

An Antarctic Expedition

Many years ago, in 1901, Captain Scott led an expedition to the South Pole. Amongst his team was a man called Lieutenant Shackleton. Scott's expedition had to be abandoned but Shackleton was determined to try again. Using the knowledge he had learnt from his trip with Scott, thinking about what went wrong and how he could make sure he didn't make the same mistakes again, he planned another expedition. This was called the Nimrod Expedition.

Exploring the Antarctic is a very expensive thing to do and Shackleton found it hard to get enough money. He needed a ship to carry him and his team of explorers on their journey and so he chose the Nimrod. As it was an older boat, it had not cost so much money as a new one. However, it was also very small and could not carry all the coal needed for the whole journey. To solve this problem she was towed by a steamer for part of the journey, to save fuel. There was not much room aboard either and with the weight of all the equipment they needed, she was well down in the water.

The explorers made their base on Ross Island and then they set off. They had with them some tough ponies who were used to hard work and a motor vehicle instead of the dogs that Scott had taken with him. The motor vehicle was not like the ones we have today and could not cope with the journey. The ponies were blinded by the snow (looking at very bright snow can make your eyes temporarily go blind). So onwards the men struggled, pulling their sledges themselves. When they were 97 miles away from the South Pole, they ran out of food and there were fierce blizzards. They could not go any further.

Disappointed they returned home, struggling through more dangerous experiences on the way. All of the explorers arrived

home safely though. When Shackleton arrived home he found that he was quite a hero. When he reached Charing Cross station, there was a large crowd eager to meet him - including Captain Scott!

Shackleton's expedition was not a failure. Many scientific discoveries had been made, and he had learnt many valuable lessons that he was able to use to help him with later expeditions. Later, the King gave him a knighthood.