

of Scoresby's journals when it comes to richness in detail, systematic observations or even literary qualities.

However rare the whaling journals of William Scoresby may be, their publication now is pertinent. Not only do they offer a first hand account of navigation and whaling in the northern Atlantic over a consecutive period of six years, but they also tell us about the formation of young Scoresby as a scientist. The maturing researcher can be seen through the gradual augmentation of observations and introduction of experiments during the whaling voyages, particularly after 1814. The journals themselves grow from an already substantial 68 pages and near 25,000 words in 1811 to twice the size only two years later. This reviewer must admit that it is not always exciting to plough through daily records of wind, weather and navigation. The journals definitely become more interesting to read when Scoresby involves scientific thinking and practice, for example his reflections on 16 May 1815, over what causes the colour of the sea (vol. II: 165–167), or his studies of plankton, hydrographical measurements and observations of climatic phenomena. Hopefully and presumably there will be more of this to explore in the yet unpublished journals of 1817, 1818 and 1820. There are also many entertaining passages describing the work processes and life on board a whaler, and of course the whale hunt itself. The dramatic crux is no doubt the near wrecking of Scoresby's ship *Esk* in June 1816, a story which also is retold in *An Account*, vol. II.

For all their qualities as sources of information these journals would not be so valuable without the fine scholarly work by editor Ian Jackson. In the first volume he gives a well researched 41 page introduction to the journals, the Scoresbys and whaling as it was conducted in their time. For the latter he relies a lot on Gordon Jackson's *The British whaling trade*, which is a very sensible thing to do, a better synthesis is hard to find (Jackson 1978). Volume II has a shorter introduction, but adds interesting perspectives on Scoresby's scientific and even spiritual development. Both volumes contain a glossary and tables of quantities and conversions, which this reviewer finds extremely helpful. Each has a decent general index and also an index of whaling ships, and of course the mandatory list of quoted literature. For every year's journal a modern map has been constructed showing the approximate route of the whaling ship, its accuracy being limited by Scoresby's sometimes approximate navigational observations. With regard to the latter, volume II holds a very instructive appendix by George Huxtable explaining the challenges and methods of 19th

century Arctic navigation with examples from Scoresby's practice. Volume II also contains a 'bonus track', namely the 1814 journal of young Charles Steward, who was invited to join the whaling voyage of *Esk* that year. All the journals are systematically annotated with comments on the transcription and additional, for the most part useful information. Marginal notes in the original manuscripts are also faithfully reproduced in footnotes. In short, for a researcher there is little left to wish for in this edition.

Scoresby's journals are of obvious interest to anyone concerned with maritime history, whaling history, geographical exploration and the Arctic in general. Especially when read in context with *An Account* and Scoresby's scientific papers these journals provide insight regarding the evolution of polar research as a specialised field in the 19th century as well as the transformation of a keen amateur into a proficient scientist. Scoresby's observations over a decade from Spitsbergen and the Greenland Sea may also have an information potential for biologists and climate researchers today, at least as regional historical snapshots.

True to tradition the Hakluyt Society presents the editions in lavish cloth-bound volumes, printed on high quality paper that makes the text eminently readable. On this matted paper photographic reproductions of original drawings, handwriting and engravings fare less well than the modern typeset illustrations, but this is definitely a minor complaint. One certainly hopes that in due course the society will also issue a similar scholarly edition of *An Account of the Arctic Regions* to complement the original and the now rare facsimile edition from 1969. For now the two volumes reviewed here are a pride to any bookshelf; just be sure to leave some free space for volume III. (Thor B. Arlov, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway).

### References

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**ICE TRACKS: TODAY'S HEROIC AGE OF POLAR ADVENTURE.** Angie Butler. 2008. Eccles, Norwich: The Erskine Press. iii + 151 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 978-1-85297-100-7. £14.95.  
doi:10.1017/S0032247409990313

There are many reasons why people travel: curiosity about faraway lands, the urge to experience an exotic culture,

or the chance to start a new life, unhindered by the narrow definitions of 'right' and 'wrong' held by one's Parole Officer. However, none of these reasons fit the travellers who populate Angie Butler's intriguing book, *Ice tracks*. That's because these are travellers who seek 'adventure' and a personal challenge in the wildest parts of the planet. Not for them a package tour or even a brief excursion to some untouched natural wonder. Instead,

these hardcore adventurers will journey to uncomfortable places to test their endurance, mental toughness, and survival skills. This is achievement tourism, and there is no place better suited to its practice than the polar regions. In *Ice tracks*, we get a peek inside the frosty world of 19 polar adventurers, at their similarities, their differences, and the personalities that drive them.

