternative version of events.³³ In addition, the Admiralty appointed an official publishing house, that of John Murray, who enjoyed a virtual monopoly on polar texts.³⁴

Craciun, I.S. MacLaren and, recently, Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell’s comprehensive *Travels into Print*, study voyage accounts. They show that these were often extensively edited by their publisher; ‘partly for style, partly for content, partly to guard the reputation of the author and the publishing house, and always with an eye to the market.’³⁵ An example given by MacLaren and repeated in *Travels into Print* is that of a book published by the Arctic explorer George Back in 1838. MacLaren compares the original manuscript with the finished version to show that, in the editing process, themes of hardship, adventure and danger had been emphasised.³⁶ These were the elements of the story most likely to appeal to the general public and help ensure commercial success. Craciun’s analysis of another voyage account, that describing Franklin’s 1823 expedition, supports this conclusion. She finds that the part of the

³⁰ Janice Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative: Arctic Exploration in British Print Culture, 1818-1860* (Toronto, 2008).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³² *Ibid.*, 19.

³³ Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago, 2015), 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

³⁶ I. S. MacLaren 'From Exploration to Publication: The Evolution of a 19th-Century Arctic Narrative' in *Arctic* 47(1) (1994), pp. 43-53., 47.

narrative that ensured ‘a large public audience’ was a shocking story involving cannibalism and murder.³⁷

Beau Riffenburgh and Ian Stone have studied the way polar exploration was mediated through another type of print media: the press. This was an important means of communication. Newspapers had the potential to reach audiences all over the country and some publications enjoyed a readership in the hundreds of thousands.³⁸ Stone surveys articles published in the periodical *Household Words*. He finds that these focused on heroic feats and the personal qualities of explorers.³⁹ Riffenburgh takes a broader perspective, examining a range of popular newspapers. His conclusions complement those of Stone; reporting usually dealt with the human aspects of exploration and emphasised endeavour and bravery.⁴⁰

A related body of work considers how exploration was portrayed in contemporary literature. A seminal study in the field is Francis Spufford’s *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination*.⁴¹ Spufford reviews the use of polar themes in a range of literary publications: novels, plays, poetry, reports, childrens’ literature. Jennifer Hill and Sarah Moss have built on Spufford’s analysis to include works not considered by Spufford, while other scholars have scrutinised single works or writers.⁴² While most scholarship focuses on literature inspired by Arctic exploration, Bill Manhire and Elizabeth Leane consider those influenced by Antarctica.⁴³ Together, these studies show the range of works that incorporate polar themes or use a polar setting: novels by Mary

³⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 100.

³⁸ For example, in 1854, at the height of the Franklin search, the *Illustrated London News* had a circulation of 123,000. Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 167.

³⁹ Ian R. Stone ‘Instruction and Entertainment’: Items of Polar Interest in Charles Dickens’ *Household Words* in *Polar Record* 24(150) (1988), pp. 246-248., 248.

⁴⁰ Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (Oxford, 1994), 8.

⁴¹ Spufford, *I May Be Some Time*.

⁴² Jennifer M. Hill, *White Horizon: The Arctic in the Nineteenth-Century British Imagination* (Albany, 2008); Sarah Moss, *Scott’s Last Biscuit: The Literature of Polar Exploration* (Oxford, 2005); I. S. MacLaren ‘Arctic Exploration and Milton’s ‘Frozen Continent’ in *Notes and Queries* 31(3) (1984), pp. 325-326; Beau Riffenburgh ‘Jules Verne and the Conquest of the Polar Regions’ in *Polar Record* 27(162) (1991), pp. 237-240.

⁴³ Bill Manhire, *The Wide White Page: Writers Imagine Antarctica* (Wellington, 2004); Elizabeth Leane, *Antarctica in Fiction: Imaginative Narratives of the Far South* (New York, 2012).

DEPARTURE OF THE "EREBUS" AND "TERROR" ON THE ARCTIC EXPEDITION.

A desert waste of waters lies before— Behind, the anxious hospitable shore— Which like a parent bird sees ye depart, Bold winged messengers of daring Art!

On Monday H. M. sloops Erebus and Terror left Greenhithe, on their attempt "to penetrate the icy fastnesses of the north, and to circumnavigate America."

The Erebus and Terror, it will be recollected, were fitted out for the South Polar Expedition, in 1839—1843, under the command of Captain Sir James Ross. The Terror had previously visited the Arctic regions; it being the vessel in which Captain (now Sir George) Back, in 1836, attempted, by "way of Wager River," to trace the northern boundary of the American Continent.

The vessels were put in commission at Woolwich on Tuesday, March 4. The Expedition is under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin, Knight, R.C.H., who is appointed to the Erebus (the larger vessel), with Commander James Fitzjames, Lieutenant Henry T. D. Le Vesconte; mate, Charles F. Des Vieux; second master, H. P. Collins; clerk, G. F. Pinhorn; gunner, J. G. Robinson; boatswain, J. G. Terry; carpenter, W. Weekes. Captain J. E. M. Crozier commands the Terror, with Lieutenant Edward Little, Lieutenant G. H. Hodgson; carpenter, Thomas Honey.

The fitting out of the vessels has been superintended and minutely inspected by the Lords of the Admiralty, and other persons distinguished in



CAPTAIN SIR JOHN FRANKLIN, K. C. H., COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION.

Polar expeditions. The ships are provided with the most approved Archimedean screw propellers; and in one of the trials in the Thames, the Terror made such excellent progress that she cast off her towing steamer, and proceeded down the river without any additional assistance whatever.

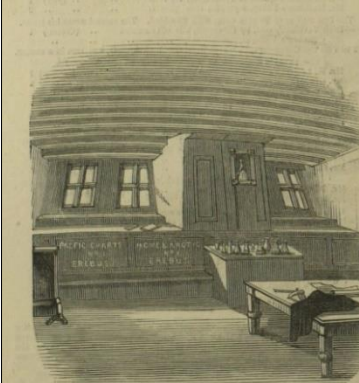
In their visit to Woolwich, the Lords of the Admiralty proceeded to the west-end of the dock yard, opposite the wharf-wall of which was stationed the Railton steam-vessel, fitted with a screw propeller. Their Lordships witnessed the manner in which the screw was shipped and unshipped by tackle and chains suspended over the starboard side of the vessel, and then proceeded on board the Erebus to witness the manner in which the screw-propeller could be taken on deck and replaced in its proper position, by letting it down through a well formed in the stern of the vessel.

The advantages of this mode of attaching and detaching the screw, are self-evident, and the principle is so simple and easy of accomplishment, that any vessel in her Majesty's navy may by its aid be fitted with a screw-propeller, objection and difficulty of shipping and unshipping it on the outside being completely obviated. Their Lordships went below and witnessed the construction of the tubular boiler and steam-forming apparatus, which occupies but a very small space in the vessel, and by the aid of a large pipe, about one foot in diameter, conveys hot water under the deck to warm the men's berths, and all parts of the vessel. The funnel of the furnace is near the side of the vessel under the rigging, and is only about nine feet high. The pipe for blowing off the steam is not three feet high above deck, and is near the centre and over the boiler. Several other ingenious contrivances have been adopted to render the whole as simple and perfect as possible. The decks of the Erebus and Terror are constructed on the diagonal principle, and about twenty feet on each side of the bows of the vessels have been cased with strong sheet iron. There is not any copper sheathing on either side of the vessels, as no danger is to be apprehended from the attacks of shell-fish or barnacles, the ice soon clearing them from incumbrances of that description.

The arrangements made for the comfort of the officers and crews are excellent. The quantity of stores taken on board is considerable, and consists of preserved provisions of various kinds, a large quantity of tea, and extra strong West Indian rum, 35 per cent. over proof. The consumption is thus provided for a prolonged expedition. Ten fine live oxen have also been shipped at the Woolwich Dockyard, on board the Barretto, Jun., hired transport-ship; she will accompany the discovery vessels to the edge of the ice, and these animals may then be killed, and their flesh preserved fresh for any length of time. Each ship has been supplied with 200 tin cylinders for the purpose of hold-



H. M. S. "EREBUS" AND "TERROR."



CAPT. SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S CABIN, IN THE "EREBUS."

ing papers which are to be thrown over board, with the statement of the longitude and other particulars worthy of record, written in six different languages, and the parties finding them are requested to forward the information to the Admiralty.

The compasses of the vessels have been adjusted by Captain Johnson, and the most perfect arrangements made for the peculiar service in which the vessels of the Arctic expedition are to be engaged.

We annex, also, a portrait of the gallant Commander of the Expedition, who has already taken a share in three Expeditions to the North. Sir John Franklin is a native of Spilsby, in Lincolnshire, and was born in 1786. At the age of fourteen, he entered the Royal Navy, as midshipman, and was on board the Polyphemus when Nelson made his daring and resolute attack on the Danish line and batteries off Copenhagen, April 2, 1801. Franklin next sailed with Captain Flinders on his Voyage of Discovery on the coast of New Holland, in which he endured shipwreck. We pass over several other of Franklin's services, but must not omit that on board the Belleisle, at the battle of Trafalgar. His first Expedition to the North was as commander of the *Zeeuic*, in company with Captain Buchan, in the *Dorothea*, in 1818; both vessels returning in the same year.

Lieutenant Franklin's next enterprise was in connection with an expedition of Lieutenant (now Sir W. E.) Parry; a journey by land, which, in point of severe and protracted suffering, has not been surpassed in the annals of discovery; he left England in May, 1820, and did not return till July, 1822. In February, 1825, he left Liverpool on a similar journey, and returned in September, 1827.

Captain Franklin was promoted to the rank of Commander in 1821, and to that of Post-Captain in 1822. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society, and has published the results of his several expeditions. He married in 1823, Miss Porden, the daughter of the architect, William Porden, Esq.; this lady unhappily died of consumption, in her 20th year, in 1825.

Our illustrations show the cabins of Captain Sir John Franklin, and Captain Fitzjames, in the Erebus. Sir John's cabin is in the stern of the vessel, and has double windows.

Among the external peculiarities of construction may be mentioned the following—Round the outside of both vessels is a protection as far as the masts, including the chains as a protection against the ice. It is flat on the surface, except at the bows, which form an angle. What is generally the figure-head is a solid block of wood; the vessel is double, and the bows are a mass of timber about eight feet thick. The stern is nearly perpendicular, for multiplying the rudders; and an ice-board is raised above the bulwarks, which projects over the side, to aid in steering clear of the ice. The screw-propeller is worked by an engine of 25 horse power, which formerly ran upon the Greenwich Railway.



CAPT. FITZJAMES'S CABIN, IN THE "EREBUS."

Figure 4. Newspaper report of the Franklin expedition leaving Britain Illustrated London News (24th May 1845) © Illustrated London News Ltd

Shelley, Charlotte Brontë, Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Verne; children's works by R.M. Ballantyne, C.S. Lewis, George Thompson, J.M. Barrie and A.A. Milne; the poetry of Samuel Coleridge, John Donne, James Thompson, John Milton and Jules Verne. There has been a particular focus on the Arctic setting of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which was published in 1818, the same year that the first Arctic expeditions of the nineteenth century left Britain.⁴⁴

These texts used the polar regions in various ways. They could signify moral purity, provide a testing ground for the endurance and masculinity of protagonists or, as they were relatively unexplored, could be used as an otherworldly location: in Manhire's words, hold 'any number of narrative surprises.'⁴⁵

Visual media was also used to portray exploration. Various writers have shown how it was used as a subject for pantomime and theatre performances. The evidence suggests that exploration was usually adopted as a subject for plays when it was a topical subject. R. Codling and Potter have both concluded that the success of the play *The Frozen Deep*, the script of which was written by Charles Dickens, depended on it being performed at a time when the British public were concerned about the missing Franklin expedition. Potter argues that its depiction of men triumphing over a hostile environment would have appealed to contemporary audiences concerned about the welfare of the lost men, while Codling shows that when the play was revived later it was not so popular.⁴⁶ The newsworthiness of polar exploration was also a factor in the performance of *The Antarctic*, performed in 1875 as the British navy launched their first polar expedition in a couple of decades, and an example, cited by Erkki Huhtamo, of an 1830s pantomime that showed William Parry completing the Northwest Passage.⁴⁷

The role of lectures in disseminating images of the polar regions has also been examined. The evidence suggests that these were a significant form of communication (Fig.5). David points out that lecture tours could range the country, reaching remote

⁴⁴ Spufford, *I May Be Some Time*, 58; Hill, *White Horizon*, 53; Garrison 'Imperial Vision' (2008); Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 95.

⁴⁵ Manhire, *The Wide White Page*, 12.

⁴⁶ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 143; R. Codling 'Polar Theatre: Two Victorian Plays' in *Polar Record* 23(142) (1986), pp. 67-68., 68.

⁴⁷ Manhire, *The Wide White Page*, 11; Erkki Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (Cambridge, 2013), 110.

audiences, and low ticket prices ensured that they were inclusive.⁴⁸ Such was their popularity that by the mid-nineteenth century a living could be made through lecturing about the Arctic regions. A study of Commander Cheyne, an individual who did just that, albeit not altogether successfully, is provided by Lewis-Jones.⁴⁹

Though he does not use a British example, Kesler Woodward argues that, by being selective about what was shown, lectures would emphasise some aspects of exploration at the expense of others.⁵⁰ David's findings support this conclusion. Comparing various examples of lectures, he suggests that their main focus was usually adventure, endurance and human endeavour.⁵¹

A number of scholars have considered polar art and photography. C. Stuart Houston's research on the creation of Arctic sketches and watercolours by explorers such as Robert Hood is paralleled by work on polar photography by Douglas Wamsley, William Barr, Lewis-Jones and David Wilson.⁵² Much of this literature has focused on the creation of polar images, providing biographical sketches of the artists or photographers, or discussing aspects of their practice. Figures such as Herbert Ponting, Edward Wilson and Frank Hurley have been particularly well studied.⁵³ Other research

⁴⁸ David, *The Arctic*, 71-72.

⁴⁹ Huw W. G. Lewis-Jones 'Balloonacy': Commander Cheyne's Flight of Fancy' in *Polar Record* 44(04) (2008), pp. 289-302.;

⁵⁰ Kesler E. Woodward 'Persuasive Images: Photographs of Vilhjalmur Stefansson in the Stefansson Collection on Polar Exploration at Dartmouth College' in Jonathan CH King and Henrietta Lidchi, *Imaging the Arctic* (Vancouver, 1998), pp. 165-172.

⁵¹ David, *The Arctic*, 77.

⁵² C. Stuart Houston 'Commentary: The Journal and Paintings of Robert Hood' in *Arctic* 27(4) (1974), pp. 251-255.; Douglas Wamsley and William Barr 'Early Photographers of the Arctic' in *Polar Record* 32(183) (1996), pp. 295-316.; Huw W. G. Lewis-Jones, *Face to Face: Polar Portraits* (Cambridge, 2008); David M. Wilson, *The Lost Photographs of Captain Scott* (London, 2011).

⁵³ Examples include Judy Skelton and David M. Wilson, *Discovery Illustrated: Pictures from Captain Scott's First Antarctic Expedition* (Cheltenham, 2001); David M. Wilson, *Edward Wilson's Antarctic Notebooks* (Cheltenham, 2011); Beau Riffenburgh and Liz Cruwys (ed.), *With Scott to the Pole: The Terra Nova Expedition, 1910-1913: The Photographs of Herbert Ponting* (London, 2004); Pat Millar 'A Person Separate: H.G. Ponting – Photographer on Scott's Last Expedition' in *The Polar Journal* 1(1) (2011), pp. 76-86.; Alasdair McGregor, *Frank Hurley: A Photographer's Life* (London, 2004); Frank Hurley and Tamiko Rex (ed.), *South with Endurance: Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition 1914-1917: The Photographs of Frank Hurley* (London, 2004); Robert Dixon and Christopher Lee, *The Diaries of Frank Hurley, 1912-1941* (London, 2011). Some of these are illustrated catalogues with accompanying scholarly essays.

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The Daily Chronicle says—Those who miss Sir Ernest Shackleton's lecture with the wonderful pictures which accompany it, will miss one of the finest things which London can give us at the present day.

The Daily Mirror says—The domestic life of men and dogs appears more like a romance than a record of a thrilling period in the lives of men. As a story it surpasses fiction, as an historical and scientific record the film is among the wonders of the world.

The Daily Express says—Shackleton held the audience spell-bound.

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Figure 5. Pamphlet advertising Ernest Shackleton's 1919 lecture Pamphlet (1919), 'Sir Ernest Shackleton will personally show..', *Sir Ernest Shackleton collection*, DC. With kind permission of the Governors of Dulwich College.

has looked at the evolution of polar photography through the lens of technological development.⁵⁴

These strands of research are not as relevant to this thesis as the role of art and photography in disseminating ideas about the polar regions. Both had a documentary purpose; they were used to record natural features and for the purpose of charting and surveying. However, they also became important in providing a pictorial representation of voyages for public consumption. Photography, in particular, became a powerful tool

⁵⁴ Richard G. Condon 'The History and Development of Arctic Photography' in *Arctic Anthropology* 26(1) (1989), pp. 46-87.; Wamsley and Barr 'Early Photographers of the Arctic' (1996).

for publicity. Lewis-Jones has shown that the medium became essential for explorers in creating and sustaining public interest in their ventures.⁵⁵ They were used to illustrate press reports, voyage accounts and lectures, as well as in exhibitions.

As well as work created in the field, the polar regions were also the subject of fine art. Particular scholarly attention has been given to two paintings: Edwin Landseer's *Man Proposes, God Disposes* (1864), and John Millais's *The North-West Passage* (1874) (Fig.6). Andrew Lambert, David and Potter have shown that the first, depicting polar bears gnawing on human bones, portrayed a terrifying and brutal Arctic where heroic efforts were futile. This was shocking to audiences as it was contrary to more traditional romantic notions of heroism, as encapsulated in the second painting.⁵⁶

During the Heroic Age another visual medium became increasingly important: cinematography. Footage from both the *Nimrod* and *Terra Nova* expeditions was screened for a public audience. Of these most scholarly work has concentrated on the latter. Herbert Ponting's film was originally released as the series *With Captain Scott, RN, to the South Pole* and then re-released under other titles.⁵⁷ Initially a great success, it attracted a total audience of 120,000 during screenings in London between January and March of 1914.⁵⁸ Analyses provided in *The History of the British Film* and in an unpublished thesis by Emily Carpenter attribute its popularity to its depiction of everyday life in the polar regions.⁵⁹ Carpenter shows that more screen time was devoted to the men, dogs and ship than to features inherent to the region, such as native wildlife.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Lewis-Jones, *Face to Face*, 36.

⁵⁶ David, *The Arctic*, 164-67.; Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 162-67; Andrew D Lambert, *The Gates of Hell: Sir John Franklin's Tragic Quest for the North West Passage* (New Haven, 2009), 311-13.

⁵⁷ 'Ponting, Herbert', *British Film Institute: Screen Online*, <http://goo.gl/7AFq5V>, Accessed 13th June 2016; Riffenburgh and Cruwys (ed.), *With Scott to the Pole*, 210.

⁵⁸ Wilson, *The Lost Photographs*, 168.

⁵⁹ Rachael Low, Roger Manvell and Jeffrey Richards, *The History of the British Film* (London, 1997), 156.; Emily Catherine Carpenter (Ph.D., 2011), '(Pre)Occupied Territories: Polar Landscapes in the Cinema', University of California.

⁶⁰ Carpenter (2011), '(Pre)Occupied Territories', 35-45.



Figure 6. Edwin Landseer's *Man Proposes, God Disposes* (1864); John Millais's *The North-West Passage* (1874).

(t) Edwin Henry Landseer [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, <https://goo.gl/59vSLT>, Accessed 18th May 2016; (b) John Millais's *The North-West Passage*; Photographic Rights ©Tate (2016) CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported) <http://goo.gl/bjMqJx>, Accessed 18th May 2016.

These studies highlight the extent to which themes of polar exploration had pervaded popular culture. Voyage accounts, press reports, literary fiction, performances, art, photography and film all helped to embed images of exploration in the public consciousness. They aided audiences in imagining the polar landscapes and the men who voyaged there. By studying how exhibitions fulfilled a similar function, my thesis contributes to this larger body of scholarship.

Other relevant works are studies that closely examine the ideas that came to define the regions in the popular imagination. A seminal work in this area is an essay by Chauncey Loomis discussing 'the Arctic sublime.' Originally a concept associated with literature and the visual arts, a sublime landscape was both vast and incomprehensible. It entailed being simultaneously thrilled and overwhelmed by surroundings amongst which the insignificance of man was made clear. Loomis shows that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, notions of the sublime informed how the Arctic was represented in literary fiction, voyage accounts and panoramas.⁶¹ He identifies two reasons why it was appropriately applied to the Arctic; first, the region displayed seemingly uncanny phenomena such as 'mock suns' and mirages, and, second, repeated failures to find the Northwest Passage made it seem yet more unfathomable.⁶²

Various writers have used Loomis's argument as a cornerstone in discussions on how the public perceived the Arctic. Wamsley and Potter have found further evidence supporting Loomis's view by identifying the influence of the sublime in other pictorial representations of the Arctic.⁶³ MacLaren has also shown how the Arctic landscape was interpreted using a different aesthetic theory: the 'picturesque.' This seems to have been restricted to the explorers themselves, however. MacLaren does not claim that it informed how the wider public viewed the region.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Chauncey C. Loomis 'The Arctic Sublime' in U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson, *Nature & The Victorian Imagination* (London, 1977), pp. 95-112.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶³ Russell A. Potter and Douglas W. Wamsley 'The Sublime Yet Awful Grandeur: The Arctic Panoramas of Elisha Kent Kane' in *Polar Record* 35(194) (1999), pp. 193-206.

⁶⁴ I. S. MacLaren 'The Aesthetic Map of the North, 1845-1859' in *Arctic* 38(2) (1985), pp. 89-103.

Loomis concludes that notions of a sublime Arctic started to erode following revelations about the end of the Franklin expedition.⁶⁵ In Loomis's words 'bleeding gums, running sores, and constricted bowels are not sublime' and the Arctic landscape lost its ethereal qualities and instead was presented as a desolate place that inspired terror.⁶⁶ Other scholars have extended this analysis by suggesting further reasons why the idea declined. Riffenburgh argues that for a landscape to be sublime it must seem mysterious and unknown. As a result of intense activity during the Franklin search, most of the region was charted and thus became 'known'.⁶⁷ Hill points out any connotations of mystery were also reduced as the public was given more opportunity to familiarise themselves with the region through books and exhibitions.⁶⁸

Several scholars have expanded on Loomis's work to investigate what replaced the sublime in the public consciousness as the dominant idea associated with polar exploration. The consensus is that afterwards the appeal of the subject lay less in the characteristics of the region itself than in the act of exploration. Polar landscapes became secondary to adventure and heroic feats. In *The myth of the explorer*, an investigation of how exploration was represented in the press, Riffenburgh argues that polar travellers were almost uniformly idolised, cast into the mould of the heroic explorer.⁶⁹ In the same vein, Michael Robinson shows that, albeit in an American context, interest shifted from an unknown and exotic polar world to the personalities of explorers and the sometimes grisly realities of Arctic travel.⁷⁰ Reports of daring and hardship became the new 'currency' of polar exploration.⁷¹

Other scholars have supported these views. Hill asserts that the tone of voyage accounts changed in response to these new ideas while Cavell argues that they influenced how

⁶⁵ Loomis 'The Arctic Sublime', 110.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁷ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, 29.

⁶⁸ Jennifer M. Hill (Ph.D., 2000), 'Unspotted Snow: Arctic Space, Gender, and Nation in the Nineteenth-Century British Imaginary', Cornell University., 47.

⁶⁹ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*.

⁷⁰ Michael F. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture* (Chicago, 2010).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

exploration was reported in periodicals where ‘the words epic and romance would take on new meaning and resonance.’⁷²

There has been additional research on the process of ‘heroization’ as it applies to polar explorers. The term was coined by Ben Maddison to refer to the process by which certain individuals are attributed heroic status.⁷³ Several scholars have discussed the factors that facilitate this: a receptive media (Riffenburgh, Felix Driver, Maddison) and fortuitous timing (Ben McInnes and Barczewski).⁷⁴ The image of the ‘heroic explorer’ formed during the nineteenth century continued to be potent during the so-called Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration.⁷⁵ Jones and Barczewski examine the heroization of Robert Falcon Scott who, due to the circumstances of his death, was particularly subject to this treatment.⁷⁶ These studies will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. Keighren also reinforces conclusions about the importance of the public persona in his study of how the explorer William Speirs Bruce was conceived of by the public in Scotland. He shows that while Bruce was not represented as a classic hero, aspects of his personality were still central to how he and his Antarctic endeavours were understood.⁷⁷

These studies suggest that the public engaged with the subject of polar exploration using certain ideas. At first the Arctic was understood in terms of a feature inherent to the region: sublime landscape. Later the dominant themes were heroism, adventure and hardship. This thesis will assess whether the evidence from exhibitions supports these conclusions.

⁷² Hill (2000), ‘Unspotted Snow’, 42; Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 166.

⁷³ Ben Maddison, *Class and Colonialism in Antarctic Exploration, 1750-1920* (London, 2014), 3.

⁷⁴ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford, 2001); Maddison, *Class and Colonialism*; Ben McInnes ‘Rethinking the Heroic Era: Lieutenant Shirase Nobu and the Kainan Maru Expedition of 1910-12’ in R.J. Crane, E. Leane and M. Williams, *Imagining Antarctica: Cultural Perspectives on the Southern Continent* (Hobart, 2011), pp. 69-79.; Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*.

⁷⁵ The ‘Heroic Age’ is a term used in Antarctic exploration literature to refer to the final years of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth: approximately 1898 to 1921. This was an intense period of Antarctic exploration and saw the accomplishment of several geographical ‘firsts’ in the region.

⁷⁶ Jones, *The Last Great Quest*; Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*.

⁷⁷ Innes M. Keighren ‘Of Poles, Pressmen, and the Newspaper Public: Reporting the Scottish National Antarctic expedition, 1902–1904’ in *Scottish Geographical Journal* 121(2) (2005), pp. 203-218.

Other works show that it was not only in Britain that polar exploration proved to be a popular subject. Johan Schimanski and Ulrike Spring look at the celebratory response of the Austrian public to the Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition of the 1870s.⁷⁸ Similarly, Espen Ytreberg examines how Amundsen's attainment of the South Pole was received in Norway, exploring how writing, film, photography and, particularly, the press helped to shape the narrative of this historic event.⁷⁹ These show that there are parallels to be drawn between the representation of polar exploration in British popular culture and in that of other countries.

The thesis also draws on other studies that, though they do not deal with the polar regions, are similar in that they examine the medium of exhibitions through the lens of a specific subject matter. In the same way that this research focuses on the representation of polar exploration, Annie Coombes has studied how exhibitions portrayed Africa while Robert Aguirre focuses on how Mexico was depicted in popular entertainments such as panoramas and commercial museums.⁸⁰ Their conclusions are similar. In both cases, exhibitions influenced the public perception of these regions and acted as propaganda justifying British intervention in the areas.⁸¹ These studies, in analysing the implicit messages inherent in displays, provide a useful methodological model for the current research.

This section has reviewed a body of research that examines the domestic influence of polar exploration. The works described have addressed the means by which ideas about exploration were broadcast, their influence on popular culture and how the subject was understood by the general public.

⁷⁸ 'Passagiere des Eises: Polarhelden und arktische Diskurse 1874' is 700 pages long and has not yet been translated into English. For this reason I have not read the original text; my understanding of its contents comes from scholarly reviews. Federhofer 'Passagiere des Eises' (2015); Jan Borm 'Passagiere des Eises: Polarhelden und arktische Diskurse 1874 [Passengers of the Ice: Polar Heroes and Arctic Discourses 1874]' in *Polar Record* 52(02) (2016), pp. 258-259.

⁷⁹ Espen Ytreberg 'The 1911 South Pole Conquest as Historical Media Event and Media Ensemble' in *Media History* 20(2) (2014), pp. 167-181.

⁸⁰ Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994); Robert D. Aguirre, *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis, 2005).

⁸¹ Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 214; Aguirre, *Informal Empire*, xvi.

The thesis contributes to this area of scholarship. While there has been some research on a limited number of polar exhibitions, no single study exists that examines them as a collective body. It is also the first time such a long time span has been considered. There are several advantages to this approach. It allows comparisons to be made both between the way exploration was portrayed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and between the reception of Arctic expeditions as opposed to those that visited the Antarctic. It will allow me to trace the evolution of displays over time. It also begins to address an important gap: the paucity of scholarly material dealing with polar exhibitions held during the Heroic Age.

1.3 Methodology

The research for the thesis has been largely exploratory and archival-based. A variety of primary sources have been used to gather information both about the exhibitions and responses to them: newspaper articles, photographs, handbills and other advertising material, catalogues, object lists, floor plans, planning documents, formal reports and correspondence. These have come from archives and museums throughout the UK as well as from digital collections, a full list of which can be found in the bibliography.

Given the timescale considered, the quantity and variety of sources available for each exhibition differ. Some displays survive only in the form of a single newspaper report while others are documented in a range of text and visual sources.

Previous scholars have tended to focus on exhibitions for which there is ample source material. This has focused attention on a few displays. In contrast, the current thesis aims to examine how extensive the display of polar exploration was, necessitating that less prominent displays also be considered. A systematic search of digitised newspapers, in which they were usually advertised, was undertaken to discover all the relevant exhibitions. This uncovered a number of displays that have never been considered in scholarly literature before.

The primary material was then scrutinised for information about the contents and appearance of each exhibition. These findings are provided in the form of a descriptive list in appendix two. The list, in which each exhibition is numbered, should be read in conjunction with the analysis given in the thesis. It also clarifies what types of sources have provided evidence for each display. It is unlikely that the appendix is comprehensive. The source material for exhibitions is ephemeral, and there may have been some for which no evidence has survived.⁸²

These sources were also used to help answer the research issues outlined earlier in the chapter. One aim was to examine which aspects of exploration were prioritised. Sometimes this was made explicit in advertising or interpretative material; at other times it was deduced by examining what objects were displayed and the prominence placed on certain artefacts. Techniques used to review modern museum displays were adopted, for example, I assessed which features of the exhibition would have been physically dominant or eye-catching. When appropriate quantitative methods were used; when, for instance, tabulating what subjects appeared most frequently in photographs.

Another objective was to analyse the impact of displays by considering, first, how successful they were and, second, how the public responded to them. There is limited evidence as to the tangible results of exhibitions, such as visitor numbers. Most of the analysis is therefore based on the impressions of visitors. Though there are some ephemeral sources that document the visitor experience, including diary entries and correspondence, the vast majority appear in newspaper reviews. This only provides a partial view; newspaper articles only record the opinion of one individual, usually an educated middle-class male. They can, however, be seen as both reflecting and influencing the views of wider society.

Each exhibition was also deconstructed using a model proposed by Brian Ferguson. Ferguson's method is to ask 'Who speaks TO and FOR WHOM and UNDER WHAT

⁸² Potter provides a similar list in an appendix to *Arctic Spectacles* but warns that it reflects a 'low estimate' of the total number of exhibitions that were actually shown. Indeed, I have uncovered a number of displays that are not included. I would apply the same disclaimer to my appendix. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 228.

CONDITIONS as well as WHERE and WHEN.’⁸³ Analysing displays this way can be an insightful means of assessing the purpose, intended audience, impact and the opportunities afforded by each exhibition. For example, asking who the exhibition organiser was and the conditions they were working under can help to distinguish between the motives of a nineteenth-century panorama proprietor and a twentieth-century curator.

Most sources are text rather than image based. Incongruously for a visual medium like exhibitions, there is limited imagery available. Exceptions include illustrations on handbills, in guidebooks and press reports, and some photographs. These will be used whenever possible.

A chronological rather than thematic approach has been taken. This is most appropriate given the length of the timescale under consideration. Transformations in both the culture of exploration and the museum sector meant that exhibitions of the 1830s were held in very different circumstances to those in the 1870s or 1910s. Exhibitions should, therefore, be considered within their specific temporal context.

1.4 The museological context

One of the aims of the thesis is to examine polar exhibitions in terms of their museological background. One of the questions asked is where these exhibitions were placed in relation to two distinct ‘cultural arenas’: shows and entertainments, and the formal museum sector.⁸⁴ It is, therefore, necessary to have an understanding of what is meant by these ‘arenas’. The following section reviews their defining features.

⁸³ Brian Ferguson 'Exhibition Rhetorics: Material Speech and Utter Sense' in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London, 1996), pp. 175-190., 183.

⁸⁴ Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 3.

The beginnings and early growth of the museum sector, from private collections and ‘cabinets of curiosities’ to public institutions, is well studied.⁸⁵ For the purposes of the thesis, this history is not as relevant as an understanding of how the sector developed later on. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were an age of fast-paced museum development: more museums were created, they became increasingly accessible and practices changed as the field became more professionalised. Polar exhibitions must be considered in this context.

In 1819, the museum sector was comprised of national institutions in London and Edinburgh and a number of smaller local museums. The following decades saw the creation of so-called ‘museums of influence’, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as a marked increase in the number of municipal museums.⁸⁶ The growth of the sector was partly due to government legislation. A parliamentary act passed in 1845 encouraged the creation of more public museums by giving local councils the power to levy rates for this purpose, legislation that was subsequently revised and strengthened.⁸⁷

As they grew in number, museums also became more inclusive. Early museums have been described as an ‘elite specialist resource’; however, their accessibility increased as the nineteenth century progressed.⁸⁸ This was partly down to the rational recreation movement, which urged the public to spend their leisure time in a way that entailed ‘self-improvement.’⁸⁹ This included visiting museums, and was encouraged by the introduction, in some institutions, of free entry and extended opening hours.⁹⁰ One advocate of these developments was Henry Cole, first director of the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum), who declared that museums could

⁸⁵ Examples include Alexander, *Museums in Motion*; Simon Tait, *Palaces of Discovery: The Changing World of Britain’s Museums* (London, 1989); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London, 1992).

⁸⁶ The number of museums more than doubled between 1860 and 1887, and then again between 1887 and 1928. Christine Garwood, *Museums in Britain: A History* (2014), Kindle edition, <http://goo.gl/5Upwjs>, 40%; Kenneth Hudson, *Museums of Influence* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁸⁷ ‘The Origin of the Free Libraries and Museums Act’ in *The Library* 1(1) (1889), pp. 341-345.

⁸⁸ Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914* (Burlington, 2005), 38.

⁸⁹ Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880* (London, 1980), 90-91.

⁹⁰ Hill, *Culture and Class*, 40; Aileen Fyfe and Bernard V. Lightman ‘Science in the Marketplace: An Introduction’ in Aileen Fyfe and Bernard V. Lightman, *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 1-22., 6-7.

provide a ‘powerful antidote to the gin palace.’⁹¹ Wider societal changes, such as increases in disposable wealth and leisure time as well as improvements in the railway network also facilitated museum visiting.⁹² Some scholars have also cited the 1851 Great Exhibition as effecting a cultural shift that promoted museums as establishments for the masses.⁹³

Even if their accessibility improved, however, it is likely that museum audiences remained largely middle and upper class; universal access was prohibited by funding and staff shortages, and problems with lighting preventing evening opening when the working classes would be most likely to be able to visit.⁹⁴ Kate Hill has concluded that museums continued to be a ‘middle-class space, where middle-class norms of behaviour were protected and, if possible, enforced; middle-class values shaped and strengthened; and middle-class hierarchies displayed.’⁹⁵

The purpose of museums during this time was felt to be to educate and improve their audiences. In 1842 Edward Edwards, a proponent of art museums, argued that their function was ‘cultivating and refining the public taste’; similarly, a few years later, the 1845 Museums Act was passed with the hope of promoting ‘a popular taste for art.’⁹⁶ In the 1890s, the ‘New Museum Idea’ championed by Henry Flowers, director of the Natural History Museum, reinforced the view that museums should be geared towards public education.⁹⁷ Interpretative techniques, such as labelling, orientation and the provision of guidebooks, should be aimed at enhancing the educational potential of

⁹¹ Henry Cole ‘Extract from an Introductory Address on the Functions of the Science and Art Department’ in Jonah Siegel, *The Emergence of the Modern Museum: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Sources* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 245-46., 246.

⁹² Pamela Pilbeam, *Madame Tussaud: And the History of Waxworks* (London, 2006), 164.; John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), 101.

⁹³ Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums: What the Visitors Thought* (London, 1975), 41. Pilbeam, *Madame Tussaud*, 153.

⁹⁴ Hudson, *A Social History of Museums*, 10; *ibid.*, 69-70.

⁹⁵ Hill, *Culture and Class*, 48.

⁹⁶ Edward Edwards, *The Administrative Economy of the Fine Arts in England* (London, 1840), 17; ‘The Origin of the Free Libraries and Museums Act’ (1889), 341.

⁹⁷ Garwood, *Museums in Britain*, 43%.

displays for non-expert audiences.⁹⁸ As Cole declared, the ideal museum would ‘be like a book with its pages always open.’⁹⁹

The focus on education meant that museums were concerned with classification and order; scientific teaching required that specimens be presented in a way that allowed for comparison.¹⁰⁰ Because of this, displays were usually arranged taxonomically.

This period also saw the sector become increasingly professionalised. Skilled posts, such as taxidermists and subject specialists, were created.¹⁰¹ The post of curator became salaried.¹⁰² In 1889, the Museums Association, a sector-wide professional body, was established.¹⁰³ These changes were not universal; as late as 1914 only 14% of museums employed a full-time professional curator.¹⁰⁴

At the other end of the scale from museums were shows associated with the entertainment business. In his comprehensive *The shows of London*, Richard Altick surveys different genres of show, including commercial museums; panoramas and dioramas; human displays; the display of animals; waxworks and pleasure gardens.¹⁰⁵ He shows that nineteenth-century audiences in London had access to a number of ‘strange sights’ ranging from bearded ladies, mammoth skeletons, rhinoceros, lions and mermaids to Chinese pagodas, acrobats, fireworks, theatrical reproductions of the Battle of Waterloo, automatons, bouquets of flowers made from fish bones and a ‘scientific goose.’¹⁰⁶ Unlike museums, shows had a commercial purpose and so they always charged an entry fee. They were usually temporary rather than permanent; their organisers were ‘proprietors’ rather than curators. As a general rule, shows focused on entertainment more than they focused on education, and so they valued the spectacular

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation: A Centenary History of the Museums Association* (London, 1989), 5; Samuel J.M.M. Alberti 'The Museum Affect: Visiting Collections of Anatomy and Natural History' in Aileen Fyfe and Bernard V. Lightman, *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 371-403, 381.

⁹⁹ Cole 'Extract from an Introductory Address', 246.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, *Culture and Class*, 72-74.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰³ Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation*, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Alexander Miers, *A Report on the Public Museums of the British Isles (Other than the National Museums)* (Edinburgh, 1928), 19-20.

¹⁰⁵ Altick, *The Shows of London*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

and sensational over representing what was true. The evidence suggests that shows were an inclusive form of leisure activity. Altick notes that they attracted visitors from all classes of society: ‘no English trait was more widespread through the entire social structure than the relish for exhibitions.’¹⁰⁷

Usually, scholars consider the museum sector and the entertainment industry to have been opposed to each other. As we have seen, Coombes described them as different ‘cultural arenas.’¹⁰⁸ Altick distinguishes between exhibitions, ‘frank money-making exercises with no thought of the public weal’, and museums ‘established and maintained by public funds for the benefit of all’, while David Goodman argues that the ‘austere presentation’ style employed in museums amounted to a conscious rejection of the theatrical techniques used in shows.¹⁰⁹

There were, however, a number of exhibition types that fell between these extremes. Public art exhibitions aimed to facilitate access to art while also making a profit.¹¹⁰ Commercial museums, such as Bullock’s Egyptian Hall, also arguably bridged the gap between museums and ‘spectacles.’¹¹¹

Another exhibition type that combined the entertainment provided by shows with the educative purpose of museums were Great Exhibitions. Great Exhibitions were large-scale displays held in custom-built venues comprising multiple buildings and outdoor spaces. They routinely attracted audiences in the millions, and hundreds were held worldwide; Paul Greenhalgh argues that they were ‘amongst the most important events held in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.’¹¹²

The first of these hosted in Britain, and indeed worldwide, was the 1851 Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. They continued to be held up until the eve of the Second World War. While at first their primary purpose was to promote manufacture and trade, later British exhibitions were usually imperialistic in tone and celebrated the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁸ Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Altick, *The Shows of London*, 4; David Goodman 'Fear of Circuses: Founding the National Museum of Australia' in David Boswell and Jessica Evans, *Representing the Nation: a Reader: Histories, Heritage and Museums* (London, 1999), pp. 255-272., 269.

¹¹⁰ Trevor Fawcett, *The Rise of English Provincial Art: Artists, Patrons, and Institutions outside London, 1800-1830* (Oxford, 1974), 3-4.

¹¹¹ Hill, *Culture and Class*, 38.

¹¹² Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 1-2; MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 101.

British Empire.¹¹³ Exhibitions included both educational displays and features such as theatres, bands and gardens.¹¹⁴ One historian has described them as ‘enormous funfairs, coupled with... museums of science, industry, and natural history.’¹¹⁵

This, then, was the background against which the polar exhibitions described in the thesis were held. The section began by describing the entertainment sector and museum sector as different ‘arenas’. In fact, it is more helpful to think of them as the extreme ends of a single spectrum. Both were visual mediums that used objects to convey information. Where they differed was in their purpose and their style of presentation. The following chapters will investigate where polar exhibitions sat on this spectrum at various points during the period under discussion.

1.5 Structure

The remainder of the thesis will take the form of four content chapters and a conclusion. Each chapter contains an element of literature review and a discussion of the relevant source material, including problems and limitations. The historical background will also be dealt with on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

The next chapter will examine the period between 1819 and the 1840s. During this time, British explorers focused on solving a centuries-old problem in their pursuit to find a ‘Northwest Passage’, a sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. These efforts were portrayed in a number of exhibitions, for the most part panoramas and displays of Inuit peoples. It will be argued that, though largely allied to the entertainment industry, they were partly aligned with museums in that their proprietors were concerned that they were seen to be representing the truth. The contents of these displays will also be

¹¹³ MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 118; Marta Filipová 'The Margins of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies' in Marta Filipová, *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840 - 1940* (Surrey, 2015), pp. 1-20., 2.

¹¹⁴ Paul Greenhalgh 'Education, Entertainment and Politics: Lessons from the Great International Exhibitions' in Peter Vergo, *The New Museology* (London, 1989), pp. 74-98., 84-85.

¹¹⁵ MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 97.

analysed to show that, though their main themes were dramatic scenery and the lives of native peoples, depictions of the explorers themselves became increasingly important.

The following chapter will examine displays hosted during the aftermath of the Franklin expedition. These featured the material remains of the expedition, collected by explorers who searched for the lost crews in the decades after their disappearance. It analyses how these 'relics' were interpreted, arguing that they acted as a catalyst for a new focus on human experience and endeavour. Closer connections between polar exhibitions and museums were also fostered through these displays.

The human side of exploration continued to dominate exhibitions throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and into the Heroic Age. Chapter four looks at how this was exacerbated by a changed model of exploration necessitating that explorers use exhibitions as a tool for publicity. As the purpose of exhibitions changed, so too did their format. The convergence between polar exhibitions and museum displays was reflected in the adoption of more museum practices and in the use of objects rather than images.

The final content chapter presents the logical culmination of this trend: the establishment of the first dedicated polar museums. It compares the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory and the Scott Polar Research Institute, both of which hosted exhibitions in which themes of polar exploration were shown on a permanent basis for the first time. It also includes an in-depth analysis of the 1930 Polar Exhibition. It is suggested that both the contents of the exhibition and the response to it reflected wider changes in exploration culture.

The conclusion will summarise these findings and briefly describe the circumstances under which themes of exploration are exhibited today, showing how the issues raised in this thesis have contemporary resonance.

Chapter 2: Exhibiting the Arctic from 1819 to the Franklin era

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how exhibitions dealt with the subject of polar exploration between 1819 and 1854. The types of exhibition that displayed these themes were diverse; nevertheless, they shared some common characteristics. Polar exhibitions were almost always temporary. They were hosted for profit-making purposes as their proprietors capitalised on public interest in the Arctic linked to the ongoing exploration of the region. They provided opportunities for audiences to learn about the land, its native inhabitants and the experiences of the explorers who went there.

The following sections will expand upon these ideas. The first discusses previous scholarship, the source material and its limitations. The second section gives the relevant historical background and describes the formats of the main types of exhibition: panoramas, human displays of indigenous Arctic peoples, and other miscellaneous exhibitions hosted in pleasure gardens and at Wyld's Great Globe. Thirdly, the topicality of polar exhibitions will be looked at; the fourth and fifth sections will show that accuracy was deemed more important than artistic merit, and argue that, like modern museums, panoramas and other exhibitions provided educational opportunities. The fifth section examines the subject content of exhibitions. Initially, Arctic landscapes, natural phenomena and the indigenous population were the central themes; towards the end of the period ideas of adventure and everyday life also became important. Finally, the impact of exhibitions will be examined by studying how accessible they were to the general population.

There are several reasons for choosing the period between 1819 and 1854 as the timescale for the chapter. It is bookended at both ends by significant events: at one, the resumption of British Arctic exploration in 1818; at the other, the discovery of the first Franklin 'relics'. The methods by which the Arctic was exhibited during this time is distinct. After 1854 both the format and themes of exhibitions changed. So too did the

way that the public thought about the Arctic, impacting how, where and why polar exploration was exhibited later in the century.

2.2 Contribution and sources

As outlined in the introduction, there has been relatively little scholarly analysis of Arctic exhibitions. The majority of what has been written, however, is relevant to this chapter in that it deals with exhibitions shown during the period under consideration, in particular displays of Inuit people and panoramas.

Much of what has been published on human displays has concentrated on the ethics and accuracy of the exhibitions, or experience of the individuals themselves. Though the following analysis draws on some of these ideas, it has a different overall focus. It seeks to examine, first, the way in which the Inuit were portrayed, and, second, the implications of this for how the British experience of the Arctic was represented.

As outlined in the introduction, Arctic-themed panoramas have been discussed by David, Potter and Garrison. David concludes that they centred on depictions of ‘British heroics’ and that the Inuit were deliberately under-represented in order to emphasise the bravery of the explorer venturing into a seemingly unpeopled land.¹¹⁶ In contrast, Potter argues that, up to 1850, portrayals of the landscape were more important than depictions of people.¹¹⁷ Garrison considers the possible use of panoramas as a vehicle for Admiralty propaganda.¹¹⁸

These analyses are limited in that they are almost entirely based on the Leicester Square panoramas.¹¹⁹ These exhibitions are the best documented and the only ones for which

¹¹⁶ David, *The Arctic*, 149-51.

¹¹⁷ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 45.

¹¹⁸ Garrison 'Imperial Vision' (2008); Garrison 'Virtual Reality and Subjective Responses' (2012).

¹¹⁹ David mentions some other exhibitions: Marshall's first Arctic production, panoramas held in the 1850s by Hamilton and Gompertz. He does not, however, analyse these in any depth. Potter briefly refers to Gompertz's panorama and a few others, including the 1834 display in Vauxhall Gardens. He also devotes a couple of pages to discussing Laidlaw's production. Altick

there are substantial visual sources, including pictorial keys published in the guidebooks. For the most part they fail to take account of the depictions offered in the more numerous moving panoramas. This is problematic and can lead to some erroneous conclusions. For example, while David is aware of other productions, he confines most of his analysis to the Leicester Square panoramas and another shown at Vauxhall Gardens in 1834.¹²⁰ His argument about the invisibility of indigenous people therefore does not take account of panoramas where the Inuit were featured prominently, such as that of the Marshalls in the 1820s and most exhibitions of the 1830s.

The analysis offered here will differ in considering a wider range of exhibitions. Image-based sources, such as illustrations in guidebooks, handbills and the illustrated press, will be used when possible. For the Leicester Square panoramas, annotated keys give a thumbnail impression of what the paintings looked like (Exh.1, 8, 20, Fig.7). For most exhibitions, however, no such evidence exists. Consequently, this study will rely more

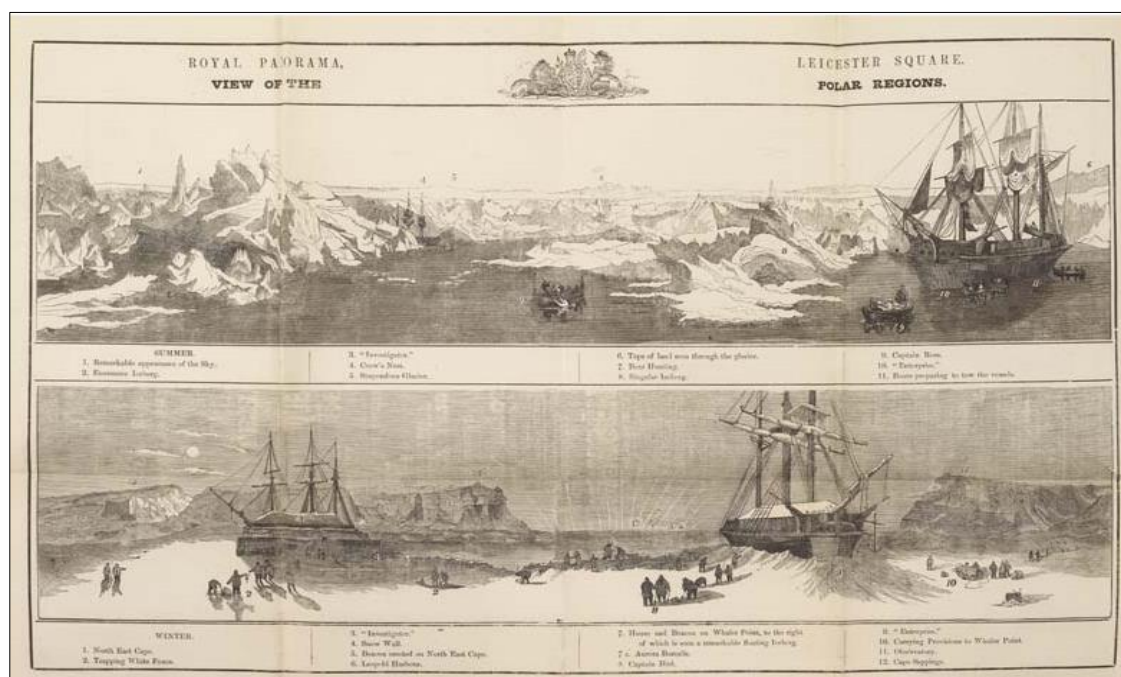


Figure 7. Annotated key for the 1850 panorama at Leicester Square. Exhibition catalogue (1850), 'Description of Summer and Winter Views of the Polar Regions: As Seen During the Expedition of Capt. James Clark Ross, in 1848-9, Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square', 10349.t.15.(4.) *General Reference Collection*, BL.

only mentions 'rival panoramas' without giving any details of these, and Garrison does not acknowledge other productions at all.

¹²⁰ David, *The Arctic*, 148-58.

heavily on text-based sources such as newspaper adverts, articles, handbills and guidebooks. These will be used to reconstruct and assess the content of exhibitions. These types of source material pose several issues and limitations. First, most exhibitions toured around different towns and cities and were advertised in the local press. Without conducting an exhaustive survey of all the adverts published in British newspapers it is impossible to make a comprehensive list of all an exhibition's appearances.

Secondly, it is often difficult to distinguish one exhibition from another, particularly in the case of panoramas. At times, it is possible that I have mistakenly treated the same panorama as two separate productions. This confusion is down to, first, ambiguity in the way panoramas were advertised and, second, strong similarities between different exhibitions. Panoramas were rarely advertised consistently; they did not have a title and were not always identified by the name of their proprietor. In addition, they tended to contain similar images. Consequently, even when detailed descriptions of a panorama's contents are available, this is not necessarily helpful. Moving panoramas usually combined polar scenes with others that depicted a non-polar subject; however, as proprietors often chose the same range of topics this does not always help to differentiate between different shows. In the 1830s, for example, two separate productions both featured the same sequence of scenes: John Ross's Arctic expedition, the burning of the Houses of Parliament, the siege of Antwerp, the sea-battle at Navarino and the burning of the ship *Kent* (Exh.13, 14).¹²¹

Lastly, there is a danger of placing undue importance on some exhibitions that are better-documented than others. While some are only known through a single newspaper advert or review, others received extensive press coverage and sometimes also survive in the form of a guidebook. As described above, the Leicester Square panoramas have received the most scholarly attention, though it is likely that other panoramas, which toured extensively and reached wider audiences, were in fact more influential.

¹²¹ *The Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier* (10th March 1835); *Dublin Morning Register* (4th June 1835).

2.3 Expeditions: exhibitions

British Arctic exploration had begun in the sixteenth century and continued intermittently since that time. Efforts focused on Greenland and what is now the Canadian Arctic, with occasional voyages to Svalbard. A major focus of this exploration was the search for a ‘Northwest Passage’: a sea-route through the continent of North America that merchant shipping could use to reach the markets of Asia. There were various agencies involved in the search, including consortiums of merchants and private companies such as the Hudson Bay Company. A number of naval voyages, including an expedition led by James Cook in the 1770s and a series of surveys completed by George Vancouver in the 1790s, had also looked for evidence of a passage.¹²²

By the nineteenth century polar exploration was largely the purview of the Royal Navy. In 1818 two naval expeditions were sent to make a dual attempt to complete the Northwest Passage and reach the North Pole. Though neither succeeded, these voyages marked the beginning of a distinct era of exploration characterised by its intensity and duration. Between 1819 and 1845 there were a further nine naval expeditions to the Arctic, as well as one to Antarctica. Explorers associated with this period include John Ross, William Parry, James Clark Ross and John Franklin. While most expeditions were ship-based, three travelled overland. Though the primary goal was still the discovery of a Northwest Passage, by the nineteenth century this seems to have been driven by different motivations than finding a practicable commercial route: national pride; the pursuit of science, particularly magnetism, and the charting of an unknown region.¹²³

Though the navy dominated Arctic exploration, their efforts were complemented by some private ventures. John Ross led a privately-organised expedition on board the *Victory* between 1829 and 1833. The Hudson Bay Company also carried out overland

¹²² A good summary of the search for the Northwest Passage from the earliest voyages onwards is provided in Glyn Williams, *Arctic Labyrinth: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (London, 2010).

¹²³ Lambert has gone so far as to argue that geomagnetic work was the real aim of most naval Arctic expeditions, misrepresented as searches for the Northwest Passage. Lambert, *The Gates of Hell*, 167.

exploration and charting work during this period, most notably by John Rae, who led multiple expeditions on behalf of the company between 1846 and 1854.

In 1845 John Franklin commanded another Arctic naval venture which famously disappeared, seemingly without trace, until the first evidence as to its fate was recovered the following decade. This event will be described more fully in the following chapter; suffice to say that it resulted in the most intense period of exploration so far, as a succession of search expeditions travelled to the Arctic to look for the missing men.

Though Britain claimed sovereignty over parts of what is now known as the Canadian Arctic, these were not treated as a colony in the conventional sense.¹²⁴ There were no serious attempts at colonisation, commercial exploitation or military conquest.

In contrast with the Arctic, little attention was paid to Antarctica. The continent itself was first seen in 1820 by a Russian expedition, while later that year the peninsula region was sighted by British merchant captain Edward Bransfield. British seal hunters operated in the Antarctic and Subantarctic and some of these, such as James Weddell and John Biscoe, made discoveries during their search for new sealing grounds.¹²⁵ There was, however, little interest in the region. In 1828 an expedition aboard the *HMS Chanticleer* landed on the Antarctic Peninsula and carried out some scientific work on the South Shetland Islands. The only other naval expedition during this period was led by James Clark Ross between 1839 and 1843.

Official disinterest in the Antarctic was reflected in popular culture, which also largely ignored the region in favour of the Arctic. There was a muted response to Antarctic efforts, demonstrated by the fact that the publisher John Murray only printed 1500 copies of Ross's voyage account in the face of public indifference.¹²⁶

This disparity may be explained by the intensity of British activity in the north as compared to the south.¹²⁷ Another possibility lies in the longer history of Arctic exploration. By the nineteenth century there had been intermittent links between Britain

¹²⁴ Gordon W. Smith 'The Transfer of Arctic Territories from Great Britain to Canada in 1880, and Some Related Matters, as Seen in Official Correspondence' in *Arctic* 14(1) (1961), pp. 53-73.

¹²⁵ David Day, *Antarctica: A Biography* (Oxford, 2013), 52.

¹²⁶ Maurice James Ross, *Polar Pioneers: John Ross and James Clark Ross* (Montreal, 1994), 250.

¹²⁷ Loomis 'The Arctic Sublime', 98.

and the Arctic for centuries. The British public may have felt more of an affinity with it than with the newly discovered Antarctica, a connection reinforced by the fact that it was closer. Arctic exploration also had commercial applications, such as opening up new whaling and hunting grounds, that may have been lacking in the south.¹²⁸

Consequently, it was the Arctic rather than the Antarctic that, for the most part, featured in the exhibitions of this period. The following will briefly describe the main display types.

The most ubiquitous kind of polar exhibition was the panorama. These came in two distinct forms: static and moving (the latter also known as ‘dioramas’ and ‘peristrepic panoramas’). The static form was a large-scale painting, sometimes circular and giving a 360° view of a single scene. The intention was that visitors would feel immersed in the action. The more common moving panoramas consisted of a series of images painted on canvas which were presented to an audience seated or standing in front of the display. Unlike static panoramas, which could only capture a single moment in time, this allowed the story of an expedition to be presented in a chronological sequence.

There were other differences between static and moving panoramas. Static paintings could be explored at leisure, while visitors to moving panoramas would see a scene presented for a short time before it was replaced by another.¹²⁹ Static panoramas could be visited at any time; moving panoramas had set show times, usually three or four per day. Moving panoramas employed machinery and lights, and were usually accompanied by a narration and music. The type of music played was diverse; one proprietor employed a ‘full military band’, another ‘a capital saxhorn band’ and a third played on the ‘musical glasses’ (Exh. 9, 24, 34).¹³⁰ Later on it became common to have vocalists as well. Sometimes songs were commissioned especially for the production.

In addition, while static panorama paintings dealt with a single subject, moving panoramas were usually comprised of a variety of topics. Scenes depicting the Arctic

¹²⁸ Timothy H. Baughman, *Before the Heroes Came: Antarctica in the 1890s* (Lincoln, 1994), 9; *The Spectator* (14th October 1905).

¹²⁹ There is some evidence to suggest that one scene was shown for between four and five minutes. Gompertz advertised that his twenty-five scene show started at 8pm with carriages ordered for 10pm. *Hampshire Advertiser* (15th November 1851).

¹³⁰ *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (3rd July 1823); *Hampshire Chronicle* (3rd January 1852); *Leamington Spa Courier* (11th June 1853).

were shown alongside subjects as varied as the Niagara Falls, Jerusalem, the battle of Bannockburn and the burning of the Houses of Parliament.¹³¹

Between 1819 and 1854 there were at least thirty panoramas that incorporated Arctic themes. Most of these were moving panoramas. Despite their differences, in terms of the argument presented in the thesis it is not necessary to differentiate between the moving and static forms and so for the purposes of the following discussion they will all be referred to as panoramas. This follows the practice of the time, where the term panorama was used indiscriminately to refer to both types of display. This is clear from newspaper reviews, as well as a note in Burford's 1850 guidebook in which he reminds readers that his is the 'original panorama' though 'other exhibitions, consisting merely of moving pictures, make use of the term.'¹³²

Another popular type of exhibition was the human display of Arctic peoples. By the nineteenth century there had already been several instances where Inuit individuals had been exhibited. This included a 1501 display in Bristol which was possibly the first ever example of an indigenous people being shown in Britain.¹³³ A man from Baffin Island named Kalicho was exhibited later in the fourteenth century and a group of Labrador Inuit in the eighteenth.¹³⁴

In the period between 1818 and 1854 there were three formal exhibitions that fall into this category. The first, in 1822, consisted of a family from Baffin Island who had been brought to Britain by the whaling captain Samuel Hadlock. Two children died soon after their arrival; the remaining couple Nianungitok and Coonahnik (also known as George and Marie) were toured around venues in Britain and Ireland. When Coonahnik died she was replaced by a British 'gypsy' woman (Exh.3).¹³⁵ Between 1847 and 1848

¹³¹ *Aberdeen Journal* (15th March 1833); *The Scotsman* (17th May 1834); *Dublin Morning Register* (4th June 1835); *The Yorkshire Gazette* (22nd October 1853).

¹³² Exhibition catalogue (1850), 'Description of Summer and Winter Views of the Polar Regions: As Seen During the Expedition of Capt. James Clark Ross, in 1848-9, Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square', 10349.t.15.(4.) *General Reference Collection*, BL, 10.

¹³³ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 'Objects of Ethnography', 402.

¹³⁴ William C. Sturtevant & David B. Quinn 'This New Prey: Eskimos in Europe in 1567, 1576, and 1577' in Christian F Feest, *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1989), pp. 61-140., 80; Stopp and Mitchell "'Our Amazing Visitors"' (2010).

¹³⁵ Hadlock described her as being of 'the same kuller and the same fetchers.' Wright 'The Traveling Exhibition', 219. Some reports suggest that this woman continued to be displayed in

Inuit couple Memiadluk and Uckaluk, also from Baffin Island and brought to Britain by the whaler Captain Parker, were displayed in various towns in the north of England (Exh.17). Lastly, in 1854, a group of three Inuit individuals, a teenage couple named Ebierbing and Tookoolito, and a seven-year old boy named Harlukjoe, were exhibited by Hull trader Mr Bowlby (Exh.36, Fig.8).



Figure 8. Illustration of 1854 exhibition of Inuit family. *Illustrated London News* (18th February 1854). © Illustrated London News Ltd

These exhibitions had a largely similar format. In all three cases, the Inuit were brought to Britain by whaling captains, who subsequently arranged their exhibit. They toured around small towns, with adverts in the local press announcing their arrival. Visitors

Paris alongside the corpse of her 'husband' after his death. *Windsor and Eton Express* (21st January 1826).

paid an entry fee to see the Inuit and hear a lecture on various aspects of their life and culture. In addition, each exhibition included a selection of ‘curiosities’: items such as tools and utensils made of bone and ivory, fur and skin clothing, dogs, sledges and kayaks.¹³⁶

Other Inuit natives were displayed on a less formal basis. In 1816 the Greenlander John Saccheuse entertained crowds in Edinburgh by showing off his kayaking and shooting skills.¹³⁷ He was followed in 1841 by a Baffin Islander named Eenooloopik who gave a similar demonstration in Aberdeen.¹³⁸ In addition to the Inuit, a group of Sami people from Arctic Norway were shown in 1822.¹³⁹

It is also likely that Inuit, or at least actors pretending to be Inuit, were exhibited at fairs. Though little is known about these displays, evidence for their existence comes from several sources. A newspaper advert for the shoe polish ‘Warrens Jet Blacking’ used the motif of an Inuit couple being shown at a country fair.¹⁴⁰ This suggests that such displays would be familiar to the advert’s target audience. Other newspaper articles suggest that ‘fake Inuit’ were a regular feature of fairs. At an 1826 court case concerning two children employed to pose as ‘Esquimaux’ at a fair in Plymouth, the defendant protested that this practice was ‘by no means uncommon with “show folk”’.¹⁴¹ In the mid-1850s, at another fair in Manchester, one visitor wrote of seeing ‘Esquimaux’ with ‘very English looking faces.’¹⁴² These may not have been serious attempts at deception, but rather based on an understanding that the audiences of these shows were willing to suspend belief.¹⁴³

¹³⁶ These curiosities could be interesting because of their association with a known Inuit individual. After John Saccheuse’s death his kayak was incorporated into Marshalls’ ‘display of curiosities’ that accompanied their 1820s panorama. *Dublin Evening Post* (11th November 1820).

¹³⁷ *Caledonian Mercury* (7th September 1816).

¹³⁸ *Aberdeen Journal* (13th November 1839).

¹³⁹ William Bullock, *An Account of the Family of Laplanders* (London, 1822), London Play Places 10 (2) *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

¹⁴⁰ With the assumption that they have no prior knowledge of either, they are asked to choose whether ‘Nature or Art’ is superior. ‘Art’ wins when they choose two boots that are so shiny that they can see their reflection. *Aberdeen Journal* (12th October 1825).

¹⁴¹ *Chester Courant* (28th November 1826).

¹⁴² *The Guardian* (19th April 1854).

¹⁴³ An ‘Esquimaux’ may have been a stock character. This is suggested by a description of a drama shown at the Brighton Theatre in 1825. The play reportedly featured two Esquimaux recruited to ‘perform a number of diverting tricks, sing a duet in their native language, and

In addition to panoramas and human displays, other types of temporary exhibition also included polar themes. These include shows held in pleasure gardens, outdoor summer venues that held a variety of entertainments. An 1834 display in Vauxhall Gardens used paintings, machinery, actors and fireworks to depict Ross's *Victory* expedition (Exh.10).¹⁴⁴ A second exhibition was held at Vauxhall Gardens in the 1850s, while this decade also saw pleasure gardens in London and Glasgow hosting Arctic panoramas (Exh.26, 29, 30).¹⁴⁵ Other exhibitions included a 'model of the North Pole, shewing Captain Parry's attempt to explore a North-West Passage', 'stalactite caves' (presumably a walk-in model) onto which was painted a view showing a ship beset in the Arctic ice, shown at the Royal Grecian in London in 1852; and sketches drawn during an expedition in search of Franklin, displayed at the Messrs Dickinson's publishing house in 1854 (Exh.4, 27, 35).¹⁴⁶

Wyld's Great Globe, an institution established in Leicester Square in 1851, also dealt with Arctic subjects. The building had the contours of the globe painted onto its interior walls. During the period of the Franklin search the expedition's probable route was marked on the Arctic section. The globe also hosted daily lectures on Arctic exploration and, later, on the Franklin relics, and a temporary exhibition 'Tents of the Tuski' showed material obtained from Alaskan peoples by one of the search expeditions (Exh.22).¹⁴⁷

If the period between 1819 and 1854 was relatively intense in terms of British Arctic exploration, at the same time there were frequent opportunities for domestic audiences to learn about the polar regions, and the exploits of their countrymen there, through a variety of temporary exhibitions. The next section shows that topicality was a prerequisite to the subject being chosen for display.

dance a national Pas de deux', with the performance culminating in a 'large white Polar bear... swallowing a live child, positively for that night only.' *Brighton Gazette* (10th November 1825).

¹⁴⁴ Handbill (1834), 'Songs, Duets, Trios, Glees, and Choruses as Sung in the Concert, of the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall', London Play Places 8 (46) *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

¹⁴⁵ *The Theatrical Journal* (5th June 1852); *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (27th June 1852); *Glasgow Herald* (4th October 1852).

¹⁴⁶ *Morning Chronicle* (22nd April 1824); *The Era* (30th May 1852); *Morning Post* (7th November 1853).

¹⁴⁷ *The Examiner* (10th April 1852); Press cutting (1852), Dioramas 4 21d *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian; Press cutting (1854), Dioramas 4 25e *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian; Press cutting (1854), Dioramas 4 25h *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

2.4 'A popular subject for some time past': the newsworthiness of exploration

This section investigates why the polar regions were exhibited. It shows that, as ongoing exploration ensured that the Arctic remained newsworthy, it had appeal as a topical subject. Proprietors exploited the interest shown in the Arctic by the British public. The launch of new panoramas always coincided with the return of an expedition to Britain and proprietors made efforts to keep their productions up-to-date.

Panoramas in particular were valued for their treatment of newsworthy events, to the extent that they have been described as a visual 'supplement to the newspaper.'¹⁴⁸ Proprietors changed the content of moving panoramas regularly so that they displayed newly topical subjects. Usually depicting three or four different topics, when a new one was introduced older and less relevant scenes would be relegated and eventually removed altogether. For example, in 1834 a depiction of the recently-returned *Victory* expedition was the headline feature of Laidlaw's panorama. Minor items on the bill

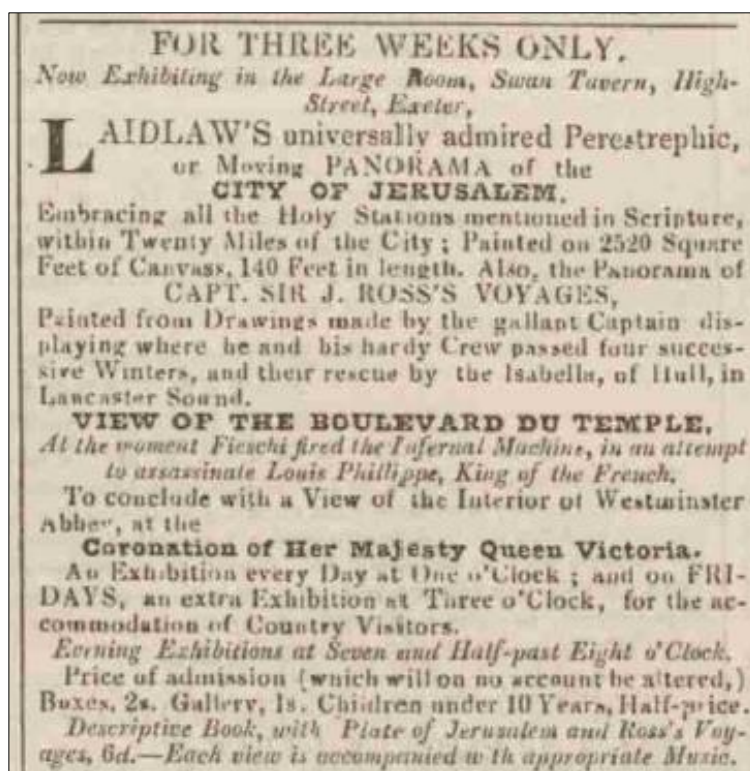


Figure 9. Advert for Laidlaw's panorama. *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (9th February 1839). © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper

¹⁴⁸ Ralph Hyde, *Panoromania!* (London, 1988), 37.

included scenes of the Battle of Navarino (1827) and the siege of Antwerp (1832) (Exh.13). By the end of the decade the Arctic content had been pushed down the billing by newer subjects: an assassination attempt on the King of France (1835) and the coronation of Queen Victoria (1838) (Fig.9).¹⁴⁹

This concern with topicality is demonstrated by the fact that new polar exhibitions were always created at times when a British expedition had just returned from the Arctic. The first polar panoramas dealt with the voyages of 1818. Following this, a series of panoramas in the 1820s depicted the contemporary voyages of William Parry. At least eight exhibitions representing John Ross's *Victory* expedition were launched after its return in 1834; similarly, there were over nineteen during the first period of the Franklin search between 1849 and 1854.¹⁵⁰ In contrast, at times of relative inactivity such as the late 1820s and early 1840s, there were very few Arctic-themed panoramas. The panoramas that were shown tended to be those that had launched years earlier and were nearing the end of a lengthy tour (Exh.2, 6, 13). Not all naval expeditions were represented; for example, George Back's 1836 venture does not seem to have been depicted. Perhaps the number of exhibitions at the beginning of the 1830s discouraged the launch of yet more Arctic shows later in the decade.

