

Book Reviews

ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS ACROSS THE WORLD. Michael Brooke. 2004. Oxford: Oxford University Press. xviii + 499 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 0-19-850125-0. £85.00.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406215304

Albatrosses and petrels are among the world's most threatened birds. According to the latest international listing by BirdLife International, 60 of 129 living species of the order Procellariiformes have been accorded a global category-of-threat status, ranging from Critically Endangered (extremely high risk of extinction in the wild), through Endangered (very high risk of extinction) to Vulnerable (high risk of extinction). A further 14 species are considered to be Near Threatened, meaning that less than half the members of the order are considered to be safe. Within the albatrosses (Family Diomedidae) all but two of the 21 species currently recognized are considered to be globally threatened. This is a relatively recent phenomenon: the 1979 version of the Red Data Book listed just 12 procellariiforms as globally threatened, of which only one was an albatross, the short-tailed *Phoebastria albatrus* of the North Pacific, as Endangered. The reasons for this calamitous state of affairs are varied: on land, albatrosses and petrels face threats from introduced predators and disease and from human disturbance; at sea interactions with fisheries, especially with long-liners and trawlers, is the main threat. Procellariiforms, especially the larger species, have also been at the forefront of recent avian research. Use of a variety of remote-tracking devices in the last decade has enabled much to be learnt about the at-sea movements of these highly pelagic birds, and long-term banding studies are contributing to the knowledge of avian population dynamics. Mike Brooke's book is thus a timely publication.

Albatrosses and petrels across the world is the eleventh in the Oxford University Press series of monographs on 'Bird Families of the World.' It is the third to be published on seabirds, following those on penguins (by T.D. Williams) and auks (by A.J. Gaston and I.L. Jones). Unlike some other seabird monographs (such as Lance Tickell's *Albatrosses*, published in 2000), this new book is also a handbook as well, since, in part II, 125 species are given individual accounts, most of which are about two pages long. This coverage takes up the bulk of the book. It is preceded by 10 general chapters that cover various aspects of the biology of albatrosses and petrels, from egg to chick on land and finding food (and perils) at sea. Complementing the text are 16 colour plates placed together in the book's centre. Each plate, well painted by John Cox, illustrates a number of species, some

(such as the great albatrosses of the genus *Diomedea*) are shown in various plumage stages. The book is also liberally illustrated by black-and-white drawings, also by Cox, and with black-and-white photographs, distribution maps (each species account has one), tables, and graphs. The main text is followed by no less than 48 pages of references and a single combined index to species, localities, and aspects of avian biology. For a book published in 2004 it is commendably up-to-date, with references up to 2003 being cited. Indeed, a two-page account of the New Zealand storm petrel *Oceanites maorianus*, thought to be extinct, but rediscovered and photographed at sea in late 2003 after an absence of records for more than 150 years, has been inserted into the front of the book under the heading 'Stop press.'

Readers of *Polar Record* are interested in the higher latitudes of our planet. *Albatrosses and petrels across the world* takes, as its title suggests, a global view, but since many procellariiforms occur in these latitudes, the book should be of sufficient interest to add to a comprehensive polar library. Those of us fortunate enough to have visited the Antarctic continent will enjoy reading of their favourites: among them surely the snow petrel *Pagodroma nivea* and the Antarctic petrel *Thalassoica antarctica*. The latter breeds in sometime very large colonies, the 200,000-pair colony (in some years) at Svarthamaren in Dronning Maud Land is one of the world's largest seabird colonies, situated some 200 km from the ice edge. Modestly, the author does not cite his own publication coming from his research at this locality, although he does mention his visit, pondering why the birds breed so far inland. Likewise, the northern fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* is a well-known inhabitant of polar seas, and has been reported within 17 km of the North Pole. Its closely related congeneric, the southern or Antarctic fulmar *F. glacialisoides*, cannot boast such an achievement, but of course it would have half a continent to traverse to do so.

Mike Brooke has toured the world for decades in search of seabirds to study (the dust jacket says 40 countries visited). He has studied many species of procellariiforms (mainly burrowing petrels) at both high and low latitudes, starting with his PhD (awarded in 1977) for an ecological study of the Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*. This study led to his first book, on the same species, published by T. & A.D. Poyser in 1990. Further work on petrels has followed in the Seychelles, Réunion, and Mauritius in the western Indian Ocean, on the Juan Fernandez Archipelago off Chile (where 'delicious' omelettes were made of abandoned eggs), in the coastal deserts of Pacific South America, on Pitcairn Island in the Pacific, on the Prince Edward Islands in the

Southern Ocean, and (gasp!) on Gough and Nightingale islands in the southern mid-Atlantic. At which seabird colony will he turn up on next? The reviewer lays some claim to having helped Mike Brooke reach several of these localities, adding to his enjoyment of the book. This perhaps unparalleled breadth of comparative study on petrels undertaken over 30 years is reflected in the general chapters, as important insights often come from personal experience.

Returning to the Antarctic and snow petrels of Svarthamaren, the author considers that the birds fly so far from the sea (and to an altitude of 1600 m) to be certain of a snow-free locality on a steep slope, one, I may add, that is also north-facing to catch the warmth of the sun. In his chapter 'Perils for petrels' (a good review of threats facing albatrosses and petrels for the marine ornithologist and general reader alike), the author considers whether the sealing and whaling booms in the Southern Ocean of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries influenced petrel populations (for example by providing enhanced opportunities to scavenge). He concludes that they did not perhaps in any lasting way, comparing the shortness of these booms with the long lives of the birds. The larger procellariiforms of the Southern Ocean now follow a fishing boom to advantage (when obtaining discards and stolen bait) and to great disadvantage (when drowning on long line hooks set for toothfish and tuna or smashing wings against the warps of trawls).

Mike Brooke writes in an easy, flowing style. His accounts often contain asides, likely to bring a wry smile. Describing how the energetic cost of incubation can be measured by use of a face mask to estimate oxygen consumption he considers it 'is a tribute to the stoicism of Wandering Albatrosses that they will not only sit on their egg when 100 knot gusts are blasting across the landscape, but also when ornithologists are pursuing knowledge.'

The book is reasonably free of typos, although something went wrong in the final checking as references in the text to other pages in the book are cited more than once as '(p. ???)'. But this does not really detract from a well-written, attractively produced book that will sit nicely on a polar shelf, perhaps next to such ornithological classics as *Edward Wilson's birds of the Antarctic*, edited by Brian Roberts, and R.A. Falla on the birds of the BANZARE Expedition. (John Cooper, Avian Demography Unit, Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa.)

