

SKUAS AND JAEGERERS

THE SKUAS. Furness, W. R. 1987. Calton, T. and A. D. Poyser. 363 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-85611-046-1. £18.00.

The skuas *Stercorariidae* are a family of brown or brown and white birds, lively and piratical cousins to the gulls. Prominent in both polar regions, they have for long intrigued and occasionally plagued field biologists. They fall readily into two genera, the large skuas *Catharacta* and the small skuas (or jaegers) *Stercorarius*. Both range widely across the world; the large skus have breeding representatives both north and south, while the jaegers breed only in the north. Many populations have now been studied in the field, and this book provides a much-needed review of the family as a whole. Furness covers them well; his own experience is mainly with stocks of great skuas (bonxies) in north Britain, but he knows his jaegers too, and deals very fairly with the southern literature on subantarctic, Chilean, Falkland, Tristan and south polar skuas. Topics in chapter headings include early history and classification, distributions and populations, migrations, sexual dimorphism and stock polymorphism, behaviour, food and feeding, kleptoparasitism, breeding, population dynamics, conflicts with farmers and conservation. Skuas are entertaining birds, and this author writes entertainingly about them, as well as fully. What he cannot reasonably include in text has been packed into over 60 tables at the back; illustrations are generous, including photographs, maps, and pleasing sketches by John Busby, and the bibliography and index are thorough. I recommend *The skuas* for its readability, presentation, sound content and modest price. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

THE ESKIMOS

ECHOES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE ESKIMOS. Text by Burch, Ernest S. jr., photographs by Forman, W. 1988. London, Macdonald/Orbis. 128 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-356-14209-4. £14.95.

The appearance of yet another book on the Inuit (Eskimos) is not everybody's chosen birthday treat, but it must be said that this one is different. 'Tiger' Burch knows people of the North at first hand, and the book is splendidly illustrated with photographs by Werner Forman, one of the foremost portrayers of the non-industrial world. We have lacked an authoritative but 'popular' treatment of the Inuit for some decades, since the earlier titles by distinguished anthropologists like Kaj Birket-Smith became hopelessly dated. We also have needed a book that junior educational institutions could be encouraged to acquire, and which might not turn away students from the pleasures of anthropology. Again this book does exactly this. It will not, of course, compete with the Arctic volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians* with its cohort of co-authors. However this fine book does introduce the reader to the main issues in Eskimology

without assuming extensive prior knowledge of anthropology. One is led through Inuit social organization, economy, cosmology and art, always with a focus on the traditional rather than the modern. This will no doubt irritate those whose concern is with ethnic mobilization. We are told virtually nothing about contemporary Inuit politics, but clearly the series of which it is a part focusses on the past. I for one have no quarrel with this, and I believe that Burch's text will not date, anymore than that of Birket-Smith did for several decades, whereas the ethnic lobbyists are often overtaken by events within five years of publication. (Ian Whitaker, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6.)

ALASKAN RAILROAD

THE WHITE PASS: GATEWAY TO THE KLONDIKE. Minter, R. 1987. Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press. 394 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-912006-26-9. US\$24.95 plus \$2.00 postage and packing.

Despite its meagre length, running only the 100 miles from tidewater at Skagway, Alaska to the Yukon River at what is now Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, the White Pass and Yukon Railroad stood as a major engineering feat of its day and one which was accomplished despite incredible legal, financial and geographic difficulties. With *The White Pass*, Roy Minter has written the definitive history of this extraordinary enterprise and at the same time filled a long neglected gap in the literature of the Yukon.

Set against the backdrop of the Klondike gold rush and surrounded by the familiar stream of frontier life, Minter's chronicle is a classic northern adventure. Beginning with the 'discovery' of the pass by Capt Moore, a supernumerary member of the 1887 Ogilvie Expedition, the story follows not just the construction of the railroad, but on a larger scale, the evolution of the idea for an all weather transportation system into the Yukon interior. All of the competing plans and routes are thoroughly examined, with the White Pass only ultimately emerging as the logical route and the railroad as the most efficient method. While the major emphasis focuses on the 25 months of the railroad's construction, it is on the characters involved as much as the event. To previous readers of Klondike history many of these will be familiar, but there are new characters as well, long neglected by historians and deserving of equal recognition: the financier Samuel Graaves; the co-builders of the railroad, Michael Heney, Erastus Hawkins and John Hislop; and others too numerous to mention.

