

200 Years OF POLAR EXPLORATION

EXHIBITION

**19-24 NOVEMBER 2019
10 AM - 5 PM | LONDON
69 SOUTHAMPTON ROW | WC1B 4ET**

SPINK

WHERE HISTORY IS VALUED

FREE PUBLIC EXHIBITION

THE LARGEST DISPLAY OF ARTEFACTS, ART AND MEDALS IN HISTORY

LEGENDS OF THE POLAR REGIONS TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME

CAPTAIN SCOTT'S SOUTH POLE PARTY RE-UNITED

FROM THE SEARCH FOR THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE TO THE PRESENT DAY

PROGRAMME OF TALKS ON FRIDAY & SATURDAY

IN SUPPORT OF:



**ENDEAVOUR
FUND**



**Scott
Polar
Research
Institute**

Spink unveil most important exhibition dedicated to Polar exploration ever staged

November show finally brings Frank Wild out of the shadows to join Scott, Shackleton and Mawson among the greats of the Heroic Age



Display covers the arc from 19th century to the modern day
and includes focus on tragic hero Henry Worsley who died in 2016

The largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Polar exploration material ever staged opens at **Spink** in London on November 18.

Entitled *200 years of Polar Exploration*, it will feature clothing equipment, medals and other memorabilia from Scott, Shackleton and all of the leading explorers, from the Franklin expedition to the modern day, including Henry Worsley, who tragically died during his final Antarctic expedition in 2016.

The unprecedented display at Spink, created in partnership with collectors as well as the Scott Polar Research Institute, marks the centenary of the end of the Heroic Age of Exploration, as Shackleton prepared for his final

expedition. It will include many iconic pieces that have never been seen together before and will also give centre stage to the largely unsung hero of the great Antarctic expeditions of the early 20th century.

Little mentioned outside polar exploration circles, however, is Frank Wild, the Yorkshire-born seaman who took part in five expeditions between 1901 and 1922, becoming Shackleton's second-in-command in both the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-16 and the Shackleton-Rowett Expedition of 1921-22, which proved fatal to its leader, when Shackleton died of a heart attack, aged just 47.

Wild took over, leading the expedition to its completion along the Antarctic coast.

Ernest Shackleton and Robert Falcon Scott were the giants of Polar exploration in the period, with

Lawrence Oates, Edward Wilson and Edward Evans among those adding to the legend.

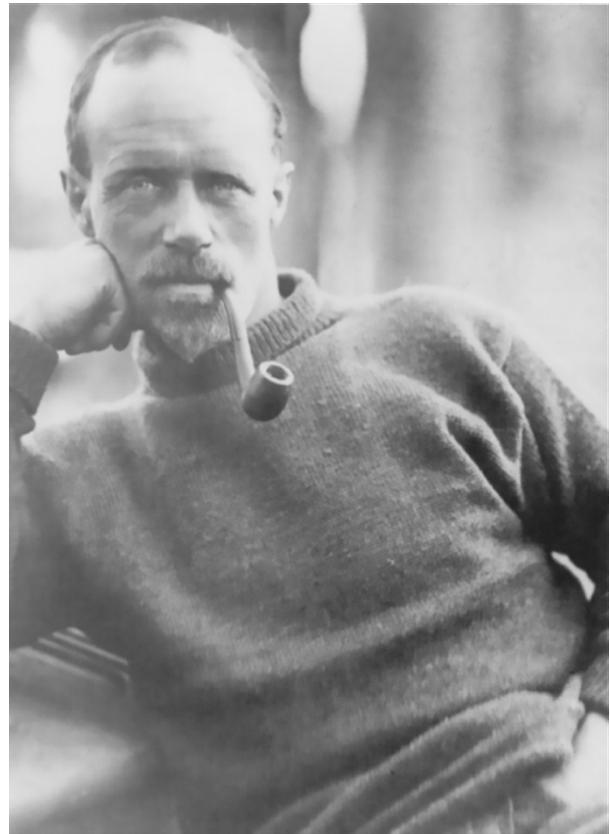
Today, however, Wild is considered one of only four men – Scott, Shackleton and Sir Douglas Mawson being the others – who define the Heroic Age of Polar exploration.

The Polar Record for January 1940 in reporting Wild's death the previous year recorded: *"Frank Wild's death must have been the first thought of Antarctic men meeting each other this winter. Apart from the leaders, no other Antarctic figure has so impressed himself on so many of the rank and file as Wild; for he had been a member of no less than five great expeditions, second in command on the later ones, but on all, whether in high position or not, acting as the guide and instructor to those new to Antarctic work. In many ways, Frank Wild was the greatest of them all."*

It was in the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1916 that Wild took charge of the 21 men left on the remote and desolate Elephant Island when Shackleton and five others set off on their epic 800-mile rescue mission aboard a lifeboat, and it was Wild who kept the men alive until the rescue party arrived.

Wild is the only man to have taken part in all four of the major Antarctic expeditions of the period, interspersing his adventures with service as a Temporary Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the First World War, becoming the Royal Navy's transport officer at Archangel after taking a Russian language course.

Wild's later life in Africa was, in many ways, as challenging as his polar exploits. From farming to work on the railroads and even a stint as a hotel barman, disaster struck all too often as his health deteriorated, and it



was only towards the end of his life that he finally found peace with his second wife as a store-keeper in mining territory in South Africa.

His diabetes and pneumonia finally caught up with him in August 1939 and he died at the age of 66.

While his name may not be as familiar as Scott and Shackleton, Evans or even Oates, among the wider public, he has long been a hero and legend to polar aficionados.

