

# 4. Abandon Ship!

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Shackleton  
100

Endurance  
100

Geography  
History



# The Story So Far...

## In brief

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*The story so far in brief...*

**In 1914** the explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton set out on an ambitious expedition to cross the continent of Antarctica from one side to the other. He failed. However he achieved one of the greatest feats of turn of the century polar exploration; he returned with all his 27 men – alive, despite the loss of his ship. Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance*, was crushed and sank in ice in the Weddell Sea, before his team could even begin that ill-fated attempt to cross the hostile continent of Antarctica.

*Find out more here* [Royal Geographical Society - Geography resources for teachers \(rgs.org\)](https://www.rgs.org/teaching-resources/ant-arctic-antarctica/antarctica/antarctica-1914-shackletons-endurance)

**In 2022**, the Centenary of Shackleton's death, Dan Snow travelled to Antarctica on board the *S.A. Agulhas II*, as part of the *Endurance22* expedition, in a successful attempt to locate the missing wreck of Shackleton's ship.

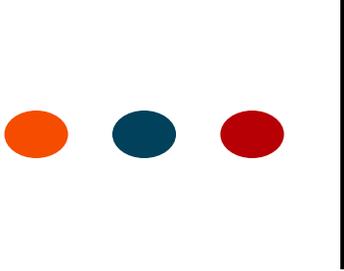
*Find out more here* [Expedition Team - Endurance22](https://www.endurance22.com/)



# Abandon Ship!

*Shackleton's ship Endurance was held fast in pack ice in January 1915. After all efforts to free her failed and Shackleton ordered that they would make the ship their winter base until winter was over and the ice had melted enough to free them.*

*It would be 8 months before that fateful order 'Abandon Ship!'*



# Timeline

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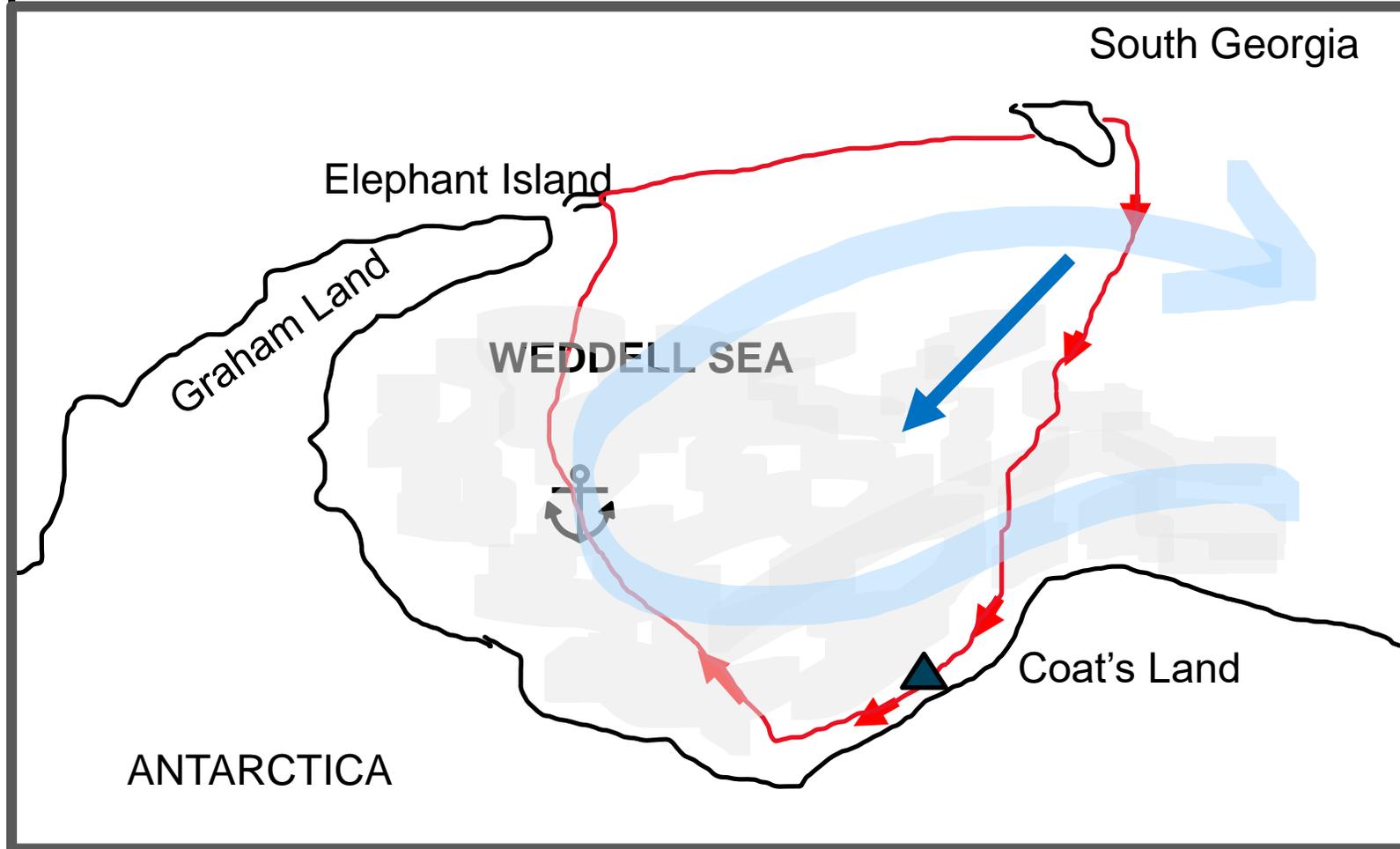
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- DECEMBER 5, 1914. The Endurance sails south from South Georgia;
- DECEMBER 7, 1914. The Endurance first encounters pack ice.
- JANUARY 18, 1915. Endurance becomes stuck in pack ice and begins drifting in the ice.
- FEBRUARY 22, 1915. The Endurance reaches its Furthest South, 77 degrees S off Luitpold Land.
- FEBRUARY 24, 1915. Shackleton settles in for the winter.
- OCTOBER 27, 1915. The Endurance is badly damaged. Order to **Abandon Ship!**
- NOVEMBER 8, 1915. Hurley dives into the flooded ship to recover precious glass plates.
- NOVEMBER 21, 1915. The Endurance sinks.

