

## Paths are made by Walking



The beginnings of a plan for a biography of Hartley Travers Ferrar

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## Introduction

Over the last couple of years I have spent quite some time at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge (SPRI) familiarizing myself with material on Captain Scott's National Antarctic Expedition (NAE) of 1901-4. I started with documents directly to do with my grandfather, Hartley Travers Ferrar (HT), the expedition Geologist, and moved on to other material as I felt drawn to it. My aim was to wander through the archive, as it were, and let my impressions settle before making decisions about what, if anything, I wanted to do with it all. Of course the idea of a biography was always there but I didn't know if familiarity would turn me away or bring me closer. I wanted to do the PCAS course to help with clarification. This essay is the culmination of the process so far.

Hartley Ferrar was the youngest of the 'Officers' and as such came in for a fair amount of 'joshing'. His cabin was a small one amid-ships, a placing which underlined his position as a non-naval scientist, yet not part of the 'men' either; neither fish nor fowl. The cartoon of him as *Our Junior Scientist* shows an awkward, unhappy youth. He had perpetual headaches on *Discovery* which stayed with him the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup>



This was Ferrar's first job after graduating and I shall return later to the circumstances of the appointment (see page 7). He had been a champion sportsman at school, winning cups galore and becoming Head Boy. At Cambridge he had been an oarsman; the top of the tree. He was rowing at Henley when the news came through that he would be going to Antarctica. Within a month of this peak experience he found himself the unfledged new boy, an Irishman on what was effectively a Royal Navy ship, an unproven, un-published, newly-graduated scientist packed off to the ends of the earth with nearly fifty chaps who, even though one or two of the 'men' were younger than him, had vastly more experience of the rough-and-tumble world of working life on a ship.

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<sup>1</sup>Scott Polar Research Institute Oral History Programme, *Evelyn Forbes in conversation with Harry King* (DVD, Cambridge, SPRI, 1994)

In the light of what I have been learning about how things are managed in Antarctica today, the possible lessons that could be drawn from Ferrar's experiences arise from the private nature of his thoughts and how he dealt with them in these trying circumstances. How might we, these days, encourage the sharing of unheard thoughts, for the benefit of all, without jeopardising a 'happy' atmosphere that may have been bought at the expense of some people's silence?

There are four main areas around the thread of HT Ferrar's life in which I have been particularly interested and which may or may not shed light on this question:

- different people's descriptions of particular events with the glimpses of HT that emerge and the contradictions that appear
- how decisions are made elsewhere by those in power
- New Zealand, specifically Christchurch, being my shared background with all of my grandparents
- HT's private asides and his subjective experiences.

### **The Questionable Reliability of Diaries**

The landing on Macquarie island on Friday November 22nd 1901 provides a clear example of seemingly contradictory accounts. I read Duncan's first and was then a bit surprised by Skelton's. Armitage's is different again and so is Wilson's. Some of the spelling in Duncan's has been corrected as its idiosyncrasies are probably at least partially attributable to the typist:

Duncan: "Land was sighted early this morning. We continued towards it all day coming to anchor 4pm at Macquarie Island and two boats went on shore, I being in one of them. We had some trouble in landing but it was overcome by going in between some rocks and seaweed. On landing we saw great flocks of Penwings King Specie and presently we got startled by coming across a Sea Elephant and we were delighted. Mr Skelton took some photos of it and he made a charge upsetting camera and stand. The same gentleman getting revenge by giving him some heavy blows with Boats foot spur. Mr Barnes putting the finishing trek on him with A Mauser Pistol..... [...] ...we met Mr Skelton having been on the hill top and shot some rabbits one of them being black. We returned to the boats and got all the specimens on board also several live Penwings, getting on board Ship 8pm and underway by 9pm. Temperature 41°."<sup>2</sup>

Skelton has a different version:

"...Sighted Macquarie island between 10.0 & 11.0 AM, somewhere about 20 miles off, also the Bishop & Clark Rocks... We came up to the Southern end... & then ran into a small bay, ...about 3.30 PM & anchored. ....

"Soon after 4.0 we embarked in the two Quarter whalers, all officers & scientists landing except Royds, & about 12 seamen, etc. I went in the Captain's boat & steered her ashore to one of the huts, where we found a passage running in between some rocks, & the swell kept down by huge masses of kelp & seaweed. The other boat followed us. Directly after landing the Captain spotted a seal basking just above the beach, great excitement of

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<sup>2</sup> J Duncan, *Journal of a Voyage to the Antarctic 1901-02 S S Discovery* (Dundee 1973) p 5.

course, & yells for a rifle. No rifle forthcoming, so I got my camera out & took some photos quite close. As I was taking a front view of the beast Heald, one of the seamen, was seized with a mania for murder & started belting the animal on the head, so my photo did not come off & the camera was very nearly upset. As it was, part of the case was turned over. Duncan & Heald then went on battering the animal in a most absurd way, until I got a Mauser revolver into its head... ...Left the shore about 8.0 PM for the ship, hoisted boats & steamed out about 9.0."<sup>3</sup>

In the light of Wilson's bribe (below), I'm sure Armitage's delight was completely genuine!:

"As we approached the island, we were all delighted by Captain Scott's decision to land. Boats were speedily made ready; and when we brought to in Lusitania anchorage, a large party, including all the officers except Royds, went away in two of the whaleboats....

"A sea-elephant was lying close to where we landed, and as my boat lay off, waiting until all from the Captain's boat were on shore, the Captain shouted to us from the shore for a rifle, for the beast was making for the water. Barne, who was in my boat, immediately seized a Mauser pistol, leapt into the water and waded to the beach. By the time he landed, however, the terrified brute had been headed off, and after being photographed was killed....

"Some of us followed the course of a lovely little waterfall until we arrived on a plateau surrounded by hills, where we saw a figure waving his arms about his head in an endeavour to ward off the attacks of a pair of furious skua gulls. It was Ferrar, who had gone on ahead of us, and was evidently near the birds' nest. We speedily went to his rescue; found the nest, which contained two eggs; and shot the parent birds...."<sup>4</sup>

And here is Wilson to set the record straight:

"...I told the Pilot [Armitage] that I would give him a bottle of liqueur if he could persuade the Skipper to allow us to land here for collecting. Off he went like a shot and soon after came up and told me he wanted the liqueur. Up came the Skipper and down came the sails and we steamed slowly along the island at a mile or a mile and a half, till we came opposite to a low lying shore at the foot of a valley which ran up into the island ending in two peaks hidden partly in cloud.

[...]

"We left the ship about 5p.m. and in two boats, after ploughing through a tremendous tangle of some gigantic seaweed, we landed on a low beach, very comfortably. At the very spot where we landed there lay a big brown seal fast asleep. Out came cameras, hammers, guns, rifles, Mauser pistols, clubs, and sketch books, till the poor beast woke up and gazed on us with its saucer-like eyes, and then being dissatisfied with the look of some 20 men and cameras, it opened its mouth to its widest, shewing a very old woman's set of teeth, poor thing, and gave a loud inspiratory sort of roar which startled us all. And then up went its tail end and it made a half dash at the camera, then it backed again into some long tussocky grass and a foul stinking

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<sup>3</sup> Judy Skelton (ed), *The Antarctic Journals of Reginald Skelton* (Cheltenham 2004) p 28.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Armitage, *Two Years in the Antarctic* (London 1905) p 27 - 28.

stagnant pool of water, always keeping its mouth open most threateningly, till at last it couldn't stand things any longer and made another clumsy dash for the camera stand, which collapsed, and then the poor beast was sacrificed in the interests of science, as it was a seal we shall not see in the Antarctic.”<sup>5</sup>

Curiously, Scott doesn't mention the elephant seal at all, but writes chiefly of his little dog's reaction to the penguins.<sup>6</sup> Ferrar's diaries at SPRI don't start until Christmas Eve, when *Discovery* has left Lyttleton, though there are Geological notebooks of his for Macquarie Island. Although I have looked at everything of his in the collection at SPRI, I haven't transcribed or even made notes on the bulk of it yet. This is the happy task ahead of me. I've re-booked my reader's desk in Cambridge for the first slots available after my return to England. I'm already exponentially better-equipped for the tasks that await me there and one of the first things I shall do is see if he had anything to say about being attacked by skuas. He had his revenge in Antarctica where he shot hosts of them for food<sup>7</sup>.

