

## Book Reviews

### **SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC: A LIFE OF COURAGE AND TRAGEDY IN THE EXTREME SOUTH.**

David Crane. 2005. London: HarperCollins. ix + 637 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-00-715068-7. £25.00.

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Since the publication of his *Scott and Amundsen* in 1979, Roland Huntford's critical assessment of Captain Scott has steadily gained ground as the accepted interpretation of Britain's most famous polar explorer. No less a literary luminary than Paul Theroux endorsed Huntford's last paperback edition, while visitors to the National Maritime Museum's successful *South: the race to the Pole* exhibition in 2000–01 complained that displays were too sympathetic to Scott.

During the last five years, however, the revisionist cycle has begun to turn again. Books by Susan Solomon, David Yelverton, and Max Jones have offered more sympathetic accounts of Scott's achievements and their reception. Ranulph Fiennes' recent biography confronted Huntford head on, drawing on the insights of a veteran polar traveller to challenge many of his accusations.

David Crane's outstanding new biography offers a timely and valuable contribution to this reappraisal. The book's sub-title is misleading. Scott spent only 4 of his 43 years living in the 'extreme south,' first on *Discovery* (1901–04) and later during the *Terra Nova* (1910–12) expedition. While Fiennes' biography focused largely on Scott's exploits in Antarctica, the great strength of Crane's book lies in its presentation of a balanced overview of the explorer's whole life. Crane has unearthed a wealth of sources that have not been drawn on before, working through, among other collections, the Admiralty papers in the National Archives. Most significantly, Crane makes extensive use of correspondence added to the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute since the publication of Clive Holland's catalogue in 1982.

Crane skilfully marshals his sources into a lively narrative, which offers a penetrating analysis of Scott's complex character. The 13-year old was sent to serve on the training ship *Britannia* in 1881, and spent the rest of his life navigating his career through the Royal Navy. Scott's command of the *Discovery* expedition was, Crane argues, his greatest achievement. The expedition allowed 'the practical and scientific bent that was at the heart of Scott's genius' (page 83) to flourish, by offering 'a physical and intellectual release from the straitjacket of service life' (page 84). The inexperienced young officer threw himself into the myriad organisational challenges posed by the expedition. Crane directs attention away from the famous farthest south march by Scott, Ernest Shackleton, and

Edward Wilson, to praise the western sledging parties of 1903, which showed Scott the explorer at his very best: a skilful ice navigator and audacious leader, driven by an insatiable scientific curiosity. Crane does not, however, engage with Don Aldridge's recent argument that Harry McKay, captain of the relief-ship *Terra Nova*, was primarily responsible for releasing *Discovery* from the ice in 1904.

The 100 pages of chapters 18 to 22 present the most detailed and perceptive examination of Scott's life between his two Antarctic expeditions yet published. Crane makes very effective use of Scott's correspondence in this period, which has not been analysed in such detail before. Scott's letters to Kathleen Bruce, whom he courted after they met in 1907, prove particularly revealing. Kathleen offered the 'joyous, affirmative obverse of Scott's own puritanical and duty-filled dedication' (page 350). Crane reveals a tormented Scott, torn between his duty to his strict, evangelical mother and his bohemian wife, between his passion for Kathleen and his fears of inadequacy, between his dreams of achievement and the frustrations of naval life. 'But sweetheart what I know and you do not,' Scott wrote, 'is our service, with its machine like accuracy and limitations — it offers place and power, but never a money prize — so that it must be poverty always' (page 361). The image of the 'naval machine' that 'grinds on with wonderful efficiency' (page 361) recurs in Scott's correspondence. Scott's association with the cadre of old polar enthusiasts such as George Egerton would leave the 'instinctive "modernist" and technocrat' (page 328) outside the circle of officers favoured by the naval reformer John Fisher. The Antarctic offered not only a means of promotion, but also an arena for the exercise of those artistic and intellectual faculties unsatisfied by service life.

Scott's personal failings began to manifest themselves more prominently in this period, particularly in his dispute with Shackleton over McMurdo Sound. Crane suggests that Scott's demand for Shackleton to leave the area free for his own future expedition was, according to the conventions of the day, a legitimate call for loyalty from a former sub-ordinate. However, Crane criticises Scott's embittered treatment of Shackleton and the innocent RGS Secretary, John Scott Keltie. The row inspired 'the first real sense of disappointment at anything of human importance Scott did' (page 341). Crane detects a new 'air of egotism and self-importance' (page 342), which would shroud Scott's later years. Personal and professional pressures took their toll, and 'a part of the man inside was shrivelling' (pages 404–405). Throughout, Crane is sensitive to the limitations of the surviving sources. The contrast between scarcity before 1900, and abundance

after, is stark. Striking gaps remain even in the most well-documented years: few details survive of Scott's ward-room life, and the nature of his friendship with fellow officer Henry Campbell, whom he chose ahead of Wilson as his best man, remains obscure.

