

Whitby, which itself has gained respect as a maritime and polar publisher, has joined with Jones to produce *Polar portraits*, a selection of 50 of his previously published articles.

The book is certainly a glowing illustration of the hard work of Jones, who has managed to produce this material — and, indeed, a great deal more — without the research advantages enjoyed by many university-based authorities. The articles cover both polar regions and a period of more than 300 years, but each nevertheless exhibits an intensive investigation of the subject. Several, such as 'Tracing a master mariner,' are virtual guides on how to use original sources. They vary in length from two to 32 pages and were previously published in a wide range of journals, both well-known and easily available, such as *Polar Record* and *The Geographical Journal*, and less so, such as *Great Circle* and *The Falkland Islands Journal*.

Some of the articles are outstanding examples of creative research and original thinking, such as 'Scott's transport, 1911–1912,' which appeared in *Polarboken* in 1977. This detailed assessment of the use of dogs, ponies, motor sledges, and skis on Robert Falcon Scott's last expedition gives a less-than-charitable interpretation of Scott's role in some of the logistical problems faced by his party, and has been supported by other subsequent research.

Yet it seems to be this desire to reassess traditional heroes of the establishment, or to dispute what Jones terms the 'authorized version' of history, that has led him at times to treat his characters in a manner that I consider to be unfair, including making debatable statements about them without providing any supporting evidence for his viewpoint. For example, when he refers to Frank Debenham's opinion of Albert Armitage, he says, 'but since the comment came from a man who lacked leadership himself, even in academic circles, the remark is of doubtful value' (page 15). This analysis of a man who reached the position of Professor of the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge not only is at odds with the usual assessment by those at the University who best knew Debenham's academic contributions, it also tends to make the reader question Jones' judgment.

Whether one agrees with Jones' interpretations or not, it is still easy to be disappointed with this collection of his work. The arrangement of articles alphabetically, instead of by geographical location or historical period, gives the reader a feeling of lack of consistency, a point magnified by the different referencing and footnoting systems and by the book's brief index. Moreover, the articles have essentially been reproduced as they were originally published in a wide array of journals. The result is an ever-changing typographical hodgepodge, and a complete lack of any articles from journals that are a different size than this book, such as *The Musk-Ox*, where a number of Jones' more significant articles appeared. The financial reasons for having reproduced the book in this manner are apparent, but the author and the reader both would have been better served if the articles had been totally reset in a consistent fashion. This would also have allowed Jones to

make revisions or corrections based on recent information, and an editor to help with those aspects of the writing — such as a frequent lack of smooth transitions between trains of thought — that make comprehension more difficult than it need be.

In an article about Henry Peter Peglar, Jones indicated that his subject's papers, found on King William Island, were 'an intriguing jig-saw of trivialities' (page 205). This is ultimately perhaps the best description of Jones' own collection. Certainly some of the articles are in the mainstream of polar interest, but in many instances Jones has dealt in great detail with 'minor' figures — 'the small, unexamined fringes of the subject' to use his own words — while, to my mind, failing to show their importance to the study of the polar regions or of exploration as a whole. In the past, Jones has produced valuable works, such as *Antarctica observed*; unfortunately, *Polar portraits* does not form as significant a contribution as its predecessors.

Polar portraits is available direct from the publisher: Caedmon of Whitby, 28 Uppang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 3JJ, United Kingdom. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

THE SOVIET ENVIRONMENT: PROBLEMS, POLICIES, AND POLITICS. John Massey Stewart (editor). 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 245 p, hard cover. ISBN 0-521-41418-0. £40.00.

This useful volume contains 14 papers given at the Fourth World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies at Harrogate in July 1990. About half of the contributions are by citizens of the former USSR — a great advance on the previous Congress in 1985, when no Soviet citizens of this specialisation attended. Many environmental issues are discussed, from case studies of particular areas to the political and global impact of Soviet actions. Leading specialists from both east and west have been enlisted, and their papers carefully edited.

These discussions relate chiefly to the country as a whole. One essay, however, places the Arctic at the centre of attention. It is entitled 'Environmental issues in the Soviet Arctic and the fate of northern natives' by A.Yu. Roginko of the Academy's Institute of World Economy and International Relations. Roginko emphasises the point, made also by others in the volume, that pollution leads to alienation of native groups. He recounts a number of situations, not widely known before, in which members of the northern peoples have found themselves — not quite horror stories, but heading that way. He ascribes these situations to various causes: confusion as to ownership of land, lack of money, ignorance of aspects of the northern environment, and lack of any overall development strategy; and he would like to see the natives decide for themselves what future they want. Many of these problems will be familiar to those concerned with the present situation in the west. Small wonder, then, that the lot of the Inuit and the other northern minorities of the west is now

seen not as a disaster and to be pitied, but as a blessing and to be envied. The beliefs of many decades have been stood on their heads. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

BIOTAS MANUAL OF METHODS FOR ANTARCTIC TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER RESEARCH. David D. Wynn-Williams (editor). 1992. Cambridge: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. 271 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-948277-13-0. £10.00 or \$15.00 (US).

This manual of the BIOTAS (Biological Investigations of Terrestrial Antarctic Systems) programme gathers together details of techniques, equipment, suppliers, reagents, hardware, software, and other practical information for fieldworkers in polar terrestrial and freshwater ecology. It comprises 29 articles, ranging in length from one to 34 pages, covering topics such as 'Selection of research sites' (R.I. Lewis Smith), 'Airborne spores at high altitude: their collection and occurrence' (J. Lacey and H.A. McCartney), 'Media for isolating Antarctic yeasts' (H.S. Vