

in both countries. Villages in the region will be asked to ratify the commission, which will seek to promote a formal international agreement on the use and protection of the herd. The commission is charged both to develop strategies to maintain the health and productivity of the herd, and to protect the rights of local communities to harvest animals for their 'traditional, cultural or nutritional use'. (Source: *Tundra Times*, 22 December 1982.)

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TO BE SPLIT

In response to the plebiscite of 14 April 1982, the government of Canada has conditionally agreed to divide the 3.3 million km² Northwest Territories into two new regions, and to give them and the Yukon more independence. The division depends on settlement of outstanding land claims, and a consensus among northern peoples on boundaries, locations of new administrative centres, and division of responsibilities among local, regional and territorial levels of government. The federal government intends to give the territories more autonomy and certainty in financial matters, though Ottawa will keep control over revenues from resources. Provincial status is not envisaged either for the Yukon or for the two new territories at present. (Source: *Canada Weekly*, January 1983.)

MOUNT EREBUS ACTIVE

Antarctica's southernmost volcano is showing unusual levels of activity. Four seismic stations—three on the slopes and one at the 3,795 m summit—that have monitored Mount Erebus for three years showed peaks of activity in early spring, 1982, with over 650 small quakes on 8 October. The lava lake in the summit cauldron has dropped 2–3 m in the past year, representing a loss of about 12 800 m³ of molten rock into the body of the mountain itself. Dr Philip R. Kyle, heading an international study team of US, New Zealand and Japanese scientists, hopes to discover if a new dyke was formed during the October quakes. In spectacular eruption when discovered by Captain James Clark Ross in January 1841, Mount Erebus has since been reported as semi-dormant, though a plume of vapour streams constantly from its summit. (Source: *National Science Foundation News*, 18 February 1983.)

Obituary

Captain ALAN J. VILLIERS DSC died on 3 March 1982, aged 78 years. Australian born, he accompanied C. A. Larsen's first whaling venture into the Ross Sea in 1923 as a cub reporter for the Hobart *Mercury*. Having signed on as a whaler's labourer at £4 per month, he endured an icy and unsuccessful season in the factory ship *James Clark Ross*, anchored in Discovery Inlet at the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf. Articles and photographs from this voyage appeared in Hobart under the title *To the frozen south*, and later in extended form as *Whaling in the frozen south* (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1925). Research on 19th century ships and voyages connected with Tasmania led to the publication of *Vanished fleets* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), which includes accounts of early whaling and sealing voyages. Years later Alan Villiers kindly helped me with my own research on early 20th century whaling. Not until 1950 did he again visit a polar region, this time Davis Strait and west Greenland in a four-masted fishing schooner—a voyage recounted in *The quest of the schooner 'Argus'* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1951). His sea-going career, described elsewhere as 'a monument to the last days of sail' (Christopher Lloyd in *The Mariner's Mirror*, 68(2): 99–100, 1982) also included spells in square-riggers, Arab dhows, sail training ships and the *Mayflower* replica. He was noted for his cine-films made under sail; these are now on loan to the National Maritime Museum Greenwich (where he was for many years a trustee) and being catalogued. Alan Villiers wrote many books on sailing. As a war-time RNVR officer he commanded squadrons of landing-craft in Europe and south-east Asia.

Ann Savours (Mrs Shirley)

Sir **WILLIAM CROWTHER** KBE, DSO, VRD died in Hobart on 31 May 1981, three weeks after his 94th birthday. Prominent in the Australian medical world, he was also the grandson of a pioneer surgeon and whaling-fleet owner. A keen sense of both medical and nautical history made him a collector of books and manuscripts on Tasmania. His collection of over 15000 items, some of which he inherited, was presented in 1964 to the State Library of Tasmania. It includes much of maritime and whaling interest. Sir William described and listed the collection in *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, 105:41–48 (1970), 106:59–68 (1972) and 107:33–45 (1974). An account of an early voyage by the sealer *Offley* to Heard Island in 1858, contributed by Sir William to *Polar Record* (15 (96):301–16, 1970), is enlivened by mention of conversations both with his father, who could recall *Offley*'s return in 1860, and with a captain who had seen service as an apprentice during the voyage.