The familiar story of the *Terra Nova* expedition forms the conclusion of Crane's biography. Although the crucial role played by the citizens of Cardiff in supporting the expedition deserves greater emphasis, a vivid sketch of Henry Bowers is particularly worthy of note, again drawing on neglected correspondence to offer new insights into Bowers' peculiar combination of imperialism and religiosity. Discounting the 'immense achievements of his scientists,' the Scott of *Terra Nova*, Crane argues, is 'an expedition leader who in intellectual, geographical and imaginative terms cannot begin to compare with the man who commanded *Discovery*' (page 457). Echoing the contemporary opinion of H.R. Mill, Crane declares it 'astonishing' that a man of Scott's 'originality' (page 458) confined himself to following Shackleton's route to the South Pole, focusing his energies on a journey that would add less than 100 miles to the map of the world.

Yet, while the scientific results of the race to the Pole would not be great, the human legacy would prove immense, as Scott himself transformed disaster into heroic sacrifice. There are tensions in Crane's interpretation of Scott's crucial last journal entries, which would provide the foundation for his legend. On the one hand, Crane argues Scott 'was slowly falsifying what he was, metamorphosing himself into an incarnation of a service, an ideal, a mythology, a faith and an age, to which he had never been entirely able to reconcile himself' (page 539). Yet, later the reader is told how, freed 'from the shackles of life, he could be at last the person he had always wanted and so often failed to be, the accidents of personality shed to reveal the nature of the man. The peevishness, the irritation, the ambition, even the reserve were gone' (page 566).

Although Crane clearly acknowledges these unsavoury aspects of Scott's personality, he is sympathetic to his subject. One footnote claims Scott 'never allowed personal feelings to cloud his judgement of Shackleton's achievements or his generosity in acknowledging them' (page 458), a claim that neglects Scott's critical asides about Shackleton's 'exaggerated' and 'overdrawn' account of his *Nimrod* march, which were excised from the published journals. Crane follows Susan Solomon in arguing that the polar party were 'quite literally, killed by the cold' (page 577), by unusually bad weather on the return from the Pole. Scott too, however, must shoulder some share of the blame, in particular for his inadequate marking of supply depots, in such striking contrast to Amundsen. Crane, though, is surely right to condemn those who have argued Scott prevented Wilson and Bowers from making a final attempt to reach One Ton Depot, for misunderstanding both the men and the culture that shaped them.

If Crane is too generous to Scott at times, it is a price worth paying to liberate his account from Huntford's

suffocating embrace and a narrow focus on whether Scott was a 'good' or 'bad' explorer. Instead, through the careful analysis of an impressive range of sources, Crane reveals a complex man, the distinctive product of the passions and prejudices of his age. The book ends with an elegant discussion of the enduring appeal of Scott's story. Others would have gone to Antarctica, if Scott had not. But it was his 'profound ability to make real the experience of human nature at the limits of its endurance that is Scott's greatest gift to posterity' (page 579). His final testimonies 'extend our sense of what it is to be human' (page 579). Crane's rich and compelling biography has refreshed this legacy over a century after Scott first sailed south. (Max Jones, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL.)

**PRACTICAL DICTIONARY OF SIBERIA AND THE NORTH.** V.D. Golubchikova and Z.I. Khvtisashvili (Project heads). Compiled by Ye.R. Akbalyan. 2005. Moscow: European Publications and Severnye Prostory. 1101 p, illustrated, hard cover, accompanying CD. ISBN 5-98797-002-4. EUR92.59.  
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This highly impressive work comprises more than 1100 pages of text containing approximately 4500 entries, which appear alphabetically and vary in length from about 25 words (for entries such as those on small geographical features) to 10 full pages (lengthy entries including 'Pomors,' 'Chukchi,' and 'New Economic Policy'). Most of the entries are between 100 and 1000 words. The effort was assisted by a distinguished, 17-member scientific board, and the experts involved in writing the entries represented virtually all of the leading scientific and educational establishments throughout Russia with specialist focus on the far north.

The stated objective of the *Practical dictionary* is to cover the breadth of knowledge about the Russian north and Siberia, although it includes a great deal of information about the wildlife, history, and geography of the rest of the Arctic as well. This all begs the question, of course, of what is the 'north' or 'Russian north,' and the basic concept seems to relate it to the territory where the northern Great Russians settled along the rivers of the Arctic Ocean basin. The remoteness of these areas from the main Russian settlement zones as well as the 'foreign' ethnic environments, absence of serfdom in most of the area, and greater uniformity of material complexes makes the area different from those of central or southern Russians in dialect, type of dwelling, clothing, and other cultural attributes. Intriguingly, no definition of Siberia is provided, but the dictionary obviously has a broad remit, because it includes entries on Lake Baikal, Sakhalin, and Anton Chekhov, the last concentrating on his time in Sakhalin.