Proprietors took further pains to link their productions to current events. Hadlock's handbill stated that his display demanded 'the particular attention of the Public, in consequence of the great National Interest which has been manifested in fitting out the late Expedition for Northern Discoveries' (Exh.3).¹⁵¹ James Wyld, the proprietor of Wyld's Great Globe, exploited interest in the Arctic by advertising the globe as a site for 'those interested in the safety of Sir John Franklin, to examine on a large scale, and on accurate data, the scene of operations which all are so anxious shall have a

¹⁴⁹ *Bristol Mercury* (20th September 1834); *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent* (31st March 1838); *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (9th February 1839). Similarly, when this panorama was offered for sale in 1842 more recent additions were described in greater detail than older ones. Presumably these were more likely to appeal to potential buyers. *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (25th September 1842).

¹⁵⁰ These figures are given with the caveat that, as described earlier in the chapter, problems with the source material means that what I have identified as two separate productions may well be the same one.

¹⁵¹ Poster (1822), 'Just arrived from Bullock's museum', *Museums* 1 (29) *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

favourable issue' (Exh.22).¹⁵² To facilitate this he marked out Franklin's probable route and hosted daily lectures on the subject.¹⁵³ The importance of remaining topical is also exemplified by an incident in the 1830s when a number of British whaling ships became trapped in the ice of the Davis Strait, and several were wrecked.¹⁵⁴ One proprietor, already touring a panorama showing John Ross's *Victory* expedition, added several additional scenes that depicted these events (Exh.16).¹⁵⁵

Sometimes the way a panorama was advertised was changed to better reflect contemporary developments. For example, the Marshalls' panorama, depicting an 1818 expedition on which Parry was the second-in-command, toured throughout the 1820s (Exh.2). Parry's name did not appear in the earliest adverts, however as he rose to become Britain's foremost Arctic explorer it featured more prominently and was sometimes listed above that of other officers who were more senior at the time.¹⁵⁶ More drastic changes were made to the way an 1850s show was marketed. Hamilton's panorama at first purported to depict the *Victory* voyage and the search for Franklin (Exh.25). By 1860, adverts stated that it showed the discoveries made by Leopold McClintock during his 1857 to 1859 expedition.¹⁵⁷ It is likely that the latter was the same painting presented under a different guise. This conclusion is supported by an anecdote Charles Dickens told about seeing the same panorama twice: 'It seemed like an old dream coming back, the boat in the air, the wounded seal, and the navigators themselves, treating with the Esquimaux,- all this was familiar. But I rather resented the pointing out of the chief navigator "in the foreground" as the intrepid Sir Leopold, for he was the very one that had been pointed to as the intrepid Captain Back.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² James Wyld, *Notes to accompany Mr. Wyld's Model of the Earth* (London, 1851), xiii. Maps.41.a.39 *Cartographic Items*, BL.

¹⁵³ *The Examiner* (10th April 1852); Press cutting (1852), Dioramas 4 21d *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian; Press cutting (1854), Dioramas 4 25e *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

¹⁵⁴ Tony Barrow 'The Decline of British Whaling in Arctic Canada, 1820-1850: A Case Study of Newcastle Upon Tyne' in *Northern Mariner* VIII(4) (1998), pp. 35-54., 43-46.

¹⁵⁵ *Hull Packet* (9th September 1836).

¹⁵⁶ *The Guardian* (29th June 1822). Similarly, the name of one of the tunes played during the panorama was changed from the 'Heigh Yaw Waltz' to 'Captain Parry' Waltz.' *Glasgow Herald* (25th March 1822); *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (3rd July 1823).

¹⁵⁷ *Brighton Gazette* (29th November 1860). Though Hamilton refers to a family rather than an individual, adverts refer to 'Hamilton's panorama' and so I am following the same convention.

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion*, 29.

Visitors seem to have appreciated these efforts, with commentators often remarking on the contemporary relevance of a panorama. For example, the Marshalls' 1820s show was 'rendered highly interesting by the arrival and recent accounts of Lieutenant Parry'; it depicted the region 'where the heroic and intrepid Captain Parry is at present exploring' (Exh.2).¹⁵⁹ When Parry and his crew received a government reward for reaching 110° degrees of longitude, one writer joked that the interest generated by this news meant that the Marshalls were also likely to benefit financially.¹⁶⁰ Exhibitions of Inuit were also interpreted as complementing ongoing exploration efforts. A writer for *The Guardian* claimed that visitors to Hadlock's exhibition could 'read with greater pleasure the descriptions which Captain Parry, Franklin and others give of the Northern people' while the 1854 exhibition was lent 'additional interest' by the ongoing search for Franklin (Exh.3, 36).¹⁶¹

Proprietors thus took measures to ensure that their exhibitions dealt with newsworthy events. The Arctic was consistently represented in exhibitions throughout the period because ongoing exploration meant it remained a topical subject. Temporary displays were well placed to respond to contemporary developments. Because of this they almost always portrayed recent expeditions rather than taking a long view of exploration.

2.5 Artists and artistry

This section discusses the artistic production of Arctic panoramas. It outlines what is known of the individual artists and the process involved in producing a panorama, and highlights the connections with theatrical stage painting. The identity of many of the artists is unknown and, much of the time, seems to have been irrelevant. The artistic merit of a panorama was not a strong draw to exhibitions, seen as of secondary

¹⁵⁹ *Caledonian Mercury* (29th March 1821); *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (3rd July 1823).

¹⁶⁰ *Dublin Evening Post* (6th January 1821).

¹⁶¹ *The Guardian* (13th December 1824); *The Theatrical Journal* (February 1854); *The York Herald* (29th April 1854).

importance to the purported accuracy of the paintings. It was expected that paintings mimic the source material as closely as possible, leaving little scope for artistic flair.

We do not know who was responsible for painting many of the panoramas under discussion. Most of the time the identity of the artist is not made explicit in advertising material; most adverts tend to include vague statements such as ‘painted by eminent English artists’, ‘eminent London artists’ or the ‘most celebrated British and Foreign Artists’ (Exh.6, 9, 12).¹⁶² Of the thirty-six panoramas held between 1819 and 1877, we only know the name of the artist behind fifteen of them.¹⁶³

Trying to identify specific individuals is further complicated by evidence of proprietors falsely attributing their paintings to well-known artists. In 1852 Mrs Ormonde declared that her panorama had been ‘Painted by the great “SACHETTI” (Artist to the Emperor of Russia), and universally pronounced to be the Masterpiece of this eminent Artist’ (Exh.32).¹⁶⁴ An Antonio Sacchetti had exhibited an Arctic panorama in Dresden in 1820; however, as Potter points out, some of the scenes depicted in Ormonde’s production post-date this and could not have appeared in the original.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, in the 1870s Rignold asserted that his production was the work of Clarkson Stanfield (1793 – 1867) (Exh.49).¹⁶⁶ Stanfield had been a well-known theatrical scene painter in the 1820s and 1830s, as well as a respected marine and landscape artist who became a

¹⁶² *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (15th August 1829); *The Guardian* (19th December 1835); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (17th July 1834).

¹⁶³ Of the remaining twenty-one, we know the name of the proprietor for thirteen. In some cases, the proprietor could have doubled as the artist; some showmen, including Peter Marshall and Moses Gompertz, are known to have been artists as well. Peter Marshall is described as an artist in his obituary, though he also hired painters, including the artist James Howe. Hyde ‘Illusions’ p.68; ‘Obituary’ in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 141 (1827), 190; A.D. Cameron, *The Man who Loved to Draw Horses: James Howe, 1780-1836* (Aberdeen, 1986), 28. Gompertz had worked as a theatrical scene painter and teacher of landscape painting. An advert for one of his panoramas suggest that he collaborated with other artists on his own productions- “in addition to his own labours he secured the assistance of all the greatest London Artists available.” Hudson John Powell, *Poole’s Myriorama! A Story of Travelling Panorama Showmen* (Wiltshire, 2002), 14; *Ibid.*, 24; Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 322; Ralph Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists of the English-Speaking World’, *Bill Douglas Cinema Museum*, <https://goo.gl/S2UKb7>, Accessed 2nd March 2017, 192.

¹⁶⁴ *The Scotsman* (8th January 1853).

¹⁶⁵ He allows for the possibility that some scenes had been added later. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 93-94.

¹⁶⁶ *The Worcester Journal* (22nd December 1877).

member of the Royal Academy.¹⁶⁷ Though he did produce panoramas, largely in collaboration with David Roberts, there is little evidence that he ever created one with an Arctic theme that could have been toured by Rignold later in the century.¹⁶⁸

Those artists whose identity we can be sure of include Henry Aston Barker (1774 – 1856), Henry Courtney Selous (1803 – 1890), Robert Burford (1791 – 1861), David Roberts (1796 – 1864), E. Lambert (fl. 1834), the father and sons team George Danson (1799 – 1881), Thomas Danson (1829 – 1893) and Robert Danson (fl. 1849 – 1856), T.W. Hall (fl. 1851), Philip Phillips (1802 – 1864), Thomas Grieve (1799 – 1882), William Telbin (1813 – 1873) and John J. Story (1827 – 1900) (Exh.1, 7, 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 29, 33, 46). Some of these figures are obscure. All that is known of Story is that, in addition to his panorama-related activities, he exhibited paintings at local exhibitions in Nottingham (Exh.46).¹⁶⁹ Still less is known of Lambert (Exh.11).¹⁷⁰

Few of these men belonged to the artistic elite.¹⁷¹ Only Barker and Selous appear to have had any formal training, having studied at the Royal Academy Schools, and only Roberts met with enough critical success to become a member of the Royal Academy (Exh.1, 7, 8, 20).¹⁷² Some of the others appear to have worked in other mediums and

¹⁶⁷ ‘Stanfield, Clarkson’, *Grove Art Online*, <https://goo.gl/INWVsZ>, Accessed 1st March 2017; Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 141.

¹⁶⁸ Stanfield worked with Roberts to produce a number of panoramas for the Queens Bazaar (also known as the British Diorama and the Royal Bazaar). Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 121; Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists’, 435. There is one tantalising possibility that suggests this could be possible. In 1856 Stanfield painted two Arctic scenes as backdrops for Charles Dickens play *The Frozen Deep*: one, a field of snow and ice with the Union flag flying, the second, a ship anchored in northern seas. Though the first scene had no obvious parallel in Rignold’s panorama, it is tempting to equate the second with a scene described in Rignold’s publicity material as showing ‘Ships in Winter Quarters.’ Rignold’s claim is further undermined, however, by the fact that at various other times he also ascribed the artistry of his production to William Turner. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 140; *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁶⁹ Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists’, 441.

¹⁷⁰ An E.F. Lambert exhibited at Royal Academy periodically between 1823 and 1846; however, it is not clear if this artist is the same one that painted panoramas or not. Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. IV Harral to Lawranson* (London, 1906), 360.

¹⁷¹ As Hyde points out ‘few of the major artists of the nineteenth century would appear in the list of panorama and diorama painters.’ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 29.

¹⁷² Barker had started helping his father, Robert Barker, inventor of the panorama, make source sketches at the age of twelve. He worked as his father’s assistant and took over management of the Leicester Square venue on Robert Barker’s death in 1906. Selous was employed by their successor Robert Burford. Stephan Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (New York, 1997), 108. G.R. Corner, *The Panorama: with Memoirs of its Inventor Robert*

occasionally exhibited at exhibitions held by the institution. Selous, Telbin, Grieve, Burford, Phillips and George Danson contributed landscape subjects; Thomas Danson wildlife.¹⁷³ The only one to have included polar themes was Selous, who in 1819 showed a painting of an Arctic fox, and in 1821, a musk ox.¹⁷⁴

The artistic background of many panorama painters, rather, was in painting scenic backdrops for the theatre. Roberts, the Danson family, Hall, Gompertz, Phillips, Grieve, and Telbin were all scenographers (Exh.7, 18, 21, 24, 29, 33).¹⁷⁵ Some were well known and respected in this field. Grieve and Telbin have been described as among the ‘ablest scene painters of the day’; one writer has gone so far as to attribute the success of the theatre at Covent Garden to their employing the Grieve family (Exh.33).¹⁷⁶ The connection between panorama painting and scene painting is not surprising. As Hyde has pointed out, moving panoramas were already used as stage backdrops when, from the 1820s onwards, theatre artists began to produce an increasing number of stand-alone

Barker, and his son, the late Henry Aston Barker (London, 1857) 4; *Ibid.*, 9; ‘Selous, Henry Courtney’, *Grove Art Online*, <https://goo.gl/VX1L1h>, Accessed 1st March 2017. Roberts was a renowned oil and watercolour artist. He became a member of the Royal Academy in 1838 having met with enough success to quit working as a theatre artist. James Ballantine, *The Life of David Roberts, RA* (Edinburgh, 1866), 7; ‘Roberts, David’, *Grove Art Online*, <https://goo.gl/8uxYZY>, Accessed 1st March 2017; Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910* (Boston, 1981), 9.

¹⁷³ Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. VII Sacco to Tofano* (London, 1906), 72-72; *Ibid.*, 158; *Ibid.*, 344; Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. I Abbayne to Carrington* (London, 1905), 344; Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. II Carroll to Dyer* (London, 1905), 252; Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. III Edie to Harraen* (London, 1905), 322; Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 Vol. VI Oakes to Rymdyk* (London, 1906), 126.

¹⁷⁴ Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts... Vol. VII*, 158.

¹⁷⁵ Ballantine, *Life of David Roberts*, 7; Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 143; *Ibid.*, 209; Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists’, 130; *Ibid.*, 352; *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁷⁶ Grieve was employed by both the Covent Garden (where his father and brother also worked) and Drury Lane theatres, while Telbin was associated with the Colosseum. From the 1850s onwards they collaborated to produce panoramas for the Gallery of Illustration. Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 143; Darryll Grantley, *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre: Early Period* (Lanham, 2013), 178; Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists’, 203; *Ibid.*, 449; Susan Crabtree and Peter Beudert, *Scenic Art for the Theatre: History, Tools and Techniques* (Woburn, 1998), 264.

panoramas for exhibition elsewhere.¹⁷⁷ Sometimes these artists became attached to an existing showplace; Roberts was associated with the Queens Bazaar, Grieve and Telbin with the Gallery of Illustration (Exh.7, 33).¹⁷⁸

If the practitioners overlapped, the two forms were also similar. Both panoramas and theatre backdrops comprised large-scale paintings in distemper on canvas or cloth, and used the same principles of lighting and perspective.¹⁷⁹ Because of this, while there is an absence of evidence detailing how a panorama was constructed, it is likely that the process was similar to creating a scene for the stage. In the latter case, the canvas or cloth would be held within a large frame. In some theatres and workshops there was an opening in the floor through which the frame could be lowered or raised to allow the artist to reach different parts of the canvas; alternatively, they could stand on a platform.¹⁸⁰ A scale drawing would be produced and then the dimensions transferred to the canvas.¹⁸¹ For large productions a whole team would be employed to work on a single painting, with the head artist designing and outlining the whole in charcoal and ink.¹⁸² The background would be painted before the foreground, then special effects would be created using lights, metallic foil, 'spangles' (sequins) and different textures and colours of cloth.¹⁸³

Perhaps in part because of the association with theatre painting, panoramas were rarely considered a form of high art. The artistic merit of the form was subject to debate, though usually the type of static panorama exhibited at the Leicester Square venue was differentiated from other productions. As Potter explains, 'such grand circles as Barker's, elaborately painted in oils in a process that typically consumed months, were

¹⁷⁷ Hyde points out that Robert's 1829 Arctic panorama appeared within a pantomime context, but was a semi-independent entity within it. Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 121. He also distinguishes between 'Theatre Panoramas' and 'Exhibition Hall Panoramas.' Hyde, 'Dictionary of Panoramists.'

¹⁷⁸ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 121; *Ibid.*, 105; Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion*, 120.

¹⁷⁹ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 33; Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 121; Booth, *Victorian Spectacular*, 6.

¹⁸⁰ Alicia Finkel, *Romantic Stages: Set and Costume Design in Victorian England* (Jefferson, 1996), 164; Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (London, 1991), 81.

¹⁸¹ Frederick Lloyds, *Practical Guide to Scene Painting and Painting in Distemper* (London, 1877), 25.

¹⁸² Oettermann, *The Panorama*, 55; Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, 82. Grieve and Telbin's team at the Gallery of Illustration was formed of artists who specialised in different components; landscape, human figures, animals. Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion*, 195.

¹⁸³ Lloyds, *Practical Guide*, 30-33; Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, 165-69.

one thing- but the “moving” panoramas, dashed off in distemper on enormous rolls of canvas, linen, and even paper, were clearly another.’¹⁸⁴ This was one of the arguments used by the artist-proprietors of the Leicester Square Panorama, who certainly considered their productions to be high art (Exh.1, 8, 20). A note in the guidebook for the 1850 panorama stated that ‘an erroneous impression is entertained by some portion of the Public that the Panoramic Views are a species of scene-painting, coloured in distemper, or other inferior manner, that such is not the case- they being all painted in the finest oil colour and varnish that can be procured, and in the same manner as a gallery picture’.¹⁸⁵

For the most part, however, the draw of a panorama was not the quality of the artwork. Sometimes reviewers commented in general terms on the artistic merit of a painting (‘the paintings are all exceedingly well executed’, ‘remarkably artistic’, ‘a wonderful piece of artistic painting’, ‘furnished with great artistic sensibility’, a ‘beautiful work of art’).¹⁸⁶ Occasionally they might critique the style or mention individual details (“the scenes are painted in a broad free style”, “the stars are cleverly managed by the use of tinsel”).¹⁸⁷ For the most part, however, reviews indicate that audiences were more concerned with whether the painting was true to life or not. A lack of artistry could be forgiven if the panorama was considered accurate. Commenting on Hamilton’s 1851 panorama, *The London Standard* complained that “the execution of the picture is rude and unfinished, the hand employed upon it being not one possessing either artistic

¹⁸⁴ Oil paints were expensive and used by gallery artists; distemper was cheaper and associated with the theatre and fairground artists. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 6. A full discussion of the artistic status of panoramas is outside the scope of this thesis. At the time the static form was pioneered some critics were enthusiastic, regarding it as a form of landscape painting. It was admired by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West, both early presidents of the Royal Academy of Arts. Others were more dismissive- the artist John Constable was amongst those who argued that it was not a high form of art. Comment has described the general reaction to the static panorama as “condescending... its undeniable technical merit [was] acknowledged while it continued to be dismissed as being outside the field of art and great painting.” Bernard Comment, *The Panorama* (London, 1999), 87-88; Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion*, 11.

¹⁸⁵ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Summer and Winter Views’, BL, 10.

¹⁸⁶ *Caledonian Mercury* (6th December 1852); *The Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser* (12th August 1876); *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* (8th June 1851); *Royal Leamington Spa* (11th June 1853); *Stirling Observer* (22nd July 1852).

¹⁸⁷ *The Leader* (7th June 1851); *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (18th January 1834).

feeling or experience” (Exh.25).¹⁸⁸ The article went on to say, however, that “if the drawings are correct, this may be excused on the score of the geographical information to be gleaned from the inspection.”¹⁸⁹

The success of a panorama was therefore not determined by the skill of the artist, but the reliability of the material the painting drew on. Ideally artists would have first-hand experience of the places they were painting. Henry Aston Barker travelled to Malta, Copenhagen, Paris and Constantinople to sketch battlefields and cityscapes that were later converted into panoramas.¹⁹⁰ George Danson visited Paris, Telbin, Spain and Portugal.¹⁹¹ When dealing with parts of the globe that were beyond their reach, artists would source material from travellers such as military and naval officers, archaeologists and explorers.¹⁹² This, of course, included the polar regions; panorama artists tackling the Arctic were always dependent on the sketches and paintings of others. Consequently, it was the provenance of this material that was highlighted in adverts rather than the identity of the artist employed to interpret it.

There is little evidence of the mechanism by which artists obtained their source material. As will be discussed later in the chapter, adverts would often name the explorer or officer on whose sketches the panorama was based. We do not know whether artists borrowed these original sketches, were gifted or sold copies, or whether they had to wait for them to be published in some other medium.¹⁹³ We do not know how much the original artist remained involved throughout the rest of the process. It may have depended on the proprietor. Oleksijczuk and Garrison have both highlighted the close connections that the Barkers and, later, Burford enjoyed with the Admiralty.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ *The London Standard* (27th December 1851); *The Guardian* was also critical, saying that “the painting of human figures and of animals is not good.” *The Guardian* (10th December 1853).

¹⁸⁹ *The London Standard* (27th December 1851).

¹⁹⁰ Corner, *The Panorama: with Memoirs*, 9-11.

¹⁹¹ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 83; Hyde, ‘Dictionary of Panoramists’, 449.

¹⁹² Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 37; *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁹³ Hyde has suggested that they were paid, saying that “the traveller or military or naval officer with a pencil and some proficiency on drawing could, on his return to England, make money or gain public recognition by selling or loaning his sketches to a panorama painter.” He does not offer any evidence for this assertion. Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 37.

¹⁹⁴ Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis, 2011), 7; Garrison ‘Virtual Reality and Subjective Responses’ (2012).

Given this, their claim to have been ‘Liberally Presented’ with source drawings in 1819 and 1850 may well be true (Exh.1, 20).¹⁹⁵

One unique account of the relationship between an artist and his source has survived in the form of Selous’s diary, written while he was working on the 1834 Leicester Square panorama (Exh.8). It reveals that during this time the explorer John Ross, the subject of the painting, visited the studio several times. Selous records that Ross made extensive changes, not only suggesting alterations, but even carrying them out himself on the canvas.¹⁹⁶ This level of involvement is unlikely to be typical, however. Ross seems to have taken more steps than his contemporaries to manage his public image and took a keen interest in several productions depicting his ventures. Ross’s concerns were noticed, and satirised in print, by the journalist Robert Huish: ‘we allude in the first instance to the panorama of Felix Harbour, got up under the immediate auspices of the gallant Captain; and in the second to the representation of the principal scenes of his expedition, also got up under the immediate direction of the Captain, exhibiting in Vauxhall Gardens, and in both of which, if report be not guilty, the services of the Captain are not gratuitous.’¹⁹⁷

Since the premium was on accuracy rather than artistic merit, it seems unlikely that artists were encouraged to interpret their source material in their own style. In the absence of visual evidence showing what panoramas looked like we cannot be sure, but it is probable that they would have tried to copy what they were given as exactly as possible. As Hyde argues ‘while evidence of artistic taste was expected, artistic license was not to be tolerated... accuracy was independent of and at times opposed to the demands of art.’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Front cover of Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen’, NLS; Front cover of Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Summer and Winter Views’, BL.

¹⁹⁶ On the 26th November 1833 Selous recorded ‘Capt. Ross made his appearance and did us the favour of obliterating nearly half our sketch and we shall have to commence our work over again.’ Two days later he reportedly arrived at the studio to find Ross already ‘making the necessary alterations.’ Cited in Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 67-68.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Huish, *The Last Voyage of Capt Sir John Ross, RN Knt, To the Arctic Regions, For the Discovery of a North-West Passage* (London, 1836), Wordie.988 Wordie collection of polar exploration, NLS, 188-89.

¹⁹⁸ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 37.

The role of the artist was reduced, then, by their inability to produce paintings based on first-hand experience of the polar regions. The draw of panoramas was not their artistry, but their accuracy and the educational benefit they conferred, a theme that will be expanded on in the following section. The skill of the artist was less important; their job was to copy as closely as possible the source material they were provided with. Perhaps this helps to explain why the identity of the artist tended to remain obscure.

2.6 ‘Faithful as nature itself’: the educational value of exhibitions

The following section will show that, though these exhibitions are not usually associated with the museum sector, their role was similar in that they were trusted to provide a truthful and accurate depiction of the Arctic regions. Visitors valued them for providing learning opportunities and proprietors took measures to assure audiences of their educational worth.

Temporary exhibitions such as panoramas and human exhibits are often considered to be allied with the shows of the entertainment industry rather than the museum sector.¹⁹⁹ Certainly they shared some similarities with shows; they charged an entry fee, they used music and they employed hyperbole in their advertising. Their preoccupation with representing the truth indicates, however, that they had some features in common with museums. Garrison argues that their concern with representing reality distinguishes panoramas from other shows, while Edward Alexander has gone so far as to describe them as ‘a specialized form of the history museum.’²⁰⁰ Victoria Carroll has argued that realism was a hallmark of many nineteenth-century exhibitions: ‘panoramas were designed to reproduce the experience of viewing real landscapes rather than painted

¹⁹⁹ Few museum histories consider commercial exhibitions, such as panoramas, to be precursors to the late nineteenth-century museum. For example, in her discussion of early museums Kavanagh only lists institutions such as the BM and the Ashmolean. Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (Leicester, 1990). Neither did early curators draw a link. In 1907, for instance, the president of the Museums Association John MacLauchlan attributed the origin of ‘the fashion of the popularity of museums and art galleries’ to the 1851 Great Exhibition. John MacLaughlan ‘Presidential Address’ in *Museums Journal* VII(1) (1907-08), pp. 4-17., 7.

²⁰⁰ Garrison ‘Imperial Vision’ (2008); Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 81.

imitations; ethnographic displays were carefully stage-managed in order to present audiences with convincing scenes.’²⁰¹

Contemporary audiences distinguished between the two forms of display. *The Worcester Journal* urged its readers to see the Marshalls’ first Arctic panorama, warning that ‘if they neglect it under the impression that it is merely a *show*, they will lose the gratification of seeing a most interesting and grand representation’ (Exh.2).²⁰² Later on Jane Franklin, the wife of the missing John Franklin, contrasted the museum at the United Service Institution with ‘Mr Wyld’s globe, or... some still lower exhibition where the main object is to catch pence and sixpence.’²⁰³

Because of this, proprietors tried to distance their exhibitions from ‘mere’ shows and instead associate them with the type of educational opportunity offered by museums. School groups were targeted; teachers were offered reduced rates or special opening times so their classes could attend.²⁰⁴ The pupils of Holy Trinity School in Stockton visited Hamilton’s panorama in 1852 and were ‘highly pleased with the recreational entertainment afforded them’ while the following year the children of the Ragged School benefited from a special showing of a panorama in Stirling (Exh.21, 25).²⁰⁵ Similarly, Vauxhall Gardens hosted an annual Juvenile fête aimed at children under twelve.²⁰⁶ Adverts for the 1834 event promised that the exhibition of Ross’s voyage by ‘demonstrating so faithfully the most striking incidents of that Voyage, is guaranteed to make a lasting impression on the youthful mind’ (Exh.10).²⁰⁷

Learning opportunities were offered to adults as well as the young. Publicity material employed rhetoric about education and self-improvement. Laidlaw assured potential visitors that his panorama offered ‘intellectual gratification... as each subject is founded

²⁰¹ Victoria Carroll 'Natural History on Display: The Collection of Charles Waterton' in Aileen Fyfe and Bernard V. Lightman, *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences* (London, 2007), pp. 271-300., 286.

²⁰² *The Worcester Journal* (27th November 1823).

²⁰³ Journal entry (Jane Franklin, 2nd January 1860), ‘Journals 1 January to 20 May 1860’, MS/248/119-20 *Jane Franklin collection*, SPRI, 3.

²⁰⁴ *The Guardian* (17th Dec 1853); *The Scotsman* (5th February 1853); *The Yorkshire Gazette* (22nd October 1853).

²⁰⁵ *Durham County Advertiser* (26th November 1852); *Stirling Observer* (10th March 1853).

²⁰⁶ Playbill (1834), ‘The Grand Juvenile Fete’, Entertainments 2 (5) *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

on fact, even the most scrupulous will find the Panorama a moral and edifying entertainment' (Exh.13).²⁰⁸ An advertisement for Gompertz's panorama similarly promised that 'the poet, philosopher and naturalist, however refined his taste or researches, [would not] come away without some addition to, or confirmation of, his higher, purer and better knowledge' (Exh.24).²⁰⁹ Exhibitions of Inuit were also presented in this way. Hadlock's exhibition would appeal to the 'inquisitive admirer of what is connected with the history of man', that in 1854 to 'the philanthropic and scientific man' (Exh.3).²¹⁰ As Kenneth Hudson points out, these learning opportunities may have been particularly appealing at a time of limited formal education.²¹¹

Proprietors also emphasised the reliability of their productions, reassuring the public that they offered depictions of the Arctic that were as 'faithful as Nature itself.'²¹² Audiences demanded realism and were willing to point out any mistakes. One writer criticised Gompertz's 1851 panorama for 'one inaccuracy of detail... the men are represented with naked hands instead of in fur gloves' (Exh.24).²¹³ The journalist Robert Huish, in an attack really directed at John Ross who had closely supervised its production, criticised Burford's panorama on the grounds that it depicted both the landmass of Boothia and the North Magnetic Pole 'although the said continent and the said magnetic pole happened to be at the distance of a few hundred miles of each other' (Exh.8).²¹⁴

Proprietors also needed to reassure audiences that their depictions were realistic despite artists not having painted them from life.²¹⁵ Several methods were used to convince patrons that the scenes were accurately drawn. First, adverts stated what sources a

²⁰⁸ *Bristol Mercury* (20th September 1834).

²⁰⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* (1st December 1853).

²¹⁰ *The Guardian* (13th December 1823); *Morning Chronicle* (16th February 1854).

²¹¹ Hudson, *A Social History of Museums*, 63.

²¹² *The Scotsman* (8th January 1853).

²¹³ *The Leader* (7th June 1851).

²¹⁴ At the time Boothia was thought to be an island. Later it was discovered it was actually a peninsula. Robert Huish 'Supplement On the Position of the North Magnetic Pole' in Huish, *The Last Voyage of Capt Sir John Ross, RN Knt, To the Arctic Regions, For the Discovery of a North-West Passage* (London, 1836), Wordie.988 Wordie collection of polar exploration, NLS, 1.

²¹⁵ Commenting on the artist who painted Burford's 1850 panorama, *The Observer* discussed 'the disadvantage of portraying scenes which he himself had not only ever seen, but which are altogether unlike any other exhibition of nature which he had ever witnessed.' *The Observer* (10th February 1850).

panorama painting was based on, usually sketches drawn on-site by an officer. Some specifically named the artist, usually Frederick William Beechey, John Ross and John Saccheuse in the 1810s and 1820s, John Ross in the 1830s and James Clark Ross, William Brown and Edward Augustus Inglefield in the 1850s.²¹⁶ Others claims were more vague. Gompertz stated simply that his painting was based on ‘authentic sketches taken on the spot by various Officers’ (Exh.24).²¹⁷

Secondly, proprietors would seek endorsement by an Arctic authority, such as an explorer who had actually visited the region. Sometimes publicity material would include a direct quote praising the exhibition. At other times the approval of explorers would be implied in claims that they had visited the display. The Queen’s Bazaar panorama was apparently ‘repeatedly visited by CAPT ROSS and the OFFICERS’; Laidlaw also claimed that John Ross, James Clark Ross and other officers had visited his production and ‘were highly pleased with its correctness’ (Exh.11, 13).²¹⁸ Gompertz quoted William Parker Snow, who had been involved in the search for Franklin, as saying that ‘the Scenes portrayed are so strikingly correct that I could almost fancy myself there again’ (Exh.24).²¹⁹ Similarly, a panorama shown in Stirling in 1853 was ‘spoken very highly of’ by whaling captain William Kennedy (Exh.21).²²⁰ Occasionally polar figures would take a closer interest; John Ross was involved in the preparation of both the 1834 Leicester Square panorama and an exhibition at Vauxhall Gardens the same year (Exh.8, 10).²²¹

Thirdly, ‘expert’ guides and guidebooks helped to provide authenticity. In 1834 Burford employed a crewman named William Light who had been on the *Victory* expedition. According to John Ross, Light amused ‘his hearers with wonderful adventures, in which he always figured as the chief actor’ (Exh.8).²²² Guidebooks contained sections of text either contributed by an explorer or copied from official publications. In 1820 the

²¹⁶ One of the scenes shown in the Marshall’s first panorama was based on a drawing by Ross’s Inuit interpreter John Saccheuse (Fig.10). Potter points out that this was ‘the sole nineteenth-century panorama scene directly based on Inuit art.’ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 86.

²¹⁷ *Hampshire Advertiser* (15th November 1851).

²¹⁸ Handbill (1833), ‘Capt. Ross having Lent his Own Drawings...’, Z2650 *Online Collections*, Museum of London, <http://goo.gl/VTuyt4>, Accessed 9th March 2015.

²¹⁹ *West Kent Guardian* (16th April 1853).

²²⁰ *Stirling Observer* (3rd March 1853).

²²¹ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 67; *ibid.*, 88.

²²² Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 177.

Marshalls copied text verbatim from Ross's voyage account; later on, Ross himself wrote sections of the guidebook sold at Burford's 1834 panorama.²²³

Visitors seem to have accepted these assurances. There is no evidence that they doubted what was presented to them. Undoubtedly there were differences in quality between exhibitions, and some probably succeeded in providing a more accurate depiction of the region than others. Nevertheless, taken as a whole the medium appears to have been trusted.

As demonstrated, the public valued exhibitions for providing educational opportunities rather than as entertainment. As such they were not wholly dissimilar to museums, and provided an authoritative way of disseminating ideas about polar exploration.

2.7 Content: Introduction

The following sections examine the content of exhibitions, showing how they evolved to include themes of exploration. The first two will show that at first audiences were primarily interested in the natural features and exotic inhabitants of the Arctic rather than the experience and deeds of the British men who explored there. The third provides evidence that later in the period this focus changed, and more emphasis was placed on themes of everyday life and adventure.

Throughout this time, the basic content of exhibitions remained similar. Certain images were present in almost every panorama: mountainous scenery; icebergs; the frozen sea; ships, either sailing between icebergs or trapped in the ice; vast skies; the Aurora Borealis; polar bears; the Inuit; igloos, and the explorers themselves.²²⁴

²²³ Exhibition catalogue (1821), 'Description of Messrs Marshall's Grand Peristrepic Panorama of the Polar Regions: Which Displays the North Coast of Spitzbergen, Baffin's Bay, Arctic Highlands, &c.' Wordie.1428(3) *Wordie collection of polar exploration*, NLS, 3-12; Exhibition catalogue (1834), 'Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia, Discovered by Captain Ross, in his Late Expedition to the Polar Regions, Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square', Wordie.IL26 *Wordie collection of polar exploration*, NLS, 12-14.

²²⁴ The similarity of panoramas meant that a writer for *The Yorkshire Gazette* was able to review the panoramas of Hamilton and Gompertz, both showing in York at the same time, in a single

What changes is the relative importance of each of these images. This is evident from examining several types of source that can be used to deduce how prominent each element was. Guidebooks offer detailed descriptions of exhibitions. Adverts are useful in that they highlight what the proprietor felt the most important parts of the exhibition were; with limited space he was forced to highlight a few main features. Newspaper articles record the impressions of visitors and show what they felt were the most striking parts of the exhibition. There are risks in depending on these entirely; what an individual writer chose to comment on will have depended on their personal preferences and preconceptions. Consequently, they may have omitted to mention some elements of the display and thus created a misleading impression of what it contained.

Another constraint of these sources is that they do not reveal what was said in the lectures that accompanied exhibitions. Most moving panoramas and all the displays of Inuit were accompanied by a narrative, which would have a major impact on how audiences perceived what they saw. The absence of any evidence as to the contents of these lectures necessarily limits our understanding of the exhibition as a whole.

Of the thirty-eight exhibitions hosted between 1819 and 1854, only fourteen are sufficiently well described to be able to draw any confident conclusions about their content. The analysis offered here relies heavily on this group, which consists of ten panoramas, three displays of Inuit and a display at Vauxhall Gardens (Exh.1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 20, 24, 25, 32, 33, 36). While this is a clear limitation, it is likely that these exhibitions can be considered as representative of the rest, with similar content and themes.

article. He describes how both panoramas showed similar images, illustrating ‘the privations, hardships and hair-breadth escapes of the adventurous explorers- the grandeur and beauty of the versi-coloured towering and pinnacled ice- the wild and romantic appearance of this land of snow- the discovery of and adventures with the Esquimaux natives, and their extraordinary manners and customs.’ *The Yorkshire Gazette* (29th April 1853).

2.8 Displaying sublime scenery

The earliest exhibitions focused on depicting the natural world of the Arctic. Their most prominent features were images of mountainous scenery, icebergs, sea ice, polar bears and other fauna, and the Aurora Borealis. Visitors were curious about the peculiarities and sublimity of the polar world and the responses recorded in newspapers suggest that these portrayals were the most important aspect of exhibitions.

The first panorama, hosted at Leicester Square in 1819, prioritised the depiction of Arctic scenery (Exh.1). Though some men were pictured, carrying out activities such as hunting, the emphasis was on characteristics inherent to the Arctic. Of the twenty-seven reference points listed in the key to the painting, twenty-two referred to natural features such as mountains and headlands, ice, walrus, polar bears and birds.²²⁵ The guidebook also contained detailed descriptions of the landscape, explanations about phenomenon such as the ‘ice blink’ and observations about Arctic bird species.²²⁶ The next panorama, toured by the Marshalls from 1820, was largely based on Barker’s production and, as such, similarly focused on the natural world (Exh.2).²²⁷

Adverts for the panoramas emphasised these features, showing that they were a selling point. Barker’s showed ‘a novel scene, representing the North Coast of SPITSBERGEN, magnificent appearance of the Ice, critical Situation of the Vessels, and Natural History of the Country’ while the Marshalls’ gave ‘a general idea of the Arctic Regions, its Icebergs, Islands of Ice, Manners and Costume of the Natives, Birds, Animals, &c.’²²⁸

The depiction of scenery continued to be important. In the 1830s most panoramas were narrative-led, representing the events of the *Victory* expedition. The landscapes amongst which these scenes were played out, however, were also prominent. Scenery dominated

²²⁵ Exhibition catalogue (1819), ‘Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen: Now Exhibiting in the Large Rotunda of Henry Aston Barker's Panorama, Leicester-Square’, Wordie.809 *Wordie collection of polar exploration*, NLS, 1.

²²⁶ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen’, NLS. ‘Ice blink’ is the glare that reflects from a field of ice.

²²⁷ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Messrs Marshall's Grand Peristrepthic Panorama’, NLS.

²²⁸ Press cutting (1819), Dioramas 2 12q, *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian; *Freeman's Journal* (6th October 1820).

Burford's 1834 panorama; half of the painting contained no human figures at all (Exh.8).²²⁹ Writers commented on its 'luminous effects... interminable fields of snow and ice... bold granite promontories... vast cavities and hummocks of ice'; 'towering icebergs of gigantic size and singularly fantastic form, & immense masses, pyramids, and cavities of ice, all heaped together in wild disorder.'²³⁰ Commentators were unanimous in their admiration of the painting of the sky.²³¹ Another example of the many panoramas which emphasised the natural world include a contemporary production by Laidlaw admired for 'the wild and rugged grandeur' of the landscape, its 'columns of impregnable ice, and fields of eternal snow' (Exh.13).²³² Similarly, a panorama shown in Edinburgh displayed 'several novel and singular effects peculiar to this frozen climate' (Exh.12).²³³

This concern with landscape was informed by ideas about 'the sublime.' The term sublime, though associated with ideas of exaltation and greatness, has no fixed meaning and the concept has been debated by commentators for centuries.²³⁴ In Britain the most influential theory was that propounded by the mid-eighteenth century commentator Edmund Burke in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke argued that the sublime was 'the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.'²³⁵ It is associated with pain and apprehension, yet, paradoxically, also with feelings of pleasure and even delight. For Burke, one source of the sublime lay in the human response to the natural world. A sublime landscape possessed a particular type of appeal that depended on it being dark, vast, and threatening, beyond human comprehension or control. The appropriate response was 'a

²²⁹ Key in Exhibition catalogue, 'Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia', NLS.

²³⁰ *Morning Post* (31st March 1834); *The Observer* (19th January 1834).

²³¹ The following comments are typical. 'The interest of these scenes fades almost into insignificance before the singular effect produced by the painting of the sky' in *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (19th January 1834); 'The most vivid and striking is the effect of the stars, which are absolutely luminous. They are astro-nomically correct in locality, size, and hue; and they sparkle like gems, with rays of the ruby, sapphire, topaz, and diamond' in *The Spectator* (18th January 1834).

²³² *Leicester Chronicle* (22nd February 1840); *The York Herald* (26th November 1836).

²³³ *The Scotsman* (17th May 1834).

²³⁴ Christine Riding and Nigel Llewellyn, 'British Art and the Sublime', in Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, <http://goo.gl/Qzg2hR>, Accessed 26th July 2016.

²³⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1757), 13.

kind of pleasurable or fulfilling terror.’²³⁶ By the nineteenth century these ideas had entered the cultural mainstream and had come to influence popular entertainment as well as high art.²³⁷ Theories of the sublime informed how people thought about and reacted to the natural world.

Proprietors deliberately evoked notions of the sublime. The term was often used in advertising. In the 1820s the Marshalls described their panorama as ‘completely illustrative of the Sublime and Novel Scenery... of that remote Country’, in 1850 Burford’s panorama showed ‘the sublime effects of an Aurora Borealis’ and in 1853 Hamilton’s depicted ‘the Sublime Scenery, and Marvellous Phenomena of the Polar World’ (Exh.2, 20, 25).²³⁸ More often, however, the idea was implied in the language used. The scenes shown in exhibitions were described in lyrical terms. For example, the guidebook for Barker’s 1819 panorama promised ‘craggy mountains, with their summits towering above the clouds; deep glens, filled with eternal snows, stupendous icebergs... grandeur and magnificence’ (Exh.1).²³⁹ The Marshalls’ guidebook similarly introduced the panorama with the following (unattributed) lines from James Thomson’s *Winter*:

‘Where undissolving from the first of time,/ Snow swell on snows amazing to the sky;/ And icy mountains high on mountains piled,/ Seem to the shivering sailor, from afar,/ Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds,/ Projected huge and horrid o’er the surge’ (Exh.2).²⁴⁰

In responding to the exhibitions, commentators also frequently employed the term sublime. The Marshalls’ panorama was ‘admirably calculated to convey the most correct idea of the sublime beauties and astonishing appearance of Nature within the Arctic Circle’; that of Laidlaw evoked the ‘sublimity and solitude of the arctic regions.’²⁴¹

²³⁶ Riding and Llewellyn, ‘British Art’ (2013).

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ *Aberdeen Journal* (15th March 1833); *The Athenaeum* (9th February 1850); *The Yorkshire Gazette* (22nd October 1853).

²³⁹ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen’, NLS. 4.

²⁴⁰ James Thomson and James Sambrook, *The Seasons* (Oxford, 1981), 245. Title page of Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Messrs Marshall’s Grand Peristrepic Panorama’, NLS.

²⁴¹ *Caledonian Mercury* (15th March 1821); *The York Herald* (26th November 1836).

Even during the Franklin era, when themes of human endeavour became more important, some exhibitions continued to focus largely on landscape. A panorama shown at the Colosseum in 1849 does not appear to have featured British explorers at all, instead showing an Inuit man being pulled in a sledge drawn by reindeer against a backdrop of icebergs, the setting sun, huskies, polar bears and other native fauna (Exh.18).²⁴² A preoccupation with the natural world is also evident in a popular motif of the time, which was to show the same view at different times of the year. This was pioneered at Burford's 1850 panorama when the usual 360° painting was split to produce two 180° scenes, one a summer view and the other a winter view (Exh.20, Fig.7).²⁴³ Other proprietors, such as Gompertz and Hamilton, adopted the idea (Exh.24, 25).²⁴⁴

Journalists writing about the exhibitions also continued to focus on landscape. Burford's painting displayed 'awful majesty', 'sublime severity', and a 'wild and weird glory'.²⁴⁵ A contemporary panorama by Hamilton attracted similar comments; 'much of the scenery is striking and even sublime'; it depicted 'savage desolation... fantastically peaked icebergs, peculiar effects of colour'.²⁴⁶

Depictions of the natural world were thus a central and attractive component of exhibitions throughout the period. This continued even as themes of exploration and adventure became more dominant.

2.9 Displaying the Inuit

Representations of the Inuit were also a draw to exhibitions. The public was curious about the indigenous people of the Arctic, and both panoramas and human displays

²⁴² *London Daily News* (18th January 1850).

²⁴³ Key in Exhibition catalogue, 'Description of Summer and Winter Views', BL.

²⁴⁴ *Kentish Gazette* (14th December 1852); *The Guardian* (10th December 1853).

²⁴⁵ *Illustrated London News* (16th February 1850).

²⁴⁶ *The Guardian* (10th December 1853); *Morning Chronicle* (27th December 1851).

offered a chance to learn about their appearance, material culture and way of life. These exhibitions, along with interpretations offered in lectures, adverts and guidebooks, presented the Inuit as a highly exotic but primitive people, whose experience of the Arctic was wholly dissimilar to that of British explorers.

For explorers the presence of an indigenous population represented a potential source of support. In the nineteenth century relations between the two groups, though not based on notions of equality, were usually friendly. They traded, socialised and on some expeditions Inuit individuals were employed as translators, hunters and guides.

At home, the British public were fascinated by the Inuit. Their curiosity was fed by the eyewitness accounts of explorers, often recycled in the popular press.²⁴⁷ Various attitudes towards the Inuit are evident. Fienup-Riordan has described a propensity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to admire the Inuit as a people who overcame their harsh environment using ingenuity and skill.²⁴⁸ A contradictory trend, however, was to dismiss them as ‘backwards’ and barbarous, capable only of dogged survival.²⁴⁹ It was assumed that the Inuit were technologically inferior and ‘going native’ by using indigenous methods of survival was seen as shameful and unappealing to explorers striving to retain their British identity in an alien environment.²⁵⁰ During the later period of the Franklin search some commentators were unremittingly hostile towards the Inuit as they were blamed for the expedition’s disappearance. In one article Charles Dickens famously portrayed them as, at best, stupid and sly and, at worst,

²⁴⁷ Stopp and Mitchell "Our Amazing Visitors" (2010), 401.

²⁴⁸ Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo Essays*, 11-23. Fienup-Riordan also points out that the British view of Arctic peoples was informed by those groups they had met in Greenland and the Canadian Arctic. These had a distinct material culture which included the use of sledge dogs, kayaks and igloos. Other Arctic peoples, such as the Yup'ik of Alaska, do not share this culture.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

²⁵⁰ The reluctance to use native technology is now seen as a major failing of the British approach. For examples see Fergus Fleming, *Barrow's Boys: A Stirring Story of Daring, Fortitude, and Outright Lunacy* (New York, 2007) and Ken McGoogan, *Fatal Passage* (London, 2012). Cavell has challenged this orthodoxy, arguing that contemporary press coverage indicates that the use of Inuit survival strategies was condoned. However she qualifies this with the admission that audiences would have balked from the idea of explorers entirely ‘going native.’ Janice Cavell 'Going Native in the North: Reconsidering British Attitudes during the Franklin Search, 1848–1859' in *Polar Record* 45(01) (2009), pp. 25-35.

murderers and cannibals.²⁵¹ Other journalists shared and disseminated these views, which remained common throughout the 1850s.²⁵²

The portrayal of the Inuit in exhibitions reflects some of these ideas. Indigenous peoples were only represented in some panoramas, largely because not all explorers actually met them. John Ross had encounters with Inuit peoples on both his earlier expeditions. In 1818 he famously met a group in the north of Greenland who he claimed had had no previous contact with the outside world. Ross nicknamed them the ‘Arctic Highlanders.’ In 1829 his expedition overwintered near an Inuit encampment. They maintained friendly relations with the group and the expedition's carpenter fitted one Inuit man with a wooden leg.

Most depictions of the Inuit occur in those panoramas that dealt with these specific ventures. The first encounter was represented in Marshalls’ 1820 panorama (Exh.2). This included two scenes that showed interactions between the explorers and the ‘Arctic Highlanders’. One depicted their first meeting: the other a game of football on the ice. These present the Inuit as novel: they are wearing furs, and using sledges and dogs. They are also meant, however, to appear slightly ridiculous. A scene described by Ross as ‘ludicrous’ showed two Inuit men using a mirror for the first time and being astonished by their reflections.²⁵³ This was probably based on an illustration that appeared in his voyage account (Fig.10). One commentator was amused by what he described as the ‘grotesque figures and fantastic gambols of the natives of Baffin’s Bay.’²⁵⁴

Panoramas in the 1830s offered a similar image of a friendly but backwards people. These dual ideas are encapsulated in the description offered in the guidebook for Burford’s 1834 panorama; the Inuit are reported to be peaceful and content, yet poor and ‘savage’, possessing ‘an indescribable mixture of wildness and ignorance.’²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Charles Dickens ‘The Lost Arctic Voyagers’ in *Household Words* 10(245) (1854), pp. 361-365.

²⁵² Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 207.

²⁵³ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Messrs Marshall's Grand Peristrepthic Panorama’, NLS, 18.

²⁵⁴ *Glasgow Herald* (8th February 1822).

²⁵⁵ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia’, NLS, 15.



Figure 10. Illustration from John Ross's account of his 1818 voyage. 'First Communication with the Natives of Prince Regents Bay' in John Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery for the Purpose of Exploring Baffin's Bay and Inquiring into the Probability of a North-West Passage* (London, 1819), 88, Lib R 91(98) Ros v Lib R collection, AUSC.

Exhibitions usually focused on what the British would have regarded as the unusual material culture of the Inuit. Adverts from this time variously promise depictions of 'A Snow Village', 'Natives with sledges' and 'Esquimaux with dogs and sledges.'²⁵⁶ The representation of an igloo encampment at Vauxhall Gardens is described as adding 'to the wildness and barbarous appearance of the scene' (Exh.10).²⁵⁷ Much is made of the fact that in several panoramas Ross is portrayed 'in polar dress', that is, furs, and Laidlaw's panorama included an image of an Inuit woman waving an ulu.²⁵⁸

The expeditions of the Franklin era rarely encountered the Inuit. Consequently, they are not such a prominent feature of exhibitions during the 1840s and 1850s. They

²⁵⁶ *Dublin Morning Register* (4th June 1835); *Bristol Mercury* (20th September 1834); *The Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier* (10th March 1835).

²⁵⁷ Handbill, 'Songs, Duets, Trios, Glees, and Choruses', Bodleian.

²⁵⁸ For example, the Marshall and Laidlaw panoramas both showed 'Captain Ross in his Polar Dress.' *Cheltenham Chronicle* (3rd July 1834); *Bristol Mercury* (20th September 1834). An ulu is an all-purpose Inuit woman's knife. Potter points out that this image was taken directly from one of the plates in Ross's voyage account. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 89.

occasionally appeared, however, in those panoramas that depicted scenes from older voyages. A handbill for Hamilton's panorama advertised that it illustrated the 'extraordinary manners and customs' of the Inuit, and underwrote the point by featuring an image of men building an igloo (Exh.25, Fig.11).²⁵⁹ Gompertz similarly included a scene showing Ross's 1818 meeting with the Arctic Highlanders (Exh.24).²⁶⁰ An Edinburgh panorama was unique in depicting, not the Inuit, but a sub-Arctic people: a 'Chief of the Copper Indians in Full Costume' (Exh.32).²⁶¹

The Inuit were not only represented in panoramas; the people themselves were put on display. Just as with panoramas, human displays presented a British-centric interpretation of Inuit culture. Methods of display, advertising material and the content of guidebooks all reinforced their 'otherness.'

One of the ways the Inuit were made to appear exotic was through displays of their material culture. Peculiar and unfamiliar objects, at least from a British point of view, were shown alongside the human exhibits. Hadlock's display included Inuit artefacts alongside a range of novelties such as Maori objects (these were described as coming from the 'South Pole' and included an 'Esquimaux blanket made of the skin of a kangaroo') and miscellanies like a 'Chinese bow' and a 'Fac simile of that wonderful ward in chancery, the Mermaid' (Exh.3).²⁶² The Inuit couple shown in 1848 wore fur clothing and were displayed alongside a kayak, a hut, and bows and arrows (Exh.17).²⁶³ In 1854 the display similarly included objects such as model huts and kayaks, hunting utensils and taxidermy animals (Exh.36).²⁶⁴ Sometimes these objects were used as props for showing off traditional skills. Hadlock's show included dart-throwing, live huskies

²⁵⁹ Handbill (1852), 'Grand Moving Panorama of the Arctic Regions', BD077253 *Bill Douglas and Peter Jewell Collection*, BDCM.

²⁶⁰ *Kentish Gazette* (14th December 1852).

²⁶¹ *The Scotsman* (12th Feb 1853).

²⁶² Exhibition catalogue (1824), 'An Interesting Account of those Extraordinary People, the Esquimaux Indians, from Baffin's Bay, North Pole, To which is Affixed a Vocabulary of Esquimaux Words, Translated into English by George Niagungitok, and a Catalogue of the Museum of Natural and Artificial Curiosities, which Accompany the Exhibition of the Esquimaux Indians', Mc.3 (16,771), NLS, 33-36.

²⁶³ *The Yorkshire Gazette* (19th February 1848).

²⁶⁴ *The Examiner* (4th February 1854); *The Era* (12th February 1854).

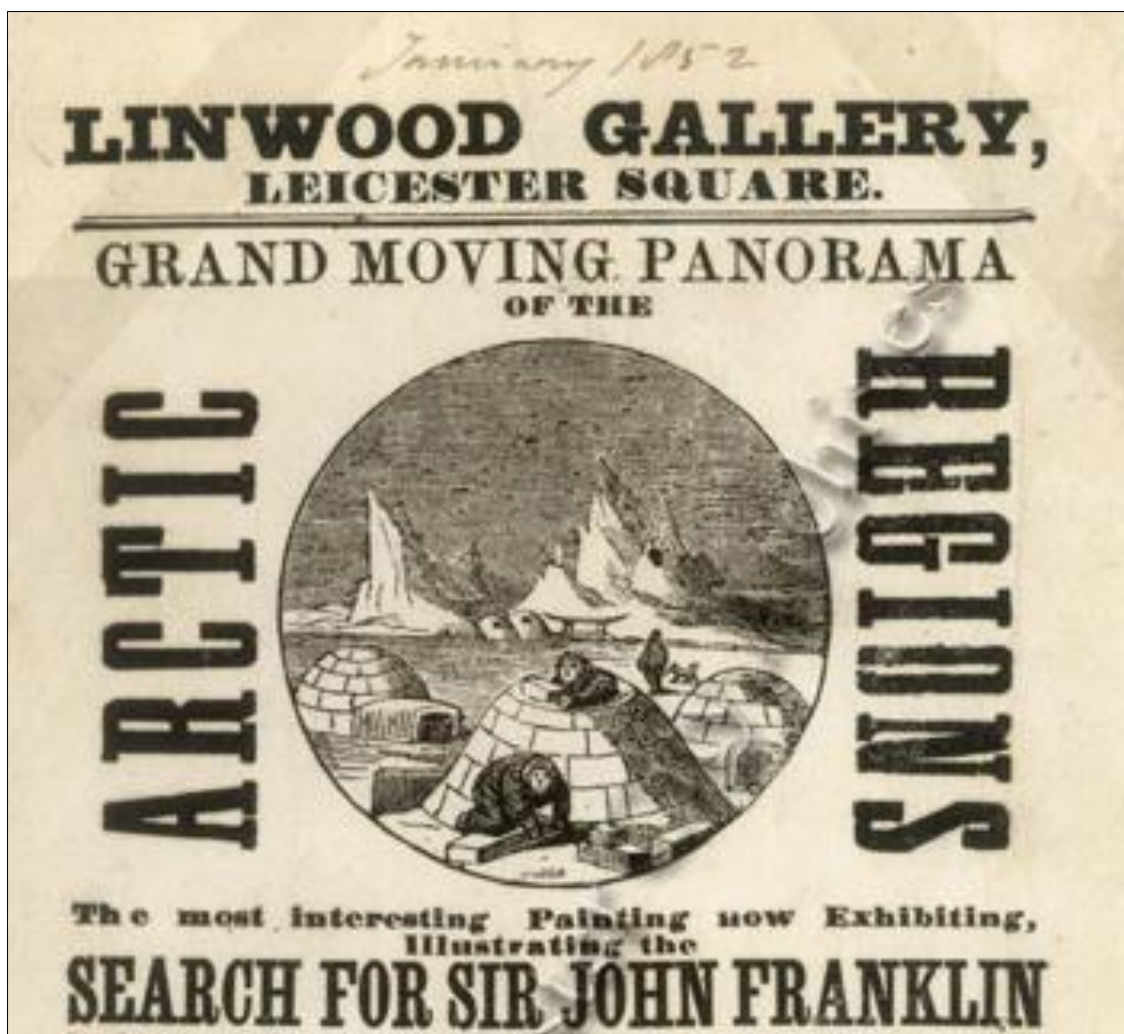


Figure 11. Part of the handbill for Hamilton's panorama at the Linwood Gallery Handbill (1852), 'Grand Moving Panorama of the Arctic Regions', BD077253 *Bill Douglas and Peter Jewell Collection, BDCM.*

pulling a sledge, a kayak demonstration and the performance of a ritual dance erroneously presented as equivalent to a marriage ceremony (Exh.3).²⁶⁵ In 1854 Ebierbing would pose for visitors sitting in a kayak and holding a spear (Exh.36). The display of these objects and practices were intended to emphasise the peculiarities of the Inuit way of life.

Guidebooks and adverts also focused on aspects of Inuit culture that would have appeared strange to British audiences. Hadlock's sensationalist guidebook described

²⁶⁵ Handbill (1822), 'Just Arrived from Bullock's Museum, the Greatest Novelty in Derby', *Museums* 1 (29) *John Johnson Collection, Bodleian*; *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (6th January 1825); *Cumberland Pacquet and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser* (7th June 1824).

shamanistic rituals, origin myths and the burial of the dead.²⁶⁶ It included anecdotes that variously presented the Inuit as foolish (one man attempting to count using his feet and falling over), heathen (a conjuring ritual) and barbaric (practising child exposure).²⁶⁷

Not only was the Inuit way of life seen as peculiar, their society was consistently portrayed as backwards and poverty-stricken. Panoramas invariably represented the Inuit as benefiting from the philanthropy of the British: receiving gifts (such as in the Marshalls' panorama) or being fitted with a wooden leg (a popular image in depictions of Ross's *Victory* expedition). The 1848 human display purportedly had a charitable purpose and visitors were told that the Inuit were starving and desperately in need of help (Exh.17). The handbill described the individuals on displays, and contrasted their life at home to how it was in Britain. Where they had been in a 'filthy state' and 'covered in vermin', they were now clean, having been taught to wash and given new clothing. Another outcome of their adoption into British society was a new ability to help with household tasks.²⁶⁸ The public seem to have been particularly fascinated by the Inuit practice of eating raw meat, which was interpreted as a sign that they were uncivilized. Both in 1848 and 1854 audiences are reassured that, on coming to Britain, the men and women on display had learned to prefer it cooked.²⁶⁹

There were commentators who did not recognise the version of the Inuit presented to them. Some visitors admired the ingenuity of their tools and survival techniques.²⁷⁰ However, despite these few dissenting voices, for the most part the public seem to have accepted this view of Inuit culture.

The portrayal of the Inuit as an uncivilized and outlandish people served to contrast them with British explorers. The public considered the Inuit interesting because they

²⁶⁶ Exhibition catalogue (1824), 'An Interesting Account', NLS, 7-12.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-20.

²⁶⁸ Ann Savours 'Early Eskimo Visitors to Britain' in *Geographical Journal* 36(6) (1963), pp. 336-343., 342.

²⁶⁹ Advert reproduced in *ibid.*, 342. *The Era* (12th February 1854). Similarly, in 1825 reports on a couple of English children who were forced to pose as Inuit described how supposedly they 'were brought to the custom of devouring raw meat' and later refused to eat anything else. *Morning Chronicle* (18th November 1826); *Chester Courant* (28th November 1826).

²⁷⁰ A writer commenting on the 1854 exhibition described how 'some of the implements exhibit singular ingenuity of contrivance; proving that, even under disadvantages such as those prevailing in the Arctic Circle, man's cunning is an over-match for nature.' *The Athenaeum* (11th March 1854).

were novel, not because they thought they could learn from them. It does not seem to have been considered that studying Inuit survival strategies could help the British explore the Arctic more effectively. The clothing, weapons and tools that allowed the Inuit to survive were considered curios rather than technologies that could be adopted.

Though audiences remained interested in the Arctic's indigenous population, during the 1850s representations of the Inuit decreased. The decline of the Arctic whaling industry meant there were fewer opportunities to bring individuals over for display. In addition, explorers during the Franklin era had little contact with them, at least until 1854 when John Rae learned about the fate of some of Franklin's men from a group he met on King William Island. Following this, the Inuit might have been seen as less benign. Suspicions were voiced concerning their possible part in the disappearance of the Franklin expedition. In any case, after the 1850s the explorers' Arctic, rather than the Arctic of the Inuit, was the more significant theme.

2.10 Depicting exploration

If representations of landscape and the Inuit dominated earlier in the period, later there was more interest in the human experience of exploration and the everyday life and deeds of British men in the Arctic. Themes of adventure became more prominent in the 1830s and grew in importance during the Franklin era. Familiar images of mountains, ice, polar bears and the Aurora Borealis were increasingly combined with depictions of the act of exploration itself.

The earliest panoramas, focusing on portrayals of the Arctic world, had paid little attention to the men who travelled there. Barker's 1819 panorama depicted some individuals, including the commanders, an officer taking a scientific reading and members of the crew hunting polar bears. However it provided few details about these men, and the rest of the crew are barely mentioned beyond praise of their 'ardour' in

trying to free the ships from the ice (Exh.1).²⁷¹ Human figures are more prominent in the final two scenes of Marshalls' panorama, which showed encounters between the explorers and Inuit (Exh.2). It is likely, however, that these were a vehicle for depicting the Inuit rather than the British men.

Panoramas occasionally evoked the adventure and dangers of exploration. A visitor to the Marshalls' panorama was impressed with a representation of a storm that emphasised the bravery of 'the bold, hardy and adventurous British mariners.'²⁷² Another production depicting Parry's 1824 voyage was advertised with the tagline that the expedition went '32 degrees further N.W. than any Ship had gone before' (Exh.6).²⁷³

Before the 1830s, however, such interpretations were the exception. Themes of adventure and hardship only became important following the return of John Ross's *Victory* expedition in 1833. The experience of Ross and his men was unparalleled in British exploration history. The expedition had been marked with some success: the discovery of a supposed new landmass that Ross named Boothia Land and the first attainment of the North Magnetic Pole.²⁷⁴ They were also, however, forced to spend an unprecedented four years in the Arctic when the *Victory* became beset in the ice and was abandoned. In the final year of the expedition the entire crew sledged over 200 miles to a site named Fury Beach where a naval ship had run aground the previous decade and where food stores could still be found. Eventually, they escaped in their lifeboats and were rescued by a whaling ship.²⁷⁵ No previous expedition had returned after surviving in the Arctic for so long.

The story of the expedition became a popular subject for panoramas. The most recurring scenes were those that illustrated the dangers and triumphs of the voyage: meeting the

²⁷¹ Key in Exhibition catalogue, 'Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen', NLS; *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷² *Glasgow Herald* (8th February 1822).

²⁷³ *The Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser* (3rd January 1829).

²⁷⁴ The North Magnetic Pole is distinct from the Geographic North Pole. It is found where the planet's magnetic field points downwards, whereas the geographic pole marks a point of latitude at 90°N. Compasses point towards the magnetic pole. Contemporaries did not always make the distinction; Ross was often presented as having reached the Geographic North Pole.

²⁷⁵ John Ross, *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North-West Passage, And of a Residence in the Arctic Regions During the Years 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833* (London, 1835), Wordie.765 *Wordie collection of polar exploration*, NLS.

Inuit, the ship beset in the ice, reaching the North Magnetic Pole, the journey to Fury Beach and the eventual rescue of the men. To a greater extent than before, the emphasis was on adventure and on the experience of British explorers rather than the inherent features of the Arctic itself.

This new focus is reflected both in the way panoramas were advertised and the response of commentators. An Edinburgh panorama announced that it showed ‘the RECENT DISCOVERIES, SUFFERINGS, PERILS, &C. OF Captain ROSS and his Gallant CREW’ (Exh.12).²⁷⁶ It was admired for its ‘characteristic portraits of the intrepid and indefatigable veteran and some of his principal companions.’²⁷⁷ Laidlaw’s panorama similarly illustrated the ‘perilous situation of the expedition... the most fearful adventures of modern times’ while Burford’s showed ‘the hardships and horrors to which our brave countrymen were subjected’ (Exh.13, 8).²⁷⁸

The increased importance of these themes is reflected in the guidebook for Burford’s 1834 panorama. In contrast to its 1819 counterpart, it expanded on human rather than natural history, giving a summary of British Arctic exploration undertaken up until that point.²⁷⁹ It offered biographical information about both John Ross and his second-in-command James Clark Ross and praised the crew for bearing hardships with ‘cheerfulness, sobriety and discipline’.²⁸⁰ Laidlaw’s guidebook also focused on the men; it contained a list of all the crewmembers, detailing their jobs aboard the ship and what they had done since returning from the expedition.²⁸¹

Themes of adventure became even more important during the 1850s. Panoramas began to include more scenes of human activity, showing how exploration was carried out as well as the landscape these activities took place in. This change was noted by a writer for *The Spectator* who observed that Gompertz’s panorama differed ‘from its predecessors chiefly in the particularity with which the occupations and adventure of the scenes no less than their natural features are described.’²⁸²

²⁷⁶ *Caledonian Mercury* (20th October 1834).

²⁷⁷ *Morning Post* (31st March 1834).

²⁷⁸ *The Guardian* (19th December 1835); *Morning Chronicle* (14th January 1834).

²⁷⁹ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia’, NLS, 6-10.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸² *The Spectator* (7th June 1851).

Though panoramas had always depicted some types of activity integral to exploration, such as hunting, in the 1850s they included more details about everyday life on an expedition. A panorama that was shown in Edinburgh in 1852 illustrated ‘numerous incidents of life in these latitudes- sledging, bear hunting, and so forth’ (Exh.32).²⁸³ Gompertz included scenes of ships overwintering and a whale being flensed while a panorama at Vauxhall Gardens contained a depiction of whale-hunting (Exh.24, 26).²⁸⁴ Another panorama at the Gallery of Illustration coupled images of the landscape ‘with the incidents which serve to vary the chilled and monotonous existence of the navigators who have penetrated and live in these icy domains’ (Exh.33).²⁸⁵ For example, an illustration of the Aurora Borealis was followed by one showing how the ships communicated with each other using signals.²⁸⁶ It even included a scene showing how Christmas Day was celebrated, with ‘the tables loaded with plum pudding and Arctic game.’²⁸⁷

Again, the Leicester Square panorama exemplified this change of focus (Exh.20). The explorers themselves figure more largely in the 1850 panorama than in either of the earlier ones. As well as depicting the crew carrying out various activities such as hunting polar bears, trapping Arctic foxes and pulling sledges, it also showed more man-made features on the landscape (Fig.12). These included beacons, buildings and a burial site containing the graves of those who had died on the expedition, a reminder of the dangers of exploration.²⁸⁸ It also included a snow wall; the guidebook explained how the wall helped the men find their way between the ships in the darkness of winter.²⁸⁹ The increased human component is reflected in the key to the panorama. In 1850 ten reference points denoted either men or evidence of their activity, as opposed to only three reference points in 1819 and five in 1834.²⁹⁰

²⁸³ *Caledonian Mercury* (6th December 1852).

²⁸⁴ *Kentish Gazette* (14th December 1852); *West Kent Guardian* (16th April 1853); *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser* (27th July 1852).

²⁸⁵ *The Era* (8th January 1854).

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *The Era* (25th December 1853).

²⁸⁸ Key in Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Summer and Winter Views’, BL.

²⁸⁹ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of Summer and Winter Views’, BL, 13.

