



## **Scott Polar Research Institute**

University of Cambridge  
Lensfield Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1ER

**“There was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers.”<sup>1</sup>**

**An analysis of the presentation and portrayal of Petty Officer Edgar Evans, the first man to perish in Captain Scott’s Pole party of 1912.**

Louise Watling  
Friday 12 June 2009

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Polar Studies



Downing College  
Regent Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 1DQ

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<sup>1</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February 1913

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## Archive collections consulted at the Scott Polar Research Institute

British Antarctic Expedition Papers Vol. 1  
British Antarctic Expedition (1910-13) scrapbooks  
Henry Robertson Bowers Collection  
Apsley Cherry-Garrard Collection  
Frank Debenham Collection  
Edgar Evans Collection  
Edward. E.G.R Evans Collection  
Thomas Griffith-Taylor Collection  
National Antarctic Expedition (1901-04) scrapbooks  
Patrick Keohane Collection  
William Lashly Collection  
Lawrence Oates Collection  
Harry McNeish Collection  
Harry Pennell Collection  
Sir Raymond Priestley Collection  
Stanley Richards Collection  
George Seaver Collection  
Thomas Williamson Collection  
Charles Wright Collection

### Notes on the text

When referencing an article that is contained in a scrapbook, I have given the title of the newspaper, the date and the scrapbook's reference number. When the article is not from a scrapbook, just the newspaper's title and date is given.



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Cambridge CB2 1ER

I declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. The Dissertation is no more than 20,000 words in length excluding the acknowledgements, declaration, list of references, tables, captions and appendices.

### **Acknowledgement:**

I would like to thank all my family and friends for their support, particularly my parents. I am indebted to SPRI archivist Naomi Boneham for all her help, along with the library staff and my fellow students at SPRI, specifically Jackie Price who has given me endless encouragement. Special thanks go to my supervisor Michael Bravo for all his comments and guidance.

Louise Watling  
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**“There was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers.”<sup>2</sup>**

**An analysis of the presentation and portrayal of Petty Officer Edgar Evans, the first man to perish in Captain Scott’s pole party of 1912.**

## **Introduction**

Between the 17 February and 31 March 1912<sup>3</sup>, the five British explorers who reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912, perished on the return journey. The news did not reach Britain, or even the closest inhabited land, New Zealand, until the following February. When the news came through, as a group of five they were raised as heroes, with particular attention played to Captain Oates and Captain Scott. The Antarctic five consisted of, Captain Robert Falcon Scott, the leader of the expedition, Dr. Edward Wilson, chief of scientific staff, Lieutenant Henry Bowers, Captain Lawrence ‘Titus’ Oates<sup>4</sup> and Petty Officer Edgar Evans. P.O Evans held unique status, he was the first man to die, the only member of the Antarctic five not of officer status and the only one several contemporary press and publishers put forward as a scapegoat.

This dissertation is based upon the results of my research undertaken over a period of three months. I have examined the published diaries and memoirs of Edgar Evans’ fellow travellers, including, Scott’s *Journals*, Thomas Griffith Taylor’s *With Scott - the Silver Lining*, and Frank Debenham’s *The Quiet Land*. Along with unpublished and thus un-adapted journals and letters, from both the lower ranks of the expedition and those of officer status, including the journals of P.O Keohane, P.O Williamson and Frank Debenham. I have also examined newspaper articles dated from 1901 to 1938. These articles are from various newspapers aimed towards the lower classes, such as *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*, and newspapers aimed towards the upper classes, such as *The Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Times*. Around 60% of the articles examined are from scrapbooks of the *Terra Nova Expedition* (1910-13), and scrapbooks of the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February, 1913

<sup>3</sup> The exact date of Scott’s death is unknown, though the last entry in Scott’s diary was dated 29 March 1912.

<sup>4</sup> Oates was a Captain in the Inniskilling Dragoons Cavalry Regiment, but signed on the expedition as a ‘Midshipman’ as the expedition was short of funds and could not afford to pay him a higher wage.

*Discovery* (1901-04) expedition, held at the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute.<sup>5</sup> There are problems with analysing newspaper reports, for there is the age-old dilemma, “whether the press simply reported what of interest to the public or whether it created that interest.”<sup>6</sup> This query has a further effect on scrapbooks, for is the scrapbook a typical representation of the coverage? Or, were only specific articles cut out and kept as a memory of the presentation of exploration?

However, although the sources are not problem-free, an analysis of the press’ perception of Edgar Evans is the most effective way to examine how he was popularly presented, as halfpenny dailies regularly reached audience figures of 1,000,000.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the use of scrapbooks in an analysis of Evans’ presentation is not as problematic as using scrapbooks as a basis for a study on the presentation of exploration in general. For the cut-out-articles would not perhaps be a genuine reflection of exploration’s entire representation. However, I am analysing the presentation of an individual within a group, so articles in scrapbooks will not only show how specific newspapers perceived Evans, but also, how one person wishes to remember Evans. Furthermore, the majority of scrapbooks viewed contain at least 100 articles from a dozen different newspapers and magazines, thus the research has not been restricted to Evans’ presentation in two or three newspapers of similar audiences and political bias’.

These particular documents and texts have been examined as they show the construction of individuals’ images. For as Cubitt declares, “formal rituals and official procedures constitute...only the most explicit part of a society’s hero-worshipping and hero-producing activity. Equally important are the ways in which heroic reputations are developed through the generally less formal practices of social, cultural and economic life - through story-telling and entertainment through gossip and news reporting, and through the circulation of

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<sup>5</sup> Scrapbooks have been analysed rather than going to Colindale to examine whole newspapers, for scrapbooks also enable one to assess collecting practices and an individual’s wanted recollection of an event.

<sup>6</sup> B. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p.1

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p.152

literature.”<sup>8</sup> This dissertation will examine Edgar Evans’ image construction via those less formal practices.

Scholarly work on Victorian and Edwardian heroism particularly the ‘imperial heroes’ has changed direction over the last twenty years. As Max Jones states, “The historian’s role is no longer to act as judge, asking ‘How great was this individual?’ Instead scholars should ask ‘Why did a past society raise this individual as a hero.’”<sup>9</sup> To take Jones’ question a step further, why was this man not raised as a hero, in the same way as his comrades? I will therefore be using a methodological symmetry, much like the ‘strong programme’ whereby failure is looked upon through the same lens as success, with the notion that similar social factors contribute to both successful and unsuccessful theories. Evans’ presented “failure”<sup>10</sup> must be viewed in the same context as the presented heroism of Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers.



**Figure 1** The Antarctic Five at the Pole on 17 January 1912. Dr Wilson took the photograph for the string attached to the camera can be seen in his right hand.

<sup>8</sup> G. Cubitt, ‘Introduction’ *Heroic Reputations*, p.4

<sup>9</sup> M. Jones, ‘What Should Historians Do With Heroes’, *History Compass*, p.441

<sup>10</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

Due to the fact that Evans was a Petty Officer, and therefore the only one not of commissioned officer status, there will obviously be class issues presented and examined, such as the differing perceptions of manliness, and accusations that his lack of education rendered him un-fit for exploration. However, as this paper will make clear, it is not sufficient to say that Evans' presentation was purely and simply caused by his class, there is more to understanding the construction of Evans' image, than class, for it is too sweeping.

The consensus is that the 'hero' is such because he is presenting an ideal image. As Orrin. E Klapp states, "the hero in social life is... more than a person; he is an ideal image, a legend, a symbol."<sup>11</sup> This has been echoed by Max Jones, "the hero is the *ideal* man or woman"<sup>12</sup>. It is this that frames the understanding of the presentation of Petty Officer Edgar Evans.

As the hero is representative of *the* ideal, it can also be assumed that he was representative of the masculine ideal. It is the general consensus, that one of the principal components of the masculine ideal, during the early twentieth century, was self-control.<sup>13</sup> However, there are obvious problems with examining concepts of masculinity and manliness, for there has only been a limited amount of analysis on working-class masculinity. Recent leading lights in the field such as John Tosh have tended to concentrate on middle and upper class masculinity.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Stephen Heathron believes that the little that is known about working-class gender suggests, "masculinity was tied to respectable employment and physical labour"<sup>15</sup>. Thus it is likely that Evans' masculinity was defined not only by his class, but also by his occupation. However, if scholarly research on working-class masculinity is lacking, there has been even less analysis on the masculinity of mariners. The main contributors to this field include, Mary Conley's, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack* and J.D Glasco's 'The Seaman Feels Himself a Man'. Conley argues that Edwardian sailors were respected for their

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<sup>11</sup> O.E. Klapp, 'The Creation of Popular Heroes' p.135

<sup>12</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.440

<sup>13</sup> J. Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do With Masculinity' p.183, G.L. Mosse, 'Shell-shock as a Social Disease' p.101, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.245.

<sup>14</sup> For example, J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*

<sup>15</sup> Heathorn, 'How stiff were Victorian Upper Lips', *History Compass*, p.2

domesticity<sup>16</sup>, and Glasco contends that during the eighteenth century, a sailor's masculinity was complex but often linked to their level of maritime skill.<sup>17</sup> These two ideas will be further examined in this paper.

Michael Lieven, in his examination of hero making during the Zulu War proclaims, "the roots of the hero are in dramatic narrative"<sup>18</sup>. This has clear links to the heroism of the Antarctic Five whose story was told by 'mediators', a term firstly used by John M. MacKenzie. Mackenzie has contributed greatly to the field of imperial heroism. He put forward in 'Heroic Myths of Empire', the widely accepted theory that it is not so much the exploits of the individual that count, for it is the 'mediators', those who work to keep the hero in the minds of the public that create a hero.<sup>19</sup> Since mediators are necessary for the establishment of a heroic reputation, they must also play a role in the creation of an un-heroic reputation. However, in the case of the Antarctic five, the 'mediators' are not individual people, they are texts, Scott's 'message to the public' and press reports. Both played a significant role in the creation of Evans' image and reputation.

Scholars analysing Victorian and Edwardian heroes have tended to concentrate on military figures, such as, the Havelock heroes<sup>20</sup> and General Gordon<sup>21</sup>. Whilst the original focus of naval heroism began with the apotheosis of Captain Cook, scholars analysing Victorian naval heroes, have focused on Nelson and Franklin.<sup>22</sup> MacKenzie, C.I Hamilton and Robert MacDonald have all shown that there was a definite link between Christianity and military heroism.<sup>23</sup> However, Christianity was also a key component in the construction of a non-military hero, David Livingstone. MacKenzie and Jones contend that Livingstone became to be

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<sup>16</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, specifically chapter 4, 'Strong men for a strong navy'

<sup>17</sup> J.D Glasco, 'The Seaman Feels Him-self a Man' pp40-52

<sup>18</sup> M. Lieven, 'Heroism, Heroics and the Making of Heroes: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879' p.419

<sup>19</sup> J. M MacKenzie, 'Heroic myths of Empire,' p.114

<sup>20</sup> R. Mackenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, M. Jones, 'What should historians so with heroes'

<sup>21</sup> R. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, M. Jones, 'What should historians so with heroes', R. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*

<sup>22</sup> C.I. Hamilton, 'Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero', H. Lewis-Jones, 'Heroism displayed': revisiting the Franklin Gallery at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1891',

<sup>23</sup> C.I. Hamilton, 'Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero', J. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', R. MacDonald, 'Deeds of Glory' in *The Language of Empire*

regarded as a hero because he could be used to present differing ideals, such as the lower class man who educated himself, thus an advocate of self-improvement, the Christian missionary and symbol of empire.<sup>24</sup> MacKenzie's research has also shown that being able to present several ideals turned the individual, with the help of mediators into "mythic status"<sup>25</sup>. The same principal can be applied to the Antarctic five, for as a group they were a symbol of the strength of British character, they were also promoted as having sacrificed their lives for the cause of science, advocating a quest for knowledge. Additionally as individuals, Wilson, Bowers, Scott and Oates became proponents of how to behave, and perhaps most importantly, how to die in a perceived heroic manner.

There has been little scholarly analysis of Edgar Evans' image construction. The only article analysing Evans is from the medical field, and concerned with the cause of his death.<sup>26</sup> Whilst the majority of publications about the British Antarctic Expedition, (1910-13), have not been analytical studies, but biographical in approach, either of the expedition member, or, of the expedition itself. With as R. Fiennes' *Captain Scott*, (2003), Michael Smith's *I'm Just Going Outside* (2000), C.H. Lagerbom's *The Fifth Man* (1999) and G. Seaver's *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic* (1933), as just a handful of examples. However, in the last five years, Max Jones' *The Last Great Quest* (2004) and Stephanie Barczewski's *Antarctic Destinies* (2007) have analysed the presentation and the aftermath of Scott's final expedition. Both have put forward their views on early twentieth century heroism. Jones' work should be seen as groundbreaking for no scholar before had analysed the reaction to the expedition by the press<sup>27</sup>, when in fact the newspapers' had such a critical role in the transfer of knowledge in early twentieth century society, newspaper reports are the key component of the popular presentation of exploration.

However, despite the valuable analysis, there are limitations to the texts. In *Antarctic Destinies*, a 300-page book, Evans gets four pages concerning the press

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<sup>24</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths', p.125, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.24

<sup>25</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire' p.122

<sup>26</sup> Rogers, 'The death of Chief Petty Officer Evans' *The Practitioner*, 1974

<sup>27</sup> Riffenburgh's investigation of the British and American press' presentation of exploration in *The Myth of the Explorer* stopped in 1910, thus leaving the presentation of Scott's last expedition un-examined.

attacks upon him and a similar amount in *The Last Great Quest*. Therefore, the gap between the image of Scott, Wilson, Bowers and Oates and that of Evans is only briefly dealt with. Furthermore, Jones declares that Evans was not attacked on a wide-scale and thus accusations towards Evans should not be exaggerated,<sup>28</sup> a point I will oppose in Chapter 3. Barczewski asserts that class caused the difference in Evans 'and Oates' presentation,<sup>29</sup> whereas I will contend that there was more to understanding Evans' presentation than his socio-economic status. Additionally, neither Jones nor Barczewski examine how Evans was portrayed in the diaries of his fellow travellers. In consequence, the derogatory comments by the press aimed at Edgar Evans are not analysed in the wider context of Evans' image construction.

Lisa Bloom's (1995), *Gender on Ice* attempts to analyse heroism and Scott's last expedition. However, much of her secondary reading is taken from Roland Huntford, thus limiting the ability to form a rounded argument. This is because Huntford's book, *Scott and Amundsen*, is a greatly inferred text, wherein Scott is essentially presented as villainous, whilst Amundsen is presented as an almost saint-like being. Therefore, anyone who solely quotes Huntford and looks to no other evidence or scholarly work limits the plausibility of his or her own argument. Moreover, Bloom does not look into the presentation of exploration by the British press when the news of the Antarctic five's death came through, if one does not know what traits and exploits were presented as heroic, how can one comment on what was considered heroic at the time.

Although there has been no scholarly analysis of scrapbooks there have been studies on memorialisation. The majority of work on memorials has focused on military memorials<sup>30</sup>. Susan Seymour and Rupert Calvolcoressi's examination of naval memorials in 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation of Empire', demonstrates that the lower ranks were commemorated, though it was still in fitting within an aristocratic framework.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Nicholas Penny's 'Amor

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<sup>28</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.112

<sup>29</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>30</sup> Such as Cooke's 'Hyde Park Holocaust Memorial', Craske's 'naval and military heroes', and Jordan and Rogers 'Admirals as Heroes'

<sup>31</sup> S. Seymour and R. Calvolcoressi, 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation of Empire', p.113

Publicus Posuit' shows that the image of Jack Tar was used in memorials but only to show devotion to a fallen commander, they were examples.<sup>32</sup> This can be linked to John Price's research into non-military heroism. Price investigated the Watt's Memorial for Self-Sacrifice in 'Heroism in Everyday Life', and has shown that the working classes, who were commemorated for their heroism, had their image adapted by the press to promote specific ideals<sup>33</sup>. Evans had few individual memorials, very rarely had his image adapted to be promoted as a heroic individual, and was seldom presented as an example for those to follow.

In 'What Should Historians do with Heroes', Max Jones proclaims that based upon one of Cubitt's theories on heroism, that a hero is someone who is an object of emotional investment<sup>34</sup>. Believing that there is a range of indicators to gauge the level of heroism, Jones points to, biographies, media representations, and references in personal testimonies, commercial exploitation, memorial services, memorial funds and public monuments as the determinant factors<sup>35</sup>. I shall investigate four of these indicators; personal testimonies, media representations, public monuments and biographies, whilst also analysing what factors affected Evans' presentation. This dissertation will show the chronology of Evans' image, presenting his fellow travellers opinions of him before his death, the role of Scott's 'message' and the press reports, his companions' opinions of Evans' death and Evans' commemoration in memorial form in both stone and ink. Showing that just as heroism is a constructed state, an un-heroic image is also a constructed state. There are four main factors that affected and defined Evans' image, firstly the circulation of knowledge, secondly inscriptions, artefacts and diaries, thirdly print culture including the use of images and lastly, the negotiation of masculinity.

In chapter 1 I shall analyse the image of Evans, as presented by his fellow travellers before he died. I will then give a brief chronology of the press' presentation of Evans, and answer several questions, including, why was Evans open to attack? I will then analyse the reports that promoted Evans as a hero

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<sup>32</sup> N. Penny, 'Amor Publicus Posuit'; Monuments for the People and of the People', pp797-800

<sup>33</sup> J. Price, 'Watts Memorial', pp.268-269

<sup>34</sup> G.Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.3

<sup>35</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.441

within the group, articles that accused Evans of going insane, failing because of a lack of education and failing because of his physicality. Whilst also assessing how the portrayal of Evans reflected contemporary views on masculinity.

The second chapter will be a comparison between the presentation of Captain Oates, the proclaimed, 'gentleman hero', and Edgar Evans. Ideals of masculinity will also be assessed and I will question Barczewski's claim that the reason the two were presented differently was purely an issue of class; it will become clear that the manner of Evans' death was a key factor in his subsequent projection. Geoffrey Cubitt has argued that heroism can occur when "a life is encapsulated in a particularly dramatic moment"<sup>36</sup>. It is through this one moment that the presentation of the heroism of Captain Oates can be assessed in comparison with Edgar Evans.

The third chapter will focus on how Evans' presentation developed throughout the century, I will investigate two of Jones' indicators of heroism, memorials and biographies and adding another factor, scrapbooks, to see how society and individuals wished to remember and present Evans. Additionally, if memorials are "memory in the guise of representation"<sup>37</sup>, what does this show about how people wanted to commemorate Evans? I will also build upon Barczewski's suggestion that the fact Evans was attacked is more significant than the number of accusations, and I will contend that there are other, less direct ways that show the contemporary perception of Evans' un-heroic status.

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<sup>36</sup> G. Cubitt, (ed) *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.13

<sup>37</sup> C. W. J. Withers 'Memory and the history of geographical knowledge: the commemoration of Mungo Park' p.3, taken from Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, p.161



**Figure 2 Evans poses for Herbert Ponting, the self-proclaimed 'camera artist'. Evans made all of the sledges with fellow Petty Officers Crean and Keohane, and so it is very likely that the sledge behind Evans is a result of his handiwork.**

## Edgar Evans

Edgar Evans (1876-1912) was born in Rhossili, Wales. When he was 15 he joined the Royal Navy. He advanced from seaman on HMS *Trafalgar* to physical education instructor on HMS *Excellent*, to able seaman on HMS *Vernon*, and to leading seaman on HMS *Pembroke*. In 1899 he joined Lieutenant Scott on HMS *Majestic*<sup>38</sup>. At the age of twenty-five, he applied to, and was accepted on to, Scott's first Antarctic expedition, The National Antarctic Expedition, (1901-04), as a Petty Officer. After returning to Wales he married his cousin, Lois Beynon. He then worked as a gunnery instructor and won the Torpedo Cup several times<sup>39</sup>, before re-joining Captain Scott for the British Antarctic Expedition (1910-13). Evans was one of four men chosen by Scott to march to the South Pole. All five perished on the return journey, Evans left a widow and three young children.

Out of the five Evans was the first to die, collapsing on 17 February 1912. Evans' death is still a matter of mystery. Scott believed Evans had a fall, which later caused a brain haemorrhage. Whilst some have suggested scurvy, which weakened his blood vessels, thus when Evans fell and hit his head, this caused a brain haemorrhage<sup>40</sup>. Though Susan Solomon believes he suffered high altitude cerebral oedema<sup>41</sup>. A month after Evans' demise, Captain Oates walked out of the tent to his death, with the immortal words, "I am just going outside I maybe some time."<sup>42</sup> Scott, Wilson and Bowers died in their tent at the end of March 1912.

When the news reached England in February 1913, following the publishing of Scott's 'message to the public', which proclaimed Evans' role in the disaster as the "astonishing failure... of the strongest man"<sup>43</sup>. Henceforth Evans became known as 'the strong man'. However, Evans was not just a one-dimensional figure as the name 'strong man' implies.

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<sup>38</sup> G.C. Gregor, *Swansea's Antarctic Explorer*, p.77

<sup>39</sup> According to Frank Debenham's journal Evans stated he had won the cup 5 times, though Evans' biographer G.C. Gregor has stated Evans won it twice.

<sup>40</sup> A.F. Rogers, 'The Death of Petty Officer Evans' *The Practitioner*, April 1974, and R. Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, p.505

<sup>41</sup> S. Solomon, *The Coldest March*, pp.228-231.

<sup>42</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>43</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

## Chapter 1

**“In a show like this we have no scared namby pamby’s”<sup>44</sup>.**

In order to analyse the construction and establishment of Evans’ image, it is first necessary to examine how Evans’ fellow travellers viewed him prior to his death. Thus, before Scott’s opinions of his ‘failure’ were published and before the accusations by the press. The remainder of the first chapter will deal with Evans’ representation by the press in 1913. A brief chronology is given to show how Evans’ image developed. This chapter then focuses on the newspaper reports that suggest Evans failed mentally, along with the reports that suggest Evans’ failure was caused by his physicality. I contend that newspaper reports and Scott’s ‘message’ were the key mediators in Evans’ subsequent projection and status, questioning his manliness and creating a vulnerable legacy.

### **The opinions of Evans’ fellow travellers**

In January 1911 Evans was told by Scott to accompany three scientists on the Western Sledge Journey.<sup>45</sup> The scientists, Thomas Griffith-Taylor, Frank Debenham and Charles Wright had never been to Antarctica before, and so Evans’ job was essentially to show the men how to sledge and camp. Evans demonstrated how to put up and pull down the tent, how to cook for four men, how to fix boots, and he kept their spirits up with a stream of anecdotes, chocolate and card games. In Griffith-Taylor’s journal he promotes Evans as, “an ideal sledge-mate”<sup>46</sup>, an “expert steersman”<sup>47</sup>, who kept them in good humour; “Evans as usual enlivened us with Navy yarns”<sup>48</sup>. These comments show Evans as a man of skill, whilst being fully aware of his responsibilities by ensuring the morale of the group remained high. Similarly Captain Scott promoted Evans as, “the most invaluable asset to our party”<sup>49</sup>, hailing his craftsman-like skill; “a new pair of sealskin overshoes for ski made by Evans have been a complete

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<sup>44</sup> Henry. R. Bowers letter to Emily Webb Bowers, 22 June 1910, MS 1505/1/1/3/89

<sup>45</sup> T. Griffith-Taylor was the official leader, but as Evans was there to teach Debenham, Wright and Griffith-Taylor how to survive tent-life, Evans became the unofficial leader.

<sup>46</sup> Griffith-Taylor collection, (ed) W. Hanley, p.87

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p.100

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p.97

<sup>49</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.363

success”<sup>50</sup>, “Evans has made a lining for one of the tents; it is secured on the inner side of the poles and provides an air space inside the tent”<sup>51</sup>. There was far more to Evans than simple seaman who was there for his strength alone.

Particularly as Evans was presented as a craftsman, that is in essence a show of self-discipline and control, two traits advocated by Victorian freethinkers Carlyle and Kinsley<sup>52</sup>. Although self-control may only have been a key component of the masculine ideal for the middle-upper classes, the men praising Evans’ skill were from that social standing, thus it is highly probable that to Scott and Griffith-Taylor, Evans represented a display of supreme masculinity. It could be argued that Evans was a favourite of Scott, and as such Scott’s comments would be positive. However, Scott was heavily responsible for Evans’ subsequent un-heroic representation and so Evans was not so favourable that he was beyond criticism.

In Frank Debenham’s unpublished diary there were frequent comments about him and Evans larking about. Debenham regularly made a note of Evans’ sayings. For example, when dealing cards Debenham gave Evans a bad hand to which Evans replied, “Right o my old blossom, wait till I’m cook again I’ll pizen you”<sup>53</sup>. This was not simply a patronising note of look at how the lower ranks talk, for he expresses how well they get on, immediately after the incident Debenham recorded, “we really are a very jolly sledging party and it is practically all due to Evans”<sup>54</sup>. It seems from Debenham’s original diary that he looked up to Evans. This statement is inferred because Debenham makes no references to the comments used by Griffith Taylor or Charles Wright, as he does with Evans, whom he mentions every day, writing down Evans’ opinions and popular sayings. Debenham states, “Evans has the most frequent falls and after one he peers out of his hole at me to see if I’m laughing and that always breaks me up.”<sup>55</sup>

“Evans and I have started a feud...Ripping chap!”<sup>56</sup> “Evans and I whirled away the time singing and generally acting the giddy ox. Amongst other things he proposed

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<sup>50</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.245

<sup>51</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals* p.229

<sup>52</sup> C. Oldstone-Moore ‘The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain’, p.14

<sup>53</sup> F. Debenham, *Diary*, 15 February 1911, MS 1654;D

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 20 February, 1911

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 18 February 1911

to me.”<sup>57</sup> Evans was essentially breaking down the class barriers that have often been associated with the regime of Scott’s expeditions. The quotes also show that Evans possessed qualities that the educated men admired.



Figure 3 [Left to right: Evans, Griffith-Taylor and Debenham in early 1911.] Debenham stated in his journal that Evans would make him laugh just as the photograph was taken, resulting in the two of them “grinning like apes” <sup>58</sup>, though here is looks like they have managed to keep a straight face.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence to illustrate how the Seamen and Petty Officers viewed Evans. This is because, only a minority kept journals, and those

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 26 February 1911

<sup>58</sup>:ibid, 21 February 1911

who did often wrote rather short entries<sup>59</sup>, and generally made no mention of their thoughts and feelings about their fellows. Often just stating the time, weather, food consumed and where they camped, whilst any extraordinary events were also noted. For as Evans proclaimed having seen a whale, “Hoorey, got something to put in the diary.”<sup>60</sup> Additionally, one should acknowledge that journals could have been lost or destroyed, or they may have remained in family possession.

It should though be clear that from the evidence available, Evans was seen as an asset to the expedition and to his fellow travellers. He was a leader, not only shown by the fact that he became the unofficial leader of the western sledge journey, but as a gunnery instructor his team won the Torpedo cup several times. He was a skilled craftsman, making successful sledges, crampons, sleeping bags, and tent linings, he was devoted to his leader and broke down social boundaries. Yet these virtues stated by his fellow explorers have, by and large, been lost, hidden or misrepresented by the mediators.

### **A chronology of the press’ presentation of Evans**

To aid the readers understanding of the construction of Evans’ image, I have written 4 key dates to show a brief chronology of Evans’ presentation by the British press.

On 10 February 1913, the news of the fate of the Antarctic five was first published. There were no accusations being put forward on this date for knowledge of the disaster is minimal.<sup>61</sup>

From 11 February 1913 Captain Scott’s ‘message to the public’<sup>62</sup> was printed<sup>63</sup>. In the ‘message’, Scott calls Evans’ breakdown an “astonishing failure of...the

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<sup>59</sup> With the exception of Petty Officer Thomas Williamson

<sup>60</sup> F. Debenham, diary, 13 February 1911. Rather ironically this was noted by Debenham in his diary and not recorded by Evans.

<sup>61</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, 10 February 1913, Extra late *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 February 1913, MS 1453/40

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix for the entire ‘Message to the public’

<sup>63</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Mail*, *Westminster Gazette* - 11 February, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Sketch*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*- 12 February 12’ *The Times Weekly* – 14 February

strongest man”<sup>64</sup>. From this date on Evans was known as the ‘strong man’, and theories were put forward by the press concerning Evans’ role in the disaster, such as, “did he fail physically or mentally?”<sup>65</sup> From 11 February for several days there were also articles about Evans with a sympathetic tone, for Evans’ wife Lois was quoted.<sup>66</sup>

From 15 February 1913, Commander Edward Evans’<sup>67</sup> interview, whereby he stated that the accusations that Edgar Evans went insane were untrue, was extensively reported<sup>68</sup>. However, some newspapers as late as 21 February were still projecting the view that “Evans [had] lost his reason”<sup>69</sup>. There were two images of Evans being offered, “the strong man of Captain Scott’s Southern Party whose accident was the beginning of the disaster”<sup>70</sup>, in conjunction with, “the strong man of Scott’s band of heroes”<sup>71</sup>.

Throughout the remainder of 1913, Evans was still offered as a hero within the group, but his un-heroic reception as an individual continued. *The Daily Mirror* presented the publication of Scott’s *Journals* as a means to “clear up the mystery of Evans’ death”, the article concurs, “there is no mystery at all Evans died a natural death following great exhaustion.” However, Evans’ image is not re-constructed as heroic, for the article continues, “the following extracts show how the various stages of the sturdy seaman’s fate dogged them”<sup>72</sup>. Evidently Evans was still a controversial figure.

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<sup>64</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.420

<sup>65</sup> *The Daily Express*,

<sup>66</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Graphic*, 12 February, *The Times Weekly*, 14 February, *The Globe* 13 February.

<sup>67</sup> Commander Edward Evans began the expedition as a Lieutenant, but after Scott’s death, he was promoted to Commander. He is no relation to Edgar Evans.

<sup>68</sup> *The Observer*, Sunday 16 February 1913, *The Daily Mail* 15<sup>th</sup> February, *The Times Weekly Edition*, February 21<sup>st</sup>, *The Times* 17 February 1913

<sup>69</sup> *The Times Weekly Edition*, 21 February 1913

<sup>70</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 15 February 1913, MS 1453/40

<sup>71</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 15 February 1913, MS 1958/1

<sup>72</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1913



**Figure 4 [Left to right] Bowers, Oates, Evans, Scott and Wilson at the South Pole, 17 January 1912**

### **Scott's 'message to the public'**

Why did the press attack Evans?

From the chronology it is clear that the primary reason Evans was open to attack stems from the fact that the first, and most influential mediator, Captain Scott, had lambasted Evans in the 'message to the public'. From that point on Evans' legacy became vulnerable.