The work contains entries related to geology, hydrology, sea ice, atmospheric sciences, and studies of pollution, but in general it is a volume dominated by topics from the social sciences, humanities, and life sciences rather than those of physical or earth sciences. The particular strengths of the *Practical dictionary* are:

- History. There are hundreds of historical entries, the largest number being biographical sketches of individuals — such as explorers, scientists, theologians, artists, and military and naval leaders — who played key roles in the Russian north or in the Arctic in general. There are also entries on ships, major exploring expeditions, military events, and a broad selection of less obvious but equally valuable topics, such as ‘February Revolution,’ ‘Collectivization,’ ‘Deportation,’ ‘Prisoners of war,’ ‘Allies’ convoys,’ ‘Monasteries,’ ‘Shipyards,’ and even ‘Gliders in the Arctic.’
- Geography. These include entries on rivers, villages, islands, archipelagos, mountain ranges, and political divisions.
- Native peoples and cultural aspects of the north. The most extensive entries in the volume relate to the individual ethnic groups identified as the ‘Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the North,’ although there are additional data on other peoples, such as the Ainu. The entries on the Small Peoples include information about early and more recent cultural elements, principal occupations, dwellings, clothing, social-economic interactions, marriage, folklore, festivals, and music. There tends to be not a great deal of information about language compared to some of these other areas of knowledge. There are also a plethora of other entries on culturally related issues such as ‘Ancestor worship,’ ‘Appiqué,’ ‘Architecture of the Siberian north and Far East,’ ‘Asbestos Ceramics Culture,’ ‘Bear festival,’ ‘Dog breeding,’ ‘Metalwork,’ ‘Northern icon,’ ‘Folklore,’ ‘Religious education,’ and ‘Population reproduction.’
- Economics includes both general overview topics such as ‘Industrial Development,’ ‘Foreign trade,’ ‘Merchantry,’ ‘Ore prospectors,’ and ‘Resources of the North,’ as well as those related to specific current economic occupations in the north. The latter include ‘Buttermaking,’ ‘Fishing,’ ‘Reindeer herding,’ ‘Sea mammal hunting,’ and ‘Woodwork.’
- Flora and fauna. There are hundreds of entries covering virtually every form of life on land or sea, from microscopic plant forms to giant whales. Non-species-specific topics include ‘Biological diversity,’ ‘Nature conservation in the north,’ and ‘Reserves.’
- Current research and scholarship. The broad range of entries include ‘Archives,’ ‘Bibliography of the North,’ ‘Libraries of the North,’ ‘Komi

Republic Museum,’ ‘Periodicals,’ ‘Public Education,’ and ‘Polar stations.’

The *Practical dictionary* also benefits greatly from a generous use of photos and other illustrations. There are approximately 500 black-and-white illustrations, many of them portraits of famous individuals or photos of native traditional clothing. There are also three extremely valuable colour signatures, divided into 16 pages of maps, 48 pages of northern plants or animals, and 16 more pages of the clothing of northern peoples.

Tables are also used to great effect, and include a list of the large naval ports of the Russian north and what their trade totals are; the major power stations of the Russian north and the details of their production and usage; and the demographic dynamics of the ‘Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the North.’ Perhaps the most impressive table is the listing of 110 key members of the Decembrist uprisings in December 1825, together with information about their births, deaths, and time and place of penal servitude.

Any work having this great a diversity of entries will find an equally large difference in the quality of the articles. This is certainly true of the biographical entries, which are some of those that I can best judge. Some are an excellent synopsis of the career of an individual, while others suffer from not having the length to make all the salient points. Colleagues with expertise in other scholarly fields have reported to me that the entries in their areas are informative and accurate.

The two major shortcomings in the work are the lack of an index and of extensive bibliographical listing with the main text of the book. The former is not an insignificant problem, as there are many topics of interest that are not listed in a form in which the average non-Russian reader might search, and that can therefore only be found when browsing through the volume. That said, an excellent job has been done in transliterating terminology and place-names from the Russian into a format understandable to the average western reader, which is a task that has baffled other encyclopaedic efforts. There are limited references to further reading with some of the entries, but their inclusion seems highly arbitrary. The issue of the lack of a bibliography in the volume is somewhat offset by the inclusion of bibliographical materials on a CD that comes with the *Practical dictionary*, but it is only partly so because of the inconvenience of having to hunt for bibliographic information on the CD when one is browsing through the book. The CD gives a great bonus of other material, however, as it includes some 2000 additional illustrations, photos, and maps; graphs and charts related to the northern economy; and 119 soundtracks of northern, Siberian, and Far Eastern ethnic music.