²⁹⁰ Key in *Ibid.*; Key in Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen’, NLS; Key in Exhibition catalogue, ‘Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia’, NLS.

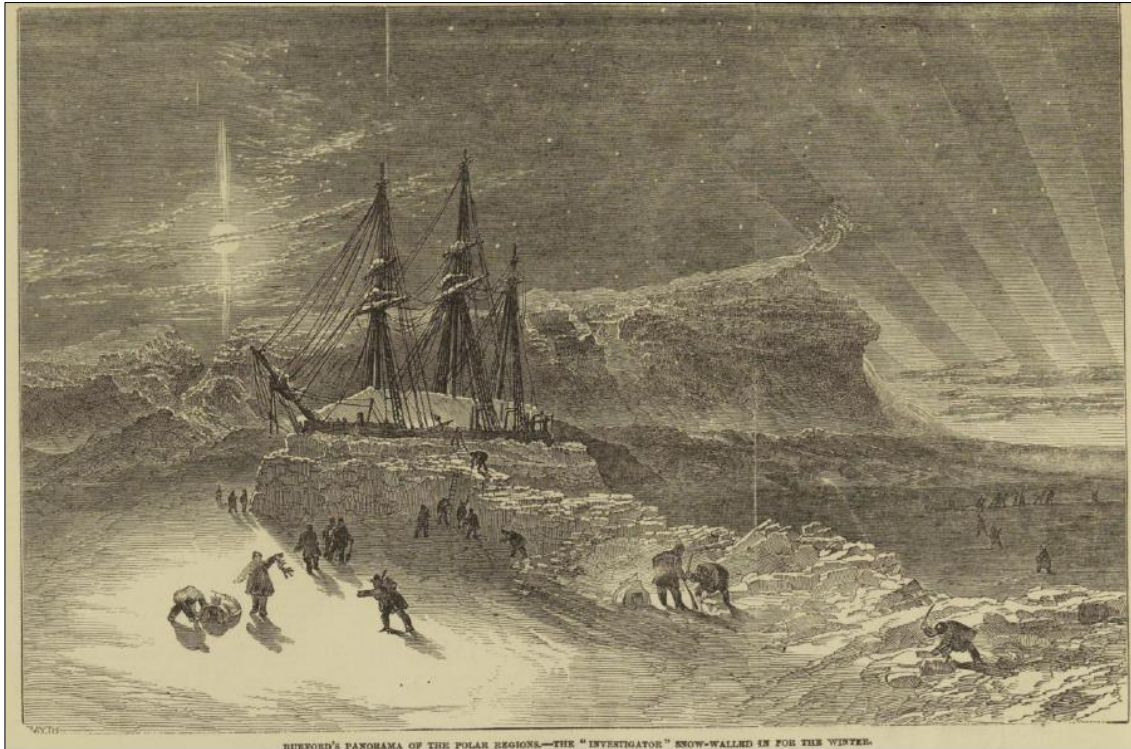


Figure 12. Illustration of the 1850 panorama at Leicester Square
Illustrated London News (February 23rd 1850). © Illustrated London News Ltd

The effect of these depictions of everyday life was to focus attention on the experiences of the men themselves. One visitor was prompted to wonder ‘at the amount of courage which enables voyagers to winter for two or three years amid such joyless and dangerous scenes’; another received ‘a vivid notion of the hardships that navigators must endure in these inclement and inhospitable regions.’²⁹¹

There are various reasons why themes of adventure might have become more prominent at this time. The first, and most prosaic, may be that proprietors needed to stay competitive as the number of Arctic exhibitions escalated. Introducing novel images of human activity alongside familiar ones of landscape might have been a way of getting an edge over competitors. Certainly, other innovations were introduced during this time as proprietors strove to distinguish their productions from those of their rivals. Some panoramas began to include scenes from multiple expeditions, maximising the material

²⁹¹ *The Era* (25th December 1853); *Reynolds Newspaper* (6th June 1852).

that could be drawn on.²⁹² Similarly, Burford halved the circle at his 1850 panorama to show two 180° instead of a single 360° view, also allowing for a greater variety of images to be shown (Exh.20, Fig.7).²⁹³ Gompertz tried to differentiate his panorama on other grounds: by size ('upwards of *a quarter of a mile in length*') and the fact that there were no breaks between scenes ('continuous from its commencement to the close') (Exh.24).²⁹⁴ The introduction of new themes might have been similarly intended to make panoramas stand out.

Another reason might be that later audiences were less impressed by depictions of Arctic scenery than their predecessors. By the 1850s the public had been exposed to Arctic images for decades, not only through exhibitions, but also plays, voyage accounts and the illustrated press. They were no longer novel. New perceptions of the region were required to maintain their interest.

Furthermore, it may be that, in their anxiety as to the fate of Franklin's missing expedition, the public of the 1850s were more interested than before in how exploration was carried out. Depictions of mundane everyday tasks may have reassured audiences that it was possible to survive in the Arctic and given them hope that Franklin's men might be safe.

Whatever the reason, by the 1850s panoramas had come to focus on the activities of the men who visited the Arctic as well as the region itself. They satiated audiences' curiosity about everyday life on an expedition and the men who joined them. As will be expanded on in the following chapter, the change of focus from depictions of landscape to the human experience was part of a wider trend evident during the Franklin era. Ideas about heroism and adventure became even more significant as the century progressed and began to dominate later polar exhibitions.

²⁹² Hamilton, Gompertz and an 1852 panorama shown in Edinburgh used this technique.

²⁹³ Key in Exhibition catalogue, 'Description of Summer and Winter Views', BL.

²⁹⁴ *Hampshire Advertiser* (15th November 1851); *The Yorkshire Gazette* (22nd October 1853); *Morning Chronicle* (1st May 1851).

2.11 Audiences and access

The successful dissemination of these images depended, of course, on people being able to visit the exhibitions. This section discusses the accessibility of Arctic exhibitions in order to assess their impact. It shows that there were various barriers to admission which reduced how effective they were.

It is safe to conclude that most panoramas were popular and well-attended. The longevity of some productions, particularly during the 1850s, suggest that they could be commercially successful.²⁹⁵ A lack of reliable source material regarding visitor numbers, however, means that it is impossible to gauge the influence of exhibitions by this means alone. The only information about visitation comes from the figures quoted in adverts, which are likely to be exaggerated. Proprietors encouraged attendance by emphasising how fashionable and popular an exhibition was. To this end they would describe how oversubscribed it had been during a previous showing; an article about a panorama shown in Bristol in 1829 warned potential visitors that in the past many people had been ‘obliged to go away without seeing the Panorama, owing to its numerous visitors’, in the 1850s, Gompertz’s panorama was apparently ‘so crowded up to the last night, that hundreds were unable to obtain admission’ (Exh.6, 24).²⁹⁶ They would also publish overblown visitor numbers. The 1834 panorama at the Queen’s Bazaar supposedly attracted 20,000 people in its first five months while in 1836 Laidlaw reported that 47,600 people had come to his production when it showed in Leeds (Exh.11, 13).²⁹⁷ In 1853 an Edinburgh panorama had allegedly been seen by a huge 800,000 visitors on a European tour (Exh.32).²⁹⁸ Similarly, Hadlock claimed that 40,000 people visited his Inuit exhibition in London and the Inuit shown in 1848 were reportedly ‘visited by upwards of 12,000 persons in Hull, Manchester, Beverly,

²⁹⁵ This was not always the case. In 1852 the proprietor of two panoramas, one of which had an Arctic theme, applied for insolvency at a debtors’ court. He told the judge that the exhibition had been a failure and that the ‘expenses were considerable.’ *Morning Post* (28th February 1852).

²⁹⁶ *Bristol Mirror* (26th September 1829); *Kentish Gazette* (14th December 1852).

²⁹⁷ *Morning Chronicle* (8th May 1834); *The Yorkshire Gazette* (12th November 1836).

²⁹⁸ *The Scotsman* (5th February 1853).

Drifffield, &c' (Exh.3, 17).²⁹⁹ These numbers seem unlikely when compared to similarly priced attractions. In 1823 an art exhibition in Leeds was visited by 4827 people over its eleven week run, while in 1841 the Tower of London's Armoury and the Crown Jewels attracted 40,000 and 18,561 visitors respectively over the course of a whole year.³⁰⁰

It is also clear that there were some groups that were excluded from exhibitions on either geographical or financial grounds.

Conclusions about the geographic spread of exhibitions must be treated with caution. As outlined above it is likely that there were exhibitions for which there is no evidence, meaning it is impossible to state conclusively that, for example, a certain area was never visited by an Arctic show. Nevertheless, it is possible to get a general idea of where exhibitions were concentrated.

Citizens of the larger cities, particularly London, had reasonably frequent opportunities to attend Arctic exhibitions. Almost half of the thirty-three polar panoramas launched between 1819 and 1860 were shown in London, sometimes exclusively. In the same period, Dublin hosted six Arctic panoramas, Bristol five, York four, Edinburgh four and Manchester three. Manchester and York were also visited twice by exhibitions of Inuit.

Geographical access was increased by the fact that most exhibitions during this era toured, visiting multiple towns and cities. Tours could last for years, the canvas of a panorama 'frequently worn out before its welcome.'³⁰¹ Notably extensive tours included those of the Marshalls and Hadlock in the 1820s, Laidlaw in the 1830s and Gompertz and Hamilton in the 1850s (Exh. 2, 3, 13, 24, 25). This not only allowed people from the towns to visit. It also provided opportunities for people living in nearby rural areas who might travel into town occasionally. In 1829 Sinclair offered an extra show-time on market days in Exeter 'to accommodate Country Families' (Exh.6).³⁰² No later exhibitions toured as extensively and so in geographical terms the British public

²⁹⁹ *Northampton Mercury* (21st June 1823); Advert reproduced in Savours 'Early Eskimo Visitors to Britain' (1963), 342.

³⁰⁰ Both had a shilling entrance fee. Fawcett, *The Rise of English Provincial Art*, 133; Joseph Hume, *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art* (1841), *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online*, <http://goo.gl/ROCPT5>, Accessed 7th May 2015, iv-v.

³⁰¹ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 87.

³⁰² *The Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser* (3rd January 1829).

probably had greater access to polar exhibitions during this period than at any other time. In the 1850s, in particular, the sheer number of Arctic panoramas ensured that they were widely spread.

There were, however, parts of the country that were seldom or never visited by exhibitions, whose populace, as a consequence, had very limited access to polar displays. This included large but sparsely populated areas such as Cornwall, North Yorkshire, the Scottish Highlands, the border regions between England and Scotland, and the whole of Wales, as well as its neighbouring English counties.³⁰³

A more significant barrier to access was cost. All the exhibitions of this period were commercial entities and, as such, charged an entry fee. The average fee for an adult was a shilling; however, prices fluctuated depending on factors such as the venue (theatres seem to have been more expensive than sites such as town halls and assembly rooms), location (the same show could be priced differently in different towns and cities) and type of seat (the gallery was less expensive than a balcony seat). Concessionary times and dates were sometimes available, and often admission was lowered during the last few days that an exhibition was shown. This meant that the ticket price for the same show could range from as low as three pence to as high as three or four shillings.

The availability of cheaper tickets would have increased access for people on lower incomes. There was an effort to include the working classes.³⁰⁴ One proprietor lowered his rates to allow ‘all classes’ to visit the exhibition, another reduced his prices to allow ‘the whole community to visit’ and a third advertised a gallery price of 6d as being suitable for ‘working people and servants’ (Exh.6, 14, 12).³⁰⁵ An early evening showing in Sheffield was aimed at ‘Parties who cannot be out late’: possibly workers who had to get up early (Exh.23).³⁰⁶ Charles Dickens description of a (fictional) panorama audience

³⁰³ The whole area between York and Edinburgh was only visited by a single exhibition-Hamilton’s panorama that toured around the north of England in the 1850s. The Highlands similarly only saw one panorama, shown in Inverness in 1851. The only documented exhibition in Wales was the Inuit toured by Hadlock in the 1820s.

³⁰⁴ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 41. Hyde argues that though there was an initial attempt by proprietors to make panorama-visiting an upper class activity, this changed when admission charges were generally lowered and advertisements started to address ‘the public’ rather than ‘the nobility and gentry.’ Hyde, *Panoromania!*, 39.

³⁰⁵ *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (15th August 1829); *Dublin Morning Register* (4th June 1835); *The Scotsman* (18th October 1834).

³⁰⁶ *Sheffield Independent* (15th November 1851).

provides further evidence that working class people attended exhibitions. In his story one visitor to Burford's 1850 panorama finds himself surrounded by 'two Scotch gardeners; several English composers, accompanied by their wives; three brass founders from the neighbourhood of Long Acre; two coach painters, a gold-beater and his only daughter, by trade a stay-maker; and several other working-people from sundry parts of Great Britain.'³⁰⁷

Despite these efforts, it seems likely that exhibition audiences were largely made up of the middle and upper classes. Though there are issues with trying to judge relative wealth during this time, estimates of some average wages suggests that visiting exhibitions would have been outwith the means of most of the working class.³⁰⁸ In 1835 a servant's wages ranged from fifty guineas per annum (1050 shillings) for a butler to seven guineas (147 shillings) for a nursery maid.³⁰⁹ In 1850 a cotton spinner earned around twenty-three shillings a week, a coal miner twenty shillings and an agricultural labourer ten.³¹⁰ The following decade agricultural labourers are estimated to have earned between three and thirteen shillings a week depending on which part of the country they worked in.³¹¹ It is unlikely that any of these workers could spend a significant portion of their income on an expensive leisure activity such as visiting an exhibition. This is reinforced by the fact that in 1890 the Football League discouraged the attendance of lower class supporters at football games by raising the minimum adult admission price to sixpence: still half the price of the average entry fee of an exhibition.³¹²

More evidence that cost was a prohibitive factor comes in the form of an 1841 parliamentary report. The *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art* examined the impact of lowering the admission prices to various London attractions. It found that, perhaps obviously, there was a correlation between decreasing the entrance fee and increasing audience numbers. For example, the Tower of London

³⁰⁷ Charles Dickens 'Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller' in *Household Words* 1(4) (1850), pp. 73-77., 76.

³⁰⁸ It is likely that average wages fluctuated in different parts of the country.

³⁰⁹ John Burnett and Ian Kershaw, *A History of the Cost of Living* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 241.

³¹⁰ John July Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850-1939* (London, 1989), 41.

³¹¹ Burnett and Kershaw, *A History of the Cost of Living*, 250.

³¹² Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995* (Preston, 1997), 56.

attracted over eight times the number of previous visitors when it reduced its entrance fee from 2s to 6d.³¹³ The National Gallery also offered ‘a gratifying instance of success from free admission’ when their numbers quadrupled.³¹⁴ When the admission charge at Hampton Palace was abolished in 1840 it attracted 122,339 visitors, a group that it was observed consisted ‘mostly of the working class.’³¹⁵ These findings prove that there was a potential audience for such cultural activities that were excluded only on the grounds of cost. The commentator Edward Edwards came to the same conclusion a year after the report was published. In a critique of English art galleries, he commented that public demand for art existed but that most sites charged exclusionary and ‘obstructive’ entry fees.³¹⁶ It thus seems likely that there was a segment of the population who were sufficiently interested in Arctic exploration to want to visit these exhibitions but who were prohibited from doing so on financial grounds.

Of course, the reach of an exhibition went beyond its direct audience. Information about what an exhibition contained was disseminated in newspaper articles and adverts. These promoted images of the Arctic that reached its readers as well as those who actually saw the exhibition. In addition, often provincial newspapers would publish reports about London-based exhibitions and so provided a level of access to people who could not visit themselves. The impact of exhibitions was nevertheless reduced by the exclusion of certain groups who were not exposed to the ideas contained in the displays.

2.12 Conclusion

In the first half of the nineteenth century, then, exploration of the Arctic region captured the public interest and ensured that it was a popular subject for exhibitions.

Comparisons between polar travel and space travel are common and, indeed, to nineteenth-century audiences the Arctic, with its bizarre natural phenomena and

³¹³ Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, 105; Joseph Hume, *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art* (1841), iv.

³¹⁴ Hume, *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art*, iv.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, v.

³¹⁶ Edwards, *The Administrative Economy of the Fine Arts in England*, 18.

outlandish indigenous peoples, could have been another planet. Panoramas, human displays and other exhibitions gave people the opportunity to learn about it. As a form of simulated reality, they were trusted to give audiences a faithful impression of the region. This educational dimension separated them from shows that were focused on entertainment and gave them some museum-like qualities.

The treatment of the Arctic in exhibitions also evolved. At first, focused on the region itself, exhibitions emphasised its natural features, fauna and indigenous population. Later the attention of the public turned to the experience of their countrymen in this new world. By the end of the period, depictions of the deeds of British men in the Arctic were becoming as ubiquitous as representations of landscape and native peoples. This was the beginning of a general trend which saw themes of heroism, adventure and everyday life on expeditions become even more important.

Because not everyone was able to access exhibitions, they may not have been as influential as other types of media, such as newspapers and books, in disseminating information about the Arctic. For those who did attend exhibitions, however, the format could be more effective than either of these. To one reviewer the 1834 exhibition at Vauxhall Gardens gave ‘a better idea of the position of the gallant navigator [Ross], than all the books and prints to which the subject has given occasion’; twenty years later an 1854 panorama at the Gallery of Illustration gave ‘a better idea of the dangerous and the strange mode of life in these inhospitable regions than pages of description’ (Exh.10, 33).³¹⁷

Many of the defining characteristics of these early exhibitions remained throughout the rest of the time under study. For the most part polar exhibitions stayed outside the direct purview of the museum sector. They continued to be largely temporary and small-scale affairs, hosted for profit-making purposes. They were also most popular when, for some reason, polar exploration was in the news.

There were changes as well as consistencies, however. The way in which the Arctic regions were exhibited began to transform after 1854. The panoramas that had been so

³¹⁷ 'Things Theatrical' in *The Monthly Magazine: or, British Register of Literature, Sciences, and the Belles-Lettres* 18(103) (1834), pp. 111-112; *Illustrated London News* (31st December 1853).

ubiquitous in the first half of the century were replaced with other types of display, and the number of human exhibitions of Inuit also reduced.

Several factors contributed to these developments, including the growth of the museum sector. The most significant change, however, was the unveiling of what had happened to the Franklin expedition, beginning with the recovery of the first 'relics', or object-based evidence, in 1854. This not only changed the public perception of the Arctic, it also provided a collection of artefacts for display and heralded a period where exhibitions were primarily object-based rather than image-based. The following chapter will discuss these changes.

Chapter 3: The Franklin relics on display

3.1 Introduction

In 1845 an expedition led by John Franklin left Britain for the Arctic, and did not return. Its disappearance prompted years of searches for the missing ships and crews. While no survivors were ever found, one result was the recovery of a number of so-called ‘relics’: objects that had belonged to the lost men. Brought back to Britain and put on display, these became central to the way the Arctic was perceived for the coming decades.

The Franklin era can be considered a demarcating line in the history of British polar exploration. The search period has been described as ‘a golden era’ of exploration during which much of the region was charted.³¹⁸ The following chapter shows how developments during this time also had a profound impact on the way the polar regions were exhibited. Displays of relics were entirely dissimilar to the polar exhibitions of the past and they had a long term effect on how exploration was portrayed thereafter.

The first section will discuss the existing scholarship and source material. The next will outline the relevant historical background and describe the exhibitions in which the relics were shown.

Following this, the next section will examine the objects themselves and compare displays of relics to other forms of polar exhibition. The fifth and sixth sections are concerned with the response to these displays. First, the contemporary reaction to the exhibitions will be analysed to discern what meanings the relics held for their audiences. Significantly, the way they were decoded focused attention on the human experience of exploration rather than the characteristics of the Arctic region itself. Secondly, the response to later displays of the relics will be examined. This will show that the Franklin objects had the same significance for audiences later in the period as

³¹⁸ Owen Beattie and John Geiger, *Frozen in Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition* (2012), Kindle edition, <https://goo.gl/18aT57>, 24%.

they had for those in the mid-nineteenth century, even as the Franklin expedition lost its dominant place in the history of polar exploration.

Literally hundreds of relics were recovered in the decades following the disappearance of the Franklin expedition. Some of these were deposited in museums while others remained in private ownership. This chapter deals primarily with two collections: the first made by John Rae in 1854 and the second by Leopold McClintock in 1859. Not only were these among the first and most significant groups of relics to be recovered, both were put on public display.

3.2 Contribution and sources

A great deal has been written about the Franklin expedition, its disappearance and the subsequent search period. As the first evidence as to what had happened to the men since leaving Beechey Island, the discoveries of Rae and McClintock usually figure largely in these accounts. Until recently, however, little had been written about the public reaction to the relics, and still less about their exhibition.

Both David and Potter briefly discuss the relics. Potter argues that images of the objects published in the press, specifically the *Illustrated London News*, had more impact than the displays themselves.³¹⁹ He argues that contemporary viewers had difficulty interpreting the relics.³²⁰ The Arctic evoked by the relics was too destructive to qualify as sublime; however, it was still possible to admire the men who travelled there.³²¹

David's conclusions are similar to those of Potter. While he does not discuss how the relics were displayed immediately after their retrieval, he does consider their appearance in exhibitions later in the century.³²² David agrees that the relics suggested an 'unfriendly Arctic.'³²³ Viewers were reminded that these broken objects represented the

³¹⁹ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 101.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

³²² David, *The Arctic*, 162-63.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 167.

ruin of the entire expedition.³²⁴ He also concurs with Potter in concluding that, while devaluing notions of a sublime Arctic, exhibitions of relics emphasised themes of heroism, doing much ‘to focus attention on the heroic endeavours, and sometimes tragic fate, of earlier explorers.’³²⁵

Neither David nor Potter reach these conclusions through an extensive examination of the displays themselves. They do not use direct evidence such as museum catalogues or contemporary exhibition reviews.

More recently, Craciun has carried out a more in-depth analysis of how the relics were received by the general public. This is provided in a chapter of *Writing Arctic Disaster* as well as in an article derived from the same material.³²⁶ Craciun addresses the lack of scholarship on the subject, suggesting that confusion over how the objects should be categorised, both historically and in the present day, meant they have escaped attention within any particular discipline.³²⁷ She examines how different collections were presented, arguing that Franklin’s supporters, and particularly his widow Jane Franklin, attempted to impose a particular narrative on the relics. They were ‘sacred objects’ signifying ‘epic narratives of self -sacrifice.’³²⁸ This was problematic for two reasons. First, as modern and everyday objects they were associated with the ‘commercially degraded present.’³²⁹ Secondly, a number of agencies offered different interpretations of the relics. As such, it was impossible to control how they were presented.³³⁰

Craciun’s conclusions are pertinent and will be drawn on when appropriate. The following discussion similarly examines how the public perceived the relics, and what messages were implicit in their display. While Craciun largely focuses on reproductions of the objects in media such as the illustrated press, however, the analysis offered here is based on a close study of the exhibitions themselves.

³²⁴ Ibid., 167.

³²⁵ Ibid., 176.

³²⁶ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*; Adriana Craciun 'The Franklin Relics in the Arctic Archive' in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 42(01) (2014), pp. 1-31.

³²⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 36.

³²⁸ Ibid., 35; *ibid.*, 54.

³²⁹ Ibid., 35.

³³⁰ Ibid., 54.

Arguments regarding the replacement of the sublime by the heroic by Loomis, Riffenburgh and others, discussed in the introduction to the thesis, are also highly relevant. One line of argument pursued by these scholars is that developments during the Franklin era affected how the Arctic was perceived. This chapter will show that these conclusions are supported by evidence from exhibitions.

The evidence used in this chapter comes largely from contemporary newspaper reports, museum catalogues and other ephemeral sources. Newspaper reviews are particularly valuable in the absence of other evidence, such as interpretative material, to show how the relics were presented. The messages that are implicit in the displays are reflected in the way that journalists decode exhibitions, particularly when multiple writers show a similar response.

Some displays received a greater amount of press coverage than others. When the exhibition at the Painted Hall opened in 1855 most newspapers simply reported the fact without any editorial comment.³³¹ Far more attention was paid to the 1859 display in the United Service Institution (USI). This may have been because the first collection had become tainted with controversy following claims, made at the time the relics were recovered, that some of Franklin's men had been cannibalised. It may also be that the second collection attracted more attention because it was larger, contained objects seen as more interesting, such as the written record, or because it was viewed as more conclusive as to the fate of the expedition.

The contents and layout of each display are detailed in two contemporary museum catalogues. Neither are official publications. The first, published in 1858, was compiled by William Parker Snow, a writer and journalist who had travelled to the Arctic on one of the search expeditions. In creating the catalogue, Snow reportedly had the hope of 'keeping alive the public sympathy, and rekindling general interest in the fate of Sir John Franklin.'³³² The catalogue listed the contents of the Arctic displays in three

³³¹ See, for example, *Cambridge Independent Press* (30th June 1855) and *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (14th June 1855).

³³² Museum catalogue (1858), 'A Catalogue of the Arctic Collection in the British Museum: With a List of the Arctic Relics in the United Service Museum and the Painted Hall at Greenwich', 3.279 NLS, 3.

separate institutions: the Painted Hall at Greenwich, the British Museum (BM) and the USI.³³³

The second catalogue was published later and records what was displayed in the USI after the relics collected by McClintock were added to its collection in 1860.³³⁴ As well as object lists, it contained an introduction describing the historical background to the collection and highlighting the most significant artefacts.³³⁵ The catalogue also provided short biographies of both John and Jane Franklin and a reproduction of a commemorative tablet erected on Beechey Island.

Neither of these catalogues were sanctioned by the authorities. The BM refused to sell Snow's publication while the second was condemned by Jane Franklin as a 'vulgar catchpenny publication' and 'miserable production.'³³⁶ It appears that the USI were in the process of preparing an official catalogue; however, they failed to publish it, saying that the 'sale would distract the Curators from their duty.'³³⁷

Because of this, the catalogues do not necessarily interpret the objects in the same way as the displays. They do not record the official line. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that they accurately record both what the exhibitions contained and how they were arranged. In this respect they are invaluable.

3.3 The history and exhibit of the Franklin expedition

After almost a ten-year hiatus a naval expedition left Britain in 1845 on another attempt to find the Northwest Passage. John Franklin commanded 128 men and two ships- the

³³³ The description of the Arctic display in the USI was prior to the addition of relics recovered by McClintock.

³³⁴ The catalogue is undated but seems to have been compiled soon after the relics went on display in the USI in October 1859. Museum catalogue (undated), 'Catalogue of the Franklin Relics, in the Museum of the United Service Institution, Whitehall', 3.279(1), NLS.

³³⁵ The text used in the introduction also appeared in the form of an article in the *The London Standard* (17th October 1859). It is not clear which came first.

³³⁶ Craciun 'The Franklin Relics' (2014), 27; Journal entry (Jane Franklin, 3rd January 1860), 'Journals 1 January to 20 May 1860', MS/248/119-20 *Jane Franklin collection*, SPRI, 13-14.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

Erebus and the *Terror*. The expedition utilised the latest maritime technology and was well resourced. The ships were an early form of ice-strengthened vessel and so many supplies were taken on board that a transport vessel accompanied the expedition as far as the Orkney Islands in order to carry it all.³³⁸

Franklin was already well-known to the public. He was a veteran of the Napoleonic wars and the American War of Independence, as well as three previous Arctic expeditions, two of which he had commanded. He had become famous as ‘the man who ate his boots’, after an overland journey where he and his party had survived by eating shoe leather. According to contemporary press reports his appointment as leader of the 1845 expedition was welcomed: ‘the command of the expedition has been intrusted to the celebrated Sir John Franklin, whose name is intimately mixed up with everything to do with Arctic discovery.’³³⁹

When Franklin had not returned by 1848 the first of a series of search expeditions was sent to try and rescue the missing men. Over the next six years a further ten expeditions (one of which involved a fleet of six ships) searched without success. In 1850 traces of Franklin’s crews, including three graves, were found on Beechey Island where the men had spent their first winter. There were no signs, however, of where they had gone or what had happened to them afterwards.

Finally, in 1854, John Rae, a Hudson Bay Company employee and experienced Arctic explorer, discovered what had happened to some of the crew from an Inuit group he encountered on King William Island. Rae learned that a group of men had died from starvation while camping nearby. Some had been cannibalised, an element of the story that proved highly controversial. The Inuit possessed a number of items that had belonged to these men, including cutlery inscribed with their owner’s initials and the gold braid from a naval uniform.³⁴⁰ Rae bought these and brought them back to Britain (Fig.13).

Further efforts led to the retrieval of more objects left by Franklin’s men. A Hudson Bay Company expedition led by factor James Anderson collected some in 1856.

³³⁸ *Morning Chronicle* (26th April 1845).

³³⁹ *The Glasgow Herald* (23rd May 1845).

³⁴⁰ Ken McGoogan, *The Arctic Journals* (Victoria, 2012), 240-42.

Another expedition, funded by Franklin's wife and led by Leopold McClintock between 1857 and 1859, found a large number of objects, including the only written record left by the expedition (Fig.14). This message recorded the death of Franklin in 1847 and abandonment of the ships in 1848. They also discovered the first human remains.

The process of recovering the material remains of the expedition continued up until the 1880s with the discoveries of explorers such as Charles Francis Hall and Frederick Schwatka. Arguably, it continues to the present day.³⁴¹

Relics were first exhibited to the public in 1855, when a selection of those brought back by Rae were put on display in the Painted Hall in Greenwich (Exh.39). The Painted Hall had been open to the public since the previous century, with the entry fee used to support naval pensioners housed in the nearby Greenwich Hospital.³⁴² It was a popular institution; in the early 1830s it had drawn over 50,000 visitors a year, a number which increased after the establishment of a railway link from central London in 1836.³⁴³ Though it principally displayed maritime-themed art, it also housed some artefacts including a collection associated with naval hero Horatio Nelson. The Franklin display consisted of a single case of objects including a selection of silverware, knives, tins and other miscellaneous objects. The cutlery bore the initials of various officers on the expedition.³⁴⁴

A few years later Jane Franklin gave the care of the relics recovered by McClintock to the Admiralty with 'a request that they might be deposited in some national institution, when they would be open to the public.'³⁴⁵ This was duly followed and they were placed in the USI, the museum of the armed forces located at Whitehall (Exh.44).³⁴⁶

³⁴¹ Remains of the Franklin expedition are still being sought. The Canadian government agency 'Parks Canada' conducted annual marine archaeological investigations in search of the ships in 2008 and then annually from 2010 onwards. In 2014 they succeeded in locating the wreck of the *Erebus*. In 2016 the *Terror* was discovered by the Arctic Research Foundation. 'The Franklin Expedition', *Parks Canada*, <http://goo.gl/SQGFFV>, Accessed 10th March 2015.

³⁴² Pieter van der Merwe, *A Refuge For All: A Short History of Greenwich Hospital* (London, 2010); Kevin Littlewood and Beverley Butler, *Of Ships and Stars: Maritime Heritage and the Founding of the National Maritime Museum Greenwich* (London, 1998), 10.

³⁴³ Merwe, *A Refuge For All*, 24.

³⁴⁴ Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS, 30.

³⁴⁵ *The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* (13th January 1860).

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Correspondence (10th October 1859), Paget to McClintock, MS 248/405; *D Great Britain, Admiralty collection*, SPRI.

The USI had been established in 1831 but was only accessible to officers above a certain rank and their guests. Consequently, visitation was low. In 1850, despite their central London location, they had half as many visitors as the Painted Hall.³⁴⁷ These entry requirements were relaxed to allow the public to view the Franklin relics. Anyone could visit for free upon application and subject to strict limits on visitor numbers.³⁴⁸

The USI already had a small Arctic collection. Though this was largely made up of ethnographic artefacts it included some objects related to exploration, including items found on Beechey Island and relics recovered in 1856 by James Anderson.³⁴⁹ With the addition of McClintock's collection, the USI came to hold the largest assortment of relics to be found in one place. These were 'ticketed with all the information that could be obtained and surmised respecting them' and spread over twelve cases and a table-top display.³⁵⁰ A wall panel listed all 129 members of the crew.

From 1855 a third group of Arctic material was put on show in the BM (Exh.41). The 'Barrow Collection', so-called because it had been assembled by John Barrow, the Second Secretary to the Admiralty, consisted of almost 500 objects.³⁵¹ Most of these were ethnographic in nature, though it also included geological and zoological specimens.³⁵² Only around 10% of the collection related to exploration and a fraction of this to Franklin. Most of what came to be termed Franklin relics were in fact related to the search voyages rather than to the Franklin expedition itself. They included a print of the 'Arctic Council', medals, models of equipment, and photographs.³⁵³

The Barrow Collection had previously been displayed in Barrow's home town of Ulverstone in Lancashire and then at the Royal Polytechnic Institute in London, where it was one of many 'novelties': billed alongside a lecture about the human voice and a

³⁴⁷ Altick, *The Shows of London*, 467.

³⁴⁸ *London City Press* (5th November 1859).

³⁴⁹ Altick, *The Shows of London*, 300; Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS, 25-26.

³⁵⁰ *The Western Daily Press* (18th October 1859).

³⁵¹ The collector John Barrow was the son of the Second Secretary of the same name who had been integral to the renewal of British Arctic exploration in 1818. The senior Barrow had helped organise the Franklin expedition but died a few years after its departure.

³⁵² Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS, 5-24.

³⁵³ The 'Arctic Council' referred to a group of men who, due to their experience, were consulted on polar affairs. They were famously depicted in an 1851 portrait by Stephen Pearce, though the meeting shown never actually took place.

singing mouse (Exh.40).³⁵⁴ In the BM it formed part of the permanent display in the newly-instituted ethnography gallery.³⁵⁵ The objects relating to exploration were laid alongside each other in a single case.³⁵⁶

3.4 Sacred relics: sites for display

These displays bore little resemblance to previous exhibitions which had incorporated themes of exploration. They used objects rather than images and they were shown in formal museum settings rather than in venues associated with the entertainment industry. The following section explores these ideas. It examines the nature of the objects themselves and draws contrasts between displays of relics and other Arctic exhibitions.

Before the recovery of the first relics, the Franklin story had been addressed in other types of display. It had been a popular subject for panoramas. In fact, as described in the previous chapter, this period saw the largest concentration of Arctic-themed panoramas so far, with over nineteen held between 1849 and 1854. Some of these portrayed either the Franklin expedition or the subsequent search voyages. Gompertz's panorama showed Franklin leaving England and another presented a montage of scenes from Franklin's previous voyages, including a 'Correct Likeness of Sir John Franklin, in a

³⁵⁴ Craciun and Potter have assumed that the 'relics' on display in the Polytechnic Institute were those brought back by Rae, and indeed some contemporary newspaper reports indicate that this was the case. However, based on descriptions of the collection it appears that they were actually objects brought back from Beechey Island several years earlier. In addition, contemporary press reports show that in June, when they were supposed to be in the Polytechnic Institute, the Rae relics were actually on display in the Painted Hall. *The Caledonian Mercury* (4th August 1855); *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (15th July 1855); *Illustrated London News* (14th July 1855); *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (14th June 1855); *The Examiner* (30th June 1855).

³⁵⁵ Brian Roberts 'Notes on the Barrow Collection of Arctic Equipment' in *The Geographical Journal* 95(5) (1940), pp. 368-380. An 'Ethnographical Room' was opened sometime between 1843 and 1849. Museum catalogue (1843), 'Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum', Mu30- g.28, GU; Museum catalogue (1849), 'Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum', Mu30- g.28, GU.

³⁵⁶ Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS, 8-12.

sledge drawn by a Dog' (Exh.24, 32).³⁵⁷ Another illustrated the search for Franklin alongside the story of the *Victory* expedition (Exh.25).³⁵⁸ James Clark Ross's rescue expedition was portrayed in various productions (Exh.20, 25, 33).³⁵⁹ Other panoramas, though they did not specifically portray the Franklin expedition, nevertheless exploited the topicality of the subject by depicting older voyages or generic Arctic scenes. In 1849 the Haymarket Rooms hosted a panorama 'combining the results of the principal Arctic navigators' while the Colosseum's 'A View of the Polar Regions' depicted an Inuit man and native fauna against a snowy backdrop (Exh.18, 19).³⁶⁰ A few years later a 'moving diorama' of Arctic scenery was shown in Vauxhall Gardens and images of the region were added to an existing panorama called the 'Ocean Mail' (Exh.26, 33).³⁶¹

Though displays of relics ultimately dealt with the same subject matter as these productions, they had a different appeal. While panoramas aimed to be visually impressive, the relics were valued for what they symbolised rather than for their aesthetic properties. For the most part the relics were everyday functional items that had been used and sometimes discarded by Franklin's crew. Craciun's description of them as 'detritus' is apt, as is her observation that in another context they could have been 'sold for scrap.'³⁶² They included cutlery, fragments of metal from watches and scientific instruments, coins, tins, pieces of wood, scraps of clothing, cooking equipment, some books, brushes and combs, spectacles, hooks, sealing wax, nails, cartridges, buttons and 'sundry other articles of little consequence', as they were described in Snow's catalogue.³⁶³ Some of these had been altered for use by the Inuit; for example, handles had been attached to some circular blades so they could be used like an ulu, a traditional knife.³⁶⁴ In the USI the objects were arranged according to

³⁵⁷ *The London Standard* (14th June 1851); *The Scotsman* (5th February 1853).

³⁵⁸ Handbill, 'Grand Moving Panorama', BDCM.

³⁵⁹ Exhibition catalogue, 'Description of Summer and Winter Views', BL; *The Guardian* (10th December 1853).

³⁶⁰ *Illustrated London News* (29th December 1849); *The Times* (18th December 1849).

³⁶¹ David, *The Arctic*, 156; Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 216.

³⁶² Craciun 'The Franklin Relics' (2014), 2; *ibid.*, 12.

³⁶³ Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS, 31.

³⁶⁴ Craciun 'The Franklin Relics' (2014), 9. Craciun argues that this appropriation of the utensils by the Inuit served to undermine the British sense of their own technological superiority. This does not, however, seem to have made a difference to the way individual objects were interpreted.

where they were found, resulting in a bewildering and random-seeming display. One typical case contained the following:

*'A tin water bottle, Brass ornament to a royal marine's shako plate, A pair of goggles with crape instead of glass, A sail maker's palm, A gauze or small green crape veil to protect the face from snow, Two pieces of handkerchief, A clay pipe bowl, A leather boot lace, A ball of worsted, Two housewives- cases of needles and thread, Two pieces of copper.'*³⁶⁵

The epithet relic was applied to these objects immediately following the return of Rae in 1854.³⁶⁶ In November the *Illustrated London News* published sketches of them in an article titled 'The Franklin Relics'; a month later Charles Dickens also wrote about the 'relics' in his widely-read and influential periodical *Household Words*.³⁶⁷ By the following June, when they were put on display in the Painted Hall, the term had become universal and it was later applied to the collection brought back by McClintock. Even the queen's secretary wrote to Edward Sabine, a close confidante of Franklin's wife, thanking him for 'the interesting relics which Lady Franklin was kind enough to send for Her Majesty's inspection.'³⁶⁸

The term relic had originally referred to an object venerated because of its association with a saint, sometimes their bodily remains.³⁶⁹ Over time it began to be used in non-religious contexts as well. Deborah Lutz has traced the emergence of a secular relic culture in Britain, with these later relics comprising either the physical remnant of a

³⁶⁵ Museum catalogue, 'Franklin relics... Whitehall', NLS, 3.

³⁶⁶ It had possibly been in use before that. In 1852 *The York Herald* had reported a prior discovery by Rae: a piece of wood thought to possibly belong to one of the ships. The writer of this piece used the term relic, enclosing it in quotes. *The York Herald* (3rd April 1852). Craciun also cites an instance when the term was used in an 1852 letter from Captain Inglefield to John Barrow of the British Admiralty. Inglefield was describing exhuming one of the graves on Beechey Island when he commented that 'no relic had been laid' with the body. As Inglefield is literally referring to grave goods, however, maybe he used the term in its older, more traditional, usage. Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 60.

³⁶⁷ *Illustrated London News* (4th November 1854); Charles Dickens 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers' in *Household Words* 10(245) (1854), pp. 361-365., 361.

³⁶⁸ Correspondence (29th October 1859), Sabine to Franklin, MS 248/469/2-4;D *Sir Edward Sabine collection*, SPRI.

³⁶⁹ Martina Bagnoli (ed.), *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London, 2010), 5.

deceased loved one (often a lock of hair worked into jewellery) or any object valued for its relationship to a famous person or event.³⁷⁰ By the nineteenth century the latter meaning of relic was being used in relation to museums to describe artefacts associated with notable people or ancient times.³⁷¹ This was the first time the term had been applied to a polar collection. When objects had previously featured in exhibitions they had been referred to variously as ‘curiosities’, ‘objects’, ‘articles’ and ‘specimens’.³⁷² There are several reasons why relic might have been seen as an appropriate designation for the Franklin material. Alexander Nagel has observed that saint’s relics were ‘typically unremarkable in and of themselves... What makes the relic unique and valuable is its provenance.’³⁷³ Most of the Franklin objects were indeed unremarkable. They were largely utilitarian items of which often only fragments remained, and only of interest because of the events they were associated with. Another meaning of ‘relic’, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is also apt: ‘that which remains or is left behind, esp. after destruction or wasting away; the remains or remaining fragments of a thing; the remnant, residue of a nation or people.’³⁷⁴ The Franklin relics were all that was left of what had been a large and well-resourced expedition.

One original connotation of a relic did not apply to the objects put on display. The human remains of Franklin’s men were never exhibited. Despite the fact that the skeletons or skulls of native peoples occasionally featured in ethnographical displays, this would have been highly controversial.³⁷⁵ Craciun has argued that the display of human remains was implied in Snow’s catalogue by his ‘cannily’ listing ‘Bones found on Beechey Island’ as among the contents of the display at the USI.³⁷⁶ By not

³⁷⁰ Deborah Lutz ‘The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture’ in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39(01) (2011), pp. 127-142., 123.

³⁷¹ As the definition of ‘relic’ broadened it was used more frequently; the appearance of the term in published literature doubled between 1810 and the 1850s. ‘relic’, *Google Books Ngram Viewer*, <https://goo.gl/RHvqQA>, Accessed 7th November 2014. Alexander Nagel claims that ‘features of out-and-out tourism were never absent from the cult of relics’, suggesting a progenitor to this meaning of the term. Alexander Nagel ‘The Afterlife of the Reliquary’ in Martina Bagnoli, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London, 2010), pp. 211-220., 213.

³⁷² Bullock, *An Account of the Family of Laplanders*, 33; Exhibition catalogue (1824), ‘An Interesting Account’, 33, NLS; *John Bull* (18th February 1850).

³⁷³ Nagel ‘The Afterlife of the Reliquary’, 215.

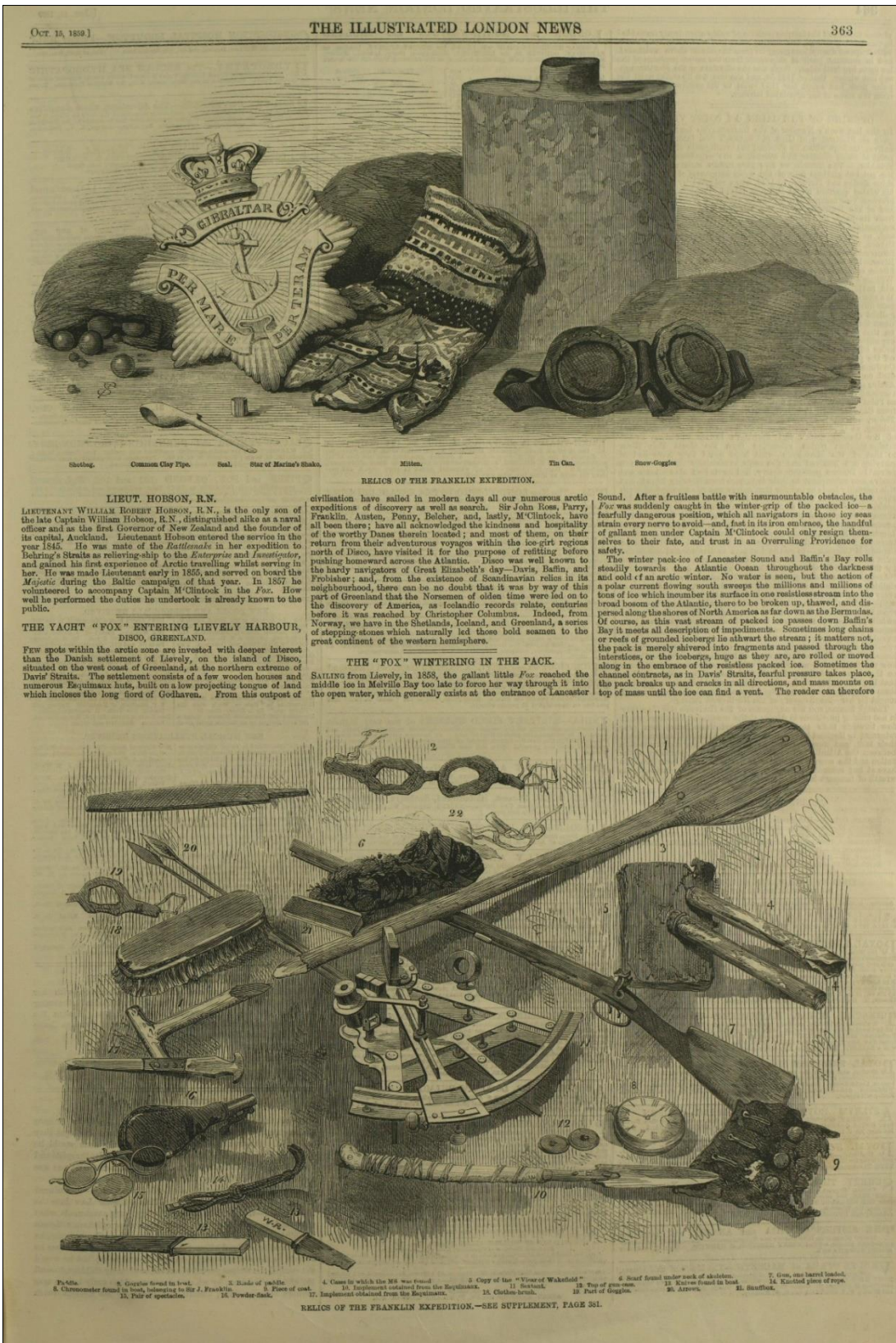
³⁷⁴ ‘relic, n.’, *OED Online*. <http://goo.gl/8FjC8e>, Accessed 7th November 2014.

³⁷⁵ Craciun ‘The Franklin Relics’ (2014), 16.

³⁷⁶ Museum catalogue, ‘Arctic Collection’, NLS, 25.



Figure 13. Illustration of the relics brought back by Rae
Illustrated London News (4th November 1854). © Illustrated London News Ltd.



Oct. 15, 1859.]



Shoebag. Common Clay Pipe. Seal. Star of Martin's Shako. Mittens. Tin Can. Snow-Goggles.

RELICS OF THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION.

LIEUT. HOBSON, R.N.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM ROBERT HOBSON, R.N., is the only son of the late Captain William Hobson, R.N., distinguished alike as a naval officer and as the first Governor of New Zealand and the founder of its capital, Auckland. Lieutenant Hobson entered the service in the year 1845. He was mate of the *Battleship* in her expedition to Behring's Straits as relieving-ship to the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, and gained his first experience of Arctic travelling whilst serving in her. He was made Lieutenant early in 1855, and served on board the *Mystic* during the Baltic campaign of that year. In 1857 he volunteered to accompany Captain McClintock in the *Fox*. How well he performed the duties he undertook is already known to the public.

THE YACHT "FOX" ENTERING LIVELY HARBOUR, DISCO, GREENLAND.

Few spots within the arctic zone are invested with deeper interest than the Danish settlement of Lively, on the island of Disco, situated on the west coast of Greenland, at the northern extreme of Davis' Straits. The settlement consists of a few wooden houses and numerous Esquimaux huts, built on a low projecting tongue of land which incloses the long fiord of Godhavn. From this outpost of

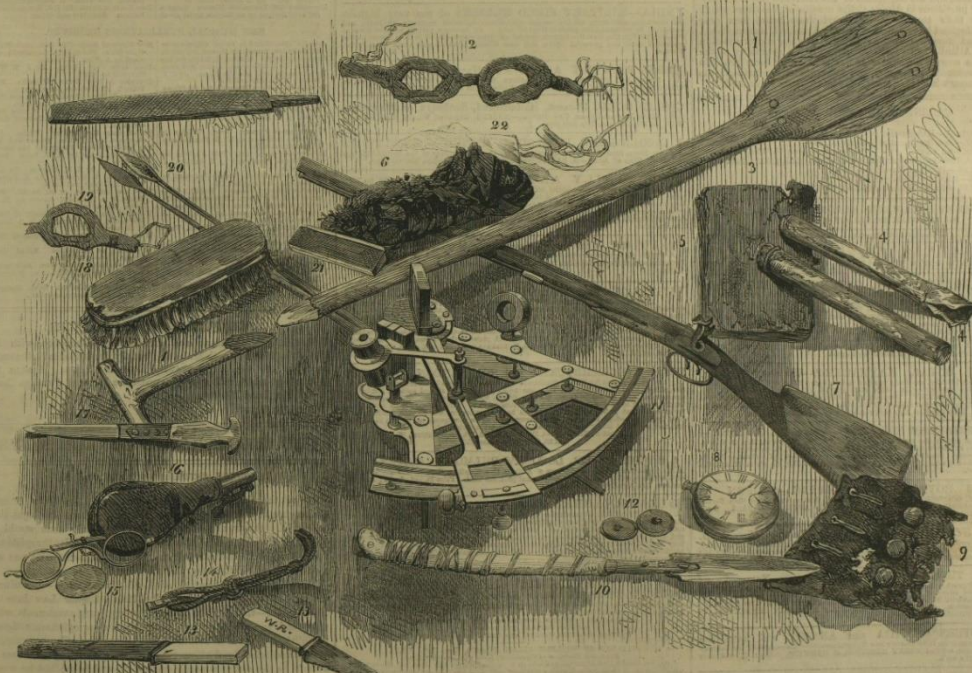
civilisation have sailed in modern days all our numerous arctic expeditions of discovery as well as search. Sir John Ross, Parry, Franklin, Austen, Penny, Belcher, and, lastly, McClintock, have all been there; have all acknowledged the kindness and hospitality of the worthy Danes therein located; and most of them, on their return from their adventurous voyages within the ice-girt regions north of Disco, have visited it for the purpose of refitting before pushing homeward across the Atlantic. Disco was well known to the hardy navigators of Great Elizabeth's day—Davis, Baffin, and Probiher; and, from the existence of Scandinavian relics in its neighbourhood, there can be no doubt that it was by way of this part of Greenland that the Norsemen of olden time were led on to the discovery of America, as Icelandic records relate, centuries before it was reached by Christopher Columbus. Indeed, from Norway, we have in the Shetlands, Iceland, and Greenland, a series of stepping-stones which naturally led those bold seamen to the great continent of the western hemisphere.

THE "FOX" WINTERING IN THE PACK.

SAILING from Lively, in 1858, the gallant little *Fox* reached the middle ice in Melville Bay too late to force her way through it into the open water, which generally exists at the entrance of Lancaster

Sound. After a fruitless battle with insurmountable obstacles, the *Fox* was suddenly caught in the winter-grip of the packed ice—a fearfully dangerous position, which all navigators in those icy seas strain every nerve to avoid—and, fast in its iron embrace, the handful of gallant men under Captain McClintock could only resign themselves to their fate, and trust in an Overruling Providence for safety.

The winter pack-ice of Lancaster Sound and Baffin's Bay rolls steadily towards the Atlantic Ocean throughout the darkness and cold of an arctic winter. No water is seen, but the action of a polar current flowing south sweeps the millions and millions of tons of ice which inumber its surface in one restless stream into the broad bosom of the Atlantic, there to be broken up, thawed, and dispersed along the shores of North America as far down as the Bermudas. Of course, as this vast stream of packed ice passes down Baffin's Bay it meets all description of impediments. Sometimes long chains or reefs of grounded icebergs lie athwart the stream; it matters not, the pack is merely shivered into fragments and passed through the interstices, or the icebergs, huge as they are, are rolled or moved along in the embrace of the restless packed ice. Sometimes the channel contracts, as in Davis' Straits, fearful pressure takes place, the pack breaks up and cracks in all directions, and mass mounts on top of mass until the ice can find a vent. The reader can therefore



1. Spoon found in boat. 2. Goggles found in boat. 3. Box found under each of skeletons. 4. Copy of the "Voyage of Wakefield". 5. Small wooden box. 6. Sextant. 7. Watch. 8. Chronometer found in boat, belonging to Sir J. Franklin. 9. Small wooden box. 10. Knife found in boat. 11. Pocket watch. 12. Top of gun. 13. Knife found in boat. 14. Knitted piece of rope. 15. Pair of spectacles. 16. Powder-stick. 17. Implement obtained from the Esquimaux. 18. Cork-stem. 19. Part of goggle. 20. Knife found in boat. 21. Small wooden box.

RELICS OF THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION.—SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 351.

Figure 14. Illustration of the relics brought back by McClintock *Illustrated London News* (15th October 1859). © Illustrated London News Ltd.

specifying whether the bones were animal or human it left readers open to the possibility that they were those of Franklin's men.³⁷⁷ It seems improbable, however, that such ambiguity was intentional on Snow's part. Snow knew that the bones belonged to an animal. He had published a book in 1851 into which he had appended the scientific report that confirmed these findings.³⁷⁸ In addition, he frequently corresponded with Jane Franklin, who at one point had employed him to raise awareness of her husband's plight, and he was agitating for the launch of another search expedition with which he wished to be involved.³⁷⁹ Given this, it is unlikely that he would have been deliberately sensationalist, risking the censure both of the establishment and the Franklin family.

In fact, most skeletal remains were interred at the site where they were found, to the disappointment of one commentator who remarked that they 'might have formed an interesting portion of the collection.'³⁸⁰ The first remains did not appear in Britain until 1869 when the skeleton of one individual was recovered by American explorer Charles Francis Hall. A second was returned a decade later by Frederick Schwatka. These were buried at Greenwich and in Edinburgh respectively.³⁸¹

If the contents of displays were different, so too was the context in which they were exhibited. For the most part, panoramas and human displays had been held in venues that hosted transient shows, such as town halls, theatres and taverns. In contrast, the relics were shown in institutions associated with the formal museum sector. This would have bestowed a cachet onto the relics that was absent from panoramas. The relics were venerated and, as Craciun comments, by appearing in formal museum institutions, they were 'housed with all the solemnity befitting their public status.'³⁸² The feeling that

³⁷⁷ Craciun 'The Franklin Relics' (2014), 16.

³⁷⁸ William Parker Snow, *Voyage of the "Prince Albert" in Search of Sir John Franklin: A Narrative of Every-day Life in the Arctic Seas* (London, 1851), 396-97.

³⁷⁹ Correspondence (? June 1857), Snow to Barrow, MS 248/474;D *William Parker Snow collection*, SPRI.

³⁸⁰ Craciun 'The Franklin Relics' (2014), 16.

³⁸¹ The first individual was initially identified as Lieutenant Henry le Vesconte, though there is now speculation that he is in fact the assistant surgeon Henry Goodsir. The skeleton was buried beneath a plaque in Greenwich memorialising the whole expedition. The second was supposed to be Lieutenant John Irving, who was given a naval burial in Dean Cemetery in his home city of Edinburgh. S. Mays, A. Ogden, J. Montgomery, S. Vincent, W. Battersby and G. M. Taylor 'New Light on the Personal Identification of a Skeleton of a Member of Sir John Franklin's Last Expedition to the Arctic, 1845' in *Journal of Archaeological Science* 38(7) (2011), pp. 1571-1582; Beattie and Geiger, *Frozen in Time*, 35%.

³⁸² Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 54.

they should be kept in an institution that inspired reverence was also reflected in an ongoing debate in the press about where they should be permanently stored, with the BM and the Crystal Palace among the possibilities mooted.³⁸³

Perhaps it is telling that after the first relics went on display panoramas were no longer used as a means of telling the Franklin story. Though some older productions continued to tour, no new panoramas were created. David has attributed this to a general loss of interest in the subject matter.³⁸⁴ It is likely, however, that the public were as fascinated with the Arctic as ever, only the exhibition form had changed.

During the Franklin era, then, the way exploration was exhibited changed. Displays of relics were the first to be based on objects rather than images and the first to be shown in a museum context. The next section will show that this change in format was accompanied by a change in the dominant themes of exhibitions.

3.5 ‘The most daring of modern adventures’: the response to the relics

This section investigates the response to these displays. It examines what messages were inherent in the exhibitions by looking at how they were decoded by viewers. The relics signified the danger and ferocity of the Arctic region and by implication the heroism of Franklin’s men, who had lost their lives there. They served a commemorative function, memorialising the individual men and acted as clues shedding light on a mystery that had become a national obsession. These ways of interpreting the displays prioritised the experience of the men travelling in the Arctic over characteristics of the region itself, marking a change in how the public perceived the subject of exploration.

³⁸³ *The London Standard* (28th September 1859); *The London Standard* (17th October 1859); *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* (3rd October 1859). The Crystal Palace was the permanent legacy of the 1851 Great Exhibition, which had been known by the same name. Upon the exhibition’s close, the building it had been housed in was dismantled, then re-erected and expanded in Sydenham, London, where it functioned as a museum and exhibition centre.

³⁸⁴ David, *The Arctic*, 156.

Displays of relics proved popular. The exhibition at the USI has been described as the 'sensation of its age.'³⁸⁵ There was a waiting list for tickets and it was listed in the press as an essential site for visitors to London.³⁸⁶

Information about the relics was also disseminated in other types of media. Press articles published lists of the objects; illustrated newspapers contained images of them; lectures on the relics were held at institutions such as Wyld's Great Globe and even at a children's event at the Athaeneum, a London entertainment venue (Fig.13, 14).³⁸⁷

McClintock's best-selling account of his voyage contained an appendix that listed the objects and where they were found.³⁸⁸ A lieutenant aboard the *Assistance*, one of the rescue ships, published a book of sketches of the voyage to which he added a lithograph depicting the Rae collection.³⁸⁹ A few years later his fellow officer John Cheyne produced a box-set of stereoscopic slides (Fig. 15).³⁹⁰ One reviewer declared that these slides 'ought to be on every drawing-room table in the kingdom.'³⁹¹ It offered an opportunity for 'the reader in Canada, at the Cape, at Sydney, at Calcutta, to whom an actual glimpse of the Franklin relics is beyond impossible dreams and desires... [to] travel, by help of these stereoscopes, over the scenery of this perilous expedition.'³⁹²

Some of this originated with the displays. Illustrators visited the exhibitions in order to draw the objects; for example, an engraving that appeared in the *Picture Times* was

³⁸⁵ 'British Naval Northwest Passage Expedition 1845-1848', *Freezeframe*, <http://goo.gl/GqqInG>, Accessed 23rd January 2015.

³⁸⁶ *Illustrated Times* (19th November 1859). It was listed alongside institutions such as Dulwich Gallery and the BM. *London City Press* (31st December 1859); *Reading Mercury* (25th May 1861).

³⁸⁷ *The Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser* (1st October 1859); *Illustrated Times* (1st October 1859); *Illustrated London News* (15th October 1859); *Morning Post* (13th July 1855); *Morning Post* (25th December 1859); *Bury and Norwich Post* (27th December 1859).

³⁸⁸ Appendix No.1 in Francis Leopold McClintock, *The Voyage of the 'Fox' in the Arctic Seas, A Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and his Companions* (London, 1860), Wordie.980 Wordie collection of polar exploration, NLS; Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 155.

³⁸⁹ Walter May, *A Series of Fourteen Sketches made during the Voyage up Wellington Channel in Search of Sir John Franklin* (London, 1855), xiv. Wordie.1667(6) Wordie collection of polar exploration, NLS.

³⁹⁰ John Powles Cheyne, *Descriptive Catalogue of Fourteen Stereoscopic Slides of the Franklin Relics: Brought Home in the "Fox" by Captain M'Clintock, in September, 1859* (1860), Mic.F.232 [no. 58741] *General Reference Collection*, BL.

³⁹¹ *The Waterford Mail* (2nd July 1860).

³⁹² *Ibid.*



Figure 15. One of Cheyne's stereoscopic slides of the relics 'Photos: Stereoscopic Photographs of the Franklin Relics', P97/173/5 *Freezeframe*, <http://goo.gl/liUNjD>, Accessed 22nd January 2015. Reproduced under University of Cambridge Scott Polar Research Institute Collections Open Education User Licence version 1.0.

based on the objects on display in the Polytechnic Institute.³⁹³ Newspaper reviews painstakingly listed the contents of each individual case, as did Snow's catalogue, available for 3d at booksellers.³⁹⁴ In this way audiences could still participate in the exhibitions without actually visiting the displays themselves. They could become familiar with the relics and the way they were presented without seeing them first-hand.

The strength of the public's reaction is particularly striking given how intrinsically unimpressive the objects were. The relics were everyday items, yet reportedly the audience at the opening of the USI exhibition were 'moved even to tears.'³⁹⁵

Commentators tried to explain this contradiction. 'Interesting' is an oft-used adjective. For example, an article in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* wrote that 'all these various things are offensive alike to the eye and to the nose; but they are nevertheless so perfectly genuine that they must be interesting.'³⁹⁶ A similar reaction is recorded in two

³⁹³ *Morning Post* (13th July 1855).

³⁹⁴ *The London Standard* (17th October 1859); *Morning Post* (17th October 1859); *The Louth and North Lincolnshire Advertiser* (2nd October 1859); Front cover of Museum catalogue, 'Arctic Collection', NLS; *Morning Chronicle* (15th April 1858).

³⁹⁵ *The Western Daily Press* (18th October 1859).

³⁹⁶ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (15th July 1855).

sources not intended for public consumption. In 1858 William Patterson, a tourist in London, wrote about visiting the Painted Hall and seeing ‘a number of spoons, prongs, watches &c which were found by Dr Rae in the Arctic regions supposed to have belonged to Sir John Franklin.’³⁹⁷ Though Patterson’s description is muted, at least compared to his detailed account of the display of a coat Nelson had worn at the Battle of Waterloo, the fact that he recorded it at all indicates that it made an impression. A few years later Caroline Edgumbe, the sister of photography pioneer Henry Fox Talbot, wrote to him inviting him to accompany her to the display at the USI Institution. She wanted to visit for a second time, having found the relics ‘most exceedingly interesting’ on the first occasion.³⁹⁸

Why were the relics of such interest? The reactions to the displays, recorded in sources such as press articles, show what impact they had on their audiences. There are several recurring ideas. First, the relics signified a destructive Arctic. All that was left of an expedition that had departed with an abundance of material goods were these scraps. By extension, they highlighted the heroism of the men who had lost their lives in this inhospitable environment. Secondly, the objects had a commemorative function, memorialising the men they had belonged to. Thirdly, they were valued as evidence of what had happened to the expedition.

The first discernible theme repeated in the press involves the physical condition of the remains. A harsh and destructive Arctic is implied in descriptions of relics damaged by exposure. The USI catalogue described an ensign (sledging flag) as ‘torn and tattered’; an article in the *Cabinet Newspaper* highlighted the same item ‘reduced almost to shreds... reminding the spectators of the many cheerless days upon which it must have fluttered sadly, but still proudly, from the mast of the ice-bound vessel.’³⁹⁹ What books have survived are ‘storm-tossed, weather-beaten, and blemished’, though another writer points out that others would have been destroyed as they ‘succumb early to the rigours of exposure.’⁴⁰⁰ A message cylinder is ‘stained and timeworn’ and a carpenter’s

³⁹⁷ Journal entry (James Patterson, 27th December 1858), ‘Diary of visit to London’, MS.7353 *James Patterson (fl. 1858-1859)*, WA.

³⁹⁸ Correspondence (3rd April 1861), Edgumbe to Talbot, *Talbot Correspondence project*, University of Glasgow, <http://goo.gl/Pgu0Ok>, Accessed 11th November 2014.

³⁹⁹ Museum catalogue, ‘Franklin relics... Whitehall’, NLS, 1.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

measuring instrument ‘whitened with exposure.’⁴⁰¹ The paper record recovered by McClintock is ‘tattered and weather stained.’⁴⁰² One writer felt that these decaying objects, ‘rusty iron, and torn fragments of clothes... suggest a whole epic of heroic and endurance.’⁴⁰³

These descriptions conjure up a hostile and inhospitable Arctic where little survives, emphasising the dangers and difficulties of exploration. As Craciun comments, images of ‘a static world of broken objects... make visible the destruction at the heart of Arctic exploration itself.’⁴⁰⁴ By extension, this suggests that the men who would venture into such a savage land are heroic in the extreme. The relics were a symbol of the bravery of Franklin and his crew. *The London Daily News* wrote that the relics told ‘a story of... resolute endurance and high courage... under the most terrible sufferings of cold and slow starvation.’⁴⁰⁵ This idea was repeated in the USI catalogue (the exhibition illustrated ‘the most daring of modern adventures’); in a letter to the editor of the *London Standard* (the relics speak of ‘the energy and perseverance of the British seaman’); and the *Western Daily Press* (which described the relics as a ‘few simple weather-worn fragments of what once belonged to the brave and true men who, within the desolation of the Arctic circle, had sustained so well the character and honour of their country’).⁴⁰⁶

A second function of the relics was in memorialising the lost men. In the case of the USI exhibition this was a conscious aim. The introduction to the, albeit unauthorised, exhibition catalogue explained how the display was intended to commemorate the lost men ‘in the admiration of their countrymen.’ The objects were ‘lone memorials’ that acted as a monument to the tragedy in the same way as a statue would.⁴⁰⁷

In viewing the exhibitions audiences were reminded of the individuals who had owned and used the objects on display. Craciun has argued that depictions of the relics as an

⁴⁰¹ *Kendal Mercury* (21st January 1860).

⁴⁰² *The London Daily News* (28th December 1859).

⁴⁰³ *The Waterford Mail* (2nd July 1860).

⁴⁰⁴ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 44.

⁴⁰⁵ *The London Daily News* (28th December 1859).

⁴⁰⁶ Museum catalogue, ‘Franklin relics... Whitehall’, NLS, 1; *The London Standard* (September 24th 1859); *The Western Daily Press* (18th October 1859).

⁴⁰⁷ Museum catalogue, ‘Franklin relics... Whitehall’, NLS, 1.

array of broken objects, as portrayed by Lieutenant May in his lithograph, had a potentially dehumanising effect.⁴⁰⁸ On the contrary, the way they were interpreted in exhibitions actually helped bring individuals to life, forcing the viewer to think about the men themselves.⁴⁰⁹ In the words of a journalist for the *Waterford Mail* ‘all these things, simple in themselves, yet bring the situation of the scene to life in a vivid manner.’ Many relics were the personal possessions of men who could be identified, either by their initials or because their family or friends recognised the article.⁴¹⁰ This information was reported in the press and so might be known to the viewer. Even when their owner could not be identified viewers were prompted to contemplate the men to whom the items had belonged. A common journalistic method was to use the objects as props for speculating about the men behind them. According to one writer a silk tie had obviously belonged to a ship’s steward as ‘this class of men are usually neat in their dress, and a sailor would have adopted a much more simple arrangement.’⁴¹¹ A selection of tools is matched to the carpenter who ‘even when starting on his dread journey had not forgotten the instrument of his trade.’⁴¹² Other objects included the ‘much prized warrant of some stout boatswain or quartermaster’ and a watch ‘probably belonging to some young mate or midshipman.’⁴¹³ The written record provokes the lament that ‘the hands which penned the information are all stilled.’⁴¹⁴

Comments about the high level of preservation of some objects, some of which were still functional, similarly reminded viewers of the men who made use of them. The USI catalogue comments that some artefacts are ‘as perfect as on the first day of their arrival

⁴⁰⁸ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 44.

⁴⁰⁹ *The Waterford Mail* (2nd July 1860).

⁴¹⁰ For example, the book ‘Christian Melodies’ contained a dedication to G.G., identified as Lieutenant Graham Gore. Some of the silver cutlery had the initials of their owners inscribed onto it. The *Kendal Mercury* reported that ‘a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood of London has identified in one of the scientific instruments the property of his long lost son’, while the composer of a ‘Letter to the Editor’ in the *London Daily News* wrote ‘I recognise some things that belonged to a very dear friend of mine.’ *Kendal Mercury* (21st January 1860); *The London Daily News* (24th September 1859).

⁴¹¹ This observation took its cue from McClintock’s own report, published in various newspapers. *The Cabinet Newspaper* (22nd October 1859); *Illustrated Times* (1st October 1859).

⁴¹² *The Cabinet Newspaper* (22nd October 1859).

