

Obituaries

The Rt Hon. Lord Shackleton, KG, PC, AC, OBE, FRS, who died on 22 September 1994, will be remembered principally as a statesman, one of the few to graduate from being a mere politician. He was held in respect, and indeed affection, by members of all political parties as ‘one of the kindest men in public life,’ in the words of a Conservative newspaper describing this Labour peer. The younger son of Sir Ernest Shackleton, he made his own way in life, never trading on the name of his illustrious father, whom he had barely known, but whose memory he revered, while aware of his very human failings. When asked on a radio programme about his own best achievements, he placed first ‘to have provided for my family’ — something that his father had hardly achieved. On the same programme, his friend but political adversary Lord Jellicoe described Eddie Shackleton as ‘a superb team leader,’ and such he was, whether as a young man on an Arctic expedition in the field or as an elder statesman grappling with problems in the Falkland Islands.

Edward Arthur Alexander Shackleton, who was born on 15 July 1911, lived his teenage years at Hampton Court Palace, where his mother had been accorded a grace and favour residence. While an undergraduate at Magdalen College, Oxford, he took part as surveyor in the Oxford University Expedition to Sarawak 1932, led by the redoubtable Tom Harrisson, ethnologist, writer, broadcaster, co-founder of Mass Observation, and wartime parachute soldier, whom Shackleton described as ‘probably the rudest man’ he had known, yet one who had influenced his ideas more than any other. On this expedition, Shackleton was in the party that made the first recorded ascent of Mount Mulu (2370 m), and he later contributed a chapter to Harrisson’s book *Borneo jungle* (1938).

In their final year at Oxford, Shackleton and his friend Arthur Moore, biologist on the Sarawak expedition, turned their thoughts to the Arctic, where they were attracted by the partly unexplored region of northern Ellesmere Island. As a result, and after 18 months’ hard work, Shackleton succeeded in organizing the Oxford University Expedition to Ellesmere Land 1934–1935, which was to be led by an older man, as required by the University authorities. The leader chosen was Dr Noel Humphreys, a medical doctor and botanist in his early forties, with extensive experience in Africa and Central and South America, but with no Arctic background. The other members of the six-man party — of which Shackleton was the last survivor — were Robert Bentham (geologist of Nottingham University), David Haig-Thomas (ornithologist of Cambridge University), and, most importantly, Sergeant Harry Stallworthy, RCMP, who would provide the expertise of a veteran Arctic traveller.

The original objective of the expedition was to estab-

lish a winter base at either Fort Conger in northeastern Ellesmere Island or further south on Bache Peninsula on the east coast of that island. In the event, heavy ice in Smith Sound precluded any landing in northern Ellesmere Island in the late summer of 1934, and the expedition was forced to winter at Etah in northwest Greenland, where a hut was built. The following spring, with support from native dog-drivers, the expedition undertook three main sledge journeys. After crossing Smith Sound, Shackleton and Bentham carried out survey and geological work in the Bache Peninsula area, while Humphreys and Haig-Thomas crossed to the west coast of Ellesmere Island, making geological and archaeological collections. The longest and most geographically important journey was made by Moore and Stallworthy northwards to Lake Hazen. From there Moore and the Greenlander Nukapingwa became the first to travel on the main ice cap of northern Ellesmere Island, and made the first ascent of an unmapped 2210 m peak, rising above the ice cap, which Moore named Mount Oxford. From the summit they sighted to the north a new range of mountains, which Moore named the British Empire Range. These two names were not approved for official Canadian use until 1960. Nevertheless, it took much longer to gain official approval for Shackleton’s Mount Magdalen at the head of Scoresby Bay. After much lobbying, and to his great delight, approval finally came only a few months before his death.

