

altogether too steep and slippery. . . It seemed such an ignominious sort of thing too, to be an explorer and have one of my party tell me I could not do something he had already done.' So a few days later, Hubbard takes her chance while the men are making a portage and goes climbing alone. Glimpsing the guides sitting at the riverside drinking tea below her, Hubbard signals her presence by firing her revolver but then sets off down the other side of the mountain, pursued by her employees. The shouting and dismay with which they follow her eventually persuade Hubbard to give herself up, but she and we rapidly learn that this chase is not simply a dramatisation of women's rebellion against domesticity and dependence. The men are white, shaking, in tears, and Elson tells Hubbard, "I was thinking about how you would feel when you knew you were lost. . . And what would we do if you got lost or fell in that rapid? Just think what could we do? How could any of us go back without you? We can't ever let you go any place alone after this" (page 92).

So the drama on the mountainside is not just about Mina Benson Hubbard's vulnerability, but about that of her guides. She is hostage to their rules about what she may and may not do, even though she employs them, but they are hostage to the same limitations. None of them can go home without her; if anything happens to her, their only future is as exiles and fugitives. The white, female, middle-class explorer may not be the one who suffers most from the limitations imposed upon her.

The ensuing stories of teasing, joking and a kind of domestic harmony are changed by Hubbard's gradual recognition of her own powers and responsibilities in relation to the other members of her team. Her narrative is likeable and engaging, and would be accessible and interesting to a general readership, but for scholars of identity politics and exploration history this book will be particularly important.

Sherrill Grace's editing is meticulous and scholarly, providing a serious and respectful context for a narrative which, when it has been read at all in the last hundred years, has been seen as a 'charming' or perhaps disingenuous account of a pretty widow's journey of recovery. The textual apparatus and specialist tones of some of the introduction contrast with Grace's obvious identification with her subject and the stated hope that this edition will bring Mina Benson Hubbard's work to a wide audience, but for serious readers this is a fine and significant work. (Sarah Moss, School of English, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NZ.)

DOG DAYS ON ICE: ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION IN A GOLDEN ERA. Peter Noble. 2008. Cheltenham: Reardon Publishing. 231 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-873877-89-7. Available in UK bookstores or direct from the author (peter@kingsburysquare.org.uk) (postage inclusive): UK £14.99; mainland Europe £16.00; rest of the world £18.00 (air mail) or £15.00 (surface mail). doi:10.1017/S0032247409008304

In this charming little book Peter Noble, who served at the Halley Bay station between January 1967 and January 1969, recalls his experiences during 'the golden age of exploratory expeditions undertaken by the British Antarctic Survey.' The title captures the contents nicely: it is a very personal story of dogs, comradeship, and the challenges and rewards of life in a unique part of the world at a unique point in time. Lively accounts of events and affectionate descriptions of colleagues (both human and canine) are accompanied by plenty of often-cheeky poetry and eighteen excellent colour plates.

The evocative term 'golden age' falls easily upon all manner of experiences that become grander with the passing of time. But there is something specific in Noble's characterisation of the period that evokes a particular moment. For Noble, who served as a general assistant, it was a privilege to be a 'Fid' (the term survived the change from Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey to British Antarctic Survey in 1963) at a time when dog travel had not completely given way to tractors and Skidoos. The bond between man and dog was necessary for effective travel in a dangerous environment, but, as Noble's touching recollections make clear, the dogs were also sources of companionship and characters in their own right. It is revealing that the carefully compiled appendices to the book include a register of the dogs that served at Halley (including names, place and year of birth, tenure at the base, and date and mode of death) as well as a comprehensive list of field expeditions undertaken between 1957 and 1972. Noble writes also of the spirit of ingenuity that permeated life at Halley. Rigging improvised lighting and heating systems, constructing bunks and dog pens, even turning an abandoned former base into a workshop, all these tasks were accomplished by resourceful use of the materials at hand.

Above all, Antarctica was still a theatre for travel into areas that were often poorly known. Noble's feelings toward the scientists who remained station-bound and missed the experience of field travel tend toward sympathy rather than envy. Reconnaissance, route-breaking and surveying remained important activities. Crevasses appear in the text with disturbing frequency. Capable of claiming tractors as well as dogs and sledges, they remind the reader that the innovations in travel technology and expertise during the twentieth century could not eliminate all dangers. In fact, the culminating event in the narrative, a six-man expedition to the Shackleton Range in the 1968–69 season, under Noble's leadership, took place despite the initial reservations of the BAS leadership back in Britain. When Noble imagines BAS Director Sir Vivian Fuchs considering the request from Halley to conduct the overland trip to the Shackleton Range, he sees the elder statesman acceding to the restless desire of the young Fids to put the practical expertise they had acquired to good use.

This leads on to an important point. Millions of words have been written on other periods of Antarctic history, most notably the 'heroic age' associated with Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton and others. The fiftieth anniversaries

of the International Geophysical Year (1957–1958) and the Washington Conference at which the Antarctic Treaty was negotiated (1959) have sparked a welcome burst of scholarship on another important period. In comparison to these periods, relatively little historical study has been done on Antarctic work during the 1960s. True, there is no obvious ‘hook’ like the race for the geographic South Pole or the massive IGY operations, but it is dangerous to presume later events are in a sense part of the present and hence less worthy of historical analysis.

Yet political decision-making over the Antarctic did not become redundant after the Antarctic Treaty came into force in 1961. The fact the Treaty marked a watershed in the political history of Antarctica should not blind us into thinking such macroscopic changes immediately shifted the cultures of national Antarctic programmes (like BAS). The perspective from the field that Noble’s account offers should encourage historians to consider how decisions taken at the highest levels played out in field activities and institutional cultures. The future of BAS itself was in question during the 1960s, with the need for a state-funded Antarctic program far from obvious. It is one thing to write a political history of these discussions and the changing direction of British policy in the Antarctic; quite another to connect high-level decision making with the work performed by the Fids themselves. The effect of shifting political winds upon the culture of FIDS/BAS should be viewed in terms of negotiation rather than imposition.

Nowhere is the gap between policy and fieldwork clearer than in the politics of assigning Antarctic place names. Noble recalls the sometimes idiosyncratic names

the Fids gave to newly discovered features, such as Mt Shelleen (a reference to Fid Alan ‘Dad’ Etchell’s resemblance to a character from the film *Cat Ballou*). The names that eventually appeared on official maps were often different: Mt Shelleen became Lundstrøm Knoll, Lonely Mountain became Mount Dewar, and so on. The view from London was that Antarctic place names were more than just privileges apportioned to explorers in the time honoured tradition. To Noble it remains a sore point and readers will find it easy to sympathise with his view of these events as examples of officious bureaucracy. But as Klaus Dodds has shown, the Antarctic Place Names Committee was a cog in a political machine that *produced* cartographic knowledge of the Antarctic rather than simply disseminated data from the field. Our understanding of the political machinations over Antarctica that took place in Whitehall and at various international meetings through the 1950s and beyond will benefit from complementary studies that catch this tension between the cultures of the field and the office.

Dog days on ice will appeal strongly to ex-Fids and those who know Halley from personal experience. For those who are interested in the history of FIDS/BAS and post-war Antarctic work, it offers a cheerful and personal insight, without academic pretensions, into life on one of the major Antarctic stations of the past half-century. It is to be hoped that more ex-Fids will follow Peter Noble’s lead and commit their memories to paper in the near future. (Peder Roberts, Department of History, Stanford University, 450 Serra Mall Building 200, Stanford CA 94305–2024, USA.)