Extremely well produced, this book is a delight to read, with the author's exhaustive research well supported by an excellent bibliography. For readers fortunate enough to have ridden with the WPYR before its untimely closure in 1982, this volume will rekindle fond memories and perhaps answer a few nagging questions. For those less fortunate, it provides an excellent opportunity to experience the thrill vicariously. (Geoffrey Bleakley,

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AN ECHO OF SCOTT'S NORTHERN PARTY

THE WICKED MATE; THE ANTARCTIC DIARY OF VICTOR CAMPBELL. King, H. G. R. (editor). 1988. Alburgh, Bluntisham Books/Erskine Press. 192 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85297-030-8.

After leading the Northern Party of Scott's British Antarctic Expedition 1910-13 and distinguished service in the Royal Navy during World War I, Capt Victor Campbell RN retired in 1922 to make Newfoundland his home. He died in 1956, and in 1979 his library, journals and other personal papers were presented by his son to Memorial University of Newfoundland. This book is based on his Antarctic journals, now in the university library. They cover the period from 1 June 1910, while he was helping to fit out the expedition ship *Terra Nova*, to 28 November 1912 at Cape Evans, shortly before the expedition returned to New Zealand and home.

The Northern Party (which included also Surgeon Murray Levick, geologist Raymond Priestley, Petty Officers George Abbot and Frank Browning, and AB Harry Dickason), was originally scheduled to explore east of the Ross Ice Shelf. Finding Amundsen at the Bay of Whales, Campbell shifted operations to northern Victoria Land, giving Priestley opportunities to explore the coast from Cape Adare to southern McMurdo Sound. The journals cover their winter in a hut at Cape Adare, their sledging journey to Inexpressible Island, the winter they spent there in a snow cave, and their hazardous spring journey to rejoin the main party at Cape Evans in 1912. Harry King, the editor, has added useful background material including notes, photographs and contemporary press items. Campbell's entries are brief and laconic; we must still rely on Raymond Priestley's *Antarctic adventure* for details of this extraordinary story of Antarctic survival, but the journals add detail and were well worth publishing. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

POLAR SHIP TECHNOLOGY

MARINE TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY JOURNAL. Issue on Polar Ship Technology: 21(3): 1-95, September 1987. Washington DC, Marine Technology Society Inc. ISSN 0025-3324

This issue of the *Journal* is a potentially interesting collection of papers covering the advancement of polar ship technology since the mid-1950s, with detailed analyses of four milestone examples of the genre, examination of some important aspects of design technology, and explanation of modern navigational techniques and policy. One would have expected particular care to be taken in preparation of such an issue, which was designed no doubt with one eye on promotion of the Society. Unfor-

tunately this one suffers from major flaws, especially in the very poor quality of halftones. The editing has been inadequate, with numerous typesetting errors and several frustrating transpositions of illustration titles, which are obvious from even a cursory inspection.

A promising opening paper is a well written and honest review of the design and operational problems encountered by *MV Arctic* (Martin P. Luce, Canarctic Shipping). This promise is not sustained in the remaining vessel reviews, which read as manufacturers' proclamations of the excellence of their products, having been written by the manufacturer or based on his publicity handouts. There is therefore a disappointing lack of comparative comment between the contributions and irritatingly misleading references such as that describing *MV Icebird* as 'the world's first vessel purposely built for polar resupply' (RRS *John Biscoe* was constructed in 1956; Lauritzen's *Dan* ships have operated in the Arctic and Antarctic for three decades).

Papers by Cynthia Lamson on 'Safe shipping in the Canadian Arctic: risks and responsibilities', and by Leavitt and McAvoy on 'Remote sensing in ice navigation', are well researched, readable and informative. Albert Free's 'Solving icebreaker design problems using ice model basins' is a good paper, the impact of which is effectively destroyed by the publishers' transposition of two complete pages. His conclusion that full scale instrumented trials are necessary to validate model tests in non-saline model ice types should be noted by the specialist ice class ship builders, who will eventually be the beneficiaries. Ghoneim on 'Instrumentation for measuring ice forces on icebreakers' and Voelker and others on 'Application of expert systems to ice piloting and ice navigation' are indicative of the type of concept which the expansion of shipping in polar areas is likely to require. Knowledge of these operating techniques should be acquired by all inexperienced designers, operators and officers.

Is there significance, I wonder, in the contributions of Canadian origin being a class above the remaining 50%? This special issue is a curate's egg, unfortunately scrambled; it does not inspire this reader to contribute \$50 for a subscription. (David Jones, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET UK.)

THE WORK OF SCAR

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE ANTARCTIC. Fifield, Richard. 1988. Oxford, Oxford University Press, for the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and ICSU Press. 146 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-19-854216-X. £25.00.

Richard Fifield starts his preface with the statement that he finds himself in a dilemma since, though his name appears on the title page, he is neither the author nor the editor of this book. Working largely from reports submit-