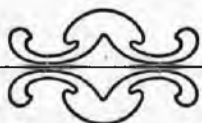


# King Edward VII. .. Land ..

A HISTORY OF THE SPECIAL  
POSTAGE STAMP ISSUED FOR  
USE IN THE ANTARCTIC REGIONS,  
FOR SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON'S  
.. .. EXPEDITION OF 1907-09. .. ..

BY

ALEXANDER J. SÉFI.



PUBLISHED BY

**D. Field, 4 and 5, The Royal Arcade,  
Old Bond Street, London, W.**

**D. Field,** Dealer and Expert in  
Rare Postage Stamps,

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KING EDWARD VII. LAND.



*Photograph by*

*(F. A. Swaine, New Bond Street.*

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON, C.V.O.  
Commander of the British Antarctic Expedition, 1907-09.

# King Edward VII. Land

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.. .. EXPÉDITION OF 1907-09. .. ..

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ALEXANDER J. SÉFI,

*Editor of the "West-End Philatelist,"*  
*Author of "The Postage Stamps of Grenada,"*  
*etc., etc.*

PRICE 6<sup>d</sup>.

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LONDON, W.

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1912.

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION ... ..	I
II. THE OUTWARD JOURNEY ... ..	4
III. IN THE ANTARCTIC ... ..	9
IV. PHILATELIC NOTES ... ..	16
BIBLIOGRAPHY ... ..	18

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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Sir Ernest Shackleton, c.v.o.

The "Nimrod."

Used Copies of the King Edward VII. Land Stamp,  
showing different dates.

Complete Sheet of King Edward VII. Land Stamps.

King Edward VII. Land Stamp used on Original  
Envelope.

The First Slopes of Erebus.

Letter from New Zealand.

„ Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Block of four King Edward VII. Land Stamps.



"THE NIMROD."

Reproduced by kind permission of Mr. W. Heinemann.

## I.—INTRODUCTION.

---

**W**E are all well acquainted with the magnificent work performed, and the great results achieved, by the British Antarctic Expedition of 1907-1909, under the Command of Sir Ernest Shackleton, c.v.o. I am sure, however, that very few of my readers are equally well acquainted with the special stamp issued for use in the Antarctic regions, and of the circumstances connected with its issue.

Information about this stamp has hitherto been so scanty that many people expressed some doubt as to its genuine postal nature ; in the following pages, however, I am able to put before my readers a complete history of this issue, and incontestably to prove that the stamp of " King Edward VII. Land " was a genuine postal emission, issued in accordance with all the regulations of the International Postal Union.

I think that it would not be out of place here to note some of the more important features of the work performed by the Expedition, and I cannot do better than quote some of Sir Ernest Shackleton's opening remarks in his book, " The Heart of the Antarctic." A book which I recommend to all my readers ; the story of a great achievement, manfully, I might say



magnificently, performed, in the face of difficulties, dangers and privation, of which we, at home, can scarce take the measure. Sir Ernest writes :—

“ We passed the winter of 1908 in McMurdo Sound, twenty miles north of the *Discovery* winter quarters. In the autumn a party ascended Mount Erebus and surveyed its various craters. In the spring and summer of 1908-9 three sledging-parties left winter quarters ; one went south and attained the most southerly latitude ever reached by man up to that date, and another reached the South Magnetic Pole for the first time ; while a third surveyed the mountain ranges west of McMurdo Sound.”

“ The Southern Sledge-party planted the Union Jack in latitude  $88^{\circ} 23'$  South, within one hundred geographical miles of the South Pole. This party of four ascertained that a great chain of mountains extend from the 82nd parallel, south of McMurdo Sound, to the 86th parallel, trending in a south-easterly direction ; that other great mountain ranges continue to the south and south-west, and that between them flows one of the largest glaciers in the world, leading to an inland plateau, the height of which, at latitude  $88^{\circ}$  South, is over 11,000 feet above sea level. This plateau presumably continues beyond the geographical South Pole, and extends from Cape Adare to the Pole.”

