

Institution: University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 30 (History)
Title of case study: Title of case study History of British exploration: enhancing public understanding of Scott of the Antarctic
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Historical research on the story of Captain Scott's death in the Antarctic in March 1912, after being beaten to the South Pole by a Norwegian expedition, is changing public understanding of British Antarctic exploration. The pathways to impact include public education delivered through public lectures, school talks, and radio and television broadcasts; museum exhibitions in Britain, Australia and New Zealand; and entertainment in the form of a new play based specifically on the research.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research began as Max Jones's doctoral project at Cambridge in 1994 and continued at the University of Manchester following the PI's appointment as a Lecturer in History in January 2003. Jones's research resulted in a monograph, an edition of Scott's journals, and a number of articles in refereed journals, all published following his appointment at Manchester.</p> <p>The research involved three key strategies to generate new insights:</p> <p>(i) Revelations from previously unused sources: numerous authors had already told the story of Scott's life. None, however, had analysed the impact of his death. The research examined previously unused personal testimonies; the papers of associations involved in acts of commemoration; and reports in c. 120 newspapers and periodicals. These previously unused sources enabled the detailed reconstruction of the British response to Scott's death, showing, for example, that he and his party were frequently portrayed as 'martyrs of science' [3.1]. Analysis of previously unused sources also revealed how Scott's reputation has developed since 1913 [3.1, 3.5, 3.6].</p> <p>(ii) Re-examination of previously used sources: the fact that Scott's sledging journals were edited before their publication in 1913 has been used to question the value of the expedition since the 1960s. Roland Huntford's debunking biography <i>Scott and Amundsen</i> (1979) caused public attitudes to Scott to become more negative [3.5]. One of Huntford's central claims was that censorship of Scott's journals lay at the centre of an Admiralty conspiracy to cover up Scott's failings in order to create the legend of 'Scott of the Antarctic'. This conspiracy theory was repeated in Trevor Griffiths' TV docu-drama in 1985, seen by millions not only in Britain but around the world. Jones's research presented the first complete and systematic analysis of the editing of Scott's journals. While some passages were indeed excised, Jones's research demonstrated both that changes were far less substantial than Huntford/Griffiths implied, and that the censorship of the journals played only a minor role in the construction of Scott's heroic reputation. Scott's 'Message to the Public', the cornerstone of his reputation, was published in Scott's exact words [3.1, 3.2].</p> <p>(iii) New analyses using the methodologies of the New Cultural History: Jones's research analysed representations of Scott's story with reference to gender and national identity and showed that Scott did not become the pre-eminent British hero on the eve of the First World War because of conspiracy and censorship. Instead, the research demonstrated that communities and individuals with very different beliefs - imperialists and Irish nationalists, soldiers and pacifists, Conservatives, socialists and suffragettes - united around a common understanding of heroism in 1913, that manliness was forged through struggle [3.1]. In spite of changing public attitudes to imperialism and war, selflessness and idealism remain central to contemporary conceptions of heroism, which helps explain Scott's continued appeal [3.5, 3.6].</p> <p>In these ways the research challenged public understanding of British Antarctic exploration before the First World War. It impacted widely due to the vigorous engagement of the researcher with ongoing public interest in Scott, and, particularly, with the extensive coverage of the centenary of Scott's last expedition.</p>

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3. References to the research (AOR- Available on request)

3.1 Jones, M. *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), xv, 352. Paperback 2004. Spanish translation 2005. (AOR)

3.2 Jones, M. Robert Falcon Scott, *Journals: Captain Scott's Last Expedition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), edited and with an introduction by Max Jones. Paperback in the Oxford World's Classics series (New York and Oxford, Oxford UP, 2006), lxii, 529. (AOR)

3.3 Jones, M. 'What should historians do with heroes? Reflections on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain', *History Compass*, 5:2 (2007), 439-54. DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00390.x