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette* (3rd October 1859).

within an arctic zone.’ The drugs in the medicine chest are ‘still fit for use’ and the print in the books is ‘perfectly decipherable.’⁴¹⁵

The most important meaning attributed to the relics, however, is that they were clues that helped solve the mystery of the expedition’s disappearance: a puzzle that had frustrated the British public for years. The artefacts were interesting in that they provided evidence for what had happened to Franklin and his men; Craciun describes them as ‘enigmatic signs pointing to the secret solution awaiting discovery.’⁴¹⁶ As Snow wrote, their value lay in ‘giving to us the first distinct glimpse of the lost Expedition.’⁴¹⁷ The materiality of this evidence was especially important in 1854, given the unwillingness to believe the Inuit testimony as reported by Rae, which included the infamous reports of cannibalism. Many writers turned to the relics to provide an alternative version of events which would be more reliable (and more palatable) than what they saw as ‘the hearsay of savages, who have often proved deceitful.’⁴¹⁸ Journalists interpreted the objects in terms of where they were discovered and the circumstances of their recovery to draw different conclusions about what had happened, usually involving the men being robbed and killed by the Inuit or the ships being plundered after their abandonment. For example, one writer discounted Inuit reports by claiming that the men would never have carried so many objects so far.⁴¹⁹ Another article similarly concluded that their testimony was in doubt due to ‘the number, the variety, and the nature of the articles... Men engaged in such a desperate struggle for life were not likely to encumber themselves with a number of books or with a quantity of silver forks and spoons.’⁴²⁰

Audiences were also encouraged to draw their own conclusions by being informed about the nature of the objects and where they were discovered. While the press printed lists detailing where the various different items had been uncovered, the exhibition in

⁴¹⁵ Museum catalogue, ‘Franklin relics... Whitehall’, NLS, 1.

⁴¹⁶ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 55.

⁴¹⁷ Museum catalogue, ‘Arctic Collection’, NLS, 26.

⁴¹⁸ *Dundee, Perth & Cupar Advertiser* (24th October 1854). This sentiment was echoed by various journalists, including one for the *Caledonian Mercury* who wrote that the account ‘would have been very open to doubt had Dr Rae nothing to go on but the verbal testimony of the Esquimaux.’ *The Caledonian Mercury* (4th August 1855).

⁴¹⁹ *The Westmorland Gazette* (4th November 1854).

⁴²⁰ *Morning Post* (28th October 1854).

the USI arranged the relics by location. One journalist commented that the display would be enhanced by the inclusion of a map so that ‘visitors would be able to see where the Erebus and Terror were abandoned, and where the relics were found.’⁴²¹ A letter-writer similarly recommended that a catalogue be compiled containing ‘a short account of each relic, where it was found, &c.’⁴²² In this way the relics were treated as clues to be decoded.

The general consensus after 1854 was that, even if it was still unclear when and how the men died, the relics provided solid evidence that the expedition was beyond hope of recovery. William Scoresby, an ex-whaling captain and elder statesman of Arctic affairs, gave a lecture associated with the exhibition in the Polytechnic Institute, in which he opined that the relics ‘offered presumptive evidence that an untimely fate had overtaken them [the crew of the expedition].’⁴²³ Dickens wrote that ‘Dr Rae may be considered to have established, by the mute but solemn testimony of the relics he has brought home, that Sir John Franklin and his party are no more.’⁴²⁴ Other press articles echoed these sentiments: the relics left no doubt ‘as to his [Franklin’s] melancholy fate’; they ‘constitute evidence of a positive kind’; ‘the interesting relics... are evidences of the fate of a famous navigator and his brave companions’; ‘the silver and other relics speak too plainly of the fate of our brave countrymen.’⁴²⁵

If the relics were valued for the insight they offered into the demise of the expedition, then individual items were gauged more or less significant according to how important a ‘clue’ they were. In the introduction to the USI catalogue, the items that displayed Franklin’s family crest were rated the most valuable because they were ‘the most decisive relic of him as regards both identity and date.’⁴²⁶ Of the McClintock collection generally the written record was considered most important, to the extent that Craciun has described as it possessing a ‘talismanic power.’⁴²⁷ In the box-set of slides published

⁴²¹ *The Dunfermline Saturday Press* (29th October 1859).

⁴²² *The London Standard* (28th September 1859).

⁴²³ *Morning Post* (4th July 1855).

⁴²⁴ McGoogan, *The Arctic Journals*, 245.

⁴²⁵ *The Leeds Times* (9th June 1855); *The Westmorland Gazette* (4th November 1854); *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* (3rd October 1859); *Dundee, Perth & Cupar Advertiser* (24th October 1854).

⁴²⁶ Museum catalogue, ‘Franklin relics... Whitehall’, NLS, 1.

⁴²⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 37.

by Cheyne, only the record and the ship's ensign are photographed by themselves rather than among a mass of other objects.⁴²⁸ As Potter argues, the fact that the record slide came last in the series meant it probably had 'the most dramatic impact.'⁴²⁹ The importance placed on the record is also reflected in the layout of the display in the USI. It was placed in 'The Record Case'; its special status reflected in this being the only case to be given a title rather than a number.⁴³⁰

The relics were interesting to contemporary audiences for several reasons. As fragmentary and weathered items, they simultaneously evoked the dangers of Arctic exploration and reinforced the heroism of the men who undertook it. They excited sympathy for the individuals lost on the expedition, who were brought to life by the display of their personal belongings. Most importantly they offered some answers to questions about the expedition's disappearance.

All of these interpretations shared one important characteristic; they all focused on Franklin and his men rather than on the features of the polar world that had defeated them. The appeal of the relics lay less in their evocation of the region than in the fate of the explorers who travelled there. Indeed, the importance of the individual is implicit in the use of the term 'relic'. These were objects taken to and brought from the Arctic by human hands and they came to signify the bravery and sacrifice of British men. The characterisation of the Arctic as dangerous and inhospitable served only to underline their heroism. In many interpretations of the relics the place where these events occurred is almost incidental. Much of the same rhetoric could have used had the men died exploring Africa or climbing Mount Everest.

This is also evident in a tendency to associate other Arctic exhibitions and collections with the lost expedition, even when there was no direct link between the two. For example, for one commentator the display of an Inuit family in 1853 was of particular relevance given the 'painful excitement which has for so long pervaded the minds of all classes with respect to the fate of Sir John Franklin's Arctic Expedition' (Exh.36).⁴³¹ Snow states that the Arctic collections listed in his catalogue are of interest because of

⁴²⁸ Cheyne, *Stereoscopic Slides*, 24.

⁴²⁹ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 158.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³¹ *Illustrated London News* (31st December 1853).

the ‘many facts connected with it referring to the lost Expedition in the Arctic seas’, despite the fact that most of the objects had no link to the Franklin expedition.⁴³² He does not consider the ethnographic, natural history and scientific artefacts that made up the bulk of the collections as interesting in their own right but only insofar as they helped to illustrate the story of the missing men. This is reflected in some of his captions which interpret artefacts in terms of the Franklin narrative even when the connection between the two is relatively tenuous. For example, a selection of geological specimens come from Cape Riley, or ‘the place where traces of the missing Expedition came to light.’⁴³³

As discussed in the introduction to the thesis, there is a thread of scholarship that links the impact of the Franklin era to changes in the way the Arctic was perceived by the general public. Scholars such as Loomis and Riffenburgh argue that notions of the sublime were replaced by ideas of heroism and an increasing emphasis on the act of exploration. Their arguments are reinforced by evidence from the exhibitions of the period. Displays of relics relegated the Arctic region itself in favour of the men who had gone missing there.

3.6 ‘Franklin relics (about 50)’: Later displays and responses

This section examines whether these views of the relics persisted. It investigates whether they held the same meaning for their late nineteenth and early twentieth-century audiences as they had for those in the 1850s. Though the relics continued to evoke the same reaction, their relative importance declined over time as exploration began to be represented in alternative, more positive, ways.

The relics were displayed in permanent exhibitions for the rest of the period under consideration. Both the collection in the Painted Hall and most of those in the USI were

⁴³² Museum catalogue, ‘Arctic Collection’, NLS, 3.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 18.

moved into a new naval museum established in Greenwich Hospital in the 1870s.⁴³⁴ Collections also expanded as more objects were added. In 1905 the USI acquired ‘an old clay pipe, a tiny glass bottle, two pieces of polar bear skin, and a small painted china plate.’⁴³⁵

Relics also featured in various temporary exhibitions. The following section will discuss their display at the 1891 Royal Naval Exhibition, a display organised by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) in 1895, and the 1930 Polar Exhibition (Exh.57, 59, 81).

The reactions to later displays demonstrate whether the meanings projected onto the relics changed over time. There are several reasons why there might have been a shift in attitude towards them. Gaynor Kavanagh has argued that it is necessary for a certain amount of time to pass after an event before it can be considered objectively.⁴³⁶ The intervening decades could, then, have encouraged a more critical view of the Franklin expedition that would be reflected in the response to its material remains. Developments in the field of exploration may also have had an impact on how the relics were perceived. The 1891 and 1895 exhibitions took place amidst calls for the launch of an expedition to Antarctica. By 1930 voyages to the polar regions were less unusual and Franklin had been replaced by Scott as Britain’s primary polar martyr. This meant that, while in the 1850s the British public viewed Arctic exploration wholly through the lens of the Franklin expedition, subsequent events may have reduced its significance and allowed for different interpretations of the subject.

The first large-scale exhibition at which Franklin relics were shown was the 1891 Royal Naval Exhibition (Exh.57). As Lewis-Jones argues, this was a public relations exercise intended to raise the prestige of the navy in the face of disillusionment over rising

⁴³⁴ Museum catalogue (1906), ‘Descriptive Catalogue of the Portraits of Naval Commanders, Representations of Naval Actions, Relics, &c: Exhibited in the Painted Hall of Greenwich Hospital, and the Royal Naval Museum, Greenwich’, Farmer 450 *Farmer collection*, GU, 7; *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (24th May 1895); *The Spectator* (25th May 1895).

⁴³⁵ ‘Franklin Relics’ in *Museums Journal* V(4) (1905-06), pp. 131-132.

⁴³⁶ Kavanagh, *History Curatorship*, 7-8.

costs.⁴³⁷ The displays celebrated both naval history and the force's technological innovation and superiority.⁴³⁸

The 'Franklin Gallery' housed displays showcasing the navy's role in Arctic exploration. Institutional and private collections were collated to produce the biggest display of relics seen so far.⁴³⁹ The exhibition catalogue lists nineteen distinct groups, numbering hundreds of individual items. Some entries were meticulously listed down to the last 'piece of flannel shirt.'⁴⁴⁰ Others, such as 'Franklin Relics (about 50)' are less precise.⁴⁴¹ These were shown alongside other polar artefacts including equipment, sledging flags; scientific equipment and specimens; Inuit tools and clothing, and taxidermy. Audiences could also visit a large model iceberg housed in the grounds of the exhibition, inside which there was a display about Robert McClure's 1850 to 1854 voyage on the *Investigator*.⁴⁴²

Unlike earlier displays, there is evidence showing how the relics were interpreted. A publication was sold. This had been written by Annette McClintock, the daughter of the explorer who had recovered many of the relics exhibited.⁴⁴³ *The Story of the Franklin Search* outlined the history of the Franklin expedition and subsequent search period, referring to the artefacts on display to illustrate parts of the account. Unsurprisingly, the author did not deviate from the stance taken by commentators in the 1850s.⁴⁴⁴ The relics are primarily important as evidence; the cutlery obtained by Rae was significant for including 'crests showing them to have belonged to Franklin's officers'; the objects found on King William Island by McClintock were 'sad and convincing proofs' of the expeditions destruction.⁴⁴⁵ There was also signage, part of which read 'These sad relics

⁴³⁷ Lewis-Jones "Heroism Displayed" (2005).

⁴³⁸ Joseph Grego, *Royal Naval Exhibition Illustrated Souvenir* (London, 1891), 1. 7959 cc.12 *General Reference Collection*, BL.

⁴³⁹ Exhibition catalogue (1891), 'Royal Naval Exhibition: Official Catalogue and Guide', [Tau].7/2, NLS, 2-13.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁴² *The Portsmouth Evening News* (2nd May 1891).

⁴⁴³ Annette McClintock, *The Story of the Franklin Search: Illustrative of the Franklin Relics, Brought Together and Exhibited in the Royal Naval Exhibition* (London, 1891), Mic.F.232 [no. 62683], *General Reference Collection*, BL.

⁴⁴⁴ Her bias is evident in a comment that the McClintock collection, as opposed to Rae's or those brought back by later explorers, was 'the most interesting... of the Franklin Relics in this exhibition.' McClintock, *The Story of the Franklin Search*, 8.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. *ibid.*, 11.

are all that have come back to us of the expedition under Sir John Franklin... bequeathing to us the ennobling memory of courage, discipline, and devotion to duty.'⁴⁴⁶ The exhibition thus presented a conventional interpretation of events, where the relics were the poignant remains of brave men.

The response in the press was also similar to that of forty years previously. The relics presented a 'melancholy interest'. they told a 'pathetic tale', were 'full of the saddest interest'; and 'for pathetic human interest could not easily be surpassed.'⁴⁴⁷ As in the 1850s, individual objects were used as a means of evoking their onetime owners. A 'lady contributor' to *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* identified the medical certificate of the expedition's surgeon Alexander MacDonald as an 'especially pathetic' relic (Fig.16). Explaining that it had helped to identify his remains, she lamented that 'little did the proud student think of the last service the cherished silver medal would do for him.'⁴⁴⁸

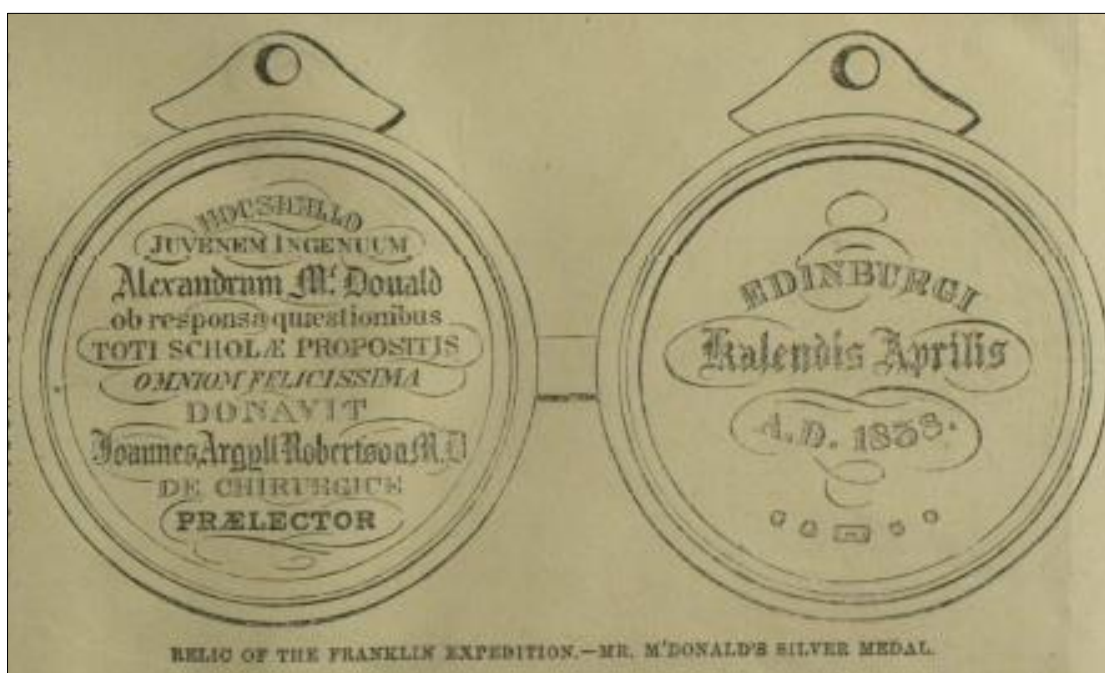


Figure 16. Alexander McDonald's medal
Illustrated London News (15th October 1859). © Illustrated London News Ltd.

⁴⁴⁶ *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* (1st July 1891).

⁴⁴⁷ *Birmingham Daily Post* (1st June 1891); *Nottingham Evening Post* (27th April 1891); *The Portsmouth Evening News* (2nd May 1891).

⁴⁴⁸ *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* (1st July 1891).

The evidence suggests that the response to the relics remained unchanged. Unlike in the 1850s, however, Arctic exploration was represented in other ways as well. The 1891 exhibition told a number of stories, employing a range of artefact-types and display techniques to do so. Tableaux were used to depict the 1875 expedition to the North Pole where Britain had set a (briefly held) furthest north record. The model iceberg contained images illustrating the voyage of Robert McClure, then credited as the first to complete the Northwest Passage.⁴⁴⁹ These were both presented as success stories. In contrast to the message inherent in the relics, they suggested that the Arctic was a place where human endeavour could triumph.

In addition, and despite the title 'Franklin Gallery', the relics were not a focal point of the Arctic displays. This is reflected in official publications which often ignored the relics in favour of other parts of the exhibition. The *Royal Naval Exhibition Souvenir*

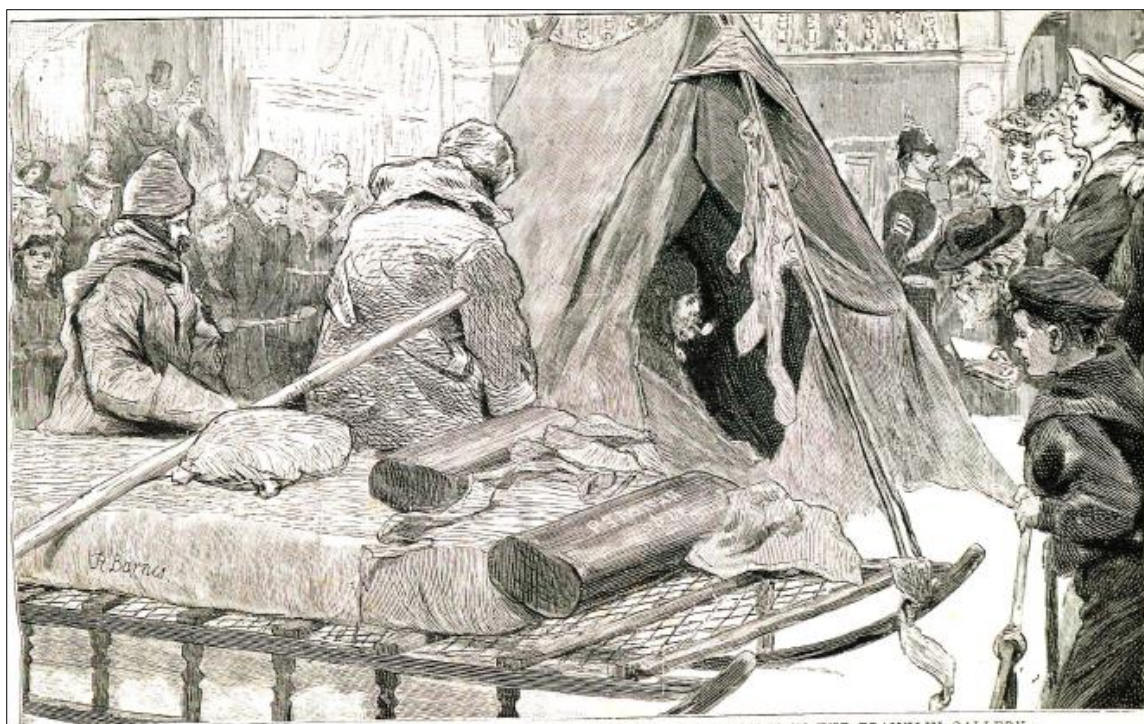


Figure 17. Illustration of crowds in the 'Franklin Gallery' looking at the camping tableau

Joseph Grego, *Royal Naval Exhibition Illustrated Souvenir* (London, 1891), © British Library Board 7959 cc.12 *General Reference Collection*, BL, 11.

⁴⁴⁹ Debate continues as to what constituted completing the Northwest Passage. McClure's claim is often dismissed because his men travelled some of the way on foot rather than by ship. Lambert, *The Gates of Hell*, 244. Usually Roald Amundsen is credited as the first since he actually sailed all the way between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

depicted crowds gathered around a tableaux of a camping scene (Fig.17).⁴⁵⁰ The children's guide, *A Day at the Royal Naval Exhibition*, contained an illustration of an 'Arctic encampment', showing a man cooking on a stove outside a tent, while in the background his companions are man-hauling a sledge.⁴⁵¹ It also showed the crow's nest from one of the ships used in 1875, an 'Esquimaux Kayak' and McClure's *Investigator* beset in the ice.⁴⁵² Neither text mentions the relics.

Some journalists also focused on these parts of the exhibition, mentioning the relics only briefly or not at all.⁴⁵³ The relics were no longer as central to the representation of polar exploration as they had been forty years earlier.

In contrast, Franklin relics were pivotal to commemorative events organised in 1895 to mark the half-centenary since the expedition's departure. The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) organised an excursion to see the displays in Greenwich, while the RSGS hosted its own exhibition of polar material (Exh.59).

The rhetoric used in articles describing these events was similar to that of the 1850s. The RSGS exhibition was criticised for its dearth of Franklin-related objects, most of the display was made up of ethnographical artefacts, taxidermy and scientific specimens.⁴⁵⁴ Inevitably, however, the press focused on what relics there were. A report in the *Dundee Telegraph* reiterated their value as clues. It discussed how various skeletons were identified through the objects found with them, including McDonald's medical certificate.⁴⁵⁵ Journalists reporting on the RGS commemoration also deliberated on the meaning of the relics. *The Spectator* wrote that they were vital as 'evidence of the time and place at which the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror" were forced to abandon their ships, frozen in their encampments, or dropped and died among the Arctic ice.'⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁰ Grego, *Illustrated Souvenir*, 11.

⁴⁵¹ *A Day at the Royal Naval Exhibition* (London, 1891), Mic.A.12566(17) *General Reference Collection*, BL, 4.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 5, 15.

⁴⁵³ *Belfast News-Letter* (13th May 1891).

⁴⁵⁴ *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* (11th May 1895); Fred Bailey 'List of Objects Shown at the Franklin Commemoration Meeting, Edinburgh, On 4th June 1895, and On Subsequent Days' in *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 11(8) (1895), pp. 410-416.

⁴⁵⁵ *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* (11th May 1895).

⁴⁵⁶ *The Spectator* (25th May 1895).

Displays of relics continued to elicit an emotional response. A 1910 guidebook to the Naval Museum described them as ‘grim’, ‘sad’ and ‘terrible’, while in 1913 a journalist commented that ‘anyone who has examined the pathetic relics of the Franklin expedition in the museum at Greenwich Hospital will admit the extraordinary potency that even a tarnished brass button or a sentence scribbled in pencil has to conjure up the scene of desolation.’⁴⁵⁷

If the Franklin relics had begun to be side-lined in 1891, by the time of the 1930 Polar Exhibition this was even more palpable. The exhibition, which contained displays on history, industry and science, included Franklin relics loaned from institutions such as the Naval Museum, the USI and the RGS (Exh.81). The response to these was unchanged; the relics were ‘pitiful remnants’ and ‘trivial articles, which are still of such vast importance because they record the death of heroes.’⁴⁵⁸ By 1930, however, the most dominant story of polar tragedy in the public imagination was that of the death of Robert Falcon Scott and his companions on their return from the South Pole in 1912. The Franklin collections were paid little attention compared to more recent relics: the objects recovered from Scott’s last camp.⁴⁵⁹ This is reflected in the exhibition catalogue where the ‘Franklin relics’ are listed as a single entry while those relating to Scott are described in minute detail.⁴⁶⁰

By the time of the 1930 exhibition, therefore, though the relics were still revered, they were no longer central to how the polar regions were understood. In the 1850s the Arctic had been defined in the public consciousness by the disappearance of the Franklin expedition. This was epitomized by the relics, which evoked an unremittingly hostile region. Later, following the relative success of subsequent expeditions, this image had been tempered. In addition, by 1930 travelling to the Arctic was less

⁴⁵⁷ Edward Fraser, *Greenwich Royal Hospital & the Royal United Service Museum* (London, 1910), 117-18; *The Spectator* (25th May 1895).

⁴⁵⁸ *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (2nd July 1930); *The Guardian* (3rd July 1930).

⁴⁵⁹ *Western Morning News* (4th July 1930).

⁴⁶⁰ Exhibition catalogue (1930), ‘British Polar Exhibition’, A.102/861 *Correspondence Dossiers*, HBCA, 10.

unusual. University expeditions left on a regular basis and even tourists, albeit only wealthy ones, could visit the region.⁴⁶¹

The use of the term 'relic' was also applied more frequently. It was no longer exclusively associated with the Franklin expedition. At first it had only been used to refer to objects that had belonged to the lost crews.⁴⁶² Though, later on, it was also applied to artefacts associated with the search expeditions, it nevertheless retained links to Franklin specifically. This was the case as late as 1891, when at the Royal Naval Exhibition only the Franklin collections were referred to as relics, while those associated with the 1875 expedition were 'articles'.⁴⁶³ A journalist writing in 1895 had approved of this exclusivity, arguing that the term should be reserved for high-status objects which 'take their place... by acclamation, in the affections of a people and are preserved as visible memorials of high endeavour'.⁴⁶⁴ He identified Franklin relics as one of only a few types of object that deserved the label.⁴⁶⁵

Later on, however, 'relic' was used more casually. It became a common term applied to any artefact connected to a notable individual. In 1895 the RSGS exhibition contained the 'relics' of various explorers including John Ross and James Weddell.⁴⁶⁶ In 1909 the *Daily News* reviewed Shackleton's 'exhibition of Antarctic relics and curios' and a few years later George Nathaniel Curzon, the president of the RGS, listed among their 'relics' a watch owned by Joseph Hooker and Charles Darwin's sextant.⁴⁶⁷

Museum professionals used the term in a similar manner. Sometimes it denoted the personal possession of a famous figure. A 1905 article in the *Museums Journal* reported that a display marking the centenary of Nelson's victory and death at the Battle of Trafalgar had 'been limited so far as possible to personal relics, and many objects

⁴⁶¹ John Wright 'British Polar Expeditions' in *Polar Record* 26(157) (1990), pp. 77-84.; Arvid Viken and Frigg Jørgensen 'Tourism on Svalbard' in *ibid.* 34(189) (1998), pp. 123-128., 123.

⁴⁶² This epithet has continued to attach itself to the collections. The website of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich still refers to the collection as the 'Franklin relics'. 'Franklin Expedition Relics', *Royal Museums Greenwich*, <http://goo.gl/hC2puI>, Accessed 20th June 2016.

⁴⁶³ Exhibition catalogue, 'Royal Naval Exhibition', NLS, 10.

⁴⁶⁴ *The Spectator* (25th May 1895).

⁴⁶⁵ The writer also includes Nelson's *Victory* and the Ark of the Covenant in this category.

⁴⁶⁶ Bailey 'List of Objects' (1895).

⁴⁶⁷ *Daily News* (30th September 1909); George Nathaniel Curzon 'Address to the Royal Geographical Society' in *The Geographical Journal* 40(1) (1912), pp. 1-7, 7.

connected rather with his battles have been declined.⁴⁶⁸ At other times the term lacked this precision, and was used to refer to any kind of object, as when, for example, the journal reviewed an ‘interesting exhibition of relics of the “Discovery Antarctic Expedition”’.⁴⁶⁹ By the time of the 1930 Polar Exhibition, ‘relic’ had become synonymous with ‘object’ or ‘artefact’. The ‘Precious Relics’ room included the Franklin collections. It also contained objects such as a ‘wax match box’ and ‘shoes worn by Eskimo Indians at the North Pole.’⁴⁷⁰

The Franklin relics held the same meaning for audiences in 1930 as they had in 1854. They were material evidence of a disappearance that contemporary audiences still found puzzling, and they evoked ideas of bravery and sacrifice on the part of Franklin’s men. They were not, however, so important in terms of the overall narrative surrounding polar exploration or to the way that the polar regions were understood. The rhetoric used to refer to the relics, however, was found in later discourse, particularly that concerning objects related to Scott, and not least the use of the term ‘relic’ itself.

3.7 Conclusion

The Franklin era was formative and had long-term implications for how exploration was exhibited thereafter. The displays of this period bore little resemblance to their predecessors. Not only did they employ objects, these were shown in a museum context. For the first time, exhibiting themes of exploration came under the purview of the museum rather than the entertainment sector.

It was not only the format of exhibitions that changed. So too did their dominant themes. The way the relics were interpreted centred on the British explorers who visited the Arctic rather than the intrinsic characteristics of the region itself. The major theme of these displays was the heroism of individuals and the human experience of

⁴⁶⁸ B. E. Sargeant 'The Nelson Centenary Exhibition at the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall' in *Museums Journal* 5(1) (1906-06), pp. 14-19, 15.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Antarctic Exhibition in Liverpool' in *ibid.* IV(8) (1904-05), pp. 288.

⁴⁷⁰ Exhibition catalogue, 'British Polar Exhibition', HBCA, 14.

exploration. The Arctic was only significant as an inhospitable and formidable backdrop.

Both of these developments had a long term effect. Though most later exhibitions were similar to panoramas in that they were temporary and held outside of a museum context, they continued to converge with museum displays by adopting more practices used by the sector. It also became more common to use objects rather than images, and the ‘human side’ of exploration remained a major preoccupation.

Though panoramas continued to be staged, it was a new type of exhibition that exemplified this change of focus. The departure of the next Arctic naval expedition in 1875 was marked by a display of polar material in the dockyard in Portsmouth (Exh.48). This was centred on objects, both the everyday equipment to be used on the upcoming voyage, and historic artefacts from earlier expeditions, including ‘theatre playbills’ produced on ships involved in the Franklin search.⁴⁷¹ The display emphasised the act of exploration by demonstrating how men lived their daily lives in the Arctic and showing the tools necessary for their survival. The format was repeated thereafter while older types of exhibition disappeared.

Of course, other factors also had an impact on how exploration was displayed. These include developments in museum practice and changes in the way exploration was organised and funded. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁴⁷¹ Putting on theatrical performances had been a normal part of a expedition’s overwintering routine since Parry’s voyage in 1819.

Chapter 4: Heroic Age exhibitions: c.1875 - 1914

4.1 Introduction

After the Franklin era the British navy largely withdrew from the Arctic. Only one more naval expedition was sent to the region, led by George Nares in 1875. By the end of the century, however, Britain had begun to look towards its southern equivalent: Antarctica. The subsequent 'Heroic Age' lasted until after the First World War.

This chapter considers how polar exhibitions evolved during this time. The period between the 1870s and 1910s saw a transformation in the way that exploration was represented. The focus on human experience fostered during the Franklin era continued, overtaking depictions of the natural world to become the dominant theme of polar displays. The formats of exhibitions also changed as they became less like shows and more like the displays of the museum sector.

The following sections will discuss these ideas in detail. The first outlines previous scholarship and source material. The second gives a brief history of the period and examines how old formats of exhibition were replaced with new.

The next part of the chapter comprises seven sections focusing on the themes of exhibitions. The first argues that one reason why 'the human side' of exploration became more significant was the shift from government-sponsored exploration to expeditions that were privately arranged. Following this, the next four sections examine how themes of human experience and adventure were manifested in displays. Both the content of exhibitions and literature such as catalogues emphasised ideas of endeavour and heroism. Displays of equipment lent insight into the daily life of explorers. At the same time there was an increased focus on individual personalities; depictions of explorers became as important as the exploration they undertook. Exhibitions that dealt with the death of Scott and his companions introduced themes of tragic heroism and introduced a new generation of polar 'relics.' The final two sections on content explore themes of the natural world and scientific endeavour.

Following this, the convergence between polar exhibitions and the museum sector will be examined. Finally, the impact of the exhibitions will be assessed by analysing their accessibility, popularity and the extent to which they fulfilled their aims.

4.2 Contribution and sources

Despite there being a large body of material on Heroic Age Antarctic exploration, the exhibitions of this period have been little-studied, receiving less scholarly attention than the panoramas and human displays discussed in previous chapters. Occasionally exhibitions are mentioned in texts about individual explorers or voyages, or in works about figures like Herbert Ponting and Edward Wilson.⁴⁷² These, however, rarely describe the displays in any detail.

An exception is Jones' *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice*, in which the author examines the public response to the death of Scott and the polar party. Part of his analysis considers the exhibitions created in the aftermath of these events. It offers an in-depth examination of Ponting's photographs; Jones concludes that the appeal of the exhibition lay, not just in its depiction of the tragedy, but in the variety of subjects represented including wildlife, landscape, daily life and scientific research (Exh.78).⁴⁷³ He makes no attempt to evaluate which of these themes was most significant. Jones also scrutinises newspaper reviews of Wilson's watercolours to show that they drew attention to the 'strange and magnificent Antarctic world' (Exh.77).⁴⁷⁴ This contribution is useful but limited in that it only deals with exhibitions following the death of Scott. The following discussion takes a broader view.

Though they deal with the nineteenth-century Arctic rather than Heroic Age Antarctica, the work of Riffenburgh and Robinson remains pertinent.⁴⁷⁵ Their conclusions about the

⁴⁷² Examples include Beau Riffenburgh, *Shackleton's Forgotten Expedition: The Voyage of the Nimrod* (New York, 2004); Wilson, *The Lost Photographs*; Wilson, *Edward Wilson's Antarctic Notebooks*.

⁴⁷³ Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 182-83.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁴⁷⁵ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*; Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*.

emotional investment of the public in polar exploration and the deliberate manipulation of the public image of explorers are extremely relevant to the analysis offered here. Riffenburgh's argument that interest in exploration was sustained by the presentation of explorers as heroes has already been applied to an Antarctic context by Keighren. Keighren shows that the way explorers were perceived could be dependent on context and place. In the case of the *Scotia* expedition ideas of heroism were replaced by an alternative narrative of scientific endeavour and Scottish nationalism.⁴⁷⁶

While Riffenburgh and Keighren study the role of the media in creating a heroic persona, Barczewski uses evidence from exhibitions and material culture to support her argument about how the popular reputations of Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton have changed over time. Barczewski analyses the treatment of objects associated with the men. For example, she argues that the way Shackleton has been regarded at different periods is reflected in the way his lifeboat the *James Caird* has been alternately fêted and ignored.⁴⁷⁷

Other studies consider the ways Antarctic exploration was, or failed to be, assimilated into popular culture. Though Stephen Pyne asserts that the cultural isolation of Antarctica precluded its inspiring imaginative literature, both Moss and Manhire contradict his conclusion by identifying texts that were influenced by contemporary Antarctic voyages.⁴⁷⁸ Pyne also suggests that, unlike the Arctic, Antarctica was not presented in terms of the sublime.⁴⁷⁹ This does not take account of the reactions to Antarctic landscapes recorded in newspaper articles, which often evoke the idea of the sublime. Klaus Dodds argues that film and photography were the most important means of portraying exploration, and attributes the popular interest in the subject to its being 'a source of reassurance' at a time when Britain's status as a superpower was under threat.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ Keighren 'Of Poles, Pressmen, and the Newspaper Public' (2005).

⁴⁷⁷ Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, 184-85.

⁴⁷⁸ Stephen J. Pyne, *The Ice: A Journey to Antarctica* (Iowa, 1986), 158-60; Moss, *Scott's Last Biscuit*; Manhire, *The Wide White Page*.

⁴⁷⁹ Pyne, *The Ice*, 153.

⁴⁸⁰ Klaus J. Dodds 'Antarctica and the Modern Geographical Imagination (1918-1960)' in *Polar Record* 33(184) (1997), pp. 47-62., 49.

None of these analyses consider exhibitions as a means of representing the regions. The following discussion will address this gap.

The exhibitions of this period are documented in a wider variety of sources than were available for earlier ones. These include catalogues, advertising material, private correspondence and transcripts of lectures. Part of the chapter deals with the contemporary museum sector, the views and preoccupations of which are recorded in the publications of the Museums Association: first, the proceedings of the annual conferences held between 1891 and 1900 and, secondly, the *Museums Journal*, published from 1901 onwards.

Like previous chapters, the analysis is based largely on newspaper articles: these are the best available means of gauging how the public felt. Exhibition catalogues are another important type of source. Often these contain an introduction describing the background to a display, which can lend insight into the aims of the exhibition organiser. They list not only what was shown but the order it was arranged in (Fig.18). This reduces the possibility, a problem when dealing with newspaper articles alone, that parts of the display are not documented.

Catalogues have some limitations, however. While they might reproduce some photographs, most objects and images are only described through captions. Despite the fact that most of the photographs taken on expeditions have survived, stored in the archives of institutions such as the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), it is difficult to match these captions with the images they label. In their book *Discovery Illustrated* Judy Skelton and David Wilson describe how they found it impossible to identify the exact photographs used in the Discovery exhibition.⁴⁸¹ Not all of the photographs taken on an expedition were exhibited afterwards: the catalogue for the Nimrod exhibition states that those chosen for display had been selected from thousands of possibilities.⁴⁸² Depending on captions alone is problematic as they might be misleading or incomplete. For example, a photograph titled 'Hummocky Sea-Ice' may also include a penguin or a human figure. This

⁴⁸¹ Skelton and Wilson, *Discovery Illustrated*, 5.

⁴⁸² Exhibition catalogue, 'British Antarctic Expedition', DC, 13.

ambiguity makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the number of times certain subjects, such as penguins, appear.

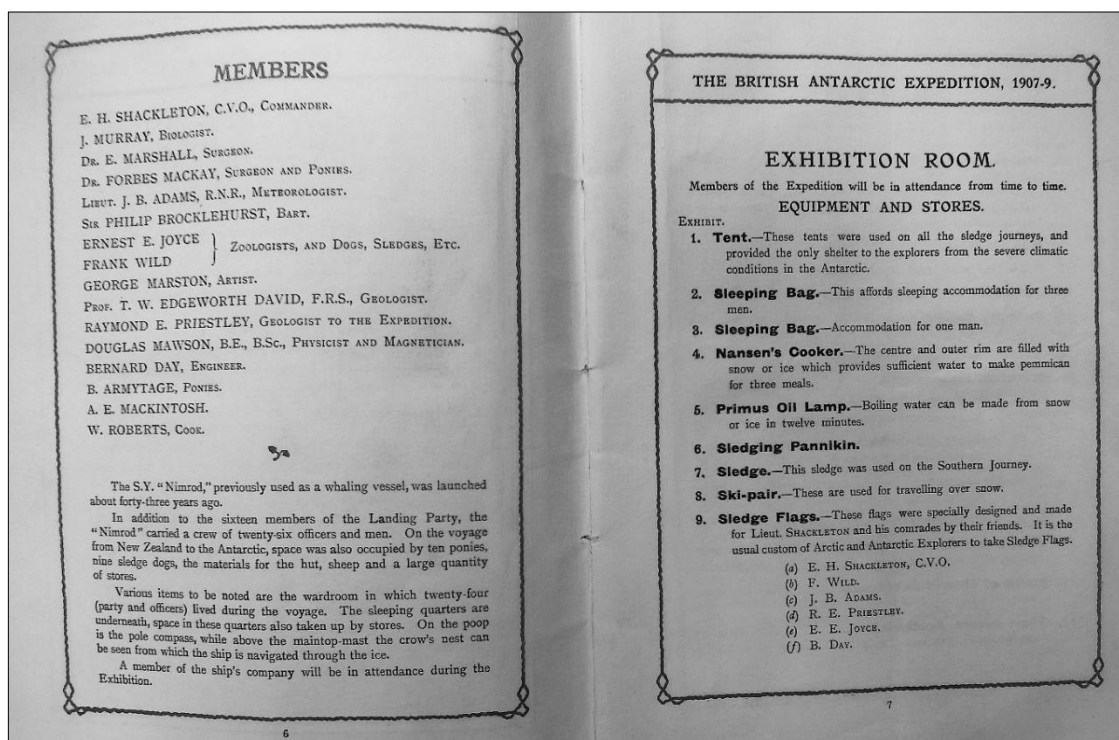


Figure 18. Pages from the catalogue for the 1909 Nimrod exhibition Exhibition catalogue (1909) 'The British Antarctic Expedition 1907-09', Sir Ernest Shackleton collection, DC, 6-7. With kind permission of the Governors of Dulwich College

4.3 Expeditions, exhibitions, changes, continuities

After the return of McClintock in 1859 British exploration of the Arctic ceased for over a decade. Though whaling continued, and there was still a British presence in the Arctic in the form of the Hudson Bay Company, no new expeditions were sent. The next British exploration of the Arctic was in 1875 when a naval expedition under George Nares attempted to reach the North Pole. This did not succeed and soon afterwards Britain withdrew from the region, transferring her Arctic territories to the newly formed

country of Canada in 1880.⁴⁸³ When the First International Polar Year took place between 1882 and 1883, Britain's participation was minimal.⁴⁸⁴

Events in the 1890s and 1910s partly renewed interest in the Arctic. The British adventurer Frederick Jackson led an expedition to Franz Josef Land between 1894 and 1897, during the course of which he rescued the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen. Nansen and a companion were returning from an attempt to reach the North Pole which, though it did not succeed, set a new furthest north record.⁴⁸⁵ In 1906 Nansen's fellow Norwegian Roald Amundsen completed the first transit of the Northwest Passage. A few years later there was controversy as two American explorers, Robert Peary and Frederick Cook, both claimed to have reached the North Pole first. After months of discussion in the American and European press public opinion, and the American Geographical Society, adjudicated in favour of Peary.⁴⁸⁶

A more significant development in Britain was the resumption of Antarctic exploration. While earlier attention had focused on the Arctic, this changed towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1870s an oceanographical voyage on board the *Challenger* carried out some work in Antarctic waters. Then, in 1893, the Dundee Whaling Expedition visited the continent in order to gauge the feasibility of commercial whaling in the region. This venture involved the scientist William Speirs Bruce and the artist William Burn Murdoch.

Five years later the *Southern Cross* expedition, commanded by Carston Borchgrevink, sailed for Antarctica with a mixture of exploratory and scientific aims. This is usually considered the first expedition of the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration. The second was led in 1902 by Robert Falcon Scott aboard the *Discovery*. Scott's first expedition was notable for a record-breaking 'Furthest South' journey into the continent's interior, undertaken by Scott, the then third lieutenant Ernest Shackleton and Edward Wilson, the expedition's surgeon, zoologist and artist. At the same time Bruce commanded the

⁴⁸³ Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 293.

⁴⁸⁴ Susan Barr and Cornelia Lüdecke, *The History of the International Polar Years (IPYs)* (London, 2010). Only one British group participated; the Royal Society sent a group of four men to Fort Rae on the Great Slave Lake. The men's logbooks were lost and little known about what occurred.

⁴⁸⁵ Fridtjof Nansen and Otto Neumann Sverdrup, *Farthest North* (Westminster, 1897).

⁴⁸⁶ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, 187-88.

Scotia expedition, which carried out oceanographical research in the Weddell Sea and established a meteorological station on the South Orkney Islands.

In 1907 Shackleton returned to Antarctica in command of the *Nimrod*. On this occasion he and three companions attempted to reach the South Pole but turned back ninety-seven nautical miles away. Scott led his second voyage in 1911 on the *Terra Nova*. This expedition saw the ‘Race to the Pole’, when a party of five men, including Scott and Wilson, reached the South Pole thirty-four days after their Norwegian rival Roald Amundsen. All five died on the return journey.

The final expeditions of the Heroic Age were commanded by Shackleton. On the 1914 to 1916 *Endurance* expedition the men were marooned after their ship was crushed in the ice and sank. Eventually making landfall on Elephant Island, Shackleton and five companions effected a rescue by sailing over 800 miles to South Georgia on the ship’s lifeboat, the *James Caird*. The *Quest* expedition left Britain in 1921. It was marked by the death of Shackleton off of South Georgia at an early stage of the voyage.

Like earlier polar exploits, these events were represented in exhibitions. There were, however, significant differences between the ways polar exploration was displayed before and after 1875.

First, and most obviously, the dominant polar region changed. In the past almost all exhibitions had focused on the Arctic rather than Antarctica. There were exceptions. An 1870s panorama that took audiences on a ‘world tour’ included a visit to the Antarctic, where they were shown images of icebergs, penguins and the Great Ice Barrier (Exh.46).⁴⁸⁷ From the 1890s onwards, however, Antarctica became a more frequent subject for displays; between 1893 and 1914 twelve exhibitions dealt solely with the Antarctic compared to two with the Arctic.⁴⁸⁸

Another difference was that old formats of exhibition disappeared. At least five new panoramas were produced in the 1860s and 1870s, partly in response to the Nares expedition: however, these were the last of their kind (Exh.47, 49, 52, 53, 54). The most thoroughly documented production, toured by a Mr Rignold, depicted familiar images

⁴⁸⁷ Playbill (1879), ‘Second Great Tour Round the World’, III.C. (499) Bridgnorth Collection, *John Johnson Collection*, Bodleian.

⁴⁸⁸ Three dealt with both regions.

such as icebergs, the Aurora Borealis, men sledging and a ship beset in the ice (Exh.49). It followed the template established by its predecessors in emphasising its educational aims ('a means of instruction as well as of entertainment') and accuracy ('its fidelity has been vouched for by officers of several of the recent Arctic expeditions').⁴⁸⁹ The number of displays of Inuit similarly declined, despite the fact that, in general, shows of indigenous peoples remained popular.⁴⁹⁰ The Inuit only appear to have exhibited twice during this period. The first occasion was at Olympia in 1899 when a group of forty individuals, living in an 'Eskimo encampment', showed their audiences objects such as tents, sledges and traditional clothing, and had races by dog-sled (Exh.61).⁴⁹¹ The second time was at the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry in Glasgow in 1911, although reports about this display are confused and the group exhibited may in fact have been Sami rather than Inuit (Exh.72).⁴⁹²

New formats replaced these older ones. These included displays of equipment, art and photography exhibitions, large multimedia displays telling the story of a particular voyage and the inclusion of polar themes in Great Exhibitions. Unlike panoramas these displays were usually organised, not by professional show-people, but by members of the exploring fraternity such as expedition leaders, artists and photographers.

There was some continuity between this period and the last. The success of exhibitions still depended on exploration being newsworthy. Most exhibitions were specifically linked to current ventures and so there were few polar offerings at times when there were no British expeditions in the field. For example, the only Arctic-themed displays in the 1880s were a group of Finnish Sami, shown alongside their reindeer at the 1885 International Exhibition, and a Hudson Bay Company stall at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition a year later (Exh.55, 56).⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ *The Era* (15th January 1881); *Hampshire Advertiser* (31st March 1877).

⁴⁹⁰ Human displays continued up until the First World War. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 105.

⁴⁹¹ *The Standard* (4th December 1899).

⁴⁹² Contradictory reports appear in the *Aberdeen Journal* (13th April 1911) and the *Sheffield Independent* (3rd May 1911).

⁴⁹³ Handbill (1885), 'International Exhibition, London 1885, Alexandra Palace', Evan.1920 *Evanion Collection*, BL; Exhibition catalogue (1886), 'Colonial and Indian Exhibition: Official Catalogue', Mic.F.232 [no. 09804] *General Reference Collection*, BL.

Another similarity was that exhibitions continued, for the most part, to be commercial ventures. There were exceptions. Bruce rarely made money from his varied curatorial activities and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society actually made a loss (Exh.59).⁴⁹⁴ Most exhibitions, however, were held for profit-making purposes. Usually an entry fee was charged and the contents of some displays were offered for sale. Burn Murdoch hoped ‘to sell a considerable number’ of his paintings during his 1893 exhibition (Exh.58).⁴⁹⁵ The objects included in the Discovery exhibition were also sold, as were Ponting’s photographs (Exh.63, 78).⁴⁹⁶ Visitors to the display of Wilson’s watercolours were invited to buy prints of the paintings (Exh.77).⁴⁹⁷

With the exception of indigenous people, of which Antarctica has none, the themes of exhibitions were broadly the same as before: dramatic landscapes, exotic wildlife, the activities of the men. The next seven sections will show how the relative importance of each of these themes changed. Unlike panoramas, which had prioritised images of the natural world, the experiences of explorers themselves were now at the heart of displays.

4.4 Content: Introduction: a new model of exploration

The following sections will discuss how themes of adventure and human experience dominated polar exhibitions, taking precedent over other aspects of exploration such as the natural world and scientific endeavour. This exemplified the change of focus that

⁴⁹⁴ *The Scotsman* (16th November 1895).

⁴⁹⁵ Correspondence (5th(?) June 1893), Murdoch to Mill, MS/100/82/2 *William Murdoch collection*, SPRI.

⁴⁹⁶ Exhibition catalogue (1904), ‘Discovery Antarctic Exhibition: Illustrated Catalogue’, DUNIH 425 *Discovery Point collection*, DHT; Exhibition catalogue (1913), ‘The British Antarctic Expedition, 1910-1913. Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures of Mr. Herbert G. Ponting’, K.21 *Discovery Point collection*, DHT.

⁴⁹⁷ Exhibition catalogue (1914), ‘British Antarctic Expedition, 1910-1913: Catalogue of an Exhibition of Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours, Drawings of Norwegian & Swiss scenery, Studies of Birds, &c./ by Edward A. Wilson’, HP2.88.22, NLS.

had been seen during the Franklin era. It can also be partly attributed to new ways of organising expeditions.

In the nineteenth century most polar exploration had been carried out by the Royal Navy.⁴⁹⁸ In contrast, Heroic Age Antarctic expeditions were largely private affairs.⁴⁹⁹ Would-be explorers had to find ways to fund their ventures.

This could be challenging. In the opening chapter to *The Heart of the Antarctic*, his account of the *Nimrod* expedition, Shackleton describes how he almost gave up after over a year of trying and failing to raise sufficient funds.⁵⁰⁰ Scott and Bruce had similar difficulties financing their expeditions.⁵⁰¹ There were various sources of support. Sometimes the government would offer financial help. They largely bankrolled the *Discovery* expedition with a £45,000 grant and gave Shackleton a more modest £10,000 for the voyage on *Endurance*.⁵⁰² Organisations like the Royal Society and the RGS also gave grants for exploration. The contributions of wealthy individuals were crucial; the *Scotia* expedition was largely funded by the Coats Family and the *Endurance* expedition by James Caird, after whom the famous lifeboat was named. The *Southern Cross* expedition was financed, and indeed initiated, by the magazine publisher George Newnes.⁵⁰³ Companies such as Jaeger, Burberry and Cadburys sometimes provided free

⁴⁹⁸ There were only a few private ventures, such as John Ross's *Victory* expedition and some of the voyages in search of Franklin.

⁴⁹⁹ Though Scott's *Discovery* had some formal government support in the form of subsidies and the use of Royal Navy personnel, the impetus behind its organisation came from the RGS. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 60.

⁵⁰⁰ Ernest Henry Shackleton, *The Heart of the Antarctic; Being the Story of the British Antarctic Expedition, 1907-1909 ... With an Account of the First Journey to the South Magnetic Pole* (London, 1914), 2.

⁵⁰¹ Robert Falcon Scott, *The Voyage of the Discovery* (2012), Kindle edition, <http://goo.gl/tCS2io>, 6%; Robert Neal Rudmose-Brown, R. C. Mossman, J. H. Harvey Pirie and William S. Bruce, *The Voyage of the "Scotia": Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration in Antarctic Seas* (Edinburgh, 1906), 23.

⁵⁰² Beau Riffenburgh 'Introduction' in Scott, *The Voyage of the Discovery* (2012), 1%; Ernest Henry Shackleton, *South: The Story of Shackleton's Last Expedition, 1914-1917* (Edinburgh, 2001), x.

⁵⁰³ Louis Charles Bernacchi, *To the South Polar Regions, 1898-1900* (London, 1901), x; Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, 149.

or discounted goods in return for endorsement and the chance to associate their product with the expedition.⁵⁰⁴

Another source of financial aid were donations from the public. As Houltz points out, explorers became dependent on their domestic audience who ‘followed, admired and ultimately financed the adventures of their heroes.’⁵⁰⁵ It was, therefore, essential to obtain their support. This meant that, first, explorers had to engage in activities that helped publicise their expeditions and, secondly, emphasis was placed on those aspects of exploration that had the most popular appeal.

Exhibitions were one means by which explorers publicised and raised money for their ventures; they also used additional tools. They undertook lecture tours. Shackleton spent two years after his return from the *Nimrod* expedition lecturing to pay off a £23,000 debt.⁵⁰⁶ In a letter to his wife he revealed that, at £30 per engagement, it was ‘more money than we can earn in any ordinary way.’⁵⁰⁷ Deals were made to provide newspapers with exclusives. For example, the agency Reuters were promised the first telegram announcing the return of the *Discovery* expedition.⁵⁰⁸ Films of the *Nimrod*, *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* expeditions were produced. That from the *Terra Nova* expedition, originally called *the Great White Silence*, was particularly successful, attracting 120,000 visitors when screened in London between January and March 1914.⁵⁰⁹ They also launched publicity stunts. For example, a dog from the *Scotia* expedition was entered into a dog-show at Waverley Market in Edinburgh, and in 1914 Shackleton constructed his prefabricated base on the quay at the West India Docks in London and hosted a lunch for members of the Shipwrights’ Company inside.⁵¹⁰ Such activities raised local awareness and were often reported in the wider press.

⁵⁰⁴ Driver examines this phenomenon, arguing that ‘by picturing the commodity on the frontiers of knowledge and power, the glamour of overseas exploration could be associated with consumption at home.’ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 207.

⁵⁰⁵ Houltz 'Displaying the Polar Nation: Nordic Museum Exhibits and Polar Ambitions', 295.

⁵⁰⁶ Prospectus (1914), ‘The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Exhibition’, *Sir Ernest Shackleton collection*, DC, 11.

⁵⁰⁷ Correspondence (? November 1910), Shackleton to Shackleton, MS/1537/2/26/7 *Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton collection*, SPRI.

⁵⁰⁸ Correspondence (7th October 1902), Keltie to Scott, MSS/80/044 *DISCOVERY Antarctic Expedition*, NMM.

⁵⁰⁹ Wilson, *The Lost Photographs*, 168.

⁵¹⁰ *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (25th October 1900); *The Guardian* (16th July 1914).

These efforts were sometimes criticised by commentators. A poem titled ‘A Cry of Boredom’, published in the press in 1912, contained the following plea:

‘Oh Shackleton! Oh Shackleton!/ When will we live to see/ The columns of our public Press/ If, for one day, set free/ From publishing your every move-/ The Orders you have got-/ The kingly crowds- your boy’s remarks/ And all such “Tommy rot?”’⁵¹¹

The writer protested that in the past explorers did not ‘go round and boom/ Their progress with a band.’⁵¹²

If more time was spent on engaging the public then there was also an emphasis on those facets of exploration with the most popular appeal: stories of adventure, struggle in the face of danger, hardships faced and overcome, the accomplishment of geographical goals such as reaching the South Pole, and the day-to-day existence of men living in an unfamiliar environment. As Keighren argues the Antarctic had become associated with ‘heroic endeavour’ and ‘thrilling sensation.’⁵¹³

That these were the priorities of the public can be judged from comments in the press and the observations of contemporaries. It was stated of Nares’s 1875 voyage that ‘it is as an exploit rather than a voyage of scientific discovery that the expedition attracted public sympathy.’⁵¹⁴ Thirty years later a reviewer commented that ‘the chief attraction’ of the Swedish explorer Otto Nordenskjöld’s book was ‘its strong human interest’; similarly, the most exciting chapters of Scott’s account of the *Discovery* expedition were considered to be those describing the furthest south journey.⁵¹⁵ Clement Markham, a strong advocate for polar exploration, declared that ‘as the public cares nothing, for geography, or any other science it became essential that the appeal should be made for an object which the public could understand and feel an interest in, such as “planting the Union Jack at the South Pole”.’⁵¹⁶

⁵¹¹ Press cutting (1912), Gen.1671 *Scottish National Antarctic Expedition*, EUCRC.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Keighren 'Of Poles, Pressmen, and the Newspaper Public' (2005), 204.

⁵¹⁴ Press cutting (1875), TIZ/30 *Captain Thomas Henry Tizard collection 1839-1924*, NMM.

⁵¹⁵ *The Scotsman* (2nd March 1905); *The Spectator* (14th October 1905).

⁵¹⁶ Correspondence (? December 1909), Markham to the President of the Royal Geographical Society, EHS/2 *Ernest Shackleton Collection*, RGS. Markham had briefly been involved in the Franklin searches as a young naval officer in the 1850s. Though he later worked for the diplomatic service in India he retained a keen interest in polar exploration and campaigned for its resumption. As president of the RGS between 1893 and 1905 he had a great influence on the

This had implications for fundraising, a fact of which Frank Debenham, a member of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition and later founder of SPRI, was aware. In a lecture to the RGS he argued that 'in the past the element of romance which is inseparable from polar exploration has been at once a help and a hindrance: a help in that it has attracted at the same time both financial support and the services of men with high ideals; a hindrance in that it has overshadowed the scientific side of exploration.'⁵¹⁷ In the 1930s Robert Rudmose-Brown, a scientist on the *Scotia* expedition, similarly bemoaned the 'common practice of judging the success of a Polar expedition by... the sensational nature of the adventures met with.'⁵¹⁸ He admitted, however, that the attainment of the pole had 'robbed polar work of a popular zest' that made fundraising more difficult.⁵¹⁹

The exhibitions of the period must be considered in this context. Not only was the format utilised by explorers to raise funds but their contents reflect these priorities. Exhibitions too emphasised the human experience of exploration.

The following sections will show how. First, themes of adventure, hardship and endeavour were emphasised both in exhibition literature and in the objects and images on show. Secondly, the display of equipment reflected visitors' interest in the everyday life and work of the men. Thirdly, more prominence was placed on individual celebrities. The fourth section of this part of the thesis looks specifically at exhibitions created in the aftermath of the death of Scott; the fifth and sixth analyse depictions of the natural world and of scientific activities.

organisation of the *Discovery* expedition, including encouraging Robert Falcon Scott to apply for the position of commander.

⁵¹⁷ Frank Debenham 'The Future of Polar Exploration' in *The Geographical Journal* 57(3) (1921), pp. 182-200., 182.

⁵¹⁸ Robert Neal Rudmose-Brown 'Recent Polar Work—Some Criticisms' in *Polar Record* 1(05) (1933), pp. 62-66., 62.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

4.5 Memorials of endurance: exhibiting themes of adventure

Exhibitions presented stories of adventure and the accomplishment of heroic feats. Catalogues and other literature emphasised these themes, and objects and images were chosen that highlighted the hostile conditions faced by explorers.

Display techniques were used that presented exhibitions in the form of a story. Photographs and artwork were usually hung in chronological order, imposing a narrative quality on displays.⁵²⁰ Audiences were shown the events of an expedition as they unfolded in a way that reflected the experience of the explorers themselves. For example, the sequence of photographs at the 1909 Nimrod exhibition showed the men first departing from New Zealand, then seeing their first icebergs, looking for a place to establish their base and setting up camp, the onset of winter and the activities undertaken during that winter. It then followed the exploits of different sledging parties the following spring and finished with the men reunited in camp, packing up and departing (Exh.71).⁵²¹ Photographs from the Nares voyage similarly began with the expedition's first stop in Greenland and ended at the furthest north camp (Exh.50).⁵²² This sense of a northwards progression was emphasised by captions giving the latitude and longitude at which each photograph was taken. Burn Murdoch's paintings, each marked with the date, followed the Dundee Whaling Expedition as it left Dundee, crossed the Equator, travelled through the tropics, reached Antarctica and then returned home (Exh.58).⁵²³ As one reviewer remarked, this enabled 'the visitors to follow the movement of the vessels right through the voyage.'⁵²⁴

Exhibition organisers also emphasised themes of adventure through the objects and images chosen for display. The subject matter of some of Nares's photographs drew attention to the endeavours of the men in the hostile Arctic landscape and reminded

⁵²⁰ This endorses Robinson's view has argued that 'stories' were the 'currency of Arctic exploration.' Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 6.

⁵²¹ Exhibition catalogue, 'British Antarctic Expedition', DC, 13-20.

⁵²² 'Exhibition 1877: Catalogue of Photographs' in *The Photographic Journal* 1 (1877), pp. 1-19, 13-16.

⁵²³ Exhibition catalogue (1893), 'Exhibition of Antarctic Pictures: Painted during the Voyage and in the Ice/ by W.G. Burn Murdoch', L276(51) *The Lamb Collection*, DCC.

⁵²⁴ *Dundee Courier* (21st July 1893).

viewers about the difficulties involved in exploration (Exh.50). One showed the men trying to free the ships from the ice: another the pillars built to guide the men from place to place through the twenty-four hour darkness of winter.⁵²⁵ Photographs of the graves of crew members who had perished during the expedition evoked the dangers of exploration.⁵²⁶ One reviewer commented that ‘it would be impossible to give a better idea of the magnitude of the undertaking to reach the North Pole than is conveyed by a glance at these photographs’ while another argued they would ‘disenchant those sanguine individuals’ who criticised Nares for turning back.⁵²⁷

The realities of Arctic travel were similarly illustrated during the 1891 Royal Naval Exhibition (Exh.57). Sledging and camping scenes conveyed ‘an idea of the hardships and privations which have to be undergone by Arctic explorers’, bringing home ‘vividly the hardships of those who penetrate to the fastnesses of the North.’⁵²⁸ As explained in the previous chapter, these were among the most prominent features of the Arctic display and pictures of them appeared in several pieces of official literature. They were also alluded to in Annette McClintock’s booklet on the Franklin relics: ‘No more arduous work can be undertaken by man. Some small idea of it may be formed from what is shewn in this Exhibition.’⁵²⁹ A pamphlet for the walk-in model iceberg, onto which was painted scenes from McClure’s voyage on the *Investigator*, also emphasised themes of hardship: ‘Comfort is a thing unknown- deprivation is the order of the day- while cold, frost-bite, hunger, thirst and scurvy, are your daily companions.’⁵³⁰

Heroic Age exhibitions also emphasised heroic feats and the overcoming of difficulties. The introduction to the Discovery exhibition catalogue particularly focused on the record-breaking furthest south journey (Exh.63).⁵³¹ It also included anecdotes that proved the men’s stoicism and courage in a hostile environment, for example, describing how one man regularly took scientific readings with frostbitten fingers.⁵³²

⁵²⁵ Photographs 61 and 73 in ‘Exhibition 1877’, *The Photographic Journal*, 15.

⁵²⁶ Photographs 101 and 102 in ‘Exhibition 1877’, *The Photographic Journal*, 16.

⁵²⁷ *The London Standard* (12th October 1877); *Literary and Art Gossip* (1st August 1877).

⁵²⁸ *Birmingham Daily Post* (1st June 1891); *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* (21st July 1891).

⁵²⁹ McClintock, *The Story of the Franklin Search*, 6.

⁵³⁰ Pamphlet (1891), ‘Shewing the Perils of the Officers and Crew of H.M.S. “Investigator” during their discovery of the North-West Passage, 1852-3’, WF 061.4 *Exhibitions not SPRI*, SPRI, 4.

⁵³¹ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Discovery Antarctic Exhibition’, DHT, 16.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 17.

During a speech at the opening ceremony Markham described its purpose as enabling visitors ‘to realise, better than anything else, the extraordinary hardships and perils that were encountered by our gallant countrymen’ and the ‘difficulties under which the great work of the expedition had been accomplished.’⁵³³ These ideas were echoed in the press. *The Guardian* wrote that the exhibition contained ‘many memorials of those long days of endurance and adventure.’⁵³⁴

The catalogue for the Nimrod exhibition similarly detailed exploratory achievements: the ascent of Mount Erebus, the furthest south journey and the attainment of the South Magnetic Pole (Exh.71).⁵³⁵ It even gave the mileages for each journey. The captions describe objects in a way that evoke the hostility of the Antarctic landscape. A sledge remnant is ‘all that is left of the Farthest South Sledge, which was torn to pieces on the rough ice of the glacier’, the ink plate on a printing machine ‘had to be heated by candle flame to soften’ having frozen in the icy air.⁵³⁶ The same year a *tableau* erected at Madame Tussauds was thought to give ‘a very graphic idea of the hardships and difficulties which the explorers encountered and overcame’, encouraging ‘a better appreciation of the qualities required and the experiences encountered in a Polar expedition.’⁵³⁷

Hardship was explicitly evoked in the Antarctic displays of the Imperial Services Exhibition. Besides the Scott relics, the main attraction was a model of an ice-cave in which one group of men had overwintered. Most reviews mentioned this feature, which one writer described as illustrating the most ‘trying circumstances as have ever been experienced by Polar explorers.’⁵³⁸ The effectiveness of the model was such that the geologist Thomas Griffith, who had been on the expedition, recorded that it was not until he saw the display that he ‘got a clear idea of the extremely difficult time’ his colleagues had experienced.⁵³⁹

⁵³³ *The Times* (5th November 1904).

⁵³⁴ *The Guardian* (4th February 1905).

⁵³⁵ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Antarctic Expedition’, DC, 5.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵³⁷ *The Standard* (30th July 1909).

⁵³⁸ *The Scotsman* (27th May 1913).

⁵³⁹ Unpublished manuscript, ‘Journeyman at Cambridge’, MS 531;BJ *Thomas Griffith Taylor collection*, SPRI, 288.

Heroic effort in the face of adversity was also a theme in the catalogues for Ponting's and Wilson's exhibitions (Exh.77, 78). Ponting's photographs were reportedly 'obtained under circumstances and difficulties seldom paralleled in the history of Photography.'⁵⁴⁰ To get certain shots he was required to undertake long journeys in temperatures of -40° and wait for hours in the cold.⁵⁴¹ On one occasion he was attacked by killer whales when photographing on an ice floe.⁵⁴² One reviewer commented that the photographs 'could only have been taken by an operator much more keen on his work than on his life.'⁵⁴³ Similarly, the foreword to the catalogue of Wilson's watercolours describes how his sketches of the South Pole were drawn in temperatures of -22°.⁵⁴⁴ The *Cambridge Independent Press* declared this feat indicative of 'the spirit in which Captain Scott and his colleagues fought and died.'⁵⁴⁵

Visitors came to anticipate that exhibitions would tell stories of adventure and hardship. These themes were deliberately evoked, both by the contents of displays and in official literature.

4.6 Competing with the rigours of the South Pole Life: exhibiting equipment

If exhibitions evoked the difficulties of exploration then they also showed visitors the tools used to overcome them. From 1875 almost every display included equipment: essential everyday items such as sledges, tents, sleeping bags, stoves, clothing and tinned and dried food. At first such exhibits served to reassure audiences that these technologies made exploration safer. Later it enabled them to better understand what everyday life on an expedition was like.

Such objects centred attention on the experience of the men by illustrating how they dealt with the environment. Shackleton himself identified 'the general equipment

⁵⁴⁰ Exhibition catalogue, 'Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures', DHT, 5.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁴³ *The Guardian* (11th December 1913).

⁵⁴⁴ Exhibition catalogue, 'Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours', NLS, 3.

⁵⁴⁵ *Cambridge Independent Press* (15th May 1914).

necessary to compete with the rigors of the South Pole Life' as representative of 'the human side of the exhibition.'⁵⁴⁶ *The Yorkshire Post*, reviewing the Discovery exhibition, similarly declared that 'human interest will be centred in the display of articles.'⁵⁴⁷

The first exhibition of this type was held in 1875 during preparations for the Nares expedition (Exh.48). It was probably held for purposes of reassurance, intended to allay the fears of a public still troubled by the Franklin tragedy. There were efforts to convince the public that the new expedition was better prepared. A member of the Admiralty, lecturing at the Crystal Palace, told his audience that 'no previous expedition

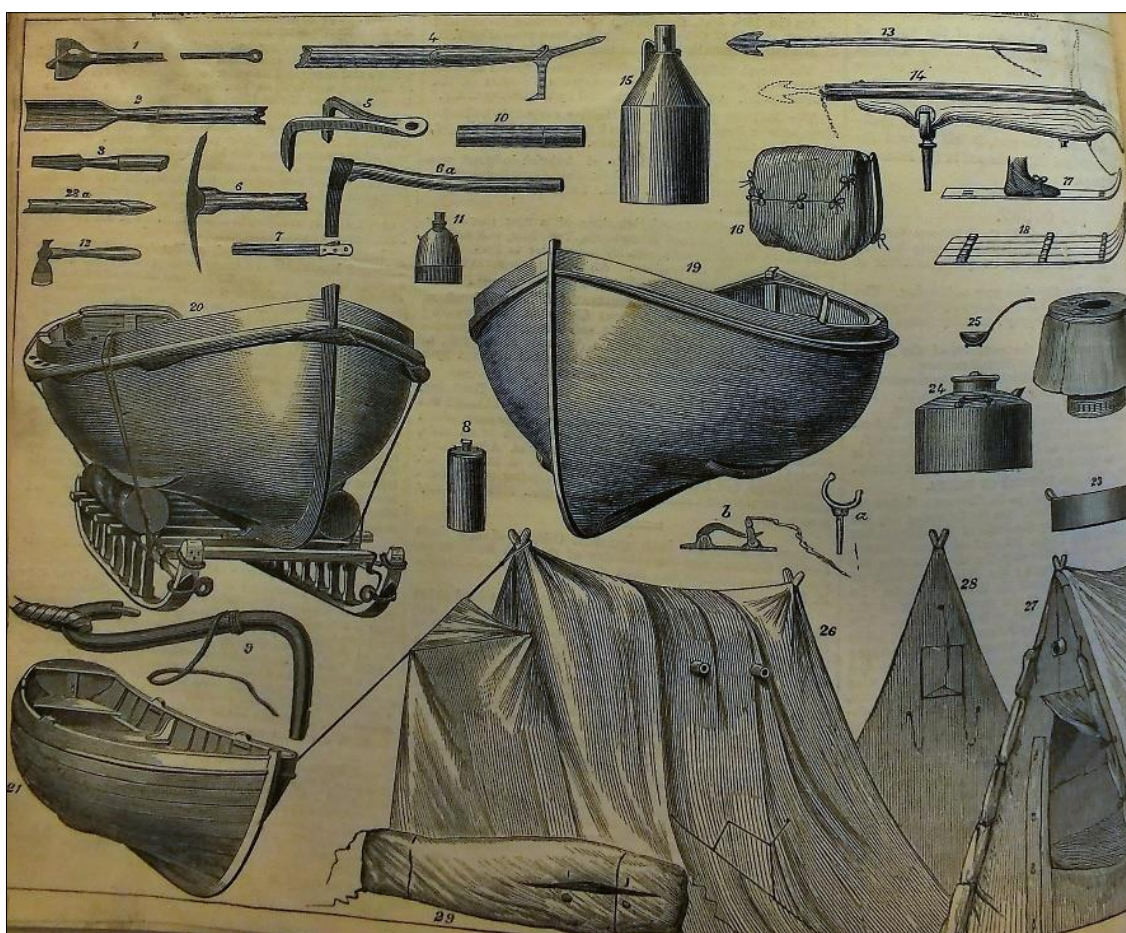


Figure 19. Illustration of objects on display at the 1875 North Pole exhibition Press cutting (1875), STP/14 Admiral Sir Henry Frederick Stephenson, 1842-1919, NMM

⁵⁴⁶ This was in contrast to scientific collections. Ernest Henry Shackleton 'The Shackleton Collection of Antarctic Specimens' in *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 11(43) (1913), pp. 51-52., 52.