The 'message' was a note written by Scott as he, Bowers and Wilson awaited death in their tent; it was an attempt to explain the reasons for the disaster. Scott blamed the loss of pony transport, the weather, the soft snow and he then claims that they would have made it home "in fine form and with surplus food, but for the astonishing failure of the man whom we least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party."<sup>73</sup> However, Scott went on to state that the journey had shown, "that Englishmen can endure hardships, help

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<sup>73</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

one another and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past...had we lived I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman.”<sup>74</sup>

Scott’s ‘message’ was not just a note; it was an unofficial document that became the basis for Evans’ un-heroic reputation and the others heroic depiction. Notes are essentially filling in for official documentation, therefore it was not an official statement produced by Scott; it was his own private thoughts and opinions.<sup>75</sup>

To be declared a ‘failure’ by his leader twice is indisputably not a representation of a state of heroism. However, ‘failure’ is not the only significant word in Scott’s pronouncement of Evans’ role in the disaster. Qualifying the ‘failure’ with the word ‘astonishing’, presents the notion that Evans’ ‘failure’ was unpredicted, Evans should not have failed, and he was therefore unreliable. This is a key statement, for self-control and self-discipline were often viewed as the epitome of masculinity, particularly for the middle to higher classes. Thus unreliability was not a virtue it was an indictment. As Showalter states, in reference to the First World War, “chief among the values promoted within the male community of the war was the ability to tolerate the appalling filth and the stink of the trenches, the relentless noise, and the constant threat of death, with stoic good humour, and to allude to it in phlegmatic understatement. Indeed, emotional repression was an essential aspect of the British masculine ideal.”<sup>76</sup> Evans was presented as having an unpredictable failure; this was clearly not a representation of a masculine ideal, let alone a heroic ideal.

Scott’s ‘message’ along with Oates’ self-sacrificing moment, “I’m just going outside I may be sometime”<sup>77</sup> were, as Jones’ research has found, the only two extracts directly quoted from Scott’s *Journals* that were telegraphed back to the

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<sup>74</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.422

<sup>75</sup> Though it is debatable if Scott knew this personal note would be made public, it would be reasonable to assume that it was his intention, as it was entitled ‘message to the public’.

<sup>76</sup> E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.169

<sup>77</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p. 410

press in England.<sup>78</sup> Those two extracts from Scott's *Journal's* provided the basis for the story told to one and a half million children in elementary schools on 15 February 1913<sup>79</sup>. The message was also printed in a small 7 page booklet entitled 'The People's Tribute to the Heroes of the Antarctic', which was a "penny contribution...enabling the humblest of us to participate"<sup>80</sup> in the fund-raising. The 'message' was evidently publicised throughout the social hierarchy. The public would not see Scott's comments praising Evans until the end of the year, when Scott's *Journals* were published on 6 November 1913. Therefore, the image of Evans that was offered in newspapers throughout Britain in February 1913, stemmed from the image presented by Scott; a strong man, dying first and contributing to the fate of the other four.

### Evans' state of mind

Many newspapers ran stories that questioned Evans' state of mind, From 15 February 1913, *The Observer*, *Western Mail*, *South Wales Echo*, *Daily Graphic* and *The Times Weekly Edition* all ran a very similar story expressing concerns about Evans' mental state. "It would seem from what has escaped some of the survivors that Evans lost his reason for the time being under the great stress of fatigue and privation and was incapable of obeying orders, or assisting his hard-pushed companions in the weary work of pulling the sledge. Indeed it became necessary in the end to lay him on it."<sup>81</sup> This article declares that the evidence for Evans' mental breakdown stems from his comrades, though there were also reports that the men did not talk to the press. For example, in another interview Commander Evans had stated, "members of the expedition were not anxious to be interviewed."<sup>82</sup> So although possible, it is unlikely that one of his companions would have made such an accusation, for claiming that Evans had 'lost his reason', was a term used to insinuate insanity. The press were making a serious indictment since the attribution of mental health issues would have been seen as a major social stigma, and consequently a long way from a heroic image.

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<sup>78</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, pp.99-100

<sup>79</sup> M. Jones, 'The King Upon His Knees' p.110 in G. Cubitt and A. Warren (ed) *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*

<sup>80</sup> Ephemera Collection 1910-13

<sup>81</sup> *The Times Weekly* 21 February 1913,

<sup>82</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, 14 April 1913, MS 1957/7

The image presented by those newspapers of Evans being carried on the sledge itself a tool of labour, shows a lack of ability to operate on space, his demise represented a failed, 'bodily force'. For as Valentine states, "Connell...argues [men] are expected to be able to exhibit bodily skill in terms of their competence to operate on space, or the objects in it, and to be a bodily force in terms of their ability to occupy space"<sup>83</sup>. In the reports of his failing mentality and physically Evans was clearly presented as showing an inability to operate not only the technology of the object (the sledge), but also an inability to orientate within the Antarctic space. However, in the accounts of his fellows before he reached the Pole, Evans was the embodiment of bodily force and by crafting objects, leading and teaching men, he had clearly occupied space with authority.

Mark Jackson believes, that Edwardian perceptions of feeble-minds "were closely framed by broader social and cultural concerns, particularly about race, class and gender."<sup>84</sup> Evans' presented mental instability was also framed by those cultural concerns. For the early twentieth century was a time when the theory of 'separate spheres' for men and women was still a popular belief. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that there were views of separate spheres too for male and female mentality, since hysteria and nervous dispositions were not seen masculine traits, they were characterized as effeminate. And the appearance of effeminate traits was seen as danger to the manliness of the race, for example, hunting was encouraged at public schools for it was seen as an "antidote to effeminacy"<sup>85</sup>. To give another contemporary example, the following letter, written by an ex-military man was printed in *The Daily Sketch*:

"MORAL GERMICIDE - Returned Exile Shocked at London's Effeminate Men"

"After eighteen years in India I return to England and what do I find? An improvement in her modes of locomotion? Perhaps. But where are her sons?

...There is a brigade of microbes (I cannot think of any other term) with painted faces, high-heeled boots and bangles infesting London.

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<sup>83</sup> G. Valentine, 'What it means to be a man, the body, masculinity, disability' p.165 from R. Butler + H. Parr (ed), *Mind and Body and Spaces*

<sup>84</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.129

<sup>85</sup> J. M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, pp.45-46 from P.A Dunne, *British Juvenile Literature*, p.475

I went into a hairdresser's in Piccadilly for a shave and to my astonishment and disgust was asked if I would have my face massaged! With a reply more forcible than polite I seized my overcoat and a hat (unfortunately not my own) and hurried along the streets thinking: What has England come to?

In the boy scouts we certainly have the making of men - not that these men will remain in Britain unless something is done to improve the masculine standard. They will away to the colonies and live with men.

KADER - Birmingham<sup>86</sup>

The letter clearly shows that displays of femininity were seen as unmanly, and so the Antarctic five may have been viewed as antidotes to the accusations of the declining manliness of the nation. The letter does though have a satirical tone, for it seems people were well aware that the testing ground for the manliness of British subjects was in the colonies, away from Britain. Although it cannot be assumed this voice was the voice of many, for it could be the voice of one region, occupation, or age. It should be acknowledged that during the Victorian and Edwardian period there was an emphasis on creating brave boys to defend the empire. This accounts for the prominence of frontier and military stories in boys' literature, wherein; "the imperatives of empire elaborated a militaristic and robust hypermasculinity which found its apotheosis in...the boys' adventure story."<sup>87</sup> This implies the shocked opinion put forward in the letter was not an individual perception, there was a popular desire to enhance the manliness of the male British nation, and Evans' presented mental instability reflected the fears of un-manliness.

It is the general consensus that the First World War acted as a catalyst for advancing the understanding of mental health and developing psychological therapy, whilst also calling into question popular beliefs on degeneration.<sup>88</sup> However, medics first had to recognise that shellshock was not a sign of weakness and degeneration, and it appears from Elaine Showalter's investigation into male hysteria in *The Female Malady* (1985), that a class distinction was

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<sup>86</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 11 February 1913

<sup>87</sup> M. Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male', *Historical Journal*, p.640

<sup>88</sup> P. Howorth, 'The treatment of shell-shock', p.225

introduced. “Doctors noticed that war neurosis took different forms in officers and regular soldiers... [There was a] tidy distribution of symptoms and diagnosis is consistent with late Victorian moralistic and class orientated attitudes to hysteria and neurasthenia in women.”<sup>89</sup> Showalter continues, “the hysterical soldier was seen as a simple, emotional, unthinking, passive, suggestible, dependant and weak - very much the same constellation of traits associated with the hysterical woman - while the complex and overworked neurasthenic officer was much closer to an acceptable, even heroic male ideal.”<sup>90</sup>

Evidently Showalter’s research shows that the lower ranks were fitted to a feminine model, leaving the privations of the higher ranks to be viewed within a heroic ideal. The fact that a distinction was sought out shows there was a concern that a state, which had traditionally been seen as a feminine trait and defect, could be pinned to men of officer status. This implies that in the pre-war and thus pre-distinction phase, Evans’ class was not the cause of accusations about his presented mental instability, for the class distinctions were yet to be introduced. Therefore, Evans’ breakdown was seen as a demonstration of a lack of will power, an accusation of femininity, not one solely tied to social status. The accusations questioned his masculinity, which would have affected the likelihood of Evans being promoted as a heroic individual.

It seems fitting to have compared the diagnosis of shellshock, a military syndrome, with the supposed mental breakdown of Edgar Evans. This is because, as George Mosse claims, “war is a test of manliness, those who had shell-sock failed the test”<sup>91</sup>. In pre-war Britain, Antarctic exploration was the supreme test of manliness, those who were projected as slowing down their comrades, losing their mind and having to be carried on a sledge, failed the test.

However, although hysteria and mental breakdown were seen as essentially feminine, there has traditionally been a connection between sailors and femininity. Quintin Colville states, “ratings were associated with feminised

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<sup>89</sup> E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.174

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*, p.175

<sup>91</sup> George. L. Mosse, ‘Shell-Shock as a Social Disease’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, p.104

qualities such as the love of domesticity, sentimentality, emotional spontaneity and immaturity; connotations further borne out by the requirement of ratings to wash and repair their own clothes.”<sup>92</sup> So there was a link already, inferring that sailors had a masculinity of their own, and thus is not comparable to other occupations, or those within the same class. Additionally, Conley has proclaimed that there was a genuine respect for the domesticated sailor, for cleaning products were often advertised by images of sailors.<sup>93</sup> However, whereas feminine qualities such as domesticity can be praised within or outside the seaman’s world, a mental breakdown was not a praise-worthy state in a seaman’s world of masculinity or any other.



Figure 5 Edgar Evans at the sewing machine, like all Petty Officers would have been a skilled sewer, for a Royal Naval mariner sewing was a necessity as they needed to mend their own clothes.

Reports questioning Evans’ mental state continued to be printed. *The Daily Express* ran an article entitled, “The problem of Seaman Evans - why he “failed” the expedition - was he handicapped by his strength? - Did Seaman Edgar Evans-

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<sup>92</sup> Q. Colville, ‘Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer. The Role of Uniform in Shaping in the Class – and Gender-Related Identities of British Naval Personnel, 1930-39’ p.127

<sup>93</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar To Union Jack*, p.145

the cheery giant of the party fail physically or mentally?" The article quoted an 'eminent mental specialist', who asserted, "it is the uneducated man he said who would feel most acutely the mental strain and dreary, monotonous life amid eternal snows...To an educated man this strain would be bad enough, but he would be able to stimulate his brain from his store of learning. Contrary to popular belief, educated men endure long terms of imprisonment - most of the rigours of which would be reproduced and intensified among the hardships of the Antarctic - better than the uneducated man. The absence of stimulus in an uneducated man, such as presumably Seaman Evans would have been - might have been succeeded by a kind of self-mannerism, followed by mania and delusion that he was being kept from food and home, both close at hand. Such a breakdown may have been the 'failure' of which Captain Scott speaks. Or it may have been physical failure. It is not always the biggest and most athletic man who endures privation best."<sup>94</sup>

The fact that the press sought out a 'specialist' to offer his opinions shows that the press were accepting Scott's initial criticism of Evans, and were not looking to provide evidence that proved otherwise. The newspaper had sought an educated man, a voice of medical authority, who was effectively verifying Scott's statement, and thus attempting to turn it from interpretation to factual analysis. Evans was therefore officially labelled unsuitable for exploration. *The Express*' 'specialist' was evidently questioning Evans' mental capability, asserting that Evans had a lack of education, essentially implying that Evans' financial and social circumstances rendered him unfit for exploration. However, when Evans had returned from Scott's first Antarctic expedition the *Discovery* (1901-04), the press declared, "the crew is composed entirely of absolutely picked men, each one of them noted for a high standard of intelligence."<sup>95</sup> Whilst another claimed, "they have been specially selected for their physique, constitution, seamanship, and for their capacity in entertaining their fellows."<sup>96</sup> Additionally, Evans' mental state was not an issue before January 1912, as Bowers stated in a letter to his sister, "in a show like this we have no scared

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<sup>94</sup> *The Daily Express*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/2

<sup>95</sup> Unknown Paper, date is most likely 1903, MS 735/1

<sup>96</sup> *Daily Mail*, 8 July 1901, MS 1464/31

namby pambys - Thank goodness”<sup>97</sup>. Whilst Scott claimed in his Journals Evans had a “really remarkable headpiece”<sup>98</sup> and Ponting recalled, “Evans, always quick-witted”<sup>99</sup>. Evidently these were a long way from the reports that Evans’ lack of education made him a liability on the expedition.

The day before Evans died, Scott had stated, “Evans has nearly broken down in the Brain we think.”<sup>100</sup> Which could account for the press accusations, yet these comments were not published until November 1913, some nine months later. Additionally on the day Evans died, Evans had announced, “As he always did, that he was quite well”<sup>101</sup> and he started the day pulling the sledge in his harness. He was clearly not a perpetual delirious mess as some of the press reports implied.

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<sup>97</sup> H. R. Bowers, letter to Emily Webb Bowers, 22 June 1910. 1501/1/1/3/89

<sup>98</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.369

<sup>99</sup> H. Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.27

<sup>100</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.396

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, p.397



Figure 6 this photograph is a section from a larger image showing Evans building a sledge<sup>102</sup>. Frank Debenham, the co-founder and first director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, was a member of Scott's last expedition and claimed Evans was, "the most useful man down here."<sup>103</sup>

It was when Evans was blamed that the press became selective and ignored evidence that proved Evans could be self-disciplined. Figure 6, above, is of major significance for it shows Evans' skill. Evans was not a trained carpenter, yet along with his fellow Petty Officers he made all of the sledges, showing his capacity for learning and engineering. This has implications for a man of skill and master of a craft shows a presence of self-discipline, control of mind and body. Yet this photo was not chosen by the press to represent Evans. Perhaps a display of a hard working, adaptable and skilled mariner was not the image the press

<sup>102</sup> The full photograph can be viewed in the appendix, p.85

<sup>103</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

wanted to project once conventions had been established. On the other hand, it may simply be that this image was not available to the press. That though is extremely unlikely as, from 21 May 1913 the photographs taken by the five at the South Pole were available, with *The Daily Mirror* having exclusive rights to show the photographs first. If the last photographs of the Pole Party were accessible from that date it can be assumed that from 21 May at the very latest, all the photographs of Evans taken prior to the Pole would have also been available to the press. In fact the image chosen to represent Evans in that particular issue was an image that highlighted his strength, not his self-discipline. The photograph used can be seen in figure 7 below.



Figure 7 Edgar Evans poses with a pickaxe slung over his shoulder. Underneath the portrait the captain in the *Daily Mirror* read, “Petty Officer Evans, ‘the strong man of the party,’ who was the first to die. ‘He died a natural death, but left us a shaken party with the season duly advanced’ wrote Captain Scott.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 21 May, 1913

Interestingly *The Daily Chronicle* on 13 February 1913, printed an article claiming, “Evans accompanied Captain Scott on his first attempt to reach the Pole ten years ago, and the leader then praised him highly. There is no word of commendation for him on this occasion.”<sup>105</sup> One cannot help but wonder if the press did actually probe, or, just accepted the evidence at face value. The only official account they were given was through Commander Evans and this included Scott’s ‘message’ and a report of the disaster, Commander Evans was interviewed in April 1913, but during this interview declared that Evans had behaved, “magnificently throughout the expedition”<sup>106</sup>. However, during this interview Commander Evans also cast judgement over Evans. *The Birmingham Gazette* explains, Commander Edward Evans was “told of some of the rumours which were circulated regarding the fate of Seaman Evans... Poor Evans behaved magnificently throughout the expedition he said and his astonishing failure, as Captain Scott described it, was due to the continuous hardships encountered. Evans was possessed of tremendous strength, but it would seem that his staying power was not equal to that of his tent-mates.”<sup>107</sup>

The comment from Lieutenant Evans, accusing Evans as lacking ‘staying power’ is not a technical or medical explanation for Evans ‘failure’. It is an accusation based upon contemporary popular language that infers and implies rather than offering a definite and constructive explanation. Paul Fussell’s, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (2000) investigates the adaptation of words to hide a greater meaning. “Not to complain is to be - *manly*” “actions are - *deeds*” “to be cheerfully brave is to be - *plucky*” “to be earnestly brave is to be - *gallant*”<sup>108</sup>. The language used in Great War was, “the language is that which two generations of readers had been accustomed to associate with the quiet action of personal control and Christian self-abnegation (‘sacrifice’), as well as with more violent actions of aggression and defence.”<sup>109</sup> The language used defined and identified several generations, and it was this language that was prominent in the projections of the exploits of the expedition. By questioning

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<sup>105</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 13 February 1913,

<sup>106</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, MS 1957/7, *The Times*, 17 February 1913

<sup>107</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, MS 1957/7

<sup>108</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p.22

<sup>109</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p.21

Evans' 'staying power', it implies Evans had a lack of mental strength and thus a lack of self-control. Additionally Commander Evans' comments show that even Edgar Evans' fellow travellers viewed him in a differing light to the rest of the Antarctic five, a point I will further examine in chapter 2.

Major Raymond. E. Priestley, who was part of Scott's 1910-13 expedition, declared in his paper 'The Psychology of exploration' in the section 'polar madness' that "one factor worth mentioning is that it appears to be the most unelastic temperaments and minds that succumb. The higher strung and more sensitive the organisation the better it will withstand extraordinary strain."<sup>110</sup> However, Debenham, who often quoted Evans in his diary, states that Evans had said "a man who takes things as they come and doesn't worry can enjoy the Navy as he does."<sup>111</sup> He clearly did not possess an 'unelastic temperament'. Additionally, although Priestley's statement is based upon his opinions and observations in the Antarctic, Priestley would not have spent very much time at all with Evans. Priestley was not part of any of the geological party's that were accompanied by Evans, and Priestley spent nine months with the Northern Party, whilst Evans was on the Southern Journey. It was reported by the press that P.O George Abbott, a member of the Northern Party suffered a mental breakdown<sup>112</sup>, so it is likely Priestley's comments were written in reference to Abbott and not Evans.

### Evans' physicality and popular opinion

The 'message to the public' had essentially set the standard for criticising Evans, it also had a major contribution in the construction of Evans' image for it put forward the notion that Evans' strength was his key, and defining trait. In consequence, the vast majority of press reports from 11 February 1913 refer to Evans as 'the strong man of the party'. For example, *The Illustrated London News* declares Evans as, 'the strong man of Captain Scott's Southern party whose accident was the beginning of the disaster.'<sup>113</sup> *The Daily Sketch* calls Evans, "the

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<sup>110</sup> Major. R.E. Priestley, 'The Psychology of exploration' p.76, SPRI- MS 1097/16/1

<sup>111</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, MS 1654

<sup>112</sup> Unknown paper, article states, "Mrs Abbott is the dependent mother of a chief petty-officer who has become insane in consequence of privations endured"- MS 1453/40

<sup>113</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 15 February 1913, MS 1453/40

strongest who died first”<sup>114</sup> *The Morning Post*; “the strong man...whose unaccountable breakdown was the first symptom”<sup>115</sup>. One article from *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913 entitled “The Strong Man Who Fell”, proclaims, “It is one of the paradoxes of Nature a London physician stated yesterday, “that splendidly developed, huge-framed stand adverse conditions, such as extreme cold, starvation, or prolonged thirst, much worse than smaller men of infinitely inferior physique. That it is a fact, however has been proven again and again in wars, where the little, more or less scrawny, underdeveloped men stand the rigours and hardships of a campaign much better than their so called stronger fellows.”<sup>116</sup>

These are clearly attacks on Evans, stemming from his physique, which here has been rendered unsuitable for exploration. To be pronounced as a ‘paradox of nature’, or be put forward as having had an ‘unaccountable breakdown’ is obviously not a representation of an ideal. *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch* were newspapers aimed towards the lower classes, inferring that it was not solely an attack on Evans’ class, for it is unlikely a newspaper whose audience was generally made up of the working classes<sup>117</sup> would attack those of a similar socio-financial state. This then questions the claim that Evans’ class can function as an unproblematic explanation for the derogatory comments put forward by the press. The quote also shows that the press had again sought out a ‘physician’ to put forward opinions on Evans’ failure, showing the willingness of the press to find an official to authenticate, and not disprove, Scott’s ‘message’. Evans was yet again officially labelled unsuitable for exploration.

However, one must question the reliability of the evidence of the ‘experts’ who were asked by the press to comment upon the photographs of Evans and give reasons for Evans’ ‘failure’. This is because from 11 February until 13 February the photographs used in most newspapers of Petty Officer Evans were actually

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<sup>114</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 13 February 1913, MS 1958/1

<sup>115</sup> *The Morning Post*, February, 1913

<sup>116</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

<sup>117</sup> In February 1913, *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch* were priced at one halfpenny, compared *The Daily Graphic* at one penny, *The Times Weekly* at 2d.

that of Petty Officer Johnson<sup>118</sup>. Although no scholars or biographers have brought up this issue before, there is affirmative evidence that the photographs do not match. Underneath a small portrait Edgar Evans in *The Daily Sketch*, an article states that the portrait “sent out by a photographic agency as that of Evans, and published in *the Daily Sketch* and other newspapers, was in reality a picture of Petty Officer Johnson, another member of the expedition, who is alive and well.”<sup>119</sup> This raises doubts over the evidence of ‘experts’ such as the ‘London physician’ who declared, “Seaman Evans, from his photograph, must have been a tremendously powerful man as far as bone and muscle are concerned.”<sup>120</sup> Although it is common consensus that Evans was a strong man, if the experts’ sole interpretation of Evans’ was based upon one photograph of the wrong man, it does suggest that some of their inferences may be erroneous.

This case of mistaken identity could have been due to the fact that Henry Robertson Bowers stated in a letter to his sister, that Johnson was “the strongest seaman”<sup>121</sup>. And so in trying to find photos of Evans, the photographic agency simply saw the photograph and assumed it was Evans, who, after all was well recorded by Scott and every paper in the nation as the ‘strong man’. Though perhaps it is most likely it was simply mislabelled in the first place, for underneath one photograph in *The Daily Mirror* in May 1910, Evans was labelled as Johnson, and Johnson as Evans<sup>122</sup>. To add insult to injury, Bowers also states, “we also got rid of our strongest seaman Johnson who exchanged with a man on the ‘Powerful.’ He was the champion Boxer man and had begun to threaten and bully his mess-mates”<sup>123</sup>. So, not only was the wrong photograph used, it was also a photograph of a man who had been removed from his position for bullying his fellows.

Mark Jackson’s research has shown that during the Victorian and Edwardian period in the medical, anthropological and educational field, links between mind

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<sup>118</sup> Including, *The Daily Sketch* 11 and 12 February, (MS 1958/1) *The Daily Mirror*, 11 and 12 February, *The Graphic* 15 February, and *The Daily Mail* 11 February 1913.

<sup>119</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 13 February, 1913

<sup>120</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 12 1913,

<sup>121</sup> H.R Bowers, letter 21, 22 October, 1910, MS 1505/1/1/2/102

<sup>122</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 31 May 1910, MS 1961 BPC

<sup>123</sup> H.R. Bowers, letter, SPRI 1501/1/1/2/102, 21 November, 1910

and body were, “neither novel or isolated.”<sup>124</sup> In consequence this infers that the theories put forward about the failure of the ‘strongest man’ were actually comments about his mental state. However, these links between mind and body were affected by fears of degeneration and fears of “imperial decline.”<sup>125</sup> So the links were caused by insecurities. Additionally some press reports distinguish between the two; mind and body were seen as separate. For example *The Daily Express* and *The South Wales Echo*, ran the same article, “Did Seaman Evans the cheery giant of the party fail physically or mentally?”<sup>126</sup> So it appears that when Evans was presented as failing physically this was not necessarily an assault on his mental state.

Because of the limited probing by the press that hid or ignored the image of Evans as a man of skill, Evans was presented as being defined by his physicality. Therefore the loss of Evans’ strength could also be seen as a loss of his masculine identity. It appears that Evans did also view his physical stature as part of his masculine identity. For although Colville states, “uniform was of crucial significance in defining the understandings of class and masculinity held by servicemen.”<sup>127</sup> Apsley Cherry-Garrard has recalled that, “[Captain] Oates hated swank - so much so that he erred on the other side almost perversely, and was rough and ready to the last degree. Taff [Edgar] Evans nearly had a fight with a sailor on the quay at Dunedin, because they spoke disrespectfully of Oates slovenly dress and slouching gait.”<sup>128</sup> Taking Judith Butler’s theory that gender is performed, that “stylisation of the body, is a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory framework”<sup>129</sup>, Oates was clearly pushing the limits of the gender identity of a man of the landed gentry. Or, perhaps Oates harboured a resistance to the effeminacy associated with the gentleman travellers. Cherry-Garrard’s recollection also shows the framework of manliness Evans worked within, attempting to defend Oates’ honour with a physical brawl. Implying Evans viewed his physical stature as part of his masculine identity.

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<sup>124</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.36

<sup>125</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.37

<sup>126</sup> *Daily Express*, 12 February, *South Wales Echo*, 12 February 1912, from S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.176,

<sup>127</sup> Q. Colville, ‘Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer’ p.106

<sup>128</sup> Copy of typewritten page bound after p228 into the Very Rev. George Seaver’s personal copy of Cherry-Garrard’s *The Worst Journey in the World*. MS 1012;D

<sup>129</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.43



Figure 8 (This a section from a larger photograph)<sup>130</sup> Oates can be seen here 'slouching' on the side ship whilst Lieutenant Rennick leads one of the ponies out.

There has though been little scholarly research on lower class occupation defined masculinity, as J.D Glasco proclaims, "little research has been done to examine the seamen's definitions of their masculine identities"<sup>131</sup>. Although Glasco's observations that, "in the seaman's world, a man's position in the gendered hierarchy, his manliness, depended primarily on his maritime skill"<sup>132</sup>, were based upon the mutinies of 1793. If masculinity was occupation defined, it is possible the late nineteenth and twentieth century mariners would have maintained the view. Seeing that Evans was proclaimed as the "most useful man

<sup>130</sup> The entire photograph can be seen in the appendix.

<sup>131</sup> J.D Glasco, 'The Seaman feels Him-self a man', p.41/42

<sup>132</sup> J. Glasco, 'The Seaman feels Him-Self a man', p.46

we have down here”<sup>133</sup>, his maritime skill level was high, and expectably so from a Petty Officer 1st class. This would imply that he was respected for his abilities, and as such there were no doubts about his manliness. Confirming the theory that it was only the press, set-up by Scott’s ‘message’, who questioned Evans’ manliness, whilst greatly ignoring, or not looking for, any contradictory evidence.

One wonders if the projection of the failure of the ‘strong man’ was a means of reclaiming a sense of masculinity for the upper classes. However, physical strength was also a trait the upper classes strived to achieve during this period, since the movement Muscular Christianity came into prominence. Muscular Christianity emphasised strength of body not just the strength of mind. It was a belief sported by those of the upper classes for it was prominent in the public schools during this time. This implies that the ‘failure’ of a strong man would not necessarily be an attack on his social standing.

However, it should be acknowledged that the emphasis on Evans’ physicality in his representation was also a product of a tradition of viewing sailors as strong men. It was a state of his occupation not his socio-financial status. The image of the tough Jack Tar had been present for centuries, for example Fulford states of the eighteenth century sailors, “British sailors, like British ships, exemplified the national virtue of oaklike strength.”<sup>134</sup> This can be complemented by Thirgood’s research into oak, he has shown that the ‘hearts of oak’ traditional view of sailors is a link to the qualities of oak itself, for oak was a metaphor for strength, “the open-grown character of English oak contributed to the vaunted superiority of the ‘hearts of oak’, used in British men-of-war. Throughout the wooden ship era, English oak was strongly held to be more durable than French or Baltic (largely German) oak.”<sup>135</sup> The muscular seaman was a national stereotype, and Evans needed no adaptation to fit the bill.

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<sup>133</sup> F. Debenham, *Diary*, MS 1654;D

<sup>134</sup> T. Fulford, ‘Romanticizing the Empire’ p.164

<sup>135</sup> J.V. Thirgood, ‘The Historical Significance of Oak’ p.9

### A hero within the Antarctic Five

One wonders if Evans' presentation goes further than not being a hero, if it descends into anti-hero, if he did essentially become a Judas-type-figure. However, Evans is not presented as wanting to cause the deaths of his comrades, it was not a calculated move, and as such he was more of a *failed* hero than an anti-hero. Additionally, Evans was still presented as a hero by some of the press reports when he was presented as part of the Antarctic five.

As part of the group, Evans was frequently offered as a hero. For example, *The Daily Mirror* had a centrefold photograph and above it the headline read, "5 heroes at the pole"<sup>136</sup>. *The Standard* proclaimed, "Britain may well be proud of these sons of hers who are the latest to add their names to the long roll of heroes and the martyrs of Polar Exploration."<sup>137</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, "The strong man of Scott's band of heroes"<sup>138</sup>. *The Daily Telegraph*, "The heroes of the South Pole"<sup>139</sup>, *The Little Paper*, "How five heroes left the world"<sup>140</sup> Evans could be seen as a hero when the press wanted to present the men as one entity. However, as an individual Evans was rarely presented in the same light as his comrades.

It is possible that when Evans was presented as a hero, this was a measure to protect the image of the strength of the nation. Evans' presentation by Scott and the articles that accepted Scott's views on Evans' role in the disaster, contradicted the stereotypical image of early twentieth century Royal Navy sailors. These were used to show the strength of the nation, and were presented as "exemplars of Britishness and manliness"<sup>141</sup>. Therefore, if sailors within the Royal Navy were viewed as the ultimate of masculinity, by presenting Evans as failing, either physically, and or, mentally this was not a representation of the model of a sailor that had been sold to the population. This could imply that not

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<sup>136</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 21 May, 1913

<sup>137</sup> *The Standard*, 11 February 1913,

<sup>138</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1913, (MS 1958/1)

<sup>139</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, February 1913, (MS 1464/32)

<sup>140</sup> *The Little Paper*, March 1913, (MS 1464/32)

<sup>141</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, p.5

all articles were derogatory, for if sailors represented imperial power, a failing sailor was potentially a failing nation.

## **Conclusion**

Evans' legacy was vulnerable having come under attack in Scott's 'message'.

The press took up Scott's claims resulting in a portrayal that questioned Evans' mental stability and physicality. The inadequacy of the press to offer Evans as a man of skill should not be viewed as a genuine reflection of Evans' character and image. Historians should judge it as editorial bias. This resulted in Evans becoming, "the strongest man whom we least expected to fail."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

## Chapter 2

“It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman”<sup>143</sup> - the heroic ideal.

Oates and Evans were the only two out of the five who did not die alongside their leader and both slowed the party down. By comparing the presentation of Evans’ death with that of Oates’, this chapter will build upon the theory that Evans’ class was not the only factor involved in his presentation. I contend that just as Scott had a key role in Evans’ subsequent presentation, he also had a critical a role in Oates’ heroic status, whilst the manner of Oates’ and Evans’ deaths had a major impact on the ability of the press to establish their reputations. Using the accounts of their fellow travellers, and the press reports I assert that Oates’ death was seen as the model upon which to base reports of other deaths. Additionally, it will be clear that the manner of Scott’s, Wilson’s, Bowers’ and Oates’ death all fitted within an already established heroic ideal.