In summary, despite some quibbles, I believe this to be a welcome addition to the reference material on the Russian north and Siberia. There are numerous topics about which even many northern scholars will know very little, and I expect it will remain a key and extremely

valuable resource for many years to come. An added bonus is that it is, by publishing standards, quite inexpensive, making it exceptional value for money. This publication is also available in Russian (as *Northern Encyclopedia*). Both language formats are distributed worldwide by Ruslania Books of Helsinki ([www.ruslania.com](http://www.ruslania.com)). (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**THE NINTH CIRCLE: A MEMOIR OF LIFE AND DEATH IN ANTARCTICA, 1960–1962.** John C. Behrendt. 2005. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. xiv + 240 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8263-3425-3. \$US29.95.  
doi:10.1017/S0032247406235459

John Behrendt is one of the most experienced Antarctic geoscientists. He first went to the ‘White Continent’ in 1957–58, as one of the young scientists wintering at Ellsworth Station during the International Geophysical Year. Since then he has returned many times to conduct geophysical work, most recently in 2003, and has become an acknowledged leader in that field. Because of his prominent position, he was an early target to participate in the oral history of polar work being promoted by the National Science Foundation. One notes in his ‘Advice to Future Researchers’ to ‘Keep an accurate and detailed journal.’ Behrendt always has done that, so the two published accounts of his early years in Antarctica, *Innocents on the ice* about his winter at Ellsworth Station and the subsequent ‘oversnow’ traverse of the Filchner Ice Shelf, and the present volume, are sufficiently complete, detailed, and accurate to be included in a formal history of US work in Antarctica.

*The ninth circle* covers Behrendt’s work in two field seasons, the austral summers of 1960–61 and 1961–62, during which he undertook two quite different kinds of work. In 1960–61, still a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, he undertook an airborne geophysical survey over the West Antarctic Ice Sheet along with two other graduate students, measuring magnetic profiles from the air and making seismic and gravity measurements on the ice during ‘open field landings.’ Many of these, in R4D (military version of the Dakota civilian aircraft) and P2V (Neptunes) aircraft of the US Navy VX-6 squadron, were frighteningly rough, and elsewhere in Antarctica there were several crashes, some with fatalities. Behrendt’s own greatest moment of terror occurred when, in November 1960, his team were in a ski-wheeled R4D-8 (a modified version of the R4D) making magnetic profiles from Byrd Station to Toney Mountain in ‘absolutely zero visibility’ when they found themselves lost in the Crary Mountains, which were marked (not plotted) on Behrendt’s map, but not on that of the aircraft navigator. They touched a rock with a wing tip, and the magnetometer ‘bird,’ towed 60 feet behind the aircraft, rattled over the surface before

being torn off. To say that they were lucky is somewhat of an understatement! Behrendt, or his publishers, have taken this event out of chronological sequence and made it the first chapter, which I don’t like, but that is a minority view. It certainly claims one’s attention and leads one, painlessly but with much apprehension, into the rest of the account.

The team spent nearly all of the season based at Byrd Station. They endured frustrating periods when flying was impossible because of poor weather, poor radio communications, or other parties having higher priority. Much of this ‘down time’ was filled with other geophysical work near Byrd Station, but when flying became possible it seemed to happen, at short notice, at the end of a long day. Altogether the traverse was successful. Behrendt tells his story well, alternating journal excerpts with explanatory bridging comments, often contrasting between conditions then and now.

During his return to Wisconsin, Behrendt visited 14 countries, making gravity measurements to tie them into a worldwide network. Unfortunately all are dismissed in a couple of paragraphs. In Madison he completed his PhD, wrote sundry scientific papers, married Donna, and prepared for the next Antarctic season. That was a conventional over-snow traverse, the Antarctic Peninsula Traverse, from Camp Minnesota, near the coast of the Bellingshausen Sea, to Sky-Hi, the proposed camp at the base of the Antarctic Peninsula, and as far east from there as possible. The seven-man team had three new diesel Sno-Cats, and a ‘Rolltrailer,’ with its four fuel-filled 500-gallon tires that had been left at Camp Minnesota after the previous season’s traverse. Their scientific program included seismic determinations of ice-thickness, measurements of gravity and total magnetic field, topographic surveying, and glaciological work to determine annual snowfall.

While waiting at Byrd Station, before the traverse, Behrendt received word that in a crash of a P2V aircraft at Wilkes Station his friend Ed Thiel and four others had been killed. Behrendt had worked with Thiel since 1955. They had wintered together at Ellsworth Station and had been together on the Filchner Ice Shelf Traverse. Behrendt was much affected by the loss.

The traverse went well. They had poor weather with many windstorms, relatively few crevasse and vehicular problems, and good results, both geophysical and glaciological. Altogether the traverse exceeded 1000 miles, most of it over new ground. Again Behrendt tells the story well. However, perhaps he is controlled too much by his journal entries, so that I found myself wishing we had better descriptions of scenery, feelings, and people. We never learn why a Japanese glaciologist was a member of the traverse party. Hiro Shimizu is a most interesting man. He boasts that he is one of very few fully trained Kamikaze pilots, and I am sorry that his full story and many others that would have made the book more lively have been relegated to the ‘Notes.’ Similarly Behrendt’s account would have been improved by mentioning that

John Molholm, the assistant glaciologist, was related to Bill Latady, the man on Finn Ronne's expedition who first photographed some of the mountains through which they were traveling. And I would have liked a few more snippets of conversation!

