

OBITUARY

ROLAND ERNEST BESCHEL, a pioneer in lichenometry, died on 22 January 1971. He was born in Salzburg on 9 August 1928 and obtained a D Phil in 1950 from the University of Innsbruck with a thesis on urban lichens and their growth. In 1955, he left a professorship at Rosenburg College in Switzerland for a position at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. In 1959, he joined the biology department of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and was at his death Professor of Biology and Director of the Fowler Herbarium. He became a Canadian citizen in 1965. His fieldwork took him to west Greenland, to many parts of northern Canada, and to parts of the Soviet Arctic seldom, if ever, visited by westerners. His research interests were directed mainly to botanical approaches to climate and chronology, chiefly by means of dating rock surfaces. Recently he had become deeply interested in the application of computers to geobotanical problems.

Lt-Col FREDERICK SPENCER CHAPMAN, DSO and bar, TD, MA, author, explorer, mountaineer, and schoolmaster, was found dead on 8 August 1971 at Wantage Hall, University of Reading. He left a wife and three sons.

He was born on 10 May 1907 and spent his boyhood near the Lake District, where he early acquired a deep love of the countryside and of nature. After school at Sedbergh, he went to St John's College, Cambridge, took an honours degree in English and history, and, through friendship with Geoffrey Winthrop Young, was introduced to the world of mountaineering. He joined the Cambridge Mountaineering Club and, for want of mountains anywhere near Cambridge, started roof climbing with such well-known pioneers as Gino Watkins, Peter Scott, Jack Longland and Laurence Wager.

On coming down from Cambridge in 1929, he spent some weeks with two friends collecting plants and birds in northern Iceland for the British Museum. He had, by then, decided to become a schoolmaster, but he was in no great hurry to begin work. While skiing in Davos that winter, he again met H. G. (Gino) Watkins, just back from a year in Labrador, and gladly accepted an invitation to join the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, 1930-31, which was then being organized to survey the Greenland coast north and south of Angmagssalik. Spencer Chapman was appointed ski-expert and naturalist and he wrote the expedition's official account, *Northern lights* (London, 1932). He and Watkins spent the next year lecturing to pay off the expedition's debts and trying unsuccessfully to raise funds for a trans-Antarctic expedition. Watkins was, however, successful through the good offices of Vilhjalmur Stefansson in finding support for the Pan-American Arctic Airways Expedition to Greenland, 1931-32, and they returned with John Rymill and Quintin Riley to continue their previous work. Spencer Chapman's narrative, *Watkins' last expedition* (London, 1934), described Watkins' death by drowning and the results of the expedition.

Rymill invited Spencer Chapman to join the British Graham Land Expedition, 1934-36, but he decided it was time he settled down and began teaching. He did, however, go to west Greenland to buy dogs for the expedition, and there his brief but active connection with the polar regions ceased; to be continued by a strenuous period of mountaineering. His *Memoirs of a mountaineer* (London, 1945) vividly describes climbs ranging from a barely unsuccessful attempt on the Fell Record in the Lake District, climbing in Wales and the Alps, and his great ascents in Himalaya, which culminated in his ascent of Chomolhari (8000 m) with but one porter. His experiences during a year with the British Diplomatic Mission in Tibet are given in *Lhasa: the holy city* (London, 1938).

He was a housemaster at Gordonstoun when the Second World War began, and left to rejoin comrades of Greenland days — Scott, Riley, and Lindsay — in a ski battalion, the 5th Battalion Scots Guards. However, in 1941, he was posted to Singapore and soon given charge of a school that trained guerrillas to work behind the Japanese lines. His adventures in this hazardous work are recounted in *The jungle is neutral* (London, 1948). After demobilization in 1946, he became first organizing secretary of the Outward Bound Trust; in 1948-52, headmaster of King Alfred School, Plön, Germany; and in 1956-62, headmaster of St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, South Africa, from which post he resigned in protest against racial policies of the South African government. Returning to England, he was appointed Warden of the Pestalozzi Children's Village, Sedlescombe, until 1966, when he became Warden of Wantage Hall, Reading University.