According to Lisa Bloom, “in the years following Scott’s death a myth of gentleman-hero was erected on the foundation of the letters Scott wrote to explain the causes of his expedition’s misfortunes.”<sup>144</sup> This statement of Bloom’s is misleading as it suggests that the gentleman-hero’s foundation began with Scott, when in fact the gentleman hero had been presented and promoted in the Victorian period<sup>145</sup>. Additionally, Bloom asserts Scott’s last letters caused him to be seen as a gentleman-hero. Contemporary press reports reveal however that it was not Scott, but Captain Oates who was presented as the gentleman-hero. He was an old Etonian and Cavalry officer who had earned the nickname “No Surrender Oates whilst fighting in the second Boer war.”<sup>146</sup> If Scott took the initial plaudits when the news was widely published on 10 February 1913, Oates was the figure who soon overtook him. For example *The Daily Chronicle* proclaimed, ‘THE HERO OATES’<sup>147</sup>, *Everybody’s Weekly* proclaimed Oates as the,

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<sup>143</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>144</sup> L. Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, p.112.

<sup>145</sup> See C.I. Hamilton ‘Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero’

<sup>146</sup> M. Smith, *I am Just Going Outside*, p.62

<sup>147</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 13 February, 1913

“MOST HEROIC ENGLISHMAN EVER”<sup>148</sup>. Whilst *The Daily Mail* 12 February 1913, declared, “if there was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers. The final honour lies with Captain Oates.”<sup>149</sup> Oates was offered as the quintessential hero, not just the gentleman hero.

As the previous chapter has shown, those accusations of Evans failing put forward by the press, were initiated by the damning criticism from his leader. Yet Oates was also criticised in Scott’s ‘message’, and slowed down the party. Therefore I will re-visit the same question proposed by Barczewski, “Why has Oates never come in for the same criticism as Evans? Why was his ‘breakdown’ not regarded as an indication of weakness or failure in the same way?”<sup>150</sup> Barczewski’s response is, “the answer is obvious: Oates was an officer and a gentleman, a member of the landed gentry from Essex. Because of his class status, he was regarded as a hero for his silent suffering and self-sacrifice. What he did was to ‘play up, play up and play the game’ according to the expectations of the time for a man of his rank.”<sup>151</sup>

It is understandable why there are those who claim that class was the major difference in Oates’ and Evans’ projections, for there were instances when their socio-economic status did enter their presentation. For example, an article in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, from 11 February 1913, states, “Captain L.E.G. Oates was the elder son of the late Mr W.E. Oates, of Gestingthorpe Hall, Essex, Lord of the manor of Over Hall, and of Mrs Caroline Oates, now lady of the manor of Over Hall, second daughter of the late Mr Joshua Buckton of West Lea, Meanswood near Leeds. In addition to being heir to his mother’s estates, Captain Oates was joint owner with his brother, of the estate of his uncle, the late Mr C.G. Oates, of Meanswood, Yorkshire. He was unmarried as was Lieutenant Bowers. Petty Officer Evans was a married man.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *Everybody’s Weekly*, 22 February, 1930, MS 1453/41

<sup>149</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>150</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>151</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>152</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 February 1913, MS 1453/40

Evidently being a member of the landed gentry was of more importance to *The Pall Mall Gazette* than the dependents left by the Petty Officer. There were though no accusations about Evans possessing ‘bad blood’, or his socio-financial status rendering him unfit for exploration. Also, the article cited above, was printed on 11 February, thus before the widespread accusations of Evans had begun, the emphasis of this magazine was already on Oates. However, *The Pall Mall Gazette* was aimed towards the upper classes of society, being priced at double the cost of *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch*. Thus the attention was with Oates and interest was directed towards his estate, it is also possible that some of the readers knew of Oates’ family and estate.

However, there are problems with Barczewski’s interpretation of events. Firstly, I do not believe that coming from Essex had anything to do with Oates’ representation. Additionally as Barczewski had questioned Jones for not appreciating the significance of the criticism of Evans<sup>153</sup>, Barczewski herself could have gone further by looking beyond class which is too sweeping, and suggests that no other factors were involved. The answer to the question Barczewski proposed concerning the difference in presentation between Oates and Evans is three-fold. Firstly, Scott did not perceive Oates’ as having as significant a role in the disaster as Evans, nor did Scott believe Evans’ rank was a cause of his ‘failure’. Secondly, the manner of Oates and Evans’ deaths as offered in Scott’s assessment, allowed their deaths to be seen as, and presented contrastingly by his fellow travellers and the press. And lastly, Evans’ death did not fit within an already established heroic framework.

### **Scott’s ‘message’**

Scott did not put forward Oates as having as significant a factor in their fate as he had done with Evans. Scott states, “we should have got through in spite of the weather were it not for the sickening of another companion, Captain Oates, and a shortage of fuel in our depots.”<sup>154</sup> There was clearly a difference in the way Oates and Evans were treated; Oates’ decline was not called an “astonishing

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<sup>153</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>154</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

failure”<sup>155</sup>. In addition to Scott’s ‘message’, Lieutenant Evans had also sent to the press agencies Scott’s comments from the 17 March concerning Oates’ self-sacrifice, Scott’s comments included, “it was an act of a brave man and English gentleman”<sup>156</sup>. Thus from the very beginning of the presentation of their images, there was the impression that because of the manner of Oates’ death, Oates deserved greater acclaim than Evans. The leader that had damned Evans had helped to establish Oates’ heroic image. As with Evans’ demise, there was a clear enthusiasm by the press to accept and promote Scott’s view of Oates’ demise, with limited probing.

In Scott’s ‘message’, the fact that Scott does not mention the rank of Evans, who is referred to as “Edgar Evans” implies that Scott did not deem Evans’ class as an explicit factor that contributed to his fate. Yet when the ‘message’ was printed, newspapers such as, *The Daily Mirror*, *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Graphic*, Evans’ rank was given, though it was incorrect; he is called “Seaman Evans”<sup>157</sup> and not Petty Officer, his proper rank.<sup>158</sup> Commander Evans could have added ‘Seaman’ when he cabled the message, or the Central News Agency could have added it in. It is generally claimed that Scott’s ‘message’ along with Scott’s account of Oates’ death were the only sections of Scott’s diary “quoted verbatim”<sup>159</sup> in the report Edward Evans sent back to the Central News Agency, this statement is thus erroneous.

### **The demise of Oates and Evans, the opinions of their fellow travellers**

It was not just the press and Scott that presented Oates’ death as more heroic than Evans’. Evans and Oates’ fellow travellers had the same opinion, although their judgements, like the newspaper articles, were based upon Scott’s account. One can see the effect that Scott’s words had on the individual’s perception of the events. Petty Officer Patrick Keohane, a member of the supporting Southern Party who turned back from the Pole, with Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Charles Wright and Edward Atkinson, declared:

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<sup>155</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

<sup>156</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>157</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Sketch* 12 February 1913,

<sup>158</sup> Evans was a Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> class, thus at least 3 promotions above the rank of Seaman, and the press would have been aware of the difference in rank, effectively demoting him.

<sup>159</sup> M. Jones, *The Great Quest*, p.99

“[Scott’s] Diary said that Evans P.O Died at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier he died of concussion of the brain caused by a fall on blue ice and Captain Oats [Oates] had hands and feet frostbitten and could not keep up he new he was preventing his companions from getting on so he walked out to his death in a blizzard about 18miles south of where we found the tent so as to give his companions a chance to get home it was one of the bravest deeds ever history has known”<sup>160</sup>.



**Figure 9** Petty Officer Patrick Keohane poses for Ponting. Keohane had previously served under Lieutenant Evans on HMS Talbot, along with P.O Forde, Dickason and Browning, all of whom went on this expedition.

Similarly, Petty Officer Thomas Williamson, who had also been part of Scott’s first expedition, declared:

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<sup>160</sup> P. Keohane, Diary, MS 825/1; BJ

“Evans P.O.1. died at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier. Capt Oates 20 miles south of this place, this brave fellow sacrificing his life by walking out of the tent in a heavy blizzard so that he could no longer be a drag on the remainder of the party, he had become badly frost-bitten in both feet and they had been pulling him along on the sledge; as the party got down on the Barrier from the Beardmore Glacier they experienced very low temperatures.... The whole world will soon know, the deeds that were done were equally as great as any committed on Battlefields and have won the respect of honour of every true Britisher.”<sup>161</sup>



Figure 10 Thomas Williamson sits smoking his pipe. Williamson wrote four journals of his daily exploits from both the *Discovery* and the *Terra Nova* Expeditions. He often ends the day's comments with the words 'alls well', even the day when one of dogs got loose and killed the Boatswain's cat.

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<sup>161</sup> T. Williamson, Journal, MS 774/1/1

The extracts show Oates' death as a model; he is no longer a drag and commits an act of self-sacrifice. However Evans' demise was not viewed or presented as an example of any of those traits. The critical factor appears to be that Oates made a conscious decision whereas Evans did not. It was an act, a calculated move, versus a mental and physical breakdown. A breakdown is not a decision, and in the context of early twentieth century beliefs, Evans' death showed a lack of self-discipline and self-control.

Max Jones, George Mosse and Elaine Showalter all declare that suffering without complaint was the basis for early twentieth century codes of masculinity.<sup>162</sup> Although masculinity is much more complex than the statement implies, it is apparent that other nations were aware that self-control was distinguished as a trait 'Britishers' predominantly admired. For in an article headed 'Un Gentleman' the French newspaper the *Temps* states, "His [Oates'] self-sacrifice bears the mark of that absolute self-control which an Englishman prizes above all else in the world. When the question is asked, what is the true gentleman? Our neighbours will have no need to search their history, or Shakespeare. It will suffice to reply that he is the man who behaves like Oates."<sup>163</sup> Additionally, self-control was clearly admired throughout the social scale as Williamson and Keohane's records demonstrate.

Essentially the model of bodily comportment represented by Oates was deemed heroic. For as Valentine says, "a hegemonic masculine style of bodily comportment is about having the freedom to move freely in space and to appropriate it both through physical displays of competence and force"<sup>164</sup>. Oates' movement was restricted whilst man hauling, it was when Oates walked to his death, free from the sledge, that he became a representation of the 'masculine style of bodily comportment', and could be presented as showing the masculine

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<sup>162</sup> G.L. Mosse, 'Shell-shock as a Social Disease' p.101, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.245, E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.168

<sup>163</sup> *Temps*, 17 February 1913, printed in *The Times Weekly*, 21 February 1913

<sup>164</sup> G. Valentine, 'What it means to be a man, the body, masculinity, disability' p.167 from R. Butler + H. Parr (ed), *Mind and Body and Spaces*

and heroic ideal. The sledge holds back Oates, and yet it is also a show of manliness, using bodily force to conquer space.

Thomas Williamson's record has added significance, for he states that Oates had to be carried on the sledge. He makes no mention that Evans had to be carried on the sledge, which was one of the original accusations the press aimed at Evans. Yet none of the newspapers ever claimed that Oates had to be carried, when one would have thought that if Williamson made that inference, others would have done so too. One reason that would explain why the press did not lay at accusation at Oates is that from 11 February the press had Scott's presentation of Oates as a hero. And as presented in the first chapter, there was a willingness to eagerly accept Scott's claims. For although articles do confirm Oates slowed down the party, his death on its own was deemed heroic enough to effectively dismiss the slowing down he had caused. For example, *The Daily Graphic* declares, "Captain Scott himself says that but for the sickness of Seaman Evans and Captain Oates the party would have reached safety". One would be forgiven for thinking that this newspaper regarded Oates and Evans in a similar light. However, on the front-page of the *Graphic*, in the same issue as the above quote, there was a full-page portrait of Oates under the heading "a very gallant gentleman"<sup>165</sup>. Oates' slowing down the party was thus not promoted as readily as the fact he had behaved so gallantly.

Those of officer status had similar views to those of the lower ranks. Physicist Charles Wright stated, "Found the Owner [Scott], Bill [Wilson] and Birdie [Bowers] in the tent. Evans went mentally first then physically at foot of Glacier... Titus got a bad frostbitten foot but struggled on till Mar 17. Knowing he had no hope & realizing that he was a drag on the party, he walked out into a blizzard... A damn fine finish."<sup>166</sup> Whilst Debenham, the man who had written so favourably of Evans, declared, "Taff Evans - already a little weak - had a bad fall and got concussion. He delayed the party and they were late for each depot. At the bottom of the glacier he failed and died before they reached the depot... Soldier failed next. He knew he was delaying them and in one blizzard walked

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<sup>165</sup> The portrait was actually of Dennis Lillie, but the fact remains it was supposed to be Oates.

<sup>166</sup> *Silas - The Antarctic diaries of Charles. S. Wright*, p.244

out and away and he was never seen again. He did it intentionally to save his comrades - a fitting death for a real hero.”<sup>167</sup>

It is not known if Debenham’s comments were affected by the claims that Evans had been “rather disappointing in the winter being given to hectoring amongst his mates”<sup>168</sup> and whether this had altered his previous opinion. Though it is plain to see that Oates’ death was presented as a deliberate act of heroic self-sacrifice, whilst Evans represented a burden, a man who lacked the moral decisiveness and selflessness to save his comrades. The approval and awe shown for Oates by his fellow travellers can be seen at the very start of his image construction. The high regard bestowed on to Oates’ deed by his fellow-travellers indicates that the press would not have to perform any adaptation on Oates’ image to offer him as a hero, they just had to use and promote Scott’s comments.

### Heroic models

Scott’s comments on Oates’ death, “it was the act of a brave man and English gentlemen”, is effectively presenting Oates’ self-sacrifice as one moment that defined his entire life and future legacy, judging one deed as a representative of an entire existence. This has clear links to Geoffrey Cubitt’s theory that heroism can be constructed when, ‘the essential message to be derived from a life is encapsulated in a particularly dramatic moment.’<sup>169</sup> Cubitt points to the heroics of Grace Darling and Brutus’ decision to order the death of his sons as primary examples.<sup>170</sup> Oates’ death can be viewed in the same vein, one dramatic moment that defined his life and legacy though perhaps it is best seen as one dramatic image that will forever define the moment.

Neither the press nor Scott presented Evans as having a dramatic heroic moment. Additionally Oates’ death fitted within the ideals of heroism being advocated at this time, for self-sacrifice was seen as a heroic ideal. It has been suggested by

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<sup>167</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.161

<sup>168</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

<sup>169</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputation and Exemplary Lives*, p.13

<sup>170</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputation and Exemplary Lives* p.13

MacDonald that self-sacrifice was seen purely as a gentlemanly deed<sup>171</sup>, but it is worth considering other texts. In Ireland in 1913, Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and Thomas MacDonagh were all advocating self-sacrifice. Additionally self-sacrifice is one of the key factors in the understanding of the objectives for Irish uprising, the Easter Rising of 1916. The suffragettes in England too viewed self-sacrifice as the ultimate act of heroism, for Emily Davidson threw herself in front of a horse in 1913. This challenges the claim that self-sacrifice was purely viewed as a gentlemanly action; it was a heroic model that was not dependent on, or could descend class or gender. One must remember that suicide at this time was illegal, so there was a fine line between self-sacrifice and suicide. Suicide was essentially seen as the easy and prohibited way out, self-sacrifice was death for the benefit of the lives of others it was a calculated decision.

Although Scott, Wilson and Bowers did not have a unique single dramatic moment at the end, their deaths were still in keeping with a heroic model. A year before the news of Scott's disaster reached England the sinking of the Titanic was a leading story and the presentation of acts of heroism link the two events. J.E Geller's research into the titanic disaster has uncovered that 54% of third class passenger children were lost, compared to 1% of the 1<sup>st</sup> Class passenger children and 0% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class passengers.<sup>172</sup> This is a scandalous statistic, but in *Return to Camelot* Mark Girouard assesses the public reaction and distortion of facts declaring, "the redeeming feature of the [titanic] disaster it was generally agreed, was the chivalry shown by the men, both passengers and crew."<sup>173</sup> It was promoted that, "all gentlemen knew that they must be brave, show no sign of panic or cowardice... be loyal to their comrades and meet death without flinching"<sup>174</sup> Here Girouard writes in reference to the Titanic disaster, but, the same principles were praised for Oates, Scott, Wilson and Bowers. The fact that Evans' death did not fit in within an already established heroic ideal, shows a further reason why there was resistance to promoting Evans as a heroic individual.

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<sup>171</sup> MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.90

<sup>172</sup> J.E. Geller, *Titanic – Women and Children First*, p.195

<sup>173</sup> M. Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p.6

<sup>174</sup> M. Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p.7

One wonders if ‘meeting death without flinching’, redeemed the titanic disaster in the eyes of the working classes. If it did not, it would suggest that the working classes would not have viewed the deaths of the Antarctic five as being heroic, particularly Oates, Scott, Bowers and Wilson. However, Barczewski’s research has discovered that Louis Heren, [an East ’ender] recalled his childhood opinions of the expedition, “I did not much like Scott and most of his brother officers and gentlemen after reading the socially superior explanation of Petty Officer Evans collapse, but ironically admired Captain Oates. He especially provided an aura of high endeavour, gallantry and tragedy to what was a splendid ship and quarters.”<sup>175</sup> Clearly for some of the working classes they saw class as the core component to explain Evans’ presentation, yet still admired Oates. However, it is unknown if it was his act and decision, or, his social standing that was the cause of Oates’ admiration. Additionally, this is one man’s recollection, and thus may be the popular working-class consensus.

The manner of Evans’ death aided the ability of the press to present his comrades in a heroic manner, for several articles present Scott, Wilson and Bowers as committing acts of self-sacrifice. *The Daily Mirror* printed an interview with a Mr. J. Foster Stackhouse, Scott’s secretary in 1910 during Scott’s tour to raise funds for the expedition. Stackhouse declared, “I am sure that if he had not felt bound to stand by that poor fellow Evans after he became helpless he would be alive today.”<sup>176</sup> Scott here is shown as sacrificing his life and by implication his companions’ lives for the sake of Evans. Similarly, *The Times* states, “When seaman EVANS became incapacitated the others knew full well that his breakdown was endangering the safety of them all. Yet stood by him till death released him from his sufferings.”<sup>177</sup> Likewise, *The Daily Mirror*, “they stood by him till the last, thereby certainly imperilling their lives”<sup>178</sup> Evans’ un-heroic demise essentially aided the ability of the mediators to present Evans’ comrades as heroic individuals. Additionally projections such as these, with Evans effectively causing the death of his companions, limited the likelihood of his achieving a heroic status in the same league as his companions,

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<sup>175</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.158, from L. Heren, *Growing up Poor in London*, p.117

<sup>176</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February, 1913,

<sup>177</sup> *The Times*, 22 May 1913, MS 1464/32

<sup>178</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1913

consequently lessening the likelihood of a “collective emotional investment”<sup>179</sup> towards Evans.

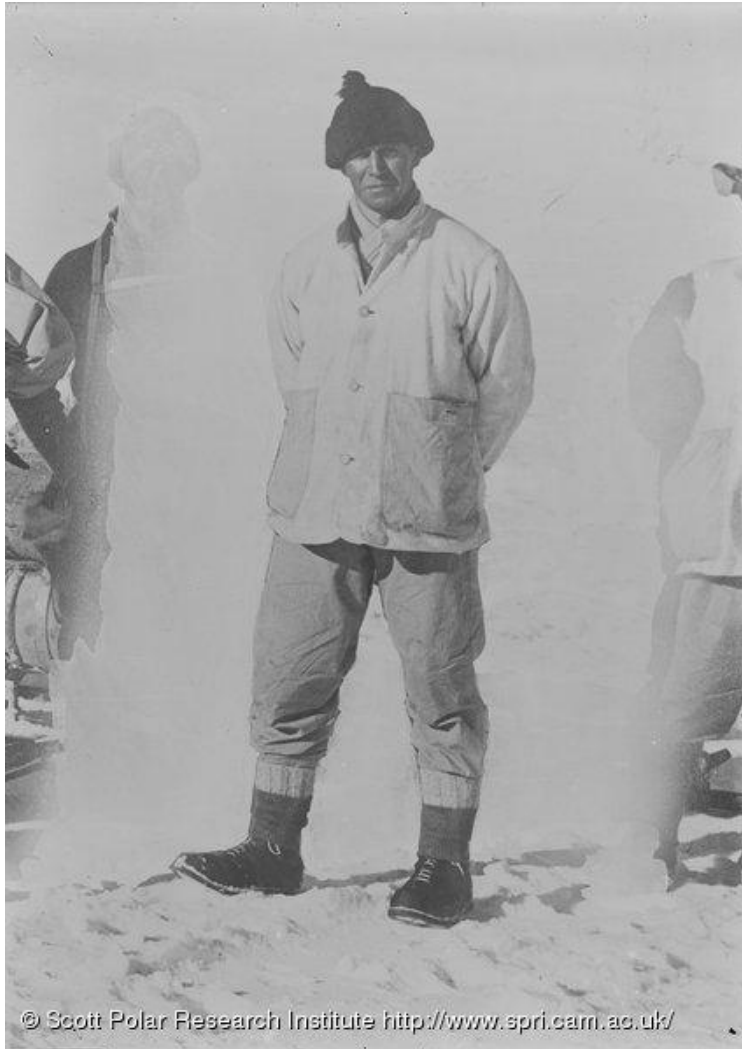


Figure 11 Captain 'Titus' Oates poses for Herbert Ponting.

### Traits of heroism

Character traits were not integral to the creation of a heroic image, for the press attributed the same character traits; a ‘great raconteur’ and ‘man of few words’ on both Evans and Oates. One newspaper declared, “Captain Oates was one of the most popular men of the expedition. He was witty and a gifted raconteur.”<sup>180</sup> Whilst Ponting commented to the press that, “Evans is a great raconteur...I

<sup>179</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations*, p.3

<sup>180</sup> Unknown newspaper, MS 2014/1

venture to say he will spin many a good yarn on the long, arduous journey as he smokes his pipe in the tent”<sup>181</sup>. Evans was also described as a, “Man of few words” in *The Sphere* 24 May 1913<sup>182</sup>, as was Oates in *The Times*<sup>183</sup>. Evans was certainly was not a man of few words, Frank Debenhams’s diary shows he was constantly telling stories, and putting forward his opinions, such as why “90% of the men in the Navy would leave if they could”<sup>184</sup>, exploits from his school days<sup>185</sup>, how to propose<sup>186</sup> and how to tie different knots<sup>187</sup>. This shows there were certain attributes the newspapers liked to bestow, and as the traits were used to describe Oates, were seen as virtuous. It also shows that those particular traits were not class-defined, nor did they define heroism, they were just admirable traits at the time.

There was a precedent for promoting the last words of those deemed to be heroes. Captain Oates’ last words, and the last written words of Captain Scott were heavily publicised, as were Henry Lawrence’s last words, ‘No Surrender’, along with the epitaph he himself composed, “Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty”<sup>188</sup>. This leads one to believe that last words were a trope for the upper classes. However, as Alice Ayres, a “general assistant and nursemaid”<sup>189</sup>, who died having saved the lives of three of her nieces and nephews in a house fire, had her last words recorded, the notion of class distinction is debateable. Ayres’ supposed last words were reported as being, “I tried my best and could try no more.”<sup>190</sup> If these were her last words it is understandable why these were promoted, it is fitting with the ideal that the upper and middling classes hoped the lower class would adhere to, self-improvement and doing one’s best. It is not recorded what Evans’ last words were, and this lack of last words may have affected the ability of the press to

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<sup>181</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

<sup>182</sup> *The Sphere*, 24 May 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>183</sup> *The Times*, 13 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>184</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, 10 February 1911, MS 1654; D

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*, 31 January 1911

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*, 14 February 1911

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*, 20 February 1911

<sup>188</sup> J. MacKenzie, ‘Heroic Myths of Empire’ p.118

<sup>189</sup> J. Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’: the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,’ p. 265

<sup>190</sup> J. Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’ p.268

construct him into a hero. However, last words could have been made-up<sup>191</sup>. There was a precedent for adaptation to enhance heroic reputations. Horace Waller, editor of Livingstone's diaries, "carefully, selected from the journals and in some instances almost rewrote them"<sup>192</sup>.

It should be acknowledged that the manner of death and the cause of death are two separate factors. Two of the men projected as heroes of imperial Britain, David Livingstone and Henry Havelock, had un-heroic causes of death. Sir Henry Havelock died from dysentery, whilst Livingstone died of dysentery and malaria. Yet the manners of Havelock and Livingstone's deaths were still projected as heroic. Even though Mackenzie suggests that the image of Livingstone kneeling at prayer was also greatly inferred by Waller<sup>193</sup>, that image of Livingstone was the one readily accepted and promoted. Whilst Havelock was presenting as dying "at his most glorious moment after a relief of Lucknow."<sup>194</sup> This suggests that the cause of Evans' death, whether brain haemorrhage, scurvy or starvation, was not as important as the manner of it. Similarly the press reports did not emphasise that Oates would have frozen to death, they reported that Oates walked out to his death.<sup>195</sup> Oates' death was not seen as heroic because of the cause of his demise just as Evans was not seen as un-heroic because of the cause of his demise. Therefore the cause of death was clearly not a cornerstone to the construction of a heroic status.

It is possible that as Evans was Welsh, his nationality played a part in his presentation, that the press wanted to emphasise the role of the Englishmen. However, there were three different nationalities present as Bowers was from Scotland, and Scott, Wilson and Oates were from England. This would limit the likelihood of attacking Evans because of his place of birth. I have not found any evidence of comments surrounding his nationality causing his breakdown, unlike the comments about his education and physicality as mentioned in the previous chapter. It was also a time in history when there was no trouble with Anglo-

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<sup>191</sup> Roland Huntford believes Scott made-up Oates' last words, though Oates' most recent biographer, Michael Smith, has disputed this claim.

<sup>192</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire' p.123

<sup>193</sup> *ibid*, p.123

<sup>194</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.443

<sup>195</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 12 February 1913, *Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

Welsh relations. The domestic troubles within the UK at his time were in Ireland, with talk of uprising with claims that “nationhood is not achieved otherwise than in arms”<sup>196</sup>.

It has been suggested that the Victorian and Edwardian men who were presented and raised as mythic heroes were displays of national strength, legitimising imperialism<sup>197</sup>. These men represented the greatness of the empire, men such as Livingstone and General Gordon. Although Jones has argued that Scott and his companions were not used as heroes of the empire<sup>198</sup>, the Antarctic five were used to present the strength of national character, which does infer they were representations of the strength of the nation, which has clear links to imperialism. *The Daily Mail* pronounced, “The story of Captain Scott’s last expedition is an epic worthy of the British race”<sup>199</sup> *The Daily Sketch* published Douglas Freshfield’s comment, “Farewell to a band of heroes whose names will shine as examples of the courage and noble evidence of the qualities of Englishmen”<sup>200</sup>, the *Daily Chronicle* quoted Peary “they died as Englishmen”<sup>201</sup>. *The Daily Graphic* quoted Mr Asquith, “Their splendid example will be an inspiration to Englishmen throughout time”<sup>202</sup>. And the *Observer* stated, “They have proved, indeed, that “the spirit, the pluck, the power to endure have not gone out of the race.”<sup>203</sup> The comments do not directly mention ‘empire’, but they clearly conjure up an image of the men as examples of the strength of the nation and race, which implies strength of the imperial power. This has an effect on the construction of Evans’ image, for Oates, Wilson, Bowers and Scott were presented as showing the strength of the British race, and clearly Evans’ presentation in Scott’s ‘message’ made him unsuitable for a model of the British race as superior individuals. Which could therefore question notions of cultural supremacy, and Social Darwinism, which played a part in legitimising colonialism.

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<sup>196</sup> P. Pearse, *The Coming Revolution*, in S. Regan (ed) *Irish Writing, an Anthology of Irish Literature*, p.188

<sup>197</sup> R. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.81

<sup>198</sup> M. Jones, ‘The King Upon His Knees’ p. 116

<sup>199</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 6 November 1913

<sup>200</sup> *The Daily Sketch*, 11 February 1913

<sup>201</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 12 February 1913

<sup>202</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 12 February 1913

<sup>203</sup> *The Observer*, 9 November, 1913, MS 1464/32

## Conclusion

Oates' death was the model and Evans was presented as falling short of Oates' example. Evans' un-heroic state was not a state solely caused by his class, but because Scott, the press and Evans' fellow travellers did not present Evans' death as a heroic demise in the same vein as Oates'. Nor did it fit within an already established heroic frame. Evans' image could have been adapted. There was a precedent for adaptation, whereby traits and, or, experiences are added to help enforce the heroic status, but this opportunity was very rarely taken by Evans' mediators. Though perhaps the most significant factor is that Oates' death along with Wilson's, Scott's and Bowers' did not need altering from how Scott had presented their deaths in his journal to be deemed heroic by the press and fellow travellers.

### Chapter 3. “the four men history will never forget”<sup>204</sup>

#### Memorials in stone and ink

This chapter will examine how Evans was presented through the decades. I will use memorials, scrapbooks, cigarette cards, biographies and published accounts about the expedition to present Evans’ marginalisation. I will argue against Jones’ claim that Evans “became increasingly marginalised”<sup>205</sup>, contending that he had always occupied a negligible place in the representation of Scott’s last expedition. I will analyse Evans’ commemoration in memorials, whereby memorials and commemoration will be viewed as a mark of heroism displayed, as part of a “collective emotional investment”<sup>206</sup>. It will become clear that memorials are not just stone blocks, but also scrapbooks and memorial editions of newspapers.

#### Marginalisation

Max Jones, writing in reference to the 1930s believes that as the years went on Evans was “increasingly marginalised, forgotten, or blamed”<sup>207</sup>. However, Evans had always been a marginalised figure, there was not a major change in the way Evans was presented from 11 February 1913, through till the 1930s. Evidence for this claim lays in the fact that some newspapers in the 1930s saw Evans as a hero in the group, “Five of the bravest Britons ever”<sup>208</sup>, “Five Heroes”<sup>209</sup>, just as articles had in 1913, “Five Heroes at the Pole”. Equally, some newspapers in 1937 omitted Evans, *The Children’s Newspaper* proclaimed, “the four men history will never forget”<sup>210</sup> just as newspapers had done in 1913, “there was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers.”<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, there were still accusations that Evans was the main cause of the disaster, “when Evans fell by the wayside they

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<sup>204</sup> *The Children’s Newspaper*, November 20 1937, MS 1453/41

<sup>205</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.268

<sup>206</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations*, p.3

<sup>207</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.268

<sup>208</sup> *Northern Evening Despatch*, 18 January 1932, MS 1453/41

<sup>209</sup> *John Bull*, 18 November 1933, MS 1453/41

<sup>210</sup> *Children’s Newspaper*, 20 November 1937, MS 1453/41

<sup>211</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

stayed with him to the end. Had they left him to die they would have saved their own lives.”<sup>212</sup>

Max Jones also argues, that seen in context, “the extent of the criticism of Edgar Evans should not, however, be exaggerated. Most commentators did not single out Evans as especially culpable but rather noted his collapse as one among a catalogue of factors which contributed to the disaster.”<sup>213</sup> Barczewski disagrees, contending, that the fact that Evans was put forward as a scapegoat when the other four were raised to saint-like status is of more significance than the number of press reports.<sup>214</sup> Although I agree with Barczewski, I would go a step further and proclaim that it is not quite as simple as appealing to the significance of the articles that presented Evans’ as a ‘failure’. One must look further and investigate other factors and instances, for there are indirect factors that show there was reluctance to portray Evans as a heroic individual.

For example, consider the layout from *The Daily Mirror* 12 February 1913, the ‘Memorial Edition’:

Front Page - A full-page photograph of Captain Scott.

Third page - two photographs of Peter Scott, and one photograph of Kathleen and Captain Scott.

Fourth Page - the story of the expedition.

Fifth Page - various articles about the expedition.

Sixth Page - Photograph of Wilson and a photograph of Bowers.

Thirteenth Page - A full-page portrait of Oates.

Seventeenth Page - A full-page photograph of Evans.<sup>215</sup>

Evans’ portrait was the last photograph in the newspaper, and in some of the editions, one assumes the early ones, the photograph of P.O Johnson was printed and not that of P.O Evans. Additionally, there were photographs of Kathleen and Peter Scott, yet there were no photographs of Evans’ widow and children. As this was a memorial edition, one can assume there was a belief that the readers may

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<sup>212</sup> *Weekly Despatch*, 20 March 1927, MS 1453/41

<sup>213</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.112

<sup>214</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.174

<sup>215</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913

want to keep the newspaper. It was therefore suggesting that Evans' role in the perceived heroic expedition should be remembered as less significant than the roles of comrades'. In *The Daily Mirror*, 21 May 1913, when the photographs of the men at the Pole were first published, there were photographs of Peter Scott on page three, whilst photographs of Evans' three children were on page twenty-two. And if one wonders about the size of readership, this particular issue sold 1,342,000 copies, the widest circulation for 1912 and 1913.<sup>216</sup> Presenting Evans and his family last, was clearly not a unique representation, which essentially infers that images of Evans were not needed to sell stories. The images of his companions and Peter Scott were the key representations of Scott's last expedition. Perhaps the press did not need to blame Evans once conventions had been established.

It was not just the cheaper dailies that attempted to deem Evans' role insignificant. An article in *The Observer*, 9 November 1913, states, "It rests with us, their fellow-countrymen, whether Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers have died in vain or no."<sup>217</sup> Similarly in *The Daily Graphic* on 13 February 1913, the front page is a photograph of Peter Scott and Kathleen, along with a separate photo of Captain Scott, whilst photographs of Evans' children are on page 11<sup>218</sup>. However, the most telling exclusion is the centrefold of *The Daily Mirror*, 15 February 1913. This is a photograph of ten members of the expedition, which the readers are informed, "should be kept in memory of these splendid men, and should be shown to children to illustrate the story that will never die"<sup>219</sup>. The photograph is very similar to one shown below in figure 12 and evidently Evans is not present. So in this memorial in paper form, that had been made to commemorate the disaster, and as such attempt to form part of societies memory of the expedition, one of the five men who died after reaching the Pole was not included. As it was a photograph people were told to keep 'in memory' of the men, it is insinuating that people should forget about Evans, that he is not worth remembering.

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<sup>216</sup> M. Jones, 'Our King Upon His Knees', p.107 in G. Cubitt & Warren, *Heroic Reputations*

<sup>217</sup> *The Observer*, 9 November, 1913, MS 1464/32

<sup>218</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1913

<sup>219</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913



Figure 12 Scott can be seen in the middle of the shot, facing away from the camera. [In the version in *The Daily Mirror*, Scott is looking at the camera]. Wilson and Bowers can be seen sitting on the sledge, whilst Tom Crean who later accompanied Shackleton on the *Endurance* expedition is standing furthest left, with pipe in mouth. Oates is second from the right, wearing a bobble hat.

Evans' role in the expedition and the qualities he brought continued to be ignored. One article from *The Times* in September 1913, reports on Commander Evans talk at the Albert Hall the previous night. The article ends, "but, to judge from Commander Evans's language... All were devoted to CAPTAIN SCOTT: they loved and revered DR.WILSON "the peacemaker", "the Solomon" of the party; they found infinite pleasure in the society of "little Bowers", and they regarded CAPTAIN OATES as what indeed he was, "a magnificent man" That all these four died at the moment of achievement is one of the great tragedies of Arctic and nautical history". Although they did not die 'at the moment of achievement', Evans was not mentioned and they did not even see fit to give him a numerical value, it was only 'these four died'. Although the daily readership of *The Times* in 1913 was not close to the readership of the cheaper dailies, selling

“a mere 45,227”<sup>220</sup>, the article does show that there was a want to hide and, or, loose Evans’ role. Whatever the size of readership, one could be sure that if Evans was seen as a key image for the presentation of Scott’s last expedition and was crucial to selling the newspapers, proprietors would have ensured Evans was not forgotten.

Although the statements do not directly attack Evans’, the mere fact that his name is not mentioned alongside his companions is significant. They are indirect digs at Evans, and a show that his contribution to the expedition was seen as insignificant. Or, perhaps, it was because his death was seen as having a major impact on the fate of the other four. It is also noteworthy that he occupied a similar place in ‘Memorial Editions’ that are, effectively, the commemoration of an event or individual. Though it debatable if Evans presentation was how the press wanted Evans to be remembered, or, if it was a genuine reflection of what the public believed, the fact remains that there was clearly the opinion that Evans and his dependants should occupy the space behind his comrades.

Even though Evans’ role in the expedition was habitually ignored, other members of the five were also forgotten. For example, in an article in *The Daily Mail* from 1928, Wilfred Bruce, Scott’s brother-in-law, rather intriguingly recalled, “he was introduced one day to a member of a shooting party who was an important man in the city. ‘Scott? Scott?’ Muttered an individual, obviously puzzled...’Oh yes, of course - explorer, wasn’t he?’ ‘Yes’ said Captain Bruce briefly. ‘North Pole wasn’t it?’ ‘South’ was the grim reply. ‘Of course,’ said the man. ‘By the way, what’s happened to Scott? We never seem to hear of him nowadays.’”<sup>221</sup> Though obviously this is more forgetfulness that blatant ignoring.

## Memory

Scrapbooks kept by individuals or families, must represent a form of memorial, for they are one person’s wanted recollection of the events. Scrapbooks have not been given the scholarly analysis and attention they deserve, for they are extremely valuable sources, scrapbook makers are active participants in the

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<sup>220</sup> G.R. Searle, *A New England?*, p.110

<sup>221</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 3 September 1928, MS 1453/41

construction of the culture and representation of exploration. One can see the effect of Scott's 'message' and the press' negative promotion of Evans creep into the scrapbooks. For example, one scrapbook has 2 pages dedicated to Wilson, Scott, Oates and Bowers and Evans. Out of a 140-page book, Scott, Wilson, Oates and Bowers occupy the pages 19 to 26, whilst Evans occupies the last 2 pages, 139 and 140<sup>222</sup>. The scrapbook maker kept several articles and photographs about each one of the five; Evans' articles were the shortest, and he was the subject of the least number of photographs kept. See figure 13 below.

Name	Number of photographs	Number of articles	Longest article (lines)	Shortest article (lines)
Scott	1 full page photo of Scott, 1 of Kathleen and Peter	5	129	22
Wilson	4	9	60	16
Bowers	4	9	30	6
Oates	3	8	102	19
Evans	1 (full page)	5	46	3

Figure 13 shows a table of the number of individual articles and photographs dedicated to the five in one scrapbook.

However, Apsley Cherry-Garrard had compiled this scrapbook, which would explain the bias for Bowers and Wilson. Cherry-Garrard had accompanied Bowers and Wilson on the Journey to collect Emperor penguin eggs from Cape Crozier in Antarctic Winter 1911. Thus Cherry-Garrard had a particular bond with Wilson and Bowers, and as such one could expect more attention to be paid to those two. I have not uncovered any evidence that suggests Cherry-Garrard housed any feelings of contempt towards Evans. So it is possible that the scrapbook is a genuine reflection of the press' presentation of Evans. However, Cherry-Garrard must have made a decision where to place Evans in the scrapbook, and the gap

<sup>222</sup> 2014/BPC - Evans' 2 pages are pages 139 + 140, though the pages themselves are labelled as p.118 + 119 as the first 28 pages have no pages numbers.

in between Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers and that of Evans is over a hundred pages, so that will remain unaccountable. This is the only scrapbook that has individual pages dedicated to each of the Antarctic five, the other scrapbooks are mainly a hundred pages long, containing scores of press clippings, so the same criteria cannot be investigated.

However, other criteria can be investigated. In another scrapbook, where predominantly portraits had been cut out of the newspapers to commemorate the disaster, Evans had the fewest individual photographs.<sup>223</sup> See figure 14 below.

Name	Individual portraits / photographs	Photographs in the group
Scott	5	2
Oates	2	1
Bowers	2	1
Evans	1	2

Figure 14, a table to show the number of portraits kept by the scrapbook maker.

It is possible that the results are a reflection of the press's limited use of Evans' portrait, rather than the scrapbook maker having a limited interest in Evans.

The vast majority of scrapbooks viewed, that contained articles from 1913, held at least one of the articles that accused Evans of failing physically and mentally, and, or, reports that left out Evans. Therefore, it was clearly not one scrapbook or one scrapbook maker; there were a number of individuals who either wanted reports of Evans failing to form part of their individual memory of the representation of the expedition. Or, wanted to keep a genuine reflection of the press' presentation of Scott's last expedition, and any future references to it. Whatever the individuals' reasons were for including those specific articles, it is a clear reflection of Evans' marginalised status in print culture.

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<sup>223</sup> MS 2018 BPC



Figure 15 J.C Dollman's painting, 'A very Gallant Gentleman' shows Oates leaving the tent into the blizzard.

Figure 13, Dollman's painting is not simply an image showing Oates' moment of self-sacrifice, for it represents Oates' apotheosis. It looks as though Oates is averting his eyes, cowering from the strength of light shining from above that is hitting his back. The painting is a representation of the moment Oates dies, one knows that is to come, linking it to paintings of the sublime, "where the disaster is safely distanced"<sup>224</sup>. It could be argued that the image of Oates forms a triangle, from the top of his back to the ground and from his head to his hand to the ground, this is significant for triangles in art have long been associated with Christ-like images, ever since El Greco's *Pietà*. Triangles were also used to show the apotheosis of General Wolfe and Horatio Nelson in Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe*, and *Death of Nelson*. Dollman's painting must therefore have played a part in enhancing of Oates' heroic status.

Portraits of Scott's demise were also produced, *The Sphere Memorial Number*, included a full-page image of an Angel receiving the 'message to the public'

<sup>224</sup> M. Paley, *Apocalyptic Sublime*, p.4

from a dying Scott.<sup>225</sup> And in *Punch, or the London Charivari*, there is a full-page illustration by Bernard Partridge of an angel looking down upon the names of the Antarctic five. Even though *Punch* was a satirical magazine, the image was not in jest, it was entitled, “In Honour of Brave Dead Men.”<sup>226</sup> As no painting or image was produced of Evans, this implies that the manner of his death was not deemed heroic enough, people had no wish to commission or view a painting showing Evans’ decline as they did with his comrades. Thus resulting in a reduced iconography of Evans, indicating a lack of perceived heroic status, for iconography is key in establishing and confirming a reputation, as shown by MacKenzie’s analysis of the paintings of Livingstone.<sup>227</sup>

The cigarette company, John Players & Sons devoted a series of cards to polar exploration. The cards included portraits of, Scott, Oates, Wilson, Bowers, Edward Evans, Dimitri (the dog-driver) and Commander Evans’ flag. Yet “not one of the twenty-five cards issued mentioned Petty Officer Edgar Evans”.<sup>228</sup> See figure 16 below. As the cards were printed in 1915-16, it reinforces my contestation that Evans had continuously occupied a ‘marginalised’ status. This is bolstered by the notion that individuals often kept cigarette cards, thus the cards have the potential to become a memory of the representation of the expedition, without Evans. John Players & Sons obviously made a decision not to include Evans, again implying that Evans was not deemed a necessity in the representation of the expedition. The cards also illustrate the deficiency in iconography of Evans in comparison to his comrades.

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<sup>225</sup> *The Sphere*, Memorial Number of the Scott Antarctic Expedition, 24 May 1913

<sup>226</sup> *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 19 February 1913

<sup>227</sup> J. MacKenzie, ‘The iconography of David Livingstone’, within G. Cubitt (ed), *Heroic reputations and Exemplary Lives*

<sup>228</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.261



Figure 16 shows the 25 cigarette cards issued by John Player in 1915-16 on the topic of Polar Exploration. Children often collected and kept cigarette cards, and as such this was effectively installing in a generation the notion Evans should be forgotten. (Image taken from [Antarcticcircle.org](http://Antarcticcircle.org))

In Antarctica one of the two Cairns erected by the search party was dedicated with the words:

“This cross and cairn erected over the remains of:

Captain R. F. Scott

Dr. E. A. Wilson,

Lieutenant H. R. Bowers

As a slight token to perpetuate their gallant and successful attempt to reach the goal...Also to commemorate their two gallant comrades, Captain L.E. G. Oates, of the Inniskilling Dragoons, who walked to his death in a blizzard willingly,

about twenty miles south of this place, to try and save his comrades beset by hardship; also of Petty- Officer Edgar Evans, who died at the foot of Beardmore Glacier.”

Near this cairn the second cairn was erected with the record:

“Hereabouts died a very Gallant Gentleman.”<sup>229</sup>

No such cairn was dedicated solely to Evans. Additionally, when Evans was mentioned in the first dedication, his death was not viewed or presented by his comrades in the same heroic style as Oates’ demise was offered. Evans’ death appears as almost an anti-climax after the tale of Oates’ death. One can again see the stress on Oates committing a deliberate act, his ‘willingness’ to offer his life. The dedication over the Cairns should be viewed as setting the standard for Evans’ future commemoration.

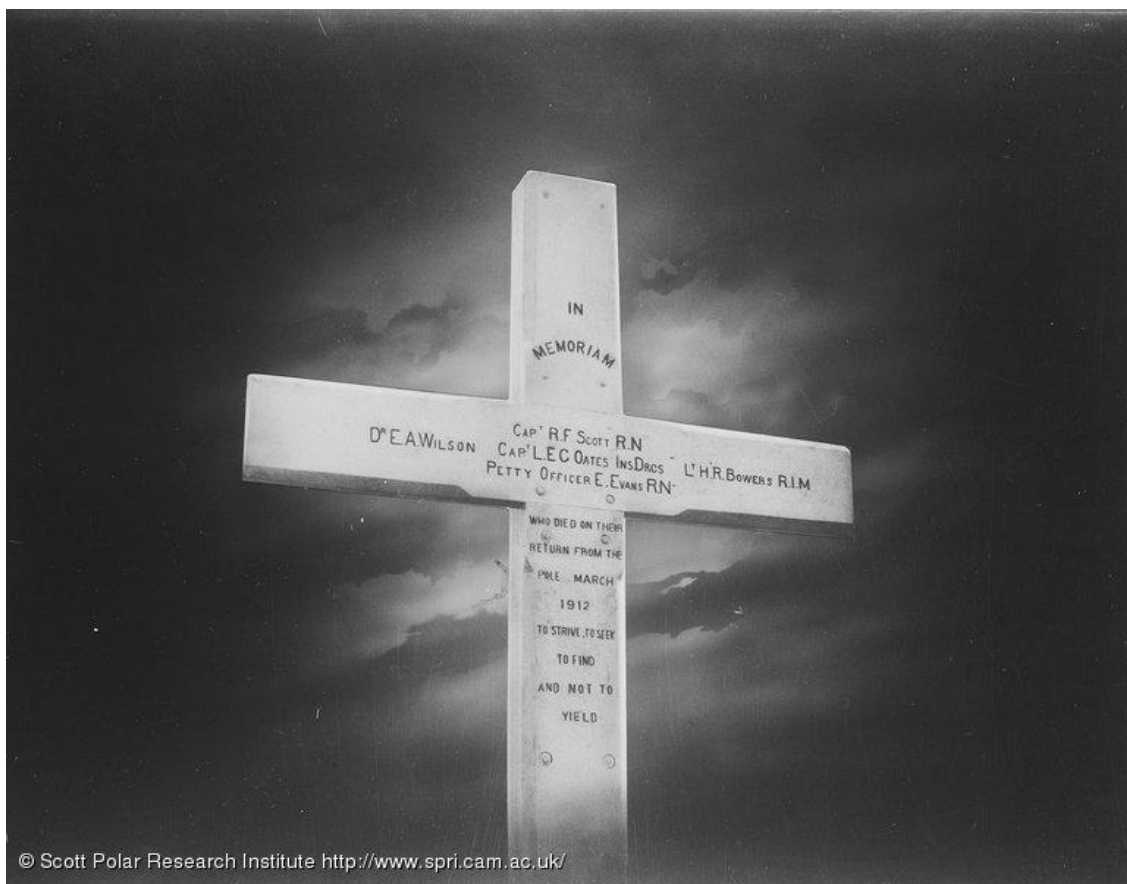


Figure 17, a close up of the wooden cross that was erected over the grave of Scott, Wilson and Bowers. Neither Oates’ nor Evans’ body was ever found.

<sup>229</sup> The dedication was quoted verbatim in *The Daily Graphic* 14 February 1913, MS 1958/1

As the decades passed, Evans remained marginalised. There were many memorials to honour the heroic dead, often publicised by the press. Yet, Evans' wife Lois died in 1952 and "during her lifetime... the only initiative to honour her husband was taken by herself."<sup>230</sup> Additionally Evans had the least number of memorials solely commemorating him, and if memorials are society's memory<sup>231</sup>, this suggests that there was a lack of popular interest in Evans. Society was not keen to commemorate Evans as an individual. And the only individual who actively sought to commemorate Evans, had an already established, "emotional investment"<sup>232</sup>. This leads on to the question posed in *Contested Sites*, "whose memory is it?"<sup>233</sup> This question infers that it was one locality, one class or, one institution responsible for the commemoration. Evidently for Evans, only his family saw Evans as someone who should occupy a place in societies memory.

Although there was a precedent for not commemorating the lower ranks of the Royal Navy as individuals, it seems unlikely that solely his social standing was the cause of Evans' lack of memorialisation. Seymour and Calvocoressi state, "despite their inclusion in the Naval Thanksgiving procession of 1797, there were no monuments to ordinary sailors in St Paul's"<sup>234</sup>. Similarly, in Nelson's Seat, [a memorial to Nelson] "ordinary sailors are listed as numbers working in each ship's crew... They are not identified or commemorated as individuals as are the ships captains."<sup>235</sup>. And although it could be argued that Evans' commemoration was based around his numerical value as one of the five, for there were far more memorials dedicated to the group (17) than Evans as an individual (2)<sup>236</sup>. That though was also the case with the rest of the five, suggesting that Evans' lack of memorialisation cannot be deemed as being solely caused by his naval rank and naval tradition of commemoration.

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<sup>230</sup> G. C. Gregor, *Swansea's Antarctic Explorer*, p.77

<sup>231</sup> C. W. J. Withers 'Memory and the history of geographical knowledge: the commemoration of Mungo Park' p.3, taken from Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, p.161

<sup>232</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.3

<sup>233</sup> P. Pickering and A. Tyrrell, *Contested Sites*, p. xii

<sup>234</sup> S. Seymour and Rupert Calvocoressi, 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation' p.97 from Hooock, 2003

<sup>235</sup> S. Seymour and Rupert Calvocoressi, 'Landscape Parks' p.108

<sup>236</sup> The figures have been taken from M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.295

However, Nicholas Penny's research has shown that during the nineteenth century there were a number of memorials that contained an image of Jack Tar.<sup>237</sup> He declares, the memorials were not commemorating the individual sailor's life or deeds; the image of Jack Tar was used to show that their leader had devoted followers. Furthermore, Penny argues the images of sailors were used to represent an example, "to reinforce the hope that such people would behave piously, loyally, and soberly as the representations of them in bronze and marble"<sup>238</sup>. This suggests that the authorities were concerned about the behaviour of some of the lower classes. If the same feelings and insecurities about the lower orders were present in the 1910s, this represents another reason why Evans was not massively commemorated. For Evans was rarely presented as displaying the perfect example. This is significant for examples were seen as a critical method of influence, for as Victorian reformer Samuel Smiles' claims, "example is one of the most potent instructors, though it teachers without tongue."<sup>239</sup> As previously shown Evans had been presented as having a mental and physical breakdown, and had been called a 'failure' by his leader, this was clearly not a representation of an example that society wished to promote additionally some memorials in paper form had already implied that Evans' role was one to forget.

By the late nineteenth century there were memorials to commemorate the deeds of members of the working classes, and the memorials were not just used to highlight the heroic image of a leader. As John Price's research has shown, Alice Ayres, a "general assistant and nursemaid"<sup>240</sup> was presented as a heroine with a place on Watt's Self-Sacrifice Memorial along with sixty other people, who lost their lives while attempting to save others.<sup>241</sup> This does suggest that there was a precedent, even if it was somewhat minor for commemorating and praising 'heroes' regardless of their socio-economic situation. Particularly if viewed in conjunction with the memorials to advocates of social improvement, as Pickering and Tyrrell state in reference to the Reformers' Memorial, "Middle and working-

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<sup>237</sup> N. Penny, 'Monuments for the people' p.797

<sup>238</sup> N. Penny, 'Monuments for the People' p.800

<sup>239</sup> S. Smiles, *Self-Help*, p.297

<sup>240</sup> J. Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life': the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,' p. 265

<sup>241</sup> J. Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life': the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,' p.256

class reformers predominate, but all classes are included.”<sup>242</sup> Therefore, it appears that there were a number of factors that explain Evans’ limited memorialisation. His class was a factor, for he was not linked to any notable institutions like Oates, who had been schooled at Eton, and Wilson who had attended Gonville and Caius College, thus restricting the scope for commemoration. Additionally, because of his social circumstances it is likely his friends and family were not figures who had positions of significant authority to influence public perception. Secondly, there was also a precedent for ignoring Evans as shown by the articles in the press and lack of iconography. And finally, the presented manner of his death lessened the likelihood of a mass public appeal for a memorial of Evans.

### Evans in literature

Most scholars agree that the number of biographies is often a show of iconic and generally heroic status. MacKenzie declares that over an 80-year period there were at least 100 biographies of David Livingstone and 70 for General Gordon.<sup>243</sup> Additionally C.I. Hamilton’s research has shown that, “in the catalogue of the National Maritime museum there are listed some 135 biographies of British naval men - sailors and officers - plus 28 of Nelson, published in Britain between 1830 and 1914.”<sup>244</sup> There was clearly an interest in those in the naval profession, for otherwise publishers would not have been interested in printing a book which would not make a profit. This interest in the maritime life was perhaps one reason why there was so much public interest in the expedition and aftermath. However, within this time of naval fascination, no biography of Evans was produced. In fact he has only one biography to his name, G.C. Gregor’s *Swansea’s Antarctic Explorer*, it is less than 100 pages long and was only published in 1995. 66 years after the first biography of Scott, 62 years after Wilson’s, 62 years after Oates’ and 57 years after the first biography of Bowers. As biographies are one of the indicators that must be present to generate a heroic reputation and status<sup>245</sup>, Evans again falls short.

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<sup>242</sup> P. Pickering and A. Tyrrell (ed), *Contested Sites*, p.4

<sup>243</sup> J. MacKenzie, ‘Heroic Myths of Empire’ p.115

<sup>244</sup> C.I. Hamilton, ‘Naval Hagiography’ p.382

<sup>245</sup> M. Jones, ‘What Should Historians Do With Heroes?’ p.441

Texts about the events of the expedition have been in print since 1914. And it is in one of the accounts that Evans comes in for some of the harshest comments ever published about his rank and role in the disaster. Max Jones and Stephanie Barczewski both make reference to Evans' presentation in the small booklet, *Like English Gentlemen*, (1915), by J.E Hodder Williams, with Jones believing the "scrapegoating of Evans reached in apogee"<sup>246</sup> within the text. Hodder Williams proclaims:

"If Evans could not walk alone, he must be helped, dragged, carried along somehow...It was their lifeblood the heroes gave for this simple seaman... If they had left him he would die just a few hours sooner and they would be safe. But they were English gentlemen these four, the hero, and Dr Wilson and Captain Oates and Lieutenant Bowers...Poor Evans! If he had not fallen. If his strength had not failed. If only they could have left him where he fell. Poor heroes! But they were four English gentlemen."<sup>247</sup>

What seems very explicit is the fact that Scott, Wilson, Oates and Bowers were the 'heroes', whereas Evans was just a 'simple seaman'. There is a definite barrier. Here it appears that the manner of his death and his class were prominent in this interpretation. However, it should not be viewed as the popular consensus for the pamphlet was produced for Peter Scott, as stated in the acknowledgements, "to Peter Scott From the author of 'Where's Master?'"<sup>248</sup> It was in essence a show to Peter Scott what a brave gentleman his father, Captain Scott had been. It did though put another nail in the coffin of Evans' reputation, in an effort to enhance that of Scott's. This was by no means a unique occurrence for Evans' image was later adapted to suit the purpose of an individual's objective.

George Seaver's, *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) promotes Evans as, "a man of giant physique, of intelligence, resources and inventiveness, calmness and

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<sup>246</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.111

<sup>247</sup> *Like English Gentlemen*, pp 39-44

<sup>248</sup> J.E Hodder Williams, *Like English Gentleman*, preface

presence of mind, in everyway a man of his hands, and a tower of strength.”<sup>249</sup> One would be forgiven for thinking the book represented a new representation that would henceforth become the common consensus. However, Roland Huntford adapted Evans’ image back, in order to support suit his own individual philosophy.

Roland Huntford declares, “Over the years, P.O Evans, a Welshman from Glamorgan, had turned into a beery womanizer, exposed to the risk of venereal disease, and running a bit to fat.”<sup>250</sup> This is a very incriminating statement, but Huntford provides no evidence for this claim, (though it is popular consensus that Evans would often get drunk whilst on shore leave.<sup>251</sup>) Evans has been used as a pawn to present a view that Scott was a poor leader, just like fifty years previously when he was used to present the notion that strong, uneducated men were a liability on expeditions. Although one could assert that Huntford is merely presenting the stereotypical image of Jack Tar, Mary Conley’s recent study, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack* (2009) has shown that by the late Victorian period, “newer images emerged that valorised the modern bluejacket, who was cast as a manly ideal, virtuous both afloat and ashore.”<sup>252</sup> Conley’s research infers that Huntford’s accusation does not even reflect contemporary reflections of Jack Tar.

In the first chapter it was revealed that Edgar Evans and Frank Debenham had a great rapport. However, in the published version of Debenham’s dairy, *The Quiet Land*, (1992), the vast majority of the comments about how well Evans and Debenham got on have been taken out. The removed comments include; “Evans and I have started a feud...Ripping chap!”<sup>253</sup> “Evans and I whirled away the time singing and generally acting the giddy ox. Amongst other things he proposed to me.”<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> G. Seaver, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.142

<sup>250</sup> R. Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, pp.314 –15. For a full discussion of the bigger man being a hindrance on an expedition, see R. Fiennes, *Captain Scott*, pp.335-336

<sup>251</sup> Evans was thrown off the expedition for a drinking escapade in New Zealand, though Scott later allowed him to return.

<sup>252</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, p.193

<sup>253</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, 18 February 1911, MS 1654;D

<sup>254</sup> *ibid*, 26 February 1911

Additionally, in his published diary Debenham states, “the nails have come out of my boots and the crampons have raised me a blister on the heel so I did not wear them yesterday. The consequence was that on the lakes and rivers of ice I slipped & skidded in all directions with many falls, much to the amusement of others,”<sup>255</sup> [This is where this date’s entry stops in *The Quiet Land*, however, his original diary continues,] specially Evans. Whenever Evans got mean he would give me a shove + we were sparring across the traces half the day.”<sup>256</sup> It seems somewhat unjust that these comments were cut and I have been unable to find a conclusive reason, the introduction to the ‘Autumn journeys 1911’ section simply states, “Here follows an account of our autumn sledging trip in the Western Mts, being almost a copy of the pencil diary I kept while on the trip, but with occasional additions and explanations.”<sup>257</sup> There have been deletions and few additions.

Perhaps as Debenham’s opinion of Evans changed, this affected how he wanted his relationship with Evans on that journey to be seen. As he states later in *The Quiet Land*, “Taff Evans... was simply splendid on that trip and we were very chummy. He was rather disappointing in the winter being given to hectoring amongst his mates, but he’s the most useful man down here and a treasure to Capt. Scott.”<sup>258</sup> It is possible that these later events may have affected how he wanted to remember Evans. Though one should remember that Evans was a Petty Officer and according to Christopher McKee’s research on the lives and views of sailors from 1900-45, “the word most frequently used in describing petty officers was *bastard*.”<sup>259</sup> So perhaps Debenham was judging Evans on his occupational role as a naval rating. Debenham’s daughter was the editor of *The Quiet Land*, and it is possible that quotes concerning Evans were deemed of no significance, with the belief that the focus should solely be on Frank Debenham. However, having contacted Debenham’s family, there appears to have been no specific reason for the omission, besides a lack of space. Had the comments about Evans been left in it would have shown the crossing of social boundaries a man of

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<sup>255</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.80

<sup>256</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, MS 1654;D

<sup>257</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.43

<sup>258</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

<sup>259</sup> C. McKee, *Sober Men, Brave and True*, p.128

science and a sailor. There is also the chance that there is a skeleton in Evans' closet that Debenham later discovered and this altered his opinions, a skeleton which is still waiting to be discovered by historians.

## **Conclusion**

Evans held a state of marginalised heroism throughout the twentieth century. There was a lack of interest in his story, with fewer biographies, memorials and images in scrapbooks than his companions. Similarly the illustrators and painters had no wish to portray the moment before Evans' death as they had done with Evans' companions, resulting in a reduced iconography. There was clearly a lack of 'collective emotional investment' towards Evans, and the actions of an individual, Lois Evans, was not enough to elevate Evans into a popular heroic individual.

## Conclusion

As the decades passed, the story of the Antarctic five moved into projection by feature film. Ponting had some footage of the Antarctic five in his film, *90° South*, and this was widely viewed throughout the nation, though there was actually no footage of the Southern Journey itself. In 1948 the feature film *Scott of the Antarctic* was released, a film had been proposed in the 1930s though Kathleen Scott had announced, “NOT WHILE I’M ALIVE.”<sup>260</sup> *Scott of the Antarctic* starred John Mills as Captain Scott and James Robertson Justice portrayed a rather large and jolly Edgar Evans. There was no real blame attached to any of the men and there was no animosity shown towards Evans. Although, Oates’ death, like Scott’s, Wilson’s and Bowers’ comes across as more heroic due to the nature and manner of their deaths. In the descent into television drama Evans was once again used as a means to convey popular beliefs. In the drama, *Last Place on Earth*, which was based upon Huntford’s *Scott and Amundsen*, it was important to make Evans out to be an irresponsible drunk as it was one of ways used to present Scott as a completely incompetent leader. One must though bear in mind that Trevor Griffiths, the author of the script, has strong left wing sentiments, and thus harboured feelings of resentment towards imperialistic ventures. Evans was a pawn of an image to be manipulated to support specific philosophies at any given time, whilst his comrades’ depiction of him before his demise was frequently ignored.

Wide samples of press clippings have been analysed from *The Globe* to *The Sheffield Telegraph* to *John Bull* to the *Birmingham Gazette* whilst the entire newspapers examined include; *The Daily Mirror*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Graphic* and *The Daily Sketch*. However, to take this investigation further, larger samples of newspapers could be viewed, such as a bigger range of regional newspapers and newspapers and magazines aimed towards women and children, thereby investigating if Evans’ presentation altered between region, class, gender and age.