“ The journey made by the Northern Party resulted in the attainment of the South Magnetic Pole, the

position of which was fixed, by observations made on the spot and in the neighbourhood, at latitude  $72^{\circ} 25'$  South, longitude  $155^{\circ} 16'$  East. The first part of this journey was made along the coast-line of Victoria Land, and many new peaks, glaciers, and ice-tongues were discovered, in addition to two small islands. The whole of the coast traversed was carefully triangulated, and the existing maps was corrected in several respects."

"The survey of the western mountains by the Western Party added to the information of the Topographical details of that part of Victoria Land, and threw some new light on its geology."

"The discovery of forty-five miles of new coast-line extending from Cape North, first in a south-westerly and then in a westerly direction, was another important piece of geographical work."

Having given, in the Commander's own words, a brief account of the results achieved by the Expedition, I will now deal with the actual journey, and the circumstances under which was issued the stamp of King Edward VII. Land.

## II.—THE OUTWARD JOURNEY.

---

ON July 30th, 1907, the *Nimrod* sailed from the East India Docks, bound for New Zealand and thence for the Antarctic.

On Sunday, August 4th, the ship was inspected in the Solent, by the late King Edward and Queen Alexandra, accompanied by the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of Connaught and other members of the Royal Family. Sir Ernest Shackleton (then Lieutenant) received on this occasion the Victorian Order, and also a Union Jack from Queen Alexandra, to be carried on the southern journey. The *Nimrod* sailed from Torquay on August 6th and arrived at Lyttleton, New Zealand, on November 23rd.

After a month of preparation, involving an immense amount of work, all was in readiness for a start on New Year's Day. On that day, January 1st, 1908, amid great enthusiasm, the start was made for the Antarctic. In order to economise coal, the *Nimrod* was to be towed for some 1,500 miles by the s.s. *Koonya*.

Previous to his departure, Sir Ernest Shackleton was sworn in as a Postmaster before a New Zealand magistrate, and was handed a supply of 1d. New

Zealand stamps, overprinted "King Edward VII. Land" in green, together with all the necessary date stamps, registration labels, and books required for the proper business of a Post Office.

I have myself handled one of the original registered letter receipt books, in which letters had been entered, and receipts given, in identically the same way as might be done at the London G.P.O. This shows that the Post Office was a serious one, and fulfilled a very necessary function, as the mail sent home at different times by the explorers was no mean one. I should like to point out here that this stamp was the only one available for postage and that Postmaster Shackleton had the full powers of an ordinary postmaster.

Among the illustrations, two letters will be found reproduced. The note signed by Sir Ernest Shackleton needs no comment from me, but I would like to turn for a minute to the letter from the New Zealand Government. Some time back our Publisher, Mr. Field, being very interested in this stamp, and having a certain number in his possession, naturally endeavoured to learn as much as possible about their origin. To this end he intended to ask for information from Sir Joseph Ward, Premier of New Zealand, who was to be the guest at a philatelic banquet; being prevented from attending, however, Mrs. Field approached Sir Joseph, on his behalf, and obtained a promise of whatever information might be available in the

New Zealand Postal Department. This promise was fulfilled by a letter dated 31st August, 1911, which I reproduce,\* and which will be found to contain the exact figures of the number of stamps issued, etc. The most interesting point of the whole letter lies in the last sentence but one, which gives the number of stamps distributed among the offices of the Universal Postal Union, according to the requirements, of that institution.

These facts form an incontestable proof of the genuine postal nature of this stamp, which can take its place in the ranks of any stamps issued by countries in the Postal Union, and available for international use. As my readers will see by the figures, the issue was a very limited one, thus precluding any possible thought of gain by the sale of the stamps to collectors. In my opinion, the issue for King Edward VII. Land is the most interesting stamp of the twentieth century, and should figure in every collection, in the first place as a stamp of great philatelic interest, and secondly as a reminder of a great episode in the spread of our Empire and, to use Sir Ernest's own expression, in the growth of our knowledge of the "void spaces of the world."

