



TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

# Antarctic Crossings

*Introduced by BFI curator Patrick Russell*

The resumption of Antarctic exploration in the 1950s was captured in dazzling colour by some of Britain's finest documentary filmmakers. Don't miss a rare Technicolor print of *The White Continent* (1951), about the Norwegian-British-Swedish Expedition to Queen Maud Land, shot by Thomas Stobart of *Conquest of Everest* fame. Plus Derek Williams' Oscar®-nominated accounts of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition: *Foothold on Antarctica* (1956) and *Antarctic Crossing* (1958).

## **The White Continent**

An account of the co-operative Norwegian-British-Swedish Expedition to Queen Maud Land during 1949-1952, the first truly international Antarctic expedition, with the nations each sending men and sharing the cost. The film covers only the first part of the expedition, its departure from Europe in the Norwegian sealer *Norsef*, its encounter with heavy weather in the 'Roaring Forties', the transfer of cargo from the whaling factory ship *Thorshovdi* to the *Norsef* in difficult conditions, near the South Sandwich Islands, the *Norsef*'s voyage through iceberg-laden sea and then pack ice until it reaches its final destination. The wintering party is landed and the setting up of the base camp is shown, and the film ends with the departure of the *Norsef*.

This is a good, direct, continuously absorbing account of an expedition which is still in progress. The subject has been made familiar by other films, but in this case is given interest by excellent colour photography. Though it gives very few personal impressions of the men on the expedition, it is an admirable general record.

*Monthly Film Bulletin, October 1951*

## **Foothold on Antarctica**

The first stage in the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition was the establishment of a base camp on the fringe of the Weddell Sea. This film, sponsored by British Petroleum as part of their contribution to the Expedition, provides an interesting record of the progress and daily routine of the journey of the *Theron* and her crew to Shackleton Base, which was established in January 1956. A modest, factual approach, excellent photography and an apt musical score give the film a simple eloquence that a more dramatic treatment might have lost. The Expedition's leaders, Dr Vivian Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary, are seen at work and also helped with the shooting as did many other members of the crew. Despite difficult working conditions, the colour is generally effective and there are some exciting shots of the formation of ice on the surface of the Weddell Sea. The film ends with a list of those who remained behind at the base, thus creating a feeling of anticipation for an adventure which is only just beginning.

*Monthly Film Bulletin, December 1956*

## Antarctic Crossing

This unique record of the trans-Antarctic expedition of 1955-1958 was made under appalling difficulties, and sometimes at temperatures well below zero. Skilful editing has resulted in a remarkable picture with moments of humour and despair linked by scenes of grandeur and beauty. The purpose of the expedition was to cross the Antarctic Continent from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea via the South Pole, and to carry out a complete programme of scientific research on the way. *Foothold on Antarctica* took the story from the departure of the advance party from London to their arrival at Shackleton Base in January 1956. *Antarctic Crossing* continues the story with the main party's crossing under Sir Vivian Fuchs and the Ross Sea party's exploration, under Sir Edmund Hillary, of the last continent uncharted by man. This modest and factual film also contains some dramatic sequences from the original films of the Scott and Shackleton expeditions, which provide startling contrast to the often impressive colour photography of the modern parties.

*Monthly Film Bulletin*, January 1959

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### THE WHITE CONTINENT

*Production Company:* Crown Film Unit  
*Sponsors:* Central Office of Information, Foreign Office  
*Commentary Written and Spoken by:* Duncan Carse  
*Director of Photography:* Thomas Stobart  
*Editor:* John Legard  
*Music:* Peter Racine Fricker  
UK 1951  
20 mins

### ANTARCTIC CROSSING

*Production Company:* World Wide Pictures  
*Sponsor:* British Petroleum Company  
*Producer:* James Carr  
*Associate Producer:* Julian Spiro  
*Photography:* George Lowe, Derek Wright  
*Editor:* Dennis Gurney  
*Prints by:* Technicolor  
*Music:* Humphrey Searle  
UK 1958  
47 mins

### FOOTHOLD ON ANTARCTICA

*Director:* Derek Williams  
*Production Company:* World Wide Pictures  
*Sponsor:* British Petroleum Company  
*Produced by:* James Carr  
*Commentary Written by:* Derek Williams  
*Photography:* Derek Williams  
*Additional Photography:* George Lowe, Edmund Hillary, Dr V.E. Fuchs, J.H. Lewis  
*Editor:* David Howes  
*Music Composed by:* Humphrey Searle  
*Music Directed by:* John Hollingsworth  
UK 1956  
21 mins

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### TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

#### Scott of the Antarctic

Sun 2 Jan 12:30, Mon 24 Jan 18:00

#### The Conquest of Everest

Mon 3 Jan 16:10, Wed 12 Jan 20:40 (+ intro by explorer Mark Wood)

#### The Great White Silence

Mon 3 Jan 18:20, Sun 23 Jan 12:10

#### Touching the Void

Wed 5 Jan 20:30, Sun 23 Jan 18:30

#### The Fight for the Matterhorn

(Der Kampf ums Matterhorn)

Thu 6 Jan 18:00 (+ intro by BFI curator Bryony Dixon), Sun 23 Jan 15:20

#### The Red Tent (Krasnaya Palatka)

Tue 11 Jan 18:00 (+ intro by BFI curator Simon McCallum),  
Sun 30 Jan 18:00

#### YES & NO Salon: Exploration Now

Wed 12 Jan 18:30

#### Encounters at the End of the World

Sat 15 Jan 15:00, Tue 25 Jan 20:30

#### Talk: Silent Cinema: Intrepid Women

Sun 16 Jan 15:30

#### To the Ends of the Earth: The Transglobe Expedition

+ Q&A with Ranulph Fiennes

Tue 18 Jan 17:45

#### Antarctic Crossings: Postwar shorts + intro by

BFI curator Patrick Russell

Tue 25 Jan 18:00

#### The Epic of Everest + live score by Simon Fisher Turner

Sat 29 Jan 19:00

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