

surmise. Earlier, Gilkes suggests that Shackleton could not have met Sørle at Stromness in May because there was no fishing there. During my own several years' association with South Georgia whaling, it was the regular custom to leave behind an over-wintering party, to care for machinery and general caretaking duties; therefore, the stations, whether operational or not, were never unoccupied. This could explain Sørle's presence at Stromness. This would also explain the presence of a ship lying at the wharf — referred to by Shackleton — for the convenience of the over-wintering party, presumably, although I would have expected a catcher, rather than a sailing ship.

Finally, Shackleton seems to have had no doubt as to where he was. In chapter XI of *South*, he wrote: 'After breakfast Mr Sørle took us round to Husvik in a motor launch.' All the Norwegian whalers, whom I met in South Georgia, accepted that Stromness was where Shackleton's party ended up, and the story seemed to be part of their folklore, passed down by people who knew him and witnessed his arrival. Morgan-Grenville has told me himself that, after crossing the König Glacier, it must have been a lot easier to have gone to Stromness than to Husvik.

It is possible that, sometime in the future, Salvesen may be able to throw more light from contemporary sources. Any company, operating thousands of miles from headquarters, and particularly a shipping company, would almost certainly maintain a log of events, for the benefit of the directors at the headquarters and visiting officials. It will depend on how far back such records were preserved. There may even be records in Norway, whalers' reminiscences, for instance.

Editor's note: Shortly after the preceding letter was received, another communication was received about which whaling station Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean initially reached after their crossing of South Georgia in 1916. In November 1992, Michael Gilkes wrote to James Meiklejohn, the chairman of the Salvesen Ex-Whalers Club in Tønsberg, Norway, to see if Mr Meiklejohn knew of anyone in the whaling community who might be able to produce old documents relevant to the Shackleton Valley controversy. After being in contact with Sonja and Karl Jan Skontorp, Mr Meiklejohn wrote to *Polar Record* in the affirmative. The following are excerpts from separate letters from Mr Meiklejohn and Mr Skontorp.

A resolution to the Shackleton Valley controversy

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Let me first introduce myself. James Meiklejohn, born in Edinburgh. Employed with Salvesen of Leith for 17 years.

Sailed with Floating Factory *Southern Venturer*, then served at Leith Harbour Whaling Station, with four years overwintering. Transferred from Leith to Tønsberg and served with Salvesen's agent. Founded my own company and celebrated 25th anniversary a few days ago. In 1984 founded Salvesen Ex-Whalers Club...

At the end of November last year I received a letter from Michael Gilkes....I have been in touch with friends who still have contacts in the whaling fraternity, and I enclose the following documents: (1) An extract taken from a letter written by Søren Berntsen to his wife, dated 1 June 1916. This letter is in the possession of his youngest daughter, Sonja, now Mrs Skontorp. (2) A translation of this extract by Karl Jan Skontorp, Sonja's son.

I gave them both copies of Michael Gilkes' letter, together with the notes published in *Polar Record*, and I stressed the importance of the original letter. I told them that the contents would 'lay to rest' irrevocably any further discussions and that proof was essential. It is thus with great pleasure that I enclose a copy of the original letter together with slides of each page, which I received today from the Skontorp family.

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My name is Karl Jan Skontorp. I have been contacted by Mr James Meiklejohn regarding the question, 'Did Shackleton come to Husvik or Strømnes when he crossed South Georgia?' My grandfather, Søren Berntsen, was Manager at Husvik in the years from 1907 to 1917. I have translated the following extract from a private letter from my grandfather to his wife, the contents of which will eliminate irrevocably any lingering doubts. The letter is dated 1 June 1916:

Shackleton, who left here in December 1914 on a South Pole Expedition, arrived on the west coast of Georgia from South Shetland in a small rowing boat, 12 days ago. He had lost his vessel in the Ice in October. Since then he and his crew had stayed on the Ice for several months. Finally sailed with the lifeboats and ended up on Elephant Island in South Shetland. From there Shackleton and 5 of his crew sailed here to Georgia and landed on the west coast. Shackleton and 2 of his men walked across the island and came down to Strømnes. They were so bearded that Sørle didn't recognize them until he identified himself. The day after he came here, Sørle sent *Samson* to the other side of the island and fetched the 3 men who had stayed behind in the boat. Now they have departed to Elephant Island in South Shetland to get the remaining 22 men. They took one of Restitution's vessels which was laid-up here. Thom has gone with them. Shackleton asked if he could accompany them....