ONE THOUSAND DAYS WITH SIRIUS: THE GREENLAND SLEDGE PATROL. P.S. Mikkelsen. 2005. Translated D. Matthews and P.S. Mikkelsen. Cawdor: The Steading Workshop. 222 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-9950773-0-3. £15.00. doi:10.1017/S0032247406225300

This is a very welcome and long-awaited translation of Mikkelsen's classic book, which was first published in

1986. In it, he gave a full account of his recruitment to, and work within, the Danish Sirius organisation, which was originally set up to provide effective occupancy of northeast Greenland. This need arose from comments made by the International Court of Justice in The Hague in its 1933 judgement on the case between Denmark and Norway concerning which country had sovereignty in the area. This was awarded to Denmark, but the Court commented on that country's hitherto inadequate maintenance of activities consonant with it. This was to be rectified by retaining in the territory a small population of service personnel who would conduct long sledge journeys each year throughout the area 'showing the flag,' maintaining huts, making scientific observations, and so forth. After World War II, and with the advent of the Cold War, the demand for the constant surveillance of the area caused the Sirius operation to be continued and developed.

The selection process for Sirius staff appears to have been agreeably informal but very thorough, and interesting contrasts will immediately be apparent for those readers who have been through an equivalent process in other countries. Mikkelsen provides a detailed account of how the work at the base, Daneborg, on Clavering Ø, was organised. Of course, great stress was laid on food, as was, and is, the case in all bases of this type, and for this reviewer some of the Danish practices seemed very odd indeed especially in that there was no permanent cook. The duty was rotated among all the Sirius personnel but from the mouth-watering descriptions of the meals prepared by these amateurs, it seems that this practice was successful.

The author devotes a large section of the book to how the sledge work was arranged, mentioning such topics as the breeding of dogs, the construction and maintenance of sledges, the packing of supplies, and depot laying. This is all absolutely fascinating, but even more so are the accounts of the sledge journeys themselves. These were essentially divided into three types, the short training journeys, medium-length autumn journeys, and the main sledge journeys, which were conducted in spring and were often of epic length and duration. Each team consisted of 11 dogs and two men and in order to spread the teams over the vast area for which they were responsible, some were airlifted to their start point. There were also extended boat journeys in the summer. By these means, the Sirius personnel covered the whole coast of Greenland from Liverpool Land on the east coast round to Nares Strait on the north.

Mikkelsen's conclusion bears much in common with those expressed by members of other such forces throughout the world: 'I am glad and proud to be able to say that I was a Sirius man.'

The book is essentially a personal account of the author's life as a Sirius member and must be judged as such. There may be dissatisfaction on the part of some readers. There is relatively little overall history of the operation as a whole. Comments are made throughout concerning the colossal distances covered by the

personnel from the formal establishment of the patrol in 1950 to the date of writing, but there are relatively few hard statistics apart from the fact that Sirius personnel had travelled more than 700,000 km in total during the period mentioned. The number of patrols is not mentioned, and so no calculation of average distance is possible. There is also no evaluation of whether the patrol achieved its purpose: in particular is there any evidence that the existence of the patrol deterred any party that might otherwise have had nefarious intent in the area in question? There is also no statement of costs, but these must have been proportionally large.

But as a statement of the day-to-day life of a Sirius member the book is superlative. It is written in a plain, matter-of-fact style and is interlaced with much humour and good-natured comment. The main body of the text conveys in print as accurate an idea of what an extended dog sledge journey is like as it is possible to convey to those who have no first-hand experience. Those, on the other hand, who have such experience, will relish the book as providing yardsticks against which their own exploits can be measured, and many, one ventures to suggest, might feel envious that Mikkelsen was able to acquire his valuable experience in such a congenial way.

There is a series of appendices including a brief 'Historical Summary of the Exploration of Northeast Greenland' and some fascinating line drawings of sledge and tent designs. The colour photographs, of which there are more than 30, are superb. They convey a full coverage of the activities of Sirius, although always in suspiciously good weather! There are three clear maps, of the southern and northern areas of the coast and of the area around Daneborg.

The translators have succeeded in the difficult task of producing a text that reads as well and fluently in English as, one is assured by Danish acquaintances, does the original.

One might query why the opportunity was not taken of presenting a new edition of the book instead of simply a straight translation of the first edition. This could have included information from Mikkelsen's up-to-date work in Danish listed in the 'Related Reading.' Such a new edition could provide a short sketch of the work of Sirius in the years since Mikkelsen left it; it would have greatly enhanced the interest of the book to historians if there had been a map indicating the tracks of all the sledge teams in any one year. This would have conveyed an estimate of the effectiveness of the coverage of the whole coast by the personnel available. One has to recall, however, that Sirius was a military operation and that the requisite information might still be classified. Certainly in the text there is little mention of the weaponry that one imagines was routinely carried on the sledges for purposes other than that of deterring polar bears. There is also no mention concerning what the 'rules of engagement' were in the event of, for example, a discovery of illegal poaching. A two-man team does not constitute much of a deterrent

and there seem to have been no large back-up land forces nearer than Denmark.

But the above is to cavil. The book is an excellent introduction to what actually went on in the field during the great years of the Sirius operation and constitutes a primary source of high importance. It is very entertaining for everyone with polar interests but for those with the experience of dog sledging in either polar area, it is a 'must' for their reading list. (Ian R. Stone, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE ARCTIC. Derek Hayes. 2003. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre; Seattle: University of Washington Press. 208 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-295-98358-2. Price: US\$60.00.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406235307

Historical atlases are of two sorts, either collections of maps from the past or modern purpose-drawn maps showing characteristics of earlier periods. In the former we see the geography of a region at different times in the past, perceived through the eyes of explorers and map-makers who were alive then. We get a sense of how geographical knowledge increased over time and, as each map reflects all the limitations of travel, observation, measurement, mapping, and printing that existed at the time it was produced, we learn something about the history of cartography. In the latter sort we see the spatial distribution in particular eras of any phenomena for which reliable data exist. The information, plotted on accurate base maps, can give a comprehensive picture of a region's physical and human characteristics during the past.

Historical atlas of the Arctic is of the first type. It contains more than 300 historical maps and sketches of the Arctic, or parts of it, from the late fifteenth century up to modern times. Most of the maps are in colour, beautifully reproduced. Their sizes vary from a few inches in width to more than a full page of 9.5 × 12.5-inch size. They are artfully arranged, so that every page confronts the reader with a different combination of print and illustration, a new arrangement of line, texture, and colour. The atlas is not merely a treasure of geographical information but also a banquet for the eyes. As might be expected, legibility is sacrificed when large maps are reduced to book size or smaller, but even if some place-names and inscriptions can not be read, the delineation of coastlines and other fundamental aspects is clear.