The expedition had relied heavily on the Greenlanders of the Thule district, with whom excellent working relations were established. Twenty years later, the Greenlander Inutuk insisted on being photographed in an attitude of salutation to Shackleton, remarking that he, a ‘chief’ in his own land, was pleased to know that, in England, Eddie had also become a ‘chief.’ There is much about Inutuk and other Greenlanders, and their way of life, in Shackleton’s fine book *Arctic journeys* (1937), a classic of its kind and one of the few books dealing with Canadian Arctic exploration between the wars. In it he wrote: ‘A year’s expedition is indeed equivalent to many years’ education....I feel sure that none of us would wish to contemplate a future in which there is no return to the white lands of the Arctic.’ It was a sad disappointment to Shackleton that the Polar Medal was not awarded to the members of his expedition, despite its geographical discoveries and the publication of his book, and of several scientific papers by others.

Any plans Shackleton may have had for a further expedition to the Arctic were overtaken by the war, the outbreak of which found him working as Ministry of Information talks producer for the BBC — a post from which he claimed to have been sacked. In 1940 he joined the RAF, in which he served with distinction for five years as an anti-U-boat planner and intelligence officer, rising to



Fig. 1. Lord Shackleton at Alert in 1965.

the rank of Wing Commander, and being twice mentioned in despatches and awarded the OBE.

Shackleton entered politics in 1945, becoming Labour Member of Parliament for Preston in 1946, a position he held until 1955. In 1958 he was among the first group of Life Peers to be created under the Life Peerages Act of the same year. In Harold Wilson's first government, he held office as Minister of Defence for the RAF 1964–1967, as deputy leader of the House of Lords 1967–1968, and finally as leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal 1968–1970. With the return of a Conservative government, he became opposition leader of the House of Lords 1970–1974.

As Minister for the RAF — the office that he most enjoyed — his chance came to return to the Arctic during an official visit to Canada in 1965. One of his objectives was to discover the feelings of Canadian servicemen about the total integration of Canadian forces then taking place. He readily understood that he would not be enlightened by senior officers in Ottawa, who would inevitably toe the government line. His later soundings at station and squadron level convinced him that the Canadian plan for integration was not an option for the British armed forces. While he was in Ottawa, a private drinks party was arranged so that he could meet old friends and Arctic hands, such as Henry Larsen, Bill Fraser, and Paddy Hamilton of the RCMP, and Tom Manning, last of the original explorers of the Canadian Arctic. He greatly enjoyed himself, swapping yarns and banter from past days, to the extent that he was an hour or so late for dinner at the British High Commission. His dinner hostess remarked next day that

'Lord Shackleton was sent over in *very good form*.' Shortly afterwards, flying north by Hercules aircraft from CF Station Namao, Edmonton, Shackleton was treated by an enthusiastic aircrew to low passes over his 1935 field area on the east coast of Ellesmere Island before landing at Alert, Canada's northernmost outpost and his personal farthest north (Fig. 1). Two years later, as patron of the RAF expedition to Ellesmere Island, he was due to fly out for the relief of the expedition. He would have enjoyed the adventure of being stranded on the Air Force Glacier, Tanquary Fiord, in a Twin Otter aircraft with an iced carburettor, except for the fact that he had been sent to Aden by the Prime Minister to sort out problems in that region. In 1988, as patron of the Joint Services Expedition to Borup Fiord, Ellesmere Island, he made his last visit to the Arctic, flying out with the expedition in an RAF Hercules aircraft. At Resolute, NWT, where he was treated not like a lord but like a prince, he made the best use of 24 hours by shaking off 50 years of his life and rising early to roam again the Arctic tundra.

However, it was at the other end of the Earth that he was better known to the public, for in 1975, by which time he had become deputy chairman of the RTZ Company, he was invited by Jim Callaghan's Foreign Secretary to lead an enquiry into the economy of the Falkland Islands. In his *Economic survey of the Falkland Islands*, published the following year, he recommended a liberalization of the islands' political system and much greater re-investment in the islands of profits made by absentee companies. He saw clearly and correctly, as was later proved, that the islanders could enjoy an independent and viable economy principally through the establishment of licensed fishing limits, land improvement, and further oil exploration. The upgrading and extension of the airfield at Stanley was crucial to his development proposals, for which he recommended that the British government should contribute about £31 million over five years. In the event, the government acceded to none of his proposals, apart from providing a token annual sum in aid.