# Diagram Weddell Sea

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- Weddell Gyre
- Endurance is stuck in ice
- Pack ice
- Shackleton's route
- NE gales affecting Endurance
- Last known position of Endurance when she sank

# Trying to free Endurance

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What kind of ice is it?

Why is it there?

Why is Endurance Stuck?

Cutting the ice around Endurance  
14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February 1915

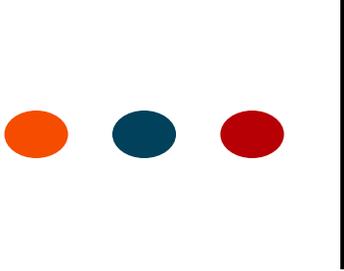
Photographer Frank Hurley

# What's 'The Ritz' Connection?

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“When the Ritz first opened its doors on 25th May 1906, it was considered one of the greatest hotels in the world.”



# Using Photographic Evidence

- **What do you notice in these photographs?**
- **What does this tell you about everyday life for these men?**
- **Is this reliable evidence?**

*The following photographs were taken by Frank Hurley, their resident photographer, during the winter of 1915 when Shackleton's crew and her ship the 'Endurance' were marooned in the pack ice before the final order to 'Abandon Ship' was given.*

Some of these photographs can be seen here [Royal Geographical Society - Shackleton's legacy and the power of early Antarctic Photography \(rgs.org\)](https://www.rgs.org/our-work/education/learning-resources/shackletons-legacy-and-the-power-of-early-antarctic-photography)

‘The Scientists washing down the Ritz.’ Living quarters in the hold with James Wordie, Alfred Cheetham and Alexander Macklin (left to right). Glass plate negative, S0000161





Soccer game during  
a 'hold up' Worsley  
in goal.

16 February 1915.

3



Image credit: *'Clark the Biologist'*.

Glass plate negative, S0011641

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“13 March ... Clark  
works dragnet ... &  
obtains a good haul of  
plankton ...”  
Worsley