The book is quite well produced. However, the 'selling squib' on the cover — 'The Coldest Outpost of the Cold War' — seems out of place. Antarctica was perhaps the only place on Earth and in space where there *was* cooperation with the Soviets. Indeed, when Ed Thiel was killed at Wilkes Station, he was returning from Mirnyy, the main Soviet station, where he had been measuring gravity. The photographs are well chosen; the six of the author show no appreciable signs of aging during the expeditions! The proofreading has been so-so. A few small boo-boos have crept through; my old haunt has changed from Byrd Polar Research Center to become an Institute. Raymond Priestley has lost an e (Priestly). My favorite is 'Each Sno-Cat burned about one gallon per mile of fuel.' What is a mile of fuel? My main complaint is with the maps: many need redrafting so that, variously, they may become legible (map 6), have a known orientation with marked latitudes and longitude (map 7), have a scale (many), or have a better explanation, such as the relationship of map 4 with maps 3 and 7.

I disagree heartily with Behrendt's assertion: 'Unlike today, carrying out Antarctic research under the US program (and probably others) was viewed by all scientists as a duty and obligation, rather than a privilege.' All of the scientists I know from those early days — New Zealanders, Britons, Americans, and others — regarded the opportunity to work in such an exotic and interesting place as a most distinct privilege. Nevertheless, I think that *The ninth circle* is the best of the four or five accounts of US Antarctic oversnow traverses that have been published. (Colin Bull, Bainbridge Island, Washington 98110, USA.)

**LIFE AND DEATH ON THE GREENLAND PATROL, 1942.** Thaddeus D. Novak. P.J. Capelotti (Editor). 2005. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. xx + 205 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8130-2912-0. \$US59.95.

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After the German invasion of Denmark, anxiety arose among governmental and military circles in the United States concerning how best to prevent the putative enemy in a future conflict from establishing footholds in Greenland, and also to ensure, for the United States, continuing supplies of cryolite, vital for aircraft manufacture, from the mines there. At the same time, the Danish authorities on the island, and at the Danish Embassy in Washington, desired to maintain Greenland as 'free' Denmark. An agreement was eventually reached to place Greenland under the protection of the United

States for the duration of the war, in which Denmark was prevented from exercising control of the territory. The measures that were taken to ensure this included the emergency commissioning into the United States Coast Guard of 10 small Boston trawlers and equipping them for Arctic service. These ships were to assist in maintaining communications, including the transport of freight, between those settlements on the Greenland coast where an American military presence had been swiftly established once the decisions had been reached.

These vessels all received Greenlandic names. This book is concerned with two of them, USS *Nanok* and *Natsek*. The author was a crew member of the former, in the rank of seaman first class, and kept the diary, from 8 June to 25 December 1942, which is here presented. This he did in defiance of regulations. Indeed, maintaining such a memoir was a court-martial offence, and he narrowly avoided having it seized when he was detected by a senior member of the crew. The document is unique as a record from the lower deck of life on board one of the vessels of what became known as the Greenland patrol.

The diary is also a literary production of merit. While there are the inevitable and continuous manifestations of boredom, irritation with other crew members, frustration with officers including the commanding officer — Lt Magnus G. Magnusson, whose leadership style seems to have been unusual — interlaced with tiredness and occasional bouts of terrifying fear, the record goes much beyond this. Embedded within the diary is a fascinating account of three quite separate matters. The first is the old phenomenon of man at war, in this case a newly married, rather naïve, cheerful young fellow from the Midwest who finds himself, at short notice, engaged in a world conflict. While the editor makes the point that he 'was caught amid storms he can barely comprehend,' there does seem to be a subtle undercurrent in the writing that Novak was aware that he was, however peripherally, and even though he participated in no actual hostilities himself, taking part in great events. The second point is the relationship of ships and the sea, in this case the unforgiving Arctic waters. The accounts of shipboard duties include the horrific and continual chipping of ice to prevent the vessel from capsizing, and the difficulties attendant on that most prosaic of nautical duties, watering ship, are written spontaneously, as is inevitable in a diary, but also in a way calculated to seize the attention of the reader. The third point is Novak's comments concerning the Inuit people that were met at many of the places of call. He is never lofty or superior and is always sympathetic, implying that he would like to learn more about them, especially concerning how they coped with the rigours of life in the Arctic.

The second vessel mentioned above, *Natsek*, was a frequent companion of *Nanok* during the summer and autumn of 1942, and the two sailed together southwards towards the United States very late in the season. Caught by a gale in the Strait of Belle Isle they were separated

and *Natsek* was never seen again. No trace has ever been found. Novak's account of the fateful storm, 17–21 December, during which on one occasion he spent 17 continuous hours at the wheel, is excellent. This reviewer has never read a better account of life on board a small vessel during a storm at sea written by one of the sailors who participated in it.

