

‘One cannot help liking them’: *Terra Nova* meets *Fram*

Meredith Hooper

Wolfson College, Cambridge CB3 9BB (MJH@wolfsonemail.com)

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ABSTRACT. During January 1911 two separate expeditions came ashore within ten days of each other in Antarctica. Both were hoping to achieve the South Pole. Robert Falcon Scott’s decision to establish his British Antarctic Expedition’s winter quarters on Ross Island close to routes explored on his first Antarctic expedition was signalled in advance. Scott had received notification of the Norwegian Roald Amundsen’s intention to head for Antarctica but did not know where he planned to land. At 00.05 am on 4 February 1911 the British expedition’s vessel *Terra Nova* unexpectedly came across Amundsen’s *Fram* moored to the ice edge in the Bay of Whales. 14 hours later *Terra Nova* departed, taking news of Amundsen’s location and plans, to deliver to Scott. For those on *Terra Nova* who kept diaries, the event filled days surrounding the encounter spurred the recording of thoughts, emotions and conversations as well as descriptions: eye witness accounts, allowing us to gain an appreciation of the situation as it was. This material from the British side, together with letters, and diary entries from earlier in the voyage, reveals a more complex account than do expedition narratives published subsequently by several of the participants. *Terra Nova*’s passage along the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in February 1911 had, in fact, come close to being cancelled. *Terra Nova*’s commander as instructed by Scott was heading for Balloon Bight on 3 February, not the Bay of Whales. Even the ship’s departure after a short stay, with everyone still on board, became a matter for intense debate. In addition, the generally very positive attitude of the British towards the Norwegians as expressed in diaries hardened subsequently, at least for some. This paper’s focus is on the responses of those on *Terra Nova* to the encounter. Those of the Norwegians are being explored by other researchers.

The British Antarctic Expedition 1910–1913

A pamphlet published on 15 September 1909 entitled *Antarctic expedition for 1910* (Scott 1909) set out the objectives of Robert Falcon Scott’s second expedition to the Antarctic as announced two days earlier (*The Times* (London) 13 September 1909). The pamphlet’s front page carried a ‘Sketch map showing area to be explored’ (Fig. 1). Here was Scott’s sense of the great wedge of sea, ice and rock that he considered his to explore, the work still to be done: the confident depiction of what was known, labels defining the geographical discoveries of recent British expeditions with dates, the delineation of the seaward facing edge of the massive Ross Ice Shelf, the Barrier, rising sheer from the ocean. Central to the work, ‘the main object’ as stated in the pamphlet’s first sentence, was ‘to reach the South Pole, and to secure for the British Empire the honour of that achievement’ (Scott 1909: 1). An enticingly straight line indicated a ‘proposed sledge journey’ starting from a second base to be established in King Edward VII Land (now known as Edward VII Peninsula) at the eastern extremity of the Barrier, and heading directly south to the pole.

However, Scott decided to focus his attack on the pole from the opposite, western, end of the Barrier, where he had established his base during his first Antarctic expedition of 1901–1904. Scott planned to leave for the pole from Ross Island traveling along the route that Ernest Shackleton had pioneered during his British Antarctic Expedition of 1907–1909 with his three companions; and that Scott, with Shackleton and Edward Wilson, had initiated in 1902–1903.

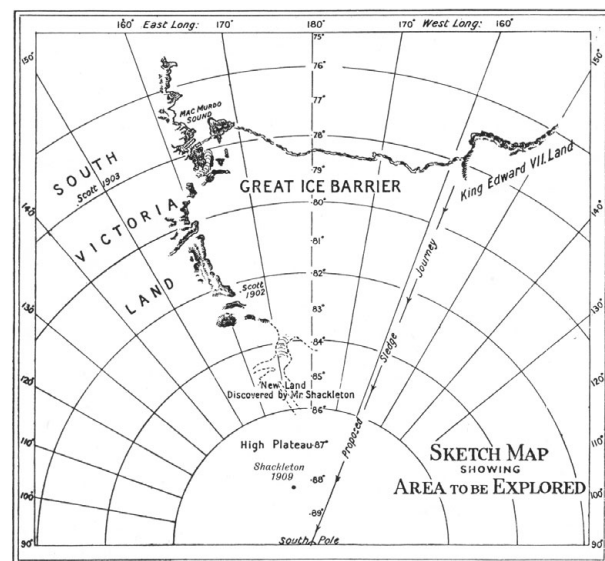


Fig. 1. ‘Sketch map showing area to be explored’ (Scott 1909). Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute Archive Ephemera 1910–1913.

