

rare copy of the volume *Aurora Australis*, bound with packing-case plywood, is on display. Shackleton's first Antarctic motorized vehicle, with an ingenious snow melter over its exhaust pipe to provide fresh water, has a place of honor, although the cratelike vehicle proved a dud when one of its wheels froze.

Two fascinating objects, too hulking to be accommodated indoors, are mounted in an adjacent courtyard: the bright orange Sno-cat, a four-ton tractor conveyance driven on the Fuchs-Hillary expedition, the first Trans-Antarctic overland crossing, in 1958; and a mammoth skeleton of a blue whale, the world's

largest mammal. The size of this eighty-seven-foot creature stuns the viewer. But more lively—and vociferous—whales can be heard in an acoustical booth in the Hall, where tape recordings made under ice reproduce the sonorous voices of whales and seals.

The Antarctic's most familiar animal is, of course, the penguin, whose formal-wear plumage and waddling antics provide rare comic relief on the bleak and frozen continent. Even some of the penguin species' names are amusing: Macaroni, Jackass, Rockhopper. Glass-enclosed dioramas of stuffed penguins in their rookeries and seals on the icy shores

convincingly recreate the harsh landscape of the Antarctic coastal areas. Geological charts, tracing the history of Antarctic rocks through a billion years, exotic fish and plant fossils and vivid ecosystem diagrams help to detail the natural history of the world's remotest, least-known region.

A number of haunting watercolor paintings by Edward Wilson portray the lonely grandeur of the snowbound terrain and evoke the hardships of the early explorers. Wilson, a doctor, zoologist and gifted artist, was one of the two last survivors who tragically perished with Scott.

The Skellerup Library of the Antarctic

US Navy