Apart from Scott's formal assessment of Ferrar's contribution to the expedition, most of the sightings in other people's writings are of him disappearing over the horizon busy with his Geological questing. The diary extracts above are probably representative of the literature in general. The proportion that mentions Ferrar is not high. He's a bit of a cipher, but I have not come across much grumbling about him. When Vince dies on March the 11th 1902, HT goes out with Armitage to find the others:

“...Ferrar leading three of the lost - Barne, Evans and Quartley. Ferrar's tale was soon told. He had accompanied Armitage's party, and, guided by Wild, they had made for Castle Rock and eventually found the abandoned sledges, and, at first, nothing near them but two dogs cosily coiled up beneath the snow; but later, as they circled round on their ropes, they had providentially come on the three with whom he had returned. Armitage had picked him to return because his geological work had given him an exceptional knowledge of the locality.”<sup>8</sup>

In the ski-ing race which formed part of the King's Birthday celebrations, there's a lovely moment when Bernacchi, struggling to overtake the man in front, whom he thinks is the champion skier Skelton, finds, once past him, that it was Ferrar. He turns and

“finds himself looking into the sphinx-like countenance of our Geologist”<sup>9</sup>

The only story about the expedition that I've known since childhood concerns HT and three others being stranded on an ice floe for several hours. HT says:

“Jan 15th Turned in at 2.45am & turned out again almost immediately to bring the penguins back to the ship with Wilson. Got the penguins on to a

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<sup>5</sup> Ann Savours (ed), *Edward Wilson - Diary of the Discovery Expedition...* (London 1966) p 77.

<sup>6</sup> Captain Scott, *Voyage of the Discovery Vol I* (London 1905) p 103.

<sup>7</sup> Ferrar diary SPRI (Personal notes). General catalogue reference: MS 1264/1-6; BJ.

<sup>8</sup> Scott 1905, Vol 1, p 220-1.

<sup>9</sup> Armitage p 151.

floe where two men were skinning seals. This got adrift & we were left on the floe until 8 a.m. Had some cocoa when I got on board and turned in.”<sup>10</sup>

Scott has a bit more to say on this occasion:

“Leaving the men to get in the seal carcasses and some ice for our boilers, I turned in at two [a.m.] to get a few hours’ rest before we again put to sea. On returning to the deck at 7.30 I was told that all work was completed, but that some five hours before a party consisting of Dr. Wilson, Mr. Ferrar, Cross and Weller had got adrift on a floe, and that no one had thought of picking them up. Although the sun had been shining brightly all night, the temperature had been down to 18° [F], and afar off I could see four disconsolate figures tramping about to keep themselves warm on a detached floe not more than fifteen yards across. When at length our wanderers scrambled over the side, it was very evident they had a big grievance, and it was only after some hot cocoa that they could talk of their experience with ease. They had been obliged to keep constantly on the move, and when they thought of smoking to relieve the monotony of the situation, the smokers found they had pipes and tobacco, but no match. It was whilst they were dismally discussing this fact that Dr. Wilson, a non-smoker, came nobly to the rescue and succeeded in producing fire with a small pocket magnifying glass - a fact which shows not only the resource of the officer, but the power of the midnight sun in these latitudes.”<sup>11</sup>

Wilson writes it up even more fully, adding the detail that he had got Ferrar out of his bunk to help him salvage some penguin carcasses that were on a floe beyond another floe where two men were skinning seals. At one point he says,

“Happily we were all four together with the seals and the penguins on one floe”!<sup>12</sup>

In eleven lines of text he uses the word ‘happily’ three times; it used to be called ‘putting a brave face on it’. These days a person might be accused of ‘denial’. In the family handed-down oral version the impression was somehow conveyed that getting stuck on an ice floe was a bit silly, a bit of a ‘lark’, but had put others to inconvenience in that a boat had had to be lowered for a rescue; not something to be particularly proud of.

Being the butt of jokes, or at least experiencing himself as such<sup>13</sup>, Ferrar occasionally took the upper hand by playing the clown. In a debate between two of the other officers on the relative merits of Tennyson and Browning, the latter’s poem *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* had been presented as evidence of Browning’s quality. HT raised a good laugh by remarking,

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<sup>10</sup> Ferrar diary SPRI

<sup>11</sup> Scott p 141.