King Edward VII Land and Scott’s eastern party

The exploration of King Edward VII Land, initially seen from *Discovery*, the vessel of Scott’s first expedition, in early 1902, remained, however, a key part of Scott’s strategy. Scott decided to set up a separate exploring expedition that would act completely independently from his main landing party. Tasked with entering King Edward VII Land, and led by Lieutenant Victor Campbell as surveyor, this eastern party would achieve two of Scott’s

objectives: geographical discovery and science. The six men would depart almost immediately after landing in Antarctica, peeling away from Scott and the rest of his shore party, and be out for one to two years.

But despite months of planning and publicly announced intentions, Campbell's plans for King Edward VII Land came perilously close to being cancelled. During frustrating December weeks with *Terra Nova* struggling through a greater extent of pack ice than anticipated, losing time and coal, Scott adjusted his priorities and decided that King Edward VII Land must give way to an alternative. Instead of heading east, Campbell and his party must go north and explore the unknown coast west of Cape Adare, directly south of Australia (Gran 1984: 37). *Terra Nova* would in the meantime explore the same coast from the sea before autumn ice sent her north to New Zealand for the winter (Scott 1910).

After listening to the arguments put forward to justify this decision, various members of the wardroom noted their disappointment on behalf of the eastern party, whose members had planned so long and carefully for their expedition (Gran 1984: 37). To Campbell, the King Edward VII Land expedition was his great opportunity. Trained in the Merchant Navy and Royal Navy, son of the Commander of the Royal Yacht, an old Etonian with some independent means, the 35 year old Campbell had undertaken to devote himself for two to three years to Scott, at no cost to the expedition as a whole. The first expedition to winter on the Antarctic continent, led by Carsten Borchgrevink, had built two huts at Cape Adare in 1899. King Edward VII Land was, by comparison, completely untouched; there was all to discover.

Scott established his shore party at Cape Evans on Ross Island in early January 1911, and the King Edward VII Land plans were reinstated. *Terra Nova* would after all be allowed to go east but under strict conditions. Scott now wanted his ship to reach New Zealand in plenty of time to dispatch vital mail concerning his second year plans (Hooper 2010: 71–72). Once he was ashore Scott had handed over command of *Terra Nova* to 28 year old Lieutenant Harry Pennell. Now Campbell was given temporary command of the vessel in order to find a suitable site for the eastern party's winter quarters (Scott 1968: no pagination). He had seven days between Balloon Bight, or Balloon Inlet, a deep inlet in the towering cliffs of the Barrier edge discovered in 1902 during Scott's first expedition, and King Edward VII Land, to find a suitable site for the eastern party's winter quarters, then man handle thirty tons of expedition equipment ashore. If he failed Campbell must then take *Terra Nova* north and try to achieve a landing place in the area already specified. If he failed to find anywhere to winter ashore west of Cape Adare he and his men would have to return with the ship to New Zealand. As soon as Campbell either landed, or failed to land his party, Pennell would resume command.

On 28 January 1911 Campbell rounded Cape Bird, the northernmost point of Ross Island and started east surveying the Barrier edge. King Edward VII Land was

sighted just after 8.00 am on Thursday 2 February 1911. The sea's surface revealed as predicted an extent and clutter of ice indisputable in brilliant clear light. '...turned back' noted Lieutenant Bruce, Scott's brother-in-law and a dedicated journal keeper, 'as there was no possibility of landing Campbell & Co on 100 foot high cliffs' (Bruce 1911a).

Plans for Balloon Bight

The attempt from the sea having failed Campbell immediately instituted the revised plan, first revealed to him by Scott when Scott joined *Terra Nova* in South Africa the previous August. According to a new theory, Scott had explained, the (as yet undiscovered) coast of King Edward VII Land extended under the ice shelf as far as the eastern side of Balloon Bight. Instead of landing on King Edward VII Land Campbell must find Balloon Bight then build his winter quarters hut on the anchored eastern side. The following summer he and his men could then sledge across the Barrier surface to King Edward VII Land. 'Scotts idea is one side of the bight is resting on land the other afloat so that ice aground is safe,' Campbell wrote to his cousin Vera in London, enclosing a sketch (Campbell 1910).

