

Obituaries

Rear Admiral Maurice James Ross, CB, DSC, the author of *Ross in the Antarctic* and *Polar pioneers*, died on 27 October 1996 at the age of 87. He was born on 31 October 1908, the great grandson of Sir James Clark Ross, the most experienced of the 'Arctic officers' of the Royal Navy. He had a distinguished naval career, mainly as a gunnery officer, and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1940 for 'courage, enterprise and devotion to duty in operations off the coast of Norway' during the Second World War. After the war, he was posted to Hong Kong, Singapore, Washington, DC (attached to NATO), and to Scotland as 'Captain Clyde' in HMS *Jupiter*. He served at the Admiralty from 1957 to 1963, when he was awarded the CB on retirement as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff.

Ross then took on the management of an architectural practice in London until 1980, and in 1983 he was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners in the City of London. Spurred by a younger cousin, he began a third career as polar historian, facilitated by nearness to the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. Tom and Cordelia Stamp, who were Caedmon of Whitby, published his *Ross in the Antarctic*, which was well received, in 1982. They became good friends and, after Tom's death, Cordelia published *Chippenham: an East Anglian estate village* in 1995. Here Admiral and Mrs Ross lived in the School House, a Queen Anne building that 'still retained some of the atmosphere of a village school from long ago, though there was a distinctive Ross family feeling to it as well' (Clive Holland, personal communication, 25 November 1996). Ross' second book, *Polar pioneers: John Ross and James Clark Ross* (Toronto, McGill-Queen's, 1994), was immensely well done. It covered not only the polar voyages of uncle and nephew, but their family and general naval backgrounds as well.

Although he never visited the Arctic or Antarctic, he had the great advantage, as a maritime historian, of a naval background. When asked whether this had helped, he replied, 'Indeed it did, not only in the understanding of seamanship and navigation, but also in the way that sailors conduct their lives, in the mess, in disciplinary matters, in emergencies, and so on.' He had 'insisted on ships remaining feminine,' telling his editors that his naval colleagues would take him to task if he referred to a ship as 'it' (M.J. Ross, personal communication, 22 July 1995). A tall, spare, modest man, he will be much missed. However, one is thankful that he lived to see the publication of *Polar pioneers* and to read the favourable reviews that it not only received, but richly deserved. He is survived by his daughter, Dr Shelagh Ross, to whom he dedicated *Polar pioneers*.

Ann Savours (Mrs Shirley)

Sir John Wordie, a long-term member of the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute, died on 21 January 1997 at the age of 73. Wordie was born 15 January 1924, the son of Sir James Mann Wordie, the Scottish explorer and geologist who was on Sir Ernest Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition and later was Master of St John's College, Cambridge. Educated at Winchester and St John's, the younger Wordie was a barrister by training and profession, but nevertheless had a strong interest in polar affairs throughout his life. He also chaired a number of national educational and political committees, including the National Joint Council for Lectures in Further Education, the Burnham and Pelham Committees, and the Central Arbitration Committee. He joined the committee of the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute in 1984, and his services will be greatly missed.

Liz Cruwys

In Brief

ANARE NEWS CEASES PUBLICATION. The Australian Antarctic Division has ended publication of its quarterly magazine *Anare News*. The decision to do so was based on widespread Antarctic government budgetary cuts that forced the Antarctic Division to reduce any effort

not considered essential to the running of the programme. The Antarctic Division hopes to put some of the effort that went into producing *Anare News* into informing the public about its research through other media, including the internet and the provision of educational material to schools.