

intervals in areas where morphological complexity and sounding control permit. Heezen and Tharp would have been the last to regard their sheet as competing in any way with the GEBCO series.

10. 'Choice and spelling of place-names seems to have been capricious'. In producing a world bathymetric chart series for international use, the problem of a universally acceptable nomenclature continues to exercise the GEBCO guiding committee. For the land areas, names have been deliberately reduced to minimum and are represented by the standard romanization systems in use by the United Nations: there are no editors and their attention has therefore not wandered. The guiding committee would certainly welcome his constructive suggestions for improvement of the system in use.

11. Names of submarine morphological features have been printed in blue and, wherever possible, in the English language with alternative names separately tabulated. We understand Harland's wish for achievement of an internationally acceptable and accepted system of uniform nomenclature.

The most surprising element of a review written by a geologist of Brian Harland's international standing is his emphasis upon nomenclatural trivia instead of the important geological tectonic implications of the submarine morphological features shown on this chart.

Madam, I have been shown the above rejoinder and given an opportunity to reply. Some apology is due, but Professor Simpson protests too much. I have put myself in the wrong by looking for, but failing to see, the 'polar stereographic projection'; however, for such a projection the polar latitudes are 'nearly equidistant', which is what the average user is interested in. It would seem that the tone of my review nettled the chairman, who writes as though such high contributing authorities must be beyond criticism. My tone was undoubtedly coloured by the questionable spellings of the conspicuous place-names ('nomenclatural trivia').

Yours faithfully,  
W. B. Harland  
29 July 1980

## REVIEW

### THE LIFE OF AUGUST COURTAULD

[Review by J. M. Scott\* of Nicholas Wollaston's *The man on the ice cap: the life of August Courtauld*, London, Constable, 1980, 260 p, illus. £8.95.]

Nicholas Wollaston showed courage in undertaking a biography of August Courtauld, whom he never met and whose main achievement was in the Arctic of which he had no experience. That he has succeeded in producing a readable book, and an interesting character study, suggests other qualities too.

He writes well. His genealogy of the Courtauld family from its Huguenot roots is fascinating; the rest of the 'Childhood' chapter reveals little. Mr Wollaston mentions as important young Courtauld's rejection by the navy. No doubt this was a crossroads, possibly his cross, but judging by his reactions as an RNVR lieutenant in World War II, either he or the navy would have had to change character. The story scarcely comes to life before 'Cambridge', and then skeletal for there can be few records. The biographer admits being puzzled by the descriptions of August's character provided by his friends—all contradictory and all more or less correct. Many life long

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friendships were begun during these years, but not much else was derived from Cambridge University.

Mr Wollaston quite often refers to the family riches, perhaps not always with appropriate significance. August's life was a long struggle against wealth, trying to conceal it from unmonied friends. I would like to have read more of what he did, largely by stealth, making funds available for exploration.

His own Arctic experience began in undergraduate days on two of James Wordie's summer expeditions to East Greenland. (The future Master of John's deserves a better description than 'a dry diminutive Scot'.) But August, himself, was by this time producing material, for his almost daily correspondence with his future wife had begun—and has been preserved. What is quoted (one is grateful that it is not too much) is, however, more descriptive of mood than action.

There followed the Sahara adventure with Francis and Peter Rodd—well described—then the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, 1930–31 lead by Gino Watkins. He was not originally a friend (they did not know each other at Trinity) but became, with the possible exception of Francis Rodd, August's only living hero. He described his death as 'the worst blow for England that I can think of'. Early in the air route expedition he wrote for Mollie Montgomerie thumbnail sketches of all the party. Only two are quoted. He was already praising Gino, though much less extravagantly. About himself he was of course ridiculously rude. But he said one true thing: '... is too tough to come to any harm and will come out much as he went in ...'. That was most strikingly proved by his five months lonely garrison duty at the ice cap station. Once he had washed and shaved you could not discern any difference. His biographer devotes two chapters to this achievement, which it fully deserves. He titles the second 'Rescue'—which would have annoyed August.

I regret the last page or so of the book. When a man is possessed by the devils of disease his behaviour should not be recorded, particularly by insinuation. I was fortunate that in my last glimpse of him in the King Edward VII Hospital he revealed the old spirit. 'Lots of famous admirals and generals have died here', he said truculently.

### NORTHERN MINORITIES IN THE SOVIET UNION

[Review by Terence Armstrong\* of *BAM i narody severa*, edited by V. I. Boyko. Novosibirsk, Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka', 1979, 176 p.]

This book contains the results of a social survey carried out in 1976 among some of the local inhabitants of the country through which the Baykal-Amur railway is now being constructed. The idea was to sample the impact of the railway on this remote region. Only the central section of the route is included in the area of the survey—that which falls administratively in Amurskaya Oblast' and the southernmost corner of Yakutskaya ASSR; and in that area, six settlements with predominantly Evenki inhabitants were selected—Pervomayskiy, Ust'-Urkima, Ust'-Nyukzha, Bomnak, and Ivanovskiy, all in Amurskaya Oblast', and Zolotinka in Yakutskaya ASSR. The combined population was about 3 400, 65 per cent Evenki and 35 per cent Russian; and most seem to have been involved in the survey.

Most interestingly, the results give, what is rare in Soviet publications, an ethnically-distinguished description of society. It is not common to find factual material illustrating social attitudes in Soviet society, but rarer to find such attitudes subdivided by the ethnic origin of the holder. Thus, there is detailed information about employment patterns, job satisfaction levels, cultural preferences, and career planning as they pertain to both Evenki and Russians. The results are too complex to summarize here, but some pointers which emerge are these: 74 per cent of the native workforce is engaged in manual labour, compared to 32 per cent of the Russian workforce; the proportion of natives in industry is seven times smaller than that of Russians, while the proportion of natives in reindeer husbandry and hunting is 140 times larger than that of Russians; the number of natives with high professional qualifications is lower, but not vastly lower, than that of Russians (roughly 1:1.5); while the proportion of Evenki wanting for example, to

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