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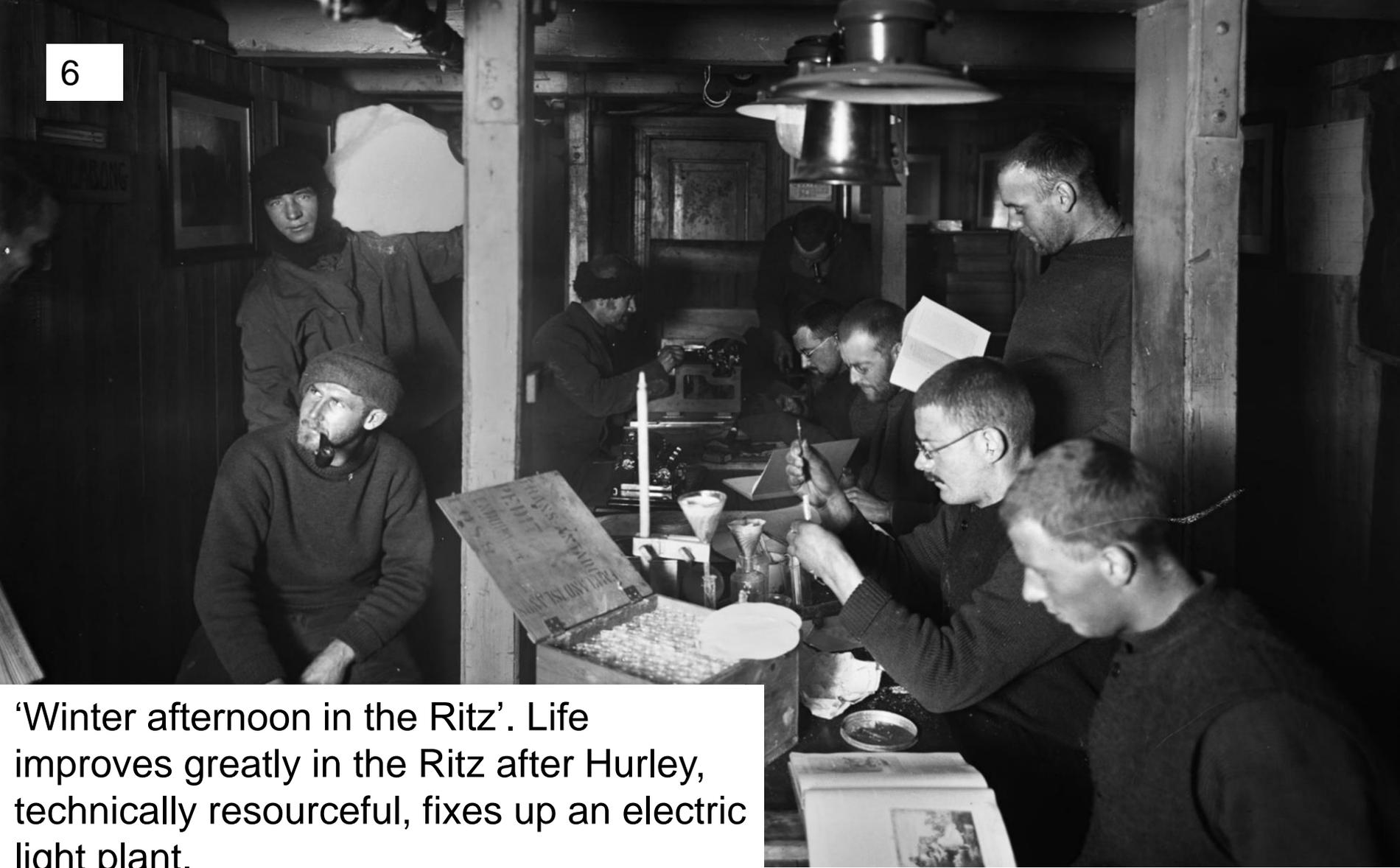
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A glimpse in the fo'c'stle. The  
seamen together  
© Scott Polar Research  
Institute, University of  
Cambridge, with permission



A full dog team  
11<sup>th</sup> April 1915

Photographer Frank Hurley



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“Blackboro bringing  
in the daily supply of  
water”

Rickinson

‘Winter afternoon in the Ritz’. Life improves greatly in the Ritz after Hurley, technically resourceful, fixes up an electric light plant.

