

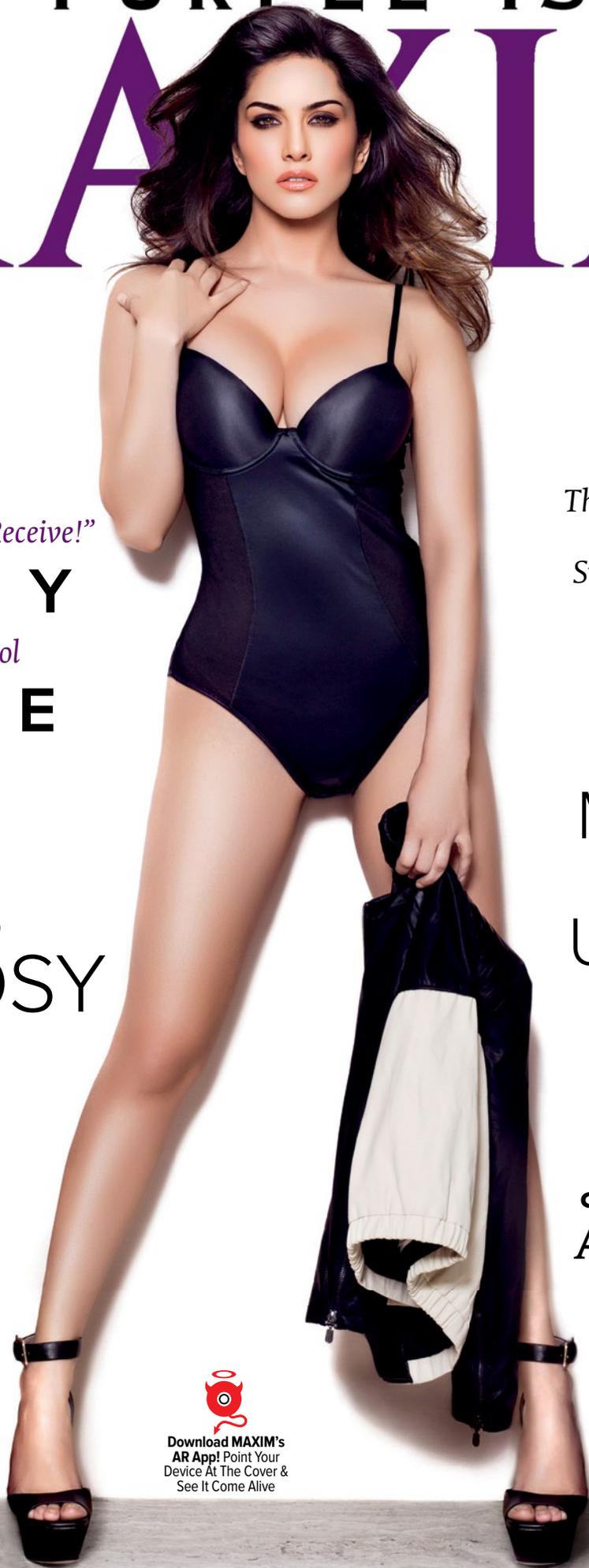
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Six men led by adventurer
Tim Jarvis recreated
the most dangerous leg of
the most gruelling

THE RACE TO

journey of all time:

Shackleton's rescue mission.

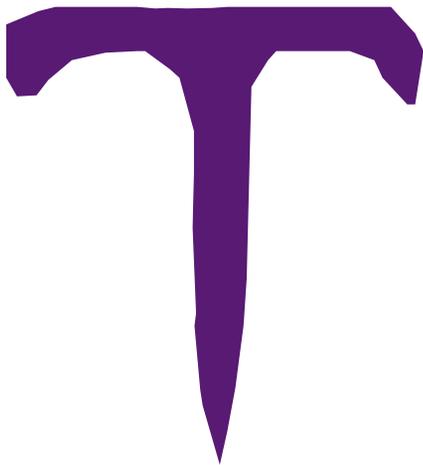
To follow exactly in
century-old footsteps, they
used identical gear and
supplies. A story of
grit and glory.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a tan jacket and pants, stands in a snowy, icy landscape. He has a large, dark green backpack on his back, secured with thick, light-colored ropes. A red rope is draped over his shoulder. He is holding a wooden staff or pole in his right hand. In the background, another person is visible, also wearing a tan jacket, standing in the snow. The sky is bright and overcast.

