

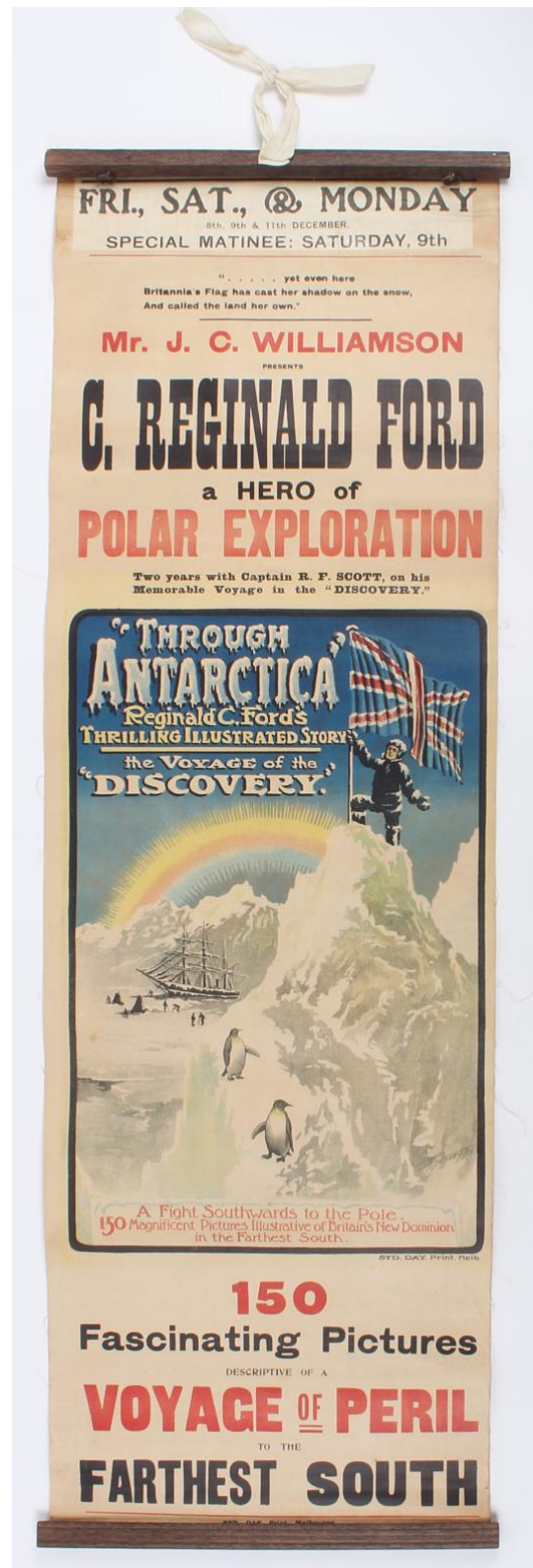
'Farthest South!' A thrilling illustrated story from one of the first expeditions to the South Pole

A visit to Shaun Higgins, Pictorial Curator at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, revealed many fascinating collections of slides in the Museum. Perhaps the most significant is a lecture compiled by the polar explorer Charles Reginald Ford, which will reward further research. Ford was Scott's steward on his first polar voyage on the ship *The Discovery* from 1902 to 1904. This early polar expedition (on which Ernest Shackleton was third in command) was sort of Scott's 'Apollo 10' mission in preparation for the final 'Apollo 11' *Terra Nova* assault on the Pole from 1910 to 1913. Scott died on that expedition, but his first was not without its dangers either.

When they finally returned after being stuck in the ice for two years, the Australian theatrical promoter J C Williamson promoted Ford on a solo tour around Australia in 1905. The Auckland Museum also holds a J C Williamson poster for that tour, promising a 'thrilling illustrated story' with '150 pictures descriptive of a voyage of peril to the farthest south'. Only some of the slides in the collection may have been from this tour though. Ford was evidently an avid slide collector, and acquired slides of subsequent Antarctic images by Frank Hurley and Hubert Ponting during his life. Besides the set he gave to the Auckland Museum in 1961, 286 slides from his collection are also in the National Maritime Museum in Sydney.

However, the Auckland slides are numbered, and must have been used for a lecture, perhaps to the Auckland Institute. After he became a successful architect, Ford was a prominent member of the Institute. Further research may discover the script in the Institute's papers which are also in the museum, but just by following the sequence of slide numbers one can follow the overall format of the lecture, and speculate on its tone. Ford's vital role as steward to the survival of the expedition's members must have been emphasised with images of neatly packed sleds and

1905 Poster advertising Ford's lecture tour, Auckland War Memorial Museum Collection.



stacked cooking implements featuring. The expedition discovered a colony of emperor penguins and these predominate in Ford's lecture, along with seals and soft-eyed sled dogs. One cute image, among the lot, where a dog riffs off the 'His Masters Voice' gramophone logo, in fact comes from Scott's ill-fated second expedition.



Images L-R: Shaun Higgins, Curator, Pictorial, Auckland War Memorial Museum. Photo credit: Martyn Jolly; Herbert Ponting, 'Dog with gramophone', 1911, Auckland War Memorial Museum Collection; CR Ford, 'Men with sledge of supplies', lantern slide, c1903, Auckland War Memorial Museum Collection.

Another box which Shaun and Martyn agreed needs more research contains a series of World War One slides, perhaps relating to the ambulance corps. The box also contained a list of typed captions, no doubt used for a post War lecture to returned men.

The Museum also holds collections of slides by local photographers such as Clement Wragge, A N Brecken and Josiah Martin.