Some historical atlases of this type simply present the maps with brief explanatory captions underneath, without enough information to really understand their context. In this atlas, however, the captions for each map are very detailed, and a long narrative text describes the events and circumstances that led to the compilation of the maps. In his introduction Hayes speaks of *writing* the history of the Arctic, and his text is so comprehensive that one might prefer to call the work a profusely illustrated book

rather than an atlas. In my estimation his commentary is among the most concise and interesting descriptions of exploration and cartography in the Arctic. More than two dozen chapters cover the important themes in Arctic exploration, including: the Great Russian Expedition; the searches for Northwest and Northeast Passages; the quest for Franklin; territorial claims; the exploration of interior Greenland; attempts to reach the Pole; trans-Arctic drift voyages by Nansen, the icebreaker *Sedov*, and Soviet ice stations; polar traverses by aircraft, dirigible, and submarine; and the discovery of the last unknown islands a mere 60 years ago, in northern Canada.

For many centuries the top of the world was a place of mystery. Although surrounded by a circumpolar settled zone, its severe cold and a permanent sea ice cover kept curious explorers and nomadic native peoples at bay. What lay poleward of the inhabited areas was purely a matter of conjecture (one on which some so-called geographers did not hesitate to make quite unwarranted speculations, as the atlas shows). The fundamental question was the distribution of land and sea. How far north did the continents extend, and what lay beyond them?

Aside from scientific curiosity, there were practical reasons to discover the full extent and nature of the Arctic. If the world could be viewed from high above the North Pole, the Arctic zone would be seen to have a central position. If it turned out to contain a navigable sea it might constitute a link rather than a barrier. For centuries explorers and sea mammal hunters drove their ships and sledges northward into its most accessible margins, seeking trade routes and biological resources. Their experience added to the incomplete or distorted picture of the region, gradually rolling back the frontier of geographical awareness.

Many early maps of the Arctic were compiled by officers on expeditions of discovery sent out by governments, merchant interests, and private sponsors, redrafted later by professional map-makers, and published in the handsome narratives written by commanders. Hayes presents a rich sampling of such maps, but adds to them many lesser known ones from obscure journals and various archives. Every bit as interesting as maps that increased the extent or the known world, rectified errors, or added more detail, were ones that depicted false information, whether derived from human error, unjustified speculation, or intentional hoax. These are also represented in the atlas — continents in the Arctic Ocean, an ice-free ocean surrounding the Pole, islands that did not exist.

Whaling voyages to the margin of Arctic ice were many times more numerous than those of explorers. Although discovery was never their main objective, they did make some significant contributions to geographical knowledge. Hayes reproduces an eighteenth-century map by a Dutch captain, Hidde Dirks Kaat (map 303), and outlines some of the achievements of William Scoresby Jr half a century later (maps 99, 224). Maps by some other whaling captains could usefully have been included.

In 1840 William Penny ‘re-discovered’ Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island, after it had remained beyond the limit of European experience for more than two centuries. In the previous year, before actually reaching the inlet, he had compiled a chart of the place solely on the basis of Inuit information. It is testimony to the reliability of Inuit geographical knowledge that the chart he drew after exploring it was remarkably similar. Both charts were published in a book by his ship’s surgeon, Alexander McDonald (1841).

Hayes’ atlas has been criticized for ‘minimising the contributions of indigenous peoples’ (Kafarowski 2005: 228), but this is unjustified. He makes it clear in his introduction that he is concentrating on expeditions, and he does include six maps drawn for explorers either by, or with the assistance of, Inuit. As another publication has already reproduced and analyzed two dozen Inuit maps (Spink and Moodie 1972), it would hardly be appropriate to show them all again. In any case, Hayes makes a *selection* of Inuit maps, just as he makes a *selection* of non-native maps. He acknowledges that Inuit contributed to Euro-American exploration, and states that they had ‘an excellent sense of geography’ (page 70). (Whether or not some maps drawn by aboriginal people in northern Asia could have been included, I do not know.)

The maps that were drawn by a few Inuit during the nineteenth century were ‘commissioned’ by non-native explorers (notably William Parry and John Ross) in order to learn whether a Northwest Passage could be found — or *not* found — in regions beyond their reach. It would have been interesting to show an entirely different sort of Inuit map, produced a century and a half later. In the 1970s a unique and highly ambitious project was commissioned by Inuit organizations, not for the use of non-natives but for their own benefit. The modern hunting territories and land-use patterns of thousands of Inuit throughout their extensive domain in Canada — from the Alaska boundary to southern Labrador — were mapped (for each species of animal hunted) and analyzed (Freeman 1976; Brice-Bennett 1977).

This is the fourth historical atlas compiled by Derek Hayes, and a fifth is in preparation. Previous ones cover British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest, the North Pacific Ocean, Canada, and ‘America.’ As there is considerable overlap in these contiguous regions, some maps in the Arctic atlas have already appeared in other volumes of what appears to be a continuing series. The same format has been used in this book. The text, arranged chronologically and interspersed with appropriate maps, is followed by a catalogue giving the source of each map, a bibliography of published works, and finally an index.

One error caught my eye. The caption for map 99 states that Scoresby made ‘frequent visits to Davis Strait.’ In fact, he never sailed west of Greenland. His voyages were confined to the whaling grounds between Greenland and Spitsbergen.

From the incomplete and imaginative maps of early centuries, the atlas leads us up to the age of air

photography and remote sensing. The great geographical problems have been solved. The mysteries and misconceptions have faded away. The alluring Pole has been reached, not only on the ice but also above and beneath it. Affluent tourists criss-cross the region in comfort on ice-breaking ships. The once fearsome Northwest Passage attracts pleasure yachts.

The *Historical atlas of the Arctic* is a formidable addition to published works on Arctic cartography and history. Its fascinating selection of maps, well-researched and well-written text, and beautiful design and appearance, should make it very appealing to readers. The author and the joint publishers deserve hearty congratulations on a fine production. The price, although substantial, is a real bargain for a work of this quality. (W. Gillies Ross, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec J1M 1Z7, Canada.)

References

- Brice-Bennett, C. (editor). 1977. *Our footprints are everywhere: Inuit land use and occupancy in Labrador*. Nain: Labrador Inuit Association.
- Freeman, M. (editor). 1976. *Inuit land use and occupancy project*. 3 vols. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs.
- Kafarowski, J. 2005. Historical atlas of the Arctic [review]. *Canadian Geographer* 49 (2): 227–228.
- McDonald, A. 1841. *A narrative of some passages in the history of Eeenooloopik*. Edinburgh: Fraser & Hogg.
- Spink, J., and D.W. Moodie. 1972. *Eskimo maps from the Canadian eastern Arctic*. Toronto: Department of Geography, York University (*Cartographica* Monograph 5).