BEAR

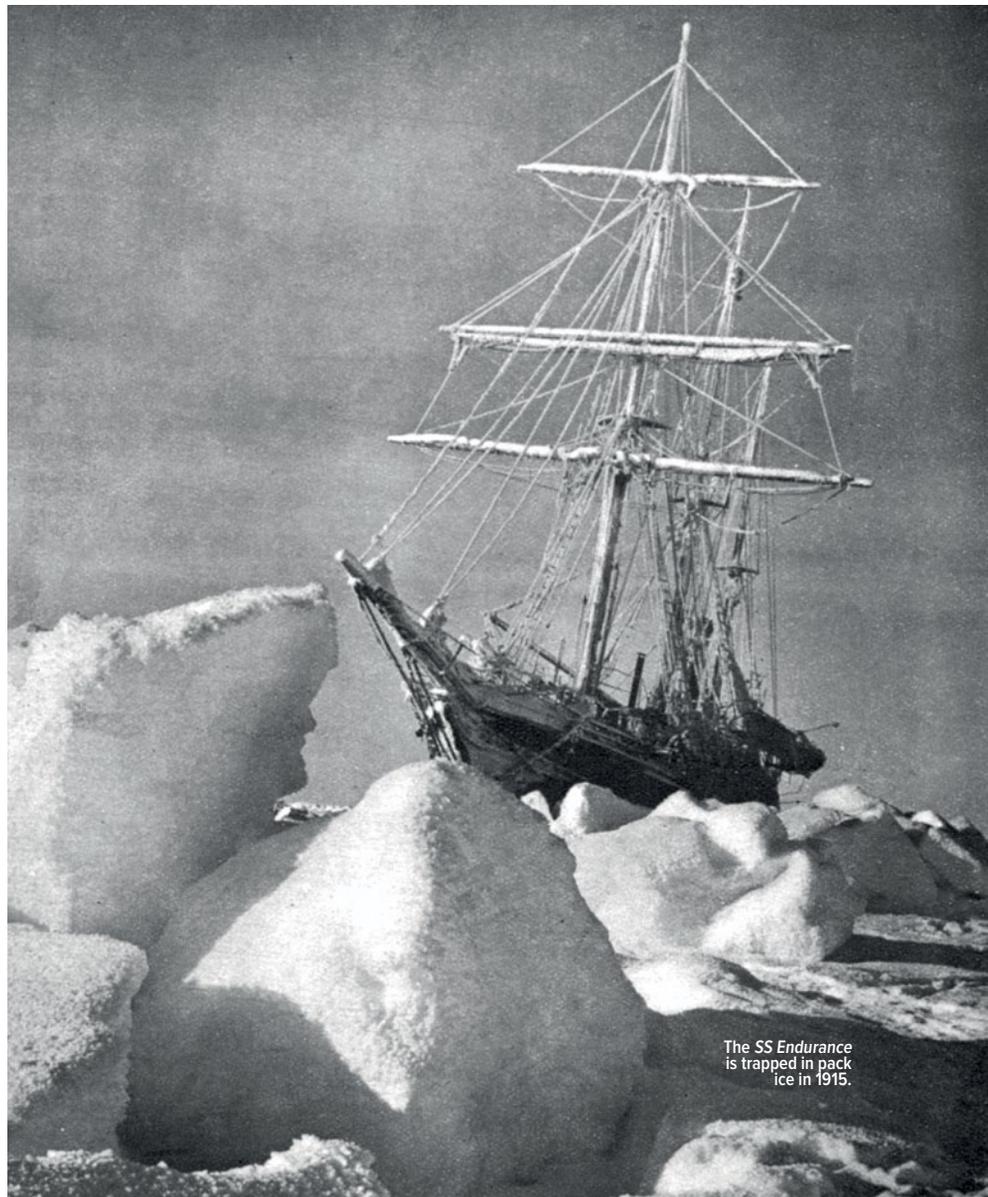
IT ALL

Text *Ruth Morgan*
Photographs *Paul Calver*



Jim Jarvis spent four days at sea inside a tiny wooden boat, his 6 ft 5 in frame bent into a four-foot-high compartment shared with five other men, all of them severely seasick. The environmental scientist and adventurer is no stranger to discomfort, having endured some of the world's toughest environments. By 46, he'd eluded polar bears, broached freezing waters and scaled mountains, but this was a sea test off England's southern coast, a mere preparatory drop in the ocean of the adventurer's next voyage. It would be his toughest yet: An expedition to recreate legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic rescue mission of 1916, using only the equipment Shackleton had available. It was the reason these men, among them Barry Gray, the survival expert for the British Royal Marines, were throwing up in seas far more manageable than the formidable Southern Ocean where they would be in a few months. The boat, an exact replica of the *James Caird* used by Shackleton, had no keel and rolled helplessly at the whim of every wave. "We were like ping-pong balls in a cement mixer," laughs Jarvis. When they went for real, they pretty much had to cope with it for weeks.

If Jarvis was worried, you wouldn't have guessed it: He stood on a wooden jetty at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, looking every bit the explorer as he chatted with his crew in gravelly Queen's English, kitted out in stone-coloured vintage Burberry. The jetty is strewn with archaic kit: A chrome chronometer, hand-stitched woollens, oak boxes full of tea and Bovril. It looks incongruous next to the trainers and hoodies of the day-trippers walking by. But, when Jarvis reached the endless expanse of the world's roughest ocean, followed by the snow of South Georgia, it may as well have been 1916 again.



The SS *Endurance* is trapped in pack ice in 1915.