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<sup>260</sup> This was reported in many newspapers on 4 March 1938, including, *Daily Sketch*, 4 March 1938, MS 1453/41, *The Sheffield Telegraph*, 4 March 1938, *The Daily Independent*, *Daily Despatch* and *The Star*

Evans' presentation was affected by the contemporary thoughts and beliefs at the time, for as MacDonald states, a hero is a product of society's virtues<sup>261</sup>, and if one turns this on its head, Evans was sometimes representative of the weaknesses society feared, such as degeneration, effeminacy and insanity. The accounts written by his fellows' show Evans was a skilled craftsman, thus fitting the masculine ideal of self-control and, the masculine ideal of the mariner, assuming the latter was based around maritime skill. However, Scott's 'message' essentially set the standard for criticising Evans, with the claim of an "astonishing failure"<sup>262</sup>, Scott's accusation was fuel for the press. Evans' family attempted to keep Evans in the public memory, however, the many articles and the lack of iconography show that some of the population wanted to forget his role in the expedition. Thus Evans' fellow travellers, his family, the press, (who worked within contemporary beliefs concerning masculinity), constructed Evans' image.

The sailors sculpted in nineteenth century memorials had a function; they were there to present the perfect example, what men should strive to be. Similarly Oates' death was the model, and Evans' was frequently presented as falling short of Oates' example. This allowed the Antarctic five to become, "the four men history will never forget"<sup>263</sup>.

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<sup>261</sup> MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.82

<sup>262</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

<sup>263</sup> *Children's Newspaper*, 20 November 1937, MS 1453/41

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## Appendix

### Message to the public

“The causes of the disaster are not due to faulty organisation, but to misfortune in all risks which had to be undertaken.

1. The loss of the pony transport in March 1911 obliged me to start later than I had intended, and obliged the limits of stuff transported to be narrowed.
2. The weather throughout the outward journey, and especially the long gale in 83° S., stopped us.
3. The soft snow in lower reaches of glacier again reduced pace. We fought these untoward events with a will and conquered, but it cut into our provision reserve.

Every detail of our food supplies, clothing and depôts made on the interior ice-sheet and over that long stretch of 700 miles to the Pole and back, worked out to perfection. The advance party would have returned to the glacier in fine form and with surplus food were it not for the astonishing failure of the man whom we had least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party.

The Beardmore Glacier is difficult in fine weather, but on our return we did not get a single completely fine day; this with a sick companion enormously increased our anxieties.

As I have said elsewhere we got into frightfully rough ice and Edgar Evans received a concussion of the brain we think - he died a natural death, but left us a shaken party with the season duly advanced.

But all the facts above enumerated were as nothing to the surprise that awaited us on the Barrier. I maintain that our arrangements for returning were quite adequate, and that no one in the world would have expected the temperatures and surfaces which we encountered at this time of year. On the summit in lat. 85° 86° we had -20°, -30°. On the Barrier lat. 82°, 10,000 feet lower, we had -30° in the day, -47° at night pretty regularly, with continuous head wind during our day marches. It is clear that these circumstances come on very suddenly, and our wreck is certainly due to this sudden advent of severe weather, which does not seem to have any satisfactory cause. I do not think

human beings ever came though such a month as we have come through, and we should have got through in spite of the weather had it not been for the sickening of a second companion, Captain Oates, and a shortage of fuel in our depôts for which I cannot account, and finally, but for the storm which has fallen on us within 11 miles of the depot at which we hoped to secure our final supplies. Surely misfortune could scarcely have exceeded this last blow. We arrived within 11 miles of our old One Ton Camp with fuel for one last meal and food for two days. For four days we have been unable to leave the tent - the gale howling about us. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. We took risks, we know we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined still to do our best to the last. But if willing to give our lives to this enterprise, which is the honour of the country, I appeal to our countrymen to see that those who depend upon us are properly cared for.

Had we lived I would have a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodied must tell the tale, but surely, surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are properly provided for.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, pp.421-422



**Figure 18** this is the entire photograph that I cropped and enlarged for of figure 5. From right to left Petty Officer Forde and Crean can be seen working on the rear of the sledge.



**Figure 19** this is the entire photograph that I cropped and enlarged for figure 8.

“There was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers.”<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the presentation and portrayal of Petty Officer Edgar Evans, the first man to perish in Captain Scott’s pole party of 1912.

## Introduction

Between the 17 February and 31 March 1912<sup>2</sup>, the five British explorers who reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912, perished on the return journey. The news did not reach Britain, or even the closest inhabited land, New Zealand, until the following February. When the news came through, as a group of five they were raised as heroes, with particular attention played to Captain Oates and Captain Scott. The Antarctic five consisted of, Captain Robert Falcon Scott, the leader of the expedition, Dr. Edward Wilson, chief of scientific staff, Lieutenant Henry Bowers, Captain Lawrence ‘Titus’ Oates<sup>3</sup> and Petty Officer Edgar Evans. P.O Evans held unique status, he was the first man to die, the only member of the Antarctic five not of officer status and the only one several contemporary press and publishers put forward as a scapegoat.

This dissertation is based upon the results of my research undertaken over a period of three months. I have examined the published diaries and memoirs of Edgar Evans’ fellow travellers, including, Scott’s *Journals*, Thomas Griffith Taylor’s *With Scott - the Silver Lining*, and Frank Debenham’s *The Quiet Land*. Along with unpublished and thus un-adapted journals and letters, from both the lower ranks of the expedition and those of officer status, including the journals of P.O Keohane, P.O Williamson and Frank Debenham. I have also examined newspaper articles dated from 1901 to 1938. These articles are from various newspapers aimed towards the lower classes, such as *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*, and newspapers aimed towards the upper classes, such as *The Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Times*. Around 60% of the articles examined are from scrapbooks of the *Terra Nova* Expedition (1910-13), and scrapbooks of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February, 1913

<sup>2</sup> The exact date of Scott’s death is unknown, though the last entry in Scott’s diary was dated 29 March 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Oates was a Captain in the Inniskilling Dragoons Cavalry Regiment, but signed on the expedition as a ‘Midshipman’ as the expedition was short of funds and could not afford to pay him a higher wage.

*Discovery* (1901-04) expedition, held at the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute.<sup>4</sup> There are problems with analysing newspaper reports, for there is the age-old dilemma, "whether the press simply reported what of interest to the public or whether it created that interest."<sup>5</sup> This query has a further effect on scrapbooks, for is the scrapbook a typical representation of the coverage? Or, were only specific articles cut out and kept as a memory of the presentation of exploration?

However, although the sources are not problem-free, an analysis of the press' perception of Edgar Evans is the most effective way to examine how he was popularly presented, as halfpenny dailies regularly reached audience figures of 1,000,000.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the use of scrapbooks in an analysis of Evans' presentation is not as problematic as using scrapbooks as a basis for a study on the presentation of exploration in general. For the cut-out-articles would not perhaps be a genuine reflection of exploration's entire representation. However, I am analysing the presentation of an individual within a group, so articles in scrapbooks will not only show how specific newspapers perceived Evans, but also, how one person wishes to remember Evans. Furthermore, the majority of scrapbooks viewed contain at least 100 articles from a dozen different newspapers and magazines, thus the research has not been restricted to Evans' presentation in two or three newspapers of similar audiences and political bias'.

These particular documents and texts have been examined as they show the construction of individuals' images. For as Cubitt declares, "formal rituals and official procedures constitute...only the most explicit part of a society's hero-worshipping and hero-producing activity. Equally important are the ways in which heroic reputations are developed through the generally less formal practices of social, cultural and economic life - through story-telling and entertainment through gossip and news reporting, and through the circulation of

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<sup>4</sup> Scrapbooks have been analysed rather than going to Colindale to examine whole newspapers, for scrapbooks also enable one to assess collecting practices and an individual's wanted recollection of an event.

<sup>5</sup> B. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p.1

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, p.152

literature.”<sup>7</sup> This dissertation will examine Edgar Evans’ image construction via those less formal practices.

Scholarly work on Victorian and Edwardian heroism particularly the ‘imperial heroes’ has changed direction over the last twenty years. As Max Jones states, “The historian’s role is no longer to act as judge, asking ‘How great was this individual?’ Instead scholars should ask ‘Why did a past society raise this individual as a hero.’”<sup>8</sup> To take Jones’ question a step further, why was this man not raised as a hero, in the same way as his comrades? I will therefore be using a methodological symmetry, much like the ‘strong programme’ whereby failure is looked upon through the same lens as success, with the notion that similar social factors contribute to both successful and unsuccessful theories. Evans’ presented “failure”<sup>9</sup> must be viewed in the same context as the presented heroism of Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers.



Figure 1 The Antarctic Five at the Pole on 17 January 1912. Dr Wilson took the photograph for the string attached to the camera can be seen in his right hand.

<sup>7</sup> G. Cubitt, ‘Introduction’ *Heroic Reputations*, p.4

<sup>8</sup> M. Jones, ‘What Should Historians Do With Heroes’, *History Compass*, p.441

<sup>9</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

Due to the fact that Evans was a Petty Officer, and therefore the only one not of commissioned officer status, there will obviously be class issues presented and examined, such as the differing perceptions of manliness, and accusations that his lack of education rendered him un-fit for exploration. However, as this paper will make clear, it is not sufficient to say that Evans' presentation was purely and simply caused by his class, there is more to understanding the construction of Evans' image, than class, for it is too sweeping.

The consensus is that the 'hero' is such because he is presenting an ideal image. As Orrin. E Klapp states, "the hero in social life is... more than a person; he is an ideal image, a legend, a symbol."<sup>10</sup> This has been echoed by Max Jones, "the hero is the *ideal* man or woman"<sup>11</sup>. It is this that frames the understanding of the presentation of Petty Officer Edgar Evans.

As the hero is representative of *the* ideal, it can also be assumed that he was representative of the masculine ideal. It is the general consensus, that one of the principal components of the masculine ideal, during the early twentieth century, was self-control.<sup>12</sup> However, there are obvious problems with examining concepts of masculinity and manliness, for there has only been a limited amount of analysis on working-class masculinity. Recent leading lights in the field such as John Tosh have tended to concentrate on middle and upper class masculinity.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, Stephen Heathorn believes that the little that is known about working-class gender suggests, "masculinity was tied to respectable employment and physical labour"<sup>14</sup>. Thus it is likely that Evans' masculinity was defined not only by his class, but also by his occupation. However, if scholarly research on working-class masculinity is lacking, there has been even less analysis on the masculinity of mariners. The main contributors to this field include, Mary Conley's, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack* and J.D Glasco's 'The Seaman Feels Himself a Man'. Conley argues that Edwardian sailors were respected for their

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<sup>10</sup> O.E. Klapp, 'The Creation of Popular Heroes' p.135

<sup>11</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.440

<sup>12</sup> J. Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do With Masculinity' p.183, G.L. Mosse, 'Shell-shock as a Social Disease' p.101, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.245.

<sup>13</sup> For example, J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*

<sup>14</sup> Heathorn, 'How stiff were Victorian Upper Lips', *History Compass*, p.2

domesticity<sup>15</sup>, and Glasco contends that during the eighteenth century, a sailor's masculinity was complex but often linked to their level of maritime skill.<sup>16</sup> These two ideas will be further examined in this paper.

Michael Lieven, in his examination of hero making during the Zulu War proclaims, "the roots of the hero are in dramatic narrative"<sup>17</sup>. This has clear links to the heroism of the Antarctic Five whose story was told by 'mediators', a term firstly used by John M. MacKenzie. Mackenzie has contributed greatly to the field of imperial heroism. He put forward in 'Heroic Myths of Empire', the widely accepted theory that it is not so much the exploits of the individual that count, for it is the 'mediators', those who work to keep the hero in the minds of the public that create a hero.<sup>18</sup> Since mediators are necessary for the establishment of a heroic reputation, they must also play a role in the creation of an un-heroic reputation. However, in the case of the Antarctic five, the 'mediators' are not individual people, they are texts, Scott's 'message to the public' and press reports. Both played a significant role in the creation of Evans' image and reputation.

Scholars analysing Victorian and Edwardian heroes have tended to concentrate on military figures, such as, the Havelock heroes<sup>19</sup> and General Gordon<sup>20</sup>. Whilst the original focus of naval heroism began with the apotheosis of Captain Cook, scholars analysing Victorian naval heroes, have focused on Nelson and Franklin.<sup>21</sup> MacKenzie, C.I Hamilton and Robert MacDonald have all shown that there was a definite link between Christianity and military heroism.<sup>22</sup> However, Christianity was also a key component in the construction of a non-military hero, David Livingstone. MacKenzie and Jones contend that Livingstone became to be

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<sup>15</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, specifically chapter 4, 'Strong men for a strong navy'

<sup>16</sup> J.D Glasco, 'The Seaman Feels Him-self a Man' pp40-52

<sup>17</sup> M. Lieven, 'Heroism, Heroics and the Making of Heroes: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879' p.419

<sup>18</sup> J. M McKenzie, 'Heroic myths of Empire,' p.114

<sup>19</sup> R. Mackenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, M. Jones, 'What should historians so with heroes'

<sup>20</sup> R. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, M. Jones, 'What should historians so with heroes', R. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*

<sup>21</sup> C.I. Hamilton, 'Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero', H. Lewis-Jones, 'Heroism displayed': revisiting the Franklin Gallery at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1891',

<sup>22</sup> C.I. Hamilton, 'Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero', J. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', R. MacDonald, 'Deeds of Glory' in *The Language of Empire*

regarded as a hero because he could be used to present differing ideals, such as the lower class man who educated himself, thus an advocate of self-improvement, the Christian missionary and symbol of empire.<sup>23</sup> MacKenzie's research has also shown that being able to present several ideals turned the individual, with the help of mediators into "mythic status"<sup>24</sup>. The same principal can be applied to the Antarctic five, for as a group they were a symbol of the strength of British character, they were also promoted as having sacrificed their lives for the cause of science, advocating a quest for knowledge. Additionally as individuals, Wilson, Bowers, Scott and Oates became proponents of how to behave, and perhaps most importantly, how to die in a perceived heroic manner.

There has been little scholarly analysis of Edgar Evans' image construction. The only article analysing Evans is from the medical field, and concerned with the cause of his death.<sup>25</sup> Whilst the majority of publications about the British Antarctic Expedition, (1910-13), have not been analytical studies, but biographical in approach, either of the expedition member, or, of the expedition itself. With as R. Fiennes' *Captain Scott*, (2003), Michael Smith's *I'm Just Going Outside* (2000), C.H. Lagerbom's *The Fifth Man* (1999) and G. Seaver's *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic* (1933), as just a handful of examples. However, in the last five years, Max Jones' *The Last Great Quest* (2004) and Stephanie Barczewski's *Antarctic Destinies* (2007) have analysed the presentation and the aftermath of Scott's final expedition. Both have put forward their views on early twentieth century heroism. Jones' work should be seen as groundbreaking for no scholar before had analysed the reaction to the expedition by the press<sup>26</sup>, when in fact the newspapers' had such a critical role in the transfer of knowledge in early twentieth century society, newspaper reports are the key component of the popular presentation of exploration.

However, despite the valuable analysis, there are limitations to the texts. In *Antarctic Destinies*, a 300-page book, Evans gets four pages concerning the press

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<sup>23</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths', p.125, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.24

<sup>24</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire' p.122

<sup>25</sup> Rogers, 'The death of Chief Petty Officer Evans' *The Practitioner*, 1974

<sup>26</sup> Riffenburgh's investigation of the British and American press' presentation of exploration in *The Myth of the Explorer* stopped in 1910, thus leaving the presentation of Scott's last expedition un-examined.

attacks upon him and a similar amount in *The Last Great Quest*. Therefore, the gap between the image of Scott, Wilson, Bowers and Oates and that of Evans is only briefly dealt with. Furthermore, Jones declares that Evans was not attacked on a wide-scale and thus accusations towards Evans should not be exaggerated,<sup>27</sup> a point I will oppose in Chapter 3. Barczewski asserts that class caused the difference in Evans 'and Oates' presentation,<sup>28</sup> whereas I will contend that there was more to understanding Evans' presentation than his socio-economic status. Additionally, neither Jones nor Barczewski examine how Evans was portrayed in the diaries of his fellow travellers. In consequence, the derogatory comments by the press aimed at Edgar Evans are not analysed in the wider context of Evans' image construction.

Lisa Bloom's (1995), *Gender on Ice* attempts to analyse heroism and Scott's last expedition. However, much of her secondary reading is taken from Roland Huntford, thus limiting the ability to form a rounded argument. This is because Huntford's book, *Scott and Amundsen*, is a greatly inferred text, wherein Scott is essentially presented as villainous, whilst Amundsen is presented as an almost saint-like being. Therefore, anyone who solely quotes Huntford and looks to no other evidence or scholarly work limits the plausibility of his or her own argument. Moreover, Bloom does not look into the presentation of exploration by the British press when the news of the Antarctic five's death came through, if one does not know what traits and exploits were presented as heroic, how can one comment on what was considered heroic at the time.

Although there has been no scholarly analysis of scrapbooks there have been studies on memorialisation. The majority of work on memorials has focused on military memorials<sup>29</sup>. Susan Seymour and Rupert Calvolcoressi's examination of naval memorials in 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation of Empire', demonstrates that the lower ranks were commemorated, though it was still in fitting within an aristocratic framework.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Nicholas Penny's 'Amor

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<sup>27</sup>M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.112

<sup>28</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>29</sup> Such as Cooke's 'Hyde Park Holocaust Memorial', Craske's 'naval and military heroes', and Jordan and Rogers 'Admirals as Heroes'

<sup>30</sup> S. Seymour and R. Calvolcoressi, 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation of Empire', p.113

Publicus Posuit' shows that the image of Jack Tar was used in memorials but only to show devotion to a fallen commander, they were examples.<sup>31</sup> This can be linked to John Price's research into non-military heroism. Price investigated the Watt's Memorial for Self-Sacrifice in 'Heroism in Everyday Life', and has shown that the working classes, who were commemorated for their heroism, had their image adapted by the press to promote specific ideals<sup>32</sup>. Evans had few individual memorials, very rarely had his image adapted to be promoted as a heroic individual, and was seldom presented as an example for those to follow.

In 'What Should Historians do with Heroes', Max Jones proclaims that based upon one of Cubitt's theories on heroism, that a hero is someone who is an object of emotional investment<sup>33</sup>. Believing that there is a range of indicators to gauge the level of heroism, Jones points to, biographies, media representations, and references in personal testimonies, commercial exploitation, memorial services, memorial funds and public monuments as the determinant factors<sup>34</sup>. I shall investigate four of these indicators; personal testimonies, media representations, public monuments and biographies, whilst also analysing what factors affected Evans' presentation. This dissertation will show the chronology of Evans' image, presenting his fellow travellers opinions of him before his death, the role of Scott's 'message' and the press reports, his companions' opinions of Evans' death and Evans' commemoration in memorial form in both stone and ink. Showing that just as heroism is a constructed state, an un-heroic image is also a constructed state. There are four main factors that affected and defined Evans' image, firstly the circulation of knowledge, secondly inscriptions, artefacts and diaries, thirdly print culture including the use of images and lastly, the negotiation of masculinity.

In chapter 1 I shall analyse the image of Evans, as presented by his fellow travellers before he died. I will then give a brief chronology of the press' presentation of Evans, and answer several questions, including, why was Evans open to attack? I will then analyse the reports that promoted Evans as a hero

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<sup>31</sup> N. Penny, 'Amor Publicus Posuit'; Monuments for the People and of the People', pp797-800

<sup>32</sup> J. Price, 'Watts Memorial', pp.268-269

<sup>33</sup> G.Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.3

<sup>34</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.441

within the group, articles that accused Evans of going insane, failing because of a lack of education and failing because of his physicality. Whilst also assessing how the portrayal of Evans reflected contemporary views on masculinity.

The second chapter will be a comparison between the presentation of Captain Oates, the proclaimed, 'gentleman hero', and Edgar Evans. Ideals of masculinity will also be assessed and I will question Barczewski's claim that the reason the two were presented differently was purely an issue of class; it will become clear that the manner of Evans' death was a key factor in his subsequent projection. Geoffrey Cubitt has argued that heroism can occur when "a life is encapsulated in a particularly dramatic moment"<sup>35</sup>. It is through this one moment that the presentation of the heroism of Captain Oates can be assessed in comparison with Edgar Evans.

The third chapter will focus on how Evans' presentation developed throughout the century, I will investigate two of Jones' indicators of heroism, memorials and biographies and adding another factor, scrapbooks, to see how society and individuals wished to remember and present Evans. Additionally, if memorials are "memory in the guise of representation"<sup>36</sup>, what does this show about how people wanted to commemorate Evans? I will also build upon Barczewski's suggestion that the fact Evans was attacked is more significant than the number of accusations, and I will contend that there are other, less direct ways that show the contemporary perception of Evans' un-heroic status.

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<sup>35</sup> G. Cubitt, (ed) *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.13

<sup>36</sup> C. W. J. Withers 'Memory and the history of geographical knowledge: the commemoration of Mungo Park' p.3, taken from Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, p.161



Figure 2 Evans poses for Herbert Ponting, the self-proclaimed 'camera artist'. Evans made all of the sledges with fellow Petty Officers Crean and Keohane, and so it is very likely that the sledge behind Evans is a result of his handiwork.

## Edgar Evans

Edgar Evans (1876-1912) was born in Rhossili, Wales. When he was 15 he joined the Royal Navy. He advanced from seaman on HMS *Trafalgar* to physical education instructor on HMS *Excellent*, to able seaman on HMS *Vernon*, and to leading seaman on HMS *Pembroke*. In 1899 he joined Lieutenant Scott on HMS *Majestic*<sup>37</sup>. At the age of twenty-five, he applied to, and was accepted on to, Scott's first Antarctic expedition, The National Antarctic Expedition, (1901-04), as a Petty Officer. After returning to Wales he married his cousin, Lois Beynon. He then worked as a gunnery instructor and won the Torpedo Cup several times<sup>38</sup>, before re-joining Captain Scott for the British Antarctic Expedition (1910-13). Evans was one of four men chosen by Scott to march to the South Pole. All five perished on the return journey, Evans left a widow and three young children.

Out of the five Evans was the first to die, collapsing on 17 February 1912. Evans' death is still a matter of mystery. Scott believed Evans had a fall, which later caused a brain haemorrhage. Whilst some have suggested scurvy, which weakened his blood vessels, thus when Evans fell and hit his head, this caused a brain haemorrhage<sup>39</sup>. Though Susan Solomon believes he suffered high altitude cerebral oedema<sup>40</sup>. A month after Evans' demise, Captain Oates walked out of the tent to his death, with the immortal words, "I am just going outside I maybe some time."<sup>41</sup> Scott, Wilson and Bowers died in their tent at the end of March 1912.

When the news reached England in February 1913, following the publishing of Scott's 'message to the public', which proclaimed Evans' role in the disaster as the "astonishing failure... of the strongest man"<sup>42</sup>. Henceforth Evans became known as 'the strong man'. However, Evans was not just a one-dimensional figure as the name 'strong man' implies.

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<sup>37</sup> G.C. Gregor, *Swansea's Antarctic Explorer*, p.77

<sup>38</sup> According to Frank Debenham's journal Evans stated he had won the cup 5 times, though Evans' biographer G.C. Gregor has stated Evans won it twice.

<sup>39</sup> A.F. Rogers, 'The Death of Petty Officer Evans' *The Practitioner*, April 1974, and R. Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, p.505

<sup>40</sup> S. Solomon, *The Coldest March*, pp.228-231.

<sup>41</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>42</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

## Chapter 1

“In a show like this we have no scared namby pamby’s”<sup>43</sup>.

In order to analyse the construction and establishment of Evans’ image, it is first necessary to examine how Evans’ fellow travellers viewed him prior to his death. Thus, before Scott’s opinions of his ‘failure’ were published and before the accusations by the press. The remainder of the first chapter will deal with Evans’ representation by the press in 1913. A brief chronology is given to show how Evans’ image developed. This chapter then focuses on the newspaper reports that suggest Evans failed mentally, along with the reports that suggest Evans’ failure was caused by his physicality. I contend that newspaper reports and Scott’s ‘message’ were the key mediators in Evans’ subsequent projection and status, questioning his manliness and creating a vulnerable legacy.

### The opinions of Evans’ fellow travellers

In January 1911 Evans was told by Scott to accompany three scientists on the Western Sledge Journey.<sup>44</sup> The scientists, Thomas Griffith-Taylor, Frank Debenham and Charles Wright had never been to Antarctica before, and so Evans’ job was essentially to show the men how to sledge and camp. Evans demonstrated how to put up and pull down the tent, how to cook for four men, how to fix boots, and he kept their spirits up with a stream of anecdotes, chocolate and card games. In Griffith-Taylor’s journal he promotes Evans as, “an ideal sledge-mate”<sup>45</sup>, an “expert steersman”<sup>46</sup>, who kept them in good humour; “Evans as usual enlivened us with Navy yarns”<sup>47</sup>. These comments show Evans as a man of skill, whilst being fully aware of his responsibilities by ensuring the morale of the group remained high. Similarly Captain Scott promoted Evans as, “the most invaluable asset to our party”<sup>48</sup>, hailing his craftsman-like skill; “a new pair of sealskin overshoes for ski made by Evans have been a complete

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<sup>43</sup> Henry. R. Bowers letter to Emily Webb Bowers, 22 June 1910, MS 1505/1/1/3/89

<sup>44</sup> T. Griffith-Taylor was the official leader, but as Evans was there to teach Debenham, Wright and Griffith-Taylor how to survive tent-life, Evans became the unofficial leader.

<sup>45</sup> Griffith-Taylor collection, (ed) W. Hanley, p.87

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p.100

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p.97

<sup>48</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.363

success"<sup>49</sup>, "Evans has made a lining for one of the tents; it is secured on the inner side of the poles and provides an air space inside the tent"<sup>50</sup>. There was far more to Evans than simple seaman who was there for his strength alone.

Particularly as Evans was presented as a craftsman, that is in essence a show of self-discipline and control, two traits advocated by Victorian freethinkers Carlyle and Kinsley<sup>51</sup>. Although self-control may only have been a key component of the masculine ideal for the middle-upper classes, the men praising Evans' skill were from that social standing, thus it is highly probable that to Scott and Griffith-Taylor, Evans represented a display of supreme masculinity. It could be argued that Evans was a favourite of Scott, and as such Scott's comments would be positive. However, Scott was heavily responsible for Evans' subsequent un-heroic representation and so Evans was not so favourable that he was beyond criticism.

In Frank Debenham's unpublished diary there were frequent comments about him and Evans larking about. Debenham regularly made a note of Evans' sayings. For example, when dealing cards Debenham gave Evans a bad hand to which Evans replied, "Right o my old blossom, wait till I'm cook again I'll pizen you"<sup>52</sup>. This was not simply a patronising note of look at how the lower ranks talk, for he expresses how well they get on, immediately after the incident Debenham recorded, "we really are a very jolly sledging party and it is practically all due to Evans"<sup>53</sup>. It seems from Debenham's original diary that he looked up to Evans. This statement is inferred because Debenham makes no references to the comments used by Griffith Taylor or Charles Wright, as he does with Evans, whom he mentions every day, writing down Evans' opinions and popular sayings. Debenham states, "Evans has the most frequent falls and after one he peers out of his hole at me to see if I'm laughing and that always breaks me up."<sup>54</sup>

"Evans and I have started a feud...Ripping chap!"<sup>55</sup> "Evans and I whirled away the time singing and generally acting the giddy ox. Amongst other things he proposed

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<sup>49</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.245

<sup>50</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals* p.229

<sup>51</sup> C. Oldstone-Moore 'The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain', p.14

<sup>52</sup> F. Debenham, *Diary*, 15 February 1911, MS 1654;D

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 20 February, 1911

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 18 February 1911

to me.”<sup>56</sup> Evans was essentially breaking down the class barriers that have often been associated with the regime of Scott’s expeditions. The quotes also show that Evans possessed qualities that the educated men admired.



Figure 3 [Left to right: Evans, Griffith-Taylor and Debenham in early 1911.] Debenham stated in his journal that Evans would make him laugh just as the photograph was taken, resulting in the two of them “grinning like apes”<sup>57</sup>, though here is looks like they have managed to keep a straight face.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence to illustrate how the Seamen and Petty Officers viewed Evans. This is because, only a minority kept journals, and those

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 26 February 1911

<sup>57</sup>ibid, 21 February 1911

who did often wrote rather short entries<sup>58</sup>, and generally made no mention of their thoughts and feelings about their fellows. Often just stating the time, weather, food consumed and where they camped, whilst any extraordinary events were also noted. For as Evans proclaimed having seen a whale, "Hoorey, got something to put in the diary."<sup>59</sup> Additionally, one should acknowledge that journals could have been lost or destroyed, or they may have remained in family possession.

It should though be clear that from the evidence available, Evans was seen as an asset to the expedition and to his fellow travellers. He was a leader, not only shown by the fact that he became the unofficial leader of the western sledge journey, but as a gunnery instructor his team won the Torpedo cup several times. He was a skilled craftsman, making successful sledges, crampons, sleeping bags, and tent linings, he was devoted to his leader and broke down social boundaries. Yet these virtues stated by his fellow explorers have, by and large, been lost, hidden or misrepresented by the mediators.

### **A chronology of the press' presentation of Evans**

To aid the readers understanding of the construction of Evans' image, I have written 4 key dates to show a brief chronology of Evans' presentation by the British press.

On 10 February 1913, the news of the fate of the Antarctic five was first published. There were no accusations being put forward on this date for knowledge of the disaster is minimal.<sup>60</sup>

From 11 February 1913 Captain Scott's 'message to the public'<sup>61</sup> was printed<sup>62</sup>. In the 'message', Scott calls Evans' breakdown an "astonishing failure of...the

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<sup>58</sup> With the exception of Petty Officer Thomas Williamson

<sup>59</sup> F. Debenham, diary, 13 February 1911. Rather ironically this was noted by Debenham in his diary and not recorded by Evans.

<sup>60</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, 10 February 1913, Extra late *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 February 1913, MS 1453/40

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix for the entire 'Message to the public'

<sup>62</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Mail*, *Westminster Gazette* - 11 February, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Sketch*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*- 12 February 12' *The Times Weekly* – 14 February

strongest man"<sup>63</sup>. From this date on Evans was known as the 'strong man', and theories were put forward by the press concerning Evans' role in the disaster, such as, "did he fail physically or mentally?"<sup>64</sup> From 11 February for several days there were also articles about Evans with a sympathetic tone, for Evans' wife Lois was quoted.<sup>65</sup>

From 15 February 1913, Commander Edward Evans'<sup>66</sup> interview, whereby he stated that the accusations that Edgar Evans went insane were untrue, was extensively reported<sup>67</sup>. However, some newspapers as late as 21 February were still projecting the view that "Evans [had] lost his reason"<sup>68</sup>. There were two images of Evans being offered, "the strong man of Captain Scott's Southern Party whose accident was the beginning of the disaster"<sup>69</sup>, in conjunction with, "the strong man of Scott's band of heroes"<sup>70</sup>.

Throughout the remainder of 1913, Evans was still offered as a hero within the group, but his un-heroic reception as an individual continued. *The Daily Mirror* presented the publication of Scott's *Journals* as a means to "clear up the mystery of Evans' death", the article concurs, "there is no mystery at all Evans died a natural death following great exhaustion." However, Evans' image is not re-constructed as heroic, for the article continues, "the following extracts show how the various stages of the sturdy seaman's fate dogged them"<sup>71</sup>. Evidently Evans was still a controversial figure.

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<sup>63</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.420

<sup>64</sup> *The Daily Express*,

<sup>65</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Graphic*, 12 February, *The Times Weekly*, 14 February, *The Globe* 13 February.

<sup>66</sup> Commander Edward Evans began the expedition as a Lieutenant, but after Scott's death, he was promoted to Commander. He is no relation to Edgar Evans.

<sup>67</sup> *The Observer*, Sunday 16 February 1913, *The Daily Mail* 15<sup>th</sup> February, *The Times Weekly Edition*, February 21<sup>st</sup>, *The Times* 17 February 1913

<sup>68</sup> *The Times Weekly Edition*, 21 February 1913

<sup>69</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 15 February 1913, MS 1453/40

<sup>70</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 15 February 1913, MS 1958/1

<sup>71</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1913



Figure 4 [Left to right] Bowers, Oates, Evans, Scott and Wilson at the South Pole, 17 January 1912

### Scott's 'message to the public'

Why did the press attack Evans?

From the chronology it is clear that the primary reason Evans was open to attack stems from the fact that the first, and most influential mediator, Captain Scott, had lambasted Evans in the 'message to the public'. From that point on Evans' legacy became vulnerable.

The 'message' was a note written by Scott as he, Bowers and Wilson awaited death in their tent; it was an attempt to explain the reasons for the disaster. Scott blamed the loss of pony transport, the weather, the soft snow and he then claims that they would have made it home "in fine form and with surplus food, but for the astonishing failure of the man whom we least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party."<sup>72</sup> However, Scott went on to state that the journey had shown, "that Englishmen can endure hardships, help

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<sup>72</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

one another and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past...had we lived I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman."<sup>73</sup>

Scott's 'message' was not just a note; it was an unofficial document that became the basis for Evans' un-heroic reputation and the others heroic depiction. Notes are essentially filling in for official documentation, therefore it was not an official statement produced by Scott; it was his own private thoughts and opinions.<sup>74</sup>

To be declared a 'failure' by his leader twice is indisputably not a representation of a state of heroism. However, 'failure' is not the only significant word in Scott's pronouncement of Evans' role in the disaster. Qualifying the 'failure' with the word 'astonishing', presents the notion that Evans' 'failure' was unpredicted, Evans should not have failed, and he was therefore unreliable. This is a key statement, for self-control and self-discipline were often viewed as the epitome of masculinity, particularly for the middle to higher classes. Thus unreliability was not a virtue it was an indictment. As Showalter states, in reference to the First World War, "chief among the values promoted within the male community of the war was the ability to tolerate the appalling filth and the stink of the trenches, the relentless noise, and the constant threat of death, with stoic good humour, and to allude to it in phlegmatic understatement. Indeed, emotional repression was an essential aspect of the British masculine ideal."<sup>75</sup> Evans was presented as having an unpredictable failure; this was clearly not a representation of a masculine ideal, let alone a heroic ideal.

Scott's 'message' along with Oates' self-sacrificing moment, "I'm just going outside I may be sometime"<sup>76</sup> were, as Jones' research has found, the only two extracts directly quoted from Scott's *Journals* that were telegraphed back to the

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<sup>73</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.422

<sup>74</sup> Though it is debatable if Scott knew this personal note would be made public, it would be reasonable to assume that it was his intention, as it was entitled 'message to the public'.

<sup>75</sup> E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.169

<sup>76</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p. 410

press in England.<sup>77</sup> Those two extracts from Scott's *Journal's* provided the basis for the story told to one and a half million children in elementary schools on 15 February 1913<sup>78</sup>. The message was also printed in a small 7 page booklet entitled 'The People's Tribute to the Heroes of the Antarctic', which was a "penny contribution...enabling the humblest of us to participate"<sup>79</sup> in the fund-raising. The 'message' was evidently publicised throughout the social hierarchy. The public would not see Scott's comments praising Evans until the end of the year, when Scott's *Journals* were published on 6 November 1913. Therefore, the image of Evans that was offered in newspapers throughout Britain in February 1913, stemmed from the image presented by Scott; a strong man, dying first and contributing to the fate of the other four.

### Evans' state of mind

Many newspapers ran stories that questioned Evans' state of mind, From 15 February 1913, *The Observer*, *Western Mail*, *South Wales Echo*, *Daily Graphic* and *The Times Weekly Edition* all ran a very similar story expressing concerns about Evans' mental state. "It would seem from what has escaped some of the survivors that Evans lost his reason for the time being under the great stress of fatigue and privation and was incapable of obeying orders, or assisting his hard-pushed companions in the weary work of pulling the sledge. Indeed it became necessary in the end to lay him on it."<sup>80</sup> This article declares that the evidence for Evans' mental breakdown stems from his comrades, though there were also reports that the men did not talk to the press. For example, in another interview Commander Evans had stated, "members of the expedition were not anxious to be interviewed."<sup>81</sup> So although possible, it is unlikely that one of his companions would have made such an accusation, for claiming that Evans had 'lost his reason', was a term used to insinuate insanity. The press were making a serious indictment since the attribution of mental health issues would have been seen as a major social stigma, and consequently a long way from a heroic image.

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<sup>77</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, pp.99-100

<sup>78</sup> M. Jones, 'The King Upon His Knees' p.110 in G. Cubitt and A. Warren (ed) *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*

<sup>79</sup> Ephemera Collection 1910-13

<sup>80</sup> *The Times Weekly* 21 February 1913,

<sup>81</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, 14 April 1913, MS 1957/7

The image presented by those newspapers of Evans being carried on the sledge itself a tool of labour, shows a lack of ability to operate on space, his demise represented a failed, 'bodily force'. For as Valentine states, "Connell...argues [men] are expected to be able to exhibit bodily skill in terms of their competence to operate on space, or the objects in it, and to be a bodily force in terms of their ability to occupy space"<sup>82</sup>. In the reports of his failing mentality and physically Evans was clearly presented as showing an inability to operate not only the technology of the object (the sledge), but also an inability to orientate within the Antarctic space. However, in the accounts of his fellows before he reached the Pole, Evans was the embodiment of bodily force and by crafting objects, leading and teaching men, he had clearly occupied space with authority.

Mark Jackson believes, that Edwardian perceptions of feeble-minds "were closely framed by broader social and cultural concerns, particularly about race, class and gender."<sup>83</sup> Evans' presented mental instability was also framed by those cultural concerns. For the early twentieth century was a time when the theory of 'separate spheres' for men and women was still a popular belief. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that there were views of separate spheres too for male and female mentality, since hysteria and nervous dispositions were not seen masculine traits, they were characterized as effeminate. And the appearance of effeminate traits was seen as danger to the manliness of the race, for example, hunting was encouraged at public schools for it was seen as an "antidote to effeminacy"<sup>84</sup>. To give another contemporary example, the following letter, written by an ex-military man was printed in *The Daily Sketch*:

"MORAL GERMICIDE - Returned Exile Shocked at London's Effeminate Men"

"After eighteen years in India I return to England and what do I find? An improvement in her modes of locomotion? Perhaps. But where are her sons?

...There is a brigade of microbes (I cannot think of any other term) with painted faces, high-heeled boots and bangles infesting London.

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<sup>82</sup> G. Valentine, 'What it means to be a man, the body, masculinity, disability' p.165 from R. Butler + H. Parr (ed), *Mind and Body and Spaces*

<sup>83</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.129

<sup>84</sup> J. M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, pp.45-46 from P.A Dunne, *British Juvenile Literature*, p.475

I went into a hairdresser's in Piccadilly for a shave and to my astonishment and disgust was asked if I would have my face massaged! With a reply more forcible than polite I seized my overcoat and a hat (unfortunately not my own) and hurried along the streets thinking: What has England come to?

In the boy scouts we certainly have the making of men - not that these men will remain in Britain unless something is done to improve the masculine standard. They will away to the colonies and live with men.

KADER - Birmingham<sup>85</sup>

The letter clearly shows that displays of femininity were seen as unmanly, and so the Antarctic five may have been viewed as antidotes to the accusations of the declining manliness of the nation. The letter does though have a satirical tone, for it seems people were well aware that the testing ground for the manliness of British subjects was in the colonies, away from Britain. Although it cannot be assumed this voice was the voice of many, for it could be the voice of one region, occupation, or age. It should be acknowledged that during the Victorian and Edwardian period there was an emphasis on creating brave boys to defend the empire. This accounts for the prominence of frontier and military stories in boys' literature, wherein; "the imperatives of empire elaborated a militaristic and robust hypermasculinity which found its apotheosis in...the boys' adventure story."<sup>86</sup> This implies the shocked opinion put forward in the letter was not an individual perception, there was a popular desire to enhance the manliness of the male British nation, and Evans' presented mental instability reflected the fears of un-manliness.

It is the general consensus that the First World War acted as a catalyst for advancing the understanding of mental health and developing psychological therapy, whilst also calling into question popular beliefs on degeneration.<sup>87</sup> However, medics first had to recognise that shellshock was not a sign of weakness and degeneration, and it appears from Elaine Showalter's investigation into male hysteria in *The Female Malady* (1985), that a class distinction was

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<sup>85</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 11 February 1913

<sup>86</sup> M. Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male', *Historical Journal*, p.640

<sup>87</sup> P. Howorth, 'The treatment of shell-shock', p.225

introduced. "Doctors noticed that war neurosis took different forms in officers and regular soldiers... [There was a] tidy distribution of symptoms and diagnosis is consistent with late Victorian moralistic and class orientated attitudes to hysteria and neurasthenia in women."<sup>88</sup> Showalter continues, "the hysterical soldier was seen as a simple, emotional, unthinking, passive, suggestible, dependant and weak - very much the same constellation of traits associated with the hysterical woman - while the complex and overworked neurasthenic officer was much closer to an acceptable, even heroic male ideal."<sup>89</sup>

Evidently Showalter's research shows that the lower ranks were fitted to a feminine model, leaving the privations of the higher ranks to be viewed within a heroic ideal. The fact that a distinction was sought out shows there was a concern that a state, which had traditionally been seen as a feminine trait and defect, could be pinned to men of officer status. This implies that in the pre-war and thus pre-distinction phase, Evans' class was not the cause of accusations about his presented mental instability, for the class distinctions were yet to be introduced. Therefore, Evans' breakdown was seen as a demonstration of a lack of will power, an accusation of femininity, not one solely tied to social status. The accusations questioned his masculinity, which would have affected the likelihood of Evans being promoted as a heroic individual.

It seems fitting to have compared the diagnosis of shellshock, a military syndrome, with the supposed mental breakdown of Edgar Evans. This is because, as George Mosse claims, "war is a test of manliness, those who had shell-sock failed the test"<sup>90</sup>. In pre-war Britain, Antarctic exploration was the supreme test of manliness, those who were projected as slowing down their comrades, losing their mind and having to be carried on a sledge, failed the test.

However, although hysteria and mental breakdown were seen as essentially feminine, there has traditionally been a connection between sailors and femininity. Quintin Colville states, "ratings were associated with feminised

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<sup>88</sup> E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.174

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*, p.175

<sup>90</sup> George. L. Mosse, 'Shell-Shock as a Social Disease', *Journal of Contemporary History*, p.104

qualities such as the love of domesticity, sentimentality, emotional spontaneity and immaturity; connotations further borne out by the requirement of ratings to wash and repair their own clothes.”<sup>91</sup> So there was a link already, inferring that sailors had a masculinity of their own, and thus is not comparable to other occupations, or those within the same class. Additionally, Conley has proclaimed that there was a genuine respect for the domesticated sailor, for cleaning products were often advertised by images of sailors.<sup>92</sup> However, whereas feminine qualities such as domesticity can be praised within or outside the seaman’s world, a mental breakdown was not a praise-worthy state in a seaman’s world of masculinity or any other.



Figure 5 Edgar Evans at the sewing machine, like all Petty Officers would have been a skilled sewer, for a Royal Naval mariner sewing was a necessity as they needed to mend their own clothes.

Reports questioning Evans’ mental state continued to be printed. *The Daily Express* ran an article entitled, “The problem of Seaman Evans - why he “failed” the expedition - was he handicapped by his strength? - Did Seaman Edgar Evans-

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<sup>91</sup> Q. Colville, ‘Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer. The Role of Uniform in Shaping in the Class – and Gender-Related Identities of British Naval Personnel, 1930-39’ p.127

<sup>92</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar To Union Jack*, p.145

the cheery giant of the party fail physically or mentally?" The article quoted an 'eminent mental specialist', who asserted, "it is the uneducated man he said who would feel most acutely the mental strain and dreary, monotonous life amid eternal snows...To an educated man this strain would be bad enough, but he would be able to stimulate his brain from his store of learning. Contrary to popular belief, educated men endure long terms of imprisonment - most of the rigours of which would be reproduced and intensified among the hardships of the Antarctic - better than the uneducated man. The absence of stimulus in an uneducated man, such as presumably Seaman Evans would have been - might have been succeeded by a kind of self-mannerism, followed by mania and delusion that he was being kept from food and home, both close at hand. Such a breakdown may have been the 'failure' of which Captain Scott speaks. Or it may have been physical failure. It is not always the biggest and most athletic man who endures privation best." <sup>93</sup>

The fact that the press sought out a 'specialist' to offer his opinions shows that the press were accepting Scott's initial criticism of Evans, and were not looking to provide evidence that proved otherwise. The newspaper had sought an educated man, a voice of medical authority, who was effectively verifying Scott's statement, and thus attempting to turn it from interpretation to factual analysis. Evans was therefore officially labelled unsuitable for exploration. *The Express*' 'specialist' was evidently questioning Evans' mental capability, asserting that Evans had a lack of education, essentially implying that Evans' financial and social circumstances rendered him unfit for exploration. However, when Evans had returned from Scott's first Antarctic expedition the *Discovery* (1901-04), the press declared, "the crew is composed entirely of absolutely picked men, each one of them noted for a high standard of intelligence." <sup>94</sup> Whilst another claimed, "they have been specially selected for their physique, constitution, seamanship, and for their capacity in entertaining their fellows." <sup>95</sup> Additionally, Evans' mental state was not an issue before January 1912, as Bowers stated in a letter to his sister, "in a show like this we have no scared

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<sup>93</sup> *The Daily Express*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/2

<sup>94</sup> Unknown Paper, date is most likely 1903, MS 735/1

<sup>95</sup> *Daily Mail*, 8 July 1901, MS 1464/31

namby pambys - Thank goodness"<sup>96</sup>. Whilst Scott claimed in his Journals Evans had a "really remarkable headpiece"<sup>97</sup> and Ponting recalled, "Evans, always quick-witted"<sup>98</sup>. Evidently these were a long a way from the reports that Evans' lack of education made him a liability on the expedition.

The day before Evans died, Scott had stated, "Evans has nearly broken down in the Brain we think."<sup>99</sup> Which could account for the press accusations, yet these comments were not published until November 1913, some nine months later. Additionally on the day Evans died, Evans had announced, "As he always did, that he was quite well"<sup>100</sup> and he started the day pulling the sledge in his harness. He was clearly not a perpetual delirious mess as some of the press reports implied.

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<sup>96</sup> H. R. Bowers, letter to Emily Webb Bowers, 22 June 1910. 1501/1/1/3/89

<sup>97</sup> R. F. Scott, *Journals*, p.369

<sup>98</sup> H. Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.27

<sup>99</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.396

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, p.397



Figure 6 this photograph is a section from a larger image showing Evans building a sledge<sup>101</sup>. Frank Debenham, the co-founder and first director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, was a member of Scott's last expedition and claimed Evans was, "the most useful man down here."<sup>102</sup>

It was when Evans was blamed that the press became selective and ignored evidence that proved Evans could be self-disciplined. Figure 6, above, is of major significance for it shows Evans' skill. Evans was not a trained carpenter, yet along with his fellow Petty Officers he made all of the sledges, showing his capacity for learning and engineering. This has implications for a man of skill and master of a craft shows a presence of self-discipline, control of mind and body. Yet this photo was not chosen by the press to represent Evans. Perhaps a display of a hard working, adaptable and skilled mariner was not the image the press

<sup>101</sup> The full photograph can be viewed in the appendix, p.85

<sup>102</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

wanted to project once conventions had been established. On the other hand, it may simply be that this image was not available to the press. That though is extremely unlikely as, from 21 May 1913 the photographs taken by the five at the South Pole were available, with *The Daily Mirror* having exclusive rights to show the photographs first. If the last photographs of the Pole Party were accessible from that date it can be assumed that from 21 May at the very latest, all the photographs of Evans taken prior to the Pole would have also been available to the press. In fact the image chosen to represent Evans in that particular issue was an image that highlighted his strength, not his self-discipline. The photograph used can be seen in figure 7 below.



Figure 7 Edgar Evans poses with a pickaxe slung over his shoulder. Underneath the portrait the captain in the *Daily Mirror* read, "Petty Officer Evans, 'the strong man of the party,' who was the first to die. 'He died a natural death, but left us a shaken party with the season duly advanced' wrote Captain Scott."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 21 May, 1913

Interestingly *The Daily Chronicle* on 13 February 1913, printed an article claiming, "Evans accompanied Captain Scott on his first attempt to reach the Pole ten years ago, and the leader then praised him highly. There is no word of commendation for him on this occasion."<sup>104</sup> One cannot help but wonder if the press did actually probe, or, just accepted the evidence at face value. The only official account they were given was through Commander Evans and this included Scott's 'message' and a report of the disaster, Commander Evans was interviewed in April 1913, but during this interview declared that Evans had behaved, "magnificently throughout the expedition"<sup>105</sup>. However, during this interview Commander Evans also cast judgement over Evans. *The Birmingham Gazette* explains, Commander Edward Evans was "told of some of the rumours which were circulated regarding the fate of Seaman Evans... Poor Evans behaved magnificently throughout the expedition he said and his astonishing failure, as Captain Scott described it, was due to the continuous hardships encountered. Evans was possessed of tremendous strength, but it would seem that his staying power was not equal to that of his tent-mates."<sup>106</sup>

The comment from Lieutenant Evans, accusing Evans as lacking 'staying power' is not a technical or medical explanation for Evans 'failure'. It is an accusation based upon contemporary popular language that infers and implies rather than offering a definite and constructive explanation. Paul Fussell's, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (2000) investigates the adaptation of words to hide a greater meaning. "Not to complain is to be - *manly*" "actions are - *deeds*" "to be cheerfully brave is to be - *plucky*" "to be earnestly brave is to be - *gallant*"<sup>107</sup>. The language used in Great War was, "the language is that which two generations of readers had been accustomed to associate with the quiet action of personal control and Christian self-abnegation ('sacrifice'), as well as with more violent actions of aggression and defence."<sup>108</sup> The language used defined and identified several generations, and it was this language that was prominent in the projections of the exploits of the expedition. By questioning

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<sup>104</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 13 February 1913,

<sup>105</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, MS 1957/7, *The Times*, 17 February 1913

<sup>106</sup> *The Birmingham Gazette*, MS 1957/7

<sup>107</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p.22

<sup>108</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p.21

Evans' 'staying power', it implies Evans had a lack of mental strength and thus a lack of self-control. Additionally Commander Evans' comments show that even Edgar Evans' fellow travellers viewed him in a differing light to the rest of the Antarctic five, a point I will further examine in chapter 2.

Major Raymond. E. Priestley, who was part of Scott's 1910-13 expedition, declared in his paper 'The Psychology of exploration' in the section 'polar madness' that "one factor worth mentioning is that it appears to be the most unelastic temperaments and minds that succumb. The higher strung and more sensitive the organisation the better it will withstand extraordinary strain."<sup>109</sup> However, Debenham, who often quoted Evans in his diary, states that Evans had said "a man who takes things as they come and doesn't worry can enjoy the Navy as he does."<sup>110</sup> He clearly did not possess an 'unelastic temperament'. Additionally, although Priestley's statement is based upon his opinions and observations in the Antarctic, Priestley would not have spent very much time at all with Evans. Priestley was not part of any of the geological party's that were accompanied by Evans, and Priestley spent nine months with the Northern Party, whilst Evans was on the Southern Journey. It was reported by the press that P.O George Abbott, a member of the Northern Party suffered a mental breakdown<sup>111</sup>, so it is likely Priestley's comments were written in reference to Abbott and not Evans.

### Evans' physicality and popular opinion

The 'message to the public' had essentially set the standard for criticising Evans, it also had a major contribution in the construction of Evans' image for it put forward the notion that Evans' strength was his key, and defining trait. In consequence, the vast majority of press reports from 11 February 1913 refer to Evans as 'the strong man of the party'. For example, *The Illustrated London News* declares Evans as, 'the strong man of Captain Scott's Southern party whose accident was the beginning of the disaster.'<sup>112</sup> *The Daily Sketch* calls Evans, "the

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<sup>109</sup> Major. R.E. Priestley, 'The Psychology of exploration' p.76, SPRI- MS 1097/16/1

<sup>110</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, MS 1654

<sup>111</sup> Unknown paper, article states, "Mrs Abbott is the dependent mother of a chief petty-officer who has become insane in consequence of privations endured"- MS 1453/40

<sup>112</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 15 February 1913, MS 1453/40

strongest who died first"<sup>113</sup> *The Morning Post*; "the strong man...whose unaccountable breakdown was the first symptom"<sup>114</sup>. One article from *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913 entitled "The Strong Man Who Fell", proclaims, "It is one of the paradoxes of Nature a London physician stated yesterday, "that splendidly developed, huge-framed stand adverse conditions, such as extreme cold, starvation, or prolonged thirst, much worse than smaller men of infinitely inferior physique. That it is a fact, however has been proven again and again in wars, where the little, more or less scrawny, underdeveloped men stand the rigours and hardships of a campaign much better than their so called stronger fellows." <sup>115</sup>

These are clearly attacks on Evans, stemming from his physique, which here has been rendered unsuitable for exploration. To be pronounced as a 'paradox of nature', or be put forward as having had an 'unaccountable breakdown' is obviously not a representation of an ideal. *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch* were newspapers aimed towards the lower classes, inferring that it was not solely an attack on Evans' class, for it is unlikely a newspaper whose audience was generally made up of the working classes<sup>116</sup> would attack those of a similar socio-financial state. This then questions the claim that Evans' class can function as an unproblematic explanation for the derogatory comments put forward by the press. The quote also shows that the press had again sought out a 'physician' to put forward opinions on Evans' failure, showing the willingness of the press to find an official to authenticate, and not disprove, Scott's 'message'. Evans was yet again officially labelled unsuitable for exploration.

However, one must question the reliability of the evidence of the 'experts' who were asked by the press to comment upon the photographs of Evans and give reasons for Evans' 'failure'. This is because from 11 February until 13 February the photographs used in most newspapers of Petty Officer Evans were actually

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<sup>113</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 13 February 1913, MS 1958/1

<sup>114</sup> *The Morning Post*, February, 1913

<sup>115</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

<sup>116</sup> In February 1913, *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch* were priced at one halfpenny, compared *The Daily Graphic* at one penny, *The Times Weekly* at 2d.

that of Petty Officer Johnson<sup>117</sup>. Although no scholars or biographers have brought up this issue before, there is affirmative evidence that the photographs do not match. Underneath a small portrait Edgar Evans in *The Daily Sketch*, an article states that the portrait “sent out by a photographic agency as that of Evans, and published in *the Daily Sketch* and other newspapers, was in reality a picture of Petty Officer Johnson, another member of the expedition, who is alive and well.”<sup>118</sup> This raises doubts over the evidence of ‘experts’ such as the ‘London physician’ who declared, “Seaman Evans, from his photograph, must have been a tremendously powerful man as far as bone and muscle are concerned.”<sup>119</sup> Although it is common consensus that Evans was a strong man, if the experts’ sole interpretation of Evans’ was based upon one photograph of the wrong man, it does suggest that some of their inferences may be erroneous.

This case of mistaken identity could have been due to the fact that Henry Robertson Bowers stated in a letter to his sister, that Johnson was “the strongest seaman”<sup>120</sup>. And so in trying to find photos of Evans, the photographic agency simply saw the photograph and assumed it was Evans, who, after all was well recorded by Scott and every paper in the nation as the ‘strong man’. Though perhaps it is most likely it was simply mislabelled in the first place, for underneath one photograph in *The Daily Mirror* in May 1910, Evans was labelled as Johnson, and Johnson as Evans<sup>121</sup>. To add insult to injury, Bowers also states, “we also got rid of our strongest seaman Johnson who exchanged with a man on the ‘Powerful.’ He was the champion Boxer man and had begun to threaten and bully his mess-mates”<sup>122</sup>. So, not only was the wrong photograph used, it was also a photograph of a man who had been removed from his position for bullying his fellows.

Mark Jackson’s research has shown that during the Victorian and Edwardian period in the medical, anthropological and educational field, links between mind

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<sup>117</sup> Including, *The Daily Sketch* 11 and 12 February, (MS 1958/1) *The Daily Mirror*, 11 and 12 February, *The Graphic* 15 February, and *The Daily Mail* 11 February 1913.

<sup>118</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 13 February, 1913

<sup>119</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 12 1913,

<sup>120</sup> H.R Bowers, letter 21, 22 October, 1910, MS 1505/1/1/2/102

<sup>121</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 31 May 1910, MS 1961 BPC

<sup>122</sup> H.R. Bowers, letter, SPRI 1501/1/1/2/102, 21 November, 1910

and body were, "neither novel or isolated."<sup>123</sup> In consequence this infers that the theories put forward about the failure of the 'strongest man' were actually comments about his mental state. However, these links between mind and body were affected by fears of degeneration and fears of "imperial decline."<sup>124</sup> So the links were caused by insecurities. Additionally some press reports distinguish between the two; mind and body were seen as separate. For example *The Daily Express* and *The South Wales Echo*, ran the same article, "Did Seaman Evans the cheery giant of the party fail physically or mentally?"<sup>125</sup> So it appears that when Evans was presented as failing physically this was not necessarily an assault on his mental state.

Because of the limited probing by the press that hid or ignored the image of Evans as a man of skill, Evans was presented as being defined by his physicality. Therefore the loss of Evans' strength could also be seen as a loss of his masculine identity. It appears that Evans did also view his physical stature as part of his masculine identity. For although Colville states, "uniform was of crucial significance in defining the understandings of class and masculinity held by servicemen."<sup>126</sup> Apsley Cherry-Garrard has recalled that, "[Captain] Oates hated swank - so much so that he erred on the other side almost perversely, and was rough and ready to the last degree. Taff [Edgar] Evans nearly had a fight with a sailor on the quay at Dunedin, because they spoke disrespectfully of Oates slovenly dress and slouching gait."<sup>127</sup> Taking Judith Butler's theory that gender is performed, that "stylisation of the body, is a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory framework"<sup>128</sup>, Oates was clearly pushing the limits of the gender identity of a man of the landed gentry. Or, perhaps Oates harboured a resistance to the effeminacy associated with the gentleman travellers. Cherry-Garrard's recollection also shows the framework of manliness Evans worked within, attempting to defend Oates' honour with a physical brawl. Implying Evans viewed his physical stature as part of his masculine identity.

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<sup>123</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.36

<sup>124</sup> M. Jackson, *The Borderline of Imbecility*, p.37

<sup>125</sup> *Daily Express*, 12 February, *South Wales Echo*, 12 February 1912, from S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.176,

<sup>126</sup> Q. Colville, 'Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer' p.106

<sup>127</sup> Copy of typewritten page bound after p228 into the Very Rev. George Seaver's personal copy of Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World*. MS 1012;D

<sup>128</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.43



Figure 8 (This a section from a larger photograph)<sup>129</sup> Oates can be seen here 'slouching' on the side ship whilst Lieutenant Rennick leads one of the ponies out.

There has though been little scholarly research on lower class occupation defined masculinity, as J.D Glasco proclaims, "little research has been done to examine the seamen's definitions of their masculine identities"<sup>130</sup>. Although Glasco's observations that, "in the seaman's world, a man's position in the gendered hierarchy, his manliness, depended primarily on his maritime skill"<sup>131</sup>, were based upon the mutinies of 1793. If masculinity was occupation defined, it is possible the late nineteenth and twentieth century mariners would have maintained the view. Seeing that Evans was proclaimed as the "most useful man

<sup>129</sup> The entire photograph can be seen in the appendix.

<sup>130</sup> J.D Glasco, 'The Seaman feels Him-self a man', p.41/42

<sup>131</sup> J. Glasco, 'The Seaman feels Him-Self a man', p.46

we have down here”<sup>132</sup>, his maritime skill level was high, and expectably so from a Petty Officer 1st class. This would imply that he was respected for his abilities, and as such there were no doubts about his manliness. Confirming the theory that it was only the press, set-up by Scott’s ‘message’, who questioned Evans’ manliness, whilst greatly ignoring, or not looking for, any contradictory evidence.

One wonders if the projection of the failure of the ‘strong man’ was a means of reclaiming a sense of masculinity for the upper classes. However, physical strength was also a trait the upper classes strived to achieve during this period, since the movement Muscular Christianity came into prominence. Muscular Christianity emphasised strength of body not just the strength of mind. It was a belief sported by those of the upper classes for it was prominent in the public schools during this time. This implies that the ‘failure’ of a strong man would not necessarily be an attack on his social standing.

However, it should be acknowledged that the emphasis on Evans’ physicality in his representation was also a product of a tradition of viewing sailors as strong men. It was a state of his occupation not his socio-financial status. The image of the tough Jack Tar had been present for centuries, for example Fulford states of the eighteenth century sailors, “British sailors, like British ships, exemplified the national virtue of oaklike strength.”<sup>133</sup> This can be complemented by Thirgood’s research into oak, he has shown that the ‘hearts of oak’ traditional view of sailors is a link to the qualities of oak itself, for oak was a metaphor for strength, “the open-grown character of English oak contributed to the vaunted superiority of the ‘hearts of oak’, used in British men-of-war. Throughout the wooden ship era, English oak was strongly held to be more durable than French or Baltic (largely German) oak.”<sup>134</sup> The muscular seaman was a national stereotype, and Evans needed no adaptation to fit the bill.

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<sup>132</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, MS 1654;D

<sup>133</sup> T. Fulford, ‘Romanticizing the Empire’ p.164

<sup>134</sup> J.V. Thirgood, ‘The Historical Significance of Oak’ p.9

### A hero within the Antarctic Five

One wonders if Evans' presentation goes further than not being a hero, if it descends into anti-hero, if he did essentially become a Judas-type-figure. However, Evans is not presented as wanting to cause the deaths of his comrades, it was not a calculated move, and as such he was more of a *failed* hero than an anti-hero. Additionally, Evans was still presented as a hero by some of the press reports when he was presented as part of the Antarctic five.

As part of the group, Evans was frequently offered as a hero. For example, *The Daily Mirror* had a centrefold photograph and above it the headline read, "5 heroes at the pole"<sup>135</sup>. *The Standard* proclaimed, "Britain may well be proud of these sons of hers who are the latest to add their names to the long roll of heroes and the martyrs of Polar Exploration."<sup>136</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, "The strong man of Scott's band of heroes"<sup>137</sup>. *The Daily Telegraph*, "The heroes of the South Pole"<sup>138</sup>, *The Little Paper*, "How five heroes left the world"<sup>139</sup> Evans could be seen as a hero when the press wanted to present the men as one entity. However, as an individual Evans was rarely presented in the same light as his comrades.