<sup>12</sup> Savours p 100.

<sup>13</sup> Ferrar diary SPRI

“Well I don’t go much on poetry, but I do go on rats!”<sup>14</sup>

## Power Politics

I now return to the question of how H T Ferrar was given the job of Geologist on *Discovery*. Originally Professor Gregory, a Geologist, was offered the job of expedition leader, which he accepted. Some time later Sir Clements Markham decided that Robert Falcon Scott should be in charge. There was correspondence in which Gregory sought to confirm his position but, receiving no satisfactory replies, he resigned. The question was really whether the expedition was a scientific one, with the Navy providing transport and logistics under a scientific head, or whether it was a Naval ‘jolly’ taking a few scientists along to keep the funders happy. Markham wrote to Scott telling him who he should talk to on which committees to make sure of his position; of the unfortunate Professor Gregory he says,

“The impudence of Gregory’s draft has taken my breath away.”<sup>15</sup>

The position under discussion changed from ‘Head of Scientific Staff’ to ‘Head of Civilian Staff’ and then to ‘Head of Civilian Scientific Staff’ over three consecutive documents<sup>16</sup>. By the time Hartley Ferrar was recruited the job had become a very lowly one indeed. The requirement seems to have been to be young and strong and to know how to tolerate abuse. Skelton writes of how Armitage speaks to HT in front of the men:

“Wednesday 3rd December 1902: Armitage talks to him in a most absurd way, a sort of bullying or ridiculing tone, in front of the men. Very bad form I think &, as I told Koettlitz, I wouldn’t stand it, but then he knows better than to speak like that to anybody who ‘knows the ropes’... The doctor makes young Ferrar fly around.”<sup>17</sup>

In a similar context Skelton says that Armitage doesn’t think Ferrar is any good at sledging, but at that point, and indeed when Armitage is speaking rudely to him, Ferrar is going down with scurvy. At other times his sledging ability is not in doubt.<sup>18</sup>

Markham was looking for someone who wouldn’t be impudent, maybe. He *had* to have his own way and he was very well-practised in getting it. He writes to Scott,

“You remind me of Macham to an extraordinary degree, not in face but in many characteristics and ways. In face you are just like Sherand Osborne. Combine the two, with the tenacity of McClintock, and you will be, as I feel confident you will, the greatest of polar explorers.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Scott vol 1, p 327.

<sup>15</sup> SPRI MS 366/15/53 10th January 1901

<sup>16</sup> SPRI MS 366/11/63-66

<sup>17</sup> Skelton p 138

<sup>18</sup> Skelton p 138-41

<sup>19</sup> MS 366/15/56 September 1901 (the names are those of earlier Polar heroes)

Scott was very much Markham's protégé, but I have no information about how Ferrar came to his notice. An alternative version to the tale of HT having received the news of his appointment whilst rowing at Henley has Markham seeing young Ferrar rowing at Henley and offered him the post on the spot. I do not believe it. I have asked people and I have begun to trawl the records, but the answer has not yet arrived. I wasn't preparing for academic work when I made my notes in SPRI, just making brief jottings so that I knew which documents I wanted to look at again and why. The 'selection process' for the NAE of 1901-4 is something which wouldn't stand up to scrutiny these days, but the rules were different then. We may think things have improved, but who can tell? It could well be that the current policy of profiling people to see if they fit the mould for Antarctic workers is wasting a lot of potential. People who have good contributions to make both in Antarctica and the rest of the world may be being overlooked. Those who know how to manipulate whatever system pertains for their own ends will probably always do so. They will call it 'winning' and 'success'.

### Christchurch and other New Zealand connections

On the 28th January 1879 Hartley Ferrar was born in Dalkey, now a fashionable part of Dublin. At about that same time his future wife's father, Andrew Anderson, was building a house beside the Heathcote river in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was completed in 1881 and named *Merchiston* after his school.