Ann Savours (Mrs Shirley)

Dr **ISOBEL WYLIE HUTCHISON** died on 20 February 1982 in her 93rd year. Born at Carlowrie, Kirkliston, one of five children of a former Indian merchant, she was educated at Studley Horticultural College. From a conventional upbringing and education she became an intrepid Arctic traveller, and a writer, botanist, poet and water colour artist of note. In 1925 she made a walking tour of Iceland, covering 260 miles in two weeks. In 1928–29 she spent over a year in west Greenland, based at Umanak but visiting remote areas, returning with a large collection of plants and charming watercolours. In 1933 she crossed Arctic Alaska by boat and dog sledge, accompanied first by a Russian trapper and later an Eskimo guide, returning with hundreds of plants for the Royal Herbarium at Kew and Eskimo curios for the Museum of Ethnology at Cambridge. Later she collected widely in the Aleutian Islands. Isobel Hutchison's Arctic work was recognised by the award of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's Mungo Park Medal and an honorary LID from St Andrew's University. She was an accomplished lecturer and wrote many articles for journals and magazines; other writings include travel books on Greenland, Alaska and the Aleutians, a novel and three collections of poems. She was unique, and among the most charming and gifted characters of her generation.

K. M. Lewis

Lieutenant-General **ALEKSANDR VASIL'YEVICH BELYAKOV** died in January 1983, aged 85. A career officer in the Soviet air force, he achieved fame as V. P. Chkalov's navigator on two remarkable non-stop polar flights. In July 1936 they flew from Moscow to Ostrov Udd, an island off Kamchatka, and in June 1937 to Vancouver, near Portland, Oregon. Both flights crossed the Arctic, the second over the Pole itself, using the same single-engined low-wing monoplane, ANT-25. The first flight covered 9374 km in 56 hours 20 minutes, and the second 8504 km in 63 hours 25 minutes.

Terence Armstrong

Kontr-Admiral **VASILY FEDOTOVICH BURKHANOV** died on 15 September 1982. He was born in 1908, and went into the Red Navy as an engineer. In this capacity he made his first voyage through the Northern Sea Route with a convoy of naval ships. He rose to the rank of kontr-admiral as second-in-command of the Far Eastern Fleet. He left the navy after World War II and went into the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route [Glavesevmorput'], serving as deputy head and then head for six years in the late 1950s. In this capacity he was also a deputy of the Minister of the Merchant Fleet [Ministerstvo Morskogo Flota]. He was thus in charge of Soviet Arctic merchant shipping at an interesting time, after Stalin's death and into the period of increasing international contact. He was concerned with the International Geophysical Year preparations and with the Antarctic Treaty. He was particularly interested in scientific exploration, and actively furthered the work both of the Soviet drifting stations on the ice of the Arctic Ocean and of the Soviet Antarctic expeditions.

In 1960 he moved to Moscow University, where he taught a course on the geography of polar lands. In 1969 he set up and headed a Problems Research Laboratory for Northern Development [Problemnaya Nauchno-Issledovatel'skaya Laboratoriya po Osvoyeniyu Severa] under the aegis of the

State Committee for Science and Technology. This institution had a wide scope, especially in the social sciences, but does not seem to have achieved the leading position Burkhanov would have wished it to have.

Burkhanov was awarded three Orders of Lenin and many other decorations.

Terence Armstrong

Lieutenant Commander **MICHAEL HENRY MASON** RNVR (Ret) died on 18 October 1982 at the age of 82. Author of *The Arctic forests* (1924), Mason gained experience for his book as a lumberjack, prospector, dog-team driver and explorer in Arctic regions of Canada and Alaska.