JOURNALS: SCOTT'S LAST EXPEDITION. Max Jones (Editor). 2005. Oxford: Oxford University Press. lxii + 529 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-19-280333-6. £14.99.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406245303

In November 1913, a search party, seeking their compatriots, discovered the sepulchral tent, on the Ross Ice Shelf of Antarctica, containing the bodies of Robert Falcon Scott, Edward Wilson, and Henry 'Birdie' Bowers. Alongside the bodies of the explorers were the diaries kept by Scott on the final assault on the South Pole, and other papers. The diaries were found by naval surgeon Edward Atkinson, in a canvas pouch under the head of Scott's sleeping bag. An accompanying note from Scott asked that they should be sent to his widow, Kathleen, in London. Scott had kept a detailed account of the British Antarctic expedition in *Terra Nova*, often writing two or three accounts of the same event. Clearly he envisaged these diaries and his other journals would serve as drafts for a publication when he returned to England. The news of Scott's death in 1912, together with four companions on their return from reaching the Pole, but without the expected priority, reverberated around the world as a tragic, but heroic, failure, the more poignant because of the unease felt at the prospect of an approaching war.

The diaries were passed to Kathleen Scott and she agreed that Leonard Huxley should prepare them for publication and offer them, as formerly promised by Scott, to their friend Reginald Smith, chairman of Smith Elder, the London publishers. Kathleen and Huxley accepted that excisions should be made, particularly in connection with some of Scott's comments on his colleagues and his naval crew. Accordingly, *Scott's last expedition* was published in two volumes on 6 November 1913. The first volume was the edited version of Scott's diaries — also serialized in *Strand Magazine* — and the second volume accounts of other aspects of the expedition and a preliminary set of reports from the scientific personnel. The work sold for 42 shillings, a considerable sum at that time, but had instant success, selling 9,663 sets by the end of the year. A cheaper edition had to await the end of the First World War. Since then, the account of Scott's last expedition has sold throughout the world, and has been translated into many languages.

Publisher John Murray acquired the rights of publication after the death of Reginald Smith, and prepared a cheaper, single-volume edition of *Scott's journals*, priced at seven shillings and sixpence, and a 'school reader' of extracts. These were published on 6 September 1923, but contained the same edited deletions as in the original edition. From this time, scarcely a year has passed without a new work being published on the life and explorations of Captain Scott, either on his British National Antarctic Expedition in *Discovery* (1901–04) or on his last, the *Terra Nova* expedition (1910–13), either as chronologies of his diaries or as scholarly reviews of his polar leadership. No other polar event has appeared so iconic as this final assault on the South Pole, often seen as the last of the great heroic Antarctic expeditions; not even the news of the sinking of *Titanic*, with the loss of 1500 lives, has kept pace with the readership of Scott and his brave associates. The 1948 cinema film *Scott of the Antarctic* and various subsequent television productions have had a great popular appeal and boosted the sales of the Scott literature. The most significant publications have included the highly controversial *Scott and Amundsen* by Roland Huntford, *Captain Scott* by Ranulph Fiennes, and the superbly analytical *The last great quest*, by Max Jones. Although these writers were aware of some excisions by Huxley from the originals, and made some amendments (see also Pound 1966: vii), by consulting family papers and the Scott journals in the British Museum, the first full revision has only now been accomplished by Max Jones, who also consulted the John Murray archives and the original materials. He has produced a definitive, fully annotated, and restored text of the original volume one, and listed all the changes from the original manuscripts.

Jones has included the famous 'Message to the Public,' and the personal letters addressed to mothers, wives, and friends, which were found with the diaries, as well as lists of the dogs, ponies, sleeping bags, and sledges, presented by individual schools. He has prefaced the Journals with a brief, general introduction, including

an account of Scott's early life, his first expedition to Antarctica, and his preparations for the last, accompanied by an analysis of its consequences in 'The birth of a legend.' There is also a valuable chronological table of Scott's life and career with a list of other 'Historical and cultural background' events with matching dates. There are three important editor's appendices: J.M. Barrie's 'Biographical introduction' of Scott, Edward Atkinson's 'The finding of the dead,' and 'Significant changes to Scott's original base and sledging journals,' written by Jones. A final glossary of names is included, giving a brief biography of the scientists and officers, and those seamen who played a significant part in the expedition, and some others whose parts were more marginal, such as Clements Markham, Smith, Huxley, Barrie, Ernest Shackleton, and Fridtjof Nansen — but not Roald Amundsen!

Max Jones and the publishers are to be congratulated on this new version of a classic story, and for offering it at such a reasonable price. It should be the last word for a very long time. (Peter Speak, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

References

- Fiennes, R. 2003. *Captain Scott*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
 Huntford, R. 1979. *Scott and Amundsen*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
 Jones, M. 2003. *The last great quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic sacrifice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Pound, R. 1966. *Scott of the Antarctic*. London: Cassell.
 Scott, R.F. 1913. *Scott's last expedition*. Arranged by Leonard Huxley. 2 vols. London: Smith Elder.

THE SÁMI PEOPLE: TRADITIONS IN TRANSITION. Veli-Pekka Lehtola. 2004. Translated from the Finnish by Linna Weber Müller-Wille. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. 144 p, illustrated, softcover. ISBN 10: 1-889963-75-5. \$US27.95. doi:10.1017/S003224740625530X

Written 'from the inside,' that is by a Sámi, *The Sámi people: traditions in transition* is a valuable source of information for English readers on Sámi history and culture as well as the current political situation. The author's mission is to give a comprehensive outlook of his people, living in a region subdivided by four nation-states — Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia — and being subjects of policies dictated by governments the aim of which has been to control their territories as well as their identities. The Sámi presence has been a matter of disturbance to these nation-states through to the present day, representing an element out of place within the nationalist ideal of congruence between people and boundaries. Some have been victims of relocation, and all have been subjected to harsh assimilation efforts, officially lasting until the 1960s and eventually ending in

a formal recognition as an indigenous people, as stated in the newly (November 2005) published proposal of an internordic Sámi convention.

