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Sara Wheeler, author of *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica*

SAGA OF THE 'DISCOVERY'

LOUIS BERNACCHI



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Saga of the 'Discovery'

Louis Bernacchi

The story of Captain Scott's first expedition, by one who went with him.

Louis Bernacchi's book *Saga of the 'Discovery'* is a comprehensive history of the fascinating ship which was built specifically for Antarctic exploration, and which was used intermittently for such purposes until the early 1930s, when she was given to the Boy Scouts Association. For the next 50 years the Discovery was a training ship for the Sea Scouts and the Royal Naval Reserve, moored on the Embankment in London. Then in 1986 the Discovery returned to Dundee, where she was built, and is now berthed at Discovery Point, where visitors can go on board, and learn the history of the ship in the adjoining museum.

The book covers the ship's building in Dundee, its first – and most famous – expedition as Captain Scott's ship for his first foray to Antarctica, from 1901-1904, and its subsequent history up until retirement. Long after the return of Scott's expedition in 1904 the Discovery continued to serve the cause of Antarctic exploration, most notably when commanded by Sir Douglas Mawson on the B.A.N.Z.A.R.E expedition of 1929-1931.

Bernacchi accompanied Scott on his first expedition. As the physicist, he was responsible for the scientific work, and here recounts the experiences, accomplishments, and setbacks they encountered. Also on that expedition were some of the legendary figures of Antarctic exploration: besides Captain Robert Falcon Scott himself, Dr Edward Wilson and Ernest Shackleton were to experience these harsh conditions for the first time, to be enchanted and enthralled, and enticed back to the continent with, for the first two, fateful results.

Apart from recounting the various expeditions that Discovery accomplished, Bernacchi also provides a useful introduction to the wild life, flora and fauna of the region.

Louis Bernacchi was the only person on Scott's first expedition to have prior Antarctic experience, having been amongst the first party ever to overwinter in Antarctica, from 1898 to 1900.

Sara Wheeler, author of *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica*:
"Louis Bernacchi's diaries are among my favourites of all the heroic-age diaries. He was a physicist who went south with both Shackleton and Scott."

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Author Information

Louis Bernacchi, son of an Italian father and Belgian mother, was born in Belgium in 1876 and brought up on Maria Island, off the coast of Tasmania, and is regarded as the first Australian Antarctic explorer. He first visited Antarctica as the Physicist and Photographer for Carsten Borchgrevink's Southern Cross Antarctic Expedition of 1898 to 1900. On his return he published an account of the expedition, *To the South Polar Region*, in 1901. In 1998 another book was published, based on Bernacchi's diaries of this expedition, *That First Antarctic Winter*, written and edited by his granddaughter, Janet Crawford. Bernacchi was appointed as Physicist to the National Antarctic Expedition of 1901 to 1904, led by Captain Scott.

He later settled in London, becoming a lieutenant commander in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the First World War. His name became well known in naval circles for his work on anti-submarine devices. France made him Chevalier d'Honor for his polar work and in Britain he received the Polar medal. He was a Member of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society and died in 1942.

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