Early on Friday 3 February in a force 8 gale, thick with drift and snow, Campbell began working *Terra Nova* close along the ice edge searching for openings in the Barrier's face. Around 4.00 am Campbell located an inlet he had seen marked on the *Discovery* chart. But despite his eager hope of being able to land, the inlet was unusable. In continuing grim weather *Terra Nova* headed on west 'with the object of finding "Balloon Inlet" discovered by Capt. Scott,' noted the eastern party doctor, naval surgeon George Murray Levick (Levick 1911a). Expedition gear piled ready on the deck, a four-man team with Campbell in the lead stood by to reconnoitre Balloon Bight on skis, with an emergency sledge loaded with supplies for six weeks in case the ship should be blown off while they were ashore (Priestley 1911a). Campbell had taken Levick aside 'and asked me if I was willing to land here. Of course I said I didn't care two pence where I went' (Levick 1911a). Petty Officer George Abbott, a tall well-built physical education instructor and the most senior of the three naval ratings Campbell had selected for the eastern party was obviously prepared to obey orders. But for the youngest eastern party member, 24 year old Raymond Priestley, the only non-naval man, the whole exercise presented real difficulties.

Exactly three years previously Priestley had been working along the Barrier edge as a very junior member of Shackleton's 1907–1909 British Antarctic Expedition. The plan had been for Shackleton to build his winter quarters hut in Balloon Bight and explore south towards the Pole the following summer while an exploring party including Priestley sledged east to King Edward VII Land. But, despite anxious searching, no trace of Balloon Bight had been found.

Campbell however had been instructed to set up his winter quarters in Balloon Bight. And Priestley was now one of Scott's men. As a last minute replacement geologist, he was standing by ready to come ashore. Except that he knew that the Bight did not exist. In January 1908 he had recorded the search in detailed, meticulously timed entries in his diary. 'Balloon Bight it seems has been destroyed owing to the ice on either side of it having broken off & drifted off to sea as bergs so that we have sailed over the Bight,' Priestley noted at 10.30 am on 24 January (Priestley 1907–1909: 54). Instead, a broad opening in the face of the Barrier ice was found further to the south, a great indent, a wide scoop knocked out of the edge of the ice shelf, with hundreds of killer whales racing through the open water. Shackleton had named the opening the Bay of Whales, after the killers.

Wind and snow finally clearing during the evening of this long tense Friday, at 9.00 p.m. the Balloon Bight dispute was over; at least as far as everyone on *Terra Nova* was concerned. Where Balloon Bight should have been, according to Campbell's careful calculations and sights, 'there was no sign of it' (Campbell 2001: 43). Instead, they were in open ocean. Campbell then took *Terra Nova* well south of the old line of the ice shelf as marked on the charts. 'About ten o'clock tonight we steamed into a deep bay in the Barrier,' wrote Priestley, 'which proved to be Shackleton's Bay of Whales' (Priestley 1911a: 48).

Terra Nova in the Bay of Whales

The bay was just as Priestley remembered; '...the same deceptive caves and shadows having the appearance from the distance of rock exposures, the same pressure ridged cliffs, the same undulations behind, the same expanse of sea & ice...' Immensely relieved and excited, 'our observations,' he wrote, (briefly reverting to Shackleton loyalties) 'have been wonderfully upheld by our' (that is Campbell's) 'present sights & angles. Everybody has always been doubtful about this Bay of Whales we reported but our traverse along the Barrier has set the matter at rest finally.' To Priestley, there was no doubt now that Balloon Bight and the neighbouring bay marked on the *Discovery* chart had become merged into one, and the resulting bight broken back considerably more. 'It was satisfactory to find all our observations coming right & everyone backing up the Shackleton Expedition' (Priestley 1911a: 48). Then Priestley turned contentedly into his bunk for a quick sleep.

At '0.5 am' as noted in the log on Saturday, 4 February *Terra Nova* 'Rounded East... point of Bay of Whales' (*Terra Nova* 1911). Ahead, moored to the ice edge, was another ship (Fig. 2). Lieutenant Bruce, the relieving officer of the watch, had just come on to the bridge with the ship's biologist, Dennis Lillie. 'As we turned in to our wild excitement we saw a ship tied up to the sea ice' (Bruce 1911b). Men rushed up on deck, pulling on clothes, shouting. The stranger ship had three masts and no funnel. To the knowledgeable

this could only mean Nansen's famous Norwegian polar vessel *Fram*. *Terra Nova* ran close by, then made fast to the ice edge ahead at '0.15 am' (*Terra Nova* 1911).