Few men can have faced constant danger so continuously and have kept their courage and fortitude so well. It was not that he knew no fear — he was far too imaginative for that and, in fact, his imagination often ran away with him. During his Greenland days, when he recounted a journey or hunting trip, his companions would "divide by two and call it nearly", a remark he always took in good part. He never bore any ill will and was the finest companion anyone could have. All his life he was an optimist, his philosophy based on a saying of Gino Watkins' "There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so." And that was the cause of his tragic death.

Quintin Riley

GEORGE HARRIS SARGEANT DOVERS, one of the last survivors of Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-14, died in Sydney on 7 July 1971, aged 84.

He was a surveyor in Commonwealth Government service when he joined the expedition and was a member of Frank Wild's Western Base Party, which spent a year on the Shackleton Ice Shelf, landing there from *Aurora* after leaving the main party in Terre Adélie. He took part in several exploratory journeys that were made in Queen Mary Land during the late summer of 1911-12 and then, with S. E. Jones and C. A. Hoadley, formed the Western Coastal Party for the main journeys during the 1912-13 summer. After a depot-laying foray in September, the party set out for Kaiser Wilhelm II Land on 7 November. They reached their western limit, Gausberg, on 22 December,



Captain Ejnar Mikkelsen

after discovering Haswell Island and charting a long stretch of hitherto unknown coast line. The main camp was reached on 21 January 1913, after a round journey of some 980 km accomplished in seven weeks.

Subsequently, Dovers worked as a surveyor at Woolongong. A son of his, R. G. Dovers, was officer-in-charge of the first wintering party at Mawson station, Mac.Robertson Land, in 1954.

LEONARD JOHN GADMAN, who worked as an environmental test equipment operator with the Polar Division, Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory, Port Hueneme, California, for 18 years, died on 17 June 1971 at the age of 55.

He was born on 10 September 1916 and served in the United States Navy during the Second World War and the Korean War. He spent several seasons working in Antarctica, as well as in Greenland, on Ward Hunt Island and at Barrow, Alaska.

Captain EJNAR MIKKELSEN, one of the last of the old-time Arctic explorers, died on 1 May 1971, aged 91. He was born on 23 December 1880 in northern Denmark, but by the time he had reached school age his family had moved to København. Here he was more attracted by ships than by school, and he was glad when, at 14, he could leave school and go to sea. It was in the sailing ship era, when a boy gave up after the first voyage or stood up to the privations and was hardened to a man. Young Ejnar stuck it out and, during the five years he sailed the seven seas, he acquired the physical strength, the endurance, and the fearlessness which, combined with an inborn strength of will, helped him through many dangerous situations in later life.

Before he was 20, he had obtained a master's certificate, and had made up his mind to become an Arctic explorer. In 1900 he went with G. C. Amdrup's expedition to east Greenland to explore and survey the coast between Scoresby Sund and the newly established settlement at Angmagssalik. Amdrup and three oarsmen, of whom Mikkelsen was one, made the 1 000 km journey through ice-filled waters and along the most dangerous stretch of coast in Greenland in a 6 m boat.

In 1901, Mikkelsen joined the Baldwin-Ziegler Polar Expedition, 1901-02, whose goal was the North Pole, but which never got very far from its base camp on Zemlya Frantsa Iosifa. Mikkelsen had nothing good to say about this expedition, but it did give him valuable experience and he made a friend, the American geologist, Ernest de Koven Leffigwell, with whom he discussed plans for future Arctic exploration. One of their plans materialized in 1906. The old rumour of an unknown land in the Beaufort Sea had been raised again, this time supported by what seemed to be new evidence, and the two young explorers decided to prove or disprove its existence.

On 20 May 1906, the schooner, *Duchess of Bedford*, left Victoria, British Columbia, and the Anglo-American Polar Expedition, with the two friends as co-leaders, was on its way to Alaska. The expedition is described in Mikkelsen's first book *Conquering the Arctic Ice* (London, 1909). Briefly told,

the expedition was dogged by ill-luck; unusually bad ice conditions delayed them and forced them to anchor at Flaxman Island. From there, they made sledge trips northwards over the ice until they were satisfied that no land existed. Then they decided to split up. Leffingwell stayed on to continue geological investigations, and Mikkelsen returned to civilization. When he reached Valdez in March 1908, he had been travelling for almost five months and had covered a distance of about 4 800 km.

In 1909 Mikkelsen offered to lead an expedition to east Greenland to look for the remains of three men lost during the *Danmark* expedition, 1906-08. He sailed on 20 June on board *Alabama*, a small ship bought for the occasion. Late in August they were stopped by heavy ice at Shannon and had to winter there. During the autumn, they made a sledge journey to Lambert's Land where they found one body, but, despite intensive search, found no trace of the other two men. The next year Mikkelsen and the machinist, Iver Iversen, crossed the ice cap to Danmark Fjord, where they hoped to find cairns containing reports from the lost party. They did find a report but, on their way back, they too nearly died. Suffering from scurvy and starvation, they struggled back, only to find *Alabama* a wreck and the hut built from its remains empty. Later they learned that their companions, following orders, had returned to Denmark on a Norwegian ship. It was summer 1912 before another Norwegian vessel brought the two men back to civilization.

For 10 years little was heard of Mikkelsen but in 1922 he came into the news again with a plan to colonize Scoresby Sund with Eskimos from Angmagssalik. He met strong opposition and discussion in the press lasted more than a year. Finally Mikkelsen succeeded in obtaining enough support. In 1924, he sailed to Scoresby Sund with materials for the first houses, and in 1925 the immigrants came to occupy them. After early difficulties the population increased rapidly and, thanks to excellent hunting conditions, the people of Scoresby Sund are now better off than their compatriots in Angmagssalik. In recognition of his service, Mikkelsen was appointed Inspektør for Østgrønland [Inspector for east Greenland] in 1930, a post he held until his retirement in 1950.

Ejnar Mikkelsen will go down in the history of Arctic exploration as a daring explorer. In Greenland and the rest of Denmark, his early achievements will not be forgotten, but his name will be remembered and honoured best as the founder of Scoresby Sund and for his untiring efforts in the cause of the Greenlanders.

He published many papers in scientific journals and several books including *Lost in the Arctic; the story of the Alabama expedition, 1909-12* (London 1913); five volumes of autobiography, *Fra hundevagt til hundeslæde* (København, 1953); *Ukendt Mand til Ukendt Land* (København, 1954), translated by M. Michael as *Mirage in the Arctic* (London, 1955); *Farlig tomandsfærd* (København, 1955) translated by M. Michael as *Two against the ice* (London, 1957); *Fra Fribytter til embedsmand* (København, 1957); and *Svundne tider i Østgrønland* (København, 1960).

Helge Larsen

RICHARD SPENCER PETERSON, born on 6 November 1937 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, died on 28 September 1969. He received his BA degree from Dartmouth College in 1959 and his DSc in 1964 from Johns Hopkins University. During the next two years, he did postdoctoral work at the University of California in Los Angeles and at Oxford University. From 1966 until his death, he was assistant professor of biology, Stevenson College, University of California in Santa Cruz. During his short life he had established himself firmly as a world authority on the biology and behaviour of pinnipeds and had published more than 30 papers on seals and sea lions.

BRYAN ROFE, MBE, Director of the Antarctic Division, Department of Supply, Australia, died in Melbourne on 27 August 1971 at the age of 53, after a short illness following an operation. He was appointed head of the Antarctic Division in August 1970, coming to the position from the department's Weapons Research Establishment in South Australia.

He gained his BSc at Adelaide University and served during World War Two as a meteorologist in the RAAF; his MBE was awarded for outstanding leadership during that period. Before coming to the Antarctic Division, he was working in upper atmosphere physics and was already known internationally for his contributions to that field. Although in charge of the division for such a short period, he showed an immediate understanding of, sympathy for, and dedication to Antarctic matters. He visited Mawson and Davis during the 1970-71 Australian expeditions.

T. Lawrence