It is possible that when Evans was presented as a hero, this was a measure to protect the image of the strength of the nation. Evans' presentation by Scott and the articles that accepted Scott's views on Evans' role in the disaster, contradicted the stereotypical image of early twentieth century Royal Navy sailors. These were used to show the strength of the nation, and were presented as "exemplars of Britishness and manliness"<sup>140</sup>. Therefore, if sailors within the Royal Navy were viewed as the ultimate of masculinity, by presenting Evans as failing, either physically, and or, mentally this was not a representation of the model of a sailor that had been sold to the population. This could imply that not

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<sup>135</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 21 May, 1913

<sup>136</sup> *The Standard*, 11 February 1913,

<sup>137</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1913, (MS 1958/1)

<sup>138</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, February 1913, (MS 1464/32)

<sup>139</sup> *The Little Paper*, March 1913, (MS 1464/32)

<sup>140</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, p.5

all articles were derogatory, for if sailors represented imperial power, a failing sailor was potentially a failing nation.

## Conclusion

Evans' legacy was vulnerable having come under attack in Scott's 'message'.

The press took up Scott's claims resulting in a portrayal that questioned Evans' mental stability and physicality. The inadequacy of the press to offer Evans as a man of skill should not be viewed as a genuine reflection of Evans' character and image. Historians should judge it as editorial bias. This resulted in Evans becoming, "the strongest man whom we least expected to fail."<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

## Chapter 2

“It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman”<sup>142</sup>- the heroic ideal.

Oates and Evans were the only two out of the five who did not die alongside their leader and both slowed the party down. By comparing the presentation of Evans' death with that of Oates', this chapter will build upon the theory that Evans' class was not the only factor involved in his presentation. I contend that just as Scott had a key role in Evans' subsequent presentation, he also had a critical a role in Oates' heroic status, whilst the manner of Oates' and Evans' deaths had a major impact on the ability of the press to establish their reputations. Using the accounts of their fellow travellers, and the press reports I assert that Oates' death was seen as the model upon which to base reports of other deaths. Additionally, it will be clear that the manner of Scott's, Wilson's, Bowers' and Oates' death all fitted within an already established heroic ideal.

According to Lisa Bloom, “in the years following Scott's death a myth of gentleman-hero was erected on the foundation of the letters Scott wrote to explain the causes of his expedition's misfortunes.”<sup>143</sup> This statement of Bloom's is misleading as it suggests that the gentleman-hero's foundation began with Scott, when in fact the gentleman hero had been presented and promoted in the Victorian period<sup>144</sup>. Additionally, Bloom asserts Scott's last letters caused him to be seen as a gentleman-hero. Contemporary press reports reveal however that it was not Scott, but Captain Oates who was presented as the gentleman-hero. He was an old Etonian and Cavalry officer who had earned the nickname “No Surrender Oates whilst fighting in the second Boer war.”<sup>145</sup> If Scott took the initial plaudits when the news was widely published on 10 February 1913, Oates was the figure who soon overtook him. For example *The Daily Chronicle* proclaimed, ‘THE HERO OATES’<sup>146</sup>, *Everybody's Weekly* proclaimed Oates as the,

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<sup>142</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>143</sup> L. Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, p.112.

<sup>144</sup> See C.I. Hamilton ‘Naval Hagiography and the Victorian Hero’

<sup>145</sup> M. Smith, *I am Just Going Outside*, p.62

<sup>146</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 13 February, 1913

"MOST HEROIC ENGLISHMAN EVER"<sup>147</sup>. Whilst *The Daily Mail* 12 February 1913, declared, "if there was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers. The final honour lies with Captain Oates."<sup>148</sup> Oates was offered as the quintessential hero, not just the gentleman hero.

As the previous chapter has shown, those accusations of Evans failing put forward by the press, were initiated by the damning criticism from his leader. Yet Oates was also criticised in Scott's 'message', and slowed down the party. Therefore I will re-visit the same question proposed by Barczewski, "Why has Oates never come in for the same criticism as Evans? Why was his 'breakdown' not regarded as an indication of weakness or failure in the same way?"<sup>149</sup> Barczewski's response is, "the answer is obvious: Oates was an officer and a gentleman, a member of the landed gentry from Essex. Because of his class status, he was regarded as a hero for his silent suffering and self-sacrifice. What he did was to 'play up, play up and play the game' according to the expectations of the time for a man of his rank."<sup>150</sup>

It is understandable why there are those who claim that class was the major difference in Oates' and Evans' projections, for there were instances when their socio-economic status did enter their presentation. For example, an article in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, from 11 February 1913, states, "Captain L.E.G. Oates was the elder son of the late Mr W.E. Oates, of Gestingthorpe Hall, Essex, Lord of the manor of Over Hall, and of Mrs Caroline Oates, now lady of the manor of Over Hall, second daughter of the late Mr Joshua Buckton of West Lea, Meanswood near Leeds. In addition to being heir to his mother's estates, Captain Oates was joint owner with his brother, of the estate of his uncle, the late Mr C.G. Oates, of Meanswood, Yorkshire. He was unmarried as was Lieutenant Bowers. Petty Officer Evans was a married man."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *Everybody's Weekly*, 22 February, 1930, MS 1453/41

<sup>148</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>149</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>150</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>151</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 February 1913, MS 1453/40

Evidently being a member of the landed gentry was of more importance to *The Pall Mall Gazette* than the dependents left by the Petty Officer. There were though no accusations about Evans possessing 'bad blood', or his socio-financial status rendering him unfit for exploration. Also, the article cited above, was printed on 11 February, thus before the widespread accusations of Evans had begun, the emphasis of this magazine was already on Oates. However, *The Pall Mall Gazette* was aimed towards the upper classes of society, being priced at double the cost of *The Daily Mirror* and *Daily Sketch*. Thus the attention was with Oates and interest was directed towards his estate, it is also possible that some of the readers knew of Oates' family and estate.

However, there are problems with Barczewski's interpretation of events. Firstly, I do not believe that coming from Essex had anything to do with Oates' representation. Additionally as Barczewski had questioned Jones for not appreciating the significance of the criticism of Evans<sup>152</sup>, Barczewski herself could have gone further by looking beyond class which is too sweeping, and suggests that no other factors were involved. The answer to the question Barczewski proposed concerning the difference in presentation between Oates and Evans is three-fold. Firstly, Scott did not perceive Oates' as having as significant a role in the disaster as Evans, nor did Scott believe Evans' rank was a cause of his 'failure'. Secondly, the manner of Oates and Evans' deaths as offered in Scott's assessment, allowed their deaths to be seen as, and presented contrastingly by his fellow travellers and the press. And lastly, Evans' death did not fit within an already established heroic framework.

### Scott's 'message'

Scott did not put forward Oates as having as significant a factor in their fate as he had done with Evans. Scott states, "we should have got through in spite of the weather were it not for the sickening of another companion, Captain Oates, and a shortage of fuel in our depots."<sup>153</sup> There was clearly a difference in the way Oates and Evans were treated; Oates' decline was not called an "astonishing

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<sup>152</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.177

<sup>153</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

failure”<sup>154</sup>. In addition to Scott’s ‘message’, Lieutenant Evans had also sent to the press agencies Scott’s comments from the 17 March concerning Oates’ self-sacrifice, Scott’s comments included, “it was an act of a brave man and English gentleman”<sup>155</sup>. Thus from the very beginning of the presentation of their images, there was the impression that because of the manner of Oates’ death, Oates deserved greater acclaim than Evans. The leader that had damned Evans had helped to establish Oates’ heroic image. As with Evans’ demise, there was a clear enthusiasm by the press to accept and promote Scott’s view of Oates’ demise, with limited probing.

In Scott’s ‘message’, the fact that Scott does not mention the rank of Evans, who is referred to as “Edgar Evans” implies that Scott did not deem Evans’ class as an explicit factor that contributed to his fate. Yet when the ‘message’ was printed, newspapers such as, *The Daily Mirror*, *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Graphic*, Evans’ rank was given, though it was incorrect; he is called “Seaman Evans”<sup>156</sup> and not Petty Officer, his proper rank.<sup>157</sup> Commander Evans could have added ‘Seaman’ when he cabled the message, or the Central News Agency could have added it in. It is generally claimed that Scott’s ‘message’ along with Scott’s account of Oates’ death were the only sections of Scott’s diary “quoted verbatim”<sup>158</sup> in the report Edward Evans sent back to the Central News Agency, this statement is thus erroneous.

### **The demise of Oates and Evans, the opinions of their fellow travellers**

It was not just the press and Scott that presented Oates’ death as more heroic than Evans’. Evans and Oates’ fellow travellers had the same opinion, although their judgements, like the newspaper articles, were based upon Scott’s account. One can see the effect that Scott’s words had on the individual’s perception of the events. Petty Officer Patrick Keohane, a member of the supporting Southern Party who turned back from the Pole, with Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Charles Wright and Edward Atkinson, declared:

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<sup>154</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

<sup>155</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.410

<sup>156</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Sketch* 12 February 1913,

<sup>157</sup> Evans was a Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> class, thus at least 3 promotions above the rank of Seaman, and the press would have been aware of the difference in rank, effectively demoting him.

<sup>158</sup> M. Jones, *The Great Quest*, p.99

"[Scott's] Diary said that Evans P.O Died at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier he died of concussion of the brain caused by a fall on blue ice and Captain Oats [Oates] had hands and feet frostbitten and could not keep up he new he was preventing his companions from getting on so he walked out to his death in a blizzard about 18miles south of where we found the tent so as to give his companions a chance to get home it was one of the bravest deeds ever history has known"<sup>159</sup>.



Figure 9 Petty Officer Patrick Keohane poses for Ponting. Keohane had previously served under Lieutenant Evans on HMS Talbot, along with P.O Forde, Dickason and Browning, all of whom went on this expedition.

Similarly, Petty Officer Thomas Williamson, who had also been part of Scott's first expedition, declared:

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<sup>159</sup> P. Keohane, Diary, MS 825/1; BJ

"Evans P.O.1. died at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier. Capt Oates 20 miles south of this place, this brave fellow sacrificing his life by walking out of the tent in a heavy blizzard so that he could no longer be a drag on the remainder of the party, he had become badly frost-bitten in both feet and they had been pulling him along on the sledge; as the party got down on the Barrier from the Beardmore Glacier they experienced very low temperatures.... The whole world will soon know, the deeds that were done were equally as great as any committed on Battlefields and have won the respect of honour of every true Britisher." <sup>160</sup>



Figure 10 Thomas Williamson sits smoking his pipe. Williamson wrote four journals of his daily exploits from both the *Discovery* and the *Terra Nova* Expeditions. He often ends the day's comments with the words 'alls well', even the day when one of dogs got loose and killed the Boatswain's cat.

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<sup>160</sup> T. Williamson, Journal, MS 774/1/1

The extracts show Oates' death as a model; he is no longer a drag and commits an act of self-sacrifice. However Evans' demise was not viewed or presented as an example of any of those traits. The critical factor appears to be that Oates made a conscious decision whereas Evans did not. It was an act, a calculated move, versus a mental and physical breakdown. A breakdown is not a decision, and in the context of early twentieth century beliefs, Evans' death showed a lack of self-discipline and self-control.

Max Jones, George Mosse and Elaine Showalter all declare that suffering without complaint was the basis for early twentieth century codes of masculinity.<sup>161</sup> Although masculinity is much more complex than the statement implies, it is apparent that other nations were aware that self-control was distinguished as a trait 'Britishers' predominantly admired. For in an article headed 'Un Gentleman' the French newspaper the *Temps* states, "His [Oates'] self-sacrifice bears the mark of that absolute self-control which an Englishman prizes above all else in the world. When the question is asked, what is the true gentleman? Our neighbours will have no need to search their history, or Shakespeare. It will suffice to reply that he is the man who behaves like Oates."<sup>162</sup> Additionally, self-control was clearly admired throughout the social scale as Williamson and Keohane's records demonstrate.

Essentially the model of bodily comportment represented by Oates was deemed heroic. For as Valentine says, "a hegemonic masculine style of bodily comportment is about having the freedom to move freely in space and to appropriate it both through physical displays of competence and force"<sup>163</sup>. Oates' movement was restricted whilst man hauling, it was when Oates walked to his death, free from the sledge, that he became a representation of the 'masculine style of bodily comportment', and could be presented as showing the masculine

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<sup>161</sup> G.L. Mosse, 'Shell-shock as a Social Disease' p.101, M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.245, E. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.168

<sup>162</sup> *Temps*, 17 February 1913, printed in *The Times Weekly*, 21 February 1913

<sup>163</sup> G. Valentine, 'What it means to be a man, the body, masculinity, disability' p.167 from R. Butler + H. Parr (ed), *Mind and Body and Spaces*

and heroic ideal. The sledge holds back Oates, and yet it is also a show of manliness, using bodily force to conquer space.

Thomas Williamson's record has added significance, for he states that Oates had to be carried on the sledge. He makes no mention that Evans had to be carried on the sledge, which was one of the original accusations the press aimed at Evans. Yet none of the newspapers ever claimed that Oates had to be carried, when one would have thought that if Williamson made that inference, others would have done so too. One reason that would explain why the press did not lay at accusation at Oates is that from 11 February the press had Scott's presentation of Oates as a hero. And as presented in the first chapter, there was a willingness to eagerly accept Scott's claims. For although articles do confirm Oates slowed down the party, his death on its own was deemed heroic enough to effectively dismiss the slowing down he had caused. For example, *The Daily Graphic* declares, "Captain Scott himself says that but for the sickness of Seaman Evans and Captain Oates the party would have reached safety". One would be forgiven for thinking that this newspaper regarded Oates and Evans in a similar light. However, on the front-page of the *Graphic*, in the same issue as the above quote, there was a full-page portrait of Oates under the heading "a very gallant gentleman"<sup>164</sup>. Oates' slowing down the party was thus not promoted as readily as the fact he had behaved so gallantly.

Those of officer status had similar views to those of the lower ranks. Physicist Charles Wright stated, "Found the Owner [Scott], Bill [Wilson] and Birdie [Bowers] in the tent. Evans went mentally first then physically at foot of Glacier... Titus got a bad frostbitten foot but struggled on till Mar 17. Knowing he had no hope & realizing that he was a drag on the party, he walked out into a blizzard... A damn fine finish."<sup>165</sup> Whilst Debenham, the man who had written so favourably of Evans, declared, "Taff Evans - already a little weak - had a bad fall and got concussion. He delayed the party and they were late for each depot. At the bottom of the glacier he failed and died before they reached the depot... Soldier failed next. He knew he was delaying them and in one blizzard walked

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<sup>164</sup> The portrait was actually of Dennis Lillie, but the fact remains it was supposed to be Oates.

<sup>165</sup> *Silas - The Antarctic diaries of Charles. S. Wright*, p.244

out and away and he was never seen again. He did it intentionally to save his comrades – a fitting death for a real hero.”<sup>166</sup>

It is not known if Debenham’s comments were affected by the claims that Evans had been “rather disappointing in the winter being given to hectoring amongst his mates”<sup>167</sup> and whether this had altered his previous opinion. Though it is plain to see that Oates’ death was presented as a deliberate act of heroic self-sacrifice, whilst Evans represented a burden, a man who lacked the moral decisiveness and selflessness to save his comrades. The approval and awe shown for Oates by his fellow travellers can be seen at the very start of his image construction. The high regard bestowed on to Oates’ deed by his fellow-travellers indicates that the press would not have to perform any adaptation on Oates’ image to offer him as a hero, they just had to use and promote Scott’s comments.

### Heroic models

Scott’s comments on Oates’ death, “it was the act of a brave man and English gentlemen”, is effectively presenting Oates’ self-sacrifice as one moment that defined his entire life and future legacy, judging one deed as a representative of an entire existence. This has clear links to Geoffrey Cubitt’s theory that heroism can be constructed when, ‘the essential message to be derived from a life is encapsulated in a particularly dramatic moment.’<sup>168</sup> Cubitt points to the heroics of Grace Darling and Brutus’ decision to order the death of his sons as primary examples.<sup>169</sup> Oates’ death can be viewed in the same vein, one dramatic moment that defined his life and legacy though perhaps it is best seen as one dramatic image that will forever define the moment.

Neither the press nor Scott presented Evans as having a dramatic heroic moment. Additionally Oates’ death fitted within the ideals of heroism being advocated at this time, for self-sacrifice was seen as a heroic ideal. It has been suggested by

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<sup>166</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.161

<sup>167</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

<sup>168</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputation and Exemplary Lives*, p.13

<sup>169</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputation and Exemplary Lives* p.13

MacDonald that self-sacrifice was seen purely as a gentlemanly deed<sup>170</sup>, but it is worth considering other texts. In Ireland in 1913, Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and Thomas MacDonagh were all advocating self-sacrifice. Additionally self-sacrifice is one of the key factors in the understanding of the objectives for Irish uprising, the Easter Rising of 1916. The suffragettes in England too viewed self-sacrifice as the ultimate act of heroism, for Emily Davidson threw herself in front of a horse in 1913. This challenges the claim that self-sacrifice was purely viewed as a gentlemanly action; it was a heroic model that was not dependent on, or could descend class or gender. One must remember that suicide at this time was illegal, so there was a fine line between self-sacrifice and suicide. Suicide was essentially seen as the easy and prohibited way out, self-sacrifice was death for the benefit of the lives of others it was a calculated decision.

Although Scott, Wilson and Bowers did not have a unique single dramatic moment at the end, their deaths were still in keeping with a heroic model. A year before the news of Scott's disaster reached England the sinking of the Titanic was a leading story and the presentation of acts of heroism link the two events. J.E Geller's research into the titanic disaster has uncovered that 54% of third class passenger children were lost, compared to 1% of the 1<sup>st</sup> Class passenger children and 0% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class passengers.<sup>171</sup> This is a scandalous statistic, but in *Return to Camelot* Mark Girouard assesses the public reaction and distortion of facts declaring, "the redeeming feature of the [titanic] disaster it was generally agreed, was the chivalry shown by the men, both passengers and crew."<sup>172</sup> It was promoted that, "all gentlemen knew that they must be brave, show no sign of panic or cowardice... be loyal to their comrades and meet death without flinching"<sup>173</sup> Here Girouard writes in reference to the Titanic disaster, but, the same principles were praised for Oates, Scott, Wilson and Bowers. The fact that Evans' death did not fit in within an already established heroic ideal, shows a further reason why there was resistance to promoting Evans as a heroic individual.

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<sup>170</sup> MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.90

<sup>171</sup> J.E. Geller, *Titanic – Women and Children First*, p.195

<sup>172</sup> M. Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p.6

<sup>173</sup> M. Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p.7

One wonders if 'meeting death without flinching', redeemed the titanic disaster in the eyes of the working classes. If it did not, it would suggest that the working classes would not have viewed the deaths of the Antarctic five as being heroic, particularly Oates, Scott, Bowers and Wilson. However, Barczewski's research has discovered that Louis Heren, [an East 'ender] recalled his childhood opinions of the expedition, "I did not much like Scott and most of his brother officers and gentlemen after reading the socially superior explanation of Petty Officer Evans collapse, but ironically admired Captain Oates. He especially provided an aura of high endeavour, gallantry and tragedy to what was a splendid ship and quarters."<sup>174</sup> Clearly for some of the working classes they saw class as the core component to explain Evans' presentation, yet still admired Oates. However, it is unknown if it was his act and decision, or, his social standing that was the cause of Oates' admiration. Additionally, this is one man's recollection, and thus may be the popular working-class consensus.

The manner of Evans' death aided the ability of the press to present his comrades in a heroic manner, for several articles present Scott, Wilson and Bowers as committing acts of self-sacrifice. *The Daily Mirror* printed an interview with a Mr. J. Foster Stackhouse, Scott's secretary in 1910 during Scott's tour to raise funds for the expedition. Stackhouse declared, "I am sure that if he had not felt bound to stand by that poor fellow Evans after he became helpless he would be alive today."<sup>175</sup> Scott here is shown as sacrificing his life and by implication his companions' lives for the sake of Evans. Similarly, *The Times* states, "When seaman EVANS became incapacitated the others knew full well that his breakdown was endangering the safety of them all. Yet stood by him till death released him from his sufferings."<sup>176</sup> Likewise, *The Daily Mirror*, "they stood by him till the last, thereby certainly imperilling their lives"<sup>177</sup> Evans' un-heroic demise essentially aided the ability of the mediators to present Evans' comrades as heroic individuals. Additionally projections such as these, with Evans effectively causing the death of his companions, limited the likelihood of his achieving a heroic status in the same league as his companions,

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<sup>174</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.158, from L. Heren, *Growing up Poor in London*, p.117

<sup>175</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February, 1913,

<sup>176</sup> *The Times*, 22 May 1913, MS 1464/32

<sup>177</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1913

consequently lessening the likelihood of a “collective emotional investment”<sup>178</sup> towards Evans.



Figure 11 Captain 'Titus' Oates poses for Herbert Ponting.

### Traits of heroism

Character traits were not integral to the creation of a heroic image, for the press attributed the same character traits; a 'great raconteur' and 'man of few words' on both Evans and Oates. One newspaper declared, "Captain Oates was one of the most popular men of the expedition. He was witty and a gifted

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<sup>178</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations*, p.3

raconteur.”<sup>179</sup> Whilst Ponting commented to the press that, “Evans is a great raconteur...I venture to say he will spin many a good yarn on the long, arduous journey as he smokes his pipe in the tent”<sup>180</sup>. Evans was also described as a, “Man of few words” in *The Sphere* 24 May 1913<sup>181</sup>, as was Oates in *The Times*<sup>182</sup>. Evans was certainly was not a man of few words, Frank Debenhams’s diary shows he was constantly telling stories, and putting forward his opinions, such as why “90% of the men in the Navy would leave if they could”<sup>183</sup>, exploits from his school days<sup>184</sup>, how to propose<sup>185</sup> and how to tie different knots<sup>186</sup>. This shows there were certain attributes the newspapers liked to bestow, and as the traits were used to describe Oates, were seen as virtuous. It also shows that those particular traits were not class-defined, nor did they define heroism, they were just admirable traits at the time.

There was a precedent for promoting the last words of those deemed to be heroes. Captain Oates’ last words, and the last written words of Captain Scott were heavily publicised, as were Henry Lawrence’s last words, ‘No Surrender’, along with the epitaph he himself composed, “Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty”<sup>187</sup>. This leads one to believe that last words were a trope for the upper classes. However, as Alice Ayres, a “general assistant and nursemaid”<sup>188</sup>, who died having saved the lives of three of her nieces and nephews in a house fire, had her last words recorded, the notion of class distinction is debateable. Ayres’ supposed last words were reported as being, “I tried my best and could try no more.”<sup>189</sup> If these were her last words it is understandable why these were promoted, it is fitting with the ideal that the upper and middling classes hoped the lower class would adhere to, self-improvement and doing one’s best. It is not recorded what Evans’ last words were, and this lack of last words may have affected the ability of the press to

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<sup>179</sup> Unknown newspaper, MS 2014/1

<sup>180</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

<sup>181</sup> *The Sphere*, 24 May 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>182</sup> *The Times*, 13 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

<sup>183</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, 10 February 1911, MS 1654; D

<sup>184</sup> *ibid*, 31 January 1911

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*, 14 February 1911

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*, 20 February 1911

<sup>187</sup> J. MacKenzie, ‘Heroic Myths of Empire’ p.118

<sup>188</sup> J. Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’: the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,’ p. 265

<sup>189</sup> J. Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’ p.268

construct him into a hero. However, last words could have been made-up<sup>190</sup>. There was a precedent for adaptation to enhance heroic reputations. Horace Waller, editor of Livingstone's diaries, "carefully, selected from the journals and in some instances almost rewrote them"<sup>191</sup>.

It should be acknowledged that the manner of death and the cause of death are two separate factors. Two of the men projected as heroes of imperial Britain, David Livingstone and Henry Havelock, had un-heroic causes of death. Sir Henry Havelock died from dysentery, whilst Livingstone died of dysentery and malaria. Yet the manners of Havelock and Livingstone's deaths were still projected as heroic. Even though Mackenzie suggests that the image of Livingstone kneeling at prayer was also greatly inferred by Waller<sup>192</sup>, that image of Livingstone was the one readily accepted and promoted. Whilst Havelock was presenting as dying "at his most glorious moment after a relief of Lucknow."<sup>193</sup> This suggests that the cause of Evans' death, whether brain haemorrhage, scurvy or starvation, was not as important as the manner of it. Similarly the press reports did not emphasise that Oates would have frozen to death, they reported that Oates walked out to his death.<sup>194</sup> Oates' death was not seen as heroic because of the cause of his demise just as Evans was not seen as un-heroic because of the cause of his demise. Therefore the cause of death was clearly not a cornerstone to the construction of a heroic status.

It is possible that as Evans was Welsh, his nationality played a part in his presentation, that the press wanted to emphasise the role of the Englishmen. However, there were three different nationalities present as Bowers was from Scotland, and Scott, Wilson and Oates were from England. This would limit the likelihood of attacking Evans because of his place of birth. I have not found any evidence of comments surrounding his nationality causing his breakdown, unlike the comments about his education and physicality as mentioned in the previous chapter. It was also a time in history when there was no trouble with Anglo-

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<sup>190</sup> Roland Huntford believes Scott made-up Oates' last words, though Oates' most recent biographer, Michael Smith, has disputed this claim.

<sup>191</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire' p.123

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*, p.123

<sup>193</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes' p.443

<sup>194</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 12 February 1913, *Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913,

Welsh relations. The domestic troubles within the UK at his time were in Ireland, with talk of uprising with claims that "nationhood is not achieved otherwise than in arms"<sup>195</sup>.

It has been suggested that the Victorian and Edwardian men who were presented and raised as mythic heroes were displays of national strength, legitimising imperialism<sup>196</sup>. These men represented the greatness of the empire, men such as Livingstone and General Gordon. Although Jones has argued that Scott and his companions were not used as heroes of the empire<sup>197</sup>, the Antarctic five were used to present the strength of national character, which does infer they were representations of the strength of the nation, which has clear links to imperialism. *The Daily Mail* pronounced, "The story of Captain Scott's last expedition is an epic worthy of the British race"<sup>198</sup> *The Daily Sketch* published Douglas Freshfield's comment, "Farewell to a band of heroes whose names will shine as examples of the courage and noble evidence of the qualities of Englishmen"<sup>199</sup>, the *Daily Chronicle* quoted Peary "they died as Englishmen"<sup>200</sup>. *The Daily Graphic* quoted Mr Asquith, "Their splendid example will be an inspiration to Englishmen throughout time"<sup>201</sup>. And the *Observer* stated, "They have proved, indeed, that 'the spirit, the pluck, the power to endure have not gone out of the race.'"<sup>202</sup> The comments do not directly mention 'empire', but they clearly conjure up an image of the men as examples of the strength of the nation and race, which implies strength of the imperial power. This has an effect on the construction of Evans' image, for Oates, Wilson, Bowers and Scott were presented as showing the strength of the British race, and clearly Evans' presentation in Scott's 'message' made him unsuitable for a model of the British race as superior individuals. Which could therefore question notions of cultural supremacy, and Social Darwinism, which played a part in legitimising colonialism.

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<sup>195</sup> P. Pearse, *The Coming Revolution*, in S. Regan (ed) *Irish Writing, an Anthology of Irish Literature*, p.188

<sup>196</sup> R. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.81

<sup>197</sup> M. Jones, 'The King Upon His Knees' p. 116

<sup>198</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 6 November 1913

<sup>199</sup> *The Daily Sketch*, 11 February 1913

<sup>200</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, 12 February 1913

<sup>201</sup> *The Daily Graphic*, 12 February 1913

<sup>202</sup> *The Observer*, 9 November, 1913, MS 1464/32

## Conclusion

Oates' death was the model and Evans was presented as falling short of Oates' example. Evans' un-heroic state was not a state solely caused by his class, but because Scott, the press and Evans' fellow travellers did not present Evans' death as a heroic demise in the same vein as Oates'. Nor did it fit within an already established heroic frame. Evans' image could have been adapted. There was a precedent for adaptation, whereby traits and, or, experiences are added to help enforce the heroic status, but this opportunity was very rarely taken by Evans' mediators. Though perhaps the most significant factor is that Oates' death along with Wilson's, Scott's and Bowers' did not need altering from how Scott had presented their deaths in his journal to be deemed heroic by the press and fellow travellers.

### Chapter 3. "the four men history will never forget"<sup>203</sup>

#### Memorials in stone and ink

This chapter will examine how Evans was presented through the decades. I will use memorials, scrapbooks, cigarette cards, biographies and published accounts about the expedition to present Evans' marginalisation. I will argue against Jones' claim that Evans "became increasingly marginalised"<sup>204</sup>, contending that he had always occupied a negligible place in the representation of Scott's last expedition. I will analyse Evans' commemoration in memorials, whereby memorials and commemoration will be viewed as a mark of heroism displayed, as part of a "collective emotional investment"<sup>205</sup>. It will become clear that memorials are not just stone blocks, but also scrapbooks and memorial editions of newspapers.

#### Marginalisation

Max Jones, writing in reference to the 1930s believes that as the years went on Evans was "increasingly marginalised, forgotten, or blamed"<sup>206</sup>. However, Evans had always been a marginalised figure, there was not a major change in the way Evans was presented from 11 February 1913, through till the 1930s. Evidence for this claim lays in the fact that some newspapers in the 1930s saw Evans as a hero in the group, "Five of the bravest Britons ever"<sup>207</sup>, "Five Heroes"<sup>208</sup>, just as articles had in 1913, "Five Heroes at the Pole". Equally, some newspapers in 1937 omitted Evans, *The Children's Newspaper* proclaimed, "the four men history will never forget"<sup>209</sup> just as newspapers had done in 1913, "there was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers."<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, there were still accusations that Evans was the main cause of the disaster, "when Evans fell by the wayside they

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<sup>203</sup> *The Children's Newspaper*, November 20 1937, MS 1453/41

<sup>204</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.268

<sup>205</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations*, p.3

<sup>206</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.268

<sup>207</sup> *Northern Evening Despatch*, 18 January 1932, MS 1453/41

<sup>208</sup> *John Bull*, 18 November 1933, MS 1453/41

<sup>209</sup> *Children's Newspaper*, 20 November 1937, MS 1453/41

<sup>210</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 12 February 1913, MS 1453/39/2

stayed with him to the end. Had they left him to die they would have saved their own lives." <sup>211</sup>

Max Jones also argues, that seen in context, "the extent of the criticism of Edgar Evans should not, however, be exaggerated. Most commentators did not single out Evans as especially culpable but rather noted his collapse as one among a catalogue of factors which contributed to the disaster." <sup>212</sup> Barczewski disagrees, contending, that the fact that Evans was put forward as a scapegoat when the other four were raised to saint-like status is of more significance than the number of press reports. <sup>213</sup> Although I agree with Barczewski, I would go a step further and proclaim that it is not quite as simple as appealing to the significance of the articles that presented Evans' as a 'failure'. One must look further and investigate other factors and instances, for there are indirect factors that show there was reluctance to portray Evans as a heroic individual.

For example, consider the layout from *The Daily Mirror* 12 February 1913, the 'Memorial Edition':

Front Page - A full-page photograph of Captain Scott.

Third page - two photographs of Peter Scott, and one photograph of Kathleen and Captain Scott.

Fourth Page - the story of the expedition.

Fifth Page - various articles about the expedition.

Sixth Page - Photograph of Wilson and a photograph of Bowers.

Thirteenth Page - A full-page portrait of Oates.