Awarded the CBE in 1920, he became a Freeman of the City of London in 1923, having won the Royal Geographical Society's Back Award in 1916 and going on to win its Patron Medal in 1924.

Ultimate recognition only came in 2011, when Wild's ashes were re-interred to the right hand side of Shackleton's grave in South Georgia, marked by a granite block carved with the words *Shackleton's right-hand man*. The burial coincided with the issue of a set of commemorative stamps by South Georgia and the South Sandwich islands honouring Wild and his fellow Antarctic pioneers.

In 2016 a statue of Wild was unveiled in his birthplace, Skelton-in-Cleveland.

As well as charting the challenges and adventures of explorers from the 19th century through the Heroic Age, the exhibition shows how the indomitable spirit of these pioneers remains today in the likes of Henry Worsley, a Lieutenant-Colonel in The Rifles, who led a successful Antarctic centenary expedition of Shackleton's Nimrod party in 2008, before becoming the first person to have successfully undertaken the routes taken by Shackleton, Scott and Amundsen in another centenary expedition to the South Pole in 2011. Worsley's final attempt came in 2015, when he made another Antarctic attempt in the steps of Shackleton before falling ill and with peritonitis, from which he succumbed in January 2016.

This is a unique non-selling exhibition for Spink, an auction house with centuries of expertise in medals, stamps, coins, banknotes, and other collecting fields. "We are immersed in history and research on a daily basis as we prepare for auctions and help our clients," said Head of Medals Marcus Budgen. "Here we decided to put commercial interests aside for a brief period and take advantage of this unique opportunity to



create a landmark exhibition with the help of collectors and the Scott Polar Research Institute to celebrate these extraordinary pioneers. It has been a true honour.”

• *The exhibition, which charts the history, experiences, sacrifices and brotherhood of these seminal polar expeditions – from the search for the Northwest Passage during the 19th century to Shackleton’s death in 1922 – brings to life the characters, their thoughts and feelings. It is being staged to benefit The Endeavour Fund – a charity championed by Henry Worsley and his family – which supports the ambitions of wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans wishing to use sport and adventurous challenge as part of their recovery and onward rehabilitation.*

Quotes:

“Few endeavours in human history have called for such commitment in terms of courage, determination, endurance and sacrifice as these polar expeditions. Here, gathered in one space for the first time, are the memories of those exceptional people who claimed their rightful place in history.” **Roan Hackney, polar explorer and co-curator.**

“Any one of these individuals could easily command a dedicated exhibition in their own right, so to be able to present dozens of them together as a kind of polar fellowship in this way is truly extraordinary. There’s no telling when, if ever, this will happen again.” **Marcus Budgen, Head of Medals, Spink.**

Sir Raymond Priestley, who was part of Antarctic exploration teams with both Scott and Shackleton, wrote: “For scientific leadership, give me Scott; for swift and efficient travel, Amundsen; but when you are in a hopeless situation, when there seems to be no way out, get on your knees and pray for Shackleton. Incomparable in adversity, he was the miracle worker who would save your life against all the odds and long after your number was up. The greatest leader that ever came on God's earth, bar none.”

From an advertisement (almost certainly apocryphal and attributed both to Shackleton’s Nimrod and Endurance expeditions): “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success.”

200 Years of Polar Exploration
Spink, London
November 19-24 2019
Open 10am-5pm
www.spink.com



EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

19-20 NOVEMBER – TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

Open from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

21 NOVEMBER - THURSDAY LATE NIGHT

Open from 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM

22 NOVEMBER - FRIDAY TALKS

Open from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

12.00-12.15 Introduction to the collection and its highlights - Marcus Budgen

12.15-12.45 The Polar Medal - Dr Philip Attwood (Keeper of Coins and Medals, The British Museum)

13.00-13.50 Frank Wild and a link with Henry Worsley by Angela Butler - author of the book 'The Quest for Frank Wild'

14.00-14.50 Andrew Croft Memorial Trust and Andrew Croft by Julia Korner

15.00-15.50 Terra Nova expedition medals and medallists by Anne Strathie, author of 'Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel'

Anne Strathie is the author of Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel and From Ice Floes to Battlefields: Scott's 'Antarctics' in the First World War. Born and raised 30 miles from Birdie Bowers' birthplace, Anne now lives in Edward Wilson's home town of Cheltenham and is currently working on a new biography of Terra Nova expedition photographer Herbert Ponting. Anne, who visited Antarctica and Scott's hut in 2011, is full of admiration for her subjects whose fortitude is an example to us all.

16.00-17.00 Roan Hackney - Pittarak

23 NOVEMBER - SATURDAY TALKS

Open from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

12.00-12.40 Introduction to the collection and its highlights - Roan Hackney

13.00-13.50 Terra Nova expedition medals and medallists by Anne Strathie, author of 'Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel' – repeated Friday talk

14.00-14.50 Lawrence Oates by Patrick Cordingley

15.00-15.50 Nico Wills - photography in polar and extreme environments

Nico Wills is a London based photographer, whose work has an international following. After photographing during his service on tour in Afghanistan he has completed a number of extreme photographic opportunities from the Arctic to the Himalayas. In this talk he will discuss his photographic work and the techniques he uses, focusing on amongst other things, work in the Polar regions, specifically Greenland.

16.00-17.00 Summary of the exhibition's goals, aims of supporting the Endeavour Fund and Henry Worsley - Marcus Budgen / Roan Hackney

Couple of authors have agreed to sign books on the day.

24 NOVEMBER - SUNDAY

Open from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM