

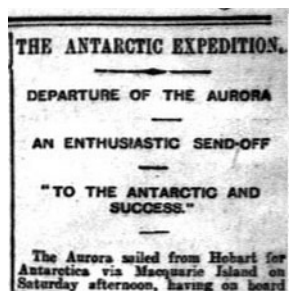
NINETY YEARS AGO

"The *Aurora* sailed from Hobart for Antarctica via Macquarie Island on Saturday afternoon, having on board Dr Mawson and nearly half the members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, the scientific instruments, and wireless telegraphy equipment, a large quantity of stores of all kinds, provisions, clothing, sledges, 266 tons of coal, etc. She is to proceed direct to Macquarie Island, where the party which is to remain on the island will be landed, and there she is to meet the *s.s. Toroa*, which has been chartered to take down the remaining members of the party, stores, and supplies, and will probably leave Hobart on Thursday.

Public interest in the expedition has been steadily increasing as the time for the *Aurora's* departure drew on, and an immense crowd assembled to see the vessel leave the port on Saturday. The Queen's Pier, at which she was lying, was densely packed with people, while a large number took up their station on the *s.s. Westralia* – lying at the King's Pier opposite – and on the end of the King's Pier. The other wharves had their quota of interested spectators, and a large number of people watched the start from the Esplanade and the reserve above it. The crowd on the side of the pier alongside the *Aurora* grew so dense as the time fixed for the vessel's departure drew near that it looked as if some of them would provide a sensation by being pushed over the edge. Fortunately everything passed off without mishap.

His Excellency the Governor and Lady Barron (attended by Major Cadell, A.D.C.), came down to the pier to say au revoir to Dr Mawson, Captain Davis, and the other members of the expedition. They were accompanied by the Master Warden (Hon. W.H. Burgess) and the secretary (Mr. J. Adams) of the Hobart Marine Board, and afterwards went as far as Long Point with the *Aurora* in the Marine Board's motor-launch *Egeria*.

The *Aurora*, with all her cargo on board, was well down in the water, and had such a quantity of deck cargo, composed of timber of various shapes and kinds, the aeroplane body in its case, the motor-boat, sledges, cases of benzine, boxes of various kinds, and miscellaneous oddments, so disposed in all available spaces that it was a somewhat difficult matter to get about the deck. On the after-deck, with their feet securely tied, were two live sheep, and a third was snugly stowed away in the motor-boat, with a little hay to console him. A large number of shore



visitors (including a noticeable proportion of Naval Reserve lads) were still on board when the hour fixed for the vessel to leave (4 o'clock) drew near. A false alarm was given a little before that by the *Aurora* pulling out a little from the wharf, and there was a considerable exodus, several elderly gentlemen displaying unexpected agility in order to avoid any possibility of being made involuntary passengers to Antarctica, or even to Macquarie Island. The *Aurora* was not starting on that occasion, but shortly afterwards, punctual to the hour arranged, the casting off of the lines was begun, and the word, "All visitors on shore" was passed along.

Hearty cheers were given by those on shore as the vessel drew away, and these were answered by the occupants of the *Aurora*, while there was much waving of hats and handkerchiefs. Cameras were busy in all directions, and the cinematographs were not idle, so that the memory of the departure of

the first Australasian Antarctic Expedition from Hobart should not be lost as long as pictorial records can preserve it. Occupying a prominent position on the *Aurora's* rigging was a signboard, with a finger pointing ahead, supplied by the Tasmanian Tourist Association, bearing the words "To the Antarctic and Success." The idea that the expedition is making an attempt on the South Pole seemed, however, to be still present in the minds of some of those on the pier, to judge by the remarks heard as the vessel began to draw away, and such encouraging shouts as, "I hope you will bring back the Pole," were heard.

The members of the expedition who sailed in the *Aurora* on Saturday were: Dr Mawson, Messrs F. Wild, W.H. Hannan, E. Webb, C.T. Harrison, A.L. Kennedy, Hurley, Bickerton, Ninnis, Watson, Madigan, Ainsworth, Hodgeman, and Dr McLean. Captain J.K. Davis is in command of the *Aurora*, and has with him the following officers:- Chief Officer, Mr F. Toutcher; second officer, Mr F. Gray; third officer, Mr De La Motte; chief engineer, Mr Gillies; second engineer, Mr. Comer. The *Aurora* carries a crew of 25 all told, and most of the members of the crew were shipped in Hobart."

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The Aurora leaves Hobart on 2 December 1911, headed 'To the Antarctic and Success'.

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