Andrew Anderson was the first settler boy born after the foundation of the city of Christchurch. His father was the second mayor. Their firm *Andersons* built railways the length and breadth of the country and supplied engineering expertise and equipment of many sorts. As well as keeping 'open house' for the 'Officers' of *Discovery*, *Andersons* would have had commercial dealings with the expedition. Andrew Anderson's daughter Gladys met HT on his way to and from the Antarctic. Gladys' youngest brother, Hugh Boscawen Anderson, gives this account of it:

“...Captain Scott, in *Discovery*, returned from South Polar seas and this led to a pretty constant succession of 'dos'. Two other ships accompanied *Discovery* - *Morning* and *Terra Nova* both of which had been sent South to assist *Discovery* which, for some months had been in serious danger of being caught in the ice. Lieut. 'Teddy' Evans was in *Terra Nova* and during this time in Christchurch he married a local girl, Miss Russell.<sup>20</sup> For the younger people, a series of picnics and minor expeditions, in which Lieut. Armitage filled the part of disciplinary chaperone, took place... If a boy stayed too long in the company of any one girl, he was firmly but smilingly hived off by the Rajah of Bong, as we called him. He was very popular with us all and as a P. & O. officer, went on to command that company's smart express mail steamer *Isis* which ran between Brindisi and Port Said.<sup>21</sup>

[...]

The Easter holiday saw us at Morthoe in North Devon where Hartley Ferrar, on leave from Egypt, joined us... Morthoe ... had quite an imposing boarding house called *Castle Rock*, just a few yards above a magnificent beach... we

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<sup>20</sup> Young Hugh is evidently not concerned about his sister Mabel's feelings for Teddy Evans (see Scott Polar Research Institute Oral History Programme, *Evelyn Forbes in conversation with Harry King* (DVD, Cambridge, SPRI, 1994))

<sup>21</sup> H. B. Anderson, *The Day's Run* (Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1977) p 58.



had this beach virtually to ourselves... From this time, plans emerged for Gladys and Hartley to marry during his leave, in the following year.<sup>22</sup>  
[...]

... I joined a family party that was assembling in Edinburgh for Gladys' wedding that took place on 12th August... seeing the happy couple off on a trip that was to take them to Ulster...and a large collection of Hartley's connections and friends...”<sup>23</sup>

HT and Gladys had four children, born in England, Egypt, Ireland and New Zealand. My father, Michael, the youngest, was born in Whangarei in 1921. The family was living in Wellington at the time of HT's sudden death in 1932. In 1935 Gladys took Michael and her two daughters to England where Michael followed his father HT through Oundle School and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He was in submarines during WWII and then came back to New Zealand and worked for *Andersons* for a few years. He met and married my mother, Sally Parr, whose family had been in New Zealand since the 1850s. By the time I was born in Christchurch, however, my three remaining grandparents were living in England. My parents took me there for a visit in 1953 and never made it back.



Hartley Ferrar lived longer in New Zealand than I have so far. On his return to England from Antarctica he was employed in Egypt working for the Survey Department on geological surveys. Some time between 1912 and 1914 he brought his growing family out to New Zealand to stay with Gladys' parents at *Merchiston*. When WWI broke out he signed up with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Palestine. After the war he taught in Christchurch for a little while before joining the New Zealand Geological Survey in 1919. He did a lot of work on soil; the underlying geology, soil quality and irrigation. He wrote several official publications as well as around thirty papers on different subjects for scientific journals in Egypt, England and New Zealand. Every time I trawl the internet I find some new article, but I have not yet tracked them all down. Smith, a Cambridge room-mate of HT's, writes in his 1932 obituary:

“In his latest outstanding work (Bull. No.33, New Series, 1929), ‘On the Soils of Irrigation Areas in Otago Central’, his Egyptian experiences were invaluable, as shown by his discussion of the irrigation problems... It was largely on the strength of this last publication that, in February last, Ferrar was awarded the degree of D.Sc. (Diploma) by the University of New Zealand...”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> p 78 ibid

<sup>23</sup> p 87-88 ibid

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Smith *Dr H T Ferrar* in *Nature*, no 3264, vol 129, p 751

He continued to work for the New Zealand Geological Survey until his untimely death on the 19th of April 1932. He was the assistant director at the time.

Ferrar Peak, in the Cloudy Peaks range, is named in his honour. In making his home in New Zealand, devoting himself to the service of his adopted country, he established himself in its heart. In doing so he also set up a vacillation between hemispheres which persists through the generations, as shown in my own life.

### **H T Ferrar in his own words**

These are from my rough notes, included because the diaries are what I like best and this gives a flavour of them. I have left out most of the books he read, which would have doubled the length of this section. He was always reading when he wasn't dashing about seeing to sticks in glaciers or lumps of ice etc.. There were three versions of some entries and I have put the different versions beside each other.<sup>25</sup> My comments are italicized in square brackets [*like so*].

#### **1902**

##### **January**

5th The skis are long smooth planks turned up at the end and the best way to get along is to go in a slip-shod manner like Mohammedans in sandals.

12th The snow-clad bold coastline of Victoria Land is very pretty

##### **February**

8th Was the first to see that Mts Erebus & Terror formed an Island [*HT was the first man to ascend Observation Hill, where he built a cairn on this day*]<sup>26</sup>

10th Cook put in hand-cuffs

19th 1st sledge trip ... Shackleton, Wilson & myself

21st Epsom salt! [*HT realised from this find that there had been a hot spring in the area*]

##### **March**

8th Contest of Tennyson (Bernacchi) vs Browning (Shackleton) on various themes

19th Set a piece of ice under strain & watched it all day... Was annoyed at the supervision I received from Shackleton.

29th Am not yet able to get on properly with my ship-mates

##### **April**

14th Have received frequent rude rebuffs quite against the spirit of the Expedition. Merely put this down here to make a note of it: will not particularize.

23rd Several jokes at my expense, may make my notes in my other diary appear in a different light, have appeared.

25th 5 iced-bergs (!) on bolts at my bunk, two within 6" of my nose.

#### **1903**

##### **January**

9th Another boat has been unearthed [*the boats had been left on the ice, had filled up with snow and sunk down into the ice over the winter*]

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<sup>25</sup> Ferrar Diaries SPRI

<sup>26</sup> Duncan p 15.

16th Dr K is very funny  
17th Have a headache and do not feel up to the mark  
20th Water brackish  
23rd Took some photos - set sail  
27th Eyes v. sore  
28th hot argument re journals + power of Expedition Committee  
28th argument re privacy of diaries etc  
30th Came back to my own cabin again for good

### February

2 Two men from *Morning* - surreptitious visit - row today  
(slept on the ward-room table [*on Morning*])  
3 Captain returned 82 degrees 17 minutes S v. hard journey, Shackleton the worse for wear. There is nothing wrong with him however. Jolly evening  
4 (Rumours as usual re work & collections)  
6th Heard today that there were a couple of rows on the Western trip!  
Wonder who was to blame this time.  
6th talk w. Captain re collections etc. + the part we would take... at home...  
(Scott - as usual is impatient...)  
7th talk w. Shackleton  
10th Had a yarn w. Shackleton [*lots of bridge*]  
12th Mulock is staying on board doing the surveying on all our trips!  
14th had a yarn w Shackleton  
Dr Wilson ... legs not right



Shackleton ... gradually improving  
17th Shackleton came in for a snooze in my cabin as there was so much traffic in the Ward-room.  
17th Shackleton came in for a snooze in my cabin... cat nursing 5 kittens!!

19th Cleared out taxidermist (Cross) who has been working in my lab the last 2 months.  
20th Shackleton told he has to retire ...  
27/28 Post for the World closed tonight.

### **March**

1st Sunday on "Morning" - slept on chart-room floor.  
4th headache  
23rd Wilson ... skinning skuas in my laboratory  
26th on trying to make thermometer tubes.  
29th have to mop ceiling every day  
30th glass blowing in cabin as Wilson skinning skuas in my lab.

### **April**

6th my usual headache  
6th got up...with my usual headache 2 toes frost-bitten playing football  
9th 'It was rather cold out there'... acetylene gas used for lighting  
10th Good Friday - church. graduated 2 thermometers I have made (-50°F)  
11th aurora (faint) no headache because of fried bread!  
22nd Barne does not seem to want me to go out with him ...  
23rd new S.P.T.  
30 finished Davis but could not take any interest in the book.