"The gear chafes a lot, it weighs a lot," says Jarvis, "it's different on so many levels. But it's amazing how your whole world centres on what's available in these situations, you adjust." Jarvis speaks from experience: His last polar trip was a recreation of Australian explorer Sir Douglas Mawson's 1912 Antarctic journey, using century-old kit. It's part of the reason Alexandra Shackleton, Shackleton's granddaughter and closest surviving relative, sought Jarvis out to propose *The Shackleton Epic* in the first place. That was back in 2008. For Jarvis, the expedition posed his greatest challenge off-land. "I've done a fair bit of sailing, but as a crew

member of a much larger ship," he says. "So for me this is breaking new ground: The Shackleton journey is the greatest survival journey of all time. Shackleton is a legendary figure and I also like him. I would have liked to have had a drink with him."

Though Jarvis spends a lot of his time as a senior associate of an architectural consultancy firm, he has every reason to feel an affinity with Shackleton. Exploration and adventure have been a big part of his world since childhood. It began as a boy growing up in Malaysia when he and his dog would disappear off into the jungle for whole days, then the serious expeditions began aged 30,



Jarvis' boat, an exact replica of Shackleton's lifeboat, rolls helplessly at the whim of every wave.

after he suffered a leg injury back in Britain, playing rugby. He used a rowing machine for rehabilitation and, after seven weeks, entered himself into a national indoor competition. He won, taking the scalps of a number of the Olympic men's squad. It was a revelation. "Once you discover what you're capable of," he says, "you think 'Holy crap, maybe I could go a bit further.'" 'A bit further' for Jarvis was an unsupported trip to the South Pole in 1999, the first of many polar expeditions which he also uses to research and bring about awareness of climate change. He also holds the record for the fastest unsupported journey to the



The 2013 expedition took the crew to the max.