Glass plate negative, S0000841



*'Hurley and Hussey engaged in a friendly tournament'*

Glass plate negative, S0000169

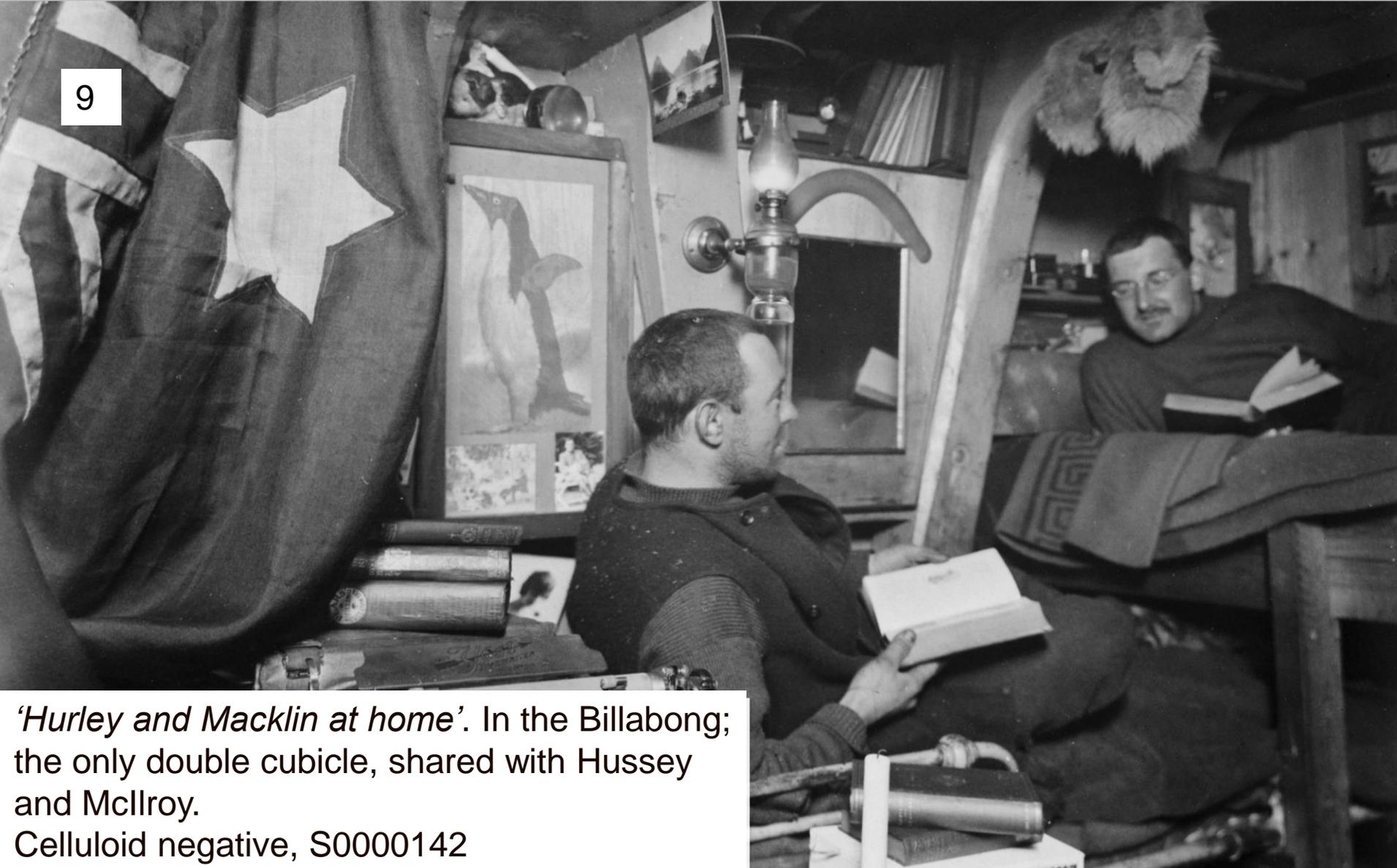
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*'Hussey and James taking observations'.*

*Glass plate negative, S0000164*



*'Hurley and Macklin at home'*. In the Billabong;  
the only double cubicle, shared with Hussey  
and McIlroy.

Celluloid negative, S0000142

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*'Mid-winter Dinner'.*

Glass plate negative, S0000160

22 June 1915 – the day the sun begins to return –

“treated as Christmas Day ... the special feast of duck and green peas, fresh - out of the tin”.

Rickinson

“After ... the end of the room was converted into a stage ... the footlights were of acetylene, 5 burners with biscuit tin lids for reflectors ... everybody did something .... Most of the performers were in costume.”

James



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“All hands are on all day & sleep all night except for the Night Watch who looks after the dogs & ship & keeps his eyes skinned for any sign of a possible crack in the ice ... from 8PM to 8AM ...”

Worsley

*‘The Night Watchman returns’*. Glass plate negative, S0000838



“The charges of flash powder were placed in three shielded receptacles and fired electrically. The dogs were extremely scared ...”

Hurley describes photographing the dogs at night.

1 August 1915:

“... the floe surrounding us started breaking up ... pressure ... forcing large masses of ice underneath us ... all hands ... warned to stand by, get all the sleep they can & have their warmest clothes in readiness to ‘get out and walk’ ...

