Obituary

Professor **ERIK HOLTVED,** the well-known Danish eskimologist who died on 24 May 1981 shortly before his 82nd birthday, had an unusual career. Having served his time as a soldier, he went on to an officers' training school. But his ambition was to become a painter and in 1918 he was admitted to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.

In 1930 Holtved contacted the Department of Ethnography of the Danish National Museum, and the next year he approached the museum expressing a great desire to visit Greenland. That summer he joined Knud Rasmussen's Sixth Thule Expedition to south-east Greenland. Holtved's task was to assist in the examination of the early Inuit sites in Lindenow Fiord; so it was that in his very first

Eric Holtved, Platinum, Alaska, 1948

summer in the field his interest was developed in a discipline to which he was later to make a major contribution. The following three summers Holtved acquired the best possible training in archaeological excavation techniques: first he worked with Poul Nørlund, a specialist in mediaeval archaeology who was excavating Norse ruins in south-western Greenland; then with Therkel Mathiassen, examining Inuit sites in Disko Bugt in 1933, and the next year in the Julianehaab district. In addition to this practical training he began his formal studies of Inuit language and folklore at the University of Copenhagen under Professor William Thalbitzer.

With that background Holtved was well-equipped when, in 1935, he was entrusted with carrying out archaeological investigations in the Thule district of north-west Greenland on behalf of the National Museum. Although this area was the home of the Inuit of north-west Greenland ['Polar Eskimo'], and from an archaeological point of view very important as the 'gateway to Greenland', only minor excavations, primarily by amateurs, had been previously undertaken. A better man for the job than Erik Holtved could not have been chosen. He spent two lengthy periods in the area, 1935–37 and 1946–47. The digging season was of course limited to a few months each year; but he made full use of the remaining months, making extensive studies in other fields of eskimology. It is, however, his archaeological results that stand out as his most important contribution to our knowledge of Inuit culture. During his four field seasons Holtved investigated several ruined settlements. He brought back to the museum about 12 000 well-preserved artefacts from which he was able to establish a cultural sequence from the 10th to the 19th century, demonstrating in particular the various phases of the Thule culture. With the publication of his extensive results in *Meddelelser om Grønland* in 1944, he was awarded a doctorate from the University of Copenhagen. By 1945 he was a reader and in 1951 he succeeded Thalbitzer as professor, a position he held until retirement in 1968.

In addition to his archaeological work in Thule, Holtved devoted much effort and time to ethnographic studies of the Inuit of this district, their language and folklore. Apart from his own prolific writings, he edited two important works: an English translation of the ethnographical descriptions by Otto Fabricius, one of the early missionaries in Greenland; and a selection of letters written by Samuel Kleinschmidt. Holtved also wrote a popular book on his life with the Inuit of north-west Greenland, *Polar Eskimoer* (Copenhagen, 1942) and a survey of Inuit art, *Eskimo kunst* (Copenhagen, 1947). He was an excellent draughtsman and after his retirement he took up painting again. He was so successful that for several years his watercolours were on exhibition. He will be missed by his many friends.

Helge Larsen

Dr **FRANK T. DAVIES,** who died in Ottawa on 23 September 1981 aged 77, was a member of Byrd's First Antarctic Expedition, 1928–30, and leader of the Canadian Second International Polar Year (IPY) Expedition to Chesterfield Inlet, NWT, 1932–33.

He was born in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, on 12 August 1904, the son of a schoolmaster. At the age of 14 he found it unfair that he was not allowed to join the army, as he considered himself bigger and stronger than most of the older boys that had gone to the Great War. After graduation from the University College of Aberystwyth, he took up an appointment as lecturer in physics at the University of Saskatchewan in 1925, moving the following year to McGill University from where he joined the Byrd expedition as physicist, and one of two British Commonwealth members of the wintering party.