Novak secured home leave for Christmas 1942, but his career in the Coast Guard ended soon after that as he was discharged due to a back injury.

The diary came into the possession of the Coast Guard Historian's Office in 1994, and the progress of the edition was greatly assisted by the author before his death in 1997. The edition is light and sympathetic, 'most stylistic and grammatical errors have been allowed to stand.' There is a preface written by the author before sending it to the Coast Guard Office, and this serves to set the scene for what follows. The text of the diary covers some 180 pages and the entries vary in length from a paragraph to several pages. Novak's writing has an immediacy that indicates that relatively few of the entries were 'written up' afterwards, although, due to the exigencies of the service, many of them must have been. He has the ability, quite unconsciously, to take the reader with him on board *Nanok* to Greenland and to participate in all the happenings that occurred there, and on the journey home.

There is an editor's note at the beginning of the book that serves as an introduction both to the diary and to the overall strategic situation confronting the United States in the early 1940s. This includes note that United States forces moved into Iceland in mid 1941 'to shield it . . . from possible German invasion,' thus implying that Iceland was hitherto naked against German aggression. In fact, a substantial British garrison had been performing precisely that task for more than a year. The editor also comments on the varied duties undertaken in Greenland waters by the Coast Guard and by *Nanok* and *Natsek* on their arrival there. He includes much interesting information concerning the construction of the United States bases in Greenland and presents a map of the defences of Ivigut, where was situated the important cryolite mine. The editor includes an epilogue, largely about *Natsek* and her fate, and there are several pages of informative notes collected together at the end of the text.

There are several illustrations, including rare photographs of *Natsek* and of the activities of the crews of the vessels of the Greenland patrol. The presentation of the book is particularly attractive.

To sum up: an excellent book presenting an important document for histories of Greenland in World War II and of the United States Coast Guard. It is a worthy addition to the 'New perspectives on maritime history and nautical archaeology series' of the Universities Press of Florida. (Ian R. Stone, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**ROCKS AND ICE: LANDSCAPES OF THE NORTH: A GEOGRAPHICAL TRAVELING ACCOMPANIMENT FOR SPITSBERGEN AND EAST GREENLAND (68–74°N).** Rolf Stange. 2005. Dortmund: privately published. 238 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 3-937903-00-3. doi:10.1017/S0032247406255451

It may be a bad idea to judge a book by its cover, but I think that it is acceptable to judge one by its title. This paperback by Rolf Stange has a cascade of titles. *Rocks and ice* is straightforward, promising geology and glaciology. The subtitle, *Landscapes of the north*, follows on logically, and gives the main thrust of the book — an analysis of Arctic landscapes. However, it is in the third layer of the title — *A geographical traveling accompaniment for Spitsbergen and East Greenland (68–74°N)* — that the quirky nature of this book becomes obvious.

First, the rather curious choice of 'accompaniment' rather than 'companion,' implying some sort of intellectual condiment rather than a *vade mecum*. Second, why the restricted areas? Why Spitsbergen rather than Svalbard, and why the restricted range of the East Greenland coast? All these questions, and the book has not even been opened.

The book is organised into nine chapters and an index. The first three chapters comprise an introduction, setting out the purpose of the book, and two chapters giving an overview of geological processes and plate tectonics. As soon as the first chapter starts, the confusion at the heart of the book becomes obvious; it appears that the Spitsbergen in the title *does* include all of Svalbard, and the reader's longing for the hand of a good editor begins. The purpose of the book is to help readers '...[observe] landscapes with new eyes and perhaps make new discoveries' (page 11). The places described have been visited personally by the author, and the book is aimed at the adventurous tourist. The second chapter contains an abbreviated account of the Wilson Cycle, which the author recounts in terms of a conveyor belt (a motif that recurs throughout the book); some thoughts on storage of sediments in moraines and other sedimentary deposits; an account of the low-temperature behaviour of water; and a brief overview of the geological time scale. In this chapter the author either says too much or too little about isostasy; anyone with no knowledge of the topic would be deeply confused. The section on dating is just plain wrong: no explanation of relative age dating, misleading information on radiocarbon dating (*not* used for rocks), and no differentiation between lithification and metamorphism. It is not a satisfactory chapter. The third chapter introduces plate tectonics in a thoroughly confusing way. There is selective introduction of various concepts such as 'plates,' followed by and interspersed with amateur discussion of isostasy. This then jumps straight into a description of structural geology, where the author is on firmer ground. In this section he

relates various types of structure directly to field areas in Greenland and Spitsbergen.

The fourth chapter is entitled 'Spitsbergen, East Greenland and the history of the North Atlantic.' This takes the reader from the Caledonian Orogeny to the formation of Tertiary erosion surfaces with reference to many localities, mostly on Spitsbergen.