The book opens with an overview of the diversity of the Sámi people — in dialects, livelihoods, and attire. The favourite postcard version of the Sámi portrayed as a reindeer herder dressed in the Guovdageaidnu costume is a simplified stereotype that serves to hide this diversity from the majority gaze. The stereotyping is further demonstrated in the historiography of the Sámi, characterised by a mixture of myths and truths from the first century AD until the twentieth century. Here the author might have gone further into a discussion of what impacts the depiction of 'the Other' in such contrasting colours had and still have on how the minority is treated. There is undoubtedly a vast gap of ignorance about the Sámi within the majorities of their host countries.

The parts following the introduction are dedicated to Sámi history, the Sámi in the modern world, and Sámi art. Finally there is an appendix commemorating the Sámi multi-artist — poet, painter, composer, and musician — Nils-Aslak Valkeappää.

On the much disputed issue of Sámi origins — did they arrive from the northeast or the southeast, or did they just originate as an ethnically distinct group in the region where they still live today — the author takes the position that there is probably a continuity of settlement in the region since the stone age some 6000–8000 years back, and that the Sámi as a distinct *ethnic* category emerged when they made contact with an agricultural population during the second millennium BC. The implications of this argument for the present day political discourse on 'aboriginality' might have been mentioned. The debate among northerners on 'who were first, the Scandinavians or the Sámi?' has been increasingly ardent in the years since the introduction of the notion of 'indigenous people' was introduced in the 1970s.

In a rather sketchy manner, the 2000 years that have passed since the Sámi entered history through Tacitus' description around 100 AD are presented, mainly emphasising their changing contacts with neighbouring peoples and the state interests in the region emerging in the thirteenth century. The presentation is descriptive in character and cannot be expected to cover the historical complexities of the whole region in any detail. To a Norwegian reader the presentation has a somewhat eastern bias. The forest Sámi are relatively extensively described, while the coastal Sámi receive less attention. This is actually refreshing to someone who is more familiar with the western group, but there are parallels here that might have been mentioned, for example, the spread of colonisation and the loss of ownership of the land. In view of the formidable task it must have been to cover the entire Sámi region in time and space within the frame of some 150 pages, it is understandable that the author had to compromise. Aspects and issues have to be treated selectively, and there will always be some that one would like to read (more) about.

Again, in a section entitled 'Participants in modern society,' the eastern part of Sápmi (the Sámi land) receives more attention than the rest. As before, this is a welcome change since relatively less is generally known about them (that is, the Aanaar [Inari], the Skolt, and the Kola Sámi) compared to the numerically dominating North Sámi population. Besides their presentation, the section chronicles the emergence of the Sámi organisational field and the establishment of the Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The presentation is informative but omits any reference to internal political conflicts. For instance, one would like to have an assessment of the relationship between the reindeer-breeding and the settled Sámi in all the three countries — in what ways has it changed in recent history, how is it balanced between competition and cooperation, what is its relevance to the issue of Sámi identity? The author recapitulates the Alta conflict, a nation-wide protest campaign against the damming of the Alta river in Norway in 1979–82, which profoundly changed the Norwegian governmental attitude towards the Sámi and eventually led to their recognition as an indigenous people and to the establishment of the Sámi parliament in Norway. Of special interest is also his presentation of the various organisational efforts to build a pan-Sámi identity, that is, a shared sense of being one people despite national borders intersecting their land. In later years these efforts were also aimed at integrating the Kola Sámi. In addition, the main discrepancies between the three states' governmental policies concerning Sámi interests and issues are presented. The most important of these is the refusal by Sweden and Finland to recognise the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous Populations, while Norway was among the first states to ratify it (1990). In this context the main frontlines between the various parties taking part in the elections to the three Sámi parliaments would have been of interest. For instance, do they mirror conflicting perspectives on the basic issue of Sámi self-determination? On the other hand, in the chapter called 'Transforming identities,' the author's discussion of the complex relationship between 'culture' and 'ethnic identity' is of special interest. His main argument is that the Sámi language should be considered the most important unifying element of the ethnic sense of belonging, besides the knowledge of a common ancestry and heritage.

In the last part of his book, the author gives an overview of Sámi arts: literature, painting, music, sculpture, photography, filmmaking, and duodji (handicraft). A number of artists within these branches are presented, and their transformations of Sámi cultural elements into today's artistic work are given special attention. This is a most informative and interesting contribution to the knowledge of the modern Sámi cultural world.

With this book Veli-Pekka Lehtola has succeeded in giving an instructive and very welcome introduction to the Sami people's history and present-day society and culture to an international readership. There are, of course, elements that one might wish to have been further

elaborated, but considering the formidable task it is to cover diversities of history, governmental policies, identity issues, and political ambitions within a limited space, the book deserves to be recognised as a standard work on Sápmi, its people and culture. (Trond Thuen, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway.)

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE ARCTIC. Mark Nuttall (Editor). 2004. New York: Routledge. 3 volumes: xlv + 695, xxi + 846, xxi + 736, illustrated hard cover. ISBN 1-57958-437-3 US\$525.00. doi:10.1017/S0032247406265306

There still seems to be a market for reference books, or at least several of the major publishers believe that. I assume that, like me, they consider that the web is not a substitute for a properly researched and edited volume by the world's experts in a particular field. This set of volumes is certainly a clear commitment to providing the best quality of information on the Arctic.

Producing such a major encyclopaedia is a serious undertaking and needs a wide range of specialised advice. Mark Nuttall persuaded a group of 21 advisors to help him find the contributors and assess the quality of the contributions. With each article credited to one of the 381 contributors, this has been a mammoth task.

As a reviewer one asks a variety of questions. Is the work comprehensive? Are the individual entries by international experts? Are the entries long enough to make all the salient points? Are there enough illustrations? How does it compare with competing volumes? Is the material accessible to the widest range of potential users? How well does the index work?

Even in three volumes it is impossible to cover everything. Rather than a plethora of short entries, the structure used here is of fewer major subject articles that deal with a field in depth, with the index tying particular issues together. I sampled at random through the three volumes. Some entries were unexpected. How many people would go to this encyclopaedia and look up 'globalisation,' 'capacity building,' 'low level flight training,' or even 'copse'? Why is 'adoption' in as a full entry but not 'marriage'? Who would go looking for 'G50' and 'G80' and why 'Office of Polar Programs' but not other Arctic research centres, such as, for example, Norsk Polarinstitutt or Scott Polar Research Institute? The literature covered seemed very useful until I realised that there was no entry for Scandinavian literature. I was surprised to find no reference at all to libraries either as a main entry or in the index, which means there is also nothing on the Northern Libraries Colloquy or its successor the Polar Libraries Colloquy. Equally interesting, there was no entry for Siberia either as a main entry or in the index, this part of Russia being covered through entries on its individual parts. How many inexperienced users will know what they are? The coverage of art seemed

incomplete, concentrating almost solely on aboriginal art when there has been a considerable amount of important non-aboriginal art produced in many Arctic countries.