⁵⁴⁷ *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (5th November 1904).

had been so completely equipped.⁵⁴⁸ The *Hampshire Telegraph* echoed this, describing how they carried superior equipment and stores to Franklin, their food had been prepared by an experienced firm and even their underclothing was ‘of the best and warmest substance.’⁵⁴⁹

The exhibition reinforced this message by showing audiences the equipment the expedition would use (Fig.19). Technologies such as an ice saw, hung in a way that showed how it was used, persuaded viewers that Nares’ expedition would not have the same tragic end as that of Franklin.⁵⁵⁰ Judging by press reports the strategy was successful. One journalist illustrated the ‘perfection of the arrangements’ by recounting the following incident: ““They didn’t used to go No’th like this formerly”, observed an old gentleman of nautical cut. But he was somewhat reconciled when it was observed to him in reply, “But they didn’t used to come home at all, formerly”.”⁵⁵¹

By the Heroic Age such assurances were no longer necessary. The public had become comfortable with the idea of polar exploration: even complacent, judging by a comment in *The Spectator*. Responding to the news of the death of Scott and the polar party, it bemoaned that ‘we had become accustomed to regard Antarctic exploration as less hazardous than Arctic exploration... no disaster had occurred in the south, and so we fell into an easy habit of thinking that none ever would occur.’⁵⁵²

In this context displays of equipment performed a new function. They helped visitors to understand how exploration was carried out: how the men travelled, what they wore, what they ate, and how they kept themselves entertained. The insight they offered into everyday life allowed audiences to partake in exploration vicariously.

These ideas recur in the press. The Southern Cross exhibition would ‘materially help to a better understanding of the rigours’ the expedition would face (Exh.60).⁵⁵³ Another writer put it more colourfully: ‘when you have strolled around for half-an-hour or so

⁵⁴⁸ *Daily News* (25th May 1875).

⁵⁴⁹ *Hampshire Telegraph* (22nd May 1875).

⁵⁵⁰ *The Spectator* (29th May 1875).

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵² *The Spectator* (15th February 1913).

⁵⁵³ *The Guardian* (27th July 1898).

among icicles and reindeers, and snowshoes and Samoyed dogs, you feel that you want to go outside and thaw your whiskers.’⁵⁵⁴

Subsequent displays were also interpreted in these terms. A few years later the 1902 Scotia exhibition would similarly ‘help those who are not able to visit the Polar Regions themselves to realise to a great extent the life and work of the men who are about to set out’ (Exh.62).⁵⁵⁵ The Discovery exhibition would ‘enable the stay-at-home Londoner to realise what exploration means’ (Exh.63).⁵⁵⁶ Visitors to the 1909 Nimrod exhibition are ‘enabled to realise what such an expedition involves... for the actual equipment used by the explorers is brought before his eyes’ and Bruce’s 1913 exhibition ‘promises to be one of great interest as showing the conditions and work of a modern Antarctic expedition’ (Exh.71, 74).⁵⁵⁷ Though displays of equipment might have been expected to demystify exploration it seems that, in contrast, they engaged their audiences’ imagination.

4.7 Exhibiting the explorers

If exhibitions of equipment demonstrated how exploration was carried out, the public was also fascinated by the men who used it. Audiences were increasingly interested in the backgrounds, personal lives and character traits of their polar heroes, curious about the men who voluntarily faced the dangers and hardships inherent in polar exploration. Exhibitions were one of the means by which they could access explorers: both celebrities such as Scott and Shackleton, and the hitherto neglected men of the lower ranks.

⁵⁵⁴ *Daily Mail* (27th July 1898).

⁵⁵⁵ *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (30th August 1902).

⁵⁵⁶ *The Observer* (6th November 1905); *The Guardian* (4th February 1905).

⁵⁵⁷ *Illustrated London News* (9th October 1909); *The Scotsman* (25th February 1913).

**FURTHEST SOUTH, % "CONJOINT," LONDON:
THE ANTARCTIC ON THE EMBANKMENT.**

LONDONERS have recently been given an opportunity of making themselves personally acquainted with the details and equipment of Lieutenant Shackleton's famous expedition in the Antarctic since his ship, the "Nimrod," has been moored off Temple Pier, and the "Furthest South" exhibition has been open close by at the Examination Hall of the Royal College of Physicians and of Surgeons, Victoria Embankment. By these means the visitor is enabled to realise what such an expedition involves much better than by reading any amount of written descriptions, for the actual equipment used by the explorers is brought before his eyes, and realistic tableaux reproduce the life which they led amid the Antarctic snows. Here, for instance, stands a weather-beaten tent, and near the small opening which does duty alike for door and window stands the figure of an explorer all prepared to start on a journey across the ice. The case in which the figure is clad was actually worn for 126 days by a member of the party. Here, too, is the little printing-press by which they kept records of the expedition, and printed the volume entitled "Aurora Australis," which was bound in covers made out of packing-cases. The ink had to be melted with a candle before it would spread. Then there is the Nansen cooking-stove, a highly important article, with various other items of the outfit, such as lamps, paraffin, ski-boots, milk, fur boots, pack-saddles, pony-harness, and sleeping-bags. The whole exhibition is extremely interesting. It should be noted that the telegraphic address of the Examination Hall is "Conjoint," London.

SINCE his return to civilisation Lieutenant Shackleton has been strenuously feted and entertained, so much so that, at the dinner given by the Alpine Ski Club at the Hotel Cecil last Saturday, he remarked that when he first came back he was as lean as a board, but now he regarded the rotundity of his waistcoat with some dismay. He also alluded to the fact that, having left London knowing only of horses, he returned to find it overrun with motors, and declared that he would rather take his chance of falling into a crevasse than risk being killed by a smelly motor-bus in Regent Street. Mr. Shackleton has some amusing stories to tell of his experiences as a celebrity. One shows that an explorer is not without honour save in his own nursery. His little boy, he said, had become frightfully bored with accounts of his exploits, and at last had said to his mother, "I don't want to hear any more about daddy; I want to hear of something really dangerous." Tell me about the baby that was drowned in its bath!" Another amusing incident occurred at Miss Tussaud's, where a bust of Lieutenant Shackleton is now on view. Two girls were looking at it, and one said: "There is Latham." "That is not Latham," replied the other, "That is the man who went to the North Pole." These were the kind of things, remarked Mr. Shackleton, that helped to keep a man modest. Mr. Shackleton has mentioned the interesting circumstance that his party did not suffer from colds until a parcel from England was opened, a fact which tends to prove that colds are conveyed by microbes.

ON VIEW AT THE EXAMINATION HALL, VICTORIA EMBANKMENT: RECORDS OF LIEUTENANT SHACKLETON'S SOUTH POLAR JOURNEY.

DRAWN BY S. BEGG; PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRAPHIC PHOTO, UNION AND WORLD'S GRAPHIC PRESS.

Figure 20. Illustration of Shackleton's 1909 Nimrod exhibition *Illustrated London News* (9th October 1909). © Illustrated London News Ltd.

In the past, only expedition commanders had any kind of public profile.⁵⁵⁸ A theatre on Drury Lane in London had apparently attracted crowds after a rumour that John Ross was visiting, and Franklin reportedly avoided the centre of London for fear of being recognised when Barker's panorama, in which he was pictured, was on show in 1819.⁵⁵⁹

In this era too the focus was on a few celebrities. The most prominent figures were the leaders Scott, Shackleton and Bruce. When possible an exhibition would be associated with one of these names; for example, articles about the Nimrod exhibition usually included a photograph of or quote by Shackleton and the advertising poster for Bruce's 1913 exhibition stated that it was 'EXHIBITED BY DR. W.S. BRUCE' (Exh.71, 74,

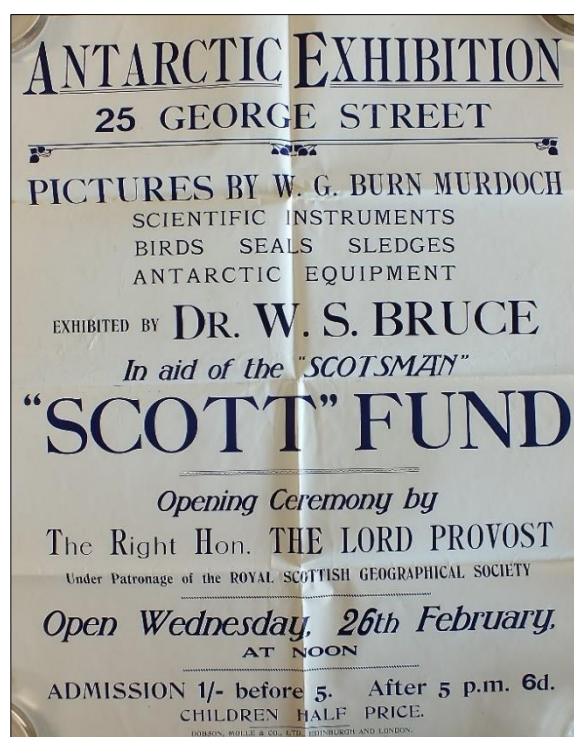


Figure 21. Poster advertising Bruce's 1913 fundraising exhibition Poster (1913), 'Antarctic Exhibition', Gen.1651 100/7 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC. Image reproduced by kind permission of the University of Edinburgh Main Library.

⁵⁵⁸ This is unsurprising. As Maddison points out it was expedition leaders who had the means to 'write themselves into Antarctic history' and published literature emphasised their role over that of ordinary expedition members. Maddison, *Class and Colonialism*, 194.

⁵⁵⁹ Correspondence (5th November 1833), Gaisford to Talbot, *Talbot Correspondence project*, University of Glasgow, <http://goo.gl/iT6T1o>, Accessed 11th November 2014; Lambert, *The Gates of Hell*, 31.

Fig.21).⁵⁶⁰ In addition personalities such as Burn Murdoch, Wilson and Ponting obtained a degree of celebrity. The men who died with Scott on the return from the South Pole, Wilson, Henry Bowers, Edgar Evans and Lawrence Oates, also gained posthumous fame.

Human figures in general began to be featured more prominently in photographs. The first photographic exhibition in 1877 only contained eleven photographs of the crew out of a total 107, though this may be partly due to technological limitations that made photographing moving subjects difficult (Exh.50).⁵⁶¹ In 1904 around a seventh of the photographs contained people (Exh.63).⁵⁶² All of these depicted the men engaged in everyday activities such as ‘harnessing the dogs’ or ‘at work killing and skinning seals’, suggesting that their purpose was to illustrate these tasks rather than glorify the men doing them.⁵⁶³ There were no portraits of specific individuals, not even the leader Scott, though there was one of Scott, Wilson and Shackleton embarking on the furthest south journey.⁵⁶⁴ In contrast, the Nimrod exhibition included not only photographs of the men undertaking activities but portrait shots and staged group shots (Exh.71). People were the subject of over a third of the images.⁵⁶⁵ In 1913 over a quarter of Ponting’s photographs depicted people, with the most frequent subjects being Scott, Wilson, Oates, Evans, a dog-handler named Cecil Meares and Ponting himself (Exh.78).⁵⁶⁶ The only member of the polar party not on this list was Bowers; perhaps Ponting would have taken more photographs of him had he been aware of how famous he would become.

Most portrait shots were of the leading members of an expedition. Indeed, the only photograph reproduced in the catalogue for the Nimrod exhibition was of Shackleton, while Ponting’s catalogue opened with a portrait of Scott.⁵⁶⁷ The lower ranks did appear, however. They were pictured in group shots, usually aboard ship or about to

⁵⁶⁰ Poster (1913), ‘Antarctic Exhibition’, Gen.1651 100/7 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC; *The Guardian* (23rd September 1909).

⁵⁶¹ A further six photographs were of native Greenlanders. ‘Exhibition 1877’, *The Photographic Journal*, 13-16.

⁵⁶² Exhibition catalogue, ‘Discovery Antarctic Exhibition’, DHT, 33-39.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁶⁵ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Antarctic Expedition’, DC, 13-20.

⁵⁶⁶ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, 8-24.

⁵⁶⁷ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Antarctic Expedition’, DC, 4; Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, frontispiece.

embark on a sledging journey, as well as in photographs showing everyday life and activities. The captions in the *Nimrod* exhibition catalogue included the name of every person pictured (Exh.71).⁵⁶⁸ Sometimes if an individual had performed a noteworthy feat this was also pointed out. For example, Ponting's catalogue included a photograph of Petty Officer Tom Crean and stoker William Lashly with a description of how they had saved the life of Edward Evans, the expedition's second-in-command (Exh.78).⁵⁶⁹ In addition, some catalogues provided extra details about the crew. The *Nimrod* catalogue listed the name and position of all the expedition members (Exh.71).⁵⁷⁰ The Discovery catalogue went further in giving not only the name and job of each man, but also their age, background and, sometimes, more personal information (Exh.63). It revealed that James Dell, an able-bodied seaman, played the mandolin and the dog-handler W.I. Weller was 'good at singing comic songs.'⁵⁷¹ These small details helped bring the men to life.

At other times the men themselves were present at exhibitions, employed as guides. Frank Wild and Ernest Joyce were among those crewmembers who sometimes led tours aboard the *Nimrod* (Exh.71).⁵⁷² In 1913 petty officers Thomas Williamson and William Heald, clad in their Polar Medals, were employed at the Imperial Services Exhibition 'to explain the use to which the various articles were put' (Exh.75).⁵⁷³

The public profiles of Shackleton and Scott were confirmed when they were reproduced in wax in the institution Madame Tussauds (Exh.70, 73, Fig.22). Like today, the early nineteenth-century Madame Tussauds was a good gauge of public interest; only the famous (or infamous) were displayed and if a figure fell out of fashion it would be removed.⁵⁷⁴ While a waxwork of Nares, erected in 1877, was taken down after six years, those of Shackleton and Scott remained on display until 1963 (Exh.51).⁵⁷⁵ The

⁵⁶⁸ Listing 137 in *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁶⁹ Exhibition catalogue, 'Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures', DHT, 23.

⁵⁷⁰ Exhibition catalogue, 'British Antarctic Expedition', DC, 6.

⁵⁷¹ Exhibition catalogue, 'Discovery Antarctic Exhibition', DHT, 27-28.

⁵⁷² *The Guardian* (29th November 1909).

⁵⁷³ *The Times* (27th June 1913).

⁵⁷⁴ Pamela Pilbeam comments that 'the acid test for survival... was whether visitors stopped as they passed a model.' Pilbeam, *Madame Tussaud*, 185.

⁵⁷⁵ In the Madame Tussauds archives there are folders dedicated to each wax figure they have ever had on display. The Scott and Shackleton folders contain notes detailing when they were

models were popular. That of Shackleton was reproduced on a postcard sold in the gift shop and in 1925 they were among the waxworks to be featured in a children's book on Madame Tussauds in which the narrator takes the readers 'hero hunting.'⁵⁷⁶

These models allowed visitors to study the appearance of the men.⁵⁷⁷ Reviews indicate that they were thought to show innate heroism. The Shackleton model had 'a characteristic attitude indicative of strength and determination.'⁵⁷⁸ Similarly, the 'striking and lifelike' waxwork of Scott showed the face 'of a resolute and fearless man, the firm, compressed lips showing great determination.'⁵⁷⁹

The public, looking for stories of adventure, seem to have been equally as interested in the adventurers. Exhibitions helped to assuage their curiosity and confirm explorers as among the celebrities of their day.



Figure 22. The waxworks of Scott (l) and Shackleton (r) at Madame Tussauds *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (22nd February 1913) © Sheffield Newspapers. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. Image reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk); *The Daily Graphic* (30th June 1909) © The British Library Board. All rights reserved.

taken off display. Both figures were replaced when Tussauds lost most of their models to a fire in the 1930s.

⁵⁷⁶ Postcard (1909), uncatalogued, MT; Edric Vredenburg, *Madame Tussaud's: The Palace of Enchantment* (Paris, 1925), 26-27.

⁵⁷⁷ These were seemingly very accurate. In the Shackleton folder in the Madame Tussauds archives there is a copy of a letter from Shackleton's widow to John Tussaud, sent in 1930. She comments that she had taken her daughter to see the Shackleton model that day and she had thought her 'Daddy statue looked splendid.'

⁵⁷⁸ *The Bystander* (11th August 1909).

⁵⁷⁹ *The Pelican* (26th February 1913); *The Ladies Field* (8th March 1913).

4.8 ‘No ordinary exhibits’: Scott and a tale of tragic heroism

The human story of the Heroic Age in which the public became most invested was the death of Scott and his four companions on the return from the South Pole in 1912. The cultural resonance of these events has been well studied. Scholars such as Jones and Barczewski have shown that, as Scott was canonised in the popular imagination, his story became synonymous with devotion to duty and sacrifice.⁵⁸⁰ This was a particularly charged message in the years surrounding the First World War, a time which, as Barczewski notes, was ‘conductive to stories of noble death.’⁵⁸¹ Though all the exhibitions examined here date from before the outbreak of war they promoted similar themes of tragic heroism.

Interestingly, one of the ways in which public grief manifested itself was in the creation of an unprecedented number of displays and monuments. Jones has collated a list of memorials erected by institutions such as local councils, churches and schools.⁵⁸² Others were less formal. In Portsmouth a draper’s shop held an exhibition of ‘Models, with Outfits, Skis, Boots, Gloves. &c., as used in Captain Scott’s dash for the South Pole.’⁵⁸³ In addition, twenty-seven ‘In Remembrance’ windows were created between 1922 and 1950.⁵⁸⁴ One example from the 1940s used photographs of the polar party, frostbitten hands, the memorial cairn and an extract from Scott’s diary.⁵⁸⁵

This section will focus on three major exhibitions that were held in the year following the news of Scott’s demise reaching Britain in early 1913. These are a display of Herbert Ponting’s photographs, one of Edward Wilson’s watercolours and an Antarctic segment at the Imperial Services Exhibition (Exh.75, 77, 78).⁵⁸⁶

The fate of the polar party was a major theme of all three. Ponting’s exhibition included two sections on the tragedy. ‘The Polar Party’ included portraits of all the men who had

⁵⁸⁰ Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 222; Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, 142.

⁵⁸¹ Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, 139.

⁵⁸² Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 159.

⁵⁸³ *Portsmouth Evening News* (21st February 1914).

⁵⁸⁴ Photograph (1943), ‘In remembrance window display’, K 22.18 *Discovery Point collection*, DHT.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ A fourth exhibition arranged by Bruce aimed to raise money for the Mansion House Scott memorial fund but did not deal with the events of the expedition.

died.⁵⁸⁷ ‘Supplementary Photographs’ contained images taken on the southwards journey and at the South Pole itself.⁵⁸⁸ These were described in the catalogue as ‘the most tragically interesting in existence’ and included the last shots of the men alive; it was pointed out that they had been found with the bodies.⁵⁸⁹ It also included images of the grave and a memorial cross erected at the expedition base.⁵⁹⁰ For some visitors this was the most important part of the display: these photographs the ‘saddest of all’, ‘undoubtedly the most interesting photographs in the world.’⁵⁹¹

The exhibition of Wilson’s watercolours included a case of objects retrieved with the bodies and relating to the polar journey: the flag and a note left by Amundsen at the pole; two drawings of the Norwegian’s flag and cairn; and Wilson’s own sketch book, carried to the pole and back.⁵⁹² This exhibition was particularly poignant given that he had been one of the victims of the tragedy. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* urged its readers to ‘seize this opportunity of learning in this way something more of the dead hero’; similarly, the *Cambridge Independent Press* lamented that no one could see the pictures ‘without feeling something of sadness and regret that the hand that painted them... will never handle brush or pencil again.’⁵⁹³

Visitors to the Imperial Services Exhibition could also see original artefacts. Scott’s last camp was recreated from objects that had actually been found there including part of the tent, a harness, a provision’s bag, a theodolite, skis and a novel poignantly open at a page beginning with the line ‘We go out into the night’ (Fig.23).⁵⁹⁴ To some visitors this scarcity of objects demonstrated the men’s desperate endeavour: ‘men do not carry much baggage when they are racing for their lives in the frozen wastes of the Polar regions.’⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁸⁷ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, 23.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁹¹ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (10th December 1913); *The Guardian* (3rd December 1913).

⁵⁹² Exhibition catalogue, ‘Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours’, NLS, 14.

⁵⁹³ *Cheltenham Chronicle* (3rd January 1914); *Cambridge Independent Press* (15th May 1914).

⁵⁹⁴ *The Grantham Journal* (5th July 1913); *The Guardian* (27th June 1913).

⁵⁹⁵ *The Grantham Journal* (5th July 1913).



Figure 23. Illustration of crowds at the Imperial Services Exhibition, including looking at the 'Last Camp' exhibit (top left)

Derby Daily Telegraph (7th August 1913) © Derby Telegraph. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. Image reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

Judging by press reports, these depictions of tragic heroism resonated with audiences. The material remains of the expedition were revered in the same way as the Franklin relics had been the previous century.⁵⁹⁶ Indeed, the term 'relic' was frequently applied.⁵⁹⁷ There was no mystery involved in their deaths and so, unlike the Franklin remains, the objects did not serve the function of clues. They were similar, however, in encapsulating ideas of heroic sacrifice and bravery. The *Western Mail* described them as no 'ordinary exhibits... they are memorials of the honoured dead, as sacred as their unforgettable memory. Each of them speaks to us, echoing the story of heroism,

⁵⁹⁶ Peder Roberts argues that 'Knowledge of the Antarctic was mixed with the circumstances of its acquisition: specimens from Scott's last expedition became objects of veneration.' Peder Roberts, *The European Antarctic: Science and Strategy in Scandinavia and the British Empire* (New York, 2011), 79.

⁵⁹⁷ For example, *The Guardian* (27th June 1913); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (25th June 1913); *The Grantham Journal* (5th July 1913).

endurance and sacrifice of which they were witness.⁵⁹⁸ This was echoed by other newspapers: the objects formed ‘a magnificent monument’; they were ‘memorials... of a profoundly interesting and particularly poignant and personal character.’⁵⁹⁹ Also like the Franklin relics, a comparison was made between ‘these things, unimportant, of little value’ and their owners who were ‘still there, hard bound under the frost and snow.’⁶⁰⁰ The *Dundee Courier* approvingly reported that French navy personnel visiting the Imperial Services Exhibition had ‘instinctively raised their hats’ towards the display of the camp.⁶⁰¹

Indeed, at the Imperial Services Exhibition this veneration led to a temporary dismantling of the display. Scott and Wilson’s widows were scandalised by the proximity of the last camp *tableau* to mannequins modelling ‘underwear’ (thermal long johns).⁶⁰² Kathleen Scott objected that ‘the mixture of blatant advertisement with things to be revered was very distasteful’ and had some objects removed, only agreeing to return them when the director of the exhibition arranged to have them separated from the rest of the display by a screen.⁶⁰³

If the public was interested in human stories, then the death of Scott and his companions was the most powerful of all. It continued to shape the public’s view of Antarctica for the coming decades and, arguably, up until the present day. Exhibitions were part of the media machine that helped to promote Scott’s myth.

⁵⁹⁸ *Western Mail* (9th June 1914).

⁵⁹⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo* (6th January 1914); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (25th June 1913).

⁶⁰⁰ *The Guardian* (27th June 1913).

⁶⁰¹ *Dundee Courier* (27th June 1913).

⁶⁰² Kathleen Scott referred to it as ‘Wolseley underwear.’ Although in existence at the time, the Wolseley firm manufactured cars. It is likely that she means ‘Wolsey’ underwear, a brand that Scott had used on the expedition. Correspondence (27th June 1913), Scott to Evans, MS 1453/153/1 *Kathleen Scott collection*, SPRI.

⁶⁰³ Correspondence (10th July 1913), Scott to Foster, MS 1453/153/3 *Kathleen Scott collection*, SPRI.

4.9 ‘Are you acquainted with penguins?’: displaying natural features

Though the human experience of the polar regions was prioritised over their natural features, depictions of landscape and wildlife still attracted audiences. Antarctic exploration was novel and the public were curious about what this new world looked like. By the end of the Franklin era the Arctic seemed like familiar territory; however, little was known of its southern equivalent. On the return of the Dundee Whaling Expedition in 1893 one writer observed that ‘Of the Arctic regions we have an almost daily increasing store of information... But of the south seas there is much more to be learned.’⁶⁰⁴ Even by 1898 Antarctica was still considered ‘an absolutely unknown and probably terrible land’, a region ‘surrounded with even greater mystery and romance than the frozen seas of the north.’⁶⁰⁵

Consequently, some of the reactions towards depictions of Antarctic landscape are reminiscent of those initially displayed towards the Arctic when exploration had resumed there in 1818. Heightened language is used, bordering on that of the sublime. Burn Murdoch’s watercolours were described as depicting ‘changeable moods of sea and sky... strange contrasts of colour... the towering grandeur of the huge icebergs with snow-capped peaks rising, now out of dark blue, anon out of green, and sometimes out of a curious unfamiliar lavender-hued ocean’ (Exh.58).⁶⁰⁶ As well as paintings, photographs could also evoke the sublime and responses to Ponting’s exhibition were couched in the same language (Exh.78). The photographs illustrated the ‘loneliness and desolation, the icy coldness of the wastes, the majesty of icebergs, the bleak, dead outlook over frozen seas, the beauty and terror of these Polar regions’; ‘scenes of ghostly radiance, of impenetrable blackness and silence’; ‘the workings of a primeval world.’⁶⁰⁷ The *Manchester Courier* particularly admired an image that showed ‘sheer precipices... dwarfing the figures of men and dogs at the base.’⁶⁰⁸ Perhaps they were

⁶⁰⁴ *The Scotsman* (6th July 1893).

⁶⁰⁵ *Country Life Illustrated* (27th August 1898); *The Glasgow Herald* (28th July 1898).

⁶⁰⁶ *The Scotsman* (6th July 1893).

⁶⁰⁷ *Country Life* (6th December 1913); Quote from the *Daily Telegraph* reproduced in Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, 1; *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (10th December 1913).

⁶⁰⁸ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (10th December 1913).

referring to the photograph titled 'End of the Barne Glacier', which was also reproduced in the exhibition catalogue (Fig.24).

Wilson's artworks particularly put the focus on the region itself (Exh.63, 77). Unlike other artists such as George Marston, his equivalent on the *Nimrod* expedition, Wilson rarely sketched people.⁶⁰⁹ His work was devoted to illustrating what Jones describes as the 'strange and magnificent Antarctic world': mountains, sunsets, icebergs, glaciers, pack ice, atmospheric effects like parhelion, paraselene and lunar corona, skies and clouds, seals, penguins and other types of wildlife (Fig.25).⁶¹⁰ To the Lord Provost of

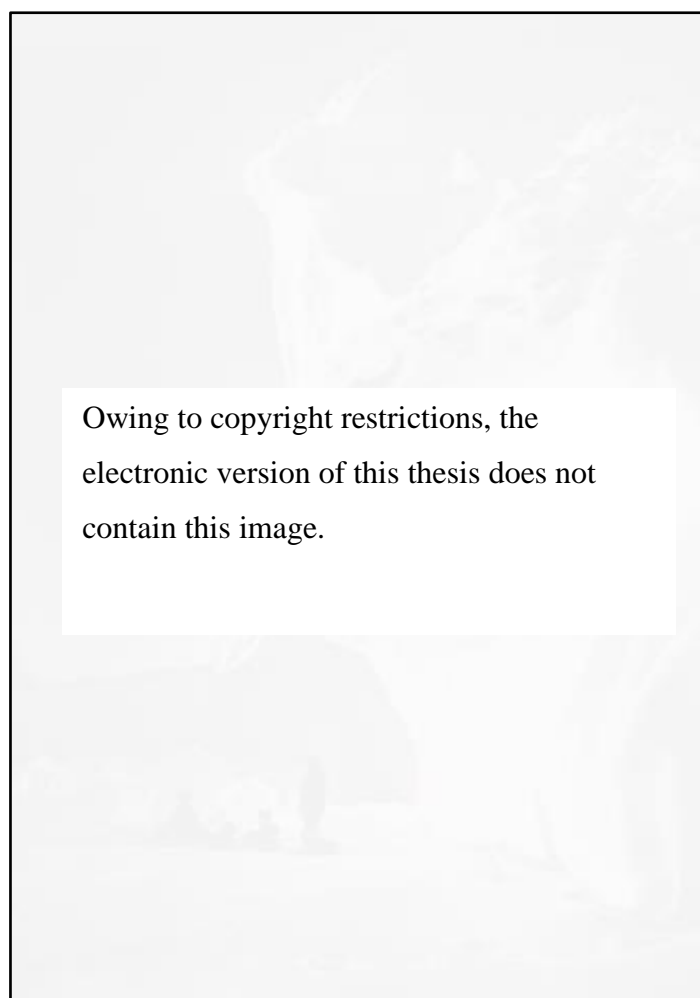


Figure 24. Herbert Ponting (1911) 'End of the Barne Glacier'
RCIN 2580015, Royal Collection Trust

⁶⁰⁹ There are some exceptions. Among his sketches there are pictures of the men man-hauling and exercising the ponies, and one of Bowers taking observations. Exhibition catalogue, 'Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours', NLS, 5, 7-8.

⁶¹⁰ Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 191; Exhibition catalogue, 'Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours', NLS, 4-11.

Glasgow, opening the Discovery exhibition, Wilson's works portrayed 'a land of impenetrable mystery... tracts of bold, hard country, impressive in their lonely majesty.'⁶¹¹ This idea was echoed in the press. The paintings and sketches showed 'a world of which we have no conception, often beautiful... but always with an unearthly terror in its beauty.'⁶¹² Reviewers particularly commented on his depictions of light and atmospheric effects: 'sunsets of a weird glory, the glow of moonlight at noon'; 'the splendour of the lunar halos with their profusion of colour, the gorgeous effects of sunset and moonrise, the aurora-australis, with its evanescent kind of light, and all the other luminous phenomena of the southern hemisphere.'⁶¹³ In viewing a painting of the Aurora Australis 'one almost feels the veils of heaven shimmer above the frozen south.'⁶¹⁴

Audiences admired Antarctic landscapes; they were also interested in the wildlife. Penguins, seals, orca and birds such as albatross and skuas appeared in exhibitions as the subjects of photographs and paintings and, sometimes, in taxidermy form. The draw of wildlife was such that Ponting deliberately included lots of animal scenes in his lectures and film, concluding that these were necessary to attract 'the masses, who will not be educated unless they can be amused.'⁶¹⁵

Penguins were the most popular wildlife subject, appearing more frequently than any other bird or mammal. In both the Discovery and Nimrod exhibitions there were more than triple the number of images of penguins than of seals, the second most popular animal (Exh.63, 71).⁶¹⁶ Similarly, the Nimrod exhibition contained five taxidermy penguins to only two taxidermy seals.⁶¹⁷ The birds were presented in different ways. Wilson's watercolours contained observations on their behaviour ('Emperor Penguin,

⁶¹¹ *Aberdeen Journal* (27th December 1904).

⁶¹² *The Times* (5th December 1913).

⁶¹³ *The Guardian* (4th February 1905); *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5th February 1914).

⁶¹⁴ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (6th April 1914).

⁶¹⁵ Cited in Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 185.

⁶¹⁶ Exhibition catalogue, 'Discovery Antarctic Exhibition', DHT, 33-43; Exhibition catalogue, 'British Antarctic Expedition', DC, 13-20.

⁶¹⁷ Exhibition catalogue, 'British Antarctic Expedition', DC, 10-11.

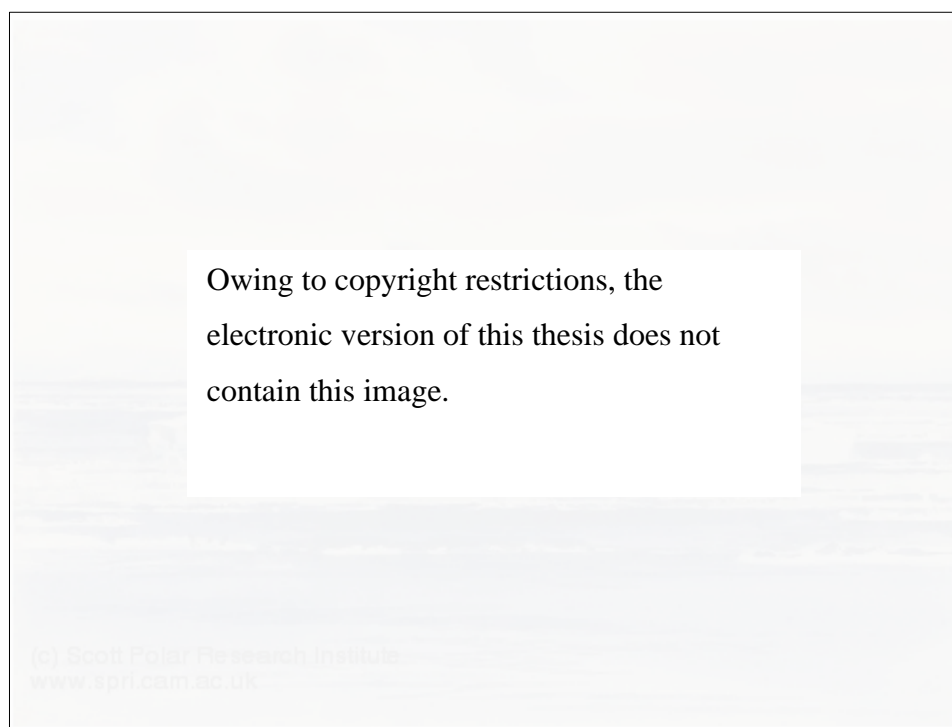
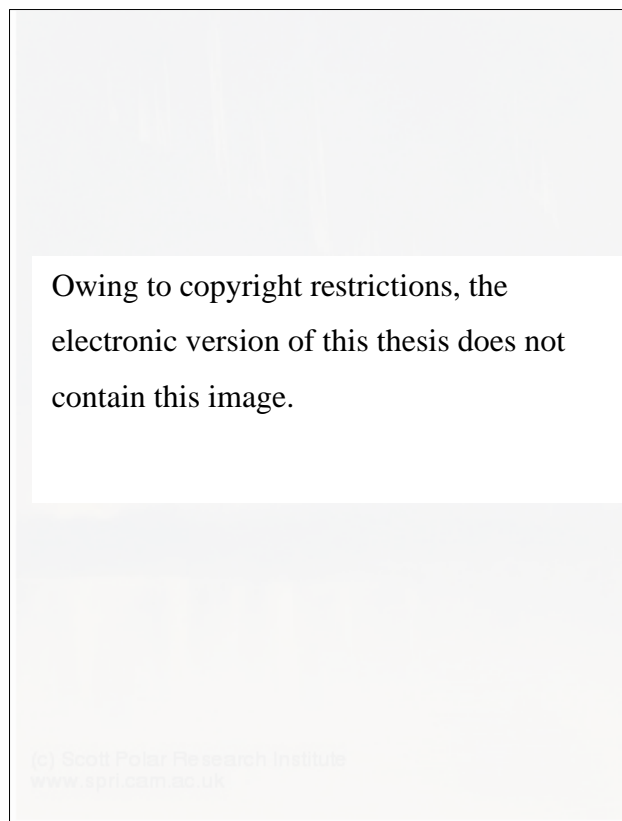


Figure 25. Examples of Edward Wilson's watercolours
(t) Edward Wilson, 'Aurora and sunset seen across McMurdo Sound from Hut Point. Mount Lister in centre', N: 1289 *Polar Art collection*, SPRI; (b) Edward Wilson 'Iceberg in the Pack Ice. Ross Sea. Dec 21. 10. 10am.' N: 413 *Polar Art collection*, SPRI.

showing the method it has of holding the young chick’) while Ponting provided anthropomorphic captions (“‘See what a fine egg I’ve made’”) (Exh.77, 78).⁶¹⁸ Judging by comments in the press they had particular appeal. One journalist, writing about the Nimrod exhibition, described them in his column: ‘Are you acquainted with penguins? If not, remedy the defect at once. These solemn birds, which walk upright like feathered human beings and have such grave, intelligent faces and such comical rudimentary arms, are the greatest fun in the world. You can sit and laugh at them for an hour at a time.’⁶¹⁹ Another commentator enjoyed the ‘specimens of the famous penguins, whose quaint similarity, in some aspects, to human beings is well shown in a series of photographs.’⁶²⁰ Perhaps penguins were popular because, as these quotes suggest, people found them charming. Another reason may have been their novelty value, penguins are not found in the Arctic and so the public were not as familiar with them as they were with images of polar bears, icebergs and glaciers.

If depictions of the natural world had dominated early nineteenth-century Arctic exhibitions, they were still important in the twentieth century. Dramatic landscapes and exotic wildlife continued to draw visitors to displays.

4.10 Science in exhibitions

Most Heroic Age voyages had dual aims: exploration and scientific investigation. Professional scientists were employed on polar expeditions, working in fields such as glaciology, geology, meteorology, oceanography, magnetism and biology. They enjoyed the backing, and occasional financial support, of scientific bodies such as the Royal Society, the RGS and the British Museum (BM). These scientific ventures were represented in exhibitions through photographs of work being undertaken and the

⁶¹⁸ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours’, NLS, 10; Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, 19. Ponting went on to create a penguin soft toy named ‘Ponko’ to be sold in association with his film.

⁶¹⁹ *Daily Mail* (30th September 1909).

⁶²⁰ *The Guardian* (29th November 1909).

display of specimens and scientific instruments: however, these attracted relatively little interest.

It has been argued that emphasising their scientific purpose gave expeditions ‘a veneer of public credibility’, increasing the likelihood of obtaining financial support from both institutions and private philanthropists.⁶²¹ Fundraising prospectuses often touted their scientific aims. That for the *Terra Nova* expedition tried to persuade potential subscribers that ‘the cause of science... make[s] it desirable that every fresh effort should be directed to breaking new ground.’⁶²² Similarly, the *Endurance* prospectus promised ‘a journey of great scientific importance’ that would carry out work in geology, magnetism, biology, glaciology and oceanography.⁶²³ Ideas about ‘the cause of science’ became particularly important following the events of the *Terra Nova* expedition. Scott was re-interpreted as a ‘martyr of science’ whose failure to reach the South Pole first was due to his dedication to the scientific program of the expedition.⁶²⁴ Science was seen as a worthwhile and respectable pursuit compared with the glory seeking of exploration.

Though exploration and science are often seen as entirely separate fields, in reality, distinguishing between scientific and exploratory aims is not so simple. The term ‘science’ was used to cover a host of activities and there is evidence to suggest that to the Edwardian mind geographical discovery was in itself scientific. In universities geography was considered a science and men with hard scientific credentials were also geographers. The first lecturer in the subject at Cambridge had been the physicist and chemist on the *Challenger* expedition and the geologist Frank Debenham later took on the same role.⁶²⁵ In addition, the RGS promoted exploration as a scientific activity.⁶²⁶ In the public mind, however, the romantic connotations of geographical discovery distinguished it from other types of scientific endeavour. Science may have helped to

⁶²¹ Shackleton is often criticised for cynically using the cause of science for fundraising purposes while being personally indifferent to its study. Wilson, *The Lost Photographs*, 23.

⁶²² Prospectus (1910), ‘British Antarctic Expedition, 1910’, DF213/97 *British Antarctic (“Terra Nova”) Expedition*, NHM, 1.

⁶²³ Prospectus, ‘The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Exhibition’, DC, 5.

⁶²⁴ Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 161.

⁶²⁵ Peter Speak, *Deb: Geographer, Scientist, Antarctic Explorer; A Biography of Frank Debenham* (Cambridge, 2008), 48.

⁶²⁶ Wilson, *The Lost Photographs*, 26.

validate expeditions but, as Riffenburgh concludes, there was little widespread interest in the results.⁶²⁷ Though exhibitions did portray the pursuit of science, this theme was largely ignored.

The explorer who worked hardest to disseminate scientific information was William Speirs Bruce. Not only did he curate several displays with polar science at their heart, he founded a museum institution dedicated to the subject. These projects will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Other exhibitions also emphasised scientific endeavour. The catalogue for the Discovery exhibition described how the venture was ‘memorable, both for the extent of its explorations and for its scientific investigations’ and highlighted several scientific specimens as being of interest, including an Emperor penguin egg (Exh.63).⁶²⁸ Two of the twelve photographs reproduced in the catalogue, ‘The Meteorological Screen’ and ‘Biologist on his daily round’, related to scientific activity.⁶²⁹ Science was also a theme of the Nimrod exhibition which included a ‘Zoological Exhibit’ (taxidermy seals, penguins and skuas), a ‘Biological exhibit’ (deep sea specimens in jars, flying fish, freshwater animals and plants, elephant seal teeth, lichens and moss) and a ‘Geological exhibit’ (rocks) (Exh.70).⁶³⁰ Shackleton promoted these displays, inviting the public ‘to visit a valuable collection of geological and biological specimens which were collected during our travels.’⁶³¹ He was particularly keen that science students ‘avail themselves of this opportunity for inspecting the interesting souvenirs.’⁶³² Most exhibitions between 1891 and 1909 also included scientific equipment amongst their displays.

Photographs and artworks could also be considered scientific exhibits in that they were used to record natural phenomena and geographical features.⁶³³ The photographs produced on Nares’s 1875 expedition were predominantly a means of recording landmarks (Exh.50).⁶³⁴ Burn Murdoch produced watercolours showing the different

⁶²⁷ Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, 198.

⁶²⁸ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Discovery Antarctic Exhibition’, DHT, 22.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6. *ibid.*, 82.

⁶³⁰ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Antarctic Expedition’, DC, 10-12.

⁶³¹ *Evening Telegraph* (23rd September 1909).

⁶³² *Ibid.*

⁶³³ Wamsley and Barr ‘Early Photographers of the Arctic’ (1996).

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 312.

effects and colours produced in the sea and sky in the hope that the cause of these would be discovered one day (Exh.58).⁶³⁵ *The Scotsman* judged that, since his paintings had ‘been taken directly from nature’, they would be of interest to scientists and later Burn Murdoch offered first refusal on the paintings to ‘Geographical or other scientific bodies’ who might find them ‘valuable for artistic or scientific reasons.’⁶³⁶ Wilson’s watercolours were similarly described as of interest to ‘scientists as well as artists’ (Exh.77).⁶³⁷ The photographs from both the *Discovery* and *Terra Nova* expeditions had the same value; indeed, Ponting described his role on the *Terra Nova* expedition as helping to ‘garner complete data of every phase encountered, whether of earth, sea or sky.’⁶³⁸

Overall the response to these scientific displays was muted. When reviewers offered comment it was usually only in passing. For example, an article about the Royal Naval Exhibition observed that the fossils exhibited were ‘evidence that this inhospitable region at one time enjoyed a sub-tropical climate’ (Exh.57).⁶³⁹ Science was not a particular focus of the article, however; it mentioned almost everything on display. Bruce’s 1902 exhibition largely consisted of scientific instruments such as deep-sea water bottles, thermometers, barometers, hygrometers, rain gauges, statoscopes and sounding machines (Exh.62).⁶⁴⁰ However, an article in the *Illustrated London News* ignored these, instead choosing to illustrate objects such as kayaks, sledges and snowshoes (Fig.26). The only scientific instrument to be illustrated was a kite used for taking atmospheric readings.⁶⁴¹

At other times articles that were ostensibly about scientific exhibits actually discussed other themes. For example, a display of specimens from the *Terra Nova* expedition at the Natural History Museum (NHM) was interpreted in terms of the death of Scott and the polar party (Exh.79). To one writer the display seemed ‘to tell his [Scott’s] tale- to

⁶³⁵ Robert Neal Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles: The Life, Work and Voyages of Dr W S Bruce, the Polar Explorer* (London, 1923), 54.

⁶³⁶ *The Scotsman* (6th July 1893); Correspondence (5th(?) June 1893), Murdoch to Mill, *William Murdoch collection*, SPRI.

⁶³⁷ *Cambridge Independent Press* (15th May 1914).

⁶³⁸ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Exhibition of the Photographic Pictures’, DHT, 4.

⁶³⁹ *Belfast News-Letter* (13th May 1891).

⁶⁴⁰ *The Scotsman* (9th August 1902).

⁶⁴¹ *Illustrated London News* (18th October 1902).

explain how he came to be forestalled and to suggest afresh the terrible price paid by some members of the expedition for their trophies.⁶⁴² To another, the geological specimens held ‘a pathetic interest’ as being ‘in some measure responsible for their deaths.’⁶⁴³ Taxidermy birds from the *Endurance* expedition were similarly described as ‘interesting relics of an adventurous voyage.’⁶⁴⁴ The specimens are not considered as interesting in their own right but only because they are associated with a wider story.

The lack of interest in scientific exhibits was noted by contemporaries. Bruce bemoaned the relative unpopularity of the Hall of Science at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition: ‘in the whirl of excitement the public care little to concentrate their attention even for a few minutes on this most interesting and certainly most profitable part.’⁶⁴⁵ This was also the experience of museum professionals. A curator at the BM observed that ‘it is not possible, by any means short of fireworks, to attract their [the public’s] attention to fossils.’⁶⁴⁶ Another commented that the average visitor ‘passes over the general geological and natural history exhibits very roughly.’⁶⁴⁷

The public thus showed little curiosity in scientific themes. They were more interested in exploratory achievements than advances in fields such as, for example, meteorology or glaciology.

⁶⁴² *The Times* (20th November 1913).

⁶⁴³ The specimens had been collected at an earlier stage of the polar journey and dragged on the sledges. This would have slowed the men down, possibly fatally. *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (25th November 1913).

⁶⁴⁴ *The Scotsman* (20th April 1925).

⁶⁴⁵ Annotated typescript (1908), ‘Science at Exhibitions’, Gen.1651 101/11 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

⁶⁴⁶ F. A. Bather ‘The Fossil Crinoidea in the British Museum’ in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Second Annual General Meeting held in Cambridge* (London, 1891), pp. 78-110., 80.

⁶⁴⁷ A. Meek ‘The Development of a Local Museum’ in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Sixth Annual General Meeting held in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne* (London, 1895), pp. 149-161., 152.

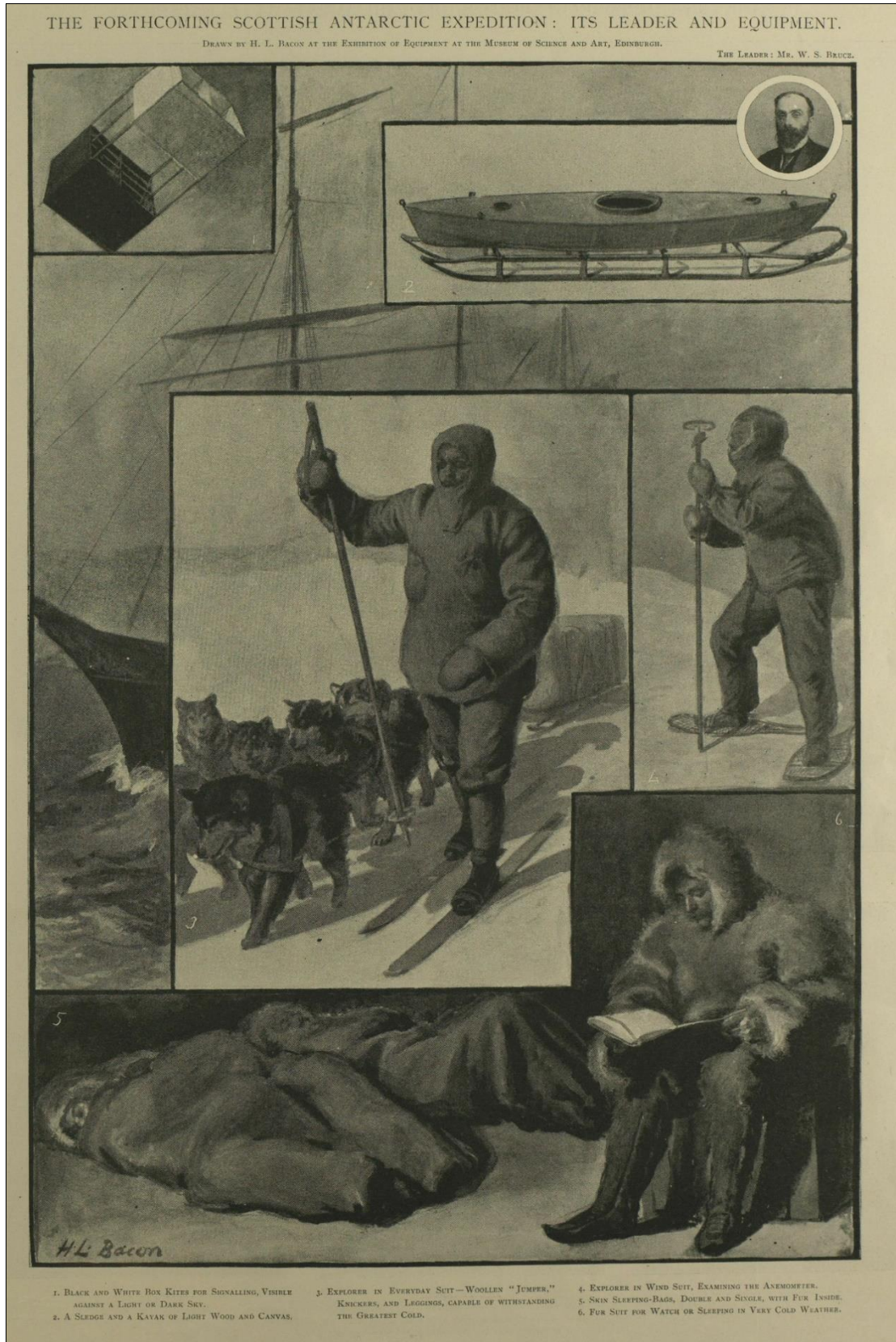


Figure 26. Illustration of 1902 Scotia exhibition
Illustrated London News (18th October 1902). © Illustrated London News Ltd.

4.11 Exhibitions and museum displays

Another feature of this period is that polar exhibitions took on more of the characteristics of museum displays. The first chapter of the thesis discussed how panoramas were similar to museums in that they were expected to impart truth. Though not considered part of the same ‘cultural arena’, there were even stronger parallels between museum displays and new types of exhibition format.

The museum sector grew and became more professionalised in the late nineteenth century. A ‘museums boom’ meant that the number of institutions rose from around ninety in 1860 to 217 by 1887.⁶⁴⁸ The Museums Association, a professional body of curators and other types of museum worker, first met in 1889.⁶⁴⁹

The broad aims of the sector had also evolved since the first half of the century. It had been considered that the main purpose of museums was to facilitate public access to art and inspire craftsmen. Supporters of the 1845 *Museums Act* hoped that it would benefit ‘designers and manufacturers.’⁶⁵⁰ This was also the impetus behind the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁶⁵¹ In contrast, by the end of the century the focus was on education.⁶⁵²

Museums should offer learning opportunities for both specialised students and the wider public.⁶⁵³

The museum sector had a relationship with the exploring fraternity. As in the past, expeditions were tasked with bringing back physical material in the form of scientific specimens. These were entrusted to the museum institutions of the day. The main beneficiaries were the BM and, after the 1880s, the NHM. Indeed, one notable feat of the *Terra Nova* expedition was carried out on behalf of the latter: the first extended journey undertaken during an Antarctic winter, the purpose of which was to collect incubating Emperor penguin eggs.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁸ Garwood, *Museums in Britain*, 40%.

⁶⁴⁹ Lewis, *For Instruction and recreation*, 8.

⁶⁵⁰ 'The Origin of the Free Libraries and Museums Act' (1889), 345.

⁶⁵¹ Hudson, *Museums of Influence*, 48.

⁶⁵² Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation*, 23.

⁶⁵³ Hudson, *A Social History of Museums*, 63.

⁶⁵⁴ The journey took place over thirty-five days in the winter of 1911. Apsley Cherry-Garrard, the zoology assistant, later wrote a book about the experience in which he described it as ‘The

Other museums also received Antarctic material. The NHM distributed duplicate specimens to smaller institutions.⁶⁵⁵ Shackleton collected specimens for Walter Rothschild, head of a private natural history museum in Tring, and gave others to his benefactor James Caird, who in turn gifted them to Dundee's Albert Institute (now The McManus).⁶⁵⁶ Dundee also benefited from its links with the Dundee Whaling Expedition and with the whaling industry, a connection exploited by the curator of the university's zoology museum D'Arcy Thompson.⁶⁵⁷ One of the specimens they received was a taxidermy Emperor penguin that might be the oldest in Britain.⁶⁵⁸ Other collections made during this period were displayed in institutions in Edinburgh, Paisley, Dublin and Norwich.⁶⁵⁹

Institutions such as the BM also supported the scientific work of expeditions. George Murray, the keeper of the botany department, was employed as a scientist on the *Discovery* voyage.⁶⁶⁰ Additionally, on the expedition's return, several members of the scientific team worked under the auspices of the museum while writing up their results.⁶⁶¹

Despite these connections, museum professionals do not seem to have considered polar exhibitions as affiliated to the sector. The *Museums Journal*, though it contained exhibition reviews, rarely acknowledged these displays. One exception is an article

Worst Journey in the World.' He also related how, later, upon presenting the eggs to the NHM, they were met with little interest. Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World: Antarctic 1910-1913* (2012), Kindle edition, <http://goo.gl/0uWaWZ>, 55%.

⁶⁵⁵ List (undated), 'Distribution of Duplicates', DF213/97 *British Antarctic ("Terra Nova") Expedition*, NHM.

⁶⁵⁶ Upon his death, Rothschild's museum at Tring became part of the NHM and is still open to the public, in its original buildings, today. Correspondence (4th November 1907), Shackleton to Rothschild, TR/1/28/530 *Ernest Henry Shackleton*, NHM; Museum Panel (2014), 'Merchant: James Key Caird, a Dundee Philanthropist' in 'The Making of Modern Dundee' *The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum*.

⁶⁵⁷ Matthew Jarron and Catherine Caudwell, *D'Arcy Thompson and his Zoology Museum in Dundee* (Dundee, 2010), 19.

⁶⁵⁸ Museum Panel (2014), 'Emperor Penguin', *D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum - University of Dundee*.

⁶⁵⁹ *The Scotsman* (20th April 1925); Letters and certificates 'Museum acknowledgements', Gen.1655 101/11 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC; Skelton and Wilson, *Discovery Illustrated*, 145.

⁶⁶⁰ Murray was appointed as temporary director of the scientific staff. He only travelled with the expedition as far as Africa. Scott, *The Voyage of the Discovery*, 7%;

⁶⁶¹ Wilson, *Edward Wilson's Antarctic Notebooks*, 90.

about the Discovery exhibition.⁶⁶² It also mentioned some polar displays in museums. In 1908 the journal reviewed a display of taxidermy seals that Bruce had donated to the Royal Scottish Museum, and a few years later it dealt with an exhibition of specimens brought back by the *Terra Nova* expedition.⁶⁶³ In an article that contended that holding temporary exhibitions in museums was not worthwhile, the writer conceded that one exception was displays ‘based upon collections that have recently been acquired by the museum under circumstances appealing to the general public. Such was the recent display of Antarctic specimens at the British Museum (Natural History)’ (Exh.79).⁶⁶⁴

There are several reasons why polar exhibitions might have been ignored by those in the sector. First, most of the exhibitions were not held in formal museum institutions. There were exceptions. Scotland’s national museum in Edinburgh hosted two exhibitions connected to the *Scotia* expedition and Wilson’s watercolours were occasionally displayed in museums such as the Cambridge New Archaeological Museum and Cheltenham Municipal Art Gallery (Exh.62, 64, 77).⁶⁶⁵ Ponting’s photographs were originally shown in a commercial art gallery on London’s Bond Street which, if not a museum, was at least a dedicated display space (Exh.78). More often, however, exhibitions were held wherever opportunity allowed. The Southern Cross exhibition was hosted in the old ‘Military Store’ in the Pall Mall district of London (Exh.60).⁶⁶⁶ In 1907 Shackleton used his exhibition offices, and in 1909 whatever building was available near the docks where the *Nimrod* was berthed (Exh.67, 71).⁶⁶⁷ Bruce’s 1913 exhibition was held in a ‘well-lighted’ shop (Exh.74).⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶² ‘Antarctic Exhibition in Liverpool’ (1904-05).

⁶⁶³ ‘The Antarctic Seals in the Royal Scottish Museum’ in *Museums Journal* VII(12) (1907-08), pp. 449., 449.

⁶⁶⁴ ‘Temporary Exhibitions in Museums’ in *Museums Journal* 14(5) (1914-15), pp. 165-167., 166.

⁶⁶⁵ The first was held in 1902: the second between 1904 and 1905. In the intervening period the museum’s name had changed from the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art to the Royal Scottish Museum. Press cutting (1905), Gen.1673 *Further cuttings of the SNAE*, EUCRC; *Cambridge Independent Press* (15th May 1914); *Gloucestershire Echo* (6th January 1914).

⁶⁶⁶ *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser* (26th August 1898). The Military Equipment Company, who owned the building, had supplied the expedition. Bernacchi, *To the South Polar Regions*, x.

⁶⁶⁷ *The Times* (1st July 1907); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (29th November 1909).

⁶⁶⁸ *The Scotsman* (27th February 1913).

Secondly, the exhibitions were not ‘curated’ in the sense that they were arranged by museum professionals. Determining who qualified as a professional curator at the time is problematic; curatorship was a new profession and those who practised it did not require to have had any particular training.⁶⁶⁹ Even by 1928 some curators often apparently ‘made up by enthusiasm much of what they lacked in experience.’⁶⁷⁰ Most of the time it is unclear who was responsible for arranging the exhibitions: however, the evidence suggests that it was people involved with the expedition rather than people employed in the formal museum sector. The Nimrod exhibition was organised by expedition members Frank Wild and Ernest Joyce, while the display at the Imperial Services Exhibition was arranged by the *Terra Nova*’s dog-handler Cecil Meares (Exh.71, 75). It was Wilson’s widow who initiated exhibiting his watercolours at the Alpine Club and, later, she supervised the way they were hung when they were shown in Dundee (Exh.77).⁶⁷¹ There is no indication that professional help was ever sought or given.

It is likely that those in the museum sector considered polar exhibitions as more akin to the displays of Great Exhibitions, both in their purpose and their style of display. For professionals of the day, museums were distinguished by what a historian of the Museums Association describes as ‘a very strong sense of educational purpose.’⁶⁷² He argues that this could preclude ‘any consideration that museums might also be enjoyable.’⁶⁷³ Consequently, displays could be uninspiring (Fig.27). Hudson claims that ‘a lively presentation of the exhibits was neither expected, nor given.’⁶⁷⁴ This problem was recognised by contemporaries. A tongue-in-cheek article in the *Museums Journal* observed that the job of the curator was to ‘bewilder the eyes of the public with thirty

⁶⁶⁹ J. Paton 'The Education of a Museum Curator' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Fifth Annual General Meeting held in Dublin* (London, 1894), pp. 95-105., 95.

⁶⁷⁰ Miers, *A Report on the Public Museums*, 20.

⁶⁷¹ Committee Meeting Minutes (10th June 1913), ‘Minute Book: A.C. Committee Minutes’, 1922/AC2S-10 *Records of the Alpine Club*, ACA, 39; *Dundee Courier* (4th March 1914).

⁶⁷² Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation*, 23.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁷⁴ Hudson, *Museums of Influence*, 74.

specimens of an object... strike dullness through the hearts of thousands by our funereal rows of stuffed birds with their melancholy lines of Latin names.⁶⁷⁵

In contrast, Great Exhibitions were not held solely for educational purposes.⁶⁷⁶ A speaker at the 1894 Museums Association conference distinguished Great Exhibitions from museums: the latter was 'for the advancement of learning' while the former promoted 'industry and commerce.'⁶⁷⁷ If Great Exhibitions were educational this was 'chiefly incidental' and because they had used museum methods of display.⁶⁷⁸ He went on to argue that displays that had a commercial purpose, such as those hosted by academies of art, were 'allied' to Great Exhibitions.⁶⁷⁹ As most polar exhibitions were also profit-making enterprises it is likely that he would have placed them in the same category.

Polar exhibitions were not allied to museum displays: nevertheless, they did utilise some museum practices. They used some of the same interpretation and display techniques such as explanatory labels, catalogues, guided tours and *tableaux*. Like museums displays, there was an attempt at categorising their contents. The most obvious similarity between the two entities, however, is that both were centred around the display of objects.

As explored in previous chapters, polar exhibitions had not always included 'real things'. Panoramas had represented the Arctic through images, produced at home by people who had never visited the region. The first collection related to exploration had been the Franklin relics. Now visitors to exhibitions expected to see the objects used, created or collected in the polar regions; one of the organisers of the Imperial Services

⁶⁷⁵ F. A. Bather 'How May Museums Best Retard the Advance of Science' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Seventh Annual General Meeting held in Glasgow* (London, 1896), pp. 92-105., 92-93.

⁶⁷⁶ Greenhalgh argues that 'Few would visit an exhibition unless entertainment was offered.' Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 84.

⁶⁷⁷ G. Browne Goode 'The Principles of Museum Administration' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Sixth Annual General Meeting held in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne* (London, 1895), pp. 69-148., 72.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

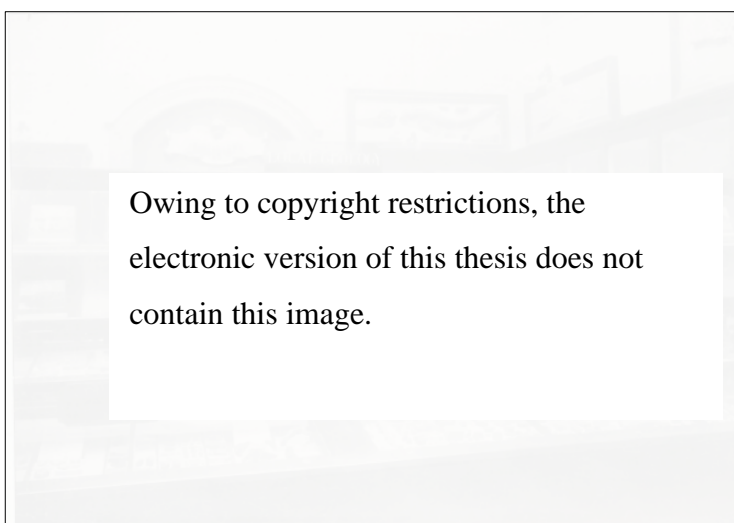
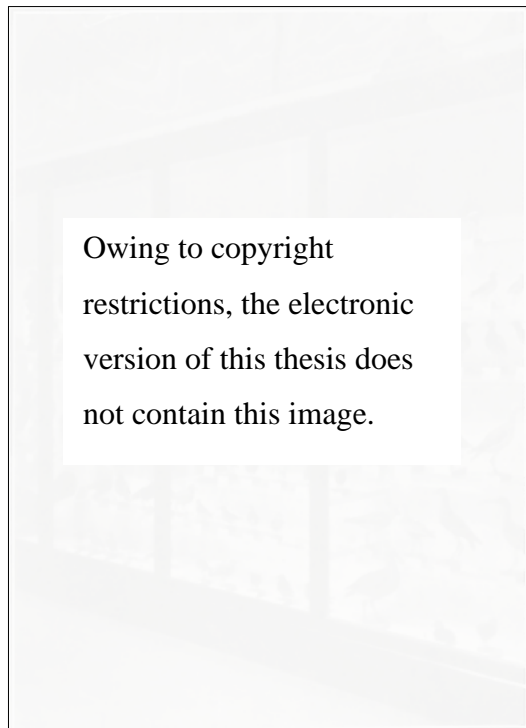


Figure 27. Typical early twentieth-century museum cases
Left: Insert Plate XI 'General View of Case' in A.M. Rodger 'Fittings of Cases in the Perthshire Natural History Museum' in *Museums Journal* VI(9) (1906-07), pp.306-7; Above: Insert Plate V 'Case of Local Geology, Worcester Museum' in W.H. Edwards "'Hastings Museum,'" Victoria Institute, Worcester: Its history, development and arrangement' in *Museums Journal* V(6) (1905-06), pp. 179-190.

Exhibition observed that they ‘would much appreciate to see anything such as sledges, tents &c &c that have been used in the Antarctic.’⁶⁸⁰ This is demonstrated by repeated use of the word ‘actual.’ The sledging *tableaux* at the Royal Naval exhibition was admired because it included items that had seen ‘actual service’ on the Nares expedition (Exh.57).⁶⁸¹ The fact that they were real rather than facsimiles added to the ‘reality of the picture.’⁶⁸² The Nimrod exhibition displayed ‘the actual equipment used by the explorers’, the Wilson exhibition ‘the actual drawings and paintings’ created in Antarctica as well as the ‘actual flag’ left by Amundsen at the South Pole (Exh.71, 77).⁶⁸³ Visitors to the Imperial Services Exhibition could see the ‘actual tent in which Captain Scott and his brave companions perished’ (Exh.75).⁶⁸⁴

Museum methods were used to interpret these objects. Catalogues were published, containing lists of what was on display. At times, guides were available to show visitors around. It is unclear how common the use of labels was. Evidence from newspaper articles and photographs show, however, that they were used occasionally.⁶⁸⁵ This was considered best museum practice; as one commentator argued, without effective labels ‘there is no education apart from the few who are able to educate themselves.’⁶⁸⁶

Display techniques were also similar. The introduction of ‘special features’ such as habitat groups and period rooms in museums was mimicked by the use of *tableaux* in

⁶⁸⁰ Correspondence (20th April 1913), Markham to Markham, MS/1453/135 *Robert Falcon Scott collection*, SPRI.

⁶⁸¹ *Aberdeen Evening Express* (17th July 1891).

⁶⁸² *Birmingham Daily Post* (1st June 1891).

⁶⁸³ *Illustrated London News* (9th October 1909); *Dundee Courier* (27th February 1914); *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5th February 1914).

⁶⁸⁴ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (25th June 1913).

⁶⁸⁵ *The Scotsman* (25th June 1902); *Illustrated London News* (9th October 1909).

⁶⁸⁶ Henry Browne, *Our Renaissance: Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* (London, 1917), ix.

exhibitions.⁶⁸⁷ Sledging and camping scenes became ubiquitous.⁶⁸⁸ Bruce also used the technique to display taxidermy seals and penguins (Exh.68, 69, 72).⁶⁸⁹

Polar exhibitions also paralleled museum practice in categorising the collections on display. Classification systems were a preoccupation of the museum sector, with artefacts and specimens usually organised according to taxonomic principles both in national and local museums. The BM displayed their collections under categories such as 'Zoology', 'Mineralogy and Fossils' and 'Egyptian Antiquities': the Arbuthnot Museum in Peterhead headings like 'Quadrupeds', 'Skulls, Skeletons &c' and 'Antiquities'.⁶⁹⁰ Objects had to be displayed in a way that facilitated learning and so a curator's 'first business' was 'to arrange, and to arrange on a definite plan.'⁶⁹¹ This organisation was felt to distinguish museums from other visual media: 'the lesson of the museum is the importance of order and method.'⁶⁹² The Horniman Museum was criticised for not paying 'sufficient attention ... to the natural arrangement of objects in their collection... some of their educational value is thereby lost.'⁶⁹³

Polar collections were similarly classified: chronologically, by subject matter, by object type, or, in the case of artworks, by medium. For instance, Wilson's watercolours were arranged into categories with titles such as 'Study of Emperor Penguins, 1903' and

⁶⁸⁷ Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 184-85; One curator described a 'special feature' in his own museum: an albatross 'brought from the Antarctic Regions, quite entire, reserved in ice' with a background painted with the sea and sky to give an impression of 'oceanic expanse.' H. H. Higgins 'On the Cultivation of Special Features in Museums' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Third Annual General Meeting held in Manchester* (London, 1892), pp. 39-43., 42-43.

⁶⁸⁸ *The Times* (8th May 1875).

⁶⁸⁹ Annotated typescript, 'Science at Exhibitions', EUCRC.

⁶⁹⁰ Museum catalogue (1843), 'Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum', Mu30- g.28, GU; Museum Catalogue (1852), 'Regulations of "The Arbuthnot Museum," Peterhead, and Catalogue of the Objects Therein' p Lambda Peterhead reg *Lambda collection*, AUCS, 1; *Ibid.*, 7; *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁹¹ H.M. Platnauer 'On the Arrangement of Insect Collections in Museums' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Fourth Annual General Meeting held in London* (London, 1893), pp. 120-137., 120.