In preparing his report, Shackleton had been guided by the belief that a successful Argentine claim to the Falkland Islands would destabilize the entire South Atlantic region, including the Antarctic. Within days of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands at the beginning of April 1982, Mrs Margaret Thatcher asked Shackleton to update his 'wonderful report.' The new report, published in September of the same year, reiterated many of the earlier recommendations and called for the investment of £100 million over five years. This time, with lessons from the Argentine invasion absorbed, the government acted quickly to implement many of Shackleton's recommendations. The airfield was improved and extended, and land reform was effected. In 1987 a 150-mile fishing limit was set, and, with the introduction of fishing licences, the Falkland Islands economy started to boom. Shackleton was hailed by the islanders as a hero and, in 1988, he returned to Stanley to receive the freedom of the town. He had previously fought and won the battle to retain the Antarctic

guardship *Endurance*, a former Danish ice-strengthened ship renamed after his father's famous ship by his daughter Alexandra at the commissioning in 1968. Eddie Shackleton had himself sailed in the ship, notably on a voyage to South Georgia in 1976, when he was able for the first time to visit his father's grave at Grytviken. In 1991 he lobbied hard and successfully for the replacement of the aging *Endurance* by a Norwegian ice-strengthened ship to be similarly renamed.

Shackleton had retired as deputy chairman of RTZ in 1983, although the company retained his services as an adviser. The effect of 'retirement' was to give him more time for his many other activities both within and outside the House of Lords. He had cultivated an astonishing range of contacts at all levels in fields of interest to him. These people with special knowledge provided him with an 'intelligence net' in such subjects as geography, mapping, space science, trade, and industry, and enabled him to discharge with distinction the offices of president of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee 1976–1980, and chairman of the Political Honours Scrutiny Committee 1976–1992, of the East European Trade Council 1977–1986, and of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology 1988–1989. After the Falklands War, he established the South-West Atlantic Group of fellow peers and others to protect British interests in that region and to safeguard Antarctica, he himself being a powerful lobbyist for these causes.

From 1971 to 1974 he had been president of the Royal Geographical Society, and in 1990, for services to geography, the Society awarded him its rare Special Gold Medal, uniquely to the son of a previous recipient. In his exploring days, he had received the Society's Cuthbert Peek Award.

Shackleton was a staunch and generous supporter of the Scott Polar Research Institute, not least in donating both his own and his father's polar papers to the Institute's archives. His inherited interest in polar exploration was lifelong and by no means limited to his own foray into the Arctic. Thus, for example, he published a biography of Nansen — *Nansen, the explorer* (1959) — whom he greatly admired, and he entered into the controversy whether Peary reached the North Pole in 1909, being a strong protagonist of Peary (*Polar Record* 28 (166): 252 (1992)). Withal he was, in the words of Paddy Hamilton, 'a real northerner,' and he was one that practised his love of skiing into his late seventies. He was president of the Arctic Club in 1960 and again in 1979.

Few have exceeded Eddie Shackleton in energy and drive, and in the ability to get the best out of colleagues and subordinates. At the same time, he was quick to seize upon inefficiency or stupidity wherever he found it, as when two Canadian geologists of Arctic renown were jointly awarded in this country a single Royal medal, which they were supposed to share. As, at the time, a Minister with responsibility for the Royal Mint, Shackleton was well placed to rectify this absurdity, and a second medal was issued in short order. He typified the very busy person by whom injustices are put right and to whom are given the

jobs that need to be done in a hurry. Nor was he ever too busy to visit a friend in sickness or to help a friend in need.

Shackleton is survived by his wife and daughter, a son having predeceased him.

Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith

Robert Spivey, former major in the Airborne Forces, quartermaster in the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, and colonial administrator, died at his home in Australia in February 1994. Robert, Rob, Bob, Boy, and Spiv: so many sobriquets surely demonstrate the appeal he had to all lucky enough to know, serve, and work with him. The fact that we in the Antarctic and his regiment called him Spiv was not a slur, but a demonstration of our genuine affection and respect.

Spivey was born in Chelsea on 25 March 1921, and was educated at Merton College, Oxford, after which he worked as a 'Blue button' in a City stockbroking firm. Soon after the commencement of World War II, he joined the Territorial Army, and by the summer of 1940 had been commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers. He soon volunteered to join the Airborne Forces, and was immediately selected by the founder of the Pathfinder Company, Major John Lander, and so was the second officer of the newly formed paratroopers.

Reading his obituary in *Pegasus* (the journal of the paratroopers), recounting his wartime activities — jumping at North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Arnhem, and Norway — one is not surprised to learn that Spivey was 'mentioned in despatches' and a major by the age of 24. In the autumn of 1945 he was in command of a company in Palestine, where the terrorists killed more of his men than he had lost at Arnhem. He also served with the Arab Legion and the Gurkhas.

I first met Spiv in December 1947, one of a motley bunch who had signed with the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey. How fortunate I was to be among those to be selected with Spiv to serve for a year at Base E, on Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay. Our leader was Vivian Fuchs, who appointed Spivey to be quartermaster — in charge of food, clothing, etc. — a job he did meticulously with the utmost fairness and humour. How nostalgic it is to remember that neat, upright figure wearing one of my white naval cap-covers, which he had appropriated, as he dished out the provisions such as chocolate or tobacco.

He was given a team of nine huskies, the lead-dog being a quiet and efficient dog called, for obvious reasons, Whitefoot. To make up numbers he was given a spare American dog called Smokey Joe, who soon became known as the Goddam Yank. He loved and respected his dogs, as they did him.

Spivey's first sledging trip was a winter journey; he and I shared a tent. I learned later that Fuchs, on hearing the laughter from our tent, remarked to Bernard Stonehouse, whom he shared with: 'You know, I think those two are really enjoying themselves.'



Fig. 1. Bob Spivey as a major in the Airborne Forces.

Our main journey of more than 500 miles and lasting 56 days was a coastal survey of Laubeuf Fjord, at the northern end of Marguerite Bay. Apart from the survey, we discovered a rookery of emperor penguins on the Dion Islands. On leaving the islands, his team, in the lead, unwittingly crossed rotten ice. The dogs got onto firmer ice, while the sledge floated. Quite coolly, Spiv, sitting astride the sledge with his legs in the icy sea, unlashed his load and passed back all items on ropes that we threw him.

In the winter of 1949, Spivey accompanied three of us back to the Dions to collect a series of emperor penguin embryos. This was a journey of more than 50 miles. During our three months, he again showed his thought and consideration by supplying a Mid-Winter's Day parcel of special drink and food; he did so again when the relief team came after 80 days, by sending fresh bread and a tin of asparagus. Travelling between 500 and 600 miles together, he and I talked endlessly, and how I wish I had recorded his accounts of his wartime experiences. Sharing a 6' x 6' tent, you certainly get to know, and in this case admire, your companion. It has been stated that he suffered severely frost-bitten toes. As the medical officer, I can state that this is totally untrue and would have been out

of character in such an efficient man.

On his return, he kept in touch with polar matters, amongst other events overseeing the dropping of supplies to the British North Greenland Expedition. In 1955 he deservedly received the Polar Medal from Her Majesty the Queen.

For the next 20 years, Spivey served with the Colonial Office in very differing parts of the world. At 4 AM on Christmas morning in 1955, then the magistrate of South Georgia, he was on the jetty at Grytviken, among the dead whales, soaring mountains, and glowing glaciers, to greet me and my team (for the International Geophysical Year) with a tray of glasses of champagne cocktails. What a memorable welcome! It was only a couple of years ago that I learned that the governor had expressed disapproval of such unbecoming behaviour.