I was not clear what policy had been followed over the illustrations, which are few, all of them as diagrams, maps, or half tones. There are too few maps, and whilst most have clearly been drawn for the book and are clearly labelled almost all lack any latitude or longitude marks and some lack any scale.

On the positive side, many of the entries I looked at were excellent and by internationally known authorities in the field. Even when covering what might seem vast subjects like Russia or Alaska, the authors have distilled excellent summaries.

Checking 'Further Reading' for some entries I knew most about, I thought generally the choice was good, although it seemed strange that Roderic Owen's book was not listed under John Franklin, and there was no reference to Gosta Liljequist's book *High Latitudes* under Sweden. Some entries seem to have remarkably long lists of references — for example Kinship with 36 — whilst others of a much more substantive nature had very few — Svalbard only has five and Alaska only eight!

As might be expected this encyclopaedia is very strong on anthropology, sociology and human history, including language and politics. There are some excellent potted biographies of many famous people and good summaries of important places and expeditions. This is certainly a major strong point.

To aid the reader in finding his way through the over 1200 mainly 'thematic' entries in the three volumes there are several indices — in volume 1 there is one listing all the entries alphabetically and one grouping them under 28 themes, whilst in volume 3 there is the usual index cross-referencing of all the entries and the important terms within them. Each entry has a series of cross-references at the end as well as suggestions for further reading. These indexes are certainly a weak point for a book organised around thematic entries, as so many of my initial terms for checking were not in the main 1200 headings. For example, those not familiar with the new Greenlandic names for many places in Greenland would undoubtedly find it helpful to have the old names in the index. I could not easily find the Athabaska tar sands, and there was no mention in the index of DEW Line stations, with no entries under NATO, Defence, or DEW Line. I always worry about abbreviations, and I could find no listing of the abbreviations used, and terms are not cross-indexed by abbreviation. So no use looking up AMAP or CAAF unless you already know what they stand for.

I conclude that this is a very welcome addition to the available reference books on the Arctic, that it provides a good mixture of coverage but not unexpectedly biased towards the human fields, that the entries are written by acknowledged experts and are generally admirable in the way they provide a readable yet succinct summary of the topic with very useful lists for further reference, and that

some more illustrations would have been helpful. There is a huge amount of fascinating information contained within these volumes and the key to finding what you need is the quality of the main index. Despite the efforts of the Editor and his advisors, I believe that in many cases the Publisher has failed to provide good indexing for those terms most familiar to the casual reader, at a stroke undermining the audience for this book. In my view this alone will restrict the easy use of the *Encyclopedia of the Arctic* to those already familiar with the Arctic. I suspect that many users will give up quickly when the term they are searching for is too hard to locate. Why did they not trial the index with a range of users before going to print? (D.W.H. Walton, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET.)

TERRA ANTARCTICA: LOOKING INTO THE EMPTIEST CONTINENT. William L. Fox. 2005. San Antonio: Trinity University Press. xvi + 312 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-59534-015-7. \$US35.00.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406275302

The publisher summarises this book as follows: 'Examines the relationship of art, land and history in Antarctica. An interdisciplinary study of the science and art of the continent. Observes life at McMurdo station and the Pole, describing scientific research and daily observations.'

One sees from this summary that the scope of the book is extremely ambitious, moving as it does in a number of different directions. Some of the chapters describe operations of the two United States bases referred to. For example, there is an extensive description of McMurdo and various episodes during the austral summer season 2001/02. A chapter is devoted to a visit, albeit brief, to the US base at the South Pole, and a description of the science being undertaken there. Then there are chapters devoted to stays in the Dry Valleys, within helicopter range of McMurdo, and a stay in a hut near the summit of Mount Erebus. Interspersed with these are chapters devoted to the history of polar exploration, north as well as south, to the development of mapping over thousands of years, to painting and drawing over hundreds of years going back to before James Cook's voyages, to geology, and other topics.

A small selection of quotations from the book gives an idea of the level of detail given and the research that lies behind this detail. In earliest times: 'Paramides (c. 515–450 BC) divided it (the sphere of the world) into five parallel zones defined by climate, from a frigid north down through a temperate band, a torrid equatorial region, another temperate zone, and a frigid south — and here we have the basis for a polar world.'

An then even earlier: 'Cartographic historians sometimes refer to an eight thousand-year-old wall mural excavated during the 1960s at Catal Hayuk in Southern Turkey as the first map.'

Of Sir John Franklin's attempt to find a Northwest Passage in the 1840s: 'It was the best equipped polar expedition the world had assembled to date: the stores included 7088 pounds of tobacco, 3600 pounds of soap and libraries of 1200 volumes for each vessel.'

Leaping ahead to more recent times: 'The 1938–1939 German expedition catapulted aircraft from its ocean going "aeroplane mothership" the *Schwabenland*, each plane reputedly carrying 400 pounds of steel tipped javelins engraved with swastikas.'

And in current times talking of McMurdo: 'the total cargo shipped in the last year weighed in at 15,898,397 pounds, according to the NSF; the total sent out was 8,446,252 pounds.'

And looking to the future referring to a new rebuilt base at the South Pole: 'Inside the new station, the initial framing of dorm rooms, kitchen and gallery are complete, and they will be occupied this winter, the first meal to be served in the galley a beef wellington.'

Throughout, the book is stuffed with fact after fact. At times a level of repetition creeps in that disorients the reader. 'Have I not been here before?' he may ask. Three times we have a summary of Scott's fatal last journey. Three times we are told of the influence William Hodges had on the work of J.M.W. Turner.

The book is at its clearest and strongest when summarising history. For example, the chapter that deals with the history of mapping through the ages reads with clarity and is exciting. It is also strong in its straight descriptions of places. In addition, much of three chapters are devoted to the Dry Valleys, their extraordinary exposed geology, their iced lakes, and their almost hidden micro life. At a personal level, I found this interesting, as I contrasted it with my own experience at the British base of Rothera, coincidentally at exactly the same time as William Fox was at McMurdo. We were each selected to go on our respective national 'Artists and Writers' programmes.

The US government, in the form of the National Science Foundation, has had an 'Artists and Writers' programme since the 1980s; New Zealand has had a somewhat similar programme since 1997, and Australia a 'humanities' programme that goes back many years. The British started a similar programme only in 2001/02, and I was fortunate to be an invited visiting artist on that first year. And so, as well as reading with interest the many and various strands of this book, I did look out for comparisons with my own experience.

