

= Ernest Joyce =

Ernest Edward Mills Joyce AM (ca . 1875 ? 2 May 1940) was a Royal Naval seaman and explorer who participated in four Antarctic expeditions during the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration , early in the early 20th century . He served under both Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton . As a member of the Ross Sea party in Shackleton 's Imperial Trans @-@ Antarctic Expedition , Joyce earned an Albert Medal for his actions in bringing the stricken party to safety , after a traumatic journey on the Great Ice Barrier . He was awarded the Polar Medal with four bars , one of only two men to be so honoured , the other being his contemporary , Frank Wild .

Joyce came from a humble seafaring background and began his naval career as a boy seaman in 1891 . His Antarctic experiences began 10 years later , when he joined Scott 's Discovery Expedition as an Able Seaman . In 1907 Shackleton recruited Joyce to take charge of dogs and sledges on the Nimrod Expedition . Subsequently Joyce was engaged in a similar capacity for Douglas Mawson 's Australasian Antarctic Expedition in 1911 , but left the expedition before it departed for the Antarctic . In 1914 Shackleton recruited Joyce for the Ross Sea party ; despite his heroics this expedition marked the end of Joyce 's association with the Antarctic , and of his exploring career , although he made repeated attempts to join other expeditions .

Throughout his career Joyce was known as an abrasive personality who attracted adverse as well as positive comments . His effectiveness in the field was widely acknowledged by many of his colleagues , but other aspects of his character were less appreciated ? his capacity for bearing grudges , his boastfulness and his distortions of the truth . Joyce 's diaries , and the book he wrote based on them , have been condemned as self @-@ serving and the work of a fabulist . He made no significant material gains from his expeditions , living out his post @-@ Antarctic life in humble circumstances before dying suddenly in 1940 .

= = Early years = =

Details of Joyce 's early life are sketchy . It has been said that he was born about 1875 at Bognor , England , but the exact date has not been verified . The birth of an Ernest Edward Joyce was registered (see GRO index , volume 2b page 381) in Westhampnett district , which includes Bognor , in the first quarter of 1876 , and the 1881 census shows an Ernest E Mill Joyce aged 5 , born Feltham [sic] or Felpham , a village by Bognor . His father and grandfather had both been sailors , his father probably within the coastguard service After the father 's early death his widow , with three children to support on her limited earnings as a seamstress , sent the young Ernest to the Lower School of Greenwich Royal Hospital School for Navy Orphans at Greenwich . Here , in austere surroundings , he received a vocational education that would prepare him for a lower @-@ deck career in the Royal Navy . After leaving the school aged 15 in 1891 , he joined the navy as a boy seaman , progressing over the next ten years to Ordinary Seaman and then Able Seaman .

No detailed records of his naval service between 1891 and 1901 appear to have survived . The last @-@ named year saw him serving on HMS Gibraltar in Cape Town where , in September , Scott 's expedition ship Discovery stopped on the way to the Antarctic . Scott was short @-@ handed , and requested volunteers ; from a response of several hundreds , Joyce was one of four seamen chosen to join Discovery . He sailed south with her on 14 October 1901 .

= = Discovery Expedition , 1901 ? 04 = =

The Discovery expedition was Joyce 's Antarctic baptism , although for the next three years he kept a relatively low profile ; Scott scarcely mentions him in The Voyage of the Discovery , and Edward Wilson 's diaries not at all . It seems that he took readily to Antarctic life , gaining experience in sledging and dog @-@ driving techniques and other aspects of Antarctic exploration . He did not figure in the main journeys of the expedition , although towards the end he joined Arthur Pilbeam and Frank Wild in an attempt to climb Mount Erebus , ascending to some 3 @, @ 000 feet (910 m) . Joyce was at times badly affected by frostbite ; on one occasion two officers , Michael Barne and

George Mulock , held Joyce 's frostbitten foot against the pits of their stomachs and kneaded the ankle for several hours to save it from amputation . However , such experiences left Joyce undaunted ; the polar historian Beau Riffenburgh writes that Joyce was repeatedly drawn to the Antarctic by " a curious combination of affection and antipathy " that " impelled [him] to return again and again " .