The author explores this world by speaking to many of its most prominent practitioners. The adventurers interviewed for this book include some of the most accomplished and best-known (not always the same thing), as well as some novices that flesh out the examination. This type of tourism has a long enough history that there are now professional guides to lead the less-experienced, and their inclusion here makes for fascinating reading. Described are journeys to the South and North Poles (with variations in starting points), traverses of Antarctica, and crossings of the Arctic Ocean. But it is not just that one makes the journey, it is also important *how* one does so. Hence, there are a number of style categories such as First, Assisted, Solo, Unsupported, or 'First from My Country' in any of these categories. 'First' is the most important epithet of the lot, and most polar adventurers limit themselves to trips that can claim primacy in some way. This has important repercussions for bragging rights, of course, but also in attracting funding. Polar adventures are extremely expensive, and although the book gives only a little insight into the actual costs, the frequent mention of sponsors makes it clear that self-financed expeditions are extremely rare. Only one of the adventurers included here (John Wilton-Davies) has described a journey without sponsorship.

The value and success of achievement-tourism is rooted in the doing of something that has not yet been done. Or, if it has been done, doing it in a new way that is more difficult. *Ice tracks* reveals some of the argument and discussion that divides the field, while demonstrating the great importance of bragging rights to many adventurers. As the polar regions become increasingly accessible, we are likely to see adventurers go to increasingly outlandish lengths to score a 'first.' And yet, until things get really silly, non-adventurers will be enthralled by the formidable nature of these journeys. These are holidays in need of an audience, and the audience for books recounting these expeditions is far from sated.

*Ice tracks* seems targeted as a primer to the genre of polar adventuring, and as such it generally succeeds. Each chapter takes on a different adventurer and gives a brief summary of his or her accomplishments, interspersed with quotes from first-hand interviews. With space limited, the journeys are described fairly broadly, and the reader who is not already familiar with the expeditions will sometimes struggle for context. Repeated references that 'much has been recorded' about such and such, serve to inform the reader that he or she needs to do some homework elsewhere. The lists of published books and websites at the end of each chapter are good starting points for further reading, but be persistent when going to the web,

as I found several of the web addresses to be incorrect. Readers will also need to come to this book with a good understanding of the geography of the polar regions – or keep some maps handy. Maps are included of the Arctic and Antarctic, but they are coarsely drawn and devoid of many of the place-names that repeatedly feature in the expeditions. One important place that is included is Ward Hunt Island, a Canadian outpost that is a common starting point for North Pole expeditions. Sadly, its location on the map is wildly incorrect.

Where *Ice tracks* really shines is in illuminating the different personalities of the adventurers. Butler's interviews shed a lot of light on the motivations and styles of individuals who would probably be considered colleagues if the tiny field in which they are all specialists were not so competitive. Not surprisingly for a pursuit that requires enormous self-confidence, there are some huge egos involved. And, while Butler never comes right out and asks one adventurer what he thinks of another, many of them let slip their opinions on the personality or style of their competitors. The book is richer for this. Because most of what is published about polar adventuring is autobiographical and confined to a single journey, frank comparisons of different practitioners is very rare. If you read their websites, most adventurers will tell you how wonderful they are. *Ice tracks* is therefore a rare source that provides a more collective perspective, and one where competitors/colleagues comment about one another. It was interesting to note that, more than anyone else, Norwegian Børge Ousland was mentioned with great respect by his peers.

Threaded throughout the individual revelations of hardship and difficulty are little snippets about the world these travellers inhabit. For example, guide Paul Landry points out that the difficulty of an Arctic trip varies depending on the motivation of the person telling the story. A guide like Richard Weber, he says, who is seeking clients, might downplay the drama and talk about the chances of success, while someone like Ranulph Fiennes, who makes his living writing books and presenting lectures, might emphasise the drama and danger to best deliver what his audience wants. And, as an aside in one of Conrad Dickinson's anecdotes, we learn just how accessible the North Pole has become when he relates that upon reaching the Pole and phoning for a pick up, they only had to wait 10 hours before a helicopter arrived. We also get several informed opinions about whether Robert Peary could really have made it to the North Pole in 1909, as he claimed (some are deeply sceptical, while others point to a modern re-enactment as proof that Peary could have done it).

Butler interweaves the escapades of these modern adventurers, with those of explorers from a century ago. She deliberately, and correctly, avoids using the term 'explorer' for these present-day polar visitors. (However, many of them refer to themselves as such on their websites.) Sprinkled throughout the book are boxes of text describing the exploits of polar explorers such as

Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen. While I appreciated the attempt to connect these two different eras, I found the historic text was sometimes oddly placed and often derailed my enjoyment of the story it interrupted. Given how vastly different today's expeditions are from those of Edwardian times, there is no need to try and link the two.