A year later, after our restricted diet, he had us all to dinner in the magistrate's house, and before each of us were *two* delicious steaks; it was only after we had eaten and relished the first that he informed us they were whale.

He subsequently spent periods of several years in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, finally settling with his family in Australia in 1970.

Spiv's personality can only be described as totally admirable: he was completely honest, his humour was a strength to all, and he was a companion beyond compare. This year he was planning with great enthusiasm to attend the fiftieth anniversary celebration at Arnhem. What a cruel blow of fate that he died seven months before the event. But, as he requested in his will, his ashes were buried in the War Grave Cemetery at Osterbeek by his daughter Kate and his widow Una.

Spiv and Una Sedgwick married in 1960. She is a third-generation Falkland Islander, and to her and their children — Candida, Robert, and Katherine — go heartfelt condolences.

David Dalgliesh

Georges R. Laclavère, who died on 26 September 1994 at the age of 88, was an outstanding administrator who had a major influence on the development of the Antarctic programme of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), 1957–58.

In addition to his duties as director of L'Institut Géographique Nationale in Paris, he served on the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI) from its first meeting in June 1953 throughout the IGY. This included membership of its financial committee and being chairman of the CSAGI Publications Committee; convenor for oceanography; secretary general of the Comité Internationale de Géophysique, which rounded off the work of the IGY; and, most important for readers of *Polar Record*, president of all meetings of the CSAGI Geographical Working Group on Antarctica from 1955 to its termination in 1958.

The first CSAGI meeting on the Antarctic programme, in 1955, set the pattern for international co-operation in



Fig. 1. Five of the first six presidents of SCAR, at XVIII SCAR meeting in Bremerhaven, 4 October 1984. From left: George A. Knox (president 1978–1982), Tore Gjelsvik (1974–1978), James H. Zumberge (1982–1986), Georges R. Laclavère (1958–1963), and Gordon de Q. Robin (1970–1974). The second president, L.M. Gould (1963–1970) was not present. Photo by Patrick G. Quilty.

Antarctica. That Laclavère both guided and responded to views of his committee is shown by the opening resolution, which ‘endorses M. Laclavère’s statement of the purposes at the opening session, and specifically his affirmation that over-all aims of the conference are exclusively scientific.’ Only once did the chairman have to reprimand a member for trying to make a political point to influence decisions. After that, no further attempt was made. This left responsibility for financing activities to individual nations, and so avoided any political problems. Co-ordination of observational programmes, exchange of results, publication policy, and exchange of operational information and personnel fell to the IGY Antarctic Committee.

The success of the Antarctic programme justified the efforts of all concerned and led to the decision by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) to continue a broader study of Antarctic sciences. ICSU’s Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR, which was originally the Special Committee) was set up with Laclavère as the first president, from 1958 to 1963. His retirement as president of SCAR did not end his interest in Antarctica; he continued as French delegate to SCAR until 1986. Nor did it ease his workload, as he served as

treasurer of ICSU from 1961 to 1968. As a result, Laclavère was only able to make a brief visit to the Antarctic in connection with a SCAR meeting. However, his work is commemorated by the name Laclavère Plateau (63° 27’ S, 57° 45’ W), an ice cap rising to 1035 m on the northern Antarctic Peninsula.

Of the distinguished honours received for his Antarctic and cartographic leadership, the most significant for readers of this journal was that of the first Honorary Member of SCAR.

During the IGY, Laclavère’s administrative load in the ICSU office was lightened greatly by his daughter Jacqueline, who survives him, along with her husband Eric (Mike) Baker, also of that office, and subsequently executive secretary of ICSU.

Georges Laclavère’s voluntary efforts for the organisation of international science were typical of the small band that organised the International Geophysical Year Antarctic programme, which, in turn, laid the foundations for the Antarctic Treaty of 1959. The Treaty ensures peaceful co-operation for scientific research in the region — a worthy memorial for Laclavère.

Gordon de Q. Robin