During the expedition Joyce encountered several men who would feature prominently in Antarctic polar history during the following years , including Scott , Wilson , Frank Wild , Tom Crean , William Lashly , Edgar Evans and , most significantly , Ernest Shackleton . Joyce made several sledging trips with Shackleton and created an impression of competence and reliability . He also impressed Scott as " sober , honest , loyal and intelligent " , and expedition organiser Sir Clements Markham later described him as " an honest and trustworthy man " . His reward , at the conclusion of the expedition , was promotion to Petty Officer 1st Class on Scott 's recommendation . However , he had been bitten by the bug of Antarctic exploration , and ordinary naval duty no longer appealed . He left the navy in 1905 but found shore life unsatisfying and re @-@ enlisted in 1906 . When the chance came a year later to join Shackleton 's Nimrod Expedition , he took it immediately .

= = British Antarctic Expedition (Nimrod) 1907 ? 09 = =

When Shackleton was selecting the crew for his Antarctic expedition in Nimrod , Joyce was one of his earliest recruits . Most accounts tell the story that Shackleton saw Joyce on a bus that was passing his expedition offices , sent someone out to fetch him , and recruited him on the spot . To join the expedition , Joyce bought his release from the Navy ; in later years he would claim that Shackleton had failed to recompense him for this , despite a promise to do so , one of several disputes over money which eventually strained his relations with Shackleton . Joyce , Shackleton and Frank Wild were the only members of the expedition with previous Antarctic experience , and on the basis of his Discovery exploits , Joyce was put in charge of the new expedition 's general stores , sledges and dogs . Before departure in August 1907 , he and Wild took a crash course in printing at Sir Joseph Causton 's printing firm in Hampshire , as Shackleton intended to publish a book or magazine while in the Antarctic .

Nimrod left New Zealand on 1 January 1908 , and as a fuel @-@ saving measure was towed towards the Antarctic pack ice by the tug Koonya . On 23 January , by now under her own power , she reached the Ross Ice Shelf (then known as the " Great Ice Barrier " , or " Barrier ") , where Shackleton planned to base his headquarters in an inlet discovered during the Discovery voyage . This proved impossible ; the inlet , where Scott and Shackleton had taken balloon flights in February 1902 , had greatly expanded to become an open bay , christened the " Bay of Whales " . Shackleton was convinced that the ice was not secure enough as a landing ground , and could find no feasible alternative site on nearby King Edward VII Land . Before leaving for the Antarctic Shackleton had promised Scott that he would not base his expedition in or near Scott 's former headquarters in McMurdo Sound . Shackleton was now forced to break this agreement , and take Nimrod to the safer waters of McMurdo Sound . The site finally chosen as a base was at Cape Royds , some 20 miles (32 km) north of Scott 's old Discovery headquarters at Hut Point . During the extended and often difficult process of unloading the ship Joyce remained ashore , looking after the dogs and ponies , and helping to build the expedition hut . In March Joyce assisted the party that made the first successful ascent of Mount Erebus , although he did not make the climb himself .

During the following winter Joyce , with Wild 's help , printed copies of the expedition book *Aurora Australis* , edited by Shackleton . About 25 or 30 copies of the book were printed , sewn and bound . Otherwise Joyce was busy preparing equipment and stores for the next season 's journey to the Pole in which , in view of his experience , he fully expected to be included . However , various mishaps had reduced the number of ponies to four , so Shackleton cut the southern party to that number . One of those dropped was Joyce , on advice from expedition doctor Eric Marshall , who noted that Joyce had a liver problem and the early stages of heart disease . Frank Wild , who along with Marshall and Jameson Adams was selected for the southern journey , wrote in his diary after the party 's bid to reach the Pole had fallen short : " If we only had Joyce and Marston here instead

of these two useless grub @-@ scoffing beggars " ? (Marshall and Adams) ? " we would have done it easily . " Joyce showed no particular resentment at his exclusion ; he assisted the preparatory work and accompanied the polar party on the southward march for the first seven days . In the following months he took charge of enhancing the depots , to ensure adequate supplies for the returning southern party . He deposited a special cache of luxuries at Minna Bluff , together with life @-@ saving food and fuel , earning Wild 's spontaneous praise when the cache was discovered .