They have been gone now for 9 days and I expect them back tomorrow. Hope they have rescued the 22 men who were left. It is unbelievable that anyone could survive in a small boat from South Shetland to here at this time of year. Shackleton and two of the others slept here the night before they went on the rescue expedition and I heard the two make an awful noise in their sleep — they thought that they were back at sea in the small boat.

Many lines have been eradicated. They contained personal comments and details about work on the station and have no interest in this matter whatsoever. The translation is as exact as possible. The only diversion I have allowed myself is to add commas and full stops.

Editor's note: We would like to express our appreciation for the assistance of Michael Gilkes, James Meiklejohn, Sonja Skontorp, Karl Jan Skontorp, and Kristian Flaatten in attaining, 77 years after the event, this answer to a question that has captivated the minds of historians and others interested in the achievements of one of the greatest Antarctic explorers.

Samuel Hearne and the printed word I.S. MacLaren

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The publication of M.J. Brand's note, 'Samuel Hearne and the massacre at Bloody Falls' (*Polar Record* 28 (166): 229–232), occasions the need for a delineation of some of the bibliographical aspects of Hearne's famous narrative (Hearne 1795). Rehearsing the well-known story of the massacre on 17 July 1771 of Inuit by Chipewyan and Copper Indians eight miles upstream from the mouth of the Coppermine River, Brand relies on familiar sources for a recapitulation that does not add to or depart from conventional understanding of the event. He follows Glover (1958) in noting that the account of the massacre as published in Hearne's *A journey from Prince of Wales's Fort...* 'was not part of his original journal (as represented by the Stowe MS)' (Brand 1992: 231). He emphasises that we have Hearne's 'journal' only in the Stowe MS (Hearne 1791a), but he does not state why this is remarkable: perhaps it is because, not being an autograph manuscript, that is, not in Hearne's own hand, the Stowe MS cannot, with utter certainty, be regarded as his work entirely.

Brand does not cite the other published version of the massacre scene (Williams 1969: 196–200), which has appeared since Glover's edition, nor does he mention the other version of the MS (Hearne nd) in the British Library — the Grenville MS in the Dropmore Papers — which has come to light more recently (Smith 1981: 82). This manuscript is also not in Hearne's hand, and may or may not be regarded as closer to the author's exact intentions, depending upon the significance that one accords the information in a comparatively longer title — 'Hearne's journal 1770–72 from the original in possession of the Hudson's Bay Company' — than that of the Stowe MS. It remains to suggest that new ground cannot be broken on this topic without more bibliographical attention being paid to this engrossing omnibus narrative. Following Glover is helpful only to a point, and one does not outdistance that point by following Peter Newman's horror-movie version of the massacre (MacLaren 1991a), which dwells entirely on the element of torture, an element not

found in Hearne's field note as it is represented in the Stowe and Grenville MSS. Indeed, any effort to describe the published narrative would do well to begin with Glyndwr Williams's considered view of the journals of other fur-trade explorers: 'It is one of the ironies of the history of the Canadian West that the journals of some of its most significant explorers — Radisson, Kelsey, La France, Pond — present ineluctable problems of reliability and even authenticity' (Williams 1970: 25; 1978: 41).

The relevant section from the transcript of the Stowe MS that was made early in this century for the National Archives of Canada (then the Public Archives of Canada) (Hearne 1791b) has been published (MacLaren 1991b: 30–32), after a check of its accuracy was made, in order to advance the argument that scholars, regardless of discipline, need to pay careful attention to versions of events as different stages of the same narrative give them. A published book faces a different readership and serves a different purpose than does a field note, or a journal written up at the conclusion of exploration for one's company superiors, or even the draft manuscript of the published account. The published book completes the sequence that transforms the traveller/explorer into an author.

In the specific case of the massacre at Bloody Fall, even Hearne's being at the massacre has been doubted, by Franklin's midshipman George Back, who travelled with a man — Annoethai-yazzeh — who had also accompanied Hearne (Houston 1974: 133n; MacLaren 1991b: 46–47). Short of that doubt, admittedly an extreme view although not automatically a dismissable one, one must do what Brand, by following Glover alone, has not done: examine the Stowe and Grenville MSS.

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