Wakened by Lillie shaking him with the 'astounding news' (Priestley 1911b: 48), Priestley scrambled up on deck. Campbell with Levick and Priestley were lowered over the side with their skis, and set off towards a dark spot which materialised into an abandoned depot. Speeding back ahead to *Fram* Campbell 'opened up conversation with one of the watchmen... who informed him there were only three men on board & that the remainder of the party were settling Amundsen in Winter Quarters', Priestley noted in his diary at 4.00 a.m. 'They inform us that Amundsen does not intend to make his descent on the Pole till next year. This is encouraging as it means a fair race...' (Priestley 1911b: 49).

For everyone on *Terra Nova* the morning brought new faces, and especially the chance to see, and even meet, the famous explorer Amundsen. The few in Scott's confidence who had known that Amundsen was headed for Antarctica had no idea where in that vast unknown the Norwegian might have chosen to establish his winter quarters. For the seamen on *Terra Nova*, 'of course' Petty Officer Frank Browning of the eastern party noted in his journal 'we had heard rumours of other expeditions one from Japan, but we thought the Norwegians were going north' (Browning 1911). 'Several of us went aboard the *Fram*', recorded Abbott, 'Amundsen shook hands with us & had a yarn about the ship, his dogs etc... looks a typical leader... very weather beaten...' (Abbott 1910–1911). Campbell thought that Amundsen 'looks older than expected, hair nearly white, a fine looking man' (Campbell 2001: 43–44).

Campbell, Levick and Pennell skied several miles inland to visit Amundsen's almost completed hut, staying until nearly noon. Levick, taking photographs with Priestley's camera, eating Lindstrom the cook's delicious hot cakes for breakfast, recorded that: 'this has been a wonderful day' (Levick 1911b) (Fig. 3). Pennell thought the 'shore party... a fine looking body of men both in physique & appearance, whatever may be thought of their appearance in these parts,' and added 'Their sole idea is the Pole' (Pennell 1911–1912a). While inland Campbell and Pennell used every opportunity to examine the ice surface concluding that '...the Norwegian's hut... not too evidently on firm ice' (Pennell 1911–1912b). To Campbell, 'It is on the E. side of the bay and weak pressure ice extends south of it. 4 and a half miles due south over the sea ice would be a good place for a hut' (Campbell, 2001: 44).

Curious eyes ranged over each other's ships. 'While we are waiting events we have not been by any means idle,' wrote Priestley on Saturday morning (Priestley 1911b: 50). Officers and scientists were busy using *Terra Nova* as a platform for vigorous scientific work for example sounding, hauling the plankton net, taking water samples, and dredging. According to Bruce, ten of *Fram's* crew including Amundsen lunched on board



Fig. 2. *Terra Nova* and *Fram* at the ice edge in the Bay of Whales, 4 February 1911. (Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute).

Terra Nova and 'were very friendly, but didn't give away much or get much' (Bruce 1911c). On a return visit to *Fram* 'to have a look round' according to Browning, Amundsen asked him if there were any spare newspapers on *Terra Nova* as he had not read any since September. Browning 'collected all I could get also a few magazines – he was very pleased' (Browning 1911). Priestley did not go. Instead, he showed a Norwegian Lieutenant over *Terra Nova*.

Finding out about each other was both game and challenge. Information was collected in concentrated tit-bits. According to Bruce, Amundsen 'told his crew night before leaving Madeira that they were going to North Pole but were going South first' (Bruce 1911d). *Fram*'s time in the pack was carefully noted, four days according to Campbell, six to Priestley: 'They did not have as bad a time as we had' (Priestley 1911b: 49). Priestley garnered other useful facts 'about our rivals': 'They kept fresh potatoes from Norway to the Barrier.' 'Don't yet know if they will lay Depots this year' (Priestley 1911b: 53).