Shackleton and his party returned safely from their polar journey , on Nimrod 's last feasible date for sailing home . They had established a new Farthest South at 88 ° 23 ' S , only 97 nautical miles (180 km ; 112 mi) from the South Pole . Joyce had been ready to remain at the base with a rearguard , to wait for the party or to establish its fate if it did not return in time to catch the ship . Nimrod finally reached London in September 1909 and was prepared , under Joyce 's direction , as a floating exhibition of polar artefacts . Shackleton paid him a salary of £ 250 a year for this (2008 equivalent approx . £ 18 @, @ 000) , a generous amount for the time .

= = Australasian Antarctic Expedition , 1911 = =

Joyce was not invited to join Scott 's Terra Nova Expedition , although several of Shackleton 's men were , including Frank Wild who declined . Instead , Joyce and Wild both signed up for Douglas Mawson 's Australasian Antarctic Expedition . In 1911 Joyce travelled to Denmark to acquire dogs for this expedition , and took them on to Tasmania . Joyce did not subsequently sail with Mawson . According to one account he was " dismissed " before the expedition left Australia , while another suggests that Joyce was dropped when Mawson reduced his expedition from three shore parties to two . Whatever the reason , it appears that there was a falling @-@ out ; Mawson reportedly distrusted Joyce , saying that " he spent too much time in hotels " , which suggests that drink was an issue . Joyce remained in Australia , obtaining work with the Sydney Harbour Trust .

= = Imperial Trans @-@ Antarctic Expedition , 1914 ? 17 = =

= = = Membership of Ross Sea party = = =

In February 1914 Joyce , still in Australia , was contacted by Shackleton. who outlined plans for his Imperial Trans @-@ Antarctic Expedition . Shackleton wanted Joyce in the expedition 's supporting Ross Sea party ; should the plans change to a one @-@ ship format , Shackleton promised to find a different role for Joyce within the expedition . Joyce would later claim without justification that Shackleton had offered him a place on the main transcontinental party . In his subsequent book , The South Polar Trail published in 1929 , Joyce also misrepresented the nature of his appointment to the Ross Sea party , omitting Shackleton 's order that placed him under an officer and claiming that he had been given sole authority over dogs and sledging .

The task of the Ross Sea party , under the command of another Nimrod veteran , Aeneas Mackintosh , was to establish a base in McMurdo Sound and then lay a series of supply depots across the Ross Ice Shelf to assist the transcontinental party . Shackleton saw this task as routine ; he wrote : " I had not anticipated that the work would present any great difficulties " . However , the party had been assembled rather hurriedly , and was inexperienced . Only Joyce and Mackintosh had been to the Antarctic before , and Mackintosh 's participation in polar work had been brief ; he had been invalided from the Nimrod Expedition before the initial landing , after an accident led to the loss of his right eye and had returned only for the final stages of the expedition

= = = Major setbacks = = =

Aurora 's departure from Australia was delayed by a series of organisational and financial setbacks , and the party did not arrive in McMurdo Sound until 16 January 1915 ? very late in the season for

depot @-@ laying work . Mackintosh , who believed that Shackleton might attempt to cross the continent in that first season , insisted that sledging work should begin without delay , with a view to laying down supply depots at 79 ° and 80 ° S. Joyce opposed this ; more time , he maintained , should be set aside to acclimatise and train men and dogs . However he was overruled by Mackintosh , who was unaware that Shackleton had ruled out a crossing that season .

Mackintosh further vexed Joyce by deciding to lead this depot @-@ laying party himself , unmoved by Joyce 's claim to have independent authority over this area . The party was divided into two teams , and the journey began on 24 January , in an atmosphere of muddle . Initial attempts at travelling on the Barrier were thwarted by the condition of the surface , and Mackintosh 's team got lost on the sea ice between Cape Evans and Hut Point . Joyce privately gloated over this evidence of the captain 's inexperience . The teams eventually reached the 79 ° mark , and laid the " Bluff depot " there (Minna Bluff was a prominent visible landmark at this latitude) on 9 February . It seemed that Joyce 's party had enjoyed the easier journey . Mackintosh 's plan to take the dogs on to the 80 ° mark led to more words between him and Joyce , who argued that several dogs had already died and that the remainder should be kept for future journeys , but again he was overruled . On 20 February the party reached the 80 ° latitude and laid their depot there . The outcome of this journey was 105 lb (48 kg) of provisions and fuel at 80 ° S and 158 lb (72 kg) at 79 ° S. But a further 450 lb (200 kg) , intended for the depots , had been dumped on the journey , to save weight .

