

A Permanent Memorial to Dr. Edward Wilson

by Sylvester L. Crozet, F.R.G.S.

Although those interested in the history of polar exploration are aware that at the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge, England, many personal items of famous Antarctic explorers are preserved, it is not generally known that in Gloucester, at the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, a collection of similar articles is housed. These items were the personal belongings of Dr. Edward Adrian Wilson, who died with Scott in the Antarctic in 1912.

Ten years ago, in 1962, the 50th anniversary of Dr. Wilson's death, the monument erected to his memory, sculpted by Capt. Scott's widow, Lady Scott (later Lady Kennet), which was unveiled in 1914, in the Long Garden of the Promenade at Cheltenham, was the scene of a memorial ceremony. Concurrently there was an exhibition at the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum of many of Dr. Wilson's works of art and personal possessions which he took to the Antarctic, as Scientific Director, with Scott's expedition.

This year in June, a similar display, enhanced by several recent acquisitions to the Wilson Collection, was arranged by the curator of the art gallery, to mark the centenary of Dr. Wilson's birth in the previously mentioned town. On this occasion more than 100 of his water colours, drawings, photographs and other personalia were on view.

The 1972 exhibition served as a curtain-raiser to a more lasting tribute to this intrepid explorer. This was the publication, by Blandfords, of "Edward Wilson - Diary of the 'Terra Nova' Expedition to the Antarctic 1910-1912".* In this volume, most excellently presented, are reproduced a great number of the water colours which were executed by Dr. Wilson when he accompanied that ill-fated enterprise.

The work referred to was edited from original manuscripts in the Scott Polar Research Institute and the British Museum, by Mr. H. G. R. King, librarian of the aforementioned establishment.

BOOK REVIEW

BOEKOORSIG

DIARY OF THE 'TERRA NOVA' EXPEDITION TO THE ANTARCTIC 1910-1912

by Edward Wilson

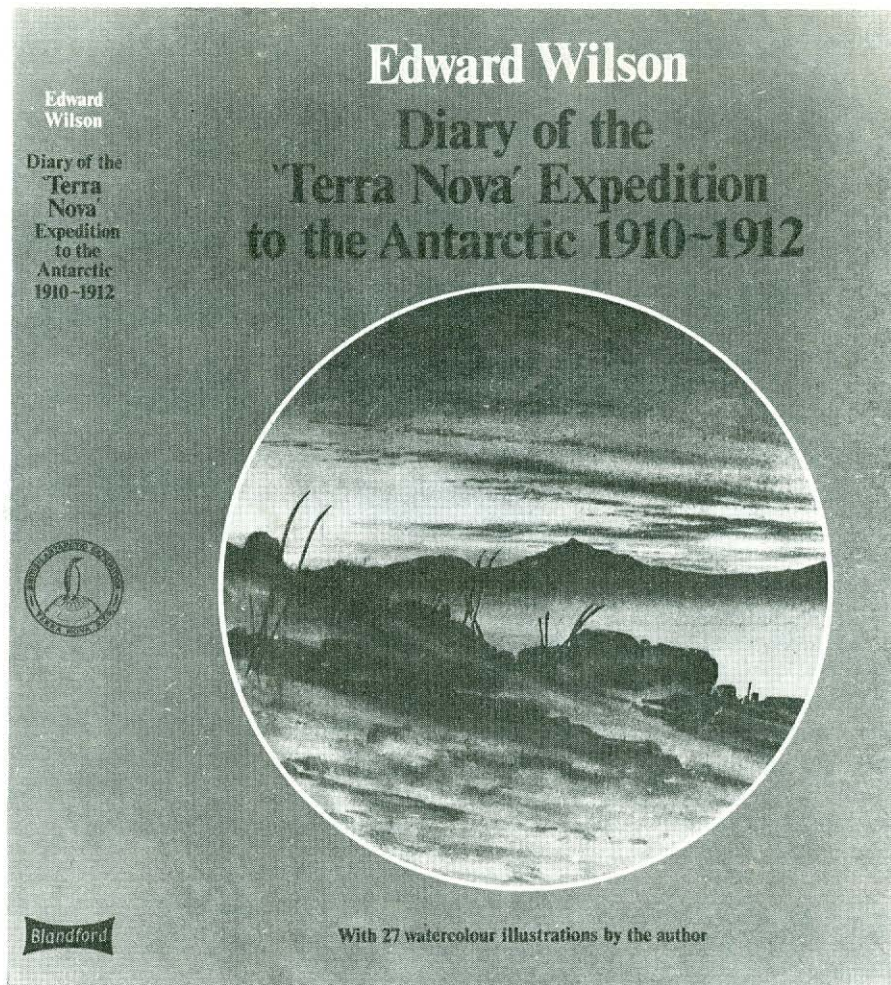
*Blandford Press Ltd., 167 High Holborn, London WC1V 6PH. £6,50 plus postage.

This most readable book of Scott's last expedition to the South is a welcome addition to Antarctic literature. Wilson, with his scientific and medical background, and having accompanied Scott on a previous expedition to the Antarctic, was Scott's obvious choice as Chief Scientific Officer on the "Terra Nova" expedition. The book has been compiled and transcribed by H. G. R. King from the diary kept by Wilson during the voyage to the Antarctic (via the Cape of Good Hope, Australia and New Zealand), the wintering at Cape Evans prior to the bid for

the pole and his field diary kept during this latter period. The book is richly illustrated with maps, photographs, sketches and 27 of Wilson's beautiful watercolours of such scenes as glaciers, pack-ice and sunsets.

The diary was written for his family to read and Wilson's enthusiasm fills it with optimism right until shortly before his death.

As far as the scientific programme was concerned, Wilson did not spare himself. He set a rigorous programme and worked long hours, determined for "the scientific work to make the bagging of the Pole merely an item in the results".



His account of the winter months, prior to the pole expedition, are filled with descriptions very similar to those given by members of today's Antarctic teams. The curiosity of the penguins, close shaves with crevasses and the two-sided nature of the husky dogs (lovable creatures in their relationship to humans but uncontrollably vicious as far as other living creatures are concerned) are talked of by every visitor to the White Continent.

During the dreadful trek to the pole, Wilson's humour and good spirits must have buoyed the rest of the team considerably. However, even he is forced to comment after

the last few terrible days of urging the exhausted and starving horses across the crevassed surface, "Thank God the horses are now all done with and we begin the heavier work ourselves".

The return trip is a story of failing strength and crippling injuries which would have been minor under different circumstances. The account ends a few weeks before the death of the Pole party, a tragic eleven miles from One Ton Depot which would have meant their survival.

M.R.T.