

Antarctic Close-up by Hazel Edwards, illustrated by Meegan Parkes
(National Museum of Australia Press)

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Reviewed by Marion Smith

Antarctic Close-up is one of the *Making Tracks* series that features a telescope used during Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914. The telescope is kept at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

When John connects the old telescope that is up for auction with his school's broken webcam and his dad's computer, he and his friend Peter take an amazing trip back in time to witness scenes from Mawson's Antarctic expedition. The telescope once belonged to John Collinson Close, a member of the expedition, and the boys see real-life footage of incidents including Close's rescue of his team members from an ice cave full of poisonous gas, a game of ice cricket among the penguins and the cook's unique method of choosing the dinner menu.

Before John can save the images, the telescope closes down and the webcam is fixed, and they're left with no evidence of what they've seen. Their curiosity is aroused and their search for more information about Antarctica and Mawson's expedition leads them to their school library. They realise that there are many unrecorded heroes and it is important that their stories are told.

Hazel Edwards has skilfully combined the two worlds of modern Australia and 1911 Antarctica, so that today's reader experiences the extreme conditions under which the members of the expedition lived and worked. The text is well supported by realistic black and white illustrations, a glossary of subject-specific words and an inventory of surviving expedition items.

Visit the museum's interactive website

www.nma.gov.au/makingtracks for documentary footage of the expedition, teachers' notes and classroom activities.