I was struck by the scale of the US presence compared to that of the UK. McMurdo is referred to throughout as 'a town.' About 3000 people passed through in one season. The average population was 1200. The comparable figures at Rothera were, I believe, about 150 total and 80 average. In all, the descriptions of McMurdo make it sound truly ugly, a terrible sprawl in the otherwise pristine land. The Rothera population was small enough that by the time of Christmas parties one more or less knew every-

one there. That could never be at McMurdo. It even has three separate bars.

In one of his many historical surveys, Fox summarises the history of western landscape art. He draws comparison with the work of map-makers: 'Landscape art is itself a mapping activity a way of getting from the familiar "here" to the unfamiliar "there".' He points out that the Dutch incorporated into their pilot's sailing books realistic drawings of the hills and coastlines as early as 1600. He asserts that this played a major role in the emergence of Dutch landscape painting with panoramic views and a generous view of sky. It seems more likely that the Dutch landscape tradition derives from the flat landscape and large skies, but he makes an interesting possible linkage. He points out that the tradition of using artists-draughtsmen on the voyages of exploration played a strong part in the early understanding of Antarctica.

This leads to his dealing with the work of artists from the early ages of Antarctic exploration until the present day. He estimates that since William Hodges sailed with Captain Cook, some 200 painters, photographers, sculptors, composers, poets, and novelists have followed to Antarctica. At least 100 of these would have been with the official programmes of New Zealand, Australia, and in particular the US.

Fox comments extensively on the visual output of the US programme. The National Science Foundation has been sending artists and creative writers to Antarctica since 1968. The first photographer sent was the eminent Eliot Porter in 1975. Fox says that it was the book subsequently published that first interested him in Antarctica (that was the same in my case). While the US has sent many photographers, it is on the selection and work of the painters that he concentrates.

The Americans have concentrated on 'realistic' artists, work that Fox says might please the general public but be of 'no interest for the art critic.' By implication, he is critical of general choices that the administrators of the US programme have made and continue to make. Some of the work of selected painters is illustrated as if to prove this point. (The book has a number of colour illustrations, although one wishes for larger images than the standard book form allows.) He implies that the Australian and New Zealand programmes have been more imaginative. Certainly Australian artists such as Sidney Nolan, Bea Maddock, and Jan Senbergs seem to confirm this.

One is left at the end of the book wondering quite what is its central thrust, and to whom it is aimed. It covers such a wide range of subjects, only a few of which are touched upon in this review. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that for those interested in Antarctica in whatever way, there is a bit of something for everyone. Although one wishes for a clearer and more focused structure, it is never without interest. For the student, or those wishing further reading and study, there is at the end a very extensive bibliography, sorted by heading and with comments. (Philip Hughes, London NW1 9JN.)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY SHORE-STATION WHALING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR.

Anthony B. Dickinson and Chesley W. Sanger. 2005. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. xvii + 254 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-7735-2881-4. Can\$49.95.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406285309

A dozen years ago I landed on a remote part of the Labrador coast where the rocky shore was strewn with large rusted iron tanks and assorted debris — relics of some industrial activity in the distant past. Large whitened bones half-covered by mosses and lichens suggested a whaling station, but there was nothing to indicate when it had been in operation, who had operated it, or what success it had achieved. *Twentieth-century shore-station whaling* would have answered all our questions, for Grady is one of the shore stations discussed by Dickinson and Sanger.

At one time or another most of the Canadian coast from southern Nova Scotia around to southern British Columbia, with only a relatively short gap in the central Arctic, was affected by commercial whaling. It was a vital factor in exploration, contact with native people, ecology, and economic development. But unlike the fur trade, or even the cod fishing industry, whaling has remained in the twilight of Canadian historiography. That is especially true of twentieth-century whaling. Publications about whaling in North American waters have dealt mainly with the thrilling era of 'traditional whaling,' characterized by the use of sailing ships, open boats, and hand-thrown harpoons. This phase petered out before the First World War. The 'modern whaling' that succeeded it was starkly different, using iron-hulled, steam-powered catcher boats, canons firing explosive harpoons, and large factory ships to process the carcasses. This type of whaling has often been referred to as a war against the whales, and is hardly the stuff for pleasant fireside reading or children's bedtime stories. Nonetheless, it is part of history.

Whereas traditional whaling was confined to a small number of species (mainly because of its comparatively crude technology), modern whaling was able to kill and process all the species of great whales. According to Dickinson and Sanger, the total catch from 17 shore stations in Newfoundland and four in Labrador between 1898 and 1972 was almost 20,000 whales, of which two-thirds were fin whales and the rest a mixture of blue, humpback, minke, sperm, sei, and smaller species such as pilot whales. A graph of annual catches does not show a continuous steady harvest of wildlife resource, but rather a boom-and-bust pattern with four distinct peaks interspersed by troughs in which little or no whaling occurred. This accords with the all too common record of whaling in many other parts of the world, in which over-exploitation depleted whale stocks and caused the industry to decline, a process sometimes reversed — but only temporarily — by technological advances or alterations in the time or location of whale hunting.

Even though modern whaling in the world's oceans has been accompanied by record-keeping, political oversight, and international regulation, the whaling industry somehow managed to turn a renewable resource into a very scarce one. Newfoundland whaling was no exception. Some of the reasons are touched upon in the book. Companies were eager to make money, working men eager to get jobs, environmentalists eager to protect whale stocks, and politicians eager to stay in power. Diverse interests often had contrary (and usually short-term) objectives, and in the resulting compromises everyone lost out, especially the whales. Widespread public concern about the plight of whales led to global protection measures and contributed to Canada's decision to abandon whaling, in 1972, more than four centuries after the Basques initiated whaling near Red Bay in the Strait of Belle Isle.

After an introductory chapter ('The setting'), the authors outline the history of whaling companies and shore stations, in chronological order. Seven of the book's 10 chapters and more than half of its text are allotted to the first period (1898–1915), during which about a third of the total whale kills occurred. The three subsequent peaks of whaling activity between 1918 and 1972, which accounted for the majority of the total catch, are the subject of only two chapters. An epilogue concludes the book.

The 10 maps prepared at the Department of Geography at Memorial University to show the location of shore stations and other places mentioned are models of cartographic clarity. Another admirable component of the book is the collection of more than 70 historic photographs of station buildings, ships, processing operations, workers, and their families. The index, although very detailed, is inconvenient because it is divided into categories. A reader attempting to find out what 'Grady' was might not know (until he read the appropriate part of the text) whether to look under 'Companies,' 'Geographical,' 'Persons,' 'Subjects,' or 'Vessels.'