⁶⁹² This was not always successful. As late as 1928 it was reported that 'there are comparatively few museums in which the labelling and arrangement can be regarded as satisfactory from the point of view of the average visitor.' Miers, *A Report on the Public Museums*, 26. Goodman 'Fear of Circuses', 269. David Murray, *Museums: Their History and their Use: With a Bibliography and List of Museums in the United Kingdom* (Glasgow, 1904), 236.

⁶⁹³ 'Notes' in *Museums Association Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Fifth Annual General Meeting held in Dublin* (London, 1894), 257.

‘Early Pencil Drawings’ (Exh.77).⁶⁹⁴ The objects in the Nimrod exhibition were classified by type: ‘Equipment and Stores’, ‘Food’, ‘Zoological Exhibit’, ‘Eggs’ (Exh.71).⁶⁹⁵ Attempts at categorisation were not always successful- the ‘Records and Newspapers’ section of the Arctic displays at the Royal Naval exhibition included a ‘Speaking Trumpet’ and a ‘Large Esquimaux Sledge’ made of bone (Exh.57).⁶⁹⁶

If exhibitions started to resemble museum displays, there was also the potential for museums to become more like exhibitions. Some curators were not averse to making their displays more appealing to the wider public by providing entertainment as well as education. Henry Balfour, the curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, revealed that he ‘did not share in the prejudice against sensational or even gruesome exhibitions; he believed that they did good by arresting the attention of casual visitors.’⁶⁹⁷ A delegate to the 1900 Museums Association conference similarly argued that the ideal curator must have ‘a touch of the showman in his composition; like the shopman he must cry his wares... Make your peep show attractive and people will come fast enough.’⁶⁹⁸

Indeed, museums which had always shown polar specimens in a purely scientific context now began to incorporate more popular themes into these displays. A NHM exhibition of specimens collected on the *Terra Nova* expedition acknowledged the human story of the voyage by including a map showing the route taken to the pole, marked with a cross where the polar party was found (Exh.79).⁶⁹⁹ A review of this display in the *Museums Journal* considered it in terms of both its scientific and human interest. It explains that the interpretation provided seemed to be aimed at specialists. The label on the fossil fish ‘is intended for those whose geological and palaeontological knowledge is more than elementary.’⁷⁰⁰ The next label, however, ‘goes straight to the heart of all readers’: “Four pieces selected from the 35 lbs. weight of rock specimens

⁶⁹⁴ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Antarctic Sketches & Water Colours’, NLS, 9, 13.

⁶⁹⁵ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Antarctic Expedition’, DC, 7-11.

⁶⁹⁶ Exhibition catalogue, ‘Royal Naval Exhibition’, NLS, 11.

⁶⁹⁷ Comment made by Mr Balfour during the discussion at the end of F.W. Rudler ‘Arrangement of Ethnographical Collections’ in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Eighth Annual General Meeting held in Oxford* (London 1897), pp. 55-62., 62.

⁶⁹⁸ J. A. Manton ‘A Rambling Dissertation on Museums by a Museum Rambler’ in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Eleventh Annual General Meeting held in Canterbury* (London, 1900), pp. 65-80., 74.

⁶⁹⁹ *The Times* (20th November 1913).

⁷⁰⁰ ‘British Museum, Antarctic Exhibition’ in *Museums Journal* 13(6) (1914-15), pp. 221., 221.

brought back from Beardmore Glacier by the Pole Party, and found in the tent by the Search Party eight months later".⁷⁰¹

During this time, then, polar exhibitions and museum displays began to converge. Though they were still considered a different entity, new forms of exhibition were far closer to museum displays than they were to the panoramas that preceded them.

4.12 Access, impact and success

The following section assesses how successful exhibitions were. It examines, first, their accessibility and, second, their popularity, in order to reach a conclusion about how well they fulfilled their aims of publicising and fundraising for expeditions.

Cost was likely to have been less of a barrier than it had been in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The average price of entry to an exhibition remained one shilling, with occasional lower prices offered on certain times and days. However, the public generally enjoyed more disposable income than earlier in the century; it has been estimated that real wages doubled between 1830 and 1900.⁷⁰² According to a survey carried out by the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1881, much of this extra money was spent on leisure activities. It found that 7% of the average budget was spent on 'recreation and education.'⁷⁰³ Combined with other societal changes such as an increase in leisure time and cheaper rail travel, this meant that visits to exhibitions were more feasible for more of the population.⁷⁰⁴

The increased access afforded by higher wages was not universal. There were still high levels of poverty, as demonstrated by early twentieth-century surveys carried out by Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree in London and York respectively.⁷⁰⁵ Other

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Burnett and Kershaw, *A History of the Cost of Living*, 257.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 258-59.

⁷⁰⁴ Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London, 1987), 80-81.

⁷⁰⁵ 30% of Londoners were living in poverty, and only a marginally smaller percentage in York. Burnett and Kershaw, *A History of the Cost of Living*, 258.

studies found the problem was nationwide as they discovered ‘a similar, or worse, story from cities old and new, from country villages as well as towns.’⁷⁰⁶ Obviously, then, charging an entry fee excluded some potential visitors. An article in the 1907 *Museums Journal* compared the visitor numbers of exhibitions that were free and those that charged admission. It found that while an exhibition in York with no entry fee was visited by 70,000 people, another held in Leeds Art Gallery that charged admission was visited by only 14,451, despite being open for longer.⁷⁰⁷ Similarly, Leighton House in London received almost three-quarters of its visitors on a Saturday, when entry was free.⁷⁰⁸ This implies that there was a large section of the population which was excluded from participating in cultural activities that cost money.

Nevertheless, on economic grounds polar exhibitions were more accessible than before. Conversely, in geographical terms they were less so. While panoramas had usually toured around the country, most exhibitions were now static, only shown in large towns and cities. Between 1890 and 1913 seven displays were exclusive to London while five were only shown in Edinburgh. Some exhibitions toured: Burn Murdoch’s paintings, the Discovery exhibition, the Nimrod exhibition, Ponting’s photographs and Wilson’s watercolours (Exh.58, 63, 71, 77, 78). These did not, however, visit the variety of smaller towns that some panoramas had. Cheaper train travel meant there were more opportunities for visitors to travel to an exhibition, rather than it coming to them. In 1875 special excursion trains took visitors to the Nares exhibition in Portsmouth and in 1909 special deals were available for those travelling to the Nimrod exhibition in Manchester.⁷⁰⁹ Overall, however, the increased centralisation of exhibitions excluded audiences living in small towns and rural areas.

These limitations on access must have reduced how effectively exhibitions could disseminate information. Their impact can also be assessed by examining their visitor numbers and income. A lack of sources means that there are problems with both these methods. There is little evidence concerning the financial success, or otherwise, of exhibitions. Newspaper reports on the Nimrod exhibition occasionally mention its

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁷⁰⁷ 'Leeds Art Gallery' in *Museums Journal* VII(1) (1907-08), pp. 25., 25.

⁷⁰⁸ 'Leighton House, London' in *Museums Journal* VI(8) (1906-07), pp. 285-286., 286.

⁷⁰⁹ *The Times* (8th May 1875); *The Standard* (6th May 1875); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (13th November 1909).

takings in reference to the amount to be donated to charity (Exh.71). They reveal, for instance, that one day the exhibition made £66 12s, and that it made a profit of £2000 over the course of its whole stay in London.⁷¹⁰ It is not clear how much of an impact this had on the overall finances of the expedition. It is also known from press reports that Bruce's fundraising exhibition raised £50 (Exh.74).⁷¹¹ While this was among the largest contributions to the Scottish branch of the Mansion House Scott memorial Fund, it was not significantly bigger than other donations. For example, the philanthropist Andrew Coats matched the amount.⁷¹²

Much of the evidence about visitor numbers is anecdotal. According to the press the Southern Cross exhibition was 'inspected day after day by numberless interested visitors', the 1902 Scotia exhibition attracted an 'almost continuous string of people', at the Discovery exhibition in London 'the doors were literally besieged from morning to night' and the Scott relics at the Imperial Services Exhibition attracted 'tremendous crowds of sightseers' (Exh.60, 62, 63, 75).⁷¹³ Shackleton recorded that 'some thousands of people' visited the 1907 display of equipment in his expedition offices (Exh.67).⁷¹⁴

Despite these positive reports the visitor numbers that do exist do not suggest that polar displays were any more popular than other exhibitions held at the same time. In 1909 the Nimrod exhibition was visited by 40,000 people during its two-month stay in London (Exh.71).⁷¹⁵ In contrast, art exhibitions in Whitechapel routinely attracted over 100,000 visitors- one exhibition of Jewish Art had 150,000 in its first few weeks.⁷¹⁶ When the Alpine Club hosted the first exhibition of Wilson's watercolours in 1913 it was visited by 2300 people, fewer than the 2500 that had come to their winter exhibition of art in 1911 (Exh.77).⁷¹⁷ 42,000 people visited Wilson's watercolours in

⁷¹⁰ *The Times* (4th October 1909); *The Times* (25th October 1909).

⁷¹¹ *The Scotsman* (17th March 1913).

⁷¹² *Ibid.*

⁷¹³ *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser* (26th August 1898); *The Scotsman* (8th October 1902); *Daily Mail* (8th November 1904); *The Grantham Journal* (5th July 1913); Unpublished manuscript, 'Journeyman at Cambridge', SPRI, 288.

⁷¹⁴ Shackleton, *The Heart of the Antarctic*, 24.

⁷¹⁵ *The Times* (25th October 1909).

⁷¹⁶ 'Whitechapel Art Gallery' in *Museums Journal* VI(8) (1906-07), pp. 290-291., 291.

⁷¹⁷ Committee Meeting Minutes (10th June 1913), 'Minute Book: A.C. Committee Minutes', 1922/AC2S-10 *Records of the Alpine Club*, ACA, 38; Committee Meeting Minutes (undated) in *ibid.*, 48.

Leeds; more modestly a couple of thousand people visited Bruce's fundraising exhibition over ten days in Edinburgh (Exh.74, 77).⁷¹⁸ The same year a six week exhibition of fish specimens held at the Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museum attracted 31,952 visitors.⁷¹⁹

Of course, visitor numbers alone are not a reliable gauge as to the impact of an exhibition. This is particularly the case for Great Exhibitions, where though the audience numbers can be huge the contents of the exhibition are also vast, making it difficult to judge the popularity or effectiveness of any one part of the displays. For example, there is no way of knowing how many of the 9.4 million visitors to the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry in Glasgow visited the Antarctic exhibits, or what they thought of them if they did (Exh.72).⁷²⁰

A better indication that exhibitions were not wholly effective is that explorers did not always employ them as a fundraising tool. Despite the examples of 1875, 1898 and 1907, Scott did not choose to host a display of equipment prior to his leaving on the *Discovery* or *Terra Nova* expeditions. Nor did Shackleton repeat the experiment when organising *Endurance* or *Quest*. Perhaps this indicates that he had not found it to be a particularly successful strategy and that other activities such as lecturing were more worthwhile.

4.13 Conclusion

Of the expeditions that left Britain for Antarctica, there were others that were aborted in the planning stages because of lack of funds. Bruce tried unsuccessfully for years to

⁷¹⁸ *The Dundee, Perth, Forfar, and Fife's People's Journal* (7th March 1914). The number of visitors to Bruce's exhibition is an estimate based on the reported revenue and entry fee. This reveals that the minimum number of visitors was around 1000. However, it is likely to have been more as Bruce occasionally charged a lower fee than the average one shilling, for example, members of Guide and Scout groups paid 1d.

⁷¹⁹ 'Museum Reports: Burnley' in *Museums Journal* 13(1) (1913-14), pp. 6., 6.

⁷²⁰ MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 101.

raise money for a second Antarctic expedition.⁷²¹ In 1921, as Shackleton was organising his *Quest* voyage, his one-time colleague John Lachlan Cope was forced to scale back plans for his own expedition when he was confronted with funding issues. Though Cope did reach Antarctica, his venture was, for the most part, abandoned less than two months in.⁷²²

Financial support was the critical factor in determining whether an expedition succeeded or failed to begin. Fundraising was, and still is, a major part of the explorer's job, and expeditions competed with each other to access a relatively limited pool of funding. This could cause tension. Markham raged against 'that ungrateful cad Shackleton' whom he perceived as deflecting support from Scott.⁷²³

Those who received most external funding tended to be the best publicists. There is a consensus among historians that part of the reason Bruce never gained backing to return to Antarctica was because he was not adept at presenting himself and his plans in a way that captured the public imagination.⁷²⁴ He did not write a popular book, he was not a proficient public speaker, and both his lectures and exhibitions dealt with the scientific side of polar work rather than exploration and adventure. In other words, as Shackleton put it, he did not do enough 'window dressing.'⁷²⁵

In this environment explorers had to be imaginative about how to engage the public. Exhibitions were one means of doing so. Some displays were genuinely novel. Shackleton's allowing audiences to visit the *Nimrod* was particularly inspired (Exh.71). Royalty and other distinguished visitors had traditionally visited expedition ships before they sailed. Now the public were also given access. As the *Daily Mail* pointed out

⁷²¹ Peter Speak, *William Speirs Bruce: Polar Explorer and Scottish Nationalist* (Edinburgh, 2003), 118-25.

⁷²² 'For the most part' because two members of the expedition decided to stay behind on the Antarctic Peninsula for the remainder of the year to carry out scientific work. Joan Boothe, *The Storied Ice: Exploration, Discovery and Adventure in Antarctica's Peninsula Region* (2011), Kindle edition, <https://goo.gl/Nsurbh>, 41%.

⁷²³ Correspondence (23rd July 1911), Markham to Skelton, MS 342/24/3 *Sir Clements Markham collection*, SPRI.

⁷²⁴ Rudmose-Brown also observed that 'In everything that Bruce did there was a lack of publicity which served him ill in his efforts to raise funds, but was in keeping with the dignity of his aims.' Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 107. Peter Speak 'William Speirs Bruce: Scottish Nationalist and Polar Explorer' in *Polar Record* 28(167) (1992), pp. 285-292., 292; Boothe, *The Storied Ice*, 26%.

⁷²⁵ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 254.

visitors could see ‘the same things in the vessel as were inspected by the King and Queen when, before the voyage, they went aboard the Nimrod at Cowes.’⁷²⁶ This must have formed part of the exhibition’s appeal. Though exhibitions were not the most successful means of disseminating information, they were one of the most exciting. The thrill of seeing ‘actual’ objects could not be replicated by any other medium. As one visitor said of the Nimrod exhibition ‘it is one thing to hear the explorer talk or lecture or to read about him in the newspapers, but it is quite another thing to tread the timbers that bore him so far South, to stand on decks that were so long hidden within a 3in sheath of ice, to wander in the very cabins that sheltered him and his comrades through the watches of the Polar night.’⁷²⁷ Similarly, Ponting’s photographs were thought to be superior to ‘the written word’ as a means of illustrating ‘the difficulties with which Captain Scott was faced’ (Exh.78).⁷²⁸

If the main catalyst for change during this period was the move from government-sponsored expeditions to privately organised ones, other factors included the influence of the museum sector and the long-term impact of the Franklin era. These changed not only how polar exploration was portrayed, but the means of representation. New types of exhibitions, comprised of objects, artworks and photographs, began to resemble museum displays to a far greater extent than the ‘show-like’ panoramas. Where the dominant themes had been landscapes and native peoples, now the focus was on human experience and adventure.

Despite these differences, there were also similarities with the displays of the past. Most exhibitions were still topical, only hosted at times when British activity in the field made the topic of exploration newsworthy. In addition, the majority of exhibitions continued to be held for commercial purposes. These continuities would cease with the creation of polar museums that were both permanent and free. The establishment of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory, and, later, SPRI completed the convergence between polar exhibitions and museum displays. With the opening of these institutions polar exploration stopped being an occasional theme and started to be exhibited on a permanent basis.

⁷²⁶ *Daily Mail* (14th September 1909).

⁷²⁷ *Daily Telegraph* (23rd September 1909).

⁷²⁸ *The Scotsman* (15th January 1914).

Chapter 5: The first polar museums

5.1 Introduction

If the culture of exploration had been transformed between the expeditions of Ross and Parry and those of Scott and Shackleton, it changed again during the inter-war period. One result was that the large-scale expeditions characteristic of the Heroic Age were largely replaced by smaller ones financed by private interests rather than the wider public. At the same time the convergence between museum displays and polar exhibitions culminated in the creation of Britain's first dedicated polar museums. This chapter examines the relationship between these new ways of organising exploration and new modes of display.

The first section of the chapter describes existing scholarship and source materials, and outlines my own contribution to the field. The second outlines the historical context and discusses the contemporary museum sector.

The following four sections relate to the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory (SOL) and the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI). The first discusses the background and other curatorial activities of William Speirs Bruce, founder of the SOL. Next, the establishment and early activities of both institutions will be analysed to show how they fit the criteria for a polar museum. Both dealt with polar themes, and both were intended to appeal to the general public. Though neither employed professional curatorial staff, they did use museum practices. The final part of this section will compare the development of each institution to show why one failed where the other succeeded.

The final section of the chapter examines the 1930 Polar Exhibition. It proposes that it further embedded polar exhibitions within the purview of the museum sector. Next, it argues that the themes of the exhibition, and the response recorded to these in the press, reflected wider changes in the field of exploration.

Though there is some consideration of the wartime activities of SPRI, the chapter largely ends with the outbreak of the Second World War. Events during and after the

war, including the beginning of a continuous British presence in Antarctica, mean that this can be considered a defining line in terms of polar history.

5.2 Sources and contribution

This chapter is largely concerned with three entities: the SOL, SPRI and the 1930 Polar Exhibition. So far, there has been little analysis of the contents or reception of any of these.

There are two published biographies of William Speirs Bruce, founder of the SOL. Both are descriptive rather than analytical, and neither contains much information on the SOL or on Bruce's other curatorial activities. The first biography, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, was written by his colleague Robert Rudmose-Brown a few years after Bruce's death.⁷²⁹ It contains some details about the early activities of the SOL, as well as descriptions of some of the displays. Though valuable in offering insight into Bruce's attitudes and intentions, it does not discuss the museum aspect of the institution in any depth. Peter Speak's modern biography includes a chapter on the SOL; however, this describes its function as being an archive and centre for research. It omits to mention its role as a museum.⁷³⁰

Usually when either the SOL or Bruce's other exhibitions are mentioned they are only alluded to briefly in texts about other events or figures. For example, Geoffrey Swinney refers to the 1913 exhibition in an article about the artist William Burn Murdoch.⁷³¹ Swinney also discusses the SOL in a second article when describing the circumstances in which Edinburgh University acquired collections relating to Bruce; they were given to the university after the laboratory was disbanded in 1919.⁷³² A more extended

⁷²⁹ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*.

⁷³⁰ Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*.

⁷³¹ Geoffrey N. Swinney 'From the Arctic and Antarctic to 'the back parts of Mull': The Life and Career of William Gordon Burn Murdoch (1862–1939)' in *Scottish Geographical Journal* 119(2) (2003), pp. 121-151., 136.

⁷³² Geoffrey N. Swinney 'Some New Perspectives on the Life of William Speirs Bruce (1867–1921), With a Preliminary Catalogue of the Bruce Collection of Manuscripts in the University of Edinburgh' in *Archives of Natural History* 28(3) (2001), pp. 285-311., 287.

analysis is given in an unpublished thesis by Keighren. Keighren considers that the SOL, along with other displays that Bruce curated, were among the spaces which helped to define the *Scotia* expedition.⁷³³

There is also little secondary literature about the museum at SPRI. Peter Speak offers a comprehensive account of the establishment of the institution in a biography of its founder Frank Debenham.⁷³⁴ This describes Debenham's ambitions for the institute as well as its activities during its early years. *In the Arctic: Tales Told at Tea-Time* is a collection of stories written by Debenham himself. These provide a picture of daily life at SPRI but are more imaginative than factual. A foreword to the book, written by Ann Savours, provides some details about the institution during the 1950s.⁷³⁵ Though useful as an indication of how SPRI developed after the war, it falls out with the timescale considered in this thesis.

In *The European Antarctic: Science and Strategy in Scandinavia and the British Empire*, Peder Roberts analyses the relationship between science, sovereignty and SPRI. He argues that SPRI actively promoted a new culture of exploration involving small-scale expeditions pursuing specific geographical and scientific goals, sometimes in the service of the state.⁷³⁶ Roberts only considers how SPRI influenced the existing polar community. He does not evaluate its role as a public-facing museum.

Roberts seems to be the only scholar to make a comparison between the SOL and SPRI. He notes that when SPRI was established there was nothing else like it in Britain 'except perhaps the decaying Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory... which was in a state of decline that mirrored the health of its founder.'⁷³⁷ One of the major planks of the argument given in this chapter is that the SOL was a precursor to SPRI. I will expand on Robert's comparison by drawing parallels between the two institutions.

There is no scholarship on the 1930 Polar Exhibition.

⁷³³ Innes Keighren (M.Sc., 2003), 'A Scot of the Antarctic: The Reception and Commemoration of William Speirs Bruce', University of Edinburgh., 93-102.

⁷³⁴ Speak, *Deb: Geographer, Scientist, Antarctic Explorer*.

⁷³⁵ Ann Savours 'Foreword' in Frank Debenham and Barbara Debenham, *In the Arctic: Tales Told at Tea Time* (Banham, 1997), pp. ix-xii.

⁷³⁶ Roberts, *The European Antarctic*, 80.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

In contrast to the limited secondary material, there is a larger variety of primary sources available than for any other period considered in this thesis. Newspaper articles continue to be crucial as a means of gauging the public perception of these exhibitions and displays. There are, however, a number of other sources that both detail what was displayed in the exhibitions and provide insight into the aims and expectations of their organisers. These include lecture transcripts, journal articles, correspondence and inventories. The 1930 Polar Exhibition is particularly well documented in an exhibition catalogue, a floor plan, committee meeting minutes, formal reports, correspondence and miscellaneous planning documents. These sources are valuable in that they provide a ‘behind the scenes’ look at the exhibitions as well as how they were presented publicly.

5.3 The historical and museological context

This section presents the historical and museological background against which polar displays developed in the inter-war period. It argues that changes in the culture of exploration had an impact on how and where polar themes were presented.

Michael Smith has described how the field of exploration underwent a ‘quiet revolution’ following the First World War.⁷³⁸ One major change was in the tools used by explorers. Technological advances, particularly in aeronautical engineering, meant that from the 1920s exploration was increasingly carried out from the air. New lands were mapped from above and aerial cameras recorded the landscape. These techniques complemented more traditional methods of land travel using sledges and dogs. Radios also facilitated increased communication between explorers and the outside world.⁷³⁹

New technologies were not the only change. Geopolitical developments largely account for a transformation in the way expeditions were organised. The result was that large-scale private expeditions dependent on public funding were replaced by smaller

⁷³⁸ Michael Smith, *Polar Crusader* (2012), Kindle edition, <https://goo.gl/ncbH6Q>, 36%.

⁷³⁹ These changes are outlined in Dodds 'Antarctica and the Modern' (1997).

ventures that were variously financed by the government, private investors and the explorers themselves.

First, following the First World War, the British government started to take more interest in both maintaining and extending its territorial claims in Antarctica. This turn of events was triggered by, first, the economic importance of the Antarctic whaling industry; second, an appreciation of the potential strategic importance of Antarctic territories, and, third, the threat of competing claims made by other nations throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁴⁰ Britain had claimed the ‘Falkland Islands Dependencies’ in 1908. The FID comprised South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands, the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands and a section of the Antarctic Peninsula.⁷⁴¹ In 1923 she made a second claim to the ‘Ross Dependency’, a sector based on the Ross Sea.⁷⁴²

To substantiate these claims, the government began to organise and finance expeditions that would either explore and assert ownership of new territory or help consolidate existing claims. An example of the first type was the British, Australian, New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) which took place between 1929 and 1931. Led by the Australian Douglas Mawson, the expedition specifically aimed to survey and lay claim to new areas of coastline.⁷⁴³ An example of the second type was the 1934 to 1937 British Graham Land Expedition which sought to reassert British claims on the Antarctic Peninsula.⁷⁴⁴ Another major government activity during this period was the Discovery Investigations, a research programme carried out on Scott’s old ship between 1925 and 1938. Initially established to carry out whale research in the face of concerns about declining whale stocks in the Southern Ocean, the program came to comprise both scientific and survey work.⁷⁴⁵ Roberts argues that these investigations, though ostensibly concerned with environmental protection, acted as an ‘arm of the state’ by asserting British rights in Antarctica through the pursuit of science.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., 50-52; Day, *Antarctica*, 234.

⁷⁴¹ Day, *Antarctica*, 129-30.

⁷⁴² Ibid., 190.

⁷⁴³ Dodds 'Antarctica and the Modern' (1997), 52; Day, *Antarctica*, 243.

⁷⁴⁴ Roberts, *The European Antarctic*, 48-49.

⁷⁴⁵ Dodds 'Antarctica and the Modern' (1997), 52.

⁷⁴⁶ Roberts, *The European Antarctic*, 32.

In the Arctic, British ventures mainly fell into two categories. British mining companies such as the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate, the Northern Exploration Company and the Spitsbergen Coal and Trading Company sent expeditions to Spitsbergen (now Svalbard) to prospect for minerals.⁷⁴⁷ These were paid for by private investors.

Most expeditions, however, were sent out under the auspices of a university, primarily Oxford and Cambridge. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were over fifty Arctic expeditions of this type, carrying out scientific work in places such as Svalbard, Greenland, Iceland and Baffin Island. These expeditions were usually small in scale, using only one ship and employing fewer than ten men, primarily undergraduate students.⁷⁴⁸ Most took place in the summer only.⁷⁴⁹ These ventures were usually paid for by the students themselves, sometimes supplemented by grants from institutions like the Royal Society or the Royal Geographical Society (RGS).⁷⁵⁰

Other contemporary British expeditions were carried out for commercial reasons and paid for by commercial interests. The 1930 to 1931 British Arctic Air Route Expedition and a follow-up in 1932 investigated the feasibility of establishing an Arctic flight route between Britain and Canada.⁷⁵¹ Though carried out under the auspices of the RGS, this was largely funded by Pan American airlines, who had a vested interest in the outcome.⁷⁵²

Just as during the Heroic Age, these changes in how exploration was carried out had an impact on how and where it was portrayed to a wider audience. In this case it meant that there was less need for explorers to publicise their ventures. With alternate funding sources it was not as urgent that they appeal to the general public; as John Wright argues, 'expeditions did not depend for their financial backing on adventures recountable on television and radio.'⁷⁵³ Expedition leaders no longer had to be curators, writers, public speakers and celebrities. Only some wrote books or gave lectures about

⁷⁴⁷ Dag Avango, Louwrens Hacquebord, Ypie Aalders, Hidde De Haas, Ulf Gustafsson and Frigga Kruse 'Between Markets and Geo-politics: Natural Resource Exploitation on Spitsbergen from 1600 to the Present Day' in *Polar Record* 47(01) (2011), pp. 29-39., 33.

⁷⁴⁸ Smith, *Polar Crusader*, 34%.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34%.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 35%.

⁷⁵¹ Wright 'British Polar Expeditions' (1990), 80.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, 80.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 81.

their experiences.⁷⁵⁴ Consequently, the amount of publicity that they sought, and received, was minimal.

Furthermore, expeditions of this era may have had less general appeal than those of the Heroic Age. While foreign explorers continued to perform dramatic feats that caught the public attention, British expeditions were rarely aimed at making new geographical discoveries or marking new achievements.⁷⁵⁵ For example, university expeditions usually carried out focused scientific work in a localised area.⁷⁵⁶ They were not perceived as being so dangerous as in the past. There were no dramatic rescues, and out of the 260 expedition members employed during this period there were only four fatalities.⁷⁵⁷ The result was that audiences in the 1920s and 1930s were probably not as invested in contemporary exploration as those of the 1900s and 1910s.

As explorers made less effort to engage the public, the use of temporary exhibitions as a tool for publicity declined. On the other hand, institutions with permanent polar displays were established. These developments meant that exploration was exhibited on a permanent basis and not just when it was topical. This was important as the changed model for exploration meant that the subject was rarely as newsworthy as in the past.

As well as changes in the culture of exploration, the replacement of temporary exhibitions with permanent institutions also reflects wider trends in the museum sector. The SOL and SPRI were established during a period of growth; the number of museum institutions doubled between 1887 and 1928.⁷⁵⁸ In addition, an increasing number of these new institutions, like the SOL and SPRI, had a specialist remit. Garwood points out that institutions like the Tate Gallery in London (1897) and the Imperial War Museum (1917) were the result of a 'drive to specialise.'⁷⁵⁹ In contrast to universal museums, such as the British Museum (BM) with its encyclopedic collections, they focused on a specific subject and collected accordingly.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 84; Smith, *Polar Crusader*, 35%.

⁷⁵⁵ These were mainly aeronautical achievements. In 1926 Roald Amundsen flew over the North Pole in an airship. In 1928 the Australian Hubert Wilkins carried out the first Antarctic flight and, a year later, the American Richard Byrd reached the South Pole by plane.

⁷⁵⁶ Smith, *Polar Crusader*, 34%.

⁷⁵⁷ Wright 'British Polar Expeditions' (1990), 77.

⁷⁵⁸ Garwood, *Museums in Britain*, 40%.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 50%.

A discussion that pertains to the argument given in this chapter is what was understood by the term ‘museum.’ As reflected in the *Museums Journal* of the time, this was part of an ongoing debate as museum professionals strove to articulate the purpose of their institutions.⁷⁶⁰ By the early twentieth century the general consensus was that museums should not only store objects and facilitate research, they should also be accessible to general audiences. A 1928 survey of Britain’s museums emphasised the importance of access when it defined a museum as ‘any building used as a repository for the preservation of objects relating to art, history, science or industry, which is open to the public for the study of these subjects.’⁷⁶¹ Curators also had a duty to make their displays comprehensible to the non-specialist. In 1893 the influential William Flowers had argued that ‘the museum of the future is to have as its complete ideal, not only the simple preservation of the objects contained in it, but also their arrangement in such a manner as to provide for the instruction of those who visit it.’⁷⁶²

During the period under study, then, a prerequisite for a museum is that it had to be open to the public. This distinction is important when it comes to determining whether the SOL and SPRI qualified as polar museums.

Some institutions, though custodians of polar material, did not fulfil these criteria. These include the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) and the RGS. The former had been bequeathed a collection of polar objects following their Franklin commemoration in 1895 (Exh.59).⁷⁶³ There is no evidence, however, that these were organised into a display. The RGS also possessed a selection of the ‘personal relics of arctic and antarctic explorers.’⁷⁶⁴ From 1913 these were displayed in a ‘Museum Room’

⁷⁶⁰ Almost any Museums Association publication of the time contains a discussion on the purpose of museums. Examples include Boyd Dawkins 'President's Address- The Museum Question' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Third Annual General Meeting held in Manchester* (London, 1892), pp. 18-24.; Goode 'Museum Administration'; William E. Hoyle 'The Use of Museums in Teaching' in *Museums Journal* II(8) (1902-03), pp. 229-239.; H. Bolton 'The Future of Museums' in *ibid.* V (1905-06), pp. 249-282.

⁷⁶¹ Miers, *A Report on the Public Museums*, 5.

⁷⁶² William H. Flowers 'President's Address- Modern Museums' in Museums Association, *Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the Fourth Annual General Meeting held in London* (London, 1893), pp. 21-48., 22.

⁷⁶³ Bailey 'List of Objects' (1895), 416.

⁷⁶⁴ Or ‘polar things’, as the curator Arthur Hinks described them in a later letter to Shackleton. Correspondence (9th April 1914), Hinks to Shackleton, EHS 4ai) *Ernest Shackleton Collection*, RGS.

in the RGS building. A 1920 photograph of the display shows cases filled with objects with photographs and paintings covering the walls.⁷⁶⁵

Despite resembling a museum, these were effectively private collections. They belonged to the societies and only members and their friends were granted access. Though they sometimes held exhibitions, the RGS did not allow general visitation until 2004.⁷⁶⁶ The RSGS does seem to have granted public access to their map room and library from 1890, however, this ceased on moving to new premises in 1908.⁷⁶⁷

Other institutions also held polar artefacts but similarly cannot be described as polar museums. At the National Portrait Gallery visitors could see the portraits and autographs of Arctic explorers including McClintock, Rae and Nares.⁷⁶⁸ The Franklin relics that had been on display in the Painted Hall were moved into the nearby Naval Museum and then into the new Greenwich Maritime Museum when it opened in the 1930s.⁷⁶⁹ Other relics remained in the BM until they were deaccessioned and given to the RGS in the 1940s.⁷⁷⁰ The BM also held other miscellaneous artefacts such as a playbill produced by one of the Franklin search ships and a medal commemorating Shackleton's *Nimrod* expedition.⁷⁷¹ Obviously, however, these institutions were not dedicated exclusively to the polar regions.

The SOL and SPRI were the first institutions to fit the criteria of a dedicated polar museum. As the use of temporary exhibitions declined they ensured that themes of polar exploration continued to be displayed.

⁷⁶⁵ 'RGS House, Lowther Lodge - The Museum Room', *Royal Geographical Society*, <http://goo.gl/IXhsx9>, Accessed 6th October 2014.

⁷⁶⁶ Rita Gardner 'Introduction' in David Popey, Keith Miller, Zoë Ross, Ali Moore and Tami Rex, *To the Ends of the Earth: Visions of a Changing World: 175 years of Exploration and Photography* (London, 2005), pp. 8-13., 8-9.

⁷⁶⁷ 'Finding the RSGS', *Royal Scottish Geographical Society*, <http://goo.gl/0tXobA>, Accessed 14th March 2016.

⁷⁶⁸ 'Forty-fifth Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery' (1902), *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online*, <http://goo.gl/s1v0TR>, Accessed 25th June 2014, 8.

⁷⁶⁹ Museum catalogue, 'Descriptive Catalogue... Greenwich Hospital, and the Royal Naval Museum, Greenwich', GU, 11; Littlewood and Butler, *Of Ships and Stars*, 49.

⁷⁷⁰ Roberts 'Notes on the Barrow Collection of Arctic Equipment' (1940), 369.

⁷⁷¹ 'Account of the Income and Expenditure of the British Museum... together with a Statement of the Progress Made in the Arrangement and Description of the Collections, and an Account of Objects Added to Them in the Year 1909' (1910), *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online*, <http://goo.gl/F1rSOa>, Accessed 20th June 2014, 25; *Ibid.*, 95.

5.4 ‘All for the love of science’: William Speirs Bruce, explorer-scientist-curator

The SOL was only one of many curatorial projects that Bruce was involved in over the duration of his career. The following section considers other displays that Bruce produced. It argues that Bruce had stronger links to the museum sector than his contemporaries. This meant that not only did he use the exhibition medium to a greater extent, he also had different motives for doing so. Bruce was primarily concerned with promoting polar science, a priority that is reflected in the content of his displays. He did, however, address other aspects of exploration as well.

Of the explorers of the Heroic Age, Bruce was the most prolific in terms of organising displays. His curatorial career dates from 1895 when he helped the RSGS to source material to be shown at their Franklin commemoration (Exh.59).⁷⁷² He went on to curate or part-curate six more temporary exhibitions between 1902 and 1913 (Exh.62, 64, 68, 69, 72, 74). In his role as vice-president of the Zoological Society of Scotland, Bruce was also instrumental in the creation of Edinburgh Zoo where he campaigned for an exhibition of polar fauna and an aquarium.⁷⁷³

It is likely that this commitment to creating displays was due to his academic background. Bruce had entered the polar arena not as a ships’ officer, like Scott and Shackleton, but as a scientist. After studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh he had been employed as a naturalist on several Arctic and Antarctic voyages before organising and leading the *Scotia* expedition.⁷⁷⁴ There were strong links between the museum sector and the academic scientific establishment that Bruce was a part of. Curatorial posts were often held by scientists.⁷⁷⁵ This included other men in the field of

⁷⁷² Correspondence (28th March 1895), Bruce to Brown, Gen.1650 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

⁷⁷³ Swinney 'From the Arctic and Antarctic' (2003), 136; *The Scotsman* (11th February 1910). When the zoo opened in 1913 some of the earliest parts to be completed were a polar bear enclosure and seal and penguin compounds. T. H. Gillespie 'The Scottish Zoological Park' in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 62(3191) (1914), pp. 173-178. Bruce’s own attempts to stock it with animals failed. Apparently an Emperor penguin he arranged to have brought back from Antarctica died on board due to a ‘surfeit of tinned fish.’ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 283.

⁷⁷⁴ Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*.

⁷⁷⁵ After all, one of the main purposes of museums was scientific research; the 1904 President of the Museums Association argued that ‘collections fail to satisfy one of the motives which justify

polar science specifically; two of the scientists on the *Discovery* expedition were also curators.⁷⁷⁶ Indeed, one of the most notable polar explorers of Bruce's time, the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen, was a neuroscientist who had been the curator of a museum in Bergen before he left to perform the first ever crossing of Greenland.⁷⁷⁷

Bruce never formally held a curatorial post, though he did apply for one at the Raffles Museum in Singapore.⁷⁷⁸ Nevertheless, he fitted into this tradition of scientist-curators and it may have been more intuitive to Bruce to use the exhibition medium than it was to other contemporary expedition leaders. Bruce was probably more aware of museum practices and there is evidence that these informed his displays. For example, his labels seem to have been written in accordance with the best practice of the time. In 1903 museums had been criticised in parliament for only including the Latin name on the labels of specimens.⁷⁷⁹ Bruce's label for a taxidermy Emperor penguin recorded its common as well as its Latin name, along with its provenance, sex and donor (Fig.28).⁷⁸⁰ Bruce also recommended the label be printed with the 'usual arrangement of lettering.'⁷⁸¹ This was in accordance with advice given in the *Museums Journal* that curators pay attention to details like font.⁷⁸² According to Rudmose-Brown, Bruce also 'gave great attention' to how his displays were lighted.⁷⁸³ He was proficient enough to

their existence if they are not used when occasion requires for the advancement of knowledge.' Sidney Frederic Harmer 'Address by the President' in *Museums Journal* IV(8) (1904-05), pp. 3-24., 21.

⁷⁷⁶ The first was George Murray of the BM who travelled with the expedition as far as Africa. Thomas Hodgson, the biologist, was curator of Plymouth Museum. Scott, *The Voyage of the Discovery*, 7%, 10%.

⁷⁷⁷ 'Curator and Ambassador' in *Museums Journal* V(5) (1905-06), pp. 176.

⁷⁷⁸ Typescript (1895), 'Application for Curatorship of Raffles Museum, 1895', Gen.1647 47/11 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC. He later withdrew his interest. Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*, 45.

⁷⁷⁹ F. A. Bather 'Names on the Labels in Public Galleries' in *Museums Journal* II(2) (1902-03), pp. 137-143., 137.

⁷⁸⁰ Draft label (William Speirs Bruce, 19th May 1910), *Dr William Speirs Bruce collection*, RSGS.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸² F. Jeffrey Bell 'On "Good Form" in Natural History Museums' in *Museums Journal* III(5) (1903-04), pp. 159-161., 159.

⁷⁸³ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 250.

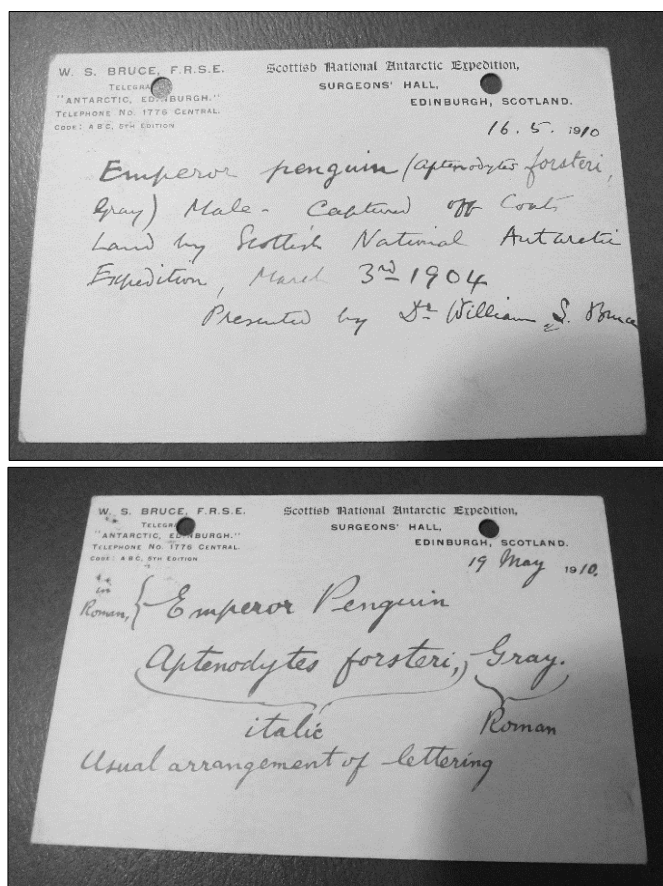


Figure 28. Bruce's draft label for an Emperor penguin
Dr William Speirs Bruce collection, RSGS.

be given an award for his display at an international oceanographic exhibition in Marseilles in 1906.⁷⁸⁴

Bruce's links with the museum sector are also reflected in the fact that, of all the British explorers of his era, he is alluded to most in the *Museums Journal*. These articles discuss various subjects related to Bruce such as the collections brought back by the *Scotia* expedition and the establishment of the SOL.⁷⁸⁵

Not only was Bruce more entrenched within the museum sector, his motives were different from those of his contemporaries. Scott and Shackleton had hosted exhibitions for the purposes of fundraising and publicity. Bruce rarely had an opportunity to make

⁷⁸⁴ 'Scottish Oceanographical Exhibits at Marseilles' in *Museums Journal* V(12) (1905-06), pp. 418-419., 213.

⁷⁸⁵ 'Antarctic Birds' in *Museums Journal* IV(6) (1904-05), pp. 213., 213.; 'Antarctic Birds' in *Museums Journal* V(8) (1905-06), pp. 277., 277.; 'The Antarctic Seals in the Royal Scottish Museum' (1907-08); 'New Oceanographic Museum' in *Museums Journal* VI(8) (1906-07), pp. 282., 282; 'A Scottish Arctic Expedition' in *Museums Journal* 6(11) (1906-07), pp. 384., 384.

money from his displays and seems to have been more concerned with promoting polar science. Though Bruce also needed funding to pursue his polar ambitions he did not participate in the promotional activities that other explorers did.⁷⁸⁶ He did not write a popular account of the *Scotia* voyage and, when he lectured, it tended to be on scientific subjects rather than more popular aspects of exploration.⁷⁸⁷

Similarly, Bruce rarely created displays in the hope of making a profit. There are two exceptions. He had planned to charge admission to his exhibit in Glasgow in 1911 (Exh.72). Though prevented from doing so by the presence of another polar exhibit with an entry fee, in the event he was granted some of the surplus funds earned by the exhibition overall.⁷⁸⁸ A second display hosted by Bruce in 1913 was also held for fundraising purposes (Exh.74). This was for the benefit of the Mansion House Scott memorial fund, however, rather than for Bruce's own projects. He may have had an ulterior motive; on the completion of the exhibition he wrote to the fund's committee arguing that the money should be spent, not only on 'memorials in building, or sculpture', but on funding new scientific ventures.⁷⁸⁹

A more important motive, however, seems to have been a genuine wish to educate the public about polar science. Evidence for this comes from often frustrated comments made by Bruce's colleagues. Rudmose-Brown wrote that 'it was with this hope of interesting people in polar exploration... that Bruce took advantage of many opportunities to have an Antarctic exhibit.'⁷⁹⁰ He added that 'one regretted that Bruce should spend the time he did on their production. It is not in such ways that the cause of exploration is advanced.'⁷⁹¹ In 1911, when Bruce was both working on a display and

⁷⁸⁶ Most of the funds for the *Scotia* expedition came from the Coats family, who gave Bruce £30,000 of the total £36,405, with the remainder made up of donations from smaller firms. Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*, 74-76.

⁷⁸⁷ A poster for a lecture held in 1894 advertised that 'The Lecture has for one of its objects the awakening of public interest in the commercial and scientific development of the Antarctic regions.' Poster (1894), 'Antarctic Exploration Lecture', Gen.1647 47/10 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

⁷⁸⁸ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 279. The other polar exhibit was an encampment of either Inuit or Sami people organised by a Mr Singer. *Aberdeen Journal* (13th April 1911); *Sheffield Independent* (3rd May 1911).

⁷⁸⁹ *The Scotsman* (17th March 1913). In a sense Bruce got his wish, when SPRI was established using money from the fund seven years later.

⁷⁹⁰ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 278-79.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid*, 279.

applying for government funding, the secretary of the SOL, James Ferrier, felt compelled to remind him that ‘the Government grant is most important, however interesting and necessary the exhibit may be.’⁷⁹² That Bruce’s desire to appeal to a wide audience was genuine is reinforced by references he received when applying for the post at Raffles Museum. One referee commented that he would be certain to make the museum ‘popularly attractive, for no one who knows your kind affability would ever hesitate to come to you for information.’⁷⁹³

Bruce inadvertently described his own efforts in an article ‘Science at Exhibitions.’ Bemoaning the relative lack of interest in scientific exhibits, he wrote that the scientists who curate them (like himself) have ‘done all for the love of science and the benefit of society, all they ask is that the public should spare a few minutes of their time from the stadium, gondolas and sensual pleasures of the great exhibition in order to learn something that is of benefit to themselves and their fellow creatures.’⁷⁹⁴

This devotion to the cause of science was reflected in Bruce’s displays. These almost always elevated scientific endeavour over other aspects of exploration. Bruce could be dismissive of the popular interest in adventure and heroism. He reportedly refused to write a book about the *Scotia* voyage on the basis that, as it contained no ‘pole-hunting sensations’, the public would not be interested.⁷⁹⁵ When his colleagues published an account of the voyage the preface included a sarcastic apology to the reader that they were not ‘more frequently at deaths door.’⁷⁹⁶ Bruce felt that aspects of scientific work, such as finding new zoological specimens, were more exciting: ‘there is no form of exploration more fascinating and more important... Reaching the South Pole isn’t in it!’⁷⁹⁷

Consequently, the main themes of Bruce’s exhibitions were scientific endeavour and results. His displays invariably included scientific instruments, specimens and taxidermy. Bruce was particularly proud of his collection of oceanographical specimens.

⁷⁹² Correspondence (1st May 1911), Ferrier to Bruce, MS/10/40/39 *James Ferrier collection*, SPRI.

⁷⁹³ Typescript, ‘Application for Curatorship’, EUCRC, 4.

⁷⁹⁴ Annotated typescript, ‘Science at Exhibitions’, EUCRC, 4-5.

⁷⁹⁵ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 215.

⁷⁹⁶ Rudmose-Brown, Mossman, Pirie and Bruce, *The Voyage of the "Scotia"*, xi.

⁷⁹⁷ William S. Bruce, *Polar Exploration* (1911), Kindle edition, <https://goo.gl/8SO2xA>, 59%.

When shown in 1908 he boasted that ‘it is the first time such a complete selection of polar deep sea animals has ever been demonstrated to the public’ (Exh.68).⁷⁹⁸ Another exhibit that Bruce displayed on a number of occasions was a specially-commissioned tableau of an Antarctic scene incorporating taxidermy seals and birds.⁷⁹⁹

Though science was Bruce’s main focus, he was not single-minded. Some of his displays were of historic or human interest. In 1911 he was a member of the sub-committee on ‘Scottish History and Literature’ for the Scottish Exhibition of Natural History, Art and Industry (Exh.72).⁸⁰⁰ As part of his duties he collated a collection to be shown in the gallery ‘Relics of Scottish Explorers.’⁸⁰¹ The resulting display featured portraits and paintings of polar scenes and ships, as well as objects such as medals, books, telescopes, maps, a sledge and a model kayak.⁸⁰² Its purpose was to laud ‘illustrious’ historical figures and so it focused on the individuals and their achievements.⁸⁰³ The 1913 exhibition also included historical displays alongside scientific ones (Exh.74). As well as specimens and scientific equipment, Bruce showed exhibits such as the saltire flag he carried on his expeditions, equipment including clothing and sleeping bags and a flag made by Jane Franklin for one of the search expeditions of the 1850s.⁸⁰⁴

In producing exhibitions Bruce’s primary aim was to educate the public about polar science. He appreciated, however, that his audiences would be interested in other aspects of exploration. This approach informed the displays shown in the SOL.

⁷⁹⁸ Annotated typescript, ‘Science at Exhibitions’, EUCRC, 2-3.

⁷⁹⁹ *The Scotsman* (28th April 1911).

⁸⁰⁰ *Palace of History: A Catalogue of Exhibits from the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry* (Glasgow, 1911), 3.

⁸⁰¹ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 279.

⁸⁰² *Palace of History* (1911), 651-58.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁰⁴ *The Scotsman* (27th February 1913); *The Scotsman* (28th February 1913); *The Scotsman* (3rd March 1913).

5.5 Bruce's Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory

If the SOL was only one of the curatorial projects Bruce undertook during his career, it was by far the most ambitious. The following section will argue that the SOL was Britain's first polar museum. It shows that the institution fulfilled this criterion by being both concerned exclusively with the polar regions and in allowing public access. Though display was not the sole or even the primary purpose of the institution, it incorporated an exhibition that displayed themes of polar exploration on a permanent basis. These were mostly scientific; however, they did include some non-scientific exhibits. Bruce was eager to appeal to those he described as 'laymen' and one of his motives in creating the SOL was to promote polar science to the general public.

The SOL was officially opened in 1907 by the Prince of Monaco, an oceanographer and Bruce's friend and colleague. (Exh.66). It did not have an auspicious start. During the opening ceremony the fuses blew and, though the 'speeches went on in the blaze of fifty candles placed in beer bottles', the visitors were not able to look around the laboratory itself.⁸⁰⁵

If they had they would have seen a series of workshops which also doubled as storage and display space for objects and specimens. Photographs of the laboratory, situated next to Surgeons Hall in Edinburgh, show a low building with ivy growing up the walls. Inside, wood-panelled rooms were set up for research with workbenches, sinks, desks, microscopes and shelves of books. Objects such as skeletons in glass cases, specimens in bottles, skulls, taxidermy birds in bell jars, a sledge and a globe were dispersed throughout. In one room antlers hung from the ceiling; in another a kayak; in the 'Antarctic room', a fish skeleton. Photographs taken on the *Scotia* expedition and pictures of oceanographic research vessels were hung on the walls (Fig.29, 30).⁸⁰⁶ The building was not ideal. Rudmose-Brown described it as 'badly suited for laboratory or museum... low in the ceiling, with a sagging floor and ill lit... The rumbling of heavy

⁸⁰⁵ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 250.

⁸⁰⁶ There are photographs of the interior and exterior of the laboratory in Photograph album (undated), 'Vol. V Prints 200-398', Gen.1662 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

lorries in the yard shook the museum cases' and it was permeated by the smell from the pickle factory next door.⁸⁰⁷

Despite these disadvantages the SOL carried out a range of activities reflecting its 'dual identity', as Keighren puts it, as both laboratory and museum.⁸⁰⁸ It stored a large number of specimens collected on Bruce's various Arctic and Antarctic voyages, as well as a selection from the *Discovery* and *Southern Cross* expeditions.⁸⁰⁹

One of its purposes was to facilitate research on these collections. Despite its title, the laboratory's scientific remit went beyond the study of oceanography. Oceanography was Bruce's particular field of interest and expertise. He had modelled the institution partly on Monaco's Oceanographical Museum, which had been established in 1902 and which also combined research and display. Photographs of it hung on the walls.⁸¹⁰ Other fields of science were also studied, however. Bruce employed a zoological assistant and the zoological log of the *Scotia* was published under the auspices of the laboratory.⁸¹¹

Beyond its scientific work, the laboratory functioned as a centre for advice and planning for future expeditions. It was visited by such figures as Amundsen, Nansen and Shackleton.⁸¹² The collection included documents that could be of help to the prospective explorer, such as navigational logs, personal notes, diaries and maps.⁸¹³ The institution also offered practical help by the loan of equipment, scientific and otherwise: in Rudmose-Brown's words, everything 'from deep-sea trawls to teacups.'⁸¹⁴ Among

⁸⁰⁷ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 249; *The Scotsman* (17th January 1907).

⁸⁰⁸ Keighren (2003), 'A Scot of the Antarctic', 98.

⁸⁰⁹ '1921.145: Collections from the Arctic, Spitsbergen etc. other than "Scotia"' in Accessions book (1921), 'Transfer of specimens from the SOL', *W.S Bruce papers*, NMS.

⁸¹⁰ One of the speakers at the opening contrasted 'the shed in which they were now assembled with that magnificent building.' *The Scotsman* (17th January 1907). Bruce knew the difference only too well. He wrote to Ferrier after visiting a second institute the Prince of Monaco established in Paris: 'it is a sumptuous Palace of Oceanography. Poor old SOL! But perhaps the day will come yet!' Correspondence (22nd January 1911), Bruce to Ferrier, MS/101/20/17 *William Speirs Bruce collection*, SPRI.

⁸¹¹ One zoological assistant was Robert Clark, who went on to join Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition. Correspondence (18th October 1911), Clark to Bruce, MS/101/32/1 *Robert Selbie Clark collection*, SPRI; *The Times Literary Supplement* (24th December 1908).

⁸¹² Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*, 98.

⁸¹³ List (1919), 'Inventory and list of specimens from Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory', 12/167 *W.S Bruce papers*, NMS.

⁸¹⁴ Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*, 97; Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 250.



Figure 29. The interior of the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory Photograph album (undated), 'Vol. V Prints 200-398', Gen.1662 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC. Image reproduced by kind permission of the University of Edinburgh Main Library.



Figure 30. A workshop in the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory
Photograph album (undated), 'Vol. V Prints 200-398', Gen.1662 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC. Image reproduced by kind permission of the University of Edinburgh Main Library.

the expeditions that benefited from this arrangement were a 1909 voyage to Svalbard on the *Conqueror* and the 1912 Arctic expedition on the *Karluk*.⁸¹⁵

The laboratory also carried out museum work. Objects and specimens were accessioned and catalogued.⁸¹⁶ External exhibits were organised. Specimens were loaned to other societies; in 1912 the laboratory contributed to a temporary display organised by the Challenger Society.⁸¹⁷ Duplicate specimens were distributed to other institutions such as universities and museums.⁸¹⁸ And, of course, the SOL hosted a permanent exhibition.

Most of the displays in the exhibition were scientific. Again, the tag ‘oceanographical’ is misleading. Certainly, some of the displays related to oceanography. Among these was a case designed to ‘show the variety of life in shallow Antarctic waters.’⁸¹⁹ Others included ‘a monster sunfish stuffed and realistically painted’, oceanographical equipment and pictures of oceanographical research vessels.⁸²⁰ These, however, were displayed next to geological and biological specimens such as skulls, skeletons and taxidermy penguins and seals.⁸²¹

Bruce combined these displays with others of more human interest such as equipment, specifically a sledge and kayak. Pictures of polar scenery hung on the walls, alongside photographs from the *Scotia* expedition.⁸²² Among this last was an image of the expedition’s laboratory assistant wearing full kilt regalia and playing the bagpipes on the ice next to an Emperor penguin (Fig.31).⁸²³

⁸¹⁵ ‘Scottish Arctic Expedition’ in *The British Medical Journal* 2(2534) (1909), pp. 229. Svalbard was then known as Spitsbergen. The SOL did not get what they had loaned back from the *Karluk* expedition. Having become beset in the ice of the Chukchi Sea, the *Karluk* was eventually crushed and sank, leaving her crew marooned with a subsequent huge loss of life. One of the survivors was William Laird McKinlay, whom Bruce had employed to man his display at the 1911 exhibition in Glasgow.

⁸¹⁶ Accessions book, ‘Transfer of specimens’, NMS.

⁸¹⁷ List (1912), ‘Challenger Society, London. Scotia New species for exhibition’, 12/167 *W.S Bruce papers*, NMS.

⁸¹⁸ List, ‘Inventory and list of specimens’, NMS; List (1912), ‘Manuscript and typescript lists of vertebrate specimens donated by SNAE to Royal Scottish Museum (NMS) and BM’, Gen.1653 171/2 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

⁸¹⁹ Item 1522 in Accessions book, ‘Transfer of specimens’, NMS.

⁸²⁰ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 250.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, 250; *Edinburgh Evening News* (15th January 1907).

⁸²² Press cutting (1907), Gen.1673, *Further cuttings of the SNAE*, EUCRC; *The Scotsman* (17th January 1907).

⁸²³ *Ibid.*

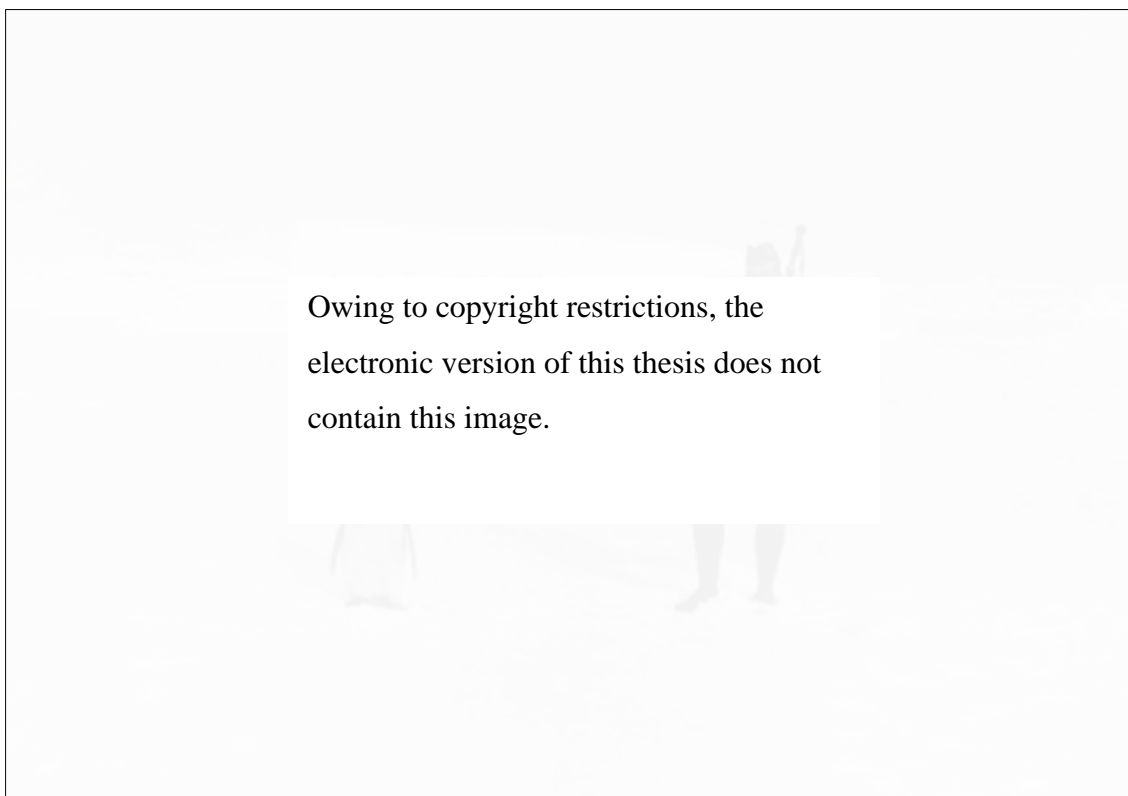


Figure 31. Gilbert Kerr on the ice playing the bagpipes to an Emperor penguin 'Piper Kerr and Emperor penguin', WSB11-12, *Dr William Speirs Bruce collection*, RSGS archives

Bruce was conscious that the displays might have limited appeal. During his speech at the opening ceremony he apologised that 'the place as it were at present was essentially a workshop for oceanography... they had attempted very little at the present time in the way of making it an exhibition to laymen.'⁸²⁴ This suggests that, in tune with debates being played out in the *Museums Journal*, Bruce was aware of two potential audiences: expert and non-expert.⁸²⁵ Not only that: it indicates that he wanted to appeal to these 'laymen' and intended to develop the displays in that direction. One newspaper reported

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Questions about target audiences had arisen as early as 1864 in an address by Dr John Gray to the British Association in Bath. According to William Flowers he had 'laid down the axiom that the purposes for which a museum were established were two': first, the instruction and amusement of the masses, and, second, to aid students in their research. Flowers 'President's Address- Modern Museums', 29. The debate had continued since that time. For example, in 1906, the year before the SOL was established, an article in the *Museums Journal* had discussed the different kinds of collections museum should have in order to better to serve these two groups. John Minto 'The Relation of Provincial Museums to National Institutions' in *Museums Journal* V(7) (1905-06), pp. 219-224., 219.

that ‘while at present the scientist alone will appreciate many of the exhibits, great things are expected of the exhibition when funds and accommodation permit.’⁸²⁶

Some commentators disagreed with the conclusion that the displays were uninteresting to the general public. A speaker during the opening ceremony countered Bruce’s assertion ‘that his arrangement of the collection here was more for scientific men than for laymen.... [for] what Scottish heart would not beat faster when he looked at the picture he saw there... and beheld in those far away Arctic regions some pigmy inhabitants listening with ecstasy to the pipes discoursed by a gigantic Highlander.’⁸²⁷ One journalist similarly considered that the displays contained ‘much to interest the layman.’⁸²⁸

It is not clear what lengths Bruce went to in order to facilitate public access. There is no evidence that he advertised the institution or kept regular opening times. He was certainly willing to entertain general visitors, however. Rudmose-Brown commented disapprovingly that ‘he was always ready to show and explain his laboratory to anyone who claimed an interest, quite apart from those who really understood and could benefit from its exhibits. He had an idea that by doing so he would awaken popular interest in oceanography.’⁸²⁹

Financial constraints meant that Bruce was never able to develop the laboratory the way he wanted. A plan in 1914 to develop a ‘National Oceanographical Institute’ that would have combined the *Scotia* and *Challenger* collections never materialised, and then the SOL struggled to stay open during the First World War.⁸³⁰ It closed down in 1919. The contents of the laboratory were distributed amongst other institutions, with specimens and instruments given to the Royal Scottish Museum and the archival material shared between the RSGS and the University of Edinburgh.⁸³¹ By this time Bruce’s health was failing, and he died in 1921.⁸³² In his will he had requested that his ashes be ‘scattered

⁸²⁶ *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (15th January 1907).

⁸²⁷ *The Scotsman* (17th January 1907).

⁸²⁸ *Edinburgh Evening News* (15th January 1907).

⁸²⁹ Rudmose-Brown finishes ‘and he forgot that he was wasting his time.’ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 278.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁸³¹ Swinney ‘Some New Perspectives’ (2001), 287.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 287.

in the South Atlantic Ocean in a high southern latitude... in order to call attention to the need for oceanographical research in these seas.⁸³³ This duly occurred in the sea near South Georgia.

Though relatively short-lived the SOL can be regarded as the first polar museum. Though the exhibition was weighted towards science, it did portray other aspects of exploration through displays of equipment, photographs and paintings.

5.6 A practical museum: Debenham and the Scott Polar Research Institute

Just a few years later after the SOL closed proposals for another institute resurrected Bruce's vision of a place for facilitating scientific research and future exploration, and acting as a depository and showcase for polar collections. This section outlines the establishment and development of the museum at SPRI. It shows that despite being initially aimed at the polar fraternity, the inclusion of historic artefacts and images meant that it came to have more general appeal.

The SOL was a precursor to SPRI in many ways. One of their similarities is that each was created largely through the efforts of a single founding member. In the same way that Bruce was behind the SOL, the establishment of SPRI can be attributed to Frank Debenham. Debenham had been a geologist on Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition before becoming a lecturer in the geography department at the University of Cambridge.⁸³⁴

There is no evidence that Debenham ever consulted Bruce or that the SOL inspired his plans.⁸³⁵ Rather, later in life, he recalled that the idea for a polar institute had occurred to him during the *Terra Nova* expedition. Carrying out a geological survey on Mount

⁸³³ Typescript (undated), 'The Late Dr W.S. Bruce', *Dr William Speirs Bruce collection*, RSGS.

⁸³⁴ P. D. Baird 'Frank Debenham' in *Arctic* 19(2) (1966), pp. 210-211.

⁸³⁵ He would have almost certainly have known about it, not least because Rudmose-Brown attended the meeting of the RGS in 1920 where Debenham first publicly proposed the idea. E. H. Rudmose-Brown, Ernest Shackleton, G. C. Simpson and E. L. Atkinson 'The Future of Polar Exploration: Discussion' in *The Geographical Journal* 57(3) (1921), pp. 200-204.

Erebus, he and his colleagues had discussed the need for a central depository for their records.⁸³⁶

Despite this, his plan was similar to that of Bruce. Debenham's institution would consist of a library and archive, a museum of polar equipment, research rooms and a store for specimens.⁸³⁷ It would facilitate research and offer practical help and advice to explorers planning and outfitting an expedition.⁸³⁸

Unlike the SOL, Debenham did not intend that the institute would be open to the public. Instead, it would serve the polar community, attracting prospective expedition leaders, scientists and other types of researcher such as historians.⁸³⁹

Debenham was given the opportunity to create the institute in 1920 when he was granted £12,000 from the Mansion House Scott memorial fund.⁸⁴⁰ Initially housed in rooms in the Sedgwick Museum of Geology, SPRI moved into its own building in 1925 and into a custom-built site in 1935 (Exh.80).⁸⁴¹ This final building, where it remains today, was designed to be 'indicative of its memorial character' with an impressive façade, a bust of Scott above the door, a statue sculpted by Scott's widow in the forecourt and maps of both polar regions painted on the ceiling in the vestibule area (Fig.32).⁸⁴²

The institute fulfilled most of Debenham's original goals. Described by the *Daily Mail* as a 'Polar Explorers School', it allowed prospective explorers to study equipment that had been used in the past when making their own logistical arrangements; or, as Debenham put it, it showed 'the young explorer what not to take.'⁸⁴³ It also acted as a

⁸³⁶ Frank Debenham 'Retrospect: The Scott Polar Research Institute, 1920-45' in *Polar Record* 4(29) (1945), pp. 223-235, 223.

⁸³⁷ 'The New Constitution of the Scott Polar Research Institute' in *ibid.* 8(56) (1957), pp. 412-418, 412.

⁸³⁸ Debenham 'The Future of Polar Exploration' (1921), 18.

⁸³⁹ Speak, *Deb: Geographer, Scientist, Antarctic Explorer*, 70.

⁸⁴⁰ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 224. The Mansion House Scott memorial fund had raised £76000 altogether. The largest portion was given to the dependants of the deceased. It was also used to pay off the expeditions debts, publish the scientific results and erect memorials, specifically a memorial tablet in St. Pauls Cathedral and a statue in Devonport, the town where Scott was born. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, 106.

⁸⁴¹ 'Opening Ceremony and Description of the New Building' in *Polar Record* 2(09) (1935), pp. 2-9., 5-7.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁴³ *Daily Mail* (18th February 1932); *The Times* (16th November 1934).



Figure 32. The Scott Polar Research Institute from the front, with Kathleen Scott's statue in the foreground
 © Przemyslaw Parzysz. Reproduced under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

hub for the polar fraternity; Debenham wanted ‘to provide a place where folk who love the Arctic can meet and smoke and yarn in comfort. Much good can come from yarnning by the fire.’⁸⁴⁴ This allowed experienced explorers to pass on their skills and knowledge in an informal setting.⁸⁴⁵ SPRI also facilitated academic research, scientific and otherwise, and from 1931 the institute published its own journal *Polar Record*.⁸⁴⁶

In furthering exploration and polar research, these activities served a select group already involved in polar affairs. Contrary to Debenham’s original expectations, however, the institute also came to focus on display and public engagement. The museum did not evolve in the way Debenham had envisaged. He had planned to create a museum aimed at specialists ‘for reference and information on all the special points of polar material.’⁸⁴⁷ Ideally, this would contain ‘samples or models or drawings of all

⁸⁴⁴ *Nottingham Evening Post* (2nd March 1932).

⁸⁴⁵ *Nature* (1st September 1928).

⁸⁴⁶ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 234. Among the non-academic research the institute helped with was advising producers of the 1948 film *Scott of the Antarctic*. For example, their collection of sledges was used to ensure historical accuracy when making the props. Frank Debenham "'Scott of the Antarctic" A Personal Opinion' in *Polar Record* 5(37-38) (1949), pp. 311-316.