The unused sheet, signed by Sir Ernest Shackleton, is also of great interest, as, with the exception of the sheet in the New Zealand Postal Department, it is probably unique.

\* See illustration following page 12.

4  
This is a complete set of  
4 temporary postage stamps  
of the British  
Post Office





Complete Sheet of King Edward VII. Land Stamps.

The inscription on the margin, which is in the handwriting of, and was signed by,  
Sir Ernest Shackleton, reads:—

“This is a complete sheet of the original Antarctic stamps.

“E. H. SHACKLETON, Postmaster.”

To return to the Expedition. As mentioned above, the *Nimrod* was to be towed by the *Koonya* for some 1500 miles, that is to say until pack ice was reached. This occurred some two weeks after the departure from New Zealand; these two weeks proved a most anxious time for all on board, and that the little Expedition ship survived the terrible gale that kept all hands hard at work, in water-soaked clothes, during every minute of this time, is solely due to her sturdy good qualities and to the consummate seamanship and pluck of all on board her, and also to the care and forethought with which the Captain of the *Koonya* handled his charge.

On January 15th the two vessels parted company. The *Koonya* established a record in towage for a vessel not built for the purpose, having done 1510 miles; she achieved another record also by being the first steel vessel to cross the Antarctic Circle.

The *Koonya* carried back with her the first mail from the Expedition, with reference to which a passage from Sir Ernest Shackleton's "The Heart of the Antarctic" is of the greatest interest; it is as follows:—

"About 10 a.m. I decided to send Captain England across to the *Koonya* with Buckley and the mail. Our letters were all stamped with the special stamp given by the New Zealand Government."

The *Nimrod* was now left to her own resources and proceeded to skirt along the Great Ice Barrier. A



Post Office was opened in the territorial waters of King Edward VII. Land. It was found impossible, however, to land at this point, on account of the movements of the ice, so the ship's course was set for McMurdo Sound, where the Expedition decided to establish their winter quarters, and here a branch Post Office was opened.

As soon as the winter party was established in their "Hut" at Cape Royds, the *Nimrod* returned to New Zealand, on February 22nd, carrying a large batch of mails, all of course stamped with the King Edward VII. Land stamp, which, as I have mentioned above, was the only one available for use. I illustrate on another page an envelope franked with one of these stamps. It was written by Joyce, a member of the Expedition in the Antarctic, and was duly delivered to the addressee in London, and does not bear any other stamp besides that of King Edward VII. Land. I am able to illustrate this cover by kind permission of Mr. H. L. Hayman, whose property it is.

LONDON

MAR 7

11-20A

1871



Mrs Steel

Co. from Dorset

52 Stratford Rd

London SE

### III.—IN THE ANTARCTIC.

---

**W**HEN the *Nimrod* left McMurdo Sound she left fifteen men behind, composing the shore-party. Of these men only three, namely, the Commander, Wild, and Joyce, had previous experience of polar work. The party was made up as follows :—

Ernest H. Shackleton, commander.

Professor T. W. Edgeworth David, F.R.S., director of the scientific staff.

Lieutenant T. B. Adams, R.N.R., meteorologist.

Sir Philip Brocklehurst, Bart., assistant geologist.

Bernard Day, motor expert.

Ernest Joyce, in charge of dogs, sledges, etc.

Dr. A. F. Mackay, surgeon.

Douglas Mawson, D.Sc., B.E., physicist.

Bertram Armytage, in charge of ponies.

D. E. Marshall, surgeon, cartographer.

G. E. Marston, artist.

J. Murray, biologist.

Raymond Priestly, geologist.