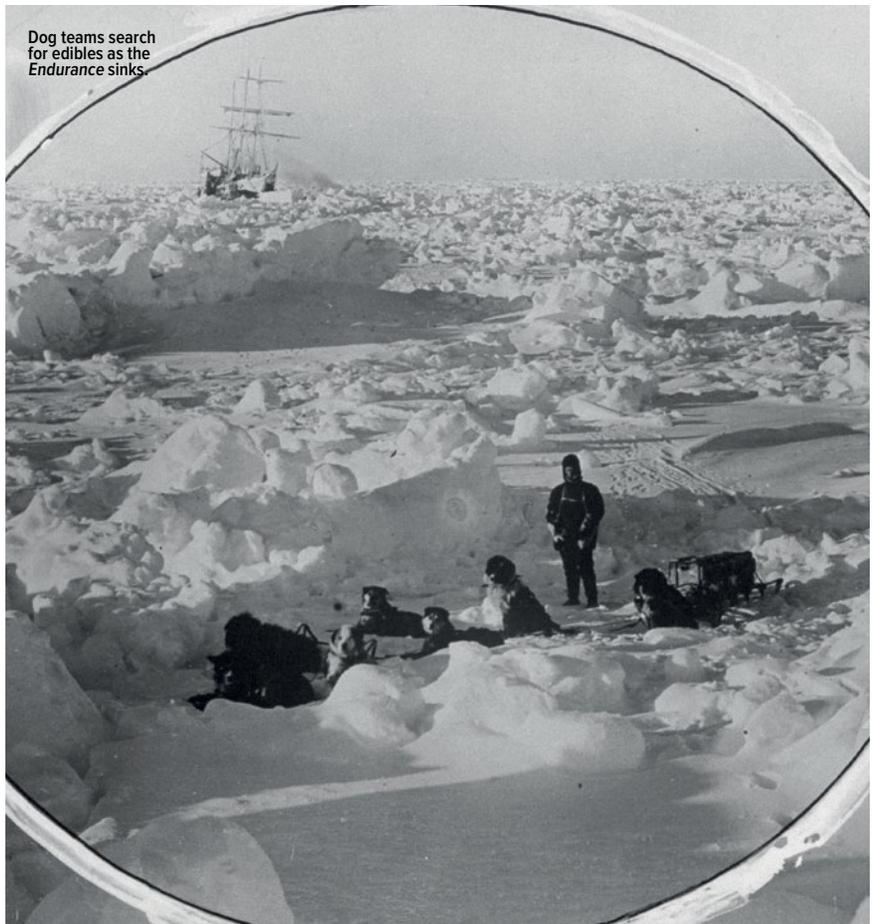
Shackleton's crew pulls a vessel across the snow in the Antarctic, in 1914.

South Pole and the longest unsupported journey in Antarctica.

"It gets desperate," he says. "You have to regard severe depravity as a daily occurrence. Frostbite, teeth falling out, falling into freezing water. I have no idea where I got the strength to get up each day. You just know as long as you take the next step you'll keep going."

The crew included other similarly battle-hardened adventurers. Apart from Jarvis and Gray, there was Ed Wardle, the cameraman who's an experienced high-altitude mountaineer and Arctic explorer, but more famous as the bloke who survived 50 days and nights for the TV series *Alone In The Wild*; Paul Larsen, sailor and navigator, who holds seven world records; Nick Bubb, an accomplished yacht racer and mechanical engineer, who acted as skipper and has competed in some of the most extreme races in the world, including the Volvo Ocean Race; and Seb Coulthard, the expedition's bosun petty officer and the representative of the Royal Navy, who's tackled various harsh terrains, including the Southern Ocean.

But even Shackleton would have likely scoffed at the idea of completing his grueling mission through choice. His original



Dog teams search for edibles as the *Endurance* sinks.