From the first moment of meeting, there was no doubt about the competition. '...it will be a race & I am sure we shall have to do all we can to be first, for I feel sure that dogs are by far the swiftest & safest animals that can be used for transporting food supplies etc,' summarised Abbott who having been drafted in to help with Scott's ponies in New Zealand did not rate them (Abbott 1910–

1911). Under the circumstances, appraising glances assessed equipment. 'All the Norwegians were dressed in sealskins,' commented Abbott, 'and it was very noticeable that our fellows were wearing ordinary clothing, very few of us wearing winter clothing yet' (Abbott 1910–1911). Most important were the sledge dogs. There was open admiration for Amundsen's animals, all well trained to sledge work. '115 dogs 10 bitches so can rear pups' commented Priestley, who had spent time with the few dogs Shackleton took on his 1907–1909 expedition: 'dogs ran loose on deck on voyage.' Recollecting all the data he could, '8 teams of 5 dogs each, working every other day. Polar journey teams of 10 dogs each working 1 day out of 2.' Then, at the end of a long diary entry, 'I may remember more, coherently, later' (Priestley 1911b: 53).

Campbell's dilemma

For Campbell as leader of the eastern party everything he had been seeking was now available. He had tried to locate Scott's inlet, Balloon Bight, and without a shadow of doubt it had disappeared. Instead, much larger, and further south, Shackleton's Bay of Whales offered an alternative at which his expedition equipment could be unloaded directly on to the ice edge. He had space and to spare for his winter quarters with outside the door, a route leading direct across the Barrier to King Edward VII Land. But Amundsen and his party were already in



Fig. 3. Members of Amundsen's South Pole party and Scott's eastern party outside the Norwegian hut, Bay of Whales on 4 February 1911. (Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute). Campbell, Levick, and Pennell visited Amundsen's hut on 4 February 1904. Two of the three visitors from *Terra Nova* are on the extreme right; the third is the photographer. Amundsen is clearly the fourth from the right.

place. Should the eastern party also establish their base here? The decision was key and Campbell had very little time to make it.

A keen sportsman and a good skier, Campbell spent his summers with his wife and young son on the southwest coast of Norway. He could speak Norwegian and was comfortable in the company of Norwegians (Hooper 2010: 83, 145). Amundsen and his men were heading south to achieve the Pole, Campbell and his men heading east to explore and do science, playing their part in Scott's declared expedition objectives. They were separate parties, with different goals. But, above all, Campbell absolutely did not want to go north (Bruce 1911e). He wanted to have the chance to discover the extent and nature of King Edward VII Land. Did it have vast mountain ranges similar to those that had been found in the west? To be the first to find out; that was challenge, and good fortune. The Bay of Whales had turned out to be Campbell's first and only opportunity to come ashore.

As a leader Campbell was a consensus seeker; and on *Terra Nova* the general feeling was against him. 'Our plans have of course been decided for us,' Priestley summarised, 'we cannot according to etiquette trench on their country for Winter Quarters. . .' (Priestley 1911b:

50). Pack ice prevented the eastern party from landing at King Edward VII Land, Abbott wrote to a friend, and the Norwegians were in the next landing place 'so we were done out of that' (Abbott 1911). The British Antarctic Expedition was here to achieve the South Pole. That objective was seen by all on *Terra Nova* as paramount. In this new context of a visible, physically located competitor, the eastern party's status as a separate, independent expedition was secondary to Scott's polar plans. On the general matter of the Norwegian intrusion into Scott's sphere, this was far from obvious. Scott's intention to send a party to King Edward VII Land at the eastern extreme of the 'area to be explored' as shown in the September 1909 map, had been signaled publicly well in advance. But Scott's plan for Campbell to land in Balloon Bight, positioned more centrally, had not been made public. The complex business of Scott's disinclination to believe Shackleton's assurance that he had been unable to find Balloon Bight and had instead discovered a new bay further south, the Bay of Whales, was not generally known, although the inner circle of Scott's supporters, and those at the head of the Royal Geographical Society, were acutely aware of Scott's response. The apparent uncertainty over which inlets or bights existed along this

section of the ice edge, and the names by which they were known, added confusion. Bruce having found out that Scott's Balloon Bight did not exist decided that Balloon Bight and the Bay of Whales were 'evidently one and the same bay' (Bruce 1911e): a simplifying of the issue that had obvious attractions. But there was a general feeling of loyalties having been brought into play. Campbell should not therefore be in the same area as the Norwegians.

In particular, Pennell was opposed to Campbell using the Bay of Whales for the eastern party's winter quarters. Pennell deployed two arguments. The first, safety, was predicated on assumptions about the Bay of Whales. The ice edge had already broken back radically, and recently, to create this new wide bay. How stable was the current ice edge? While on shore the area was examined, and cracks noted. Amundsen's hut was considered to have been built in 'not a very good place'. The Bay of Whales was unsafe, Pennell concluded. 'I do not think the ship would have liked to leave the Eastern Party in such a position' (Pennell 1911–1912b). *Terra Nova* would become Pennell's to command as soon as Campbell, in temporary command, found a place to land. As such, Pennell's thoughts were always with the ship, and his responsibilities for all in her.