By this time men and dogs were worn out . On the return journey , in appalling Barrier weather , all the dogs perished , as Joyce had predicted , and the party returned to Hut Point on 24 March exhausted and severely frostbitten . After being delayed for ten weeks at Hut Point by the condition of the sea ice , the party finally got back to their base at Cape Evans on 2 June . They then learned that Aurora , with most of the shore party 's stores and equipment still aboard , had been torn from its moorings in a gale , and blown far out to sea with no prospect of swift return . Fortunately , the rations for the next season 's depot @-@ laying had been landed before the ship 's involuntary departure . However , the shore party 's own food , fuel , clothing and equipment had been largely carried away ; replacements would have to be improvised from supplies left at Cape Evans after Scott 's 1910 ? 13 Terra Nova expedition , augmented by seal meat and blubber . In these circumstances Joyce proved his worth as a " master scavenger " and improviser , unearthing from Scott 's abandoned stores , among other treasures , a large canvas tent from which he fashioned roughly tailored clothing . He also set about stitching 500 calico bags , to hold the depot rations .

== = Depot @-@ laying journey == =

The party set out on 1 September 1915 . The men were under @-@ trained and half @-@ fit , in primitive clothing and with home @-@ made equipment . With only five dogs remaining from the previous season 's debacle , the task would mostly be one of manhauling . Before beginning the march south ? a return distance of 800 nautical miles (1 @, @ 500 km ; 920 mi) ? approximately 3 @, @ 800 pounds (1 @, @ 700 kg) of stores had to be taken to the base depot at Minna Bluff . This phase of the task lasted until 28 December . Mackintosh had divided his forces into two parties , himself in charge of one and Joyce of the other . The two men continued to disagree over methods ; finally , Joyce confronted Mackintosh with incontrovertible evidence that his party 's methods were much the more effective , and Mackintosh capitulated . " I never came across such an idiot in charge of men " , Joyce wrote in his diary .

The weaker members of the party ? Arnold Spencer @-@ Smith and Mackintosh himself ? were by this time showing signs of physical breakdown , as the long march south began from Bluff Depot towards Mount Hope at 83 ° 30 ' S , where the final depot was to be laid . The party was reduced to six when three men were forced to turn back because of a Primus stove failure . With Mackintosh and Joyce in the final party were Spencer @-@ Smith , Ernest Wild (younger brother of Frank) , Dick Richards and Victor Hayward . With four dogs they trekked southward , increasingly afflicted by frostbite , snow blindness and , eventually , scurvy . Spencer @-@ Smith collapsed , and thereafter had to be carried on the sledge . Mackintosh , barely able to walk , fought on until the final depot

was laid at Mount Hope . On the homeward journey the effective leadership of the party fell increasingly to Joyce , as Mackintosh 's condition deteriorated until , like Spencer @-@ Smith , he had to be carried on the sledge . The journey became a protracted struggle which eventually cost the life of Spencer @-@ Smith and took the others to the limits of their endurance . Mackintosh suffered further physical and mental collapse , and had to be left in the tent while Joyce , himself suffering from severe snow blindness , led the rest to the safety of Hut Point . He and Ernest Wild then returned for Mackintosh , and the five survivors were all back at Hut Point on 18 March 1916 .

= = = Rescue = = =

All five men were showing symptoms of scurvy with varying severity . However , a diet of fresh seal meat , rich in Vitamin C , enabled them to recover slowly . By mid @-@ April they were ready to consider travelling the final 13 miles (21 km) across the frozen sea to the base at Cape Evans .

Joyce tested the sea @-@ ice on 18 April and found it firm , but the following day a blizzard from the south swept all the ice away . The ambience at Hut Point was gloomy , and the unrelieved diet of seal was depressing . This seemed particularly to affect Mackintosh , and on 8 May , despite the urgent pleadings of Joyce , Richards and Ernest Wild , he decided to risk the re @-@ formed ice and walk to Cape Evans . Victor Hayward volunteered to accompany him . Joyce recorded in his diary : " I fail to understand how these people are so anxious to risk their lives again " . Shortly after their departure a blizzard descended , and the two were never seen again .