On the voyage south 'Taffy' Davies worked his way before the mast in the barque-rigged expedition ship, *City of New York*, whose master bore the same name as the author of *Moby Dick* and, according to Davies, had actually sailed with Captain Ahab! Ashore at Little America Davies's specialized work in the field of geomagnetism kept him at the base where his genial personality and keen sense of humour were greatly appreciated. When Admiral Byrd asked him what he missed most in the Antarctic, he replied with a grin: 'temptation'. Although below medium height, he was of very powerful build and one man, still alive today, owes his life to Davies's great physical strength. After he had fallen from an ice cliff, Davies succeeded in holding him at the end of a rope for 30 minutes while a third man went for help; Taffy's hand were raw and bleeding after the incident.

Davies was a shrewd judge of character, and of Byrd (for whom he had a warm affection) he wrote that he 'certainly did pick excellent men for his lieutenants'. In that company he referred particularly to Dr Laurence M. Gould and the late Col Bernt Balchen, both of whom 'had exceptional personal qualities of leadership'. Davies had these same qualities, enhanced perhaps by the example of men he admired. Of Balchen he wrote that he had never met 'anyone comparable . . . in practical ability to tackle all and any situations—as engineer, navigator, pilot, snow traveller . . . I realize he must have assessed a good many of the rest of us as rather naive but well-meaning amateur explorers.'

Davies received, with other members of the expedition, the special Antarctic medal awarded by the United States Congress, and Cape Davies on Thurston Island, Eights Coast, was later named after him. Some years ago he donated his collection of expedition slides to the Scott Polar Research Institute.

On his return from the Antarctic, Davies joined the Carnegie Institute, Washington DC, as a

geomagnetician, and from there he took leave with the Canadian Meteorological Service to lead the four-man expedition to Chesterfield Inlet, where he established one of a chain of stations in the Arctic for meteorological, geomagnetic and auroral studies. From 1936 to 1939 he was Director of the Carnegie Geophysical Observatory at Huancayo, situated at an elevation of 3 400 m in the Peruvian Andes. On the outbreak of World War II he returned to Canada to serve as a civilian in naval intelligence, for part of the time stationed in South America where his fluency in Spanish was an asset.

After the war he joined the Defence Research Board in Ottawa and, in a series of senior appointments, played an important part in fostering Arctic research and in engineering the highly successful Alouette satellite, launched in 1965. The Canadian IGY Expedition to Lake Hazen was launched under his general direction, and in 1966 his laboratory provided technical assistance for the Scott Polar Research Institute's airborne radio echo sounding trials in Ellesmere Island. As a director, he was a conspicuously contented man in his work and his family life; he had had his fling and it was time for delegated younger ones to make their mark. In success he gave all the credit to his staff; in problems he took all the knocks on his broad shoulders. 'I'm just a trouble-shooter—that's what I'm paid for', he would say. His genuine interest in people, his bluff and informal manner, and his gifts as a raconteur endeared him to members of his staff at all levels. He always had a cheerful word for everyone, and they felt the better for it.

Davies was also active on National Research Council committees where his forthright and colourful speech enlivened meetings he attended. From him no one minded a few home truths which from another might have caused offence. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Fellow and past Governor of the Arctic Institute of North America, and a founder member of the Arctic Circle Club and its second president.

In 1968, the year before he retired as Director-General of the Defence Research Telecommunications Establishment, I accompanied 'FT' on his last visit to the Arctic, which he thoroughly enjoyed—from the VIP quarters and an excellent dinner at Thule Air Base to the more austere arrangements at Tanquary camp. He decided that our comfort in the camp called for a more spacious WC, and on his return to Ottawa put in hand design and construction of a splendid building to be sent in by icebreaker later in the season.

In retirement the award of a DSc degree from his old university of McGill gave him great pleasure. In his last illness, when he lay paralysed, his fighting spirit would not give in, and he set about learning German. Such was the man he was and such is the man that his family and friends will ever remember.

Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith

CHARLES GILL MORGAN, geologist and geophysicist with Rear-Admiral Richard Byrd's second Antarctic expedition, 1933–35, died on 8 August 1980. Born in Dallas, Texas on 22 June 1906, Morgan graduated from the Southern Methodist University in 1928. In 1930 he went on to the Graduate School of Geology at Harvard, returning to the Southern Methodist University two years later. In October 1934 he left the Little America base on the Ross Ice Shelf as joint leader with Dr Erwin Bramhall of the plateau party. Using tractors they made a 1 311 km journey to the Rockefeller Plateau in Marie Byrd Land to measure ice thickness by seismic sounding, in addition to making a series of magnetic measurements.