TEXT: THE RED BULLETIN; PHOTOGRAPHS: TIME & LIFE PICTURES, HULTON ARCHIVE, GETTY IMAGES, PAUL CALVER, TIM JARVIS, THE SHACKLETON EPIC



The trek to the finish was as tough as the sailing.

“DIFFICULTIES ARE JUST THINGS TO OVERCOME, AFTER ALL”

Sir Ernest Shackleton



In 1914, Shackleton and his men set off from Antarctica.

plan, as he set sail in 1914, was to become the first to cross the Antarctic continent. However, his ship was slowly crushed by pack ice. Having reached the remote Elephant Island after a week at sea in three tiny lifeboats, he knew the only hope of survival for him and his crew of 27 rested on reaching a whaling station in South Georgia, 1,287 km away.

Shackleton and five of his men achieved this feat in May 1916, 658 days after he departed from London. It's recognised as one of the greatest survival stories of all time, battling the Southern Ocean, navigating a narrow landing onto jagged rocks, and scaling the icy mountains that lay between them and the whaling station using only one carpenter's adze and a short length of hemp rope.

But these situations that most do their best to avoid are what Jarvis lives for. “Back at home, you're in second gear,” he says, “whereas on an expedition you're constantly in fifth. You have to be totally on the ball, and I like the side of my personality that comes out in those situations. It's like meeting an old friend again, I feel complete. It's addictive.”

Jarvis's true grit was clear as he aired his views on the concessions to modern technology during the expedition—emergency equipment and radios stored on board the *Alexandra Shackleton* and a support vessel, *Australis*, stationed in the Southern Ocean. When faced with a challenge of this magnitude and risk, Jarvis is possibly the only person who could have found reassurance in the crew's small chances of rescue. “The possibility of rescue eats into your resolve,” he says. “That's a problem Shackleton didn't have. Death is a hell of a motivator to keep going, but for us we've got the problem of thinking, if it got so bad, we could try to bail on it. I'd rather know that there's no going back. But in



Jarvis' crew finally hits land after weeks at sea.



NO BASES COVERED

From leaky boat to man overboard: The journey's primary pitfalls.

LEAVING ELEPHANT ISLAND

"We're going to try to head north, coming in from the west. The wind's going to try to push us out into the open Atlantic and we're going to try to hold as close as we can to the South America side, as if we allow it to blow us too far east we'll end up in Africa a few months later."

THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

"The Southern Ocean is the roughest in the world and the boat is just not designed for it. We're in an old wooden rowing boat with no keel, water can leak through the planks, it can capsize very easily. If someone falls overboard we've got no remote possibility of going back for them because we can't turn the boat around."

ARRIVING AT SOUTH GEORGIA

"This poses a new set of problems. It's a narrow entrance, and jagged mountains come right out of the sea. The wind and currents from Antarctica hit the southern side, the only place we have a chance of landing. So you have one go at getting it right: You've got to see the gap, get the sails out, get the oars out and go for it. Getting dashed against the rocks is a major fear."

CROSSING THE ISLAND

"There is less snow in the mountain crevasses than when Shackleton was there, so it's a very dangerous crossing in places, very easy to fall down. We've got one little section of hemp rope, which doesn't stretch like modern rope, so if somebody does fall, it will put their back out. And we've got one carpenter's adze, a pick-axe type thing, which isn't much use between three people."

FALKLAND ISLANDS

ELEPHANT ISLAND

SOUTH GEORGIA

ANTARCTIC CIRCLE

RONNE ICE SHELF

FILCHNER ICE SHELF

APRIL 24, 1916
Shackleton and five others sail to South Georgia in the *James Caird*.

APRIL 16, 1916
The lifeboat lands on Elephant Island.

APRIL 9, 1916
Crew in three lifeboats: The *James Caird*, *Dudley Docker* and *Stancomb Willis*.

NOVEMBER 21, 1915
Shackleton and his crew watch the *Endurance* sink.

JANUARY 18, 1915
The *Endurance* becomes set in the pack ice.