3.4 Jones, M. 'Great Scott?', *BBC History Magazine*, 7:8 (August 2006), 14-17. (AOR)

3.5 Jones, M. 'From "Noble Example" to "Potty Pioneer": Rethinking Scott of the Antarctic, c.1945-2011', *Polar Journal*, 1:2 (2011), 191-206. DOI: 10.1080/2154896X.2011.626623

3.6 Jones, M. 'Why do the British still remember Scott of the Antarctic?', *ACME: Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Milano*, LXV:III (2012), 47-58. (AOR)

The quality of the research is demonstrated by successful passage through the peer review process, by international invitations, and by favourable reviews, for example re. [3.2]: 'definitive ... It should be the last word for a very long time' (Peter Speak, *Polar Record*, 2006); 'scrupulously scholarly edition ... there is nobody who knows more about the mythologizing of Scott than Jones does' (David Crane, *Spectator*, 2005).

4. Details of the impact**Context:**

Public understanding of Scott of the Antarctic was previously conditioned by the idea that Scott's story was a 'myth' created by the British establishment to conceal Scott's shortcomings and to justify imperialism and war. Jones's interventions challenged this view by emphasising the scientific value of Scott's expeditions, by demonstrating that a phoney heroism was not created through the censorship of Scott's journals, and by showing that Scott's reputation was the product of a consensus on the eve of the First World War, that manliness was forged through struggle.

Pathways to Impact:

Jones undertook to influence the public view of Scott in four principal ways after publishing his monograph: 1) public lectures; 2) school talks; 3) radio and television broadcasts; 4) involvement in museum exhibitions. His work has also inspired a stage play. Publications [3.1] and [3.2] established his reputation among polar experts as the leading academic historian of Scott's last expedition [5.10], generating invitations to lecture, broadcast and collaborate, in particular from the two institutions that led the extensive centenary celebrations 2010-13, Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI).

Reach and Significance of the Impact:

Jones's books on Scott are popular, with sales of over 10,000 and 20,000 copies respectively [3.1 and 3.2]. Since *The Last Great Quest* appeared in 2003 [3.1], Jones has delivered 23 public lectures on Scott, over half since 2008, and they have commanded large audiences. More than 2,000 people listened to Jones lecture at the RGS and during the subsequent regional tour. The Head of Research and Higher Education at RGS stated: 'Based on the quality and success of the lecture, Dr Jones was selected [by the RGS] as the one speaker for the regional theatre tour in the summer of 2011, presenting extended versions in Brecon, Darlington, Keswick, King's Lynn, Southampton and Stamford' [5.6]. Jones also lectured to schools and local history societies, and spoke about the promotion of science in Scott's last expedition (specifically his collaboration with a Manchester scientist) at the Manchester Histories Festival (MHF) in March 2012. Eighty two people attended, journeying from as far as Staffordshire and Wales, with 85% awarding 5 stars (out of 5)

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and 37% saying the lecture was the highlight of their Festival. 'One of our main aims is to reveal hidden narratives of Greater Manchester's history', writes the Festival Director, 'and this talk definitely helped us to reach this goal' [5.8]. In addition to delivering the keynote lecture at the 3-day 'Antarctic Visions' international conference in Hobart, Tasmania (June 2010), Jones also staged a public 'In Conversation' event about Scott and was interviewed on Hobart radio.

Jones has been in demand by broadcasters to advise on and contribute to media representations of Scott, Antarctic exploration, and the history of masculine heroism. He acted as the consultant on BBC2's *The Secrets of Scott's Hut* TV documentary. The producer confirms that 'Max's book inspired me to pitch a documentary about Scott to the BBC' [5.7]. Jones was then approached to discuss heroism during World War Two for the Radio 4 series *Amanda Vickery on Men*, following which the producers restructured the series in line with Jones's suggestion that they dedicate an episode to explorers [5.9]. The ensuing broadcast included an interview with Jones at 'Scott's Last Expedition' at the Natural History Museum. This exhibition was stimulated by Jones's emphasis on the scientific aims of Scott's last expedition in his publications and public lectures. Jones served as an adviser to the organisers, as well as contributing commentary on permanent loop in the museum space and on the exhibition website. The Exhibition Interpretation Developer states that '87,000 people attended the Natural History Museum's exhibition in London alone' [5.5]. The exhibition subsequently went on tour to Australia and New Zealand.

