

SHACKLETON'S JOURNEY



William Grill

FLYING EYE BOOKS

INTRODUCTION



Born on 15 February 1874, Shackleton was the second of ten children. From a young age, Shackleton complained about teachers, but he had a keen interest in books, especially poetry – years later, on expeditions, he would read to his crew to lift their spirits. Always restless, the young Ernest left school at 16 to go to sea. After working his way up the ranks, he told his friends, “I think I can do something better, I want to make a name for myself.”

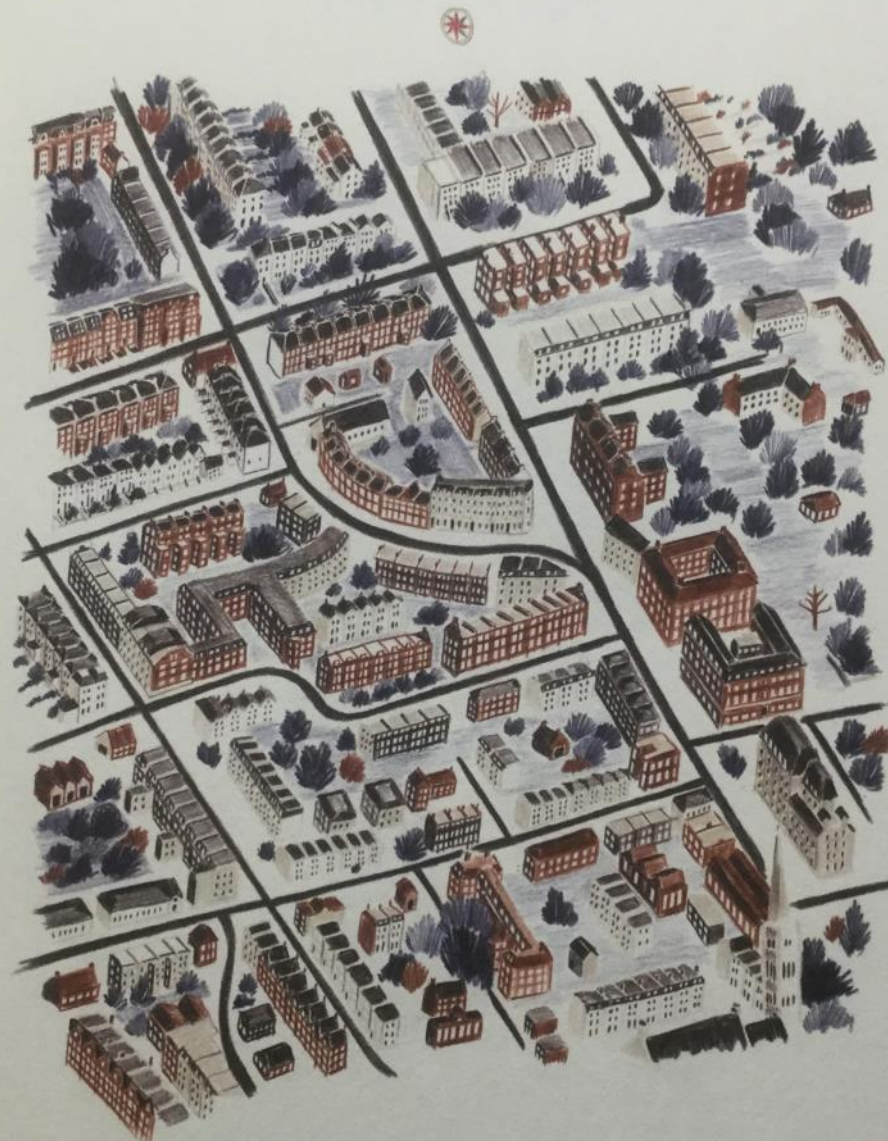


Shackleton was a member of Captain Scott's famous Discovery expedition (1901-1904), and told reporters that he had always been “strangely drawn to the mysterious south” and that unexplored parts of the world “held a strong fascination for me from my earliest memories”.

Once Amundsen reached the **South Pole** ahead of Scott, Shackleton realised that there was only one great challenge left. He wrote: “The first crossing of the Antarctic continent, from sea to sea, via the Pole, apart from its historic value, will be a journey of great scientific importance.”

On 8 August 1914, Ernest Shackleton and his brave crew set out to cross the vast south polar continent, **Antarctica**. Shackleton's epic journey would be the last expedition of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration (1888-1914). His story is one fraught with unimaginable peril, adventure and, above all, endurance.