The problem of safety triggered the second, deciding, argument. Seven days had been allocated by Scott for Campbell to find winter quarters between Balloon Bight and King Edward VII Land. Saturday 4 February was only day three. But, Pennell wrote in his diary, 'the nearest spot that could be called really safe was over 4 miles from the edge of the sea-ice (by Range-Finder). As this sea ice was continually breaking away & had several cracks across it, it would have been impossible to place his [Campbell's] gear on the ice & leave it, and to sledge it that distance would take a long time.' The eastern party's vital equipment would be at risk. 'The more the matter came up for discussion the more certain do I feel that Campbell could not have landed in the Bay of Whales apart from Amundsen being there' (Pennell 1911–1912b).

Campbell's hopes were therefore dashed by harnessing the time allocated to him by Scott to a negative assessment of local conditions. Amundsen had manifestly accepted those local conditions and selected a site for his hut accordingly. Campbell and Pennell by openly questioning Amundsen's judgement, laid the ground for the subsequent British assumption that Amundsen risked losing his hut and hopes for the pole, with a break-out of the ice (Wilson 1972: 107). Campbell, in comparison, had chosen what he considered a safe position further inland. One potentially awkward comparison was not, however, recorded. The eastern party's means for sledging their 30 tons of goods inland to the place declared safe were men in harness, and two ponies, one of which had already proved inadequate when pulling sledge loads of supplies across the sea ice to Scott's winter quarters on Ross Island. Shifting loads would not be easy for Campbell and his men, especially with the Norwegians still moving

equipment away from the ice edge at speed with teams of well trained dogs.

Bruce however was reasonably direct. 'Campbell talked of landing here, but we dissuaded him, as the feeling between the two expeditions must be strained' (Bruce 1911e).

Deeply disappointed (Campbell 1911), Campbell noted only the barest details. 'Amundsen suggested my wintering there, but I decided it would not do. Also it would have taken too long to get my hut and stores to a safe place and coal was running short. So at 2 P.M. we sailed' (Campbell 2001: 44).

Discussion and arguments continued on the ship, especially on Sunday 5 February when the wind shifted and the ship was hove to. With *Terra Nova* going nowhere, talk was intense at both ends of the ship about everything seen and heard. Three main themes were listed by Bruce: the state of the Barrier edge, what had actually happened, and why; the rights and wrongs of Amundsen's party; and 'the chances of our being able to beat them; their experience & number of dogs seem to leave us very little' (Bruce 1911d).

With the encounter still so fresh, the mood about the race was a mix of elation, engagement, and balanced assessment. Sheer luck could decide it; or dogged perseverance. The Norwegians were in dangerous winter quarters: given the eastern party's decision not to stay, this was now taken for granted. The ice could break away taking Amundsen and his men with it, and that would be the end of any race. Otherwise, everyone agreed, the race could go either way. 'It is going to be one of the finest races next summer that the world has ever seen,' Levick had enthused on Saturday, summing up the unexpected encounter (Levick 1911b). 'I think', concluded Priestley, 'that two parties will reach the Pole next year but God only knows which one will get there first' (Priestley 1911b: 52).

Campbell needed to prepare a report. The unexpected meeting at the Bay of Whales provided invaluable intelligence for Scott, last seen on 26 January setting out across the Barrier with stores to leave in a depot ready for next summer's attempt on the pole. The report listed all things observed, and achieved: the Barrier had been surveyed; there was no sign of Balloon Bight; they had come upon *Fram* and the Norwegians in the Bay of Whales; Amundsen's plans to use dogs to go to the pole, and *Fram's* movements next year. The Norwegians had the only possible landing place along the Barrier, wrote Campbell, but their camp was on bad ground with soft hummocky ice to the south. Given this state of affairs he was sorry not have seen Scott in case the eastern party's plans might have been altered (Cherry-Garrard 1910–1913). The news of Amundsen, read by Scott on 22 February at a camp on the Barrier edge having returned from his depot journey, was a great shock. Scott, reported his tent companion Cherry-Garrard, 'thinks it is very unsporting...said anyway we won't hurry – mentioned possibility of trying a nearer glacier than the

Beardmore' (Cherry-Garrard 1910–1913). Wilson, having just driven a dog team on the Barrier, doubted that Amundsen understood 'how bad an effect the monotony and the hard travelling surface of the Barrier is to animals' (Wilson 1972: 107).