On his return to the United States Morgan had a number of senior appointments with the United Geophysical Company. During his war service, from 1941–46, he reached the rank of colonel and was a member of a number of important military commissions. After another brief spell at Harvard, Morgan became consulting geologist and president of the Atlas Land Company in Dallas, where he remained until his death.

Professor **MIKHAIL IVANOVICH BELOV**, the Arctic historian, died on 21 July 1981, aged 64. A prolific writer and enthusiastic field worker, he devoted his attention almost entirely to the history of Russian polar endeavour. In 1937 he entered Leningrad university as a history student, and in 1941–44 he fought on the Leningrad front. From 1947 until the end of his active career he was on the staff of the Arctic (later Arctic and Antarctic) Research Institute [Arkticheskiy i Antarkticheskiy Nauchno-Issledovatel'skiy Institut] in Leningrad, where he was one of a very small number of scholars concerned with human affairs. His best-known work was the three volumes he contributed to the monumental four-volume series *Istoriya otkrytiya i osvoyeniya Severnogo morskogo puti* [*History of the*

discovery and development of the Northern Sea Route] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1956–69). D. M. Pinkhenson wrote volume two, so Belov covered the periods from earliest times to 1850 and from 1917 to 1945. The Northern Sea Route is here interpreted in the broadest possible way, as not only the sea route itself, but all the land areas it has served or could serve.

Belov had two other major interests in the north. One was in the achievements of the cossack seafarer Semen Dezhnev, who in 1648 was the first white man to sail through Bering Strait, which he approached from the north. Belov's contribution was a series of scholarly articles culminating in his *Podvig Semena Dezhneva* [*The feat of Semen Dezhnev*] (3rd edition. Moscow, 1973). The other was a fascination with the history of Magazeya, the 17th century fur trading outpost on the Taz river. This interest led him to organize and head from 1968 on a series of field parties to explore and excavate the now deserted site. From this work flowed another series of publications, of which the latest and largest is *Mangazeya: Mangazeyskiy morskoy khod* [*Mangazeya: the sea route to Mangazeya*] (Leningrad, 1980), of which Belov was co-author with O. V. Ovsyannikov and V. F. Starkov. A second part of this work is promised for publication shortly.

Belov also made a foray into Antarctic history by publishing the charts, recently discovered in the naval archives, of Bellingshausen's circumnavigation of Antarctica in 1819–21. The publication, *Pervaya russkaya antarkticheskaya ekspeditsiya 1819–1821 gg. i yeye otchetnaya karta* [*The first Russian Antarctic expedition of 1819–21 and its navigational chart*] (Leningrad, 1963), was edited by Belov, and he also wrote much of the commentary.

These are the highlights of his achievement. He turned his attention to a number of other questions also, always illuminating some dark corner with his energetic and thorough scholarship. The All-Union Geographical Society [Vsesoyuznoye Geograficheskoye Obshchestvo] awarded him the Dezhnev Prize and the P. P. Semenov Gold Medal. His work is a monument to his industry and enthusiasm. His outlook was strongly nationalistic. Other things being equal, things Russian were seen in a more favourable light than things non-Russian. Yet despite this slant, which at times was heavy, Belov has put Arctic historians everywhere greatly in his debt.

Terence Armstrong

Dr **AVERIL MARGARET LYSAGHT**, biologist and historian, died in London on 21 August 1981. Born in 1905 in Hawera, New Zealand, she trained as a zoologist at Victoria College, Wellington, but spent most of her working life in Britain at Rothamstead, Nottingham, Hull and London. She will be remembered especially for her scholarly studies of Sir Joseph Banks—notably *Joseph Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1776*—and other contributions on the history and biology of 18th century exploration.

Bernard Stonehouse