



## The Captain's Secret

—1912—

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 1912, a large wooden ship marked 'Fram' sailed into the Derwent River, carrying some very big news – news which was to be kept secret. Captain Roald Amundsen came ashore and checked in to Hadley's looking rather disheveled in a tattered blue sweater and peaked cap. Amundsen noted in his diary that he was "treated like a tramp" and given a fairly small room. He insisted he was not to be disturbed.

Rumours spread and reporters became increasingly insistent, pleading Mr Hadley to retrieve the unkempt, seafarer guest. Mr Hadley eventually caved to pressure, knocked on the door and woke Amundsen only to hear a sharp response: "I cannot confirm anything."

Amundsen wrote secret letters to his brother, his mentor, and his King with the news that he had reached the south pole first. He also prepared a coded telegram to send to London's Daily Chronicle, all of which were sent in great secrecy at Hobart's Post Office.

After the story broke abroad, congratulatory telegrams poured in. Tasmanian journalists were so desperate for an interview they tried to break down the door of his hotel room!

A few weeks later when things had calmed down, Tasmanian Premier Sir Elliot Lewis gave a celebratory luncheon party in Captain Amundsen's honour at Hadley's, which included Captain Davis of the Aurora, as well as VIP guests, such as the United States Consul and the Norwegian Consul.

### References:

- 'The News from London', *The Mercury*, Sat 9 Mar 1912, p.5  
'CAPT. AMUNDSEN IN HOBART', *Leader*, Sat 30 Mar 1912, p.47  
Huntford, Roland. *Race for the South Pole: The Expedition Diaries of Scott and Amundsen*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.