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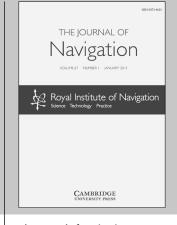
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## POLAR RECORD

#### A Journal of Arctic and Antarctic Research Journal of the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

VOLUME 50 NUMBER 255 OCTOBER 2014

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Sir Ian Gourlay

Charles Winthrop Molesworth Swithinbank 1926-2014

#### **COVER PHOTO**

Ice-fishing outside the village of Kuzomen' (66°17'N, 36°52'E) on the river Varzuga, near the White Sea coast, in the northwest of Russia. Villagers start fishing for Arctic rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax dentex*) as soon as the river freezes and remain on the ice until it is too thin in mid-spring. Unemployment is high and their leisure sphere is very limited, so fishing for smelt has become a favourite pastime and a means of supplementing income.

The daily catch varies greatly: one day on the ice can bring a few fish whilst on another day a few hours can yield a healthy 20 kg. Part of the catch is used for private consumption: eaten fresh or salted and dried. Many people, however, sell most of their catch: to local businessmen and various incomers such as urbanites who come for ice-fishing, or to tourists. In 2014, a kilogram of smelt could be sold for up to £20 dried and £4 fresh. Local shops are also willing to buy villagers' catch albeit at a lower price.

Dried smelt is regarded a rare delicacy and local people often send it to relatives and give it away as a gift to visiting friends and family. Smelt is a token fish for Kuzomen' in winter as it makes villagers of all ages come out on the ice and engage in an activity that makes business a pleasure.

Photo taken by Maria Nakhshina in March 2007. To learn more about fishing on the White Sea coast, see references to Nakhshina 2012 in the current issue.

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