⁸⁴⁷ Debenham 'The Future of Polar Exploration' (1921), 19.

types of polar gear from ships to cooking utensils', labelled with helpful details such as the 'maker, cost, weight, materials, performance, etc.'⁸⁴⁸ The collection would be entirely practical. Debenham was not interested in what he termed 'relics': 'the institute doesn't want the cap that Edward Parry used, or Franklin's false teeth.'⁸⁴⁹

In the event, the collection came to encompass objects of historical and human interest as well as practical equipment. This was partly due to the way objects were collected. Rather than pursue a strict collections policy donations seem to have been accepted indiscriminately. For example, the objects acquired by the institution in 1932 included Franklin relics and a 'large case of penguins' as well as more practical objects such as snowshoes and a harpoon.⁸⁵⁰ Debenham attributed this to the institute's relationship with the descendants of historic explorers: 'with such visitors and well-wishers... it was natural that our collection of souvenirs and relics mounted rapidly while the more utilitarian side of the museum, modern polar equipment, grew but slowly.'⁸⁵¹

As a result, the museum came to include artefacts that were of human interest as well as equipment. The first permanent exhibition, comprising an Arctic room and an Antarctic room, included both travelling gear and historical exhibits such as pictures of one of the Franklin search expeditions.⁸⁵² When the display was redeveloped upon SPRI moving into a new building in 1935, it was similarly of both 'practical and historical interest.'⁸⁵³ The *Polar Record* described how 'sledges, dog-harness, polar clothing and Eskimo

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁴⁹ Correspondence (30th May 1920), Debenham to Cherry-Garrard, MS/559/57/9 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI. Though Franklin's false teeth are not in the collection at SPRI there are some dentistry related items. One is a set of joke false teeth: the upper jaw of a dog, painted red, with the teeth still attached. This was presented to a member of the 1934 to 1937 British Graham Land Expedition after he had undergone dental treatment, with the instruction 'to be worn for a few hours daily.' 'Joke teeth', Y: 2008/10/22a-b *Antarctic Collection*, SPRI. There is also a set of toothpicks carried by the 1955-58 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition and a toothbrush that had belonged to a member of the 1989-90 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition. 'Toothbrush', Y: 91/1/6/25a-b *Antarctic Collection*, SPRI; 'Toothpick', Y: 59/8/2/91 *Antarctic Collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁵⁰ 'Annual Report of the Scott Polar Research Institute (1932)' in *Polar Record* 1(04) (1932), pp. 37-38., 38.

⁸⁵¹ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 234.

⁸⁵² Debenham reported that in their previous quarters at Sedgwick Museum they had 'occasional parties, rising once or twice to the scale of exhibitions.' 'The Scott Polar Research Institute' in *ibid.* 1(01) (1931), pp. 2-3., 3; *The Times* (26th May 1926); *Nature* (1st September 1928); Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945).

⁸⁵³ 'Opening Ceremony and Description' (1935), 8.

kayaks are in close proximity to relics from the time of Sir Martin Frobisher, including some from the Parry, Franklin and more recent expeditions.⁸⁵⁴ Artworks, including a selection of Wilson's watercolours, were also displayed in a dedicated gallery space (Fig.33).⁸⁵⁵

In correlation with this, the institute started to welcome the wider public. Initially, it had been intended to appeal solely to specialists. Debenham had argued that the institute would be of 'little interest to the layman' and dismissed the idea of a public museum 'for kiddies to play in on wet days.'⁸⁵⁶

By 1929, however, his attitude had changed. Writing to a friend that a possible grant from the Carnegie Trust would be conditional on the institute being open to the public, he declared 'so it should be.'⁸⁵⁷ From 1930 the institute had regular opening hours between 2pm and 4pm.⁸⁵⁸ These were extended from 1935 onwards.⁸⁵⁹

The institute even began making deliberate efforts to attract a wider audience. They created a permanent display that Debenham said 'appealed strongly' to the general public.⁸⁶⁰ In 1930 they hosted a temporary exhibition about Edward Wilson, a subject that, being connected with the Scott story, likely had popular appeal. As well as the watercolours, sketchbooks and flag that had been shown in 1912, the display also included more personal artefacts such as a home-made candlestick made out of a biscuit tin and Scott's letter to Oriana Wilson, written during his final days.⁸⁶¹ Both the

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁵⁶ Correspondence (30th May 1920), Debenham to Cherry-Garrard, MS/559/57/9 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI. Correspondence (2nd June 1920), Debenham to Cherry-Garrard, MS/559/57/10 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

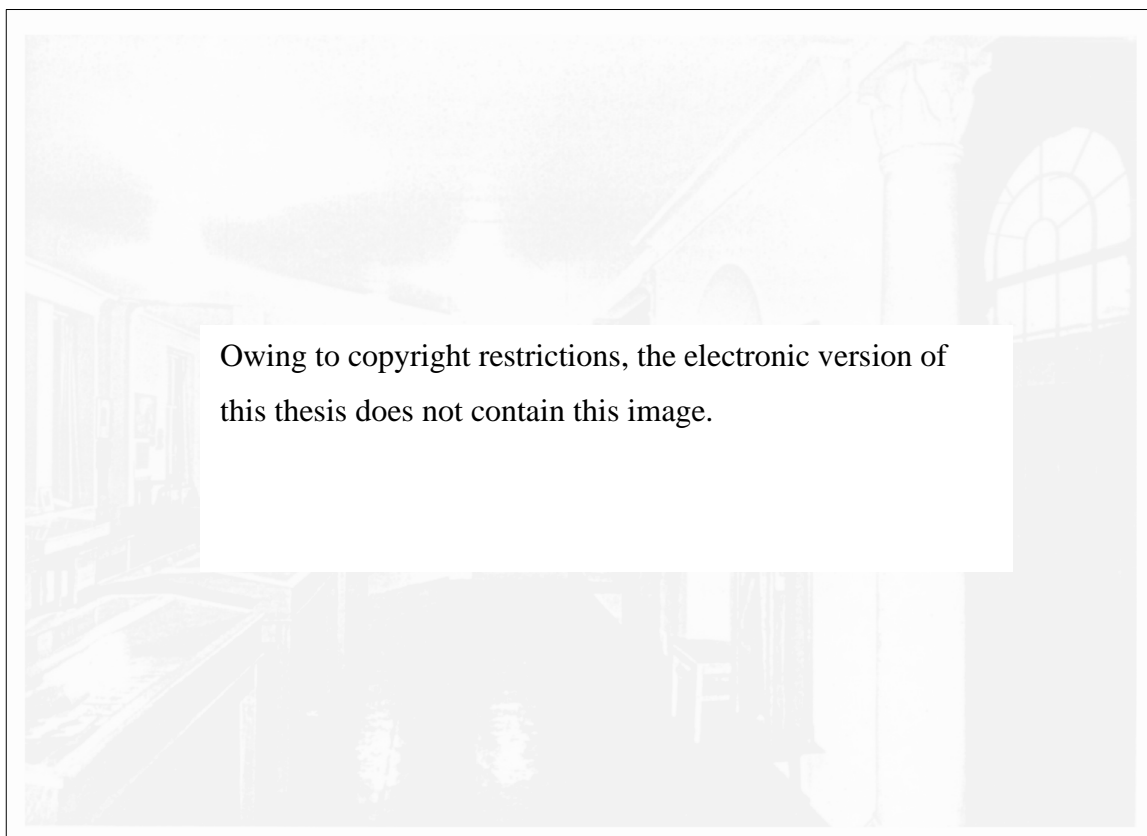
⁸⁵⁷ Correspondence (24th May 1929), Debenham to Mill, MS/100/23/8 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁵⁸ 'Annual Report of the Scott Polar Research Institute (1931)' in *Polar Record* 1(02) (1931), pp. 37-38., 37.

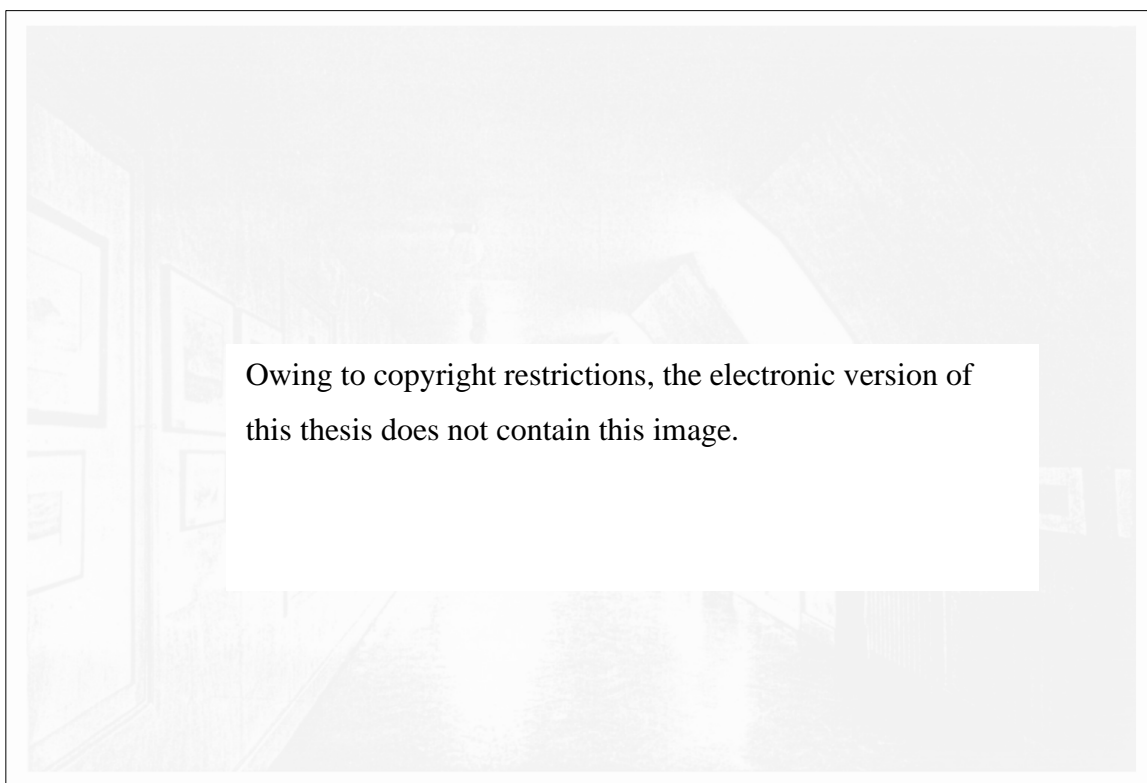
⁸⁵⁹ 'Opening Ceremony and Description' (1935), 9.

⁸⁶⁰ 'The Scott Polar Research Institute' (1931), 3.

⁸⁶¹ Correspondence (8th October 1929), Wilson to Debenham, MS/280/28/7i *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.



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Figure 33. The interior of the Scott Polar Research Institute: The Museum' (t) and 'The Wilson Picture Gallery' (b)
Frank Debenham 'Retrospect: The Scott Polar Research Institute, 1920-1945' in *Polar Record* 4(29) (1945), pp.223-235, 226, 230

permanent and temporary displays were advertised and, at least from 1939, a museum pamphlet was produced that highlighted the exhibition's star objects.⁸⁶²

Visitor numbers were not large. In 1931 it apparently attracted '25-30 people in during the week as a rule.'⁸⁶³ They included, however, what was described in the institute's annual report as 'ordinary visitors.'⁸⁶⁴ This suggests it had some appeal amongst the wider public.

Despite functioning as a museum, SPRI did not initially employ museum professionals. Most of the curatorial work seems to have been carried out by a series of female assistants.⁸⁶⁵ Debenham described how the first, Miss Drake, had 'taken over the greater part of the pack work duties in connection with the Institute such as mounting press cuttings, making catalogues, labelling specimens, writing up memoranda etc.'⁸⁶⁶ He commented that if it was not for her work 'the collections of manuscripts, photographs, drawings etc., would still be in a hopelessly uncatalogued state. As it is, a great part of the material is now sorted, labelled and accessible.'⁸⁶⁷ Despite this, Drake and those who came after her were not considered curators, as shown by the fact that in 1929, despite Drake being in post, Debenham proposed that the institute recruit a 'permanent officer, curator or secretary.'⁸⁶⁸ The Assistant to the Director, as the post was formally titled, also performed duties less integral to museum work. Drake acted as a hostess and the guide she wrote for her successors included advice on how regular visitors liked to take their tea.⁸⁶⁹

Instead of employing its own museum staff, SPRI benefited from working relationships with other museum institutions whose curators could provide professional advice. The

⁸⁶² Handbill (1930), 'An Exhibition of Dr E.S. Wilson's Antarctic pictures', MS/280/28/7 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI; Correspondence (30th May 1939), Debenham to Mill, MS/100/23/55, *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁶³ Correspondence (1st April 1931), Drake to Ponting, MS/280/28/7 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁶⁴ 'Annual Report of the Scott Polar Research Institute (1932)' (1932), 37.

⁸⁶⁵ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 232.

⁸⁶⁶ Correspondence (9th November 1927), Debenham to Mill, MS/100/23/5 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁶⁷ Correspondence (6th June 1928), Debenham to Mill, MS/100/23/7 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁶⁸ Correspondence (24th February 1929), Debenham to Mill, MS/100/23/8 *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁶⁹ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 232.

most important of these was with Gordon Malcolm, the conservator of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum. Judging by the correspondence between the institute and Malcolm he acted as an informal advisor; for example, in 1931 Drake informed him that ‘enough has happened to the new Polar institute building for it to be worth while to report to you.’⁸⁷⁰ SPRI also maintained links with curators at the Natural History Museum (NHM), who helped them source specimens for display.⁸⁷¹

SPRI, then, came to fit the definition of a polar museum. It carried out tasks associated with museum work and made an effort to attract and serve the general public. Rather than the practical museum for the use of the polar fraternity that Debenham had intended, the exhibition became outward facing, appealing to the public through its inclusion of displays of historic and human interest.

5.7 The success of SPRI versus failure of the SOL

The SOL and SPRI were born out of a similar vision. They were both intended to facilitate polar research, they both acted as centres for advice and planning and, finally, both used the exhibition medium to reach out to a wider audience.

Despite these similarities the fate of each institution was very different. The SOL was disbanded after twelve years while SPRI grew in size and influence and still exists today. This section explores the various external and internal factors that caused one institution to fail where the other succeeded.

One issue was funding. Both institutions initially suffered from a lack of funds. In its early years SPRI depended almost entirely on the help of volunteers, including the post of director’s assistant which was not salaried until 1930.⁸⁷² Ultimately, however, SPRI succeeded in attracting more financial support than the SOL. As well as an initial grant

⁸⁷⁰ Correspondence (11th August 1931), Drake to Malcolm, WA/HMM/CO/Chr/H.42, *Scott Polar Research Institute*, WA.

⁸⁷¹ Correspondence (6th September 1934), Creswick to Kinnear, DF230/121/20, *Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute 1922-1974*, NHM.

⁸⁷² Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 232.

from the Mansion House Scott memorial fund it also received funding from other bodies including the BM, the Pilgrims Trust and the government.⁸⁷³ The SOL did not receive the same assistance and was eventually forced to close.

This disparity may have been down to the relative success of Bruce and Debenham in attracting support from influential individuals and institutions. On the whole, Debenham seems to have been more skilled at cultivating helpful relationships. For example, he had secured the backing of the RGS early on when he outlined his vision for SPRI at one of their meetings.⁸⁷⁴ In contrast, Bruce had a strained relationship with the body.⁸⁷⁵

Debenham was also supported by figures such as the MP Sir Hilton Young, the second husband of Scott's widow Kathleen. In 1932 Young used his public profile to help fundraise for SPRI, writing a letter to the press appealing for funds to make up the extra £2000 needed to add an additional storey to the building.⁸⁷⁶

Bruce had some political connections. The MP Charles Price fought his case in parliament when Bruce was applying for government funding.⁸⁷⁷ Price also wrote to the press urging visitors to the 1911 Exhibition to make a donation towards publishing the results of the *Scotia* expedition (Exh.72).⁸⁷⁸ Overall, however, Bruce did not attract the same backing from establishment figures, who could find his lack of tact irritating.⁸⁷⁹ Speak describes how to some 'he was considered difficult, as prickly as the Scottish thistle itself.'⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷³ 'Opening Ceremony and Description' (1935), 3-4.

⁸⁷⁴ Debenham 'The Future of Polar Exploration' (1921).

⁸⁷⁵ Speak cites a letter from the secretary of the RGS to a council member in which he says, referring to the fact that Bruce had lobbied the RGS for the award of a medal, 'If he had been a man of more tact than he seems to possess he would have fared better... he so irritated everybody by the way he behaved with reference to a paper that he gave us that his name was withdrawn.' Speak, *William Speirs Bruce*, 127-28.

⁸⁷⁶ *The Times* (24th November 1932).

⁸⁷⁷ Keighren (2003), 'A Scot of the Antarctic', 107.

⁸⁷⁸ *The Scotsman* (22nd May 1911).

⁸⁷⁹ Bruce had a chequered relationship with the government. He campaigned unsuccessfully for years to have the members of the *Scotia* expedition awarded the Polar Medal and accused the government of prejudice when it came to awarding grants. J. R. Dudeney and J. Sheail 'William Speirs Bruce and the Polar Medal: Myth and Reality' in *The Polar Journal* 4(1) (2014), pp. 170-182., 174-78.

⁸⁸⁰ Peter Speak 'William Speirs Bruce and the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition' in *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 108(3) (1992), pp. 138-148., 140.

SPRI also benefited from its affiliation to the University of Cambridge. Though the institution was not formally incorporated into the university structure until 1957, the university lent assistance with its accommodation and management.⁸⁸¹ Debenham attributed the growing influence of the institute to the number of Arctic expeditions associated with the university during the inter-war period.⁸⁸² Its location also facilitated exchange between the polar academics that worked at Cambridge and governmental and cultural institutions in London.⁸⁸³ The SOL did not enjoy an equivalent relationship to a larger and more secure institution.

A third factor is that SPRI received more support from the wider polar community. It was specifically aimed at this demographic, acting as an informal gathering place as well as hosting more formal events such as meetings of the Arctic Club.⁸⁸⁴ On the other hand the SOL was directed towards the academic establishment.⁸⁸⁵ The difference is illustrated by who was invited to their respective opening ceremonies. That of SPRI was attended by ‘guests closely associated with polar work’, that of the SOL by representatives from universities, museums and learned societies.⁸⁸⁶

SPRI therefore appealed to the polar fraternity in a way that the SOL did not. The support of this group was crucial to the growth of the institute. As well as building up their collections via donations, it ensured other forms of assistance. For example, the 1930 Polar Exhibition, that helped raise funds for SPRI, was organised by Louis Bernacchi, a member of this wider circle of polar figures.

⁸⁸¹ Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 227-30. In 1957 it was integrated into the university structure as a sub-department of the Department of Geography. 'The New Constitution' (1957), 415.

⁸⁸² Debenham 'Retrospect' (1945), 228.

⁸⁸³ Ideas formed and developed during conversation with Brian Lintott, Exhibitions Officer at SPRI, in July 2015. For example, SPRI was able to borrow artefacts from London institutions and set up meetings with London professionals easily. Correspondence (16th September 1934), Creswick to Kinnear, DF230/121/20, *Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute 1922-1974*, NHM; Typescript, 'Very early days at the SPRI', MS 1081 *G.D. Hayes collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁸⁴ Correspondence (17th October 1932), Wordie to Mill, MS 1325/31/4 *James Mann Wordie collection*, SPRI. The Arctic Club was formed by James Wordie, who had been a geologist on various Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, in 1932. It was a members' club for those who had played a significant role in Arctic exploration to meet and dine once a year.

⁸⁸⁵ Bruce identified it as part of a network of academic institutions such as the University of Edinburgh. *The Scotsman* (17th January 1907).

⁸⁸⁶ 'Opening Ceremony and Description' (1935), 2; Programme (1907), 'Scottish Oceanographic Laboratory Inauguration', Gen.1651 101/13 *Papers of William Speirs Bruce*, EUCRC.

Besides these internal factors, wider geopolitical events also affected the development of each institution. SPRI was established at a time when Britain was concerned about asserting her territorial rights in Antarctica. As outlined by Dodds, this created a demand for ‘practical geographical information’, one of the tools needed to establish a claim.⁸⁸⁷ SPRI was in a position to provide relevant information and so it became increasingly important to the British state. Its significance grew after the war when Britain established a year-round presence in the Antarctic using bases that had been created as part of the wartime ‘Operation Tabarin.’⁸⁸⁸

Both institutions were affected by the outbreak of a major conflict during their early years. While this strengthened the Cambridge establishment, it hastened the end of that in Edinburgh. The First World War interrupted plans to expand the SOL by combining its collections with those of the *Challenger* expedition.⁸⁸⁹ The laboratory was then forced to shut for a portion of the war as Bruce took on a job as manager of a whaling station.⁸⁹⁰ When it reopened in 1916 Bruce administered it alone. In 1917 he wrote to an inquirer ‘some of my assistants are killed, the remainder are in the fighting line, and my chief work is within the Admiralty, and laboratory affairs are therefore very difficult to attend to.’⁸⁹¹ The SOL never recovered and shut down the year after the war ended.

In contrast, the role SPRI played during the Second World War helped to consolidate the institute. SPRI already had a working relationship with the War Office when war broke out in 1939. In the 1930s they had revised sections of a transport guide on the use of reindeer and dogs.⁸⁹² Later, once war looked inevitable, they had assisted the government by creating a list of possible submarine bases in the Arctic.⁸⁹³ In 1941, the Admiralty occupied SPRI and the building was subsequently used by a variety of government departments for the duration of the war.⁸⁹⁴ When the war was over SPRI

⁸⁸⁷ Dodds 'Antarctica and the Modern' (1997), 50.

⁸⁸⁸ Klaus J. Dodds 'The Great Game in Antarctica: Britain and the 1959 Antarctic Treaty' in *Contemporary British History* 22(1) (2008), pp. 43-66., 51.

⁸⁸⁹ Rudmose-Brown, *A Naturalist at the Poles*, 256.

⁸⁹⁰ Keighren (2003), 'A Scot of the Antarctic', 114-15.

⁸⁹¹ Correspondence (6th August 1917), Bruce to Mangin, MS/356/39/22 *Neal Rudmose-Brown collection*, SPRI.

⁸⁹² Typescript, 'Very early days', SPRI.

⁸⁹³ Roberts, *The European Antarctic*, 93.

⁸⁹⁴ Gordon de Quetteville Robin 'The Scott Polar Research Institute, 1920-70' in *Polar Record* 15(97) (1971), pp. 451-452., 451.

received the rent that had accumulated during this period and, in addition, the Treasury granted the institute an annual stipend.⁸⁹⁵ This put it on a more secure financial footing, allowing it to expand and employ more staff.⁸⁹⁶

Both the SOL and SPRI were shaped by the decisions and attitudes of their founding members but, more than this, they were shaped by outside events. Various factors meant that SPRI became a more successful and influential institution than the short-lived SOL.

Nevertheless, both institutions were significant in that they changed how polar exploration was exhibited. The establishment of dedicated polar museums meant that these themes were displayed on a permanent basis rather than being restricted to temporary exhibitions. It was no longer dependent on the subject being topical.

5.8 The 1930 Polar Exhibition

Permanent institutions did not entirely replace temporary exhibitions. The 1930 Polar Exhibition, held over ten days in London's Westminster Hall, comprised displays on historic and contemporary exploration, polar industries and scientific research (Exh.81). It is significant in several ways. First, more so than any of its predecessors, it utilised the expertise of the formal museum sector. Secondly, its thematic content reflected both changing practices of exploration and a shift in how the regions were perceived by the public.

Like the displays of the Heroic Age, the exhibition was initiated by individuals within the polar fraternity. It was organised by Louis Bernacchi, a physicist who had participated in the *Southern Cross* and *Discovery* expeditions.⁸⁹⁷ The primary purpose of the exhibition was to raise funds for SPRI. Less concrete aims were 'to recall those great deeds of the past, and to draw attention to the potentialities of the future.'⁸⁹⁸

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid., 451. 'The New Constitution' (1957), 413.

⁸⁹⁶ Quetteville Robin 'The Scott Polar Research Institute' (1971), 451.

⁸⁹⁷ *The Times* (10th June 1930).

⁸⁹⁸ Louis Charles Bernacchi (ed.), *The Polar Book* (London, 1930), 6.

The outcome was a mix of displays representing both historic and contemporary activities. Bernacchi had intended that the two subjects be separated; a poster for the exhibition indicated that it would be divided into sections including ‘Relics of Arctic and Antarctic Expeditions’ and ‘Modern Polar Exploration Exhibits.’⁸⁹⁹ In reality, however, there was little attempt to organise content by theme, time period, or region. As a result, the displays were rather confused. Visitors entered a vestibule area with a book stall and the crow’s nest from Nares’s *Discovery* (Fig.34). Following the order set out in the catalogue, they then walked past Shackleton’s *James Caird* into a room which contained scientific and navigational instruments, taxidermy, sledging flags, model ships, Samoyed artefacts and displays detailing the Discovery Investigations. A selection of Burn Murdoch’s watercolours hung alongside maps and prints illustrating historic Arctic exploration and whaling. The next room represented both historic exploration and the contemporary whaling, sealing and fishing industries. Journals and snowshoes were shown alongside model fishing vessels, nets, charts and fish specimens. A third ‘Precious Relics’ room contained objects relating to nineteenth-century Arctic expeditions and twentieth-century Antarctic ones. Artefacts related to the expeditions of Ross, Parry, Franklin and Nares were displayed alongside Scott’s journal and Shackleton’s furthest south flag. The final room hosted the stalls of firms who had traditionally sponsored expeditions, such as Bovril, Burberry, Cadburys and Jaeger.⁹⁰⁰ Tour guides, usually explorers themselves, helped visitors navigate the exhibition.⁹⁰¹

In some ways, the exhibition was reminiscent of its Heroic Age predecessors. Like them, it was temporary with a commercial purpose, though rather than benefiting the leader of a specific expedition it hoped to raise funds for SPRI. Its organisers similarly tried to draw a link with current affairs, insisting on the particular relevance of the exhibition in the context of ongoing exploration. Bernacchi declared that the exhibition

⁸⁹⁹ Poster (1930), ‘British Polar Exhibition’, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 LC Bernacchi, WA.

⁹⁰⁰ Exhibition catalogue, ‘British Polar Exhibition’, HBCA.

⁹⁰¹ One of the exhibition organisers apparently threatened to report one of these guides to the police when he was caught breaking pieces off the *James Caird* to give to visitors. Ernest Joyce, the accused, had been on various Heroic Age expeditions under Scott and Shackleton. Correspondence (9th July 1930), Wilson to Drake, MS/280/28/7 i. *Frank Debenham collection*, SPRI.

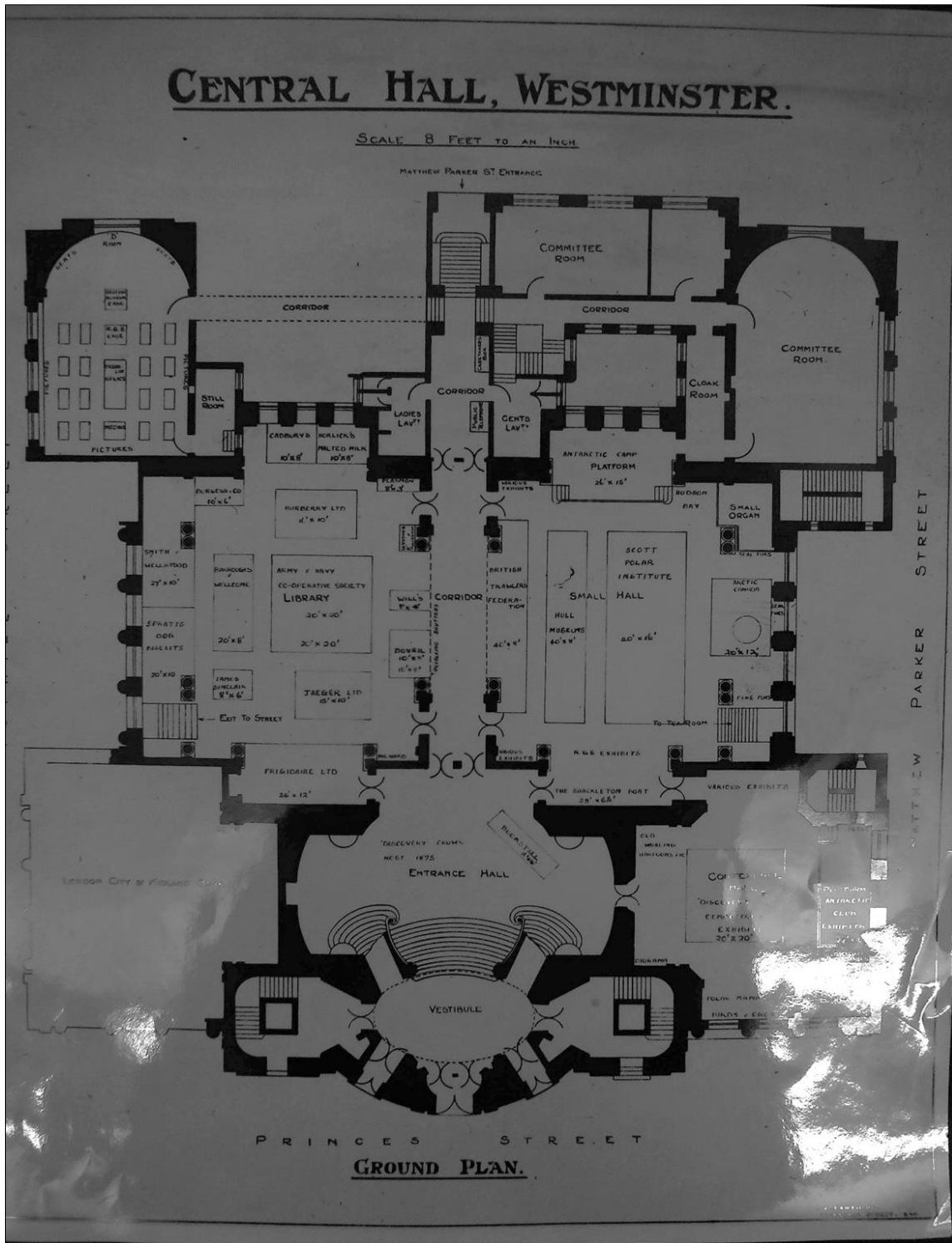


Figure 34. Floorplan of the 1930 Polar Exhibition
Floorplan (1930), WA/HMM/CO/Sub/94 Polar Exhibition 1930, WA.

was of ‘particular appropriateness in view of the great activity in Polar exploration during the present century.’⁹⁰² Two of the men on the exhibition committee likewise wrote to *The Times* to explain that ‘those who would follow Mr. Watkin’s expedition to Greenland will gain a better understanding by studying the conditions of life as shown.’⁹⁰³

Bernacchi also echoed proprietors of the past in emphasising the educational benefits of the exhibition. Schoolchildren were granted reduced entrance fees and Bernacchi hoped it would also attract naval cadets.⁹⁰⁴ He considered the publication of *The Polar Book* to have enhanced ‘the educational opportunities of the exhibition.’⁹⁰⁵ This had been compiled especially for the occasion and included chapters on history, science, industries such as fishing and whaling, and the practical considerations of exploration, such as ‘Polar Transport’ and ‘Notes on the Rationing of Sledge Parties’.⁹⁰⁶

One of the most striking differences between the 1930 exhibition and previous displays was in its formal links with the museum sector. The expedition organisers themselves had limited museum experience, as reflected in Hudson Bay Company employee George Binney’s acerbic comment that ‘from personal acquaintance with the Exhibition Committee I do not anticipate that it will be run very efficiently or that the general display will be up to exhibition standards.’⁹⁰⁷ The exhibition was organised in such a way, however, that institutions were invited to participate and curate their own stall. These included museums. Hull Corporation Museums had a display.⁹⁰⁸ So too did the Hudson Bay Company, who by that point had a public facing museum, albeit in

⁹⁰² ‘British Polar Exhibition, 1930’ in *The Geographical Journal* 75(6) (1930), pp. 539-540., 539.

⁹⁰³ *The Times* (8th July 1930). Gino Watkins was a promising young explorer who had led his first expedition to Svalbard in 1927 while still an undergraduate student. In 1930 he was in Greenland leading the British Arctic Air Route Expedition. Sadly, Watkins would die in a kayaking accident two years later while in Greenland on his fourth expedition.

⁹⁰⁴ Poster, ‘British Polar Exhibition’, WA; Correspondence (14th July 1930), Bernacchi to Wellcome, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 LC Bernacchi, WA.

⁹⁰⁵ Louis Charles Bernacchi ‘The British Polar Exhibition, July, 1930’ in *Polar Record* 1(01) (1931), pp. 30.

⁹⁰⁶ Bernacchi (ed.), *The Polar Book*, 3; Bernacchi ‘The British Polar Exhibition’ (1931).

⁹⁰⁷ Correspondence (11th June 1930), Binney to unknown, A.102/861 *Correspondence Dossiers*, HBCA.

⁹⁰⁸ Bernacchi (ed.), *The Polar Book*, 7.

Winnipeg.⁹⁰⁹ The company adopted professional practices such as producing standard labels, which they had custom-printed, and hiring suitable display cases.⁹¹⁰

In addition, professional curators were involved in planning and organising the displays. Gordon Malcolm, the Conservator at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, was on the exhibition committee.⁹¹¹ He carried out a variety of tasks including helping with advertising, organising transport for exhibits, sourcing display cases, sourcing artefacts, arranging parts of the display and advising independent exhibitors.⁹¹² This provided a degree of professionalism the exhibition may otherwise have lacked. Various other museum professionals also lent assistance. A taxidermist at the NHM cleaned some of the exhibits before display and the curator at the RGS wrote to Bernacchi to offer advice on ‘good printing, lettering and labelling.’⁹¹³

The 1930 exhibition was more allied with the displays of the museum sector than any of its predecessors. It also differed from them thematically. Themes of human experience and adventure, while still important, were solely associated with historic expeditions rather than those of the present day. The exhibition also omitted to address some themes that had been important in the past, while at the same time introducing new ones. These developments reflected wider changes in the contemporary culture of exploration. The following section will expand on these ideas.

⁹⁰⁹ ‘HBC Gallery: Discover the Legacy’, *Manitoba Museum*, <https://goo.gl/ViucQW>, Accessed 8th April 2016.

⁹¹⁰ Correspondence (26th June 1930), E.G. Berryman & Sons to Dunk, A.102/861 *Correspondence Dossiers*, HBCA; Correspondence (26th June 1930), unknown to Messrs.Penny & Company, A.102/861 *Correspondence Dossiers*, HBCA.

⁹¹¹ Exhibition proposal, ‘Polar Exhibition’, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 *Bernacchi, LC*, WA. Malcolm was a Cambridge anthropologist and scholar who had been curator of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum since 1925. Frances Larson, *An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World* (Oxford, 2009), 180-81. The pharmaceutical tycoon Henry Wellcome who employed Malcolm also helped the expedition financially, guaranteeing its expenses when the committee decided to keep it open for an extra few days. Correspondence (14th July 1930), Bernacchi to Wellcome, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 *LC Bernacchi*, WA.

⁹¹² Correspondence (29th May 1930) Bernacchi to Malcolm, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 *LC Bernacchi*, WA; Correspondence (19th May 1930), Malcolm to Filwyn-John, WA/HMM/CO/Sub/94 *Polar Exhibition 1930*, WA; Correspondence (26th June 1930), unknown to Hutton, A.102/861 *Correspondence Dossiers*, HBCA.

⁹¹³ Correspondence (25th February 1930), Hinks to Bernacchi, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 *LC Bernacchi*, WA.

One difference was that, rather than celebrating a single venture, the exhibition tried to present a comprehensive view of British polar exploration. On the surface the exhibition resembled those of the past in that many of the artefacts and images shown had already appeared in previous displays. They had rarely, however, been juxtaposed with objects from different expeditions and time periods. For example, Shackleton's furthest south flag had been shown to the public at the Nimrod exhibition in 1909 (Exh.71). But it had never before been displayed alongside Scott and Franklin artefacts. Some exhibitions in the past had similarly tried to present a more holistic view of exploration by using a range of objects. This was the case in 1891, 1895 and 1913; indeed, Bernacchi had been given a list of exhibits shown at the 1895 exhibition to help in his preparations (Exh.57, 59, 74).⁹¹⁴ These antecedents were sufficiently distant, however, for the popular press to treat the 1930 exhibition as entirely novel. In the words of one commentator 'the wonder is that no one had ever thought before of collecting the treasured pictures, records, and relics relating to all England's historic Polar expeditions.'⁹¹⁵

Some subjects that had been important in the past were not represented in the exhibition. For example, there was little consideration of Arctic peoples. The display contained few Inuit artefacts and the otherwise comprehensive *The Polar Book* did not contain a chapter on the subject.⁹¹⁶ Perhaps at a time when British Arctic expeditions tended to be small and self-supporting, there was little interest in the Inuit. As Roberts has pointed out, for contemporary explorers meeting indigenous peoples was of secondary importance to scientific research, and ethnography was not usually amongst the subjects studied.⁹¹⁷

As in the past, themes of adventure and heroism were still important. These were actively promoted by the expedition organisers and picked up on by the press. Bernacchi intended that the exhibition would recall 'the great deeds of the past.'⁹¹⁸ Ponting repeated this idea: 'the exhibits... are testimony to a glorious record of

⁹¹⁴ Correspondence (1st May 1930), Kinnear to Bernacchi, DSCF5304-5314 *Bird Section Correspondence N-S 1926-1979*, NHM.

⁹¹⁵ *The Guardian* (3rd July 1930).

⁹¹⁶ Bernacchi (ed.), *The Polar Book*, 5.

⁹¹⁷ Roberts, *The European Antarctic*, 92.

⁹¹⁸ Bernacchi 'The British Polar Exhibition' (1931), 30.

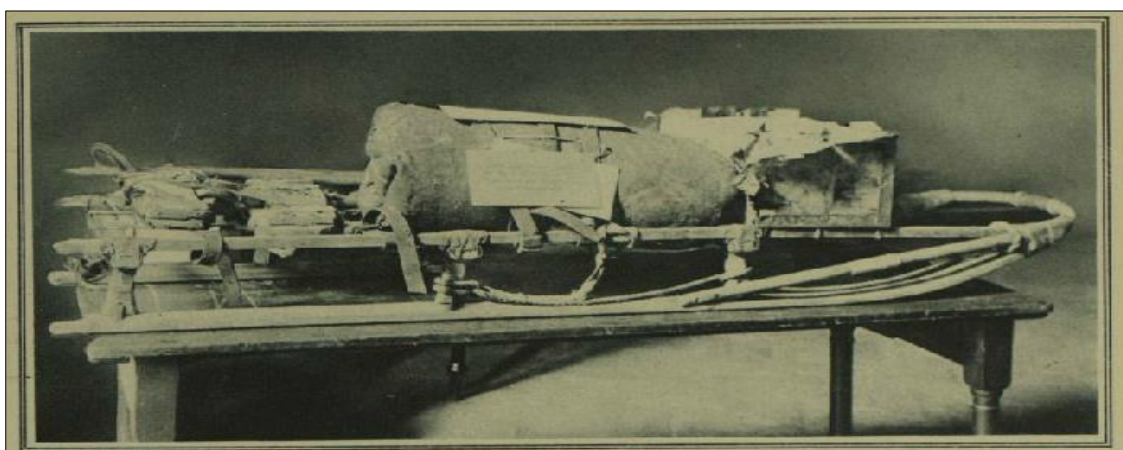
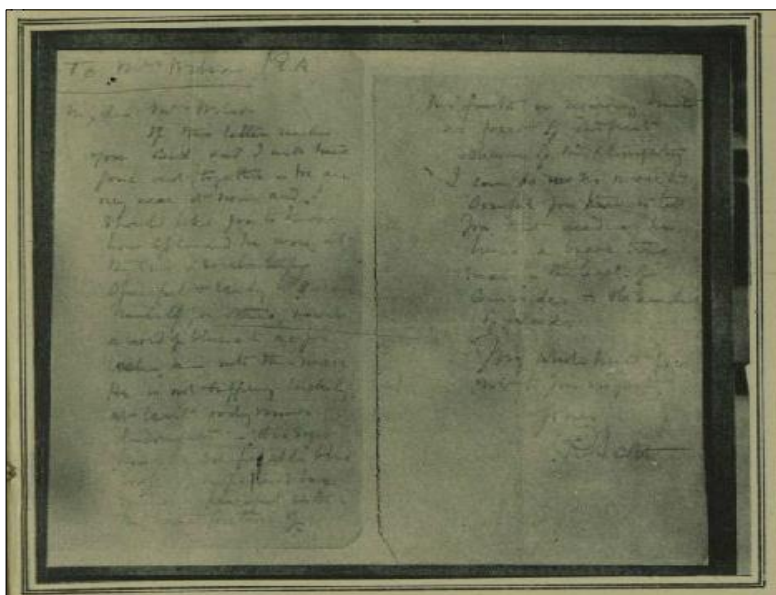


Figure 35. Photographs of Scott's last letter (t) and Mawson's half-sledge (b) at the 1930 Polar Exhibition *Illustrated London News* (12th July 1930). © Illustrated London News Ltd.

achievement' by men who 'won immortal fame in the annals of adventure.'⁹¹⁹

Similarly, in the press the exhibition was described as providing 'a picture of adventure and achievement or heroic failure in the regions of eternal ice.'⁹²⁰

These ideas, however, were almost exclusively associated with the historic displays rather than those dealing with contemporary exploration. The *Yorkshire Post* contrasted the modern 'educative side' with the historic 'romantic' side; *The Guardian* differentiated 'scientific exhibits' from 'dramatic' relics.⁹²¹ The artefacts that journalists

⁹¹⁹ *The Times* (5th July 1930).

⁹²⁰ *The Guardian* (3rd July 1930).

⁹²¹ *Yorkshire Post* (7th July 1930); *The Guardian* (2nd August 1930).

identified as evoking ideas of heroism were always those associated with historic expeditions: Scott's diary and letters, Shackleton's *James Caird*, the 'half-sledge' used by Mawson in 1913, the flag James Clark Ross carried to the Magnetic South Pole (Fig.35).⁹²² Notions of heroism were rarely applied to modern exhibits. One exception was a commentator who, writing about the contemporary fishing industry, argued that 'the rise of our fisheries in these northern waters... is one long record of enterprise and endurance on the part of our fishermen, and proves that the spirit of the explorers of old still lives and flourishes in our own days.'⁹²³

For the most part, exhibits that dealt with modern activities were treated in a different way. The displays of bodies such as the British Trawlers Association and the Hudson Bay Company highlighted the economic importance of the polar regions. Though it does not seem to have been explicitly addressed in the displays, British sovereignty was also an important theme. The exhibition was political in that it highlighted Britain's historic role in the region at a time when Britain's ownership of parts of Antarctica was seen as being under threat. Bernacchi described how the exhibition illustrated 'the achievements of British sailors and scientists who were the pioneer explorers of remote polar seas and land.'⁹²⁴ The theme was also alluded to in parts of *The Polar Book*. The chapter on exploration history described how Mawson, at that point in the midst of the BANZARE expedition, was making new discoveries on behalf of the British Empire.⁹²⁵

When they mentioned these themes, most journalists used them as a means of justifying continued exploration. For example, one of the 'possibilities of modern exploration' was the extension of the polar fisheries.⁹²⁶ Similarly, the 'political factor' meant it was crucial to have an 'accurate knowledge of the vast regions around the poles.'⁹²⁷ In this sense the modern displays gave an economic and political case for exploration; or, as one article argued, provided 'an answer to the layman's "Why?"' whenever the question

⁹²² The Australian explorer Douglas Mawson had used his half-sledge on a harrowing overland journey in Antarctica between 1912 and 1913 on which his two companions had died. Too weak to pull the full weight of the sledge himself and with dwindling supplies, he cut the sledge in two. Articles where these artefacts are singled out appear in *The Scotsman* (10th July 1930), *The Times* (3rd July 1930) and the *Hartlepool Mail* (28th June 1930).

⁹²³ *Nottingham Evening Post* (2nd July 1930).

⁹²⁴ Bernacchi (ed.), *The Polar Book*, 6.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹²⁶ *Western Morning News* (4th July 1930).

⁹²⁷ *Nature* (12th July 1930).

crops up of the utility of Polar exploration.’⁹²⁸ Rather than appealing to notions of heroism and sacrifice, the argument was made on the grounds of economic and political necessity.

This indicates that the public’s view of the polar regions had changed. Though audiences were still interested in tales of adventure, these were outdated ideas that were only applied to expeditions of the past. There had been sweeping changes since Scott had died on his way back from the South Pole less than two decades earlier, not only in the field of exploration but in wider society. Perhaps the First World War and the beginnings of the Great Depression meant that ideas about heroism popular in 1913 were considered historic and irrelevant by 1930.

One result was that the public seems to have been less engaged with the subject of exploration. Contemporary expeditions did not have the same widespread appeal as those of Shackleton or Scott earlier in the century. A few years after the exhibition Rudmose-Brown wrote an article in which he argued that polar exploration had lost its ‘popular zest’ and that the public was no longer so interested in the subject as they had been before the war. He cited the American Richard Byrd’s flight to the South Pole as an event that ‘stirred imagination comparatively little’ and commented that ‘Greenland can now be crossed without the public taking the slightest interest.’⁹²⁹ Rudmose-Brown attributed this to the use of technologies such as aeroplanes and radios which he argued reduced the romantic appeal of exploration.⁹³⁰

More evidence for public disinterest lies in the tangible results of the 1930 exhibition. It was not a success. Where the organisers had hoped for 1000 visitors a day they actually received around 250, though the total had risen to just under 6500 by the end of the exhibition’s run.⁹³¹ They made a profit of £250 rather than their projected £1500.⁹³² These disappointing results were despite attempts to attract public interest: a £275

⁹²⁸ *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (2nd July 1930).

⁹²⁹ Rudmose-Brown ‘Recent Polar Work—Some Criticisms’ (1933), 62-63.

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹³¹ Correspondence (9th July 1930), Bernacchi to Mill, MS/100/7/6 *Louis Charles Bernacchi collection*, SPRI; Report (1930), ‘Report and Statement of Accounts’, WA/HMM/CO/Sub/94 *Polar Exhibition 1930*, WA, 2.

⁹³² £200 of the takings was donated to SPRI and £50 to the RGS. Proposal (undated), ‘Polar Exhibition’, WA/HMM/CO/Alp/58 *LC Bernacchi*, WA; Report, ‘Report and Statement’, WA, 2.

advertising budget had been spent on posters, sandwich boards, placing adverts in the press and a BBC announcement.⁹³³ In addition, the much-vaunted *The Polar Book* was not as popular as expected. Of a print run of 2400 only 700 were sold.⁹³⁴

Bernacchi blamed these failures on the weather ('boiling hot- people keep out of doors as much as possible') and the fact that some newspapers, what he termed 'the yellow press', had not reported on the exhibition.⁹³⁵ Perhaps it actually reflected a lack of interest in the subject matter.

The contents of other temporary displays also suggest that historic expeditions continued to capture the imagination more effectively than modern ones. Other temporary exhibitions tended to be nostalgic. They celebrated past efforts and particularly the Scott story. In 1931 the *Daily Mail* included a Scott display as part of their Schoolboys Exhibition at Olympia (Exh.82).⁹³⁶ This was advertised using the familiar rhetoric of heroism and sacrifice. Bernacchi, who again helped organise the exhibition, said he wanted 'to make the younger generation of to-day more familiar with the details of the last tragic journey [of Scott] ... The epic story of their great fight against overwhelming odds is one of the most precious heritages of young Britain.'⁹³⁷ The display proved far more popular than that in 1930 with 70,000 people reportedly visiting the Scott section alone.⁹³⁸

Other temporary exhibitions in 1934 and 1936 also evoked the Scott story. The first was an 'Exploration' themed display hosted by the Royal Photographic Society which included a selection of Ponting's photographs (Exh.83).⁹³⁹ The second accompanied a film showing of Byrd's flight to the South Pole and comprised a display of photographs and objects including the 'actual sledge and tent which Capt. Scott used on his last

⁹³³ Report, 'Report and Statement', WA, 2.

⁹³⁴ Ibid.

⁹³⁵ Correspondence (11th August 1930), Bernacchi to Mill, MS/100/7/7 *Louis Charles Bernacchi collection*, SPRI.

⁹³⁶ Exhibition catalogue (1931), 'Daily Mail Schoolboys Exhibition', WF 061.4 *Exhibitions not SPRI*, SPRI, 53.

⁹³⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁹³⁸ 'Annual Report of the Scott Polar Research Institute (1931)' (1931), 37.

⁹³⁹ Correspondence (7th December 1834), Ponting to Hayes, MS/964/7/35 *Herbert Ponting collection*, SPRI.

expedition' (Exh.84). An advertising pamphlet declared that the exhibition would 'enable the public to form a graphic picture of the epic struggle of these pioneers.'⁹⁴⁰

None of these later exhibitions followed the example of 1930 by either trying to provide a holistic view of the polar regions or focusing on contemporary activities. Rather, they dealt with those aspects of exploration that were known to have popular appeal. The fact that exhibitions that solely focused on historical expeditions were more successful reinforces the conclusion that the public were not as invested in contemporary exploration as they had been in the past.

Unlike its predecessors, the 1930 exhibition had its roots both within the polar fraternity and the museum sector. It was the first time museum professionals had been formally involved in the curation of a temporary polar exhibition, furthering the convergence between the two arenas. It was more aligned with SPRI than the exhibitions of the Heroic Age in that it aimed to provide a comprehensive view of both current and historic exploration. Despite its relative lack of success, by juxtaposing historical displays with those depicting ongoing activities it showed how much the field of exploration had changed in the previous few decades.

5.9 Conclusion

The establishment of polar museums in the early twentieth century was the culmination of a trend that had been in evidence since the Franklin era, when polar exhibitions had begun to take on more of the characteristics of museum displays. The main impact of the creation of these museums was that themes of polar exploration started to be exhibited on a permanent basis and not just when the subject was topical.

This was particularly important in light of the changed culture of exploration. Though exploration continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the use of temporary exhibitions as fundraising tools declined as explorers no longer needed to put such effort into

⁹⁴⁰ Pamphlet (1936), 'With Byrd at the South Pole', WF 061.4 *Exhibitions not SPRI*, SPRI.

engaging the general public. Permanent institutions, and particularly SPRI, filled this gap and ensured that themes of exploration continued to be displayed.

This did not have entirely positive consequences. In theory, the creation of permanent displays allowed the public to access polar artefacts at any time. In practice it had the effect of centralising polar displays and excluding potential visitors on geographical grounds. In the past there had always been some exhibitions that toured throughout the country as, first panorama proprietors and, then, explorers tried to reach as wide an audience as possible. Now displays were entirely static, forcing visitors to travel to them. This reduced how effectively the museums were able to disseminate information. It is likely that other media that were able to reach a wider audience, such as newspaper articles and cinematography, were more successful.

Another feature of the period is that the overall themes of exhibitions changed. Most displays of the past, whether nineteenth-century panoramas or Heroic Age exhibitions, had promoted contemporary exploration. They celebrated expeditions that were either due to depart or had just returned from the field. In contrast, the displays of this period did not concentrate on current efforts. Rather, they either attempted to give a comprehensive view of British polar activity or they focused on historic ventures.

This was partly down to a changed model of exploration whereby explorers did not need to promote themselves. It may also, however, have been because audiences found contemporary exploration uninspiring. The expeditions of the inter-war period were less dramatic than those of the Heroic Age and their leaders did not share the same celebrity status of explorers like Scott or Shackleton.⁹⁴¹ At the 1930 Polar Exhibition modern activities such as fishing were represented in a subdued display of charts, practical equipment and tables of statistics. Ideas of adventure, heroism and sacrifice were associated solely with historic efforts. It is indicative of the continued interest of the public in these themes that subsequent exhibitions concentrated solely on historic exploration with no attempt to represent contemporary activities.

⁹⁴¹ The next polar figure at Madame Tussauds was Vivian Fuchs in the 1950s. Exhibition catalogue (1962), 'Madame Tussaud's Exhibition: Official guide & catalogue', uncatalogued, MT.

The most enduring legacy of this period is in the continued existence of SPRI. The institute has evolved beyond Debenham's original vision. It still facilitates research, hosting a body of staff and students researching a range of subjects pertaining to polar science and humanities. It still contains a library and archives. And it still has a museum inviting visitors to 'come and find out about exploration, science and survival at the extreme ends of the earth.'⁹⁴²

⁹⁴² 'The Polar Museum', *Scott Polar Research Institute*, <http://goo.gl/kXYGcy>, Accessed 5th April 2016.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary and conclusion

In some ways, the experience of visitors to the 1930 Polar Exhibition was similar to that of visitors to Burford's panorama in Leicester Square over a century earlier (Exh.1, 81). They would have been presented with identical images, such as mountainous landscapes, icebergs, ships beset in the ice and polar bears, and heard accounts of the efforts of their countrymen in these environments.

What had changed in the intervening period was the means used to tell these stories. Early nineteenth-century visitors learned about the Arctic through large-scale and immersive paintings of polar scenes, or through encounters with its indigenous inhabitants. On the other hand, for twentieth-century audiences the polar regions were presented through photographs and artwork, samples of equipment, scientific specimens and historical relics. These were usually arranged into neat categories and presented in the style of a museum display. The dominant themes of exhibitions had also changed. Earlier visitors might have their attention directed towards natural features and leave rhapsodising about the sublimity of the Arctic landscape. Later audiences could expect rhetoric praising the heroism and bravery of the explorers who ventured there and a selection of artefacts that emphasised the human experience. This thesis has sought to explain these changes.

The research has uncovered at least eighty exhibitions based on the subject of polar exploration shown between 1819 and 1939. These varied largely in their form and content, ranging from panoramas and human exhibits to displays of 'relics', equipment, photographs and artwork, waxworks and displays shown as part of a Great Exhibition. They also differed in size, scale and ambition. Some depicted a single polar scene; others purported to give a holistic view of the exploration of the regions. The first dedicated polar museums were also created during this period.

Though their geographical spread did not remain consistent, it has been shown that polar exhibitions were held across the country, from Exeter to Inverness. Some tours were particularly extensive and shows were held in towns and villages as well as in larger cities. These were seen by thousands of people throughout Britain. Given the availability of some reduced entry fees, it is likely that their audiences included members of the working class.

The aim of this thesis was to place these displays in their historical and museological contexts. First, it set out to determine how exhibitions interacted with the contemporary museum sector. Next, it looked at their role in disseminating ideas about polar exploration. By examining the content and themes of exhibitions, it sought to assess what images of exploration they promoted. It also aimed to consider how effective they were in shaping popular views of the subject. The thesis has shown how exhibitions evolved over the period, demonstrating that this was in response to developments both in the museum sector and in exploration culture.

In addressing these issues, this research drew on a variety of source material, including exhibition catalogues, handbills, adverts, correspondence, reports and other miscellaneous and ephemeral sources. Most of these sources are archival based and some of them are uncatalogued. It included primary documents that have not been considered in scholarship before. A range of articles published in national and local newspapers throughout Britain was also used.

One major finding is that polar exhibitions increasingly converged with museum displays. If the entertainment industry and museum sector occupied opposing ends of the same spectrum, it was a spectrum that polar exhibitions moved across over time. While early exhibitions such as panoramas shared some features with museums, notably a concern with accuracy, they were more closely allied with shows. The 1850s saw a turning point when the Franklin relics were shown in formal museum institutions, after which polar exhibitions began to more closely resemble museum displays (Exh.39, 44). As museums adopted techniques aimed at improving their educational provision, so too did many of the exhibitions held during the Heroic Age. This included methods of display and the classification of objects. The displays of this era were similar to Great

Exhibitions in that they were largely profit-making exercises that bridged the gap between museums and shows.

This trend reached its natural conclusion with the establishment of permanent institutions dedicated to the polar regions. Though the Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory and the Scott Polar Research Institute were run by explorers rather than curators, their displays resembled those of museums and they occasionally employed professional expertise (Exh.66, 80).

Later exhibitions also resembled museum displays in their use of objects. While panoramas had represented the polar world in images, following the display of the Franklin relics objects began to take centre-stage. Everyday tools and equipment evoked daily life and survival; artefacts and 'relics' were revered for their association with notable explorers.

The thesis has also shown that exhibitions were influenced by changes in the way exploration was organised and funded. This reflects the fact that, from the 1870s onwards, exhibitions were more deeply rooted within exploration culture than their early nineteenth-century predecessors. While early polar displays were largely independent of the polar establishment, organised by professional show people with no particular investment or interest in the subject, later it became more common for explorers to arrange exhibitions themselves. Consequently, exhibitions began to reflect the changing needs of the polar fraternity. This is most obvious during the Heroic Age when expedition leaders like Scott and Shackleton, dependent on public support for success, used displays as tools for publicity and fundraising. It is also evident at other times when exhibitions were used to try and sway popular opinion in favour of exploration. For example, the 1875 exhibition was intended to alleviate fears over the upcoming Nares expedition, and the purpose of the 1930 display, organised by members of the old polar guard, was to draw attention to polar activities at a time when the public were losing interest in the subject (Exh.48, 81).

Another change was in the dominant themes of exhibitions. The earliest displays focused on the polar world. They emphasised characteristics inherent to the Arctic: dramatic and sublime landscapes, indigenous peoples, native fauna.

Later on, however, the human experience of the polar regions became more significant. This change partly came about as a result of the way the Franklin relics were interpreted, which focused on the men rather than the region where they died. After the 1850s, though natural features continued to be of interest, they were relegated in favour of themes of heroism, adventure and everyday life. Heroic Age explorers promoted these ideas as they sought to raise their personal profile and attract support and funding by publicising their exploits and achievements. Even Bruce, the consummate scientist, recognised the need to include objects of human interest in his displays (Exh.62, 66, 68, 69, 72, 74).

These findings reinforce the conclusions reached by various scholars about the ideas through which the British public came to understand and engage with the polar regions. As described in the literature review, Loomis, Riffenburgh and others have shown that notions of the sublime, which had informed how the polar regions were understood in the first half of the nineteenth century, became secondary to the human side of exploration. This had an almost universal impact on how the subject was represented across different media. Riffenburgh, Stone and Cavell have shown how themes of heroism and the human experience were emphasised in the press; McLaren, Keighren, Withers and Bell in voyage accounts; David in lectures; and Carpenter in film. This thesis demonstrates that the same applied to exhibitions. Ideas about 'heroization' discussed by Maddison, Jones and Barczewski are also relevant. The thesis shows that later exhibitions, in emphasising the character traits of individuals, both reacted and contributed to the heroization of polar figures.

A final aim of the thesis was to examine the impact of exhibitions. As there is a lack of reliable source material regarding visitor numbers, assessing their influence has largely depended on considering how accessible exhibitions were to the general public. It has been shown that while economic barriers decreased over time, this coincided with a reduction in the number of touring exhibitions, which excluded potential audiences on geographical grounds. This limited the impact of displays, and it is likely that other media, such as press reports and voyage accounts, were more successful in disseminating ideas about the polar regions. It may be artificial, however, to differentiate too strictly between different types of media. They were all part of an intertwined and self-reinforcing network of material. Exhibition reviews appeared in the

press, occasionally accompanied by illustrations or photographs. Lectures were held in association with displays. Literature such as handbills and catalogues could still be read by those who could not actually visit. Exhibitions could thus reach beyond their immediate audience, making it difficult to evaluate their true influence.

The thesis contributes to a growing body of literature on the public reception of polar exploration and the media that facilitated this. As the first work to focus exclusively on the role of exhibitions, it makes an original contribution to this field of scholarship. It has shown that along with the popular press, voyage accounts, literature, photography and cinematography, exhibitions helped to embed images of exploration in the public consciousness. They aided audiences in imagining polar landscapes and the men who voyaged there and thus shaped how the polar regions were perceived in the popular imagination.

This study also builds on a small number of existing works about polar exhibitions. It extends the work of David and Potter on nineteenth-century Arctic exhibitions, taking a more comprehensive view and considering a larger number of displays than either scholar. It also expands Craciun's analysis of the reception of the Franklin relics by looking in detail at how they were displayed. In addition, the thesis juxtaposes and engages with other works that deal with a single exhibition or time period, most notably studies by Jones, Jones and Barczewski.

The thesis does more than build on previous scholarship, however. This research has identified and filled several gaps in knowledge. It has uncovered a number of displays that have not been considered in either popular or scholarly literature before. It has engaged with a wider range of displays than any previous study and has begun to address the scarcity of research on Heroic Age Antarctic exhibitions. It is the first to survey polar exhibitions held over such a long period of time. By considering these as a collective body it has been possible to study how polar exhibitions evolved over time and in response to changing circumstances in the museum sector and in exploration culture.

One unique contribution of this study has been its consideration of both nineteenth-century Arctic and twentieth-century Antarctic exhibitions. This has highlighted similarities in the ways the two polar regions were portrayed. The voyages of Ross,

Parry, Franklin and the Franklin searches took place under different domestic and geopolitical circumstances to those of Bruce, Scott and Shackleton in the following century. The regions they explored were also different, both ecologically and in terms of their human history; British men in the Arctic encountered an indigenous people, unlike those who travelled to the uninhabited Antarctic. Despite this, the way the Antarctic was interpreted in exhibitions echoes the way that the Arctic had been represented in the previous century. Similar images were used to denote each place. Pictures of icebergs and ships beset in the sea ice were crucial to how Antarctica as well as the Arctic was portrayed. So too were images of British men struggling to master an inhospitable landscape, albeit having adopted some Inuit technologies such as wearing furs and the use of dogs to pull sledges. Similar language was also used; this thesis has explored the re-adoption of the language of the sublime to describe natural features in the Antarctic and parallels in the way the Franklin and Scott relics were treated. This suggests that the way the Antarctic was presented from the late nineteenth-century onwards may have been informed by previous portrayals of the Arctic. It could be that images seen as generically 'polar', with which the public were already familiar, were transferred to the new region.

The nature of the source material places some restrictions on what can be deduced from the body of evidence, particularly with regards to the visitor experience. While the study has largely relied on newspaper reviews for first-hand impressions of displays, these are limited in that they only express the opinion of one individual. It is likely that there were a range of alternative points of view that were not recorded. As Hudson points out, most visitors 'have been interested or bored, stupefied or invigorated, without anybody but themselves or their friends knowing about it.'⁹⁴³ Barring the improbable discovery of new ephemeral sources, this problem is unlikely to be overcome.

Nevertheless, the thesis has shed light on a previously unexplored field and highlighted several strands of research that would complement and extend this work. As the research focuses exclusively on British explorers, another natural progression would be to investigate how foreign explorers were represented. Madame Tussauds hosted a waxwork of Nansen, a tableau depicting the Swedish Solomon Andrée and his

⁹⁴³ Hudson, *A social history of museums*, 6-7.

companions' attempt to reach the North Pole by hot air balloon, and models of the American explorers Robert Peary and Frederick Cook.⁹⁴⁴ In 1871, the American explorer and artist William Bradford held a popular display of Arctic paintings and photographs in a London hotel.⁹⁴⁵ It would be interesting to examine the response to these displays to determine whether they were treated in the same way as British explorers. A corresponding line of research could look at polar exhibitions hosted in other countries with a comparable history of exploration. Potter has shown that Arctic panoramas were popular in the United States, and other scholars have demonstrated that displays of Inuit were not unique to Britain.⁹⁴⁶ Similar work could investigate the role of exhibitions during different time periods and in other countries, such as Heroic Age Norway.

Future research could also compare polar exhibitions with those dealing with other types of exploration. In the nineteenth century, at the same time as Arctic explorers were searching for the Northwest Passage, other British expeditions in Africa were looking for the source of the Niger river.⁹⁴⁷ Similarly, the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration was followed by a concerted effort by British mountaineers to climb Mount Everest, sometimes referred to as the 'Third Pole.'⁹⁴⁸ The conclusions offered in this thesis could provide a starting point for an investigation into whether these ventures were presented in a similar way to polar exploration.

Perhaps the most worthwhile comparison would be between representations of polar exploration and space exploration. Parallels are consistently drawn between the two. A historical example of this occurred as early as 1860 at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), when it was declared that inland Antarctica was 'as little known as the interior of the moon.'⁹⁴⁹ Wally Herbert, the first man to cross the Arctic

⁹⁴⁴ Photograph (undated), Neg BBC.HDC/H8558, MT; Photograph (undated), Ng.BBC.Heb/H122438, MT; *Punch* (29th September 1909).

⁹⁴⁵ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 197-98.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Accounts of Inuit being displayed elsewhere are provided in Rivet, *In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab* and Harper, *Give me my father's body*.

⁹⁴⁷ An account of both Arctic and African nineteenth-century exploration is provided in Fleming, *Barrow's Boys*.

⁹⁴⁸ Fergus Fleming, *Off the Map: Tales of Endurance and Exploration* (New York, 2004), 295.

⁹⁴⁹ M. F. Maury 'On the Physical Geography of the Sea, in Connection with the Antarctic Regions' in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 5(1) (1860), pp. 22-26., 24.

Ocean on foot, attached importance to the fact that the completion of his journey in 1969 coincided with the moon landing, and James Lovell, the commander of Apollo 13, believes that his experience in space was similar to that of Shackleton's men on the *Endurance* expedition.⁹⁵⁰ Similar comparisons have been drawn by scholars. For example, Potter equates the 1820s search for the Northwest Passage with the 1960s Space Race.⁹⁵¹

Like polar exploration, space exploration has popular appeal. The writing of this thesis coincided with the British astronaut Tim Peake's mission at the International Space Station. During his six-month stay, the public was able to follow his exploits on social media. Alongside photographs of the earth from space and information about the scientific experiments he was participating in, Peake posted photographs and videos showing how he carried out everyday tasks in a zero-gravity environment, such as doing chores, washing, and cooking.⁹⁵² This mirrors earlier audiences' fascination with what daily life on a polar expedition was like.

Taking this into consideration, there may be similarities between the way polar exploration and space exploration have been represented. The approach and methods employed here could be used to determine whether astronauts are presented in the same heroic vein as polar explorers were, and whether there is more focus on the world of space or on the men who travel there.

Finally, while this thesis has considered exhibitions in Britain about the polar regions, another valuable line of research would be to look at displays held in the regions themselves. There are a number of museums in both the Arctic and Antarctic. While those in the Arctic serve both local communities and visitors, in the unpeopled Antarctic their purpose is harder to ascertain. Permanent exhibitions in the Antarctic include a display of 'associated artefacts from the early Bulgarian science and logistic operations in Antarctica', produced by the National Museum of History in Sofia and housed in a

⁹⁵⁰ Wally Herbert, *The Noose of Laurels* (London, 1991), 14; Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell, *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer* (2011), Kindle edition, <https://goo.gl/ZPCr75>, 62%.

⁹⁵¹ Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 38.

⁹⁵² 'Tim Peake @astrotimpeake', *Twitter*, <https://goo.gl/sMT4Y4>, Accessed 29th June 2016.

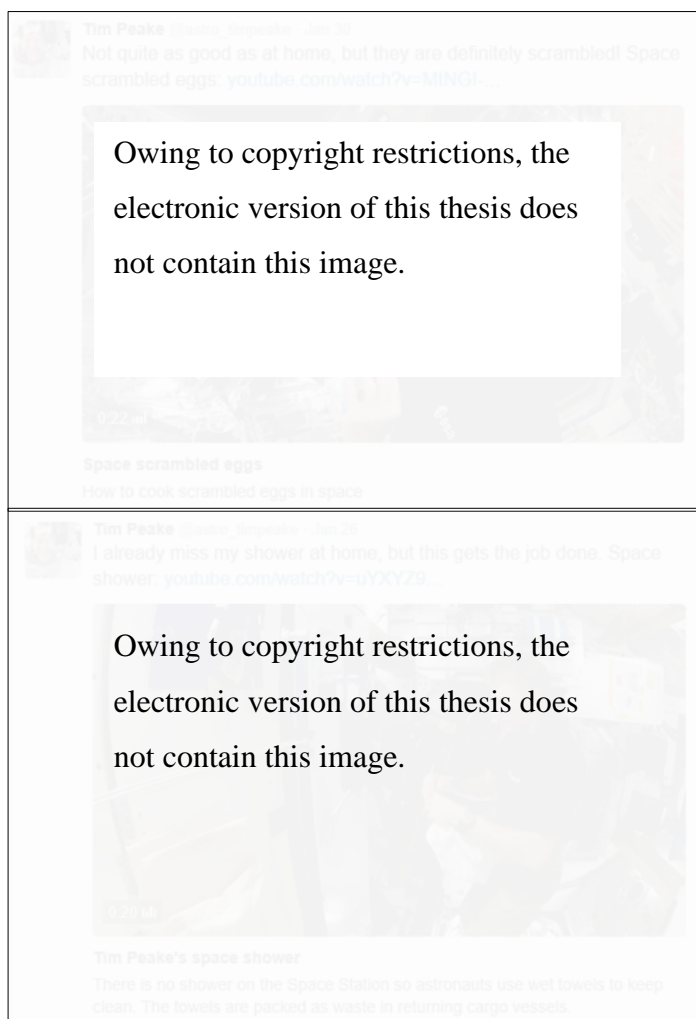


Figure 36. Screenshots from Tim Peake's Twitter page 'Tim Peake @astro_timpeake', *Twitter*, <https://goo.gl/zDYPTc>, Accessed 29th June 2016

historic hut on the South Shetland Islands.⁹⁵³ The Museo Antartico Esperanza, part of an Argentinian scientific station on the Antarctic Peninsula, displays taxidermy animals, a sledge, scientific equipment, modern clothing and photographs of the base and its surroundings.⁹⁵⁴ Britain is represented by seasonal museums both on the Antarctic Peninsula and on South Georgia: the first housed in a historic scientific base, the second in one of the buildings of a disused whaling station.⁹⁵⁵ Obviously, these displays have

⁹⁵³ Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty 'Measure 19 (2015) Annex: Revised List of Historic Sites and Monuments' in *Final Report of the Thirty-eighth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting* (2015), 22.

⁹⁵⁴ These observations are based on my own visit there in January 2015.

⁹⁵⁵ South Georgia is in the Subantarctic rather than the Antarctic; however, most visitors combine a visit there with one to the Antarctic Peninsula. I was the curator of the South Georgia Museum between 2012 and 2013.



