

Ernest Shackleton



Date and place of Birth: 15th February, 1874 in County Kildare, Ireland

Date of Death: 5th January, 1922 in Grytviken, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Ernest Shackleton is significant because he is widely regarded as one of the most inspirational explorers and leaders of the 20th Century. He was a polar explorer, travelling to Antarctica. In his early life, he was an avid reader with a healthy and active imagination. Although his father wanted him to follow in his footsteps and become a doctor, Shackleton had other ideas. At the age of just 16, he joined the Merchant Navy and, by the time he was 18, he was quickly promoted to First Mate.

His first exploration of Antarctica was in 1901 alongside fellow explorer, Robert Scott. Although they came nearer to the South Pole than anyone else at that time, they were forced to halt the expedition due to terrible weather conditions and Shackleton's own poor health.

In 1908, he led an expedition to the South Pole on a ship called Nimrod. Despite treacherous weather conditions, they reached within 97 nautical miles (180 km) of the South Pole in 1909. On his return, he was awarded a medal by the Royal Geographical Society along with a knighthood. He was now known as Sir Ernest Shackleton.

A further exploration, in 1914, is often hailed as Shackleton's greatest success as his ship became trapped. The team had to abandon the ship and were stranded on the ice for several months. Not until the Spring, when the ice began to thaw, could Shackleton and some of his men mount a rescue mission. Remarkably, all

Shackleton died during an expedition in January 1922. He was laid to rest in Grytviken, South Georgia (a small, remote island located in the South Atlantic Ocean).

of his team survived.

Interesting Fact

In 2002, the BBC carried out a poll to find the '100 Greatest Britons'. Shackleton reached eleventh place. This demonstrates how even today, many people consider him to be not only one of the most influential explorers, but one of the most inspirational Britons to have lived.

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Ernest Shackleton is significant because he is considered to be one of the most inspirational explorers and leaders of the 20th Century. He was a polar explorer who carried out expeditions to Antarctica.

Early Life

In his early life, he loved to read and had an active imagination. Shackleton's father wanted him to become a doctor, however, he had other ideas. At the age of just 16, he joined the Merchant Navy and by the time he was 18, he had been promoted to First Mate.

Shackleton's Expeditions

His first exploration of Antarctica was in 1901. Although the team got closer to the South Pole than anyone before them, they were forced to turn around due to terrible weather conditions. Also, Shackleton was unwell and had to return home. Undeterred, in 1908, he led an expedition to the South Pole on a ship called Nimrod. Even though they struggled with the weather, they reached within 97 nautical miles (180 km) of the South Pole in 1909. When he arrived back in England, he was awarded a knighthood. He was now known as Sir Ernest Shackleton.

In 1914, he set off for Antarctica again. This expedition is often seen as Shackleton's greatest success because his team had to abandon their ship; they were stranded on the ice for several months. When the ice began to melt in the spring, Shackleton began a rescue mission. Remarkably, all of his team survived.

Shackleton died during an expedition in January 1922. He is buried in Grytviken, South Georgia (a small, remote, Atlantic island).

In 2002, the BBC carried out a poll to find the '100 Greatest Britons'. Shackleton reached eleventh position demonstrating how he is still widely seen as one of the most influential explorers.

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Why is Ernest Shackleton famous?

- Ernest Shackleton is famous because he is thought of as one of the most inspirational explorers of the 20th Century.
- He explored the Antarctic and South Pole regions.

Shackleton's Early Life

- In his early life, he loved to read and he had an active imagination.
- His dream was to travel and discover new places.
- At the age of just 16, he joined the Merchant Navy.
- By the time he was 18, had been promoted to First Mate (2nd in command on a ship).

Shackleton's Expeditions

1901 - Shackleton started his first expedition to the South Pole.

- His team got closer to the South Pole than anybody ever had.
- Because of bad weather and Shackleton becoming unwell, they had to turn around.

1908 – He led an expedition to the South Pole on a ship called Nimrod.

- They reached Antarctica on January 15th, 1909.
- He was given a knighthood, and became Sir Ernest Shackleton.

1914 – This is often seen as Shackleton's greatest success.

- The team had to abandon the ship and were stranded on the ice for several months.
- In the spring, when the ice began to thaw, Shackleton and some of his men, launched a rescue mission. Remarkably, all of his team survived.

Shackleton died during an expedition, in January 1922. He is buried in Grytviken, South Georgia, a small, remote, Atlantic island.

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