Joyce and the others learned the fate of Mackintosh and Hayward only when they were finally able to reach Cape Evans in July . Joyce immediately set about organising searches for traces of the missing men ; in the subsequent months parties were sent to search the coasts and the islands in McMurdo Sound , but to no avail . Joyce also organised journeys to recover geological samples left on the Barrier and to visit the grave of Spencer @-@ Smith , where a large cross was erected . In the absence of the ship , the seven remaining survivors lived quietly , until on 10 January 1917 , the refitted Aurora arrived with Shackleton aboard to take them home . They learned then that their depot @-@ laying efforts had been futile , Shackleton 's ship Endurance having been crushed by the Weddell Sea ice nearly two years previously .

= = Later life = =

= = = Post @-@ expedition career = = =

After his return to New Zealand Joyce was hospitalised , mainly from the effects of snow blindness , and according to his own account had to wear dark glasses for a further 18 months . During this period he married Beatrice Curtlett from Christchurch . He was now probably unfit for further polar work , although he attempted , unsuccessfully , to rejoin the Navy in 1918 . In September 1919 he was seriously injured in a car accident , which led to months of convalescence followed by a return to England. In 1920 he signed up for a new Antarctic expedition to be led by John Cope of the Ross Sea party , but this venture proved abortive . He continued to maintain his claims to financial compensation from Shackleton , which caused a breach between them , and he was not invited to join Shackleton 's Quest expedition which departed in 1921 . He applied to join the British Everest expedition of 1921 ? 22 , but was rejected .

He was in the public eye again in 1923 when he was awarded the Albert Medal for his efforts to save the lives of Mackintosh and Spencer @-@ Smith during on the 1916 depot @-@ laying journey . Richards received the same award ; Hayward , and also Ernest Wild who had died of typhoid during naval service in the Mediterranean in 1918 , received the award posthumously . In 1929 Joyce published a contentious version of his diaries under the title The South Polar Trail , in which he boosted his own role , played down the contributions of others , and incorporated fictitious colourful details . Thereafter he indulged in various schemes for further expeditions , and wrote numerous articles and stories based on his exploits before settling into a quiet life as a hotel porter

in London . Bickel asserts that Joyce lived into his eighties , beyond the date (1958) of the first Antarctica crossing by Vivian Fuchs and his party ; in fact , he died from natural causes , aged about 65 , on 2 May 1940 @.@ is not supported by any other sources . Joyce is commemorated in Antarctica by Mount Joyce at 75 ° 36 ' S 160 ° 38 ' E.

= = = Assessment = = =

Polar chronicler Roland Huntford sums up Joyce as a " strange mixture of fraud , flamboyance and ability " . This mixed assessment is endorsed in the assortment of views expressed by those associated with him . Dick Richards of the Ross Sea party described him as " a kindly soul and a good pal " , and others shared the favourable opinions expressed by Scott and Markham , confirm Joyce as a " jolly good sort " , though unsuited for command . On the other hand , Eric Marshall of the Nimrod Expedition had found him " of limited intelligence , resentful and incompatible " , while John King Davis , when refusing to join the Imperial Trans @-@ Antarctic Expedition , told Shackleton : " I absolutely decline to be associated with any enterprise with which people of the Joyce type are connected " .

Joyce 's versions of events recorded in his published diaries have been described as unreliable and sometimes as outright invention ? a " self @-@ aggrandizing epic " . Specific examples of this " fabulism " include his self @-@ designation as " Captain " after the Ross Sea expedition ; his invented claim to have seen Scott 's death tent on the Barrier ; the misrepresentation of his instructions from Shackleton regarding his sledging role , and his claim to independence in the field ; his claim to have been offered a place on the transcontinental party when Shackleton had made it clear he did not want him there , and his habit , late in life , of writing anonymously to the press praising " the famous Polar Explorer Ernest Mills Joyce " . This self @-@ promotion neither surprised nor upset his former comrades . " It is what I would have expected " , said Richards . " He was bombastic [...] but true @-@ hearted and a staunch friend " . Alexander Stevens , the party 's chief scientist , concurred . They knew that Joyce , for all his swaggering style , had the will and determination to " drag men back from certain death " . Lord Shackleton , the explorer 's son , named Joyce (with Mackintosh and Richards) as " one of those who emerge from the (Ross Sea party) story as heroes " .