MAY 10, 1916
After 17 stormy days, the crew arrives at South Georgia.

FINISH
MAY 19, 1916
Shackleton, Worsley and Crean trek for 36 hours solid across South Georgia's glacier-clad peaks to reach the Stromness whaling station.

DECEMBER 7, 1914
The *Endurance* first encounters pack ice.

START
DECEMBER 5, 1914
Having left England on the *Endurance* in August, Shackleton and his crew set off from Grytviken Whaling Station.



Sir Ernest Shackleton Expedition 1914-16



Tim Jarvis Expedition, 2013

THE GEAR OF AGES

Jarvis points out the stuff that Shackleton used (he used it, too).



CHRONOMETER

The Thomas Mercer chronometer is specially designed to keep time accurately at sea, important as clocks used to all work on a pendulum which became a problem with the motion of the sea. If you didn't have accurate time, you couldn't navigate, even if you knew where the sun was supposed to be at a particular time. These things are gimballed—they sit on a base plate which allows them to remain stationary while the sea and the boat move around beneath them.

COMPASS

The compass was made by E. Dent & Co, London, who manufactured the one for Jarvis' crew too. She gets stored in the cockpit and there's a little light inside. It weighs a ton. Funnily enough, Jarvis' had a crack on the lid, just like Shackleton's.

RATIONS & COOKER

Shackleton used the Primus cooker and these haven't changed in 100 years. You wouldn't take any of the rations with you on a modern expedition that Jarvis took, apart from tea bags. Their rations were Bovril and pemmican, which is congealed animal fat in biscuit form, beef jerky, sugar,

butter and a lot of nougat. In the old days, explorers would make what they called hoosh, where they just boiled up the pot, chucked everything in, created a slop and pretty much drank it straight up.

SAILS

The sails on Shackleton's boat were all hand-stitched, with exquisite detail. There are two or three men in the UK who can still do this, but Jarvis' team used one called Philip Rose Taylor, a salty old sea dog who lives in Weymouth. The quality of the handiwork is just incredible even on Jarvis' expedition sails.

BURBERRY CLOTHING

In Shackleton's day, Burberry kit was the equivalent of today's Gore-Tex. The pattern maker is long gone, and the original Burberry patterns have been lost. So when they wanted to remake the outfit for the Shackleton TV programme starring Kenneth Branagh, they copied the surviving Burberry clothing of Shackleton's friend and contemporary, Australian explorer Douglas Mawson. That's what Jarvis used on his expedition. There's no insulation, but it keeps the wind off. They also had big beaver-pelt mitts.



reality, the conditions that would get us into trouble are the same conditions that would stop the back-up boat reaching us. Once we're in trouble, ain't no one going to come. I feel quite relieved that we have to fend for ourselves." That's resolve if you'll ever see it.

Jarvis did have his worries, and the principal one was that the boat would capsize. Another was that they wouldn't easily be able to rescue a crew member who'd gone overboard. But the things he faced most were the same ones that Shackleton and his team battled: The fight against the wind to nail the narrow entrance to South Georgia and the icy climb using frozen block-like leather boots and next to no equipment. Deep crevasses were waiting to punish any misstep, but they all failed to deter them in the end. "This was the ultimate challenge for me," Jarvis said. "To put up with the intense sea sickness, the danger and the discomfort. I don't think I could be happy in normal life without it. You don't get these trips out of your system; they're who you are. My biggest fear isn't of losing a toe, or even death. It's failure."

The expedition was applauded as much by the sailing community as scientists and adventurers. In fact, the Royal Institute of Navigation Council awarded the Shackleton Epic Expedition crew a Certificate of Achievement, while Larsen, the doggedly determined navigator, was nominated for the 2013 ISAF Rolex World Sailor of the Year Award in October.

Even as the expedition culminated in a pilgrimage to Shackleton's grave at Grytøyviken, the story is ready to be retold in print and on screens. If Shackleton were here today, he'd watch too.