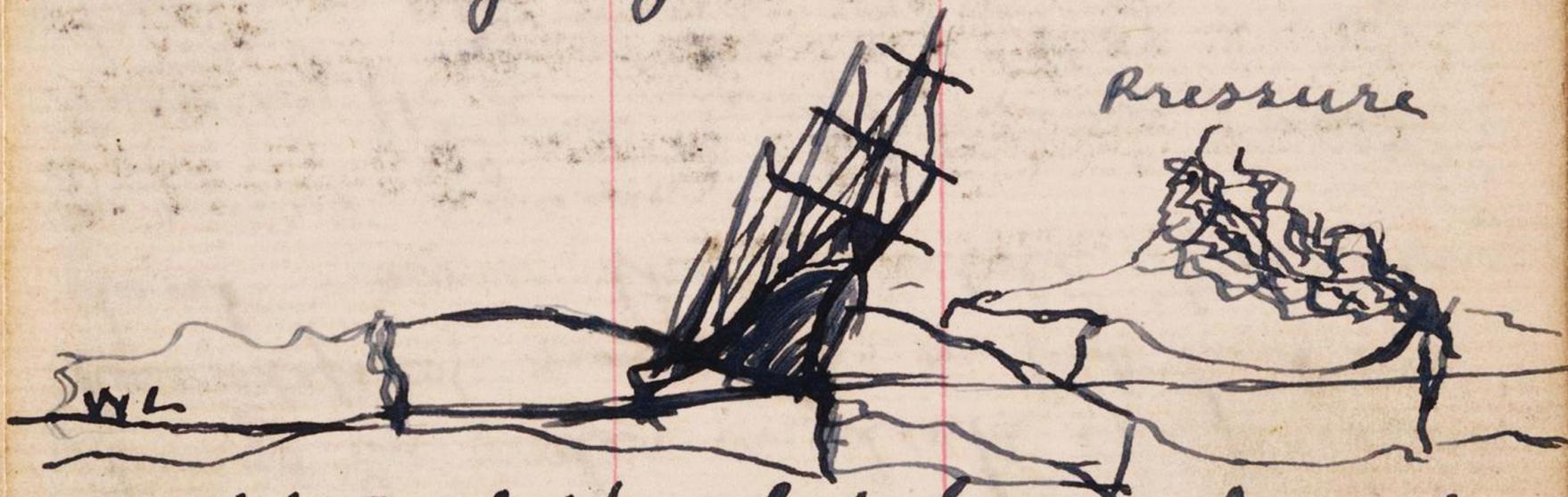
A year ago ... this day and hour ... we unmoored in the S.W. India Docks & started South.”

Worsley

The Long, Long Night. Glass plate negative, S0000143



be a lot of pressure when the gale  
subsides I have placed my loved ones  
photos inside Bible we got presented  
with from Queen Alexandra & put  
them in my bag



Position of the ship Sunday August  
1<sup>st</sup> 1915 at 4-0 P.M. very thick &  
dark

McNish's closely observed diary description of the ice attacking *Endurance* on 1 August 1915 includes a diagram revealing the position and direction of the ice exerting pressure.

*Journal of Harry McNish, carpenter on Shackleton's Endurance expedition.* [Ref: MS-1389](#). Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand



*'The Members of the  
Endurance Expedition'.*  
Wearing full polar clothing and  
gathered under the bow of the  
ship, photographed and filmed  
by Hurley probably on 1  
September 1915.

Glass plate negative, S0000850



## Members of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition on board the Endurance

- ❖ William Bakewell, Able Seaman
- ❖ Perce Blackborow, Steward
- ❖ Alfred Cheetham, Third Officer
- ❖ Robert Clark, Biologist
- ❖ Tom Crean, Second Officer
- ❖ Ernest Holness, Stoker
- ❖ Walter How, Able Seaman
- ❖ Charles Green, Cook
- ❖ Lionel Greenstreet, First Officer
- ❖ Hubert Hudson, Navigator
- ❖ Frank Hurley, Photographer
- ❖ Leonard Hussey, Meteorologist
- ❖ Reginald James, Physicist
- ❖ Alexander Kerr, Engineer
- ❖ Alexander Macklin, Surgeon
- ❖ George Marston, Artist
- ❖ Timothy, McCarthy, Able Seaman
- ❖ James McIlroy, Surgeon
- ❖ Thomas McLeod, Able Seaman
- ❖ Harry 'Chippy' McNish, Carpenter
- ❖ Thomas Orde-Lees, Motor Expert and Storekeeper
- ❖ Lewis Rickinson, Engineer
- ❖ Ernest Shackleton, Expedition Leader
- ❖ William Stephenson, Stoker
- ❖ John Vincent, Boatswain
- ❖ Frank Wild, Second-in-Command
- ❖ James Wordie, Geologist
- ❖ Frank Worsley, Captain

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