

THE LONDON LIBRARY

Press Release

21 June 2012

British heroism and humour in The London Library's Diamond Jubilee gift

The London Library has chosen an original and suitably bookish gift for its patron, Her Majesty the Queen, in honour of her Diamond Jubilee.

In addition to being the year of the Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics, 2012 marks the centenary of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's team from the British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition reaching the South Pole. While the outcome of Scott's expedition was ultimately tragic, the story of his endeavour resonates still as an exemplar of British vision, courage and heroism.

A little-known aspect of the Scott polar story is that he and his men produced a magazine, the *South Polar Times*, to entertain themselves through the Antarctic winter, until warmer weather made further exploration possible. Typed and illustrated with paintings, sketches and photographs, just one copy of each issue was produced before being passed from hand to hand and read aloud. With content ranging from weather reports to cartoons and songs, the *South Polar Times* gives an extraordinarily moving sense of the community created among expedition members during these dark winter months.

The London Library has chosen to present to Her Majesty a copy of The Folio Society's facsimile edition of the *South Polar Times*: a Diamond Jubilee gift encapsulating British patriotism, heritage and character, and the importance of the year 2012. Limited to 1,000 copies, this first ever complete facsimile edition adheres to the handmade nature of the originals, with each *South Polar Times* issue bound separately.

President of The London Library, Sir Tom Stoppard, said 'This unusual gift captures British spirit and optimism, and reflects the energy and commitment with which Her Majesty has led her subjects for these past sixty years. We are profoundly indebted to her as our monarch and Patron of The London Library.'

The volumes will be presented to Her Majesty with a specially designed London Library book plate.

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Notes to Editors

About The London Library

The London Library, St James's Square, was founded in 1841 and is the world's largest independent lending library. Its broad and eclectic collection covers a vast number of subjects

across the humanities, with books dating from the 16th Century to the latest print and digital resources. It has over one million volumes, stored on 15 miles of open-access shelves which may be freely browsed with over 97% available for loan.

With over 7000 current members, the Library has provided an invaluable resource to writers, researchers and avid readers for over 160 years. Past and present members include Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, Bruce Chatwin, Sebastian Faulks, Jeremy Paxman, Antonia Fraser and current president Sir Tom Stoppard. Membership of The London Library is open to all.

The Library is a registered charity and receives no government or statutory funding and is funded entirely by members' subscriptions, donations and bequests. In summer 2010 the Library completed the second phase of its historic refurbishment designed by Haworth Tompkins Architects.

For further information and images please contact Aimee Heuzenroeder, Senior Manager, Communications and Special Projects on +44 (0) 20 7766 4734 or email aimee.heuzenroeder@londonlibrary.co.uk

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Further information about The Folio Society's limited edition of the *South Polar Times* can be accessed on the Society's website (<http://www.foliosociety.com/book/SPT>) or by contacting Libby Lennon, Marketing Manager – Limited Editions, Tel: +44 (0) 20 7400 4260, or email libbyl@foliosociety.com