

IS ANTARCTICA WARMING?

Scientists alert to the possible effects of a man-induced global trend—increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, due to the burning of fossil fuels—are examining the significance of recent changes in the distribution of Antarctic sea ice, which are now detectable from year-round satellite observations. A report of 1981 (G. Kukla and J. Gavin, *Science*, 214(4520): 497–503), comparing recent records with those from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, concluded that there had been a reduction of about 2.5 million km², or one fifth of the total sea-ice area, by the late 1970s—and suggested that the decrease might be consistent with global warming due to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide. A more recent report from the Goddard Laboratory for Atmospheric Sciences, Greenbelt, Maryland, USA, indicates that, although there was a substantial decrease between 1973 and 1977, especially in the Weddell Sea area, there were also previous and subsequent short-term increases. Variability between years and between regions is high; there is no consistent long-term downward trend, and thus no evidence—at least from this source—of steady global warming. (Source: H. J. Zwally and others, *Science*, 220 (4601): 1005–12.)

CANADIAN EXPEDITION TO STUDY THE ALPHA RIDGE

For over eight weeks from late March 1983, scientists of Canada's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources occupied an ice floe camp in the Arctic Ocean, investigating the Alpha Ridge, a submarine mountain range extending 1 200 km north-westward from Ellesmere Island. Established by army engineers, their floating camp, CESAR 83, was occupied from 26 March; supplies were flown in by Hercules transport planes from Resolute, Northwest Territories. Over 40 scientists and technicians took part in the expedition, which was directed by chief scientist Hans Weber. Gravity, seismic, magnetic, oceanographic and biological observations were taken from the drifting floe, and cores up to 8.5 m long were extracted from the ocean floor. On 1 May a party from the camp flew by Twin Otter for a 6-hour visit to a Soviet ice floe station some 300 km away. CESAR 83 was evacuated on 20–23 May.

THE 'FRAM STRAIT' PROJECT

The Comité Arctique International announces the inauguration of the 'Fram Strait' Project, a coordinated field and modelling study of the flows of water and sea ice into and out of the Arctic Ocean. The purpose of the study is to determine how these flows influence ice conditions within the polar basin, and adjacent waters, and how this knowledge can be applied to long-range ice forecasting. Field work will concentrate in the sea area between northeast Greenland and Svalbard, using two research ships, radar-equipped aircraft and monitoring buoys; results obtained in this area will be coordinated with similar work planned by other organisations elsewhere in the Arctic. The project is planned to start with a pilot investigation in the summer of 1984 and to be completed in 1992. Sponsorship is invited from all countries with Arctic interests: further details are available from the Secretary General (M. Kristensen), Norsk Polarinstitutt, Box 158, N-1330 Oslo Lufthavn, Norway. (Source: 'Fram Strait' Project publicity material.)

Obituary

Professor **TOM M. HARRIS**, FRS died in Reading on 1 May 1983, in his 81st year. Formerly Professor of Botany at the University of Reading (1935–68), he was a distinguished palaeobotanist who gained his early field experience in east Greenland. Shortly after graduating from Cambridge he joined Lauge Koch, the Danish geologist and explorer, and worked for two summers and a winter on the mesozoic fossil flora of Scoresby Sund. His results, published in *Meddelelser om Grønland* between 1931 and 1937, remain the classic palaeobotanical reference work for the region.

ALLAN INNES-TAYLOR died in Whitehorse, Yukon, on 14 January 1983, aged 81. Born in Berkhamstead, England, he moved with his family to Canada, attending school and university in Toronto. In 1971 he joined the Royal Flying Corps and qualified as a pilot. Returning to Canada after the war, he turned successively to farming, surveying, the Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police (1921–26, where he gained sledging experience in the Yukon), and the mercantile marine. In 1928 he joined Byrd's first Antarctic expedition as dog handler and crewman, and in 1933–35 was chief of trail operations on Byrd's second expedition, with overall responsibility for the dog teams and their work in the field. During World War II he served in the US Army, using his polar experience in Greenland, northern Canada and Alaska; later (1949–53) he was recalled to the army to become involved in rescue and survival training, and command an Arctic Survival School. He was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1976, and presented with the Yukon Commissioner's Award in 1982.

JOHN J. TEAL died in Huntington Center, Vermont, on 26 August 1982, aged 61. Born in New York in 1921, he graduated in anthropology at Harvard, and served with distinction as a USAF pilot in World War II. After the war he studied international relations at Yale, and lived for three years in northern Scandinavia, where he became interested in Arctic agriculture. He turned gradually to research and management studies of musk oxen, leading over a dozen expeditions in Arctic Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Scandinavia to investigate their ecology and potential for domestication. At his home in Vermont he founded the Institute of Northern Agricultural Research, where he maintained a small herd of musk oxen. Later he established further experimental herds at College, Alaska, Old Fort Chimo near Ungava Bay, and at Bardu, northern Norway, and with Inuit collaboration founded Oomingmak, the Musk Ox Producers' Cooperative, which has done much to popularize fabrics made from quiviut—the fine musk ox under-wool.