FUNDING AND RECRUITMENT



The Shackletons had moved house many times, from Athy in County Kildare, Ireland to Yorkshire to London. Just before Shackleton left for Antarctica again in 1914, he lived in Kensington, West London.



Shackleton's first challenge was to raise enough money to support the expedition, and this proved very difficult. However, after much effort he was able to secure the thousands of pounds he needed. Life boats were named after the sponsors – the James Caird, the Dudley Docker and the Stancomb Wills.



During the recruitment process, Shackleton quizzed candidates on their practical skills, but also about more unusual things, like if they could sing well. Second-in-command Frank Wild helped Shackleton to choose 26 men from the 5,000 that applied.



THE CREW



FRANK WORSLEY
Ship's captain.



ERNEST SHACKLETON
Expedition leader.



FRANK WILD
Second-in-command.



LEONARD HUSSEY
Expedition meteorologist.



GEORGE MARSTON
Expedition artist.



WALTER HOW
Able seaman.



REGINALD JAMES
Expedition physicist.



THOMAS ORDE-LEES
Motor expert and storekeeper.



JOHN VINCENT
Boatswain and able seaman.



TOM CREAN
Second officer.



WILLIAM STEPHENSON
Fireman and stoker.



ROBERT CLARK
Expedition biologist.



JAMES WORDIE
Expedition geologist.



FRANK HURLEY
Expedition photographer.



LIONEL GREENSTREET
First officer.



CHARLES GREEN
Ship's cook.



THOMAS McLEOD
Able seaman.



TIMOTHY MCCARTHY
Able seaman.



DR. JAMES McILROY
Second surgeon.



ERNEST HOLNESS
Able seaman and stoker.



ALEXANDER KERR
Second engineer.



HENRY McNEISH
Ship's carpenter.



ALFRED CHEETHAM
Third officer.



DR. ALEXANDER MACKLIN
Expedition surgeon.



HUBERT HUDSON
Navigating officer.



LOUIS RICKINSON
Chief engineer.



WILLIAM BAKEWELL
PERCY BLACKBORROW
Able seaman. Stowaway.

THE DOGS



In 1914, a cargo of 99 dogs was sent from Canada to London. Of these, 69 were chosen for the expedition. Shackleton and the crew gave them all names, and you may notice that some are named after famous people and crew members.



The dogs came from a mongrel mixture of breeds, including Newfoundlands, St. Bernards, Eskimo dogs, Wolfhounds and wolves. Cross-breeding the dogs meant that they were very strong and had qualities such as a thick coat or a good temperament. The average weight of each dog was 100 lbs!



They included:

Alti, Amundsen, Blackie, Bob, Bo'sun, Bristol, Brownie, Buller, Bummer, Caruso, Chips, Dismal, Elliott, Fluff, Gruss, Hackenschmidt, Hercules, Jamie, Jasper, Jerry, Judge, Luke, Lupoid, Mack, Martin, Mercury, Noel, Paddy, Peter, Rodger, Roy, Rufus, Rugby, Sadie, Sailor, Saint, Sally, Sammy, Samson, Sandy, Satan, Shakespeare, Side Lights, Simian, Slippery Neck, Slobbers, Snowball, Soldier, Songster, Sooty, Spider, Split Up, Spotty, Steamer, Steward, Stumps, Sub, Sue, Surly, Swanker, Sweep, Tim, Upton, Wallaby, Wolf.



The lively dogs were to play a vital role in Shackleton's expedition. Their ability to pull more than their weight, brave the cold and work in packs meant that they were at home in Antarctic conditions. They were expected to cover up to 20 miles a day with a loaded **sledge**.



Each crew member was assigned at least one dog to care for, and many developed strong bonds with them, especially second-in-command Frank Wild, Tom Crean and the photographer Frank Hurley.



ENDURANCE



Originally intended for tourist cruises and polar hunting, the Endurance (or Polaris as she was initially named) was perhaps the strongest wooden vessel in the world with the exception of the Fram. She was named Endurance after Shackleton's family motto: *By Endurance We Conquer*.



Endurance was designed by Ole Aanderud Larsen, and constructed under the watch of master shipbuilder Christian Jacobsen in Framnaes shipyard in Sandefjord, Norway.

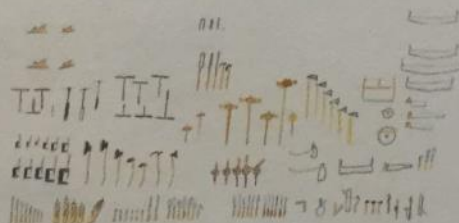
Jacobsen, being a meticulous craftsman, made sure that all the men who worked on the ship's construction were experienced seafarers as well as skilled shipwrights.