The fifth chapter reverts back to introductory geology lectures with a discussion of the origin and varied textures of volcanic and plutonic rocks. This then gives way to a section on 'Relocated rocks: sediments.' This is deeply confused, reaching a nadir on page 75, where the author implies that most sedimentary rocks were once moraines and then goes on to describe the process of lithification as 'condensing.' There are inaccuracies: the Kapp Starostin Formation (including the waterfall in Figure 5.8) is largely made up of siliceous spiculite rather than limestone; and the Festningen Sandstone has been renamed Helvetiafjellet Formation for decades.

In chapter six the author writes of glaciers and glaciation, moving on to glacial erosion and deposition. Again, this chapter jumps around, from the formation of glacial striae, to beach ridges, to climate change. There is some accurate and useful information, but the overall effect is confused.

There is (finally) a logical progression into chapter seven, on permafrost. This is mostly quite well written, but again the author overplays the conveyor belt analogy. The final two chapters contain notes on nature protection and field safety, and a reading list.

What to make of this book? It is a gallant attempt to do something useful for the burgeoning polar tourist industry. It will not, however, replace Audun Hjelle's excellent handbook *Geology of Svalbard*. It suffers from lack of organisation, poor editing, and, above all, a rather quirky understanding of geology and geological processes. The book, which was privately published by the author, is available from: Behindertenarchiv, Wellinghofer Str. 44, D-44 263 Dortmund, Germany (Behindertenarchiv@t-online.de). (David Macdonald, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, St Mary's, Elphinstone Road, Aberdeen AB24 3UF.)

## BRIEF REVIEWS

**WISE WORDS OF THE YUP'IK PEOPLE: WE TALK TO YOU BECAUSE WE LOVE YOU.** Ann Fienup-Riordan. 2005. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. xlvii + 347 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-8032-6912-9. \$US16.95.  
doi:10.1017/S0032247406265458

The Yup'ik people of southwestern Alaska were among the very last Arctic peoples to come into contact with non-natives. Because of this, the language, traditions, and

oral history of this culture remain vital in the twenty-first century. Realising the importance of recording their *qanruyutet* (adages and other words of wisdom), the Yup'ik elders agreed to share their knowledge during meetings of the Calista Elders Council (CEC) gatherings. Ann Fienup-Riordan was on hand to record the discussions, and translations from the Yup'ik language were made by Alice Rearden. The result is *Wise words of the Yup'ik people*, a collection of sayings, knowledge, and discussions on a range of themes for life.

The introduction briefly outlines the history of the people, and the background to the CEC conventions. Then there is a note on transcription and translation, and a list of Yup'ik contributors. (The CEC represents more than 1300 elders, all of which are 65 years of age or older, and who live in the Yup'ik homeland, and their purpose is to pass on their wisdom by means of conferences, youth culture camps, dance festivals, and bilingual publications.) The book contains a good index and a glossary of Yup'ik terms.

There are 11 chapters. The first introduces Yup'ik oral instruction and stresses the importance the elders place on teaching, rather than on allowing the young to invite disaster by 'following their own minds.' Chapter 2 assesses what it means to be Yup'ik, including the ethical requirements to treat human and non-human others with respect and compassion. The third chapter assesses a number of adages the elders employ to communicate moral instruction, making use of a wide range of metaphors. Chapter 4 addresses the relationship between parents and children that shapes lives, while chapters 5, 6, and 7 detail the moral codes guiding the relationships between men and women, the extended family, the community, and strangers. Chapter 8 describes the contemporary relevance of past practices, chapter 9 sets out the rules surrounding those who do not adhere to instructions, and chapter 10 discusses traditional restrictions following major life events. The final chapter addresses how past practices are relevant to contemporary life, and underlines the value of their still-vital oral traditions.

This book will prove to be an important resource for scholars in the future, as well as an excellent record of Yup'ik oral culture.

**YUPIIT QANRUYUTAIT: YUP'IK WORDS OF WISDOM.** Edited by Ann Fienup-Riordan. 2005. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. xxxvi + 282 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-8032-6917-X. \$US17.95.  
doi:10.1017/S0032247406275454

This is the bilingual companion to *Wise words of the Yup'ik people* by Ann Fienup-Riordan. The introduction states that it is not a supplement to the first book, but an equal partner to it. Perhaps the publishers felt it important to make this point as, although it is 65 pages shorter, it

is \$US1 more expensive! *Wise words* is a collection of hundreds of statements by Yup'ik elders on a variety of themes for everyday living and the ethical codes that go along with it, whereas *Yup'ik words of wisdom* highlights the words of expert orators by focussing on conversations between the elders and young people.

Like *Wise words*, the bilingual volume is divided into chapters that deal with specific issues. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 have the same titles in both books; chapters 8 and 9 in *Yup'ik words of wisdom* concentrate on contemporary issues — abstinence practices and Yup'ik kinship and relational terms. An introduction sets the sayings in their context, and provides a brief cultural summary. The book also contains a 24-page colour supplement of photographs from the Leuman Waugh Collection, held in the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

In many senses, *Yup'ik words of wisdom* is more user-friendly than its companion volume. Each chapter is divided into short sections with sub-headings, which makes it easy to pick up and browse. As such, it will prove to be a valuable record of Yup'ik tradition and knowledge not only for young people who might want to spend a few minutes reading, but also for scholars of oral history in the future. The bilingual presentation is an excellent way of preserving not only the sentiments and wisdom of the elders, but of their language, too.

