

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | South Kensington | Thursday, 19 July 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWENTY-SEVEN NEWLY-DISCOVERED LETTERS

REVEAL DETAILS OF THE SEARCH FOR CAPTAIN SCOTT AND HIS COMPANIONS

Letters written by Apsley Cherry-Garrard to his mother expected to realise over £50,000

Polar section of Christie's Travel, Science and Natural History auction
commemorates the centenary of Captain Scott's death



Twenty-seven newly-discovered letters, 1910-1912 (estimate: £50,000-80,000)

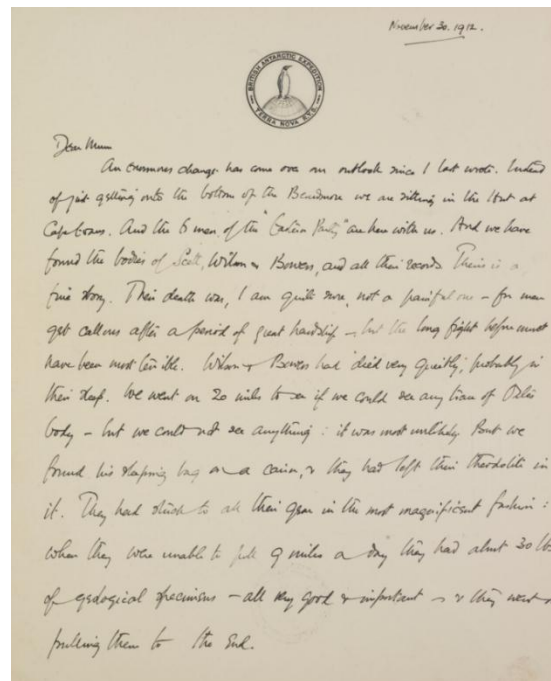


Apsley Cherry-Garrard

South Kensington, London – A newly-discovered letter describing the discovery of the bodies of Captain Scott and his companions on their famous fatal polar journey 100 years ago is to be auctioned. Written by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, the youngest member of the *Terra Nova* expedition and one of the 12-man search party who found Scott, the letter will be offered for sale within the Polar section of Christie's *Travel, Science and Natural History* auction to be held in South Kensington on Tuesday, 9 October 2012. Preserved by a family member, and hitherto unknown to scholars, the correspondence is part of a series of twenty-seven letters covering the whole span of the expedition from its departure in June 1910 to the sad return of the survivors to New Zealand in February 1913. The correspondence is a major new source by one of the most prominent expedition members and is estimated to fetch between £50,000 and £80,000 when sold as a complete collection.

Thomas Venning, Director and Senior Specialist, Christie's commented: "With hindsight, it feels as if it was always a given that the death of Scott and his companions would be hailed as a paradigm of British heroism, but the letters show us the real fear amongst the expedition members that they would be received as failures, and be subject to hostile criticism, particularly in the Press."

The letter dated 20 November 1912 illustrated right, written by expedition-member Apsley Cherry-Garrard from the Antarctic, reports 'we have found the bodies of Scott, Wilson & Bowers, and all their records ... Their death was, I am quite sure, not a painful one – for men get callous after a period of great hardship – but the long fight before must have been most terrible'. Scott and the doomed polar party of Edward Wilson, Henry Bowers, Lawrence Oates and Edgar Evans had reached the pole on 17 January. After the loss of Evans and Oates on the return march, Scott, Wilson and Bowers, battling on against starvation and blizzards, eventually succumbed in their tent around the 29 March. Cherry-Garrard, who was one of the 12-man search party who found their bodies six months later on 12 November, comments in the letter to his mother 'Theirs is a fine story ... Wilson & Bowers had died very quietly, probably in their sleep'.



Aged just 24 when he volunteered to join Scott's *Terra Nova* Expedition, Apsley Cherry-Garrard was its youngest member. His memoir, *The Worst Journey in the World*, has become one of the classics of polar literature: it draws its title not from the polar journey but from the terrible sufferings he experienced six months earlier during an expedition with Wilson to visit the breeding grounds of the Emperor Penguin at Cape Crozier in the depths of the Antarctic winter – the plans for which he describes with fatal optimism to his mother: 'Old Bill ... & I are going to Cape Crozier for some time in the winter if all goes well & that will be great fun I think, but of course very cold'.

Cherry-Garrard experienced a physical and mental breakdown in the months after the loss of Scott's polar party, a period he describes in the correspondence as 'about the worst time I have ever had ... it has been an absolute hell'. The letters are also notable for his complaints about adverse press coverage of the expedition, which he describes as 'nothing less than a tissue of lies', and his fears of 'hostile criticism' on his return home. In the event, Scott and his companions were instantly elevated to the pantheon of British heroism, and it was to be more than 50 years before a critical reassessment of the expedition took place.

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The complete eCatalogue will be available to view online from September 2012 at www.christies.com/calendar

Public Exhibition:

Saturday, 6 October: 11.00am – 5.00pm
Sunday, 7 October: 11.00am – 5.00pm
Monday, 8 October: 9.00am – 7.30pm

Auction:

TRAVEL, SCIENCE AND NATURAL HISTORY
including the Polar Sale to commemorate the Scott Centenary, 1912-2012
9 October 2012 at 10.30am

Christie's South Kensington

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from £300. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Film Posters, Pop Memorabilia, Antiquities, Jewellery, 20th Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, among others. In 2011 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the second successive year with sales of £115.9 million / \$186.6 million.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2012 that totaled £2.2 billion/\$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £413.4 million/ \$661.5 million in the first half of 2012, an increase of 53% on the previous year.

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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