Figure 37. Displays in the Museo Antartico Esperanza (t) and the South Georgia Museum (b)
 (t) Authors own; (b) Courtesy of Jamie Grant, photographer of the South Georgia Museum

limited audiences. During the 2015 to 2016 tourist season there were fewer than 40,000 visitors to Antarctica, only a fraction of whom would have visited museum sites.⁹⁵⁶

It would be worthwhile considering whether being located in the Antarctic itself affects how they present the region, and how this may differ from museums elsewhere. It could also be investigated to what extent these ventures are a ‘soft’ means of asserting sovereignty in the region. Dag Avango, using the museum on South Georgia as a case study, has concluded that ‘heritage sites in the polar regions can play a significant role in the competition for political influence and resources there.’⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵⁶ ‘Antarctic Tourism Figures Released as IAATO's 25th Anniversary Meeting Opens - 3 May 2016’, *International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators*, <http://goo.gl/9NDdDg>, Accessed 14th May 2016.

⁹⁵⁷ Dag Avango 'Heritage in Action: Historical Remains in Polar Conflicts' in Sverker Sörlin, *Science, Geopolitics and Culture in the Polar Region: Norden Beyond Borders* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 329-356., 353.

6.2 Concluding thoughts: the contemporary context

The following and final section briefly considers how polar exploration is represented today. It also discusses the contemporary relevance of some of the conclusions drawn in this thesis.

Like audiences a century ago, the British public continues to be intrigued by the polar regions. There are various parallels between the way we engage with the subject today and how we have done so in the past.

In some ways, our conceptions of the Arctic and Antarctic have little changed, and the draw of the regions can still be found in both their natural features and human history. A number of natural history documentaries focusing on wildlife and landscape have mainstream appeal; for many in Britain, their images of the Arctic and Antarctic will be indelibly associated with the tones of David Attenborough narrating a documentary such as *Life in the Freezer* or *Frozen Planet*.⁹⁵⁸ The stories of Scott's and Shackleton's expeditions remain popular, buoyed by their recent centenaries.⁹⁵⁹ That of Franklin has been given fresh attention due to the recent discovery of the wrecks of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.⁹⁶⁰ Contemporary human stories are also important. The polar regions are still a source of heroes, viewed as places where human endurance is tested and challenged. Contemporary expeditions often gain large public followings by combining the idea of adventure with scientific endeavour or popular education. Examples include Ranulph Fiennes's aborted effort to travel across the entire Antarctic continent in the

⁹⁵⁸ 'Life in the Freezer', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, <https://goo.gl/ZID7ns>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'Frozen Planet', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, <https://goo.gl/RwhB8>, Accessed 24th September 2016. The role of Attenborough in engaging the public with the natural world, including the polar regions, was acknowledged when a British Antarctic Survey ship, to be launched in 2019, was named the *RRS Sir David Attenborough*. This followed an incident where the name that won the public vote was the 'RRS Boaty McBoatface.' 'Boaty McBoatface' polar ship named after Attenborough', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, <https://goo.gl/OneMBI>, Accessed 24th September 2016.

⁹⁵⁹ A number of events, including exhibitions, talk and performances were held to mark the centenaries of Scott's *Terra Nova* and Shackleton's *Endurance* expeditions. 'Scott 100 Events: Terra Nova Expedition Centenary', *Antarctica 100 Group*, <https://goo.gl/siFe5v>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'Shackleton 100 Events: Endurance Expedition Centenary', *Antarctica 100 Group*, <https://goo.gl/zmEx3u>, Accessed 24th September 2016.

⁹⁶⁰ 'The Franklin Expedition', *Parks Canada*, <http://goo.gl/SQGFFV>; 'Last piece of the Franklin Expedition potentially discovered in the Canadian Arctic', *Parks Canada*, <https://goo.gl/PCPTct>, Accessed 18th September 2016.

wintertime, Henry Worsley's attempt to complete the first unsupported crossing, which tragically ended in his death, Prince Harry skiing to the South Pole with a group of military veterans, and the upcoming bid by an all-female team to snorkel the Northwest Passage.⁹⁶¹

If ideas of adventure and heroism have been exploited by modern day adventurers, this reflects the fact that they face the same problem as their predecessors: raising funds. Like before, this requires that they promote themselves and their exploits in a way that will attract public attention. Where Scott and Shackleton gave lectures and published books and articles, contemporary explorers have an additional tool: the internet. Most expeditions have a website and accounts on social media.⁹⁶²

The polar regions, however, are no longer only seen as a place that a select few visit to test themselves. One subject that concerns a large sector of the public involves a more negative manifestation of the relationship between humans and the polar world: the effects of climate change. In recent years the impact of global warming on the Arctic and Antarctic has grabbed headlines and become a mainstream topic of conversation. For some their dominant images of the polar regions will be rapidly receding glaciers, melting ice shelves and the iconic polar bear on an ice floe drifting in open sea.⁹⁶³

As in the past, the public engages with these ideas using multiple media. Film, utilised in its early stages by Scott and Shackleton, is probably the most important. Many people's images of the polar regions will be informed by offerings such as *Frozen Planet*, *March of the Penguins*, which followed the yearly cycle of an Emperor penguin,

⁹⁶¹ 'The Expedition', *The Coldest Journey*, <https://goo.gl/v2v8cp>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'Henry Worsley', *Shackleton Solo*, <https://goo.gl/6CDMsy>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'Prince Harry and team arrive at South Pole', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, <https://goo.gl/veqcM3>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'Northwest Passage Snorkel Relay', *Sedna Epic*, <https://goo.gl/s8ZsB8>, Accessed 24th September 2016.

⁹⁶² For example, the 'From Fire to Ice' expedition, involving a burns survivor who plans to ski the last 112 miles to the South Pole, has a website, a Facebook page and a Twitter account. 'About the Expedition', *From Fire to Ice*, <https://goo.gl/0Z59pR>, Accessed 24th September 2016; 'From Fire to Ice @fromfiretoice', *Twitter*, <https://goo.gl/bLS5Vr>, Accessed 26th September 2016; 'From Fire to Ice', *Facebook*, <https://goo.gl/Vq9jni>, Accessed 26th September 2016.

⁹⁶³ Robert Cox and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*, Sage Publications, 2016, <https://goo.gl/4nVAFG>, Accessed 25th September 2016.

or even animated films such as *Happy Feet* or *Frozen*, the setting for which was inspired by Arctic Norway.⁹⁶⁴

The subject continues to be portrayed in exhibitions, though there have been further developments in the relationship between polar displays and museum culture. Today, polar exhibitions are largely under the purview of the museum sector. With the establishment of Discovery Point in Dundee in 1993, there is now a second institution, along with SPRI, wholly dedicated to the subject of polar exploration. Other museums have permanent polar displays. This includes the National Maritime Museum, as well as local museums in Stromness, Cheltenham and Plymouth.⁹⁶⁵ In addition, several museums have held temporary exhibitions telling stories of exploration. In the last couple of decades, the centenaries of various Heroic Age expeditions have been commemorated in National Museums Scotland, the Natural History Museum (NHM), SPRI and the RGS (Fig.38).⁹⁶⁶ The NHM also developed the recent *Ice Station Antarctica*, an interactive display that explores living and working at a scientific base on the continent today.⁹⁶⁷ *Ice Station Antarctica* toured to museums and science centres in the UK and beyond.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁴ ‘Frozen Planet’, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, <https://goo.gl/RwhB8>; ‘March of the Penguins’, *National Geographic*, <https://goo.gl/asELW9>, Accessed 24th September 2016; ‘Happy Feet’, *Warner Bros.*, <https://goo.gl/c7nDb7>, Accessed 24th September 2016; ‘Frozen’, *Disney*, <https://goo.gl/WqJeMJ>, Accessed 24th September 2016; *The Guardian* (6th June 2014).

⁹⁶⁵ Usually when local museums have extended polar displays it is because they have a link with a notable explorer. The Stromness Museum on Orkney hosts displays related to John Rae. He grew up near the town and was instrumental in establishing the Orkney Philosophical Society, out of which the museum was created, and he donated objects to the museum, including Franklin relics. The museum also displays artefacts related to Arctic whaling and the Hudson Bay Company. Edward Wilson was from Cheltenham and the local museum holds a large collection of his artwork. In 2013 it was renamed ‘The Wilson.’ Robert Falcon Scott was born and spent the early years of his childhood at Devonport, near Plymouth. Plymouth also has links with other individuals who served under Scott and Shackleton. These links are commemorated in the permanent displays of Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery.

⁹⁶⁶ *The Scotsman* (24th September 2003); ‘Scott’s Last Expedition opens’, *Natural History Museum*, <http://goo.gl/b5vPHF>, Accessed 25th July 2016; ‘Enduring Eye: The Antarctic Legacy of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Frank Hurley’, *Royal Geographical Society*, <http://goo.gl/ow7CqN>, Accessed 12th April 2016.

⁹⁶⁷ ‘Ice Station Antarctica opens at Natural History Museum’, *British Antarctic Survey*, <https://goo.gl/AGI5my>, Accessed 25th July 2016.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Owing to copyright restrictions, the electronic version of this thesis does not contain this image.

Owing to copyright restrictions, the electronic version of this thesis does not contain this image.

Figure 38. Advertisements for the 2015-16 'Enduring Eye' (t) and the 2008-08 'Nimrod' exhibitions (b)
'Enduring Eye: The Antarctic Legacy of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Frank Hurley', *Royal Geographical Society*, <http://goo.gl/ow7CqN>, Accessed 12th April 2016, 'Nimrod: The British Antarctic Expedition, 1907-1909', *Scott Polar Research Institute*, <http://goo.gl/tSJrbA>, Accessed 12th April 2016.

The dominance of the museum sector is in contrast to most of the period studied in the thesis, when themes of exploration were predominantly exhibited in temporary shows rather than museums. It may be that part of the reason this change has been made possible is due to shifting attitudes in the museum sector as to the purpose of museums. It is now thought that museums should be both educational and entertaining; the Museums Association states that they should provide ‘inspiration, learning and enjoyment.’⁹⁶⁹ This may mean there is a greater willingness to embrace both popular subjects and alternative styles of presentation and display. Garwood argues that there has been a ‘blurring of boundaries’ between museums and other forms of exhibition that prioritise ‘entertainment and spectacle.’⁹⁷⁰ This is exemplified in heritage attractions, such as Jorvik Viking Centre in York, which aims to provide a multisensory experience using animation and special effects.⁹⁷¹ Goodman similarly contends that ‘today’s experimental museum embraces the theatre its nineteenth-century predecessor felt obliged to renounce.’⁹⁷² Consequently, the methods employed by the entertainment sector and museum sector are closer than in the past. If polar exhibitions had previously occupied a middle ground between museums and shows, it may be that this is no longer necessary as the attitudes that had prevented museums from tackling the human stories of exploration have changed.

As in the past, modern polar exhibitions are usually held at times when the subject is topical. In September of 2014, polar exploration was again in the news when Parks Canada, the Canadian government’s heritage agency, located the wreck of Franklin’s *Erebus* on the Arctic sea floor. The discovery, made 169 years after the expedition’s departure from Britain, was the subject of widespread media attention, spawning numerous newspaper articles, a television documentary, the re-release of books about the expedition, and, of course, exhibitions. By December a replica of the ship’s bell, one of the first artefacts to be recovered, was on display at the Royal Ontario Museum.⁹⁷³ The following May actual objects from the wreck were displayed, still submerged in

⁹⁶⁹ ‘FAQs: What is a museum?’, *Museums Association*, <http://goo.gl/n3hUsR>, Accessed 29th June 2016.

⁹⁷⁰ Garwood, *Museums in Britain*, 68%.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷² Goodman ‘Fear of Circuses’, 270.

⁹⁷³ *The Globe and Mail* (18th December 2014).

water, at the Canadian Museum of History.⁹⁷⁴ More recently the Franklin Museum Network have launched a pop-up exhibition detailing the history of the expedition and modern efforts in locating the wreck, to be toured to museums throughout Canada.⁹⁷⁵

In Britain, the British Library hosted 'Lines in the Ice', an exhibition that showed a selection of their Arctic material. Advertising for the exhibition drew explicit links with the discovery of the *Erebus* and was sponsored by One Ocean Expeditions, a travel company who had been involved in the search.⁹⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the National Maritime Museum, custodian of some of the original Franklin relics, has announced plans to redisplay its Arctic collections in the new permanent gallery 'Polar Worlds.'⁹⁷⁷

The Canadian government have also announced the allocation of funding to create a custom-built 'Franklin Centre' in Gjoa Haven, an Inuit community located near the site where the ship was found.⁹⁷⁸ This is to the surprise and consternation of local heritage professionals who were not consulted about the plans.⁹⁷⁹ They point out that the town's existing Nattilik Heritage Centre, which contains displays on traditional Inuit life, could have been used or expanded.⁹⁸⁰ Perhaps there is a fear that, in separating the two narratives, the Franklin story will come to overshadow that of the indigenous people. In September of 2016 a second wreck, since proven to be Franklin's other ship *Terror*, was also discovered.⁹⁸¹ This may provoke a similar reaction and exacerbate these concerns.

These projects provide interesting opportunities to reflect on how British polar exploration is treated now as compared to in the past. In the 1850s and 1860s the Franklin episode was portrayed uncritically as a story of heroism and tragic sacrifice. Some recent Arctic literature, however, has condemned the organisation and conduct of

⁹⁷⁴ 'Franklin expedition's HMS Erebus artifacts go on display in Gatineau', *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, <http://goo.gl/y3nSx8>, Accessed 9th May 2016.

⁹⁷⁵ 'The Franklin Expedition: The Franklin Museum Network', *Parks Canada*, <http://goo.gl/27DVkX>, Accessed 9th May 2016.

⁹⁷⁶ 'The British Library explores the Northwest Passage', *British Library*, <http://goo.gl/JeaOZV>, Accessed 9th May 2016.

⁹⁷⁷ 'Stimulating Curiosity: Corporate Plan 2014-2018', *Royal Museums Greenwich*, <http://goo.gl/yQ6X8o>, Accessed 20th June 2016.

⁹⁷⁸ *Nunatsiaq News* (18th March 2016).

⁹⁷⁹ 'Franklin centre announcement catches Inuit Heritage Trust off guard', *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, <http://goo.gl/jXtikg>, Accessed 19th March 2016.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; 'Norway returns Inuit artifacts to Gjoa Haven', *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, <http://goo.gl/1M12I5>, Accessed 9th May 2015.

⁹⁸¹ 'Last piece', *Parks Canada*, <https://goo.gl/PCPTct>.

the expedition.⁹⁸² Modern interpretations should take account of these assessments and not simply reiterate those ideas broadcast at the time. In addition, the experience of British explorers has tended to take precedence over that of the Arctic's indigenous people. In any modern exhibition the role of the Inuit should be fully acknowledged.

Exhibitions may not, however, be the best format through which to offer a more critical account of exploration. They may not be equipped to deal with historical complexities or ambiguities. In 2012 the *Museums Journal* published a review of various exhibitions held to mark the centenary of the *Terra Nova* expedition. The writer, Oliver Green, noted that the displays did not address complex historiographical issues such as the quality of Scott's leadership or the links between exploration and science. He concluded, however, that such subjects are 'best considered in books... Museum displays and exhibitions can only be a taster.'⁹⁸³

Green also points to what exhibitions can offer above all other forms of representation. One of their strengths is in giving visitors access to original objects. Seeing things that had been used by Scott's party was, in Green's words, 'magical.' Similarly, visiting SPRI: 'I defy anyone not to be moved by the sight of Captain Oates' sealskin sleeping bag, from which he struggled out to his tragic but futile self-sacrifice in the blizzard.'⁹⁸⁴

Green's response echoes those of other commentators over the centuries, from the proprietors of the 1834 display at Vauxhall Gardens, who promised that the show would make a 'lasting impression... while abstruse geographical descriptions would be understood with much difficulty' to the schoolboy a century later who, on seeing the Scott relics, expressed his excitement at being able to 'touch the very sledges used in that heroic effort.'⁹⁸⁵ The sentiment was repeated by both journalists and museum professionals, such as the 1905 editor of the *Museums Journal* who wrote that 'an inspection of the [Discovery] exhibition gives a more vivid idea of the daily life of the

⁹⁸² For examples see McGoogan, *Fatal Passage*; Fleming, *Barrow's Boys*.

⁹⁸³ Oliver Green 'Scott's Last Expedition, NHM; The Heart of the Great Alone, The Queen's Gallery, The Polar Museum, Cambridge' in *Museums Journal* 112(04) (2012).

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* There is a big slit cut into the side of the sleeping bag. The label explains that this is because Oates was so frostbitten it was the only way he could get in and out.

⁹⁸⁵ Playbill, 'The Grand Juvenile Fete', Bodleian; E. R. S. Winter and G. Bailey 'A Visit to the Schoolboys' Exhibition' in *The Pharos: The Magazine of the Dover County School for Boys* XXI(66) (1931). <http://goo.gl/6peOQc>, Accessed 27th June 2014.

officers and crew, and of the icebound land in which they passed two long winters than can be gathered from any written record.'⁹⁸⁶

For a sector of the British public in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then, polar exploration was an enthralling subject. It appealed to audiences' sense of wonder and notions of the sublime. It provided the public with heroes and captivating stories of endurance and adventure. Exhibitions could offer a unique gateway into this polar world, serving 'to stir the imagination of home-keeping citizens and set it too travelling across wonderful seas and lands of snow.'⁹⁸⁷ They may not have been as widely influential as other types of media. However, because they offered visitors the chance to contemplate tangible objects, or 'real things', they could be more compelling. This was the distinct role exhibitions played in interpreting the polar regions. As one commentator in 1909 remarked, it was 'amid stuffed penguins, geological specimens, and model explorers on ski' that the British public could 'really touch the romance of Antarctic penetration.'⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁶ 'Antarctic Exhibition in Liverpool' (1904-05).

⁹⁸⁷ *The Guardian* (4th February 1905).

⁹⁸⁸ *The Guardian* (2nd October 1909).

Appendix 1: Chronology of British polar exploration

This appendix does not claim to be comprehensive. It only lists those expeditions most relevant to the analysis given in the text.

DATE	POLAR REGION	COMMANDERS, ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS (WHEN RELEVANT)	SHIPS OR OVERLAND
1818	Arctic	John Ross, William Parry, John Saccheuse	<i>Isabella, Alexander</i>
1818	Arctic	David Buchan, John Franklin, Frederick William Beechey	<i>Dorothea, Trent</i>
1819-20	Arctic	William Parry, Frederick William Beechey	<i>Hecla, Griper</i>
1819-22	Arctic	John Franklin, Robert Hood, George Back	Overland
1821-23	Arctic	William Parry	<i>Hecla, Fury</i>
1824-25	Arctic	William Parry, Frederick William Beechey	<i>Hecla, Fury</i>
1825-27	Arctic	John Franklin	Overland
1827	Arctic	William Parry	<i>Hecla</i>
1829-33	Arctic	John Ross, James Clark Ross	<i>Victory</i>
1839-43	Antarctic	James Clark Ross	<i>Erebus, Terror</i>

1845-	Arctic	John Franklin	<i>Erebus, Terror</i>
1848-49	Arctic	James Clark Ross	<i>Enterprise, Investigator</i>
1850-54	Arctic	Richard Collinson, Robert McClure	<i>Enterprise, Investigator</i>
1853-54	Arctic	John Rae	Overland
1857-59	Arctic	Leopold McClintock	<i>Fox</i>
1875-76	Arctic	George Nares	<i>Alert, Discovery</i>
1898-1900	Antarctic	Carston Borchgrevink	<i>Southern Cross</i>
1901-04	Antarctic	Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton, Edward Wilson, Reginald Skelton	<i>Discovery</i>
1902-04	Antarctic	William Speirs Bruce, William Gordon Burn Murdoch	<i>Scotia</i>
1907-09	Antarctic	Ernest Shackleton, George Marston	<i>Nimrod</i>
1910-13	Antarctic	Robert Falcon Scott, Edward Wilson, Herbert Ponting	<i>Terra Nova</i>
1914-16	Antarctic	Ernest Shackleton, George Marston, Frank Hurley	<i>Endurance</i>
1921-22	Antarctic	Ernest Shackleton	<i>Quest</i>

Appendix 2: Chronology of Polar Exhibitions 1819 to 1936

This appendix gives a short description of each exhibition, a title (when applicable), known locations and the admission fee for one adult (usually children are half price). The range of prices reflects differences in the admission fee according to the type of ticket, the venue and concessionary dates and times. The types of primary source material available are also listed. Locations and dates that are probable but not certain have been italicised.

1810s

1. 1819 - 20

Type: *Static panorama A View of the North Coast of Spitsbergen: Now Exhibiting in the Large Rotunda of Henry Aston Barker's Panorama, Leicester-Square; Painted from Drawings Taken by Lieut. Beechey, who Accompanied the Polar Expedition in 1818, and Liberally Presented them to the Proprietor*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

Henry Aston Barker painted this circular panorama, which depicted a scene from the 1818 North Pole expedition. It showed both ships and the men carrying out various activities including taking scientific readings, hunting and trying to free the ship from the ice. It also depicted mammal and bird life, icebergs, the frozen sea, and various known geographical features.

Source types: handbook including a pictorial reproduction of the panorama, newspaper adverts

1820s

2. 1821 – 33

Type: *Moving panorama, objects, scientific specimens Messrs. Marshall's Grand Peristrepthic Panorama of the Sublime Scenery of the Frozen Regions, with Eight Views of Captains Parry, Ross, Franklin and Buchan's Voyage of Discovery in the Polar Regions*

Location(s): Glasgow, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Bath, Aberdeen, Manchester, Dublin, Bristol, Exeter, Worcester, Salisbury, Reading

Price (range): 6d - 1s. In some places access to the display of objects was free, in others it was an additional 6d.

The panorama featured scenes from both 1818 expeditions. The first six views depicted the North Pole expedition and featured the officers, ships stuck in the ice, landscape, icebergs, wildlife and the ships caught in a storm. This was followed by two views of the Northwest Passage expedition: the first encounter between the expedition and Inuit natives; and the crew and Inuit playing football on the ice. An accompanying 'Museum of Natural and Artificial Curiosities' contained Inuit clothing, the canoe that had belonged to the late John Saccheuse, taxidermy birds and animals, skeletons, a narwhal tusk, botanical specimens and a live sledge dog.

Source types: handbook, newspaper adverts, newspaper articles, letter from Thomas Collins

3. 1822-24

Type: Human display, objects

Location(s): Chester, tours Wales, Dublin, tours Ireland, Preston, Ormskirk, Wigan, Nottingham, Hull, Lincoln, Grantham, London, Reading, Abingdon, Cheltenham, Oxford, Bath, Frome, Bristol, Manchester

Price (range): 1s

A family from Baffin Bay were displayed alongside a museum of 'curiosities.' The museum, housed inside a canvas booth, included Inuit clothing, utensils and tools and the furs and skeletons of Arctic animals, as well as a range of non-Inuit artefacts mainly from New Zealand (advertised as from the 'South Pole'). The show variously included kayaking demonstrations, dart-throwing, live huskies pulling a sledge, the sale of Arctic sketches, a live band and a dance which was claimed to be equivalent to a marriage ceremony. A panorama featured Baffin Bay and Cooper Island.

Source types: catalogue, Rachel Field, *Gods Pocket* (biography of the proprietor Samuel Hadlock that includes extensive quotes from his journal), newspaper adverts, handbill

4. 1824

Type: Model

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The entrance fee granted access to a range of exhibitions. 'A model of the North Pole, shewing Captain Parry's attempt to explore a North-West Passage' was shown alongside miscellaneous displays including a model of the Holy Land and an 'enchanted lyre.'

Source types: newspaper advert

5. 1825

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Dublin, *London*

Price (range): 1s 1d

Twelve views were shown, three of which were Arctic themed, depicting 'Different Views of the NORTH POLE and Captain PARRY'S last Voyage to the Frozen Regions and the new discovered land. Fife's Harbour.' Other subjects included biblical scenes, the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh, Paris and the Giant's Causeway.

Source types: newspaper advert

6. 1827-29

Type: Moving panorama *Captains Parry and Hoppner's last Voyage to the Frozen Regions*

Location(s): Norwich, Bristol, Exeter, Leicester, Leeds, Sheffield

Price (range): 1s 6d

The proprietor of this panorama was William Sinclair. It depicted Parry's 1824-25 voyage with the tagline that the expedition had gone '32 degrees further N.W. than any Ship had gone before.' There are no details of what the exhibition contained, though one article indicates that it showed the expedition overwintering. A handbook was available for sale. Other scenes included the Battle of Navarin and views of Turkey and Greece.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

7. 1829-30

Type: Moving panorama *Roberts' Moving Diorama of the Polar Regions*

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

Part of a series of theatrical entertainments that comprised both tragedies and comedies, including *Romeo & Juliet*, the moving panorama included thirteen views purporting to show Parry's 1824-25 expedition. Only four of the views actually depicted the Arctic- others showed the departure from England and erroneously, the expedition completing the Northwest Passage and arriving in Japan. The Arctic depicted the ships at sea off of Cape Farewell; Inuit with sledges at Hudson Bay,

Baffin Bay; the ships surrounded by icebergs off Melville Island and one ship being destroyed by the ice. The artist was David Roberts.

Source types: handbill

1830s

8. 1834

Type: Static panorama *Description of a View of the Continent of Boothia: Discovered by Captain Ross in his Late Expedition to the Polar Regions: Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The panorama showed a scene from Captain Ross's 1829-33 expedition. It was set during a day in the winter of 1830 and showed the ship, transformed into winter quarters, with a canvas covering; an encounter between the crew and a group of visiting Inuit with sledges and dogs; the two commanding officers; icebergs; sea ice; the Aurora Borealis, a polar bear and the scientific observatory. Several significant geographical features were depicted, including the sites where the expedition overwintered and the North Magnetic Pole. The audience stood underneath a canvas tent that had been used on the voyage. Robert Burford was the proprietor and co-artist, along with Henry Courtney Selous.

Source types: handbook including a pictorial representation of the exhibition, newspaper articles, newspaper reviews

9. 1834-35

Type: Moving panorama *Messrs.Marshall's Grand Peristrepthic Panorama of Captain Ross's Voyages*

Location(s): Cheltenham, Belfast

Price (range): 1s -1s 6d

The proprietors were the Marshalls. Scenes included depictions of Ross wearing polar gear; the crew and Inuit; the ship, both beset in the ice and transformed into winter quarters; geographical features associated with the expedition; the Aurora Borealis, ice and igloos. It was apparently painted by the 'most celebrated British and foreign artists' and accompanied by a 'Full military band.' A handbook was sold.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

10. 1834

Type: Moving panorama with actors and special effects *Grand Scenic Representation of Captain Ross's Expedition to the North Pole*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s – 4s

The exhibition was the central feature of the season at Vauxhall Gardens, displayed alongside a concert, firework display and other shows. The entry fee gave visitors access to all these entertainments. This segment was in three parts and depicted Ross's *Victory* voyage. Scene one showed the ship becoming beset in the ice and transformed into winter quarters, and also featured polar bears. Scene two showed the crew going about their everyday winter activities, exercising and taking scientific readings. The Inuit were depicted, along with a settlement of igloos. The scene ended with the planting of the British flag at the North Magnetic Pole. The final scene depicted the rescue of the expedition amidst a sea of giant icebergs and whales 'spouting real water.' The show also featured the Aurora Borealis.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles, handbill

11. 1834

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

This was hosted at the Queen's Bazaar. Two scenes from Ross's expedition were shown. The first depicted the meeting between Ross, officers and the Inuit: the second a scene from Fury Beach showing the hut built by the expedition and men undertaking tasks in preparation for their departure, such as repairing the boats. Other attractions included in the entry fee was a diorama of Belshazzar's feast (a Biblical scene) and a series of thirteen physiorama views including scenes of Venice, the Isle of Wight and the burning of the ship *Kent*. The artist was an E. Lambert, aided by assistants.

Source types: handbill, newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

12. 1834

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): 1s 6d

The panorama was hosted at the Rotunda on the Mound. It depicted Ross's *Victory* expedition, including geographical features and 'several novel and singular effects peculiar to this frozen climate' (these are not detailed but presumably include phenomena such as sea-ice and the Aurora Borealis). Other subjects included the Niagara Falls, Quebec and the siege of Antwerp.

Source types: newspaper adverts

13. 1834 – c.1840

Type: Moving panorama *Panorama of the Continent of Boothia, Felix, Sheriff and Victoria Harbours, and Fury Beach*

Location(s): Bristol, Cork, Manchester, Leeds, Hull, York, Sheffield, Liverpool, Dublin, Exeter, Leicester

Price (range): 6d - 1s 6d

The proprietor of this panorama was J.B. Laidlaw. It depicted Ross's expedition in four scenes, showing the discovery of Boothia, the crew at Fury Beach and their rescue. It included representations of the *Victory* transformed into winter quarters; Ross in polar dress; the Inuit; igloos, the Aurora Borealis, icebergs and known geographical features. Music by a 'full military band' and narration were provided. During the first part of the tour these scenes were shown alongside others depicting the siege of Antwerp, the sea-battle at Navarino, Constantinople, the burning of the Houses of Parliament and the burning of the ship *Kent*. By the end the alternative scenes were of Jerusalem and whaling ships caught in the ice (Exh.16, described below).

Source types: handbook, newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

14. 1835 - 1836

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Dublin

Price (range): 2s

This panorama may have been the same as the panorama shown in Edinburgh in 1834, or it could be either Marshall's or Laidlaw's production. Ross's expedition was shown in four scenes and included representations of the Aurora Borealis; the Inuit, igloos; the crew; the night sky; the ship, both transformed into winter quarters and as a wreck; the journey to Fury Beach and the rescue. A narration was provided, along with music. Other scenes shown were the burning of the Houses of Parliament, the siege of Antwerp, the sea-battle at Navarino and the burning of the ship *Kent*.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

15. 1836**Type: Moving panorama**

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): 6d – 1s 6d

This was shown at the Rotunda on the Mound. Ross's expedition was depicted alongside scenes showing Quebec and New York

Source types: newspaper advert

16. 1836**Type: Moving panorama**

Location(s): Hull, York, *Sheffield*, Manchester, Dublin

Price (range): 6d – 2s

This depicted an incident that had occurred in the winter of 1835, when a group of British whaling ships became beset in the ice of the Davis Strait. It showed the ships being broken up by the ice as well as one ship, the *Jane*, being freed and sailing to safety. These scenes formed part of Laidlaw's panorama (Exh.13, described above).

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

1840s**17. 1847-48****Type: Human display, objects**

Location(s): Hull, York, Manchester, Driffield, Howden, Louth

Price (range): 6d – 1s

Inuit couple Memiadluk and Uckaluk, from Baffin Island, were brought to Britain and exhibited by a whaling captain named Parker. They wore sealskin dress and Memiadluk, the young male, posed with a kayak and spear. A hut and bows and arrows were also on display. Parker would give a lecture on the plight of the Inuit on Baffin Island, which he described as British territory, comparing it unfavourably to the way those in Greenland were treated under Danish rule.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

18. 1849-50**Type: Moving panorama** *View of the Polar Regions*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 2s

This was shown at the Colosseum. The admission fee gave visitors access to a host of entertainments including a 360° view of Paris, an aviary and a sculpture gallery. The polar scenes headlined a show that also included views of Netley Abbey, Tehiar Shaw in China, and a model of a working silver mine. Painted by George, Thomas and Robert Danson, it showed icebergs, the setting sun, huskies, polar bears and other indigenous animals and an Inuit man being pulled in a sledge drawn by reindeer.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

19. 1849-50**Type: Moving panorama**

Locations(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

The panorama was shown at the Haymarket Rooms. Articles report that it combined 'the results of the principal Arctic navigators.' The drawings of James Ross, Lyon and Beechey are cited as the source material, suggesting that it showed views of the expeditions of 1818, 1821-23, 1829-33 and possibly 1848-49.

Source type: newspaper articles

1850s**20. 1850****Type: Static panorama, objects** *Description of Summer and Winter Views of the Polar Regions: As Seen During the Expedition of Capt. James Clark Ross, Kt., F. R. S. in 1848-9, Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The panorama was divided into two 180° views, one half showing a summer scene and the other a winter scene from James Clark Ross's 1848-49 expedition. The summer scene showed the expedition ships traversing through channels between

icebergs, with a glacier in the distance. A group of the crew are hunting a polar bear. In the winter scene both ships are beset in the ice and have been transformed into winter quarters. The men are carrying out activities such as trapping Arctic foxes and man-hauling sledges. An observatory and a beacon are shown. There is a full moon and Aurora Borealis. A red screen divided the two halves, on which was hung the sketches upon which the panorama was based and some fur clothing. It was painted by Robert Burford and Henry Courtney Selous.

Source types: handbook including a pictorial reproduction of the panorama, newspaper adverts, newspaper articles, reproduction of scene in illustrated press

21. 1851-53

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Aberdeen, Inverness, Markinch, Dunfermline, Stirling

Price (range): 3d – 1s

Scenery and icebergs were features of this panorama. It was accompanied by narration and music. The artist and proprietor was a T.W. Hall from 'her Majesty's Italian Opera' and at various points the lecturers included a Mr Gordon and a J.W. Anson.

Source types: newspaper article, newspaper advert

22. 1851 – c.1860

Type: Exhibition venue *Mr Wyld's Great Globe*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The globe was painted onto the circular interior walls of the building. Visitors entered by the Pacific Ocean and found themselves in a series of four galleries, connected by stairwells, each showing a different part of the world. In 1852 Franklin's probable course was marked on the walls of the Arctic section. A temporary Arctic exhibition 'Tents of the Tuski' was shown in 1854, displaying the clothing and tents of an Alaskan people. Daily lectures were hosted on, first, the Arctic regions and, later, the Franklin relics.

Source types: guidebook, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

23. 1851

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Sheffield

Price (range): 6d – 1s 6d

The focus of the exhibition seems to have been Franklin and the on-going search.

Source types: newspaper advert

24. 1851-55

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): London, Winchester, Southampton, Portsea, Brighton, Lewes, Ramsgate, Canterbury, Rochester, Wollwich, Grenwich, Derby, York, Lincoln, Nottingham, Peterborough, Stamford, Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester, Gloucester, Cheltenham, *Birmingham, Dublin (1864)*

Price (range): 6d – 2s 6d

The proprietor, and possible the artist, was Moses Gompertz. Twenty-five views were presented in three sections. The first seven scenes showed the departure of the Franklin expedition from England, its traverse up the coast of Greenland, a whale being flensed and a polar bear. The next nine depicted Ross's *Victory* expedition and included images of ships, both travelling amongst icebergs and beset in ice; locations like Disco Island and Cape Melville Bay; and an encounter between the crew and Inuit. Views seventeen to twenty were scenic, showing known geographical locations. The final five scenes showed Parry on his 1819-20 expedition. Their overwintering site was shown both in the depths of winter and on the point of their departure in the summer. A narration and band accompanied the views. The lecturer was named as G.T. White. Most adverts say that a 'full band' play at the production; however, at one point the 'celebrated pianist Miss Butler' is employed to play both 'concerted' pieces and 'overtures from the Great Masters.'

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

25. 1851 – 1854 (c.1860)

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): London, Newcastle, South Shields, Stockton, Hartlepool, Whitby, York, Manchester, Sheffield, *Glasgow (1856) Brighton (1860)*

Price (range): 6d – 3s

Originating in the Linwood Gallery, London, this moving panorama by the Hamilton family was advertised as depicting the search for Franklin and the Arctic voyages of James Clark Ross. Scenes from both the 1829-33 and 1848-9 expeditions were shown. The panorama showed the appearance of the Arctic regions during different seasons and included pictures of the Inuit, igloos, icebergs, ships beset in the ice and the Aurora Borealis. The show included narration and music. During its tour it was combined with subjects such as the earthquake in Lisbon and the ascent of Mont Blanc in the Alps. Later panoramas by Hamilton advertised that they depicted the discoveries of McClintock. The lecturer is variously named as Mr Adams and a P. Jones.

Source types: handbill (including illustration), newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

26. 1852

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): London, *Dundee*, *Stirling*

Price (range): 6d – 2s 6d

This was first shown in Vauxhall Gardens, London. It depicted the Arctic regions during the summer and winter solstices. Other scenes included the departure of Franklin, a ship traversing through the ice and a depiction of whale hunting. In Dundee it was shown alone; in Stirling with views of the birthplace of Robert Burns and a firework display; at Vauxhall Gardens alongside a multitude of entertainments including an orchestra, ballet show and firework display. The proprietor was a Mr Adams.

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

27. 1852

Type: Painting/model

Location(s): London

Price (range): 6d – 2s

A venue named the Royal Grecian hosted a gala week which included entertainments such as an exhibition of indigenous peoples from Africa, a burlesque show, a ballet and a panorama of Salzburg. Among these were some 'stalactite caves' (presumably a model) onto which was painted a view of the Arctic showing a ship beset in the ice.

Source types: newspaper advert

28. 1852

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Chelmsford, Colchester, Braintree

Price (range): 1s – 2s

The Arctic panorama was first on a six item program of events that also contained a lecture on the possibility of communicating with Franklin using balloons. The program also included a lecture on optical illusions and a series of views of 'places of interest'.

Source types: newspaper advert

29. 1852

Type: Moving panorama *Phillip's Grand Moving Panorama of the Expedition to the Arctic Regions*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The proprietor and artist was Philip Phillips. It purported to show 'the' expedition to the Arctic in search of Franklin; which expedition this was is not specified. Narration and music was included. The panorama was shown in two locations. It was shown alone in Surrey Music Hall and alongside other entertainments, such as concerts and a firework display, at St Helena Gardens.

Source types: newspaper adverts

30. 1852

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Glasgow

Price (range): Unknown

An arctic panorama was on display at the newly-opened Victoria Gardens, along with entertainments such as a band, fireworks, acrobatics and a hot-air balloon.

Source types: newspaper article

31. 1852

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Liverpool

Price (range): Unknown

The proprietor was a Mr Perchard. The panorama consisted of around forty views, accompanied by a narration, illustrating 'the last eventful voyage of Sir John Franklin and his brave companions.' Apparently it showed the supposed position of the ships and promoted the possibility of aiding the expedition using balloons. It also demonstrated how a sighting of two ships reported by a whaling captain the previous year could have been caused by refraction. General views of the Arctic were shown and a map was utilised.

Source types: newspaper articles

32. 1852-53

Type: Moving panorama *Ormonde's Grand New Panorama of Sir John Franklin's Expedition to the North Pole*

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): 6d - 1s

The proprietor was a Mrs Ormonde. The exhibition focused on Franklin and contained scenes from his various expeditions; a view of Spitsbergen, icebergs and sea-ice, a bear hunt, icebergs, Inuit people, Copper Indian people, igloos, the ship traversing through the ice, a sledging scene and Franklin himself. It also included a view of the Behring Strait, suggesting that it might have speculated that Franklin had completed the Northwest Passage. Adverts claim that it was painted by Sacchetti, 'Artist to the Emperor of Russia.'

Source types: newspaper adverts, newspaper articles

33. 1853-55

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s – 3s

Thomas Grieve and William Telbin's Arctic panorama was shown alongside their long-running Ocean Mail panorama shown at the Royal Gallery of Illustration. It depicted James Clark Ross's 1848-49 voyage. Scenes included the Aurora Borealis, a polar bear hunt, the ship becoming beset in the ice, a camping scene and the ships communicating using light signals. One scene showed a cross-section of the ship through which the audience could see the crew celebrating Christmas. It included a narration by a Mr Stocqueler.

Source types: newspaper articles

34. 1853

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Worchester, Leamington Spa

Price (range): Unknown

The 'general features' of the Arctic were shown. Music was provided by the proprietor W.J. Morris playing on his 'musical glasses'.

Source types: newspaper articles

35. 1854

Type: Sketches

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

Sketches by Captain Inglefield, who had captained two journeys to the Arctic, were displayed at Messrs. Dickinson's publishing house in conjunction with their publishing his book.

Source types: newspaper advert

36. 1854

Type: Human display, objects

Location(s): London; Hull; Drifffield; Pocklington; York

Price (range): 1s -2s

Three Inuit individuals, a teenage couple Ebierbing and Tookoolito, and a seven year old boy named Harlukjoe, were brought to Britain and exhibited by Hull trader Mr Bowlby. They wore sealskin clothing and were displayed in front of a picture of the Davis Strait. There was an accompanying display of a tent, canoe, spears and harpoons and taxidermy polar bears, seals and walrus. An accompanying lecture described Inuit life and customs, as well as giving more general details about the Arctic.

Source types: newspaper articles, including illustration, newspaper adverts

37. 1854

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Bristol

Price (range): 6d – 2s

The proprietor was a Professor Buck. It was shown alongside a 'cyclorama' of London and a series of 'extraordinary illusions'.

Source types: newspaper advert

38. 1854

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Lynn, *Wisbech*

Price (range): Unknown

An Arctic panorama was shown at fairs in both towns, along with other entertainments such as wax figures, a magician, peep-shows and 'a young lady, about the size of a kitten.' In Wisbech the proprietor is named as a Mr Bell.

Source types: newspaper articles

39. 1855**Type: Franklin relics**

Location(s): London.

Price (range): Free

The first Franklin relics were displayed at the Painted Hall in Greenwich, A single case housed a portion of the objects retrieved by Rae, including silver cutlery belonging to some of the officers, a medal belonging to Franklin, gold naval dress braid and tins.

Source types: catalogue, press reports, diary of William Patterson (1859)

40. 1855**Type: Objects, photographs, art, Franklin relics. *The Arctic Collection of John Barrow, with Franklin Relics***

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

The Barrow Collection of Arctic material was shown at the Royal Polytechnic Institute. The collection comprised mainly of ethnographic artefacts and scientific specimens. Around 10% of the collection related to exploration and a section of this to the Franklin search expeditions. This included a portrait of Franklin, a print of the 'Arctic Council', medals, models of equipment, and photographs. It was billed alongside a lecture about the human voice and a singing mouse. There was an accompanying lecture series with talks by figures such as John Rae and William Scoresby.

Source types: newspaper adverts, press reports

41. 1855**Type: Objects, Franklin relics. *The Arctic Collection of John Barrow, with Franklin Relics***

Location(s): London

Price (range): Free

The collection described above (Exh.40) was bequeathed permanently to the British Museum. It was housed in their ethnography department and spread out over several cases. The objects relating to exploration were laid alongside each other in a single case.

Source types: catalogue

42. 1857**Type: Moving panorama**

Location(s): Chesterfield

Price (range): 6d – 2s

The theme was the search for Franklin. It was shown alongside Burford's panorama of the Russian war.

Source types: newspaper advert

43. 1858**Type: Human display, animal display *The Great Sea Lion- Alive!***

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1d

A sea lion, reportedly caught by a whaling captain, was displayed along 'with its Esquimaux Keeper.' It was accompanied by a display of dogs from China.

Source types: handbill

44. 1859**Type: Franklin relics**

Location(s): London

Price (range): Free on application

The relics brought back by McClintock were put on display in the United Service Institution in Whitehall. The collection was shown over twelve cases and a table-top display. The written record was given its own case. A wall panel listed all 129 members of the expedition. Additional displays held objects related to earlier expeditions.

Source types: catalogue, press reports, private correspondence

1860s**45. 1860****Type: Moving Panorama**

Location(s): Luton

Price (range): 3d – 1s

The panorama depicted McClintock's 1857-59 expedition. It was shown along with a second panorama depicting Japan.

Source types: newspaper advert

1870s

46. 1872-75

Type: Moving panorama *Splendid New and Unrivalled Diorama- Second Great Tour Around the World*

Location(s): Liverpool, Bridgnorth

Price (range): 6d – 2s

The artist was a J.J. Story, and the panorama was accompanied by music and songs performed by ‘cicerone’ Walson Thornton and pianist Sidney Williams. Taking the form of a world tour, one section of the panorama took audiences to Antarctic with representations of icebergs, penguins, the Great Ice Barrier and the mountains Erebus and Terror. The handbill references the expedition of James Clark Ross, though the panorama does not appear to depict any individuals.

Source types: handbill

47. 1873

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Sunderland

Price (range): Unknown

The proprietor and artist was a Mr Bell. It showed scenes from various Arctic expeditions, displayed chronologically and accompanied by music. This included depictions of ships and a scene showing a vessel beset in the ice with the Aurora Borealis overhead.

Source types: newspaper article

48. 1875

Type: Equipment, objects, artwork

Location(s): Portsmouth

Price (range): Free

This exhibition was associated with the upcoming naval expedition commanded by George Nares. The exhibition was held at the dockyard where the two expedition ships were being prepared. Beginning in a small building on site, it was later moved to the larger Military Store. The exhibition displayed the equipment that was to be

used on the expedition, objects such as sledges, tents and ice saws. Mannequins were dressed in Arctic clothing. Some historical objects were also shown, including paintings of Arctic scenes and a mock theatre program from an expedition held in the 1850s. New objects were added to the display throughout the exhibition's duration.

Source types: newspaper articles

49. 1876-1883

Type: Moving panorama, objects (from 1881)

Location(s): Glasgow, Preston, Cheltenham, Oxford, Brighton, Southampton, Portsea, Portsmouth, Bath, Worcester, Leicester, Bridlington, Scarborough, Bungay, Islington, London

Price (range): 6d – 3s

The proprietor of the panorama was a Mr Rignold. The scenes depicted a generic Arctic voyage, starting with the departure of the ship from Britain and scenes around the British coast. Arctic subjects included whaling, an iceberg; the Aurora Borealis; the ship meeting the ice, becoming beset and then freed again; men sledging and setting fox traps; Inuit men fishing; musk-ox, reindeer, polar bears, and a scene titled 'Homeward Bound' which showed the crew cheering as they departed for home. From c.1881 a sledging suit and sleeping bag used on the Nares expedition was included as part of the display. The Arctic scenes were sometimes paired with depictions of the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War. It was accompanied by a lecture and music; the musicians, pianists and singers are variously named as Professor Greenwood, Mr Malnsworth, Eos Dyffryn, Meredyth Elliott, Gertrude Skey, and the Brother Davies. Rignold claimed the panorama had been painted by Clarkson Stanfield.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, handbill

50. 1877

Type: Photographs

Location(s): London

Price (range): 6d – 1s

The Photographic Society displayed 107 photographs taken on the Nares expedition, a collection lent to them by the Admiralty, as part of their annual exhibition. The exhibition included over 500 other unrelated photographs, as well as examples of photographic equipment. The Arctic photographs were laid out on a table. They were arranged chronologically and the latitude at which each was taken was marked. Most showed the ships and features of the landscape as they progressed north and at their winter quarters. Other subject matters included the Inuit; icebergs and sea ice;

structures erected at their winter quarters, such as a smithy and theatre made out of snow; the sledging parties waiting to depart; and the grave of a crewmember who had died. The final photographs showed the camp established at their most northerly point. The exhibition also included a selection of photographs taken by William Grant of the *Pandora* expedition which showed Inuit, the ship, scenery, the men erecting a cairn and a coal seam. The two sets of photographs were not displayed together or linked thematically.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles

51. 1877

Type: Waxwork

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

A waxwork of George Nares dressed in Arctic costume was added to the exhibition at Madame Tussauds.

Source types: newspaper adverts

52. 1877

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Dundee

Price (range): Unknown

Nothing is known of this panorama other than that it portrayed the Arctic.

Source types: newspaper article

53. 1877

Type: Moving panorama *A Tour to the Arctic Regions*

Location(s): Sheffield

Price (range): Unknown

The proprietor was a Mr Irving, whose lecture accompanied the scenes. The subject of the panorama was the Nares expedition.

Source types: newspaper article

54. 1877

Type: Moving panorama

Location(s): Gosport

Price (range): Unknown

This panorama represented the Nares expedition. One focus was on the equipment used by the crew. The scenes were accompanied by music.

Source types: newspaper article

1880s

55. 1885

Type: Human display *International Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 6d – 1s

The exhibition included a show of Sami people from Finland, displayed with a hut, tools and live reindeer. Other attractions included a theatre, an orchestra, an electric railway and hot air balloons.

Source types: handbill

56. 1886

Type: Great Exhibition *Colonial and Indian Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s – 2s 6d

The exhibition contained sections on all of Britain's colonies, highlighting such themes as their natural history, the raw products produced, their manufacturing industries, and art. The 'Canada' section included two Hudson Bay Company stalls. One, under the heading 'Animals', displayed furs and taxidermy, while 'Fisheries' showed 'Esquimaux' whalebone and nets.

Source types: catalogue, exhibition literature

1890s

57. 1891

Type: Objects, photographs, art, scientific specimens, Franklin relics, *Royal Naval Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s – 2s 6d. Separate admission to iceberg 6d

The exhibition was hosted by the Royal Navy and showcased both their history and new technologies. The 'Franklin Gallery' displayed objects relating to their polar endeavours. These included Franklin relics, portraits of explorers, Arctic and Antarctic landscapes, equipment, sledging flags, scientific instruments, fossils, taxidermy and Inuit artefacts. The display featured tableaux of a sledging scene and a camping scene. In the grounds of the exhibition there was a model iceberg which housed a representation of McClure's 1850-53 expedition.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, exhibition literature

58. 1893-95

Type: *Art Exhibition of Antarctic Pictures Painted during the Voyage and in the Ice*

Location(s): Dundee, Nottingham, Glasgow

Price (range): Free

The artist William Burn Murdoch exhibited sketches and paintings produced on the 1893 Dundee Whaling Expedition to the Antarctic. The exhibition comprised 170 pictures; 107 were from the voyage. The pictures were displayed chronologically, showing the expedition leaving Dundee, travelling down the coast then sailing south through the tropics and crossing the Equator, encountering the 'roaring forties', staying on the Falkland Islands, encountering the first ice and then reaching Antarctica. It then depicted the journey back north. Subjects included landscapes, the ships, activities on board and seal hunting. Around fifty-four pictures had specifically Antarctic subject matter which included penguins, seals, icebergs and Antarctic landmarks.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, private correspondence

59. 1895

Type: *Objects, art, photographs, Franklin relics, equipment, scientific specimens Royal Scottish Geographical Society Franklin Commemoration*

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): Unknown, possibly free

The exhibition was hosted by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society on the fiftieth anniversary of the Franklin expedition's departure from Britain. It contained hundreds of items relating to both the Arctic and Antarctic. These included Franklin relics, as well as other objects relating to Franklin, his crew (particularly Scottish members) and the subsequent search expeditions. Artefacts from earlier expeditions were also displayed, as well as objects related to general polar exploration, such as

sledges and ice spurs. Other items included paintings and portraits, photographs, maps, taxidermy animals, natural history specimens, scientific reports and whaling equipment. There were collections relating to both the Inuit and other North American native groups (probably Cree or Dené). The collections appear to have been arranged by donor.

Source types: list of objects published in society magazine, newspaper articles

60. 1898

Type: Equipment, photographs (?)

Location(s): London

Price (range): Free, visitor's card required

The exhibition was held in the month before the departure of the *Southern Cross* expedition to Antarctica, and displayed the equipment that was to be used. One display showed a range of dried and tinned foods. Wax figures were used to model clothing, and there was a tableau of a camping scene with tents, sledges and sleeping bags. The exhibition also encompassed scientific instruments, snowshoes and skis, and 'facsimiles' (possibly photographs) of Samoyed dogs. A guide showed visitors around.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

61. 1899

Type: Human display, objects

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

A group of forty Inuit from Labrador were displayed in an 'Eskimo encampment', part of a great exhibition held in the London venue *Olympia*. The main theme of the exhibition was Africa and, particularly, the Boer War. A stage-show showed pictures of the hostilities and an enactment of a British raid on a Boer camp, as well as miscellaneous entertainments such as performing elephants, cart races, high jumping competitions and a 'football dog.' Zulu and Sudanese people were also on show. The Inuit group were displayed living in tents and a whale bone house, and wearing traditional clothing. They had dogs and sledges with which they ran races. The surroundings were made up to look like ice and snow, and a live polar bear was featured.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

1900s

62. 1902

Type: Equipment, photographs

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): Free

The Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art hosted a temporary exhibition of the equipment to be used on the upcoming *Scotia* expedition. This included clothing and sleeping bags, skis, snowshoes and sledges, photographs of the expedition ship and drawings of her interior. A major focus was scientific and navigational instruments and the exhibition also utilised globes and maps. Objects were added throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Source types: newspaper articles, museum's annual report

63. 1904-1905

Type: Objects, art, photographs, equipment, "Discovery" Antarctic Exhibition

Location(s): London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Cheltenham

Price (range): 6d – 1s

The exhibition was held after the return of *Discovery*. It included around 175 photographs taken on the expedition, showing wildlife, landscapes, notable events such as a midwinter dinner, and the everyday life of the men. There were 250 watercolour paintings and sketches by Edward Wilson of birds, other types of wildlife, scenery and topographical sketches. A section titled 'Articles of interest' included objects such as tents, sledges, harnesses, lamps and cooking apparatus, as well as other miscellaneous items such as sledging flags, the shipboard newspaper 'The South Polar Times' and sealskin items made by the men during the expedition.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

64. 1904-05

Type: Photographs

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): Free

The photographs taken during the *Scotia* expedition were bound in an album and put on temporary display in the Art and Ethnographical Department of the Royal Scottish Museum.

Source types: annual report, newspaper articles

65. 1905**Type: Objects, art, Franklin relics *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition***

Location(s): Earls Court, London

Price (range):

This Great Exhibition was held on the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. It displayed paintings of ships and naval battles, models, objects associated with Nelson and a panorama of the battle of Trafalgar. There was a 'colony' of indigenous peoples from North America. Polar displays included Franklin relics, objects associated with Nares's 1875 expedition, sledges and snowshoes.

Source types: newspaper articles, Admiralty correspondence

66. 1907 - 1919**Type: Permanent museum of photographs, art, equipment, scientific specimens, scientific equipment *Scottish Oceanographical Laboratory***

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): Free

The laboratory was established by William Speirs Bruce and used to store specimens, documents and equipment, scientific and otherwise, from his various Arctic and Antarctic expeditions. Scientific research was carried out from the laboratory and it also acted as a place where explorers could access documents, get advice and borrow equipment. The laboratory also hosted a permanent exhibition. This was largely orientated towards science, with displays of geological, zoological and oceanographical specimens, taxidermy, oceanographical equipment, photographs of ships used in oceanographical research and photographs of the oceanographical museum in Monaco. Other exhibits included a sledge, a kayak, a selection of Burn Murdoch's watercolours and photographs from the *Scotia* expedition. Bruce would show visitors around when available.

Source types: newspaper articles, *A Naturalist at the Poles* (biography of Bruce), accessions book, photographs, correspondence**67. 1907****Type: Equipment**

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

A display of equipment to be used on the upcoming *Nimrod* expedition was arranged in the expedition offices. This included a tent, sleeping bags, cooking apparatus, food supplies and other equipment such as lamps and ice axes. A sledge was packed like it would be for a six-week journey and displayed on a mock ice-floe against a backdrop

showing an Antarctic scene. Mannequins were dressed in polar clothing. Other items on display included furniture to be used in the hut, medical equipment, photographic supplies, scientific instruments, a typewriter, pony food, dog food and farrier's tools.

Source types: newspaper articles

68. 1908

Type: Objects, equipment, scientific specimens *Scottish National Exhibition*

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): 1s

This Great Exhibition comprised various buildings including an art gallery, a 'Machinery Hall' and an 'Industrial Hall'. There were also gardens, fairground rides, and displays such as a Canadian pavilion, Irish cottage and a Senegal native village. In the 'Industrial Hall' a stand related to the *Scotia* expedition displayed the specimens that had been collected and the scientific equipment they had used. These were labelled. A tableau of an Antarctic scene contained taxidermy penguins and seals, and photographs from the expedition were also displayed.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, typescript of article 'Science in Exhibitions', souvenir guidebook, *A Naturalist at the Poles* (biography of Bruce)

69. 1908

Type: Objects, scientific specimens *Franco-British Expedition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The exhibition comprised twenty-eight buildings, each with a different theme such as 'Education', 'Engineering', the 'Liberal Arts' and 'Horticulture'. These were separated by avenues, courts and waterways. There was also a colonial section with pavilions dedicated to countries such as Canada and Australia, native villages, gardens, fairground rides, a cinema and a sporting stadium. Music was played and there were firework shows and sporting events. A hall dedicated to science was divided into divisions such as astronomy, meteorology, metallurgy and magnetism. The oceanography division contained displays related to the *Challenger* and *Scotia* expeditions, including specimens collected on the voyages.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, typescript of article 'Science in Exhibitions' (1908), *A Naturalist at the Poles* (biography of Bruce)

70. 1909

Type: Waxwork, art

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

In Madame Tussauds a tableau was erected depicting Shackleton's most southerly camp on his attempt to reach the South Pole. The tableau comprised a waxwork of Shackleton dressed in sledging gear and wearing a pair of snowshoes, standing in front of a large painting that depicted his companions putting up a tent, securing it with blocks of ice and unloading the sledge. This had been painted by expedition artist George Marston. The display may have been accompanied by a display of photographs. This tableau was destroyed in a fire in 1925. When Madame Tussauds reopened in 1928 it had been replaced with a new waxwork of Shackleton. The new model was dressed similarly but the rest of the tableau had not been recreated.

Source types: newspaper articles, postcard sold as merchandise in shop, private correspondence, Pathé film (1957)

71. 1909

Type: Objects, art, photographs, equipment, scientific specimens, ship tours

Location(s): London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle

Price (range): 6d – 2s 6d

The exhibition was held after the return of the *Nimrod* expedition. Visitors were given a tour of the ship by one of the expedition members. The entry fee also gave them access to a display mounted in a nearby building. This consisted of equipment used on the expedition, some of which was set up in the form of a tableau of a camping scene. A sledge was packed with equipment, and mannequins were dressed in polar gear. A printing press was displayed along with the book produced on it: the *Aurora Australis*, the first book to be printed in Antarctica. Other objects included photographic equipment, a gramophone, taxidermy seals and penguins, geological specimens, biological specimens in jars, bird's eggs and scientific equipment. 146 photographs depicting the events of the expedition were arranged chronologically in rows on the wall. Forty paintings and drawings by the shipboard artist George Marston were also displayed.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles

1910s

72. 1911

Type: Objects, art, scientific specimens *Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry*

Location(s): Glasgow

Price (range): 1s

The exhibition was comprised of multiple buildings and entertainments including a 'Palace of Art', 'Palace of History', 'Palace of Industry', concert hall, gardens, mock historical streets and a Highland village. Orchestras played, lectures and plays were held and costumed interpreters were employed. Polar displays featured in two parts of the exhibition. A gallery in the Palace of History contained 'Relics of Scottish Explorers': the portraits and personal possessions of John Ross, John Richardson, Robert Brown, John Rae, James Weddell, James Clark Ross, Thomas Simpson, Alexander MacKenzie and Joseph Hooker. There was also a display dedicated to the Scottish members of the *Challenger* expedition. The objects included paintings of polar scenes and ships, medals, books, telescopes, maps, a sledge, a model kayak and a taxidermy Antarctic petrel. The display was mounted on the wall and laid out in cases. The 'Kelvin Hall' (dedicated to science) included a display about the *Scotia* expedition. This included a tableau of an Antarctic scene incorporating taxidermy seals and birds as well as specimens, scientific instruments and a collection of Burn Murdoch's watercolours. These displays appeared alongside other exhibits related to subjects such as magnetism and astronomy and industries such as coal mining and shipbuilding. There was also an encampment of either Inuit or Sami people, organised by a Mr Singer.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, catalogue for 'Palace of History' display, *A Naturalist at the Poles* (biography of Bruce), private correspondence

73. 1913

Type: Waxwork

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

Madame Tussauds produced a waxwork of Robert Falcon Scott. It shows him wearing naval uniform, carrying a cocked hat. The model stood on a plinth draped with Union Jacks. A laurel wreath, inscribed with the names of all five men in the polar party, was attached to the display. This waxwork was destroyed in a fire in 1925. The replacement model showed Scott dressed in sledging gear.

Source types: newspaper articles, Pathé film (1957)

74. 1913

Type: Objects, art, photographs, equipment, scientific specimens

Location(s): Edinburgh

Price (range): 6d – 1s

William Speirs Bruce and William Burn Murdoch, in conjunction with *The Scotsman* and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, arranged a temporary exhibition in order to raise funds for the Mansion House Scott memorial fund. It was held in a shop premises and exhibits were added throughout the duration of the exhibition. A barrel organ piped music into the room. Paintings were displayed, including one of the *Scotia* amongst icebergs, a portrait of Scott, paintings from the Ross and Weddell Antarctic expeditions and watercolours by Burn Murdoch and Wilson. There was also a flag made by Jane Franklin, a banner carried by Bruce on his polar expeditions, equipment such as clothing and sleeping bags, scientific equipment and specimens and a tableau showing seals and birds on the ice. Some of the oceanographical equipment was hung in such a way to illustrate how it was used, and there was a map of Antarctica.

Source types: advertising poster, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

75. 1913

Type: Objects, equipment *Imperial Services Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 1s

The Imperial Services Exhibition was a Great Exhibition held at the Earls Court venue. It showcased military technology and history. There were regular shows simulating a naval bombardment of a town, a mock military camp and a reconstructed naval cruiser that visitors could board. Lectures, firearm demonstrations and diving displays were held, and music was provided by a military band. Exhibits relating to the armed forces were set up in two halls. One of these included an Antarctic display. This included objects belonging to the polar party set up in a tableau simulating their last camp; part of the tent, skis, a sledge sleeping bags, cooking apparatus, a camera, a theodolite and smaller personal possessions such as utensils and a book. Smaller objects such as a sledge repair kit, compass and thermometer were displayed in a glass case. The exhibit also included taxidermy animals and birds. A second feature was a reconstruction of a snow shelter that some of the *Terra Nova* expedition members had spent the winter living in. Two members of the expedition were employed as guides.

Source types: private correspondence, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, unpublished memoir

76. 1913

Type: Objects, photographs, equipment, scientific specimens, live dog

Location(s): Tewkesbury

Price (range): 6d – 2s

A three-day fete was held at Tewkesbury Abbey. It featured concerts, theatrical and dance performances, stalls and shows such as shooting galleries. Raymond Priestley, who had been a geologist on the *Nimrod* and *Terra Nova* expeditions, organised a display of Antarctic exhibits. This included photographs, specimens of food such as sledging biscuits and pemmican, equipment including clothing, snowshoes and tents, geological specimens and scientific instrument. A dog from the *Terra Nova* expedition also featured.

Source types: newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

77. 1913- 1914

Type: Art, objects

Location(s): London, Cheltenham, Leeds, Dundee, Cambridge

Price (range): Free – 1s

The exhibition consisted of 281 sketches and watercolours by Edward Wilson. Around three quarters of these had been produced on the *Discovery* and *Terra Nova* Antarctic expeditions. Most showed natural features such as atmospheric phenomena, sunsets, the Aurora Borealis, mock suns and Antarctic birds (particularly Emperor penguins). The remainder of the exhibition showed non-Antarctic work, including paintings and sketches of British birds, landscapes and buildings, and Norwegian and Swiss landscapes. The display also included objects displayed in a glass case; the flag and note left by Amundsen at the pole, facsimile sketches of the flag and a cairn that Amundsen had built there; the notebook Wilson had used on the journey to and from the pole and six medals awarded to Wilson by institutions such as the Admiralty and Royal Geographical Society.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts, minutes of meetings of the Alpine Club

78. 1913- 1914

Type: Photographs

Location(s): London, Manchester, Southsea, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cambridge, Portsmouth

Price (range): Free - 6d

Herbert Ponting, the official photographer on the *Terra Nova* expedition, exhibited a selection of his photographs. 145 photographs were arranged chronologically under headings such as 'The Journey South', 'Arrival', 'Winter' and 'Summer.' Their subject matter included icebergs, landscapes, wildlife, the dogs and ponies, portraits of the men and the expedition members carrying out everyday tasks. A special section was dedicated to 'The Polar Party' and included group shots of four of the

men who had reached the South Pole and portrait shots of all five. In addition a section of 'Supplementary Photographs', not taken by Ponting, included images of the polar party on their way to the pole, their arrival, their grave and a memorial cross. Visitors could arrange to buy copies of any of the photographs on sale.

Source types: catalogue, newspaper articles, newspaper adverts

79. 1913

Type: Photographs, scientific specimens

Location(s): London

Price (range): Free

A selection of scientific specimens collected on the *Terra Nova* exhibition were put on temporary display in the central hall of the Natural History Museum. The specimens were accompanied by photographs taken on the expedition and a map showing the route Scott had taken to the South Pole, marked with a cross where the bodies were found.

Source type(s): newspaper articles, papers held by the Natural History Museum

1920s

80. c.1920 – ongoing

Type: Permanent museum of objects, equipment, scientific specimens, art, photographs *Scott Polar Research Institute*

Location(s): Cambridge

Price (range): Free

Established by Frank Debenham, the institute was originally housed in the attic of Sedgwick Museum. It moved into its own premises in 1925 and then into a custom building in 1935. It fulfilled several functions. It had an archive and library of polar material and research rooms. It also acted as an informal meeting place for the polar community. From 1925 the institute also hosted a permanent exhibition. This included equipment, taxidermy animals and Inuit artefacts. It also displayed a range of historical artefacts relating to both Arctic and Antarctic exploration including items related to Frobisher, Parry, Ross, Franklin, Scott and Shackleton. Wilson's watercolours were exhibited in a gallery space and a selection of Ponting's photographs and portraits of explorers were also displayed.

Source types: newspaper articles, various articles in the *Polar Record*, correspondence

1930s

81. 1930**Type: Objects, equipment, scientific specimens, art, photographs** *1930 Polar Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): 6d – 1s 6d

The exhibition was held at Westminster Central Hall. Displays were divided between four rooms and a vestibule area. The vestibule contained the crow's nest from Nares Discovery and a book stall. The names of notable explorers were printed above the door. The first room (following the order set out in the catalogue) contained Shackleton's *James Caird*, taxidermy animals and birds, scientific and navigational instruments, sledging flags and model ships, Samoyed artefacts and displays on the Discovery Investigations. Burn Murdoch watercolour's hung on the walls along with maps and prints showing historic Arctic exploration and whaling. The second contained a mix of objects related to historic exploration and the contemporary whaling and fishing industries: sledges, harnesses, crampons, clothing, skis, snowshoes, furs, skins, seal oil, whaling artefacts, model fishing vessels, nets, charts, and fish specimens. There was a display related to Edward Wilson and a tableau of a camping scene. A 'Precious Relics' room displayed artefacts related to Franklin, Scott and other historic explorers. These included Scott and Wilson's journals, Scott's letters, Shackleton's furthest south flag, polar medals, and objects relating to the expeditions of Ross, Parry, Nares and the Franklin search voyages. Portraits of the most significant explorers- both Arctic and Antarctic- hung on the walls. The last room hosted the stalls of firms associated with exploration such as Bovril, Burberry, Cadburys and Jaeger. Books and prints were for sale, guide were available to show visitors around and events were organised in conjunction with the exhibition.

Source types: newspaper articles, poster, catalogue, floorplan, meeting minutes, committee report, Hudson Bay Company stall planning documents, *The Polar Book*

82. 1931**Type: Objects, equipment, photographs, art** *Daily Mail Schoolboys Exhibition*

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

Held at the Empire Hall in Olympia, London, this exhibition comprised 113 stalls dealing with topics designed to appeal to schoolboys, such as boats, pets, stamps and boomerangs. One stall was titled 'Scott's Last Polar Expedition.' The display included a scale model of Antarctica showing the route taken towards the South Pole, photographs, watercolours, sledging flags, the flags flown at the South Pole, objects

found at Scott's last camp including geological specimens, and Scott's satchel and tools.

Source types: catalogue, correspondence, schoolboy's magazine review

83. 1934

Type: Photographs

Location(s): London

Price (range): Unknown

This was an 'Exploration' themed exhibition hosted by the Royal Photographic Society. It included around thirty of Ponting's photographs.

Source types: correspondence

84. 1936

Type: Objects, equipment, photographs

Location(s): London

Price (range): Free

This was held in the Carlton Theatre in association with a showing of the film *With Byrd at the South Pole*. It included Ponting photographs, a sledge and tent used on the *Terra Nova* exhibition and 'many other relics.'

Source types: Pamphlet, souvenir programme

Bibliography

List of abbreviations used in footnotes

ACA:	Alpine Club Archives
AUSC:	Aberdeen University Special Collections
BDCM:	Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, University of Exeter.
BL:	British Library
Bodleian:	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
DC:	Dulwich College Archives
DHT:	Discovery Heritage Trust
DCC:	Central Library, Dundee City Council
EUCRC:	Edinburgh University Centre for Research Collections
GU:	Special Collections, University of Glasgow
HBCA:	Hudson Bay Company Archives
MT:	Madame Tussauds
NHM:	Natural History Museum
NLS:	National Library of Scotland
NMM:	National Maritime Museum
NMS:	National Museum of Scotland Library
SPRI:	Scott Polar Research Institute
WA:	Wellcome Archives

Archival material

Aberdeen University

Lambda collection

p Lambda Peterhead reg Museum Catalogue (1852), 'Regulations of "The Arbuthnot Museum," Peterhead, and Catalogue of the Objects Therein'

Lib R collection

Lib R 91(98) Ros v John Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery for the Purpose of Exploring Baffin's Bay and Inquiring into the Probability of a North-West Passage* (London, 1819)

Alpine Club

Records of the Alpine Club

1922/AC2S-10 Minute Book: A.C. Committee Minutes

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