Readers familiar with polar adventure travel may question the inclusion or omission of some names from this book, but for a novice reader there is a wonderfully broad sample of characters here. The really big names are present, and while a few relative beginners are included at the expense of some accomplished performers, the book brings a wider range of experiences and personalities together because of it. For example, you

would expect a novice like John Wilton-Davies to have a different perspective than veteran professionals like Viktor Boyarsky or Rune Gjeldnes. And so he does. Leave it to the only person not beholden to sponsors to say that it's 'more about the doing, than the reaching.'

Overall, Butler has compiled an entertaining and informative first stop for anyone interested in delving into the world of polar-adventure literature. By combining in one volume the exploits of so many different personalities, she has made it possible for readers to better understand the people involved in this small, but fascinating form of tourism. (Peter Carey, SubAntarctic Foundation for Ecosystems Research, 8 Estuary Road, Christchurch 8061, New Zealand.)

**A CHRONOLOGY OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION: A SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES UNTIL THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEARS, 2007–09.** Robert Keith Headland. 2009. London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd. 722 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-0-9550852-8-4. £110.

doi:10.1017/S0032247409008535

There are only two books that have a permanent place on this reviewer's desk, as opposed to residing in his bookshelves. These are the late Clive Holland's classic *Arctic exploration and development c. 500 b.c. to 1915* (Holland 1994) and the present author's *Chronological list of Antarctic expeditions and related historical events* (Headland 1989) which developed from an earlier compilation prepared by Brian Birley Roberts, and which included 664 entries. These books are indispensable for anyone who takes more than a casual interest in the exploration of the polar regions and most readers of *Polar Record* will be familiar with both.

The present work is, in effect, a further edition of the author's earlier work. The preparation of a new edition was chosen rather than the publication of a mere *addendum* to the old one 'for a variety of reasons' including 'changes in the introductory sections, additional entries, revision and improvement... and integrity of the index.' Not only is the time frame extended until 2009, but the opportunity has been taken to present additional and expanded entries for earlier years. While the author estimates that 'fewer than 10%' of the entries in the '1989 edition have been significantly amended' the number of new entries amounts to some 1500 which include 'some... minor voyages of discovery' and 'several hundred more sealing voyages.'

Those who possess the 1989 edition will immediately feel at home as the list of contents of the new edition is very similar to that of the old. The introductory material has been thoroughly brought up to date and expanded and is extremely useful in its own right as a source of information that may be difficult to find. Should one, for example, desire facts on visits by private yachts to

Antarctica there they are on page 57. Or should one need to know how South Africa structures its Antarctic operations, the relevant information will be found on page 42. This process of bringing up to date applies also to the maps which have been thoroughly revised where necessary but those that did not require extensive revision from the earlier edition are still included for example the wonderful map of '[p]ositions recorded for the non-existent islands and rocks' (Map 2) about which one could easily muse for hours.

The main part of each book is, of course, the lists themselves and these cover some 553 pages in 1989 and 554 in 2009. However, the page size in the latter is significantly larger and the gaps between lines and words rather smaller so that a much larger amount of information is presented. The number of entries has increased from 3342 to 4865 and the very last entry is the publication of the present work. Among the 4865 there are details of approximately 5000 expeditions. Looked at another way, the 1000th entry in 1989 was the formal opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, while in 2009 the 1000th entry is a record of a British voyage of the vessel *Lord Duncan* under Robert George Barton to the Auckland Island colony in 1851, giving a 'slippage' of 18 years. The first reference reminds the reader of the somewhat eclectic approach adopted by the author with regard to the selection of entries for the earlier edition and it is pleasing to note that this has been continued in the present one. For example, the invention of the zip fastener is number 1215 in the old edition and this is retained in the new as entry number 1484, with the additional information that 'velcro' was invented by the Swiss, Georg de Mestral, in 1948 (entry number 2352). When we come to the 2000th entry we find that in the earlier edition it is the 1950 establishment of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies meteorological service while in the 2009 edition it is the 1926 British Imperial Conference in London, so there is a 'slippage' of 24 years. And at the 3000th entry we have the 1980–1981 Argentine expeditions in the 1989 edition and the private US mountaineering expedition of Nicholas Bayard Clinch in 1966–1967 in the present volume giving a 'slippage' of 14 years. When we come to the end of the early edition,