Jones's publications have also inspired a theatrical production. A British playwright has written a play inspired by Jones's monograph [3.1], the first stage-play ever commissioned by the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff. He states, 'My decision to write a play about Captain Scott resulted directly from my reading of *The Last Great Quest*' [5.1].

The significance of the impact lies particularly in the three major changes to public discourse about Scott that have followed these events. The first concerns Jones's contribution to retrieving Scott's scientific aims from neglect and placing the scientific achievements of the expedition at the centre of Scott's remembrance. The Director of the Sir Alaster Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science and former Director of the British Antarctic Survey confirms that 'Max's work makes it quite clear that science was the primary motivation and that there is a significant scientific legacy' [5.4]. Secondly, Jones has made a major contribution to the rebuttal of Huntford's extreme representation of Scott as incompetent, and to the presentation of Scott as a figure who, while not without flaws, deserves greater respect. The writer, lecturer and co-ordinator of the 'Scott 100' Centenary Events states that Dr Jones has produced two of the '3 or 4 key texts' that have challenged Huntford over the last decade. He emphasises that Jones's academic credentials enable him to produce 'authoritative research which is accurately footnoted' and has 'energised the field and substantially contributed to the subject' [5.10]. The Director of the SPRI confirms that Jones's work has played a key role through 'the rebuttal of the Roland Huntford thesis that Scott was an inept bungler', making a major contribution to the public reappraisal of Scott over the last decade [5.2]. The Chair of the Friends of SPRI likewise concludes that 'Dr Jones's compelling research is a timely reminder for those minded to believe Huntford of Scott's remarkable achievements in Antarctic exploration and science over a significant number of years at the turn of the 20th Century.' [5.3]. Thirdly, Jones has made a major contribution to educating the public about ideas of masculinity and heroism, emphasising the centrality of sacrifice and struggle to conceptions of heroic masculinity. A leading historian and broadcaster confirms that Jones's input 'added a new dimension' to her radio series, revealing how, in Scott's case at least, the façade of the tough, heroic explorer concealed romantic longing and vulnerability [5.9]. The playwright developing a play on Scott writes, 'Inspired by the book, my play attempts to convey the veneration of sacrifice in Edwardian culture before the First World War, which Max draws so compellingly' [5.1].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

All claims referenced in text.

5.1 Email from the Writer on *The Last Great Quest* stage play, public reading, Cardiff, October 2013; production at Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, and tour, 2014.

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5.2 Letter from the Director of SPRI on public lectures and impact.

5.3 Letter from the Rear Admiral, UK National Hydrographer, 2010-12, and Chair of the Friends of SPRI on public lectures and impact.

5.4 Letter from the Director of the Sir Alaster Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science and former Director of the British Antarctic Survey on public lectures and impact.

5.5 Letter from the Exhibition Interpretation Developer on 'Scott's Last Expedition' exhibition, Natural History Museum, London 2012; Sydney 2011; New Zealand 2012-13.

5.6 Letter from the Head of Research and Higher Education, RGS, on 'Scott of the Antarctic: Hero or Villain?' Lecture, London, Nov. 2010; Regional Tour, May-July 2011.

5.7 Email from the TV Producer on 'The Secrets of Scott's Hut' TV documentary, BBC2, April 2011.

5.8 Letter from the Manchester Histories Festival Director on 'Captain Scott and Manchester' lecture, Manchester Museum, Manchester Histories Festival, March 2012.

5.9 Email from the Historian and Broadcaster on Episode 5 'Explorers', *Amanda Vickery On Men* documentary, BBC Radio 4, 3 September 2012.

5.10 Letter from the Writer, Lecturer and Co-ordinator of 'Scott 100' Centenary Events on public lectures and general impact.