

# SHACKLETON'S SHIPS

A FUN & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by Alan S. Noake MBE

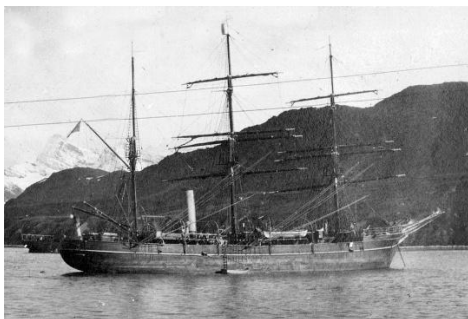
## DISCOVERY



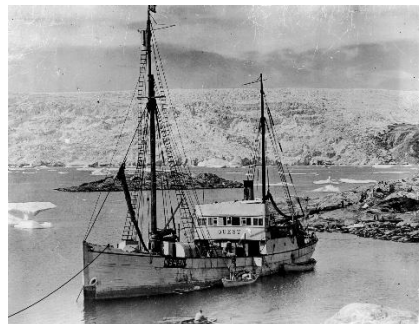
## NIMROD



## ENDURANCE



## QUEST



*This pack forms part of the legacy of the Kent Scouts REQUEST2021 Antarctica Project. The fifth project objective was OUTREACH with the aim of inspiring thousands of young people about the peace, environment and heritage lessons to be learned from the icy frozen continent of Antarctica.*

# CASTING OFF

So, what can we learn from the story of a ship? There are some important life lessons to be learned from each of the ships the famous explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton boarded to sail to Antarctica.

Between them Shackleton's Ships share a wealth of tales of courage, rivalry, friendship, survival, hope and despair. The Antarctic voyages of all four ships span what is known as the heroic age of Antarctic exploration.

Shackleton's first journey to Antarctica on Captain Scott's **Discovery** Expedition (1901-1904). Despite being sent home due to ill health the voyage kindled a desire in the young sailor to return to the "great white south".

With **Nimrod** (1907-1909) Shackleton set out on his own attempt at the South pole and was only 97 miles from it when he made the difficult but sensible decision to turn back.

The most famous of Shackleton's Antarctic voyages was on board the **Endurance** (1914-1918). When the ship tragically sank below the ice a long series of events transpired which eventually led to Shackleton's rescuing all the ship's crew.

His final voyage on the **Quest** (1921-1922) became Shackleton's swan song. He died as the ship arrived in South Georgia, but his legacy has gone on to inspire other polar adventures and undertakings down the years.

The exciting rediscovery of the wrecks of both *Endurance* and *Quest* in recent years has sparked a fresh interest in these important polar vessels and the spirit of adventure they represent.

Many books have been written and published about Shackleton's expeditions. The concept of this resource is to focus on the ship's themselves and what their stories can do to inspire young people to dream big and seek out adventures of their own. Let's cast off and see what we can find...



# DISCOVERY

Ernest Shackleton was third officer on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's Discovery Expedition (1901-1904). He was invalided home early due to health reasons, including scurvy, after participating in a southern sledge journey with Scott and Dr. Edward Wilson that set a new record at 82° South. This experience was Shackleton's first in the polar regions.

## **Early Role:**

Shackleton joined Scott's Discovery Expedition as third officer, a position that included responsibilities like deep sea water analysis and editing the South Polar Times, which was later published as a two-volume work.

## **Southern Journey:**

He was part of the sledging party that travelled south with Scott and Wilson, setting a new record at 82° South.

## **Invalided Home:**

Shackleton was forced to return home before the expedition's end due to illness, including scurvy, which was likely a result of inadequate supplies and poor vitamin C intake.

## **Disappointment:**

Shackleton was deeply disappointed to be sent home and would have preferred to remain with the Discovery.

## **Later Expeditions:**

Following his experience on the Discovery Expedition, Shackleton went on to lead his own Antarctic expeditions: the Nimrod expedition (1907-09), the Endurance expedition (1914-17), which is particularly well-known for its survival story and his final Quest expedition (1921-22) which Kent Scouts honoured with their 2021-22 REQUEST2021 Antarctica Project.

## **Controversy with Scott:**

Shackleton's later expeditions led to some tension with Scott, particularly after Shackleton's Nimrod expedition reached 88°23'S, very close to the South Pole, and used the same area as Scott's Discovery base, which Scott considered his own territory.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES - DISCOVERY

Tour of the ship videos:

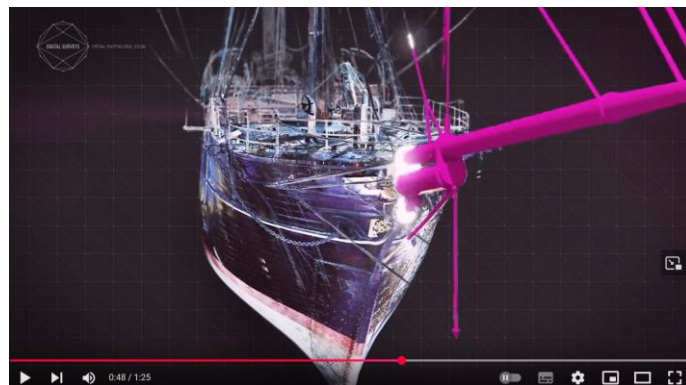
<https://youtu.be/mHBJOcDaL7U>



<https://youtu.be/NCwqUP9rS1g>



Digital Surveys | 3D Scanning the RRS Discovery:



<https://youtu.be/0mFk-T9BPF8>

Scott's Discovery I Presented To Boy Scouts (1937):



Scott's Discovery I Presented To Boy Scouts (1937)

[https://youtu.be/VNC\\_oinyuSk](https://youtu.be/VNC_oinyuSk)

Scouts On Discovery (1963):



<https://youtu.be/40WbJTpSiew>

# NIMROD

Shackleton's Nimrod expedition was the first expedition led by Sir Ernest Shackleton to the Antarctic. The expedition, officially known as the British Antarctic Expedition, aimed to be the first to reach the South Pole. While they didn't succeed in reaching the Pole, they made significant achievements, including climbing Mount Erebus, reaching the South Magnetic Pole, and nearly reaching the South Geographic Pole, coming within 97 miles of it.

Key aspects of the Nimrod Expedition:

**Aim:** To be the first to reach the South Pole and conduct scientific research.

**Leadership:** Led by Ernest Shackleton.

**Ship:** The expedition's vessel was the ship Nimrod, which set sail in 1907.

**Notable achievements:**

- First ascent of Mount Erebus.
- Reaching the South Magnetic Pole.
- Failing to reach the South Pole but reaching within 97 miles of it.

**Personnel:** Included scientists, sailors, and other crew members.

**Challenges:** Extreme cold, hunger, danger, and psychological trauma were faced by the expedition members.

**Legacy:** The Nimrod Expedition is remembered for its daring attempt to reach the South Pole and for the scientific discoveries made during the journey.



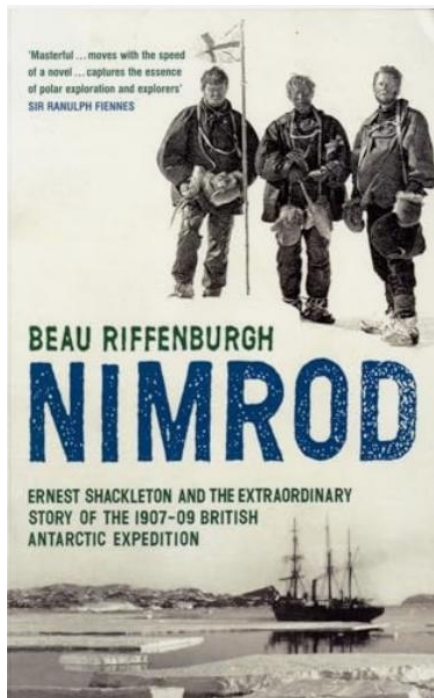
*Jameson Adams, Frank Wild and Eric Marshall (from left to right) plant the Union Jack at their southernmost position, 88° 23', on 9 January 1909. The photograph was taken by expedition leader Ernest Shackleton.*



## SUGGESTED RESOURCES - NIMROD

Nimrod book:

<https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Nimrod/8DWqQgAACAAJ>



### **YOUTUBE VIDEO**

#### **Shackleton Talk On The Nimrod Expedition**



<https://youtu.be/aja8TCo5JGk>

Nimrod Jigsaw:

<https://www.mediastorehouse.co.uk/jigsaw-puzzles/scott-polar-research-institute/british-antarctic-expedition-1907-09-nimrod/s-y-nimrod-leaving-lyttleton-south-january-1st-20265192.html>



# ENDURANCE

Shackleton's Endurance expedition was an audacious, yet ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to be the first to cross Antarctica on foot. The expedition's ship, the Endurance, became trapped in ice in the Weddell Sea and was subsequently crushed, forcing the crew to camp on ice floes and eventually navigate to safety. Despite the dramatic challenges, every member of the expedition survived thanks to Shackleton's leadership and the crew's resilience.



**The Plan:** The expedition, officially named the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, aimed to be the first to cross Antarctica from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea, via the South Pole. Two ships, Endurance and Aurora, were used, with Shackleton leading the Endurance and Aeneas Mackintosh the Aurora. Shackleton intended to land a party at Vahsel Bay, with six men under his leadership to trek across the continent, supported by supply depots laid by the Aurora.

**The Disaster:** The Endurance encountered thick sea ice in the Weddell Sea and became trapped. The ship was crushed by the ice over a period of months, forcing the crew to abandon it and camp on the ice. The men drifted with the ice for several months, experiencing extreme conditions.

**The Survival:** When the ice broke up, the crew launched the lifeboats and eventually reached Elephant Island, a desolate and rocky island. Shackleton, along with five others, sailed in a small boat to South Georgia, a 16-day journey across dangerous waters. Shackleton then led a rescue effort, successfully retrieving all his men from Elephant Island.

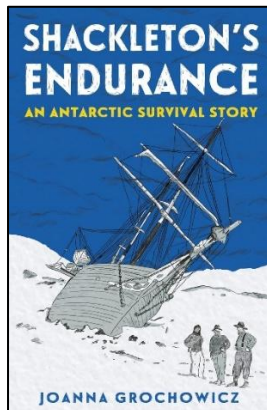
**Outcome:** Despite the dramatic survival story, the expedition's primary goal of crossing Antarctica was not achieved. Shackleton's leadership and the crew's resilience were celebrated, earning him widespread fame.

**Rediscovery:** The Endurance, which had been lost for over a century, was rediscovered in 2022 on the bottom of the Weddell Sea.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES - ENDURANCE

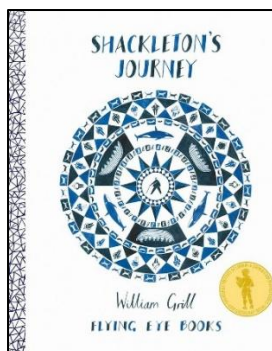
Shackleton's Endurance:

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Shackleton\\_s\\_Endurance/XWsYEAAAQBAJ](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Shackleton_s_Endurance/XWsYEAAAQBAJ)



Shackleton's Journey:

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Shackleton\\_s\\_Journey/PrYgEQAAQBAJ](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Shackleton_s_Journey/PrYgEQAAQBAJ)



The Lego Endurance set:

<https://www.lego.com/en-us/aboutus/news/2024/november/the-icons-the-endurance-set>



How Endurance was Found New animated Search Map, showing the day-by-day voyage of Agulhas II during the mission to find the missing polar vessel.

<https://fmht.co.uk/shackletons-endurance-revealed/wreck-hunt/>



# QUEST

The Shackleton-Rowett Expedition, led by Sir Ernest Shackleton, was his final Antarctic expedition, which took place in 1921-1922. Financed by John Quiller Rowett, it's also known as the Quest Expedition, after the ship used, the Quest. The expedition's primary goal was to collect scientific data in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic areas, including meteorological, magnetic, zoological, geological, hydrographical, and oceanographical studies, as well as exploring and charting previously unknown islands.

## **Funding:**

Initially, Shackleton sought funding from the Canadian government for an Arctic expedition, but when this fell through, John Quiller Rowett stepped in to finance a voyage to Antarctica.

## **Objectives:**

The expedition aimed to circumnavigate the Antarctic continent and explore the Southern Ocean, including little-known islands and areas.

## **Ship:**

The expedition used the ship Quest, originally a Norwegian sealer, which was heavily modified for the Antarctic voyage.

## **Scientific Work:**

The expedition undertook a wide range of scientific studies, including meteorological examinations, magnetic observations, zoological studies, geological surveys, hydrographical and oceanographical work, and the charting of little-known islands.

## **Tragedy:**

Shackleton died of a massive heart attack during the expedition in South Georgia, and the expedition continued under the leadership of Frank Wild.

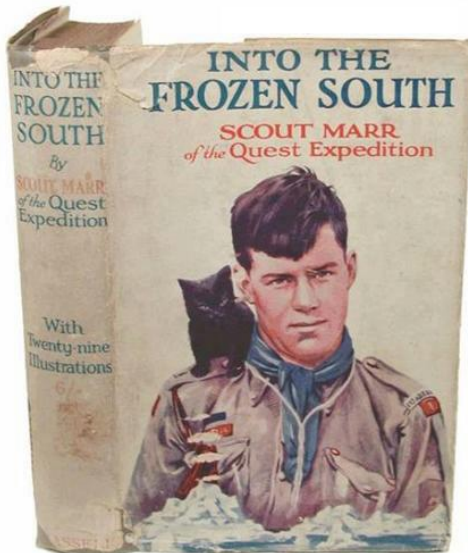
## **REQUEST2021:**

Kent Scouts recreated the ethos of the expedition in 2021-22 when ten of their members sailed on a tall ship to Antarctica and carried out polar research projects.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES – Quest

Into The Frozen South:

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Into\\_the\\_Frozen\\_South/4VOmNAEACAAJ](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Into_the_Frozen_South/4VOmNAEACAAJ)



Online versions: -

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/64196/64196-h/64196-h.htm>

<https://ia800902.us.archive.org/29/items/intofrozensouth00marruoft/intofrozensouth00marruoft.pdf>

South Georgia Museum – Shackleton's Last Quest Online Exhibition:

<https://sgmuseum.gs/chapter/shackletons-last-quest/>

Kent Scouts REQUEST2021 Polar Research Project:

<https://www.request2021.org.uk/>

## **YOUTUBE VIDEOS**

Shackleton's ship at London and Tower Bridges (1921):

<https://youtu.be/TJ495lW0VBk>

Departure of Sir Ernest Shackleton 's ship "The Quest" from Tower Bridge for South (1921): <https://youtu.be/5HYEZ0enJGE>