W. Roberts, cook.

F. Wild, in charge of provisions.

Their first work was the collecting and stowing away of all their provisions, and making the hut ready for their long occupation. The inside arrangements of this

were most ingenious. The space round the walls was allotted in sections to the various members of the party, and was so arranged that two persons shared one cubicle. This space for two men amounted to six feet six inches in length, and seven in depth from the wall of the hut towards the centre. The partitioning off and interior arrangements of the cubicles was left entirely to the fancy of the occupants. Packing cases, empty petrol tins, etc., formed the chief means of interior division, and also were used to construct beds and furniture.

An entirely new feature in polar exploration was the introduction of ponies. They were hardy Manchurian animals, accustomed to cold and to little attention, and had been brought all the great distance from Manchuria to the Antarctic, in a sure belief of their suitability for the purpose required. On the establishment of the winter quarters, there had been eight ponies, but unfortunately this number was, within a month, reduced to four. These four animals subsequently proved a great asset to the Expedition and quite justified their inclusion. A motor car also formed part of the equipment and was useful for drawing heavy loads on the smooth surface of the Barrier.

On March 5th a party, consisting of Professor David, Mawson and Mackay, set out on an attempt to reach the top of Mount Erebus. A supporting-party, consisting of Adams, Marshall and Brocklehurst, was to



THE FIRST SLOPES OF EREBUS.  
By kind permission of Mr. W. Heinemann.



Used Copies of the King Edward VII. Land Stamp, shewing different dates.

assist the main body as far as feasible, but to complete the climb with them if the circumstances seemed favourable. After many hardships, the parties returned, having reached the summit. The journey produced important scientific results. The height of Mount Erebus was calculated at 13,350 feet above sea level.

We now come to the more important work of the Expedition. It is naturally impossible, in the space at my disposal, to give even an outlined account of all the work accomplished, so I will limit myself to brief descriptions of the "Northern" and "Southern" journeys, taking them in this order.

The Northern Sledge-party was under the command of Professor E. David, the two other members being Douglas Mawson and Alistair Mackay. The chief objects of this journey were to take magnetic observations with a view to determining the dip and position of the Magnetic Pole, and, if time permitted, to endeavour to reach this point. Another object was to make a general geological survey of the coast of Victoria Land, and to make careful observations of the geological formation of the western mountains, and to prospect for minerals of economic value.

A start was made on October 5th. The advance was somewhat hindered during the first week by blizzards, but by October 17th the party had reached Cape Bernacchi, where, just before 10 a.m., they hoisted the Union Jack, and took possession of Victoria Land for

the British Empire. For nearly three months after this they pushed ahead, doing valuable geological work and triangulating the coast with success, proving the Admiralty Chart wrong on many points.

On Saturday, January 16th, after a forced march, they reached the Magnetic Pole, and, on the mean position calculated for it by Mawson, namely  $72^{\circ} 25'$  South latitude,  $155^{\circ} 16'$  East longitude, hoisted the Union Jack at 3.30 p.m., taking possession of the Magnetic Pole area for the British Empire. The return journey proved very trying, but on February 4th the party was picked up by the *Nimrod*; if the ship had not turned up, they would have been forced either to winter where they were, or make an exceedingly difficult and hazardous journey of over 200 miles to get back to Cape Royds.

The Southern sledge-party, consisting of the Commander of the Expedition, Adams, Marshall, and Wild, started from Hut Point on November 3rd. They had with them ninety-one days food, which could, with careful management, be made to spin out to 110 days, which they hoped would give them time to reach the South Pole. They took four sledges with them and the four remaining ponies. After being somewhat delayed shortly after the start by a blizzard, they marched steadily South, and on November 26th they passed the "farthest South" previously reached by man.

It was then they first came in sight of a great chain of mountains, heading in a south-easterly direction from



DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND



S.

*In any further correspondence  
on this subject please quote the  
number hereunder*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, WELLINGTON.

P.O.11/1169(1).

31st August, 1911.

