

Bothie is the only dog to have peed at both the North Pole and South Pole? Or that toothpaste will freeze in the tube, so if you want to use it in the morning you have to sleep with it in your sleeping bag? There's a glossary to help the reader understand some of the more unusual terms, and there's also a historical timeline listing important dates. I wasn't always sure that the history was thorough. It didn't mention John Davis, the first man to step on to the Antarctic continent in 1821, for instance, but that's a minor detail. The book is fun to read, contains a wealth and diversity of information, and I'm pleased to see that it also has an index. There are several photos, including some gruesome ones, such as the mummified bodies of some of the members of the Franklin expedition, or Ranulph Fiennes' frostbite. It probably could have had more illustrations to break up the text, as the look of the pages is solid in parts and might put off the younger reader.

The other volume, *Conquering the world*, is in the same format, a mixture of history, adventure stories, and helpful hints to survive in extreme conditions. Because its topic is much wider, it does not cover individual expeditions in such detail, so the text comes in smaller bite-size chunks. But there is still a tremendous wealth of facts and stories. I rather liked the section that looked at all the different ways people have travelled round the world — or as far as they could get — whether by car, bicycle, balloon, or even a wheelchair or a horse-drawn caravan.

Both books have plenty to offer and are ideal for a long read or just dipping into. Good stuff for that long car ride — or whatever your next extreme expedition is. (Mike Ashley, 4 Thistlebank, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 8AD.)

### BRIEF REVIEWS

**LET HEROES SPEAK: ANTARCTIC EXPLORERS, 1772–1922.** Michael H. Rosove. 2000. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press. xi + 358 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-55750-967-0. US\$34.95.

Benjamin Disraeli noted that success was the rarest of outcomes. Michael Rosove has attempted an extremely difficult task — to retell the story of Antarctic exploration from Captain Cook's voyages to the death of Sir Ernest Shackleton. What Rosove wants is to let the heroes tell much of the tale. The approach is unique in the field of polar literature: a thoughtful and insightful narrative that is woven around lengthy and appropriate primary source quotations. Rosove's superb blending of narrative and apt quotation succeeds in creating a work that both the beginner and the serious polar buff will want to read and own. Here at last is an amateur historian who restores one's faith in the ability of non-professionals to weave a tale with clarity, balance, and accuracy. This book is in many ways a model of excellence in historical writing.

Each expedition or era is described in a chapter. The narrative is ideal for the beginner in the field because the story of each expedition is supremely self-contained. Rosove does not hesitate to assess — which is what he

should do — but he has no axe to grind. My impression is that he came to this subject to celebrate heroes, not destroy them.

The illustrations are well chosen, and few are from the standard pool of photographs from which the casual writer of polar literatures draws his/her illustrations. The maps, too, show a degree of determination to produce the best possible volume, for they illustrate with great clarity essential geography that the reader will want to comprehend.

For some time a variety of books could claim to be the one that someone should read to gain an appreciation of Antarctica's past. The great works of Apsley Cherry-Garrard and Sir Ernest Shackleton will still draw the serious reader. But if you are interested in a thorough and balanced survey of the entire period of Antarctic history from 1772 to 1922, you need look no further than this splendid and delightful volume.

**ANCIENT HARPOON HEADS OF NUNAVUT: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE.** Robert W. Park and Douglas R. Stenton. 1998. Ottawa: Parks Canada. viii + 108 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-662-27996-4.

**ANCIENT STONE TOOLS OF NUNAVUT: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE.** Douglas R. Stenton and Robert W. Park. 1998. Ottawa: Parks Canada. viii + 118 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-662-64374-7.

**THE INUKSUK BOOK.** Mary Wallace. 1999. Toronto: Greedy de Pencier Books. 64 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-895688-91-4.

On 1 April 1999 the eastern half of the Canadian Arctic (until then part of the Northwest Territories) came under a new government, that of the Nunavut Territory. Canada is periodically thrown into confusion by the stated intention of the government of the Province of Quebec to separate from the Canadian Federation. Much less widely noticed was this separation from the NWT. The NWT had earlier evolved from control by the federal government in Ottawa to the predominantly aboriginal NWT government, located in Yellowknife. The recently separated Nunavut Territory now has a new, Inuit-centred legislative assembly in Iqaluit. The new territory remains strongly within the Canadian Federation, however, and Nunavut receives much federal support, financially and, for want of a better word, spiritually. The latter, however, may leave something to be desired.

Three new publications on the archaeology of the region reflect these circumstances. All describe Inuit artefacts. The two 'guides' follow in the tradition of federal government publications, well-written and presented, authoritative in content, and well-illustrated. Park and Stenton's book on harpoon heads is largely a detailed catalogue of the types found, and that on tools (Stenton and Park) is similarly much concerned with physical description, although also containing interesting accounts of their use, repair, and rediscovery. This is fortunate, since these days one is not allowed to collect, or even move, such artefacts, and this surely reduces demand

for any guide to identification, as might be used by collectors. In a sense, these guides reflect the progressive involvement in the Inuit lands of the federal government and the western European scientific tradition since the middle of the nineteenth century. A reflection of contemporary political thinking is that, within the one cover, one gets the book in Inuktitut as well as in English.

Wallace's book on Inuksuit (the traditional stone figures built by Inuit on the tundra) is quite different. Full of photographs, largely colour reproductions of paintings, it gives an illuminating account of the purpose and interpretation, the spirit and form of the Inuksuk. Because of its glossy format and easy language, it will probably have a much wider appeal to tourists and others. A paperback of modest size, it reflects the input of a large number of people and institutions, many Inuit, and all acknowledged fulsomely. Yet it has something of the nature of a book for children. It turns out that its southern Canadian publisher specialises in children's books. There is no Inuktitut version.

These three informative books are thought-provoking — as much for their form as for their substance. They seem to epitomise the biggest challenge Nunavut has: how to bring together most advantageously the culture and experience of Inuit people with the European traditions that are fundamental to the history of Canada and the basis of Canada's position as a country with one of the highest standards of living in the contemporary world. If such integration can be carried out successfully, it will be of benefit to all who live in Canada's remote and Arctic lands. It will also benefit Canadians generally and their federal government, upon which rests most of the onus of developing the appropriate policies.

**MUSIC OF THE ALASKA-KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH: SONGS AND HISTORY.** Jean A. Murray. 2000. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xvii + 440 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-889963-13-5. US\$54.95.

This substantial book is the culmination of Jean Murray's long search for the genuine songs of the Gold Rush. It includes songs and parodies by the gold seekers themselves and songs about the Gold Rush by professional musicians. It also contains popular music sung and performed by the prospectors, which they brought with them from home and recorded in diaries, letters, and other accounts. Many of the tunes are still familiar today, such as 'Turkey in the straw,' 'Old folks at home,' and 'La donna e mobile.'

Some of the titles fire the imagination, such as 'When the ice worm nests again' and 'Arctic brotherhood two-step.' The book contains more than a hundred songs with commentaries and reproductions of music covers and photos that convey the extraordinary lives of the gold seekers and the importance of music in their lives. Some of the songs convey the harsh reality of the Gold Rush, for instance, 'He is sleeping in the Klondike Vale tonight':

Some had wealth but in their joy was mingled sadness,  
As they told how many perished in the fight  
One a lad so brave and bold  
In a grave that's decked with gold  
He is sleeping in the Klondike Vale tonight.

Jean Murray and her husband are keen sing-song enthusiasts, and this book is a great resource both for researchers and other enthusiasts. The music and words are clearly reproduced, the book fits easily on a piano music stand, and it is attractively presented.

There is also a CD and cassette available containing 15 of the songs from the book.