### **May**

3rd 200 fish for breakfast for 37  
9th headache as usual  
14 Making spirit thermometers "I seem to be continually seeing lights in the sky, such as luminous clouds and today St Elmo's fire on Observation Hill. No one else seems to see them so it must be imagination on my part."  
15 Jukes-Brown (read) Parselenia have been seen today + again I saw flashes in the sky like faint sheet lightning. Hodgson + Weller both saw them today too.  
17th have had an attack of liver 'Armored of Lyonesse' Walter Besant  
18th A slight flutter ... (Barnes late back)  
19 "Coles" Geology  
20 Darwin "Origin of Species"  
23rd headache

### **June**

6th my usual headache  
20th headache  
20th Feel seedy as usual  
22nd Midwinter celebrations "singing, cock-fighting & pulling on the Ward-room floor."  
22 mid-Winter celebrations: singing, cock-fighting + pulling on the Wardroom floor. Very jolly... S.P.T. mid-winter edn.  
22nd mid-winter celebrations Real Turtle Soup, Real Roast Beef and champagne. Turned in at 1 AM after a very pleasant evening. Had songs, cock-fighting and pulling on the Ward-room floor. The Mess Deck also had singing and it is to be noted there was no quarrelling at all.

### **July**

2 Nasty blowy day  
7 'Sartor Resartus' Carlyle. making a hole w. Wild in Arrival Bay. Men at work on new fish trap. hole under Observation Hill

13 Skelton has got about 50 lantern slides made. K. Barne is suffering from insomnia

23 animated discussion on Ice

24th ... the ice, the nature of which I have been wracking my brains since I have been here.

29 long argument in the ward room.

29th After tea there was a long argument in the Ward-room.

29 long argument in ward room

### **August**

1st Read Armitage's report of the Western sledging journey and regaled myself with seal fried in butter

2 13stone 7 lbs

8th 17 pups have been born this winter

8th & 9th Chess w Mulock

9th Mutton for the last time chess w Mulock

10th & 11th & with Royds

11th chess w Mulock & Royds - 'was beaten'

13th 3 chess boards in use Barne, Wilson & Hodgson never play chess or cards

Sunday 16th [*beautiful description of the sky*]

16th Very curious day. T = -32 to -4°F

17th Helped Clarke (who is learning arithmetic)

17th Helped Clarke with some arithmetic...

19th experiment with candle paper and mirror because of dark band in sky - possibly not reflecting refracted sunlight off e.g. Prince Albert mountains

20th Dark band in the S today was very marked. Animated discussion on it after tea in which everybody had an explanation of their own and would accept no other

20th Dark band in the S very marked today. Animated discussion about it after tea. No one will accept another's explanation of it and there are three separate such.

21st Sat up till 3am listening to the talk. (8/9 solar eclipse) After tea the Captain practically told me he would not take me beyond the land on the Western trip. several people saw the upper limb of the sun today

23rd big dinner to celebrate return of sun - singing

23rd ... tried to arrange a plan of campaign when left on the New Harbour Glacier.

27th hockey - 40 mins. sewing

28th seal fried in butter as usual

### **September**

1 13 st 7lbs

16th chess w ABA

19th after dinner impromptu concert in the wardroom

19th After dinner... an impromptu concert

20th chess w Dr K

29th The captain played chess with me after dinner & made rings round me

30th after dinner played chess w Captain

30th Chess with the Captain; he gives me a castle or a bishop & then beats me

### **October**

1st Weller harpooned large seal & a fish 4' long was found without its head

2nd 13st 7lbs

21st Sledging. We hold the record for a day's march - 32 miles  
22nd weighed 12st 8lbs so have lost 14lbs in 10days  
23rd talked to Hodgson

### **November**

11th found the first evidence of organic remains in the moraine

## **Vol 5 December 16th to February 29th 1904**

### **December**

17th (headache)

19th Sawing... moving tent... sleeping soundly

21st ...sawed 24 feet. The work was very slack as we have done as much sawing as the other two watches put together, & have lost interest in the job as it is so very slow. Adelie penguins - like automatic mouse.

23rd We are all getting fairly friggly & my hands are rather sore from continuous work on the rope. Find some entertainment in addition to reading listening to the nagging etc. that goes on.

26th The Captain got back on Xmas Eve... on his way back to the ship he went over the ground I had told him I was going to examine so he will probably have some opinions to ventilate.

27th Wilson has taken to sleeping outside of late.

29th Skelton is suffering from tooth-ache & most of us have the pip generally.

31st Got in for porridge, seal & slap-jack's all off the same plate...

## **1904**

### **January**

1st No sawing

## **Conclusion: Chasing up Details**

I should have stopped researching and concentrated on setting out the story so far, but a few days ago I started trying to find out about the Henley Regatta of 1901. HT was rowing there when the news came of his appointment to the NAE. With the help of Google I found out that the Leander Rowing Club had won at eights in 1901 by a length from the University of Pennsylvania. Quite naturally I imagined that my grandfather, HT, could have been rowing in that winning boat and accordingly I sent an email to the Leander Club with a request for further information. Their speedy response was a mixed blessing. 'H S Ferrar' was in the record as having rowed at number 7 with the Thames Club, who were knocked out against Pennsylvania in their first heat. So, not only did he lose his first race, but they got his name wrong. At any rate this piece of information from Dr Jones at the Leander Club is uncontentious:

"Thames' race is likely to have taken place on the second day of the regatta, Thursday 4 July 1901 - the regatta that year was a three-day affair, from Wednesday 3 - Friday 5 July.

"As far as I can gather, that was Ferrar's only Henley appearance."<sup>27</sup>

It might've been a different story if Thames hadn't drawn an American team to race against on the Fourth of July!

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<sup>27</sup> Email from leander

A harder pill for me to swallow is the information contained in his death certificate which is at variance with the family story of some sort of relapse after an appendectomy.<sup>28</sup> The certificate says "sub-acute pancreatitis 5 days" and "operation acute dilatation of stomach 4 hours"; an unpleasant and unnecessary death. I mention it as an illustration of my partisan-ship. I cannot help being upset that my grandfather, whom I might have met, died an avoidable death in 1932. It is not so bad that he was knocked out in the first round at Henley in 1901, and I am coming round to the fact that he was no great shakes at skiing. Although he did not totally distinguish himself at the King's Birthday Sports he was there and he emerges in various accounts as moderately cheerful and energetic, joining in with zest.

A neighbour of mine said once, "Loyalty is *never* misplaced." This may be so, but it surely must be the case that to understand everything is to forgive everything. When I started on my researches my son said to me, "Scott made Hartley cry." Well, I haven't found the evidence for this, but when I mentioned it to Baden Norris, he said, "I wouldn't be surprised."<sup>29</sup> This may explain why my father and my aunt were scrupulously silent about Scott. My mother always said, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." This is sound, but presupposes that one knows what "nice" is. If, as we say in New Zealand "it's all good", the censor can put the blue pencil away. As the saying goes: "The truth will set you free; first it will really annoy you, then it will set you free".



There will be many other things to find out about my judiciously reserved grandfather. In 1901 Hartley Ferrar was an intelligent, energetic, conscientious young man who had learnt how to keep his head down and get on with his work. The account he gives of himself and the glimpses of him afforded by others are curiously divergent. These days we could think it unhealthy for someone to keep their own counsel quite as much as HT apparently did, yet he seemed to go on to lead what could be regarded as a 'normal happy life'. He didn't

upset people, nor did he retaliate when insulted. In the dangerous situation he was in in Antarctica, he contributed what he could, keeping himself quietly amused and safe. He refused in his lifetime to contradict the picture drawn by Scott and Armitage of a cosy paradise created on board *Discovery* and so allowed the image of peaceful contentment to crystallize into a real possibility of harmony in their ice-bound home.

<sup>28</sup> SPRI Oral History, E Forbes' interview

<sup>29</sup> Baden Norris, conversation on February 10th 2012



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## Illustrations

Title page: Silhouette of HT Ferrar from South Polar Times Volume 2.

Page 2: Cartoon from South Polar Times Volume 1.

Page 9: GNS Science photograph of HT Ferrar from Tonkin web page.

Page 11: HT Ferrar, second from left, with officers of the *Morning*, SPRI.

Page 15: Henley Regatta 1901, from ebay website.

Page 17: HT Ferrar, centre, 1904, from Skelton.