Madam,

Referring to Sir Joseph Ward's letter to you of the 29th May last: I beg, by direction, to inform you that £100 worth of New Zealand postage stamps at 1d. were overprinted "King Edward VII Land". 23,492 stamps, value £97 17s.8d., were supplied to the British Antarctic Expedition; 448, value £1 17s.4d. were distributed among Offices of the Universal Postal Union and 60, value 5s. were retained as specimens in this Office.

Yours obediently,

Secretary.

Mrs Field,  
The Nook,  
Fawley Road,  
WEST HAMPSTEAD,  
England.

KING EDWARD VII. LAND STAMPS.

These stamps were designed, intended, and issued for the postal purpose of prepaying and franking the letters of the Commander, Officers, Members of the Expedition, and Crew of the ship "Nimrod", engaged in the Antarctic Expedition of 1907-1909. They were issued under the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Government.

Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Commander of the Expedition, was sworn in Postmaster, by authority of Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand. The stamps were produced by overprinting in green on the one penny, red stamp of New Zealand the words "King Edward VII. Land."

Sir Ernest Shackleton (then Lieut) exercised his jurisdiction by the opening of a post office in the territorial waters of King Edward VII. Land, at the spot where Emandson is now wintering, and subsequently opened a branch office at McMurdo Sound.

These stamps were used for all mails, the first batch of letters bearing them being sent home on January 15th. 1908, by the steamer "Koonya."

Signed

Ernest Shackleton

the 82nd parallel, south of McMurdo Sound, to the 86th parallel, constituting one of the most important discoveries of the Expedition.

By December 1st only one pony was left, the other three having been shot when they were no longer able to stand the trying conditions. On December the 4th they found a huge glacier, bounded on each side by rugged mountains, leading South, upon which they continued their journey. On December 7th they lost the last pony, down a crevasse, Wild, who was leading it, having a miraculous escape. Ten days later, on December 17th, Wild discovered coal, a find of great scientific interest.

Christmas Day was spent on the great Plateau, some 9,500 feet above sea level, upon which the South Pole is located. The days following this, up to January 9th, were spent in a great struggle against unequal odds, and it became apparent to them all that it would be impossible for them to reach the South Pole. As it was, they were on short rations, and had depôté most of their warmer clothes to save weight. The end came on January 9th, whatever regrets they may have had, they could do no more—they had done their best.

The following quotation is from Sir Ernest Shackleton's diary, in which he entered particulars of the daily marches :—

“ *January 9.* Our last day outwards. We have shot our bolt, and the tale is latitude 88° 23’

South, longitude 162° East. The wind eased down at 1 a.m., and at 2 a.m. we were up and had breakfast. At 4 a.m., started south, with the Queen's Union Jack, a brass cylinder containing stamps and documents to place at the furthest south point, camera, glasses, and compass. At 9 a.m. we were in 88° 23' South, half running and half walking over a surface much hardened by the recent blizzard. It was strange for us to go along without the nightmare of a sledge dragging behind us. We hoisted Her Majesty's flag, and the other Union Jack afterwards, and took possession of the Plateau in the name of His Majesty. There was no break in the plateau as it extended towards the Pole, and we feel sure that the goal we have failed to reach lies on this plain."

The return journey proved terribly difficult, and it is a wonder that the party survived at all. The early days of February were exceptionally trying; food had practically given out and all the members of the party developed dysentery; during the period from November 15th, 1908, to February 23rd, 1909, they had but one full meal, and that was on Xmas Day.

On March 1st their troubles were at an end, and they were safe on board the *Nimrod*. Apart from the mere "dash for the Pole," the party had very arduous and important scientific work to do as they went along, each member having his own particular duties to perform.

Adams had charge of the meteorology, and his work involved the taking of temperatures at regular intervals, and the boiling of the hypsometer, sometimes several times in a day. Marshall was the cartographer and took the angles and bearings of all the new land, and also the meridian altitudes and the compass variation. The commander kept the courses and distances, worked out observations, and laid down the directions of the march.