One of the main differences between the Endurance and the Fram was that the Fram was bowl-bottomed, allowing her to rise out of the ice if she became stuck.



Luckily for Shackleton, the original owners Adrien de Gerlache and Lars Chistensen were in financial straits and desperate to sell the ship. Being supportive of Shackleton's intentions, they were happy to sell the ship for £11,600 (approx £45,000 in today's currency), a fraction of the original cost.



Being such a unique ship, Endurance had to be worked on with a whole host of conventional and unconventional carpentry tools.



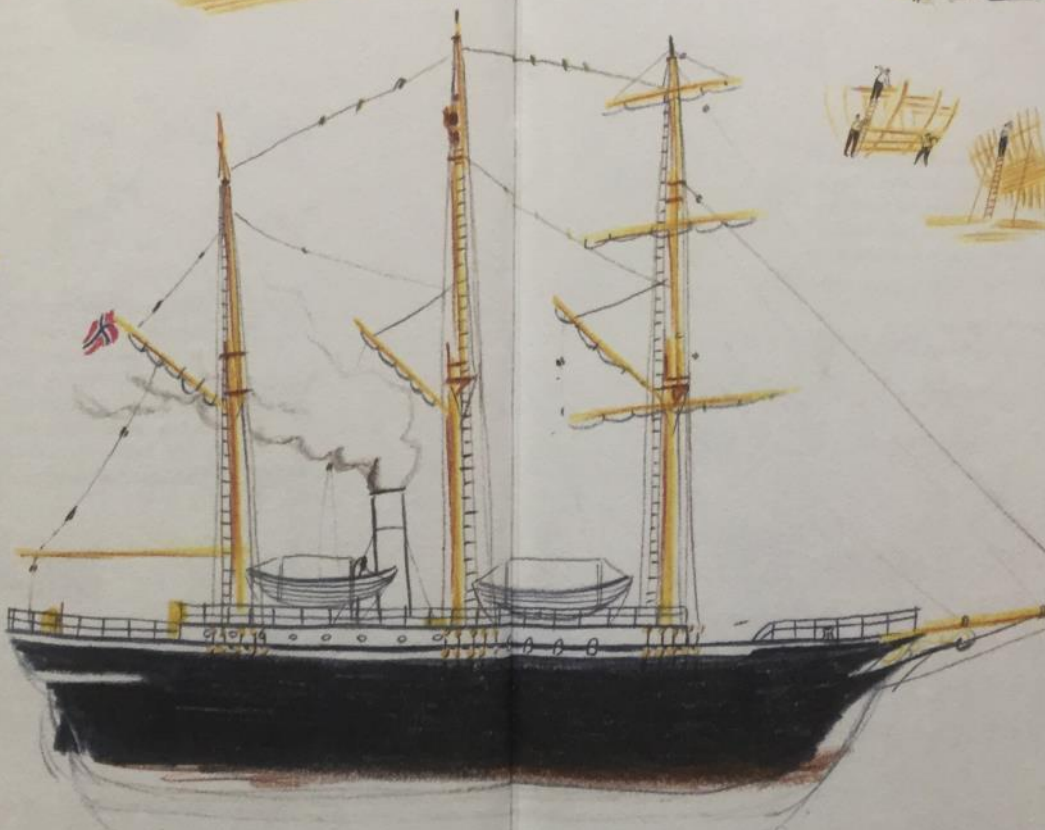
Endurance was built from Norwegian fir, oak and greenheart.



Her keel was made up of 4 sandwiched pieces of solid oak, totalling to a thickness of nearly 2.2 metres, while both her sides were 0.7 metres thick.



Each piece of timber had been selected carefully from a single oak tree, so that it would fit the design and curvature of the ship.



A very robust and sturdy little ship, Endurance was designed specifically to withstand harsh polar conditions. This meant that wherever possible joints and fittings were cross-braced and strengthened, making her extremely strong.



Later on, a platform was rigged under the jib boom so that Hurley was able to film the ship breaking through pack ice.



The bow (the front) would be used like a battering ram to break up thick ice, so it had to be especially strong. In total, it was 1.3 metres thick!

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES



As well as supporting a crew of 28 men and 69 dogs, Endurance carried a large amount of cargo. Journeying into the heart of Antarctica meant that Shackleton would need to carry a whole array of exploration equipment and supplies to keep him and his crew alive in hostile conditions, from sledges and skis to blankets and mitts.

Just before departure, Shackleton was presented with the Union flag by King George V, who encouraged him to bring it back safely.