Seventeenth Page - A full-page photograph of Evans. <sup>214</sup>

Evans' portrait was the last photograph in the newspaper, and in some of the editions, one assumes the early ones, the photograph of P.O Johnson was printed and not that of P.O Evans. Additionally, there were photographs of Kathleen and Peter Scott, yet there were no photographs of Evans' widow and children. As this was a memorial edition, one can assume there was a belief that the readers may

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<sup>211</sup> *Weekly Despatch*, 20 March 1927, MS 1453/41

<sup>212</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.112

<sup>213</sup> S. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.174

<sup>214</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913

want to keep the newspaper. It was therefore suggesting that Evans' role in the perceived heroic expedition should be remembered as less significant than the roles of comrades'. In *The Daily Mirror*, 21 May 1913, when the photographs of the men at the Pole were first published, there were photographs of Peter Scott on page three, whilst photographs of Evans' three children were on page twenty-two. And if one wonders about the size of readership, this particular issue sold 1,342,000 copies, the widest circulation for 1912 and 1913.<sup>215</sup> Presenting Evans and his family last, was clearly not a unique representation, which essentially infers that images of Evans were not needed to sell stories. The images of his companions and Peter Scott were the key representations of Scott's last expedition. Perhaps the press did not need to blame Evans once conventions had been established.

It was not just the cheaper dailies that attempted to deem Evans' role insignificant. An article in *The Observer*, 9 November 1913, states, "It rests with us, their fellow-countrymen, whether Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers have died in vain or no."<sup>216</sup> Similarly in *The Daily Graphic* on 13 February 1913, the front page is a photograph of Peter Scott and Kathleen, along with a separate photo of Captain Scott, whilst photographs of Evans' children are on page 11<sup>217</sup>. However, the most telling exclusion is the centrefold of *The Daily Mirror*, 15 February 1913. This is a photograph of ten members of the expedition, which the readers are informed, "should be kept in memory of these splendid men, and should be shown to children to illustrate the story that will never die"<sup>218</sup>. The photograph is very similar to one shown below in figure 12 and evidently Evans is not present. So in this memorial in paper form, that had been made to commemorate the disaster, and as such attempt to form part of societies memory of the expedition, one of the five men who died after reaching the Pole was not included. As it was a photograph people were told to keep 'in memory' of the men, it is insinuating that people should forget about Evans, that he is not worth remembering.

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<sup>215</sup> M. Jones, 'Our King Upon His Knees', p.107 in G. Cubitt & Warren, *Heroic Reputations*

<sup>216</sup> *The Observer*, 9 November, 1913, MS 1464/32

<sup>217</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1913

<sup>218</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 12 February 1913



Figure 12 Scott can be seen in the middle of the shot, facing away from the camera. [In the version in *The Daily Mirror*, Scott is looking at the camera]. Wilson and Bowers can be seen sitting on the sledge, whilst Tom Crean who later accompanied Shackleton on the *Endurance* expedition is standing furthest left, with pipe in mouth. Oates is second from the right, wearing a bobble hat.

Evans' role in the expedition and the qualities he brought continued to be ignored. One article from *The Times* in September 1913, reports on Commander Evans talk at the Albert Hall the previous night. The article ends, "but, to judge from Commander Evans's language... All were devoted to CAPTAIN SCOTT: they loved and revered DR. WILSON "the peacemaker", "the Solomon" of the party; they found infinite pleasure in the society of "little Bowers", and they regarded CAPTAIN OATES as what indeed he was, "a magnificent man" That all these four died at the moment of achievement is one of the great tragedies of Arctic and nautical history". Although they did not die 'at the moment of achievement', Evans was not mentioned and they did not even see fit to give him a numerical value, it was only 'these four died'. Although the daily readership of *The Times* in 1913 was not close to the readership of the cheaper dailies, selling

"a mere 45,227"<sup>219</sup>, the article does show that there was a want to hide and, or, loose Evans' role. Whatever the size of readership, one could be sure that if Evans was seen as a key image for the presentation of Scott's last expedition and was crucial to selling the newspapers, proprietors would have ensured Evans was not forgotten.

Although the statements do not directly attack Evans', the mere fact that his name is not mentioned alongside his companions is significant. They are indirect digs at Evans, and a show that his contribution to the expedition was seen as insignificant. Or, perhaps, it was because his death was seen as having a major impact on the fate of the other four. It is also noteworthy that he occupied a similar place in 'Memorial Editions' that are, effectively, the commemoration of an event or individual. Though it debatable if Evans presentation was how the press wanted Evans to be remembered, or, if it was a genuine reflection of what the public believed, the fact remains that there was clearly the opinion that Evans and his dependants should occupy the space behind his comrades.

Even though Evans' role in the expedition was habitually ignored, other members of the five were also forgotten. For example, in an article in *The Daily Mail* from 1928, Wilfred Bruce, Scott's brother-in-law, rather intriguingly recalled, "he was introduced one day to a member of a shooting party who was an important man in the city. 'Scott? Scott?' Muttered an individual, obviously puzzled... 'Oh yes, of course - explorer, wasn't he?' 'Yes' said Captain Bruce briefly. 'North Pole wasn't it?' 'South' was the grim reply. 'Of course,' said the man. 'By the way, what's happened to Scott? We never seem to hear of him nowadays.' "<sup>220</sup> Though obviously this is more forgetfulness than blatant ignoring.

## Memory

Scrapbooks kept by individuals or families, must represent a form of memorial, for they are one person's wanted recollection of the events. Scrapbooks have not been given the scholarly analysis and attention they deserve, for they are extremely valuable sources, scrapbook makers are active participants in the

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<sup>219</sup> G.R. Searle, *A New England?*, p.110

<sup>220</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 3 September 1928, MS 1453/41

construction of the culture and representation of exploration. One can see the effect of Scott's 'message' and the press' negative promotion of Evans creep into the scrapbooks. For example, one scrapbook has 2 pages dedicated to Wilson, Scott, Oates and Bowers and Evans. Out of a 140-page book, Scott, Wilson, Oates and Bowers occupy the pages 19 to 26, whilst Evans occupies the last 2 pages, 139 and 140<sup>221</sup>. The scrapbook maker kept several articles and photographs about each one of the five; Evans' articles were the shortest, and he was the subject of the least number of photographs kept. See figure 13 below.

Name	Number of photographs	Number of articles	Longest article (lines)	Shortest article (lines)
Scott	1 full page photo of Scott, 1 of Kathleen and Peter	5	129	22
Wilson	4	9	60	16
Bowers	4	9	30	6
Oates	3	8	102	19
Evans	1 (full page)	5	46	3

Figure 13 shows a table of the number of individual articles and photographs dedicated to the five in one scrapbook.

However, Apsley Cherry-Garrard had compiled this scrapbook, which would explain the bias for Bowers and Wilson. Cherry-Garrard had accompanied Bowers and Wilson on the Journey to collect Emperor penguin eggs from Cape Crozier in Antarctic Winter 1911. Thus Cherry-Garrard had a particular bond with Wilson and Bowers, and as such one could expect more attention to be paid to those two. I have not uncovered any evidence that suggests Cherry-Garrard housed any feelings of contempt towards Evans. So it is possible that the scrapbook is a genuine reflection of the press' presentation of Evans. However, Cherry-Garrard must have made a decision where to place Evans in the scrapbook, and the gap

<sup>221</sup> 2014/BPC - Evans' 2 pages are pages 139 + 140, though the pages themselves are labelled as p.118 + 119 as the first 28 pages have no pages numbers.

in between Scott, Oates, Wilson and Bowers and that of Evans is over a hundred pages, so that will remain unaccountable. This is the only scrapbook that has individual pages dedicated to each of the Antarctic five, the other scrapbooks are mainly a hundred pages long, containing scores of press clippings, so the same criteria cannot be investigated.

However, other criteria can be investigated. In another scrapbook, where predominantly portraits had been cut out of the newspapers to commemorate the disaster, Evans had the fewest individual photographs.<sup>222</sup> See figure 14 below.

Name	Individual portraits / photographs	Photographs in the group
Scott	5	2
Oates	2	1
Bowers	2	1
Evans	1	2

Figure 14, a table to show the number of portraits kept by the scrapbook maker.

It is possible that the results are a reflection of the press's limited use of Evans' portrait, rather than the scrapbook maker having a limited interest in Evans.

The vast majority of scrapbooks viewed, that contained articles from 1913, held at least one of the articles that accused Evans of failing physically and mentally, and, or, reports that left out Evans. Therefore, it was clearly not one scrapbook or one scrapbook maker; there were a number of individuals who either wanted reports of Evans failing to form part of their individual memory of the representation of the expedition. Or, wanted to keep a genuine reflection of the press' presentation of Scott's last expedition, and any future references to it. Whatever the individuals' reasons were for including those specific articles, it is a clear reflection of Evans' marginalised status in print culture.

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<sup>222</sup> MS 2018 BPC



Figure 15 J.C Dollman's painting, 'A very Gallant Gentleman' shows Oates leaving the tent into the blizzard.

Figure 13, Dollman's painting is not simply an image showing Oates' moment of self-sacrifice, for it represents Oates' apotheosis. It looks as though Oates is averting his eyes, cowering from the strength of light shining from above that is hitting his back. The painting is a representation of the moment Oates dies, one knows that is to come, linking it to paintings of the sublime, "where the disaster is safely distanced"<sup>223</sup>. It could be argued that the image of Oates forms a triangle, from the top of his back to the ground and from his head to his hand to the ground, this is significant for triangles in art have long been associated with Christ-like images, ever since El Greco's *Pietà*. Triangles were also used to show the apotheosis of General Wolfe and Horatio Nelson in Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe*, and *Death of Nelson*. Dollman's painting must therefore have played a part in enhancing of Oates' heroic status.

Portraits of Scott's demise were also produced, *The Sphere Memorial Number*, included a full-page image of an Angel receiving the 'message to the public'

<sup>223</sup> M. Paley, *Apocalyptic Sublime*, p.4

from a dying Scott.<sup>224</sup> And in *Punch, or the London Charivari*, there is a full-page illustration by Bernard Partridge of an angel looking down upon the names of the Antarctic five. Even though *Punch* was a satirical magazine, the image was not in jest, it was entitled, "In Honour of Brave Dead Men."<sup>225</sup> As no painting or image was produced of Evans, this implies that the manner of his death was not deemed heroic enough, people had no wish to commission or view a painting showing Evans' decline as they did with his comrades. Thus resulting in a reduced iconography of Evans, indicating a lack of perceived heroic status, for iconography is key in establishing and confirming a reputation, as shown by MacKenzie's analysis of the paintings of Livingstone.<sup>226</sup>

The cigarette company, John Players & Sons devoted a series of cards to polar exploration. The cards included portraits of, Scott, Oates, Wilson, Bowers, Edward Evans, Dimitri (the dog-driver) and Commander Evans' flag. Yet "not one of the twenty-five cards issued mentioned Petty Officer Edgar Evans".<sup>227</sup> See figure 16 below. As the cards were printed in 1915-16, it reinforces my contestation that Evans had continuously occupied a 'marginalised' status. This is bolstered by the notion that individuals often kept cigarette cards, thus the cards have the potential to become a memory of the representation of the expedition, without Evans. John Players & Sons obviously made a decision not to include Evans, again implying that Evans was not deemed a necessity in the representation of the expedition. The cards also illustrate the deficiency in iconography of Evans in comparison to his comrades.

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<sup>224</sup> *The Sphere*, Memorial Number of the Scott Antarctic Expedition, 24 May 1913

<sup>225</sup> *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 19 February 1913

<sup>226</sup> J. MacKenzie, 'The iconography of David Livingstone', within G. Cubitt (ed), *Heroic reputations and Exemplary Lives*

<sup>227</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.261



Figure 16 shows the 25 cigarette cards issued by John Player in 1915-16 on the topic of Polar Exploration. Children often collected and kept cigarette cards, and as such this was effectively installing in a generation the notion Evans should be forgotten. (Image taken from [Antarcticcircle.org](http://Antarcticcircle.org))

In Antarctica one of the two Cairns erected by the search party was dedicated with the words:

"This cross and cairn erected over the remains of:

Captain R. F. Scott

Dr. E. A. Wilson,

Lieutenant H. R. Bowers

As a slight token to perpetuate their gallant and successful attempt to reach the goal...Also to commemorate their two gallant comrades, Captain L.E. G. Oates, of the Inniskilling Dragoons, who walked to his death in a blizzard willingly,

about twenty miles south of this place, to try and save his comrades beset by hardship; also of Petty- Officer Edgar Evans, who died at the foot of Beardmore Glacier."

Near this cairn the second cairn was erected with the record:

"Hereabouts died a very Gallant Gentleman."<sup>228</sup>

No such cairn was dedicated solely to Evans. Additionally, when Evans was mentioned in the first dedication, his death was not viewed or presented by his comrades in the same heroic style as Oates' demise was offered. Evans' death appears as almost an anti-climax after the tale of Oates' death. One can again see the stress on Oates committing a deliberate act, his 'willingness' to offer his life. The dedication over the Cairns should be viewed as setting the standard for Evans' future commemoration.



Figure 17, a close up of the wooden cross that was erected over the grave of Scott, Wilson and Bowers. Neither Oates' nor Evans' body was ever found.

<sup>228</sup> The dedication was quoted verbatim in *The Daily Graphic* 14 February 1913, MS 1958/1

As the decades passed, Evans remained marginalised. There were many memorials to honour the heroic dead, often publicised by the press. Yet, Evans' wife Lois died in 1952 and "during her lifetime... the only initiative to honour her husband was taken by herself."<sup>229</sup> Additionally Evans had the least number of memorials solely commemorating him, and if memorials are society's memory<sup>230</sup>, this suggests that there was a lack of popular interest in Evans. Society was not keen to commemorate Evans as an individual. And the only individual who actively sought to commemorate Evans, had an already established, "emotional investment"<sup>231</sup>. This leads on to the question posed in *Contested Sites*, "whose memory is it?"<sup>232</sup> This question infers that it was one locality, one class or, one institution responsible for the commemoration. Evidently for Evans, only his family saw Evans as someone who should occupy a place in societies memory.

Although there was a precedent for not commemorating the lower ranks of the Royal Navy as individuals, it seems unlikely that solely his social standing was the cause of Evans' lack of memorialisation. Seymour and Calvocoressi state, "despite their inclusion in the Naval Thanksgiving procession of 1797, there were no monuments to ordinary sailors in St Paul's"<sup>233</sup>. Similarly, in Nelson's Seat, [a memorial to Nelson] "ordinary sailors are listed as numbers working in each ship's crew... They are not identified or commemorated as individuals as are the ships captains."<sup>234</sup>. And although it could be argued that Evans' commemoration was based around his numerical value as one of the five, for there were far more memorials dedicated to the group (17) than Evans as an individual (2)<sup>235</sup>. That though was also the case with the rest of the five, suggesting that Evans' lack of memorialisation cannot be deemed as being solely caused by his naval rank and naval tradition of commemoration.

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<sup>229</sup> G. C. Gregor, *Swansea's Antarctic Explorer*, p.77

<sup>230</sup> C. W. J. Withers 'Memory and the history of geographical knowledge: the commemoration of Mungo Park' p.3, taken from Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, p.161

<sup>231</sup> G. Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, p.3

<sup>232</sup> P. Pickering and A. Tyrrell, *Contested Sites*, p. xii

<sup>233</sup> S. Seymour and Rupert Calvocoressi, 'Landscape Parks and the Memorialisation' p.97 from Hooock, 2003

<sup>234</sup> S. Seymour and Rupert Calvocoressi, 'Landscape Parks' p.108

<sup>235</sup> The figures have been taken from M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.295

However, Nicholas Penny's research has shown that during the nineteenth century there were a number of memorials that contained an image of Jack Tar.<sup>236</sup> He declares, the memorials were not commemorating the individual sailor's life or deeds; the image of Jack Tar was used to show that their leader had devoted followers. Furthermore, Penny argues the images of sailors were used to represent an example, "to reinforce the hope that such people would behave piously, loyally, and soberly as the representations of them in bronze and marble"<sup>237</sup>. This suggests that the authorities were concerned about the behaviour of some of the lower classes. If the same feelings and insecurities about the lower orders were present in the 1910s, this represents another reason why Evans was not massively commemorated. For Evans was rarely presented as displaying the perfect example. This is significant for examples were seen as a critical method of influence, for as Victorian reformer Samuel Smiles' claims, "example is one of the most potent instructors, though it teachers without tongue."<sup>238</sup> As previously shown Evans had been presented as having a mental and physical breakdown, and had been called a 'failure' by his leader, this was clearly not a representation of an example that society wished to promote additionally some memorials in paper form had already implied that Evans' role was one to forget.

By the late nineteenth century there were memorials to commemorate the deeds of members of the working classes, and the memorials were not just used to highlight the heroic image of a leader. As John Price's research has shown, Alice Ayres, a "general assistant and nursemaid"<sup>239</sup> was presented as a heroine with a place on Watt's Self-Sacrifice Memorial along with sixty other people, who lost their lives while attempting to save others.<sup>240</sup> This does suggest that there was a precedent, even if it was somewhat minor for commemorating and praising 'heroes' regardless of their socio-economic situation. Particularly if viewed in conjunction with the memorials to advocates of social improvement, as Pickering and Tyrrell state in reference to the Reformers' Memorial, "Middle and working-

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<sup>236</sup> N. Penny, 'Monuments for the people' p.797

<sup>237</sup> N. Penny, 'Monuments for the People' p.800

<sup>238</sup> S. Smiles, *Self-Help*, p.297

<sup>239</sup> J. Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life': the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,' p. 265

<sup>240</sup> J. Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life': the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice,' p.256

class reformers predominate, but all classes are included."<sup>241</sup> Therefore, it appears that there were a number of factors that explain Evans' limited memorialisation. His class was a factor, for he was not linked to any notable institutions like Oates, who had been schooled at Eton, and Wilson who had attended Gonville and Caius College, thus restricting the scope for commemoration. Additionally, because of his social circumstances it is likely his friends and family were not figures who had positions of significant authority to influence public perception. Secondly, there was also a precedent for ignoring Evans as shown by the articles in the press and lack of iconography. And finally, the presented manner of his death lessened the likelihood of a mass public appeal for a memorial of Evans.

### Evans in literature

Most scholars agree that the number of biographies is often a show of iconic and generally heroic status. MacKenzie declares that over an 80-year period there were at least 100 biographies of David Livingstone and 70 for General Gordon.<sup>242</sup> Additionally C.I. Hamilton's research has shown that, "in the catalogue of the National Maritime museum there are listed some 135 biographies of British naval men - sailors and officers - plus 28 of Nelson, published in Britain between 1830 and 1914."<sup>243</sup> There was clearly an interest in those in the naval profession, for otherwise publishers would not have been interested in printing a book which would not make a profit. This interest in the maritime life was perhaps one reason why there was so much public interest in the expedition and aftermath. However, within this time of naval fascination, no biography of Evans was produced. In fact he has only one biography to his name, G.C. Gregor's *Swansea's Antarctic Explorer*, it is less than 100 pages long and was only published in 1995. 66 years after the first biography of Scott, 62 years after Wilson's, 62 years after Oates' and 57 years after the first biography of Bowers. As biographies are one of the indicators that must be present to generate a heroic reputation and status<sup>244</sup>, Evans again falls short.

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<sup>241</sup> P. Pickering and A. Tyrrell (ed), *Contested Sites*, p.4

<sup>242</sup> J. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire' p.115

<sup>243</sup> C.I. Hamilton, 'Naval Hagiography' p.382

<sup>244</sup> M. Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes?' p.441

Texts about the events of the expedition have been in print since 1914. And it is in one of the accounts that Evans comes in for some of the harshest comments ever published about his rank and role in the disaster. Max Jones and Stephanie Barczewski both make reference to Evans' presentation in the small booklet, *Like English Gentlemen*, (1915), by J.E Hodder Williams, with Jones believing the "scrapegoating of Evans reached in apogee"<sup>245</sup> within the text. Hodder Williams proclaims:

"If Evans could not walk alone, he must be helped, dragged, carried along somehow...It was their lifeblood the heroes gave for this simple seaman... If they had left him he would die just a few hours sooner and they would be safe. But they were English gentlemen these four, the hero, and Dr Wilson and Captain Oates and Lieutenant Bowers...Poor Evans! If he had not fallen. If his strength had not failed. If only they could have left him where he fell. Poor heroes! But they were four English gentlemen." <sup>246</sup>

What seems very explicit is the fact that Scott, Wilson, Oates and Bowers were the 'heroes', whereas Evans was just a 'simple seaman'. There is a definite barrier. Here it appears that the manner of his death and his class were prominent in this interpretation. However, it should not be viewed as the popular consensus for the pamphlet was produced for Peter Scott, as stated in the acknowledgements, "to Peter Scott From the author of 'Where's Master?'" <sup>247</sup> It was in essence a show to Peter Scott what a brave gentleman his father, Captain Scott had been. It did though put another nail in the coffin of Evans' reputation, in an effort to enhance that of Scott's. This was by no means a unique occurrence for Evans' image was later adapted to suit the purpose of an individual's objective.

George Seaver's, *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) promotes Evans as, "a man of giant physique, of intelligence, resources and inventiveness, calmness and

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<sup>245</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, p.111

<sup>246</sup> *Like English Gentlemen*, pp 39-44

<sup>247</sup> J.E Hodder Williams, *Like English Gentleman*, preface

presence of mind, in everyway a man of his hands, and a tower of strength." <sup>248</sup> One would be forgiven for thinking the book represented a new representation that would henceforth become the common consensus. However, Roland Huntford adapted Evans' image back, in order to support suit his own individual philosophy.

Roland Huntford declares, "Over the years, P.O Evans, a Welshman from Glamorgan, had turned into a beery womanizer, exposed to the risk of venereal disease, and running a bit to fat." <sup>249</sup> This is a very incriminating statement, but Huntford provides no evidence for this claim, (though it is popular consensus that Evans would often get drunk whilst on shore leave. <sup>250</sup>) Evans has been used as a pawn to present a view that Scott was a poor leader, just like fifty years previously when he was used to present the notion that strong, uneducated men were a liability on expeditions. Although one could assert that Huntford is merely presenting the stereotypical image of Jack Tar, Mary Conley's recent study, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack* (2009) has shown that by the late Victorian period, "newer images emerged that valorised the modern bluejacket, who was cast as a manly ideal, virtuous both afloat and ashore." <sup>251</sup> Conley's research infers that Huntford's accusation does not even reflect contemporary reflections of Jack Tar.

In the first chapter it was revealed that Edgar Evans and Frank Debenham had a great rapport. However, in the published version of Debenham's dairy, *The Quiet Land*, (1992), the vast majority of the comments about how well Evans and Debenham got on have been taken out. The removed comments include; "Evans and I have started a feud...Ripping chap!" <sup>252</sup> "Evans and I whirled away the time singing and generally acting the giddy ox. Amongst other things he proposed to me." <sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> G. Seaver, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.142

<sup>249</sup> R. Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, pp.314 –15. For a full discussion of the bigger man being a hindrance on an expedition, see R. Fiennes, *Captain Scott*, pp.335-336

<sup>250</sup> Evans was thrown off the expedition for a drinking escapade in New Zealand, though Scott later allowed him to return.

<sup>251</sup> M. Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, p.193

<sup>252</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, 18 February 1911, MS 1654;D

<sup>253</sup> *ibid*, 26 February 1911

Additionally, in his published diary Debenham states, "the nails have come out of my boots and the crampons have raised me a blister on the heel so I did not wear them yesterday. The consequence was that on the lakes and rivers of ice I slipped & skidded in all directions with many falls, much to the amusement of others,"<sup>254</sup> [This is where this date's entry stops in *The Quiet Land*, however, his original diary continues,] specially Evans. Whenever Evans got mean he would give me a shove + we were sparring across the traces half the day."<sup>255</sup> It seems somewhat unjust that these comments were cut and I have been unable to find a conclusive reason, the introduction to the 'Autumn journeys 1911' section simply states, "Here follows an account of our autumn sledging trip in the Western Mts, being almost a copy of the pencil diary I kept while on the trip, but with occasional additions and explanations."<sup>256</sup> There have been deletions and few additions.

Perhaps as Debenham's opinion of Evans changed, this affected how he wanted his relationship with Evans on that journey to be seen. As he states later in *The Quiet Land*, "Taff Evans... was simply splendid on that trip and we were very chummy. He was rather disappointing in the winter being given to hectoring amongst his mates, but he's the most useful man down here and a treasure to Capt. Scott."<sup>257</sup> It is possible that these later events may have affected how he wanted to remember Evans. Though one should remember that Evans was a Petty Officer and according to Christopher McKee's research on the lives and views of sailors from 1900-45, "the word most frequently used in describing petty officers was *bastard*."<sup>258</sup> So perhaps Debenham was judging Evans on his occupational role as a naval rating. Debenham's daughter was the editor of *The Quiet Land*, and it is possible that quotes concerning Evans were deemed of no significance, with the belief that the focus should solely be on Frank Debenham. However, having contacted Debenham's family, there appears to have been no specific reason for the omission, besides a lack of space. Had the comments about Evans been left in it would have shown the crossing of social boundaries a man of

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<sup>254</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.80

<sup>255</sup> F. Debenham, Diary, MS 1654;D

<sup>256</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.43

<sup>257</sup> F. Debenham, *The Quiet Land*, p.127

<sup>258</sup> C. McKee, *Sober Men, Brave and True*, p.128

science and a sailor. There is also the chance that there is a skeleton in Evans' closet that Debenham later discovered and this altered his opinions, a skeleton which is still waiting to be discovered by historians.

## **Conclusion**

Evans held a state of marginalised heroism throughout the twentieth century. There was a lack of interest in his story, with fewer biographies, memorials and images in scrapbooks than his companions. Similarly the illustrators and painters had no wish to portray the moment before Evans' death as they had done with Evans' companions, resulting in a reduced iconography. There was clearly a lack of 'collective emotional investment' towards Evans, and the actions of an individual, Lois Evans, was not enough to elevate Evans into a popular heroic individual.

## Conclusion

As the decades passed, the story of the Antarctic five moved into projection by feature film. Ponting had some footage of the Antarctic five in his film, *90° South*, and this was widely viewed throughout the nation, though there was actually no footage of the Southern Journey itself. In 1948 the feature film *Scott of the Antarctic* was released, a film had been proposed in the 1930s though Kathleen Scott had announced, "NOT WHILE I'M ALIVE."<sup>259</sup> *Scott of the Antarctic* starred John Mills as Captain Scott and James Robertson Justice portrayed a rather large and jolly Edgar Evans. There was no real blame attached to any of the men and there was no animosity shown towards Evans. Although, Oates' death, like Scott's, Wilson's and Bowers' comes across as more heroic due to the nature and manner of their deaths. In the descent into television drama Evans was once again used as a means to convey popular beliefs. In the drama, *Last Place on Earth*, which was based upon Huntford's *Scott and Amundsen*, it was important to make Evans out to be an irresponsible drunk as it was one of ways used to present Scott as a completely incompetent leader. One must though bear in mind that Trevor Griffiths, the author of the script, has strong left wing sentiments, and thus harboured feelings of resentment towards imperialistic ventures. Evans was a pawn of an image to be manipulated to support specific philosophies at any given time, whilst his comrades' depiction of him before his demise was frequently ignored.

Wide samples of press clippings have been analysed from *The Globe* to *The Sheffield Telegraph* to *John Bull* to the *Birmingham Gazette* whilst the entire newspapers examined include; *The Daily Mirror*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Daily Graphic* and *The Daily Sketch*. However, to take this investigation further, larger samples of newspapers could be viewed, such as a bigger range of regional newspapers and newspapers and magazines aimed towards women and children, thereby investigating if Evans' presentation altered between region, class, gender and age.

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<sup>259</sup> This was reported in many newspapers on 4 March 1938, including, *Daily Sketch*, 4 March 1938, MS 1453/41, *The Sheffield Telegraph*, 4 March 1938, *The Daily Independent*, *Daily Despatch* and *The Star*

Evans' presentation was affected by the contemporary thoughts and beliefs at the time, for as MacDonald states, a hero is a product of society's virtues<sup>260</sup>, and if one turns this on its head, Evans was sometimes representative of the weaknesses society feared, such as degeneration, effeminacy and insanity. The accounts written by his fellows' show Evans was a skilled craftsman, thus fitting the masculine ideal of self-control and, the masculine ideal of the mariner, assuming the latter was based around maritime skill. However, Scott's 'message' essentially set the standard for criticising Evans, with the claim of an "astonishing failure"<sup>261</sup>, Scott's accusation was fuel for the press. Evans' family attempted to keep Evans in the public memory, however, the many articles and the lack of iconography show that some of the population wanted to forget his role in the expedition. Thus Evans' fellow travellers, his family, the press, (who worked within contemporary beliefs concerning masculinity), constructed Evans' image.

The sailors sculpted in nineteenth century memorials had a function; they were there to present the perfect example, what men should strive to be. Similarly Oates' death was the model, and Evans' was frequently presented as falling short of Oates' example. This allowed the Antarctic five to become, "the four men history will never forget"<sup>262</sup>.

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<sup>260</sup> MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p.82

<sup>261</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, p.421

<sup>262</sup> *Children's Newspaper*, 20 November 1937, MS 1453/41

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## Appendix

### Message to the public

"The causes of the disaster are not due to faulty organisation, but to misfortune in all risks which had to be undertaken.

1. The loss of the pony transport in March 1911 obliged me to start later than I had intended, and obliged the limits of stuff transported to be narrowed.
2. The weather throughout the outward journey, and especially the long gale in 83° S., stopped us.
3. The soft snow in lower reaches of glacier again reduced pace. We fought these untoward events with a will and conquered, but it cut into our provision reserve.

Every detail of our food supplies, clothing and depôts made on the interior ice-sheet and over that long stretch of 700 miles to the Pole and back, worked out to perfection. The advance party would have returned to the glacier in fine form and with surplus food were it not for the astonishing failure of the man whom we had least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party.

The Beardmore Glacier is difficult in fine weather, but on our return we did not get a single completely fine day; this with a sick companion enormously increased our anxieties.

As I have said elsewhere we got into frightfully rough ice and Edgar Evans received a concussion of the brain we think - he died a natural death, but left us a shaken party with the season duly advanced.

But all the facts above enumerated were as nothing to the surprise that awaited us on the Barrier. I maintain that our arrangements for returning were quite adequate, and that no one in the world would have expected the temperatures and surfaces which we encountered at this time of year. On the summit in lat. 85° 86° we had -20°, -30°. On the Barrier lat. 82°, 10,000 feet lower, we had -30° in the day, -47° at night pretty regularly, with continuous head wind during our day marches. It is clear that these circumstances come on very suddenly, and our wreck is certainly due to this sudden advent of severe weather, which does not seem to have any satisfactory cause. I do not think

human beings ever came though such a month as we have come through, and we should have got through in spite of the weather had it not been for the sickening of a second companion, Captain Oates, and a shortage of fuel in our depôts for which I cannot account, and finally, but for the storm which has fallen on us within 11 miles of the depot at which we hoped to secure our final supplies. Surely misfortune could scarcely have exceeded this last blow. We arrived within 11 miles of our old One Ton Camp with fuel for one last meal and food for two days. For four days we have been unable to leave the tent - the gale howling about us. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. We took risks, we know we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined still to do our best to the last. But if willing to give our lives to this enterprise, which is the honour of the country, I appeal to our countrymen to see that those who depend upon us are properly cared for.

Had we lived I would have a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale, but surely, surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are properly provided for.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> R.F. Scott, *Journals*, pp.421-422



Figure 18 this is the entire photograph that I cropped and enlarged for of figure 5. From right to left Petty Officer Forde and Crean can be seen working on the rear of the sledge.



Figure 19 this is the entire photograph that I cropped and enlarged for figure 8.