**WHERE MOUNTAINS ARE NAMELESS: PASSION AND POLITICS IN THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.** Jonathan Waterman. 2005. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company. xxiv + 280 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-393-05219-2. £18.99. doi:10.1017/S0032247406285450

This personal account of Jonathan Waterman's travels to the Arctic relates his adventures with the wildlife, not all of it friendly, some of the indigenous people, employees of the oil industry, and conservationists. But this is not just a story about one man's experiences in the north. It is an examination of how the relentless hunt for oil to fuel the industrial south has choked, and is choking, Alaska's unique natural heritage. He paints pictures of the residents — mighty barren-ground grizzlies, humming mosquitoes, howling wolves, and shy caribou — and details how the demand for oil is affecting them. He notes the great water-filled gouges in the tundra from the vehicles used to take readings for geological maps, and the fate of the sea otters after the *Exxon Valdez* catastrophe in 1989. Yet despite the human ravages on a fragile landscape and ecosystem, this is a hopeful book.

The book also traces the history of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), a 19-million acre area of wilderness that is predicted to hold a vast reservoir of crude oil. While politicians and oil magnates argued the case for exploitation, conservationists fought to keep the region pristine. Two particularly passionate defenders of

the ANWR were Olaus and Mardy Murie, whose story is woven in the narrative of *Where mountains are nameless*.

Waterman writes with an easy, relaxed style, more like a novel than a serious book. Serious scholars or anyone wanting a detailed history of the ANWR will be disappointed, but it might appeal to the general reader. And if public opinion is something that may serve to protect the ANWR, then perhaps this book will serve to strengthen the conservationists' case.

**THE FUTURE OF ICE: A JOURNEY INTO COLD.**

Gretel Ehrlich. 2004. New York: Pantheon Books. xv + 200 p, hard cover. ISBN 0-375-42251-X. \$US21.95; \$CAN29.95.

doi:10.1017/S0032247406295457

The author of several popular non-fiction books, Gretel Ehrlich's *The future of ice* is a celebration of winter. It is not only about cold weather, but about select remote places of the northern and southern ends of the Earth, where Ehrlich elected to travel. These include Svalbard and Tierra del Fuego. Experienced polar hands will be disappointed that Ehrlich does not include Antarctica, the largest repository of ice in the world, in her book, and that she considers January in Tierra del Fuego 'winter in summer.'

The objective of *The future of ice* was born out of a fear that the 'democracy of gratification' has impacted upon the world's climate, and that the first victim of global warming will be ice. However, the scientific analyses are extremely light-weight, and much of her information seems to have been garnered from the internet. The world-wide web is a good research tool, but as every first-year undergraduate knows, since anyone can put anything on it, large sections should be treated with caution, particularly where a controversial issue like climate change is concerned. No serious academic studies are referenced in Ehrlich's 'notes and sources' section, and it shows.

The writing can be overly flowery. The quotation on the dust-jacket reads: 'weather streamed into my nose, mouth, eyes and ears and circulated inside my brain . . . rain is a form of sleep. Lightning makes scratch marks on brains; hail gouges out a nesting place, melts, and waters the seed of an idea that can germinate into idiocy, a joke, or genius.' Fortunately, most of the book is rather more accessible, although still unlikely to be anything that will educate, inform, or satisfy readers of this journal.

**INTO BROWN BEAR COUNTRY.** Will Troyer. 2005.

Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xiv + 130 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-889963-72-0. \$US24.95.

doi:10.1017/S0032247406305451

At first sight, this appears to be a children's book, but it is the story of one man's five decades of experience with bears. Will Troyer began his study of bears in the 1950s, when he was manager of the Kodiak National



Wildlife Refuge. He then spent 30 years as a biologist with the US Department of the Interior. He continued his investigations after he retired, and holds the Olaus Murie Award for conservation. His understanding and love of bears shines through his text, which is lavishly illustrated throughout.

The 15 chapters, all short, are nicely divided for the general reader. There are summaries of breeding behaviour, dietary requirements, hibernation, behaviour, and adaptation and evolution. At the end of the book, there are also sections on the interactions between bears and humans, including a brief history of trapping, and the

'Kodiak bear–cattle war.' 'Charges and countercharges' puts to rest some of the myths regarding the chances of being mauled by a bear (50 times less than being run over by a car), and includes a useful list of precautions for anyone travelling through bear country.

This is the kind of book that should be sold in those national parks that are lucky enough to boast a bear population. It would make an excellent souvenir, but also serves to point out the bear's right to our continued protection, and the advice for avoiding or minimising bear encounters is measured and sensible. It is an excellent guide for educating the general public.