Of the book's 254 pages, a hundred are taken up by end material — almost 1000 notes, several appendices, a bibliography of nearly 500 items, and the index. The text itself is surprisingly short — in my estimation only 46,000 words or so — but it is interspersed with more than 120 figures, tables, and illustrations, with eight more tables in the appendix.

The unrelenting recitation of facts and statistics in the text and tables threatens to overwhelm the reader. The book would be more appealing if most of the tables were consigned to the appendix or omitted altogether. In the main body of the work they are a distraction, often one of doubtful relevance. For example, in summarizing the early history of the Cabot Steam Whaling Company in 1900 is it necessary — or even useful — to present a list of its 36 shareholders, their places of residence, occupations, and numbers of shares owned, when the text has already commented on the company's sources of capital? No fewer than 10 tables in the book list the shares

or shareholders of various companies. Four tables list the specification of catcher boats — their place and type of construction, dimensions, gross tonnage, horsepower, and port of registration, even though the text does little more than mention them in passing. One of the seven appendices lists the dimensions of every building, animal shed, and slipway, at a particular whaling station in 1908, along with their contents. These include small things, such as one set of tea scales in the bunkhouse, two deck brooms in the coal shed, one hammer in the forge building, and so on. The only reference I noticed in the text to this appendix states that when the station was put up for sale the inventory was distributed to prospective buyers. But what purpose does the appendix serve?

Some tables and figures, on the other hand, are very relevant to the text, among them a graph showing the total catch by year for the entire whaling period, a table giving a year-by-year breakdown of the catch by species, and another listing all the whaling companies with their stations, years of operation, and catcher boats.

Serious studies of modern whaling off Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coasts have been few. The definitive book on the west coast is by Webb (1988) but the east coast has received less attention — a mere 10 pages in the comprehensive global treatment by Tonneson and Johnsen (1982). This book therefore fills a gap.

The preface tells us that 'portions of this book have appeared in preliminary form in other publications.' Indeed, much of the book's content, including many tables, maps, diagrams, and photographs, was published in 16 co-authored papers between 1989 and 2001, half of them in the *International Journal of Maritime History* and the *Northern Mariner*. The chapters of the book conform closely to the topics covered in the series of papers.

No one is as qualified as Dickinson and Sanger to tell the story of Newfoundland's recent whaling history. Over the years they have painstakingly scoured libraries and archives in North America and abroad, sifted through local newspapers, corresponded widely, unearthed a vast amount of information, and published their findings. I am disappointed that in this book they have chosen to cover the same ground as before, by re-writing or paraphrasing their earlier papers. I wish they had stepped back, looked objectively at the overall picture, identified the most important themes, and given us a totally new version, one in which the fascinating story of Newfoundland whaling is not obscured by unnecessary detail. I wish they had written less about business history and more about biology and geography (their academic fields of expertise). Perhaps we can expect something along those lines in the future. (W. Gillies Ross, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec J1M 1Z7, Canada.)

References

Tonneson, J.N., and A.O. Johnsen. 1982. *The history of modern whaling*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Webb, R.L. 1988. *On the northwest: commercial whaling in the Pacific Northwest 1790–1967*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

BEARING THE HEART OF A SAILOR: LETTERS FROM THE ANTARCTIC AND OTHER FARAWAY PLACES FROM TOM OATES TO ELIZABETH EADIE 1936–1938. Trish Burgess (Editor). 2004. Fisher, ACT: Patricia Burgess. 192 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-646-44154-X.
doi:10.1017/S0032247406295305

The letters printed in this book were written by Tom Oates – who in 1936 was aged 25 and serving as third officer of RRS *Discovery II* – to Elizabeth Margaret Eadie, daughter of the manager of 'the Harbour Trust dockyard' at Williamstown, near Melbourne. She had her seventeenth birthday in that year and is the mother of the editor. *Discovery II* visited the dockyard for refurbishment, and the officers seem to have been frequent guests at the Eadie residence and, with the family, they participated in many social events. Oates was smitten by Elizabeth Eadie, and they had clearly declared affection for each other. On the departure of the vessel from Melbourne, on 3 March 1936, Oates commenced a series of letters to Elizabeth, which are printed intact in this book.

Oates met Elizabeth several times during a visit that she paid with her mother to London in 1938 and he proposed on 24 June but was refused. He might have expected this because towards the end of February 1937 he had received a letter that clearly was an indication she had changed her mind. Despite this letter, he continued writing in affectionate terms during his subsequent period on board RRS *William Scoresby* and later during his training for a commission in the Royal Navy in England. The last letter was written on 27 September 1938. Oates died during World War II.

The enduring monument to the Oates/Eadie relationship is Eadie Island, near Elephant Island in the South Shetlands. During the survey it was apparent that Aspland Island 'was at least two islands, at least it was at high water. The captain said "What shall we call it?" I said "Elizabeth Margaret Island." He however jibbed at that but compromised with Eadie Island.'

There is no doubt that within these letters there is much of interest for historians of the Antarctic. The work performed by the research vessels of the Discovery Committee is described in some detail, and there is much relevant and unusual information about the various whaling stations in South Georgia. For example, this reviewer was surprised to note there was a tennis court at Grytviken, where the game was regularly played.

But the reader has to plough through a very large amount of irrelevant writing in order to arrive at the points of interest. Indeed, and this reviewer does not think that he has an abnormally thin skin in this respect, much of it is positively embarrassing, as Oates, quite naturally in

private letters, did not hesitate to lay bare his emotional feelings for Elizabeth. Reading the letters, one feels that one is looking into deeply private matters with which one has no business. One wonders two things. The first is what Oates himself would have thought if he had known that his feelings would have been exposed to the public after his death. And second, one wonders about the recipient of the letters, who appears to have encouraged the editor in her project, without, apparently, requiring that the more personal parts be omitted. On the other hand, opinions on questions of propriety vary widely and one is perfectly prepared to admit that many would find the openness of the editor in printing the letters intact as reasonable and even laudable. In fairness, it should be noted that the editor acknowledges the help 'of a small group of Oates family researchers' in the work, and they, presumably, had no objection to what was being proposed.

There is an introduction setting out the background to the Discovery Investigations and an epilogue. This consists of a description of the editor's expedition cruise, in 2003, to many of the places visited by Oates. Those illustrations that are contemporary to Oates' voyages are perhaps the most interesting part of the book.

The book has been privately published. It would, in this reviewer's opinion, have been much better if the letters had been edited to excise the deeply personal parts, leaving the elements that might be attractive to those with Antarctic interests. This, together with efficient editorial input with regard to the introduction and epilogue, would have made for a better, and shorter, book. (Ian R. Stone, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)