

[Frank Hurley's Antarctica.]

[Stephen Martin, Arctic Historian, Mitchell Library, turns the pages of an old handwritten journal.]

[MAN]

0:07 – 0:33 "15th April, 1916. Landing was conducted expeditiously and without accident. Conceive our joy on setting foot on solid earth after 170 days of life on a drifting ice floe, each day filled with anxiety, patience and watching. It is sublime to feel solid earth under one's feet after having trod but heaving decks and transient ice for nearly 18 months."

[Black-and-white images of Frank Hurley operating a camera, a man in a balaclava holding an ice pick in thick snow, a man peering into a deep ice crevasse.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

0:34 – 0:51 Frank Hurley was an interesting man. He was quite often seen as a remote sort of fellow and emotionally separated from his companions. Hurley was the man who accompanied Mawson and Shackleton on two of the most historic expeditions to Antarctica in Antarctica's long history.

[Various slides of Antarctica expeditions, showing expedition members, mock snow 'penguins', and majestic ice formations.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

0:51 – 1:22 Europe and the rest of the world is receiving stories of this strange, wonderful, vast land that very few had heard or even seen photographs of. His passion was photography. His whole life seems to have been bent towards making the perfect photograph. A lot of his feelings went into his diaries and you can certainly see through some of his portraits. I think if I met Hurley today I'd ask him how he felt being in the tents with the expeditioners and with the men on Elephant Island, where they were so close and tensions must have been high.

[Photographs of expedition members on land and at sea.]

[MAN]

1:25 – 1:39 "May 10, 1916. The most motley, unkempt assembly that ever was projected on a plate. I have completed a bogie pot burning blubber-stove, made from an old drum, which was utilised for cooking meals."

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

1:41 – 1:46 Hurley was a persistent and diligent photographer and he went to extraordinary lengths to capture his photography.

[Photograph - Hurley operating his camera on ice near a snow-covered bowsprit, climbing through a crevasse, perched on the very end of the ship's highest yardarm.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

1:46 – 1:52 He'd spend hours waiting for the right light. He'd put his life in danger to get the best shot.

[Photograph of a three-masted ship stationary in ice.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

1:52 – 2:05 As the 'Endurance' of Shackleton's trans-Antarctic expedition was caught in the ice, Hurley continued taking photographs and there's a wonderful shot, one of the most iconic images of the 20th century, of the 'Endurance' caught in the ice.

[Negative image of the ship, sails furled, shot from below.]

[MAN]

2:08 – 2:26 "27th August. During the night, take flashlight of ship beset by pressure. This necessitated some 20 flashes. Half blinded after the successive flashes, I lost my bearing amidst the hummocks, bumping shins against the projecting ice points and stumbling into deep snow drifts."

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

2:27 – 2:42 Once they realised the 'Endurance' was gone, Hurley had to sit down and cull down from about 600 negatives down to about 120. Those that he rejected he smashed, so that he wouldn't have to go back and go through the pangs of indecision and change his mind.

[Photographs - various views of the 'Endurance' trapped in ice, a gathering of expedition crew in the ship's boardroom, a man with an armful of puppies.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

2:42 – 2:45 I wonder if they ever thought, "Will I get home?"

[Photographs of the expedition's camp on a desolate shore.]

[MAN]

2:47 – 3:19 "29 October. The dump heap is a collection of dress suits, hats, brushes and combs - all the pleasant though useless refinements of civilisation. After all, value is but relative. During the afternoon, Wild, McIlroy and myself went abroad. The poor old ship! What a battered wreck she is. The starboard side has been crushed. The boardroom, too, is a pitiful sight. It is difficult to recognise but for the name on the stern, 'Endurance'."

[Photographs of the wrecked 'Endurance'.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

3:21 – 3:35 I think it's extraordinary that the photos and the diaries have survived - they're delicate, they're fragile - have come back across the ice, they've come back across stormy seas and they've brought these stories back to Australia in remarkably fine condition.

[Wearing cotton gloves, Stephen removes photographic plates from their cases and examines them on a lightbox.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

3:36 – 3:55 Here they are, over 100 years later, in the Mitchell Library and in the exhibitions that we hold here. It's always interesting to think about what the feelings were when these men, including Hurley, were rescued from the Antarctic. He must've felt immense relief that he was being saved, that his life was being saved.

[MAN]

3:58 – 4:29 "30 August, 1916. Day of wonders. Whilst the party were in at lunch, Masters and I were shelling limpets. Whilst we were so engaged, a ship rounded the Gnomon Island. We immediately called out, 'Ship O' which was instantly followed by a general exodus of cheering and some hysterical antics of lunatics. On coming alongside, we recognised the

boss and heartily thanked God for his safety. Had a musical evening and learned the news of the war."

[Scenes of the expedition's rescue.]

[STEPHEN MARTIN]

4:32 – 5:01 To be part of the custody of these is a privilege, not just because it's a record of human endeavour in Antarctica, but because it's a record of a particularly courageous and a particularly emotional part of the development of human culture in Antarctica. In Hurley's darkroom of the Mawson main base, Hurley wrote in pencil, "Near enough is not good enough." And it's a great reflection of the way Hurley treated his life.

[Photograph of Hurley in a fur-lined hood.]

[VOICEOVER]

5:03 – 5:09 One Hundred - a free exhibition at the State Library of New South Wales. Until June 16.