Telling the story

Eye-witness accounts, especially words written immediately, have specific value as data to historians. In this context there exist valuable manuscript diaries, notebooks and letters containing first accounts from the British side. Later versions in some cases also exist as fair copies, or typescripts, many with revisions and corrections. But revised versions, along with accounts written after the event, can be subject to hindsight bias, to adjustments taking into account what happened later.

On the British side some of the open, positive emotions experienced on the day of the encounter tended to harden over time. Writing to his sister Kathleen Scott in London three and a half weeks after the meeting of the two ships, Bruce added comments not included in his daily diary entries. 'Curses loud and deep were heard everywhere' as *Terra Nova's* men came on deck after *Fram* had been sighted, Bruce wrote at the end of February. Amundsen became the oft-quoted 'perfidious' (Bruce 1911e). Priestley immediately after the encounter summarised the Norwegians in a set piece in his diary. 'The impression they have left with us is that of a set of men of distinctive personality, hard & evidently inured to hardship, good goers & pleasant good-humoured men: All these qualities combine to render them very dangerous rivals but one cannot help liking them individually, in spite of the rivalry. The Norwegians are in dangerous winter quarters for the ice is breaking out rapidly in the Bay of Whales...' (Priestley 1911b: 52). In his book *Antarctic Adventure* published in 1914, Priestley quoted the above passage as taken direct from his diary. However, with sentences and punctuation tidied up, the quote was cut after 'dangerous rivals'. His sentiment that 'one can't help liking them individually' did not survive into the printed version (Priestley 1914: 40).

At the same time the narratives of what happened were simplified. Campbell's brief account in *Scott's Last Expedition* published in 1913 described the return journey along the Barrier from King Edward VII Land looking for Balloon Bight 'or some inlet at the east end of the Barrier' as a landing place (with no mention of any instructions), Balloon Bight's disappearance, and finding Shackleton's Bay of Whales (Scott 1913: 84–86). Priestley's *Antarctic Adventure* left out any mention of Balloon Bight, Scott's instructions, all the uncertainty over the configuration of the ice-shelf edge. *Terra Nova*, in this account, having turned away from King Edward VII Land, headed along the Barrier edge, steamed into the Bay of Whales, found the Norwegians, briefly experienced their company and left. The business of decision making, assumptions drawn, actions based on instruc-

tions that later proved to be inaccurate, the bumpy texture of days as they actually happened, as revealed in the first, unamended unrevised diary accounts, adjusted, as was the convention, to fit a smoother narrative line.

Part of the narrative line was a narrowing of focus. King Edward VII Land having failed as an objective slipped from attention. The fact that that much sought after land buttressing the eastern end of the Ross Ice Shelf was in fact entered across the barrier ice from the Bay of Whales in November 1911 by a three man exploring party from Amundsen's expedition, was not referred to; nor that a first entry from the sea was achieved by a Japanese party in January 1912. Notching up firsts in Antarctica was in truth a very competitive business. The six members of the eastern party having survived extraordinary hardship discovered, when *Terra Nova* finally arrived to remove all remaining members of the British Antarctic Expedition from Ross Island in January 1913, that unknown to anyone in Antarctica their name had been changed from 'Eastern' to 'Northern'. They were now known as the 'Northern party' – and diaries and accounts were adjusted and altered to fit.

What if – and a conclusion

The author would like to end on the indulgence of a 'what if' question. If Campbell had been able to unload his eastern party ashore in King Edward VII Land, as he desired, *Terra Nova* would, with no other task required, and under a time and fuel constraint, almost certainly have headed straight back to Ross Island to leave a report for Scott, before going north, as instructed. Amundsen's presence in the Bay of Whales would therefore have remained undetected. Rivalry would have remained a potential, rather than a specific threat.

For Scott and his men, the race would have been theoretical as it unrolled, though real in its outcome. Uneven between the participants, Amundsen knowing that he was racing, Scott unsure that he was, and if so, from which quarter the competitor might be coming.

The meeting of *Fram* and *Terra Nova* in the Bay of Whales in that sense created drama. The fourteen hours of the encounter were crucial. They turned, in effect, two separate scripts into a joint performance, for a world audience.

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