\* \* \* \*

This brings our chapter to a close, the members of the Expedition having all been taken safely on board the *Nimrod*. It is a pleasing fact that notwithstanding the hardships and privations of an Expedition such as this, not one human life was lost, a circumstance which speaks well for the care with which Sir Ernest Shackleton made, and carried through, all his arrangements.

This Expedition will stand for all time as one of the most brilliant of Antarctic efforts, an achievement only brought about by the skill, pluck and determination of all concerned.

#### IV.—PHILATELIC NOTES.

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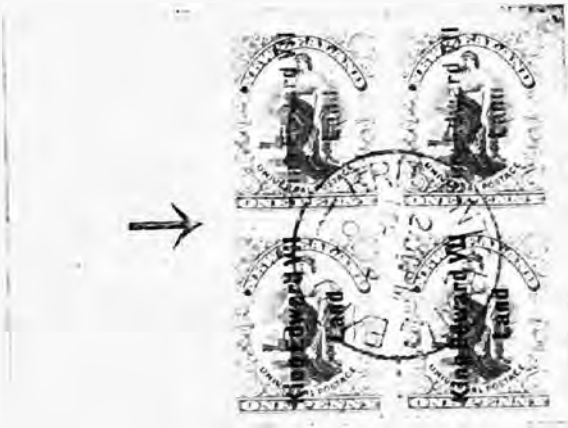
THE New Zealand stamp used for this issue, was from what is known as the "new plate." This plate had a minute dot almost in the centre of the spaces between the stamps in the horizontal rows, but it is frequently cut out by the perforation, which gauged 14; the watermark was N.Z. over a star.

The overprint, "King Edward VII. Land", was, as I have mentioned before, in green, and invariably reads upwards. The sheets consisted of 60 stamps, the overprint being set up in a block of 30, five horizontal rows of six each. I illustrate a used block of four from the centre of the sheet (left-hand side) which shows this very clearly, as the overprint on the two upper stamps is not in alignment with the two lower ones, and is more lightly printed.

The postmark used reads: "BRIT. ANTARCTIC EXPD" with the N.Z. underneath, and the date. I illustrate various used copies showing this postmark very clearly, and also showing different dates.

It is interesting to note that, in the autumn of 1911, our Publisher, Mr. D. Field, purchased from Sir Ernest Shackleton, all the King Edward VII. Land stamps he possessed, together with those that had been returned to him from New Zealand.

\* \* \* \*



Block of four shewing the arrow pointing to middle of sheet. It will be noticed that the overprint on the two upper stamps is not so clear as on the lower ones ; this is due to the sheet of 60 stamps being overprinted in two operations, 30 stamps at a time.

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Ernest Shackleton's Expedition  
of 1907-09.

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Ditto ditto block of four ...	1	6	0

This stamp is exceedingly scarce in unused  
condition, and it is with pleasure that  
I am able to offer it in superb mint  
condition (less than 200 exist thus) 1 5 0

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**D. FIELD,**

**4 & 5, The Royal Arcade, Old Bond St.,**

**LONDON, W.**

Telephone: 4809 Gerrard.



This brings my little book to a close, and I think that my readers will now agree with me that this stamp is a genuine and bona-fide postal issue, and also one of the most interesting stamps it is possible to obtain.

Not only is it of great Philatelic importance, but it also constitutes a perpetual reminder of a glorious achievement, of which every Briton, and indeed the whole world, is justly proud.

*(FINIS.)*

# Bibliography.

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BY

Sir Ernest Shackleton, c.v.o.

## THE HEART OF THE ANTARCTIC.

Being the Story of the British Antarctic Expedition, 1907-09. With an Introduction by HUGH ROBERT MILL, D.S.O., and an account of the first journey to the South Magnetic Pole, by PROFESSOR EDGEWORTH DAVID, F.R.S.

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