

OBITUARY

ROBERT BENTHAM, geologist in the Oxford University Ellesmere Land Expedition, 1935-36, died in London on 10 August 1968. During the expedition he accompanied Edward Shackleton (now Lord Shackleton) on a survey of the Bache Peninsula area, and visited the glaciers at the head of Princess Marie Bay. A later journey of some 1280 km was made up the eastern coast of Ellesmere Island, exploring and surveying Scoresby Bay and the Victoria and Albert Mountains and collecting specimens as far north as lat 80°N.

Soon after the expedition ended, he returned to Canada to spend two more seasons working in Ellesmere Island from a base at Craig Harbour, the most northerly of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police stations in the Canadian Arctic. Reaching Craig Harbour in September 1936 in the government supply ship *Nascopie*, he began his programme with a survey of Starnes Fiord and part of Mackinson Fiord early in April 1967. The summer was spent on a geological survey west of Craig Harbour, as far as South Cape. The 1938 season opened with a short visit to Coburg Island and an unsuccessful attempt to find a route overland from Starnes Fiord to Mackinson Inlet. On this, and on his subsequent main survey, he was accompanied by a RCMP Corporal and an Eskimo. The main journey took them from Mackinson Inlet overland to Vendom Fiord, west to Eidsfiord and back to Craig Harbour by way of Nordstrand, Goose Fiord and Jones Sound. Cape Sparbo on Devon Island was later visited, also Coburg Island again. With two very successful seasons' work completed, Bentham left Craig Harbour in *Nascopie* at the end of August 1938.

His subsequent career was as a geologist in the Burmah Oil Company.

ROBERT JOHN FISCHER, one of Alaska's most experienced "bush pilots", was killed in an aircraft accident near Barrow on 21 November 1968.

Fischer, who was 37 at the time of his death, was born and educated at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and served in the United States Navy from 1948 to 1950. He took a civil service post at Eielson Air Force Base, near Fairbanks, in the early 1950's and there learned to fly in his spare time. As he gained sub-Arctic and Arctic experience, he very soon showed that he possessed an invaluable eye for judging thickness and character of ice and confidence in his own judgement. He flew some of the first survey parties in search of DEW-Line sites before moving to Barrow in 1955 as pilot for Interior Airways, a company which carried a great deal of passenger and cargo transport for DEW-Line stations. In 1958 he became, and remained until June 1966, chief pilot for the United States Navy Arctic Research Laboratory at Barrow. During those years he flew hundreds of missions over the Arctic Ocean supporting scientific parties on the ice stations, ARLIS I, ARLIS II, T-3 and other sites. In 1960, he flew no less than three emergency rescue operations from T-3, two with landings on mushy island ice in July, and

the third in October. In 1963 he landed a Cessna 180 aircraft at the North Pole where gravity and water-depth measurements were obtained for the first time. In 1966 he and a partner formed a charter company, the Barrow Air Service, and it was while flying members of the Governor's Employment Service Commission to Inuvik, that the crash occurred.

PAUL LEDUC, the French mountain guide, a member of the summer party to Terre Adélie in 1965-66, was killed in a climbing accident in the Aiguille du Midi on 12 July 1967. He was 27 years old.

KRISTOFFER LYNGE, who played a notable part in the development of Greenland radio and journalism, died in København on 19 September 1967.

Born at Godthåb on 26 November 1894, he trained there as a printer and followed Lars Møller as editor of *Atuagagdlitit* from 1922 to 1952, founding Grønlands Radio in 1942 and directing its activities for ten years, also serving as Greenland correspondent of Denmark's Radio from 1952 to 1964. He was a member of Sydgrønlands landsråd [Provincial Council of South Greenland] in 1922-26 and again in 1932-45 and took a leading part in local and national government affairs.

He published three volumes of *Kalâtdlit okalugtuait okalualâvilo* [Greenland myths and legends] in 1938 and 1939 and did a great deal of translating, including a Greenlandic version of the New Testament. He was on the editorial board of the *Dansk-grønlandsk ordbog* [Danish-Greenlandic dictionary] published in 1960.

Captain WILLIAM JOHNSON for many years Commander of *John Biscoe*, was born on 3 March 1908 and died on 27 February 1968.

He was educated at Whitehead, in Northern Ireland, leaving school at the age of sixteen to go to sea as an apprentice with the Head Line and qualifying as a Master Mariner in 1933. In 1936 he became Chief Officer, and later Master, of the Falkland Islands Company vessel *Lafonia*. In 1940 the vessel was taken over by the Ministry of Transport for war duties and Johnson joined the Royal Navy, serving as a Lieutenant in command of rescue tugs and seeing service in various Mediterranean engagements, particularly the Allied landings in southern Europe. He returned to the Falkland Islands in 1946 to command a new *Lafonia* until she was sold four years later. He was then appointed to command the old *John Biscoe* for the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, and later of the new *John Biscoe*, which he commanded until his retirement, due to ill health, in October 1965.

"Bill", or "Kelly", was ideally suited by temperament to command in polar waters. He was calm and always completely unruffled; many a passenger and crew member has derived much needed comfort from his demeanour when, to the uninitiated, there seemed to be little chance of survival in some particularly ferocious gale. Nor was he ever frustrated by being beset in sea ice; he would look over the bridge, decide that nothing could be done and go back to his book for the rest of the day. Reading, bridge and a "flutter" were his interests and his ambition was always to own a farm in his home country.

D. J. Clark

Sir WALTER NASH, PC, GCMG, CH, Prime Minister of New Zealand, 1957-60, died on 4 June 1968, aged 86. He was still Member of Parliament for Hutt, after 39 years of Parliamentary service.

This is not the place to record his major reforms as Minister of Finance and as architect of the far-reaching social security legislation which made New Zealand a prototype welfare state. But the *Polar Record* should mention his special interest in Antarctic matters. No one who was present at the Antarctic Conference in Washington in 1959 will forget his contribution to the Antarctic Treaty. Nash advocated consistently that any Antarctic group of nations should not be restricted exclusively to those carrying out scientific investigations in the southern continent; he wanted the circle to be much wider. In this he had to meet arguments which were not attractive to him and which he found difficult to demolish on theoretical grounds. He was horrified at the political obstacles in the way of any rational approach to an international solution of Antarctic problems at that time. His idealism ill fitted with the narrow nationalism which dominated the early stages of the six-week conference, but, although he was not present for the whole meeting, while he was there his charming personality infected all but the most insensitive with his own almost visionary view of how Antarctic affairs should be conducted. To this extent his contribution to the Treaty as it was finally signed was of great consequence.

Nash was Patron of the New Zealand Antarctic Society. In January 1964 he flew to the Antarctic as the guest of Rear-Admiral Reedy, and visited the South Pole station. He was then 81, the oldest man ever to reach the Pole. He spent a week in the Antarctic, mostly at McMurdo, but he also stayed at "Scott Base".

Brian Roberts.

GILLES PILLAS, who took part in the ionospheric programme of TA-16 in Terre Adélie in 1966, was killed climbing in the Aiguille du Midi with Paul Leduc on 12 July 1967. He was 25 years old.

PAUL ALLMAN SIPLE, the American Antarctic explorer and geographer, died on 25 November 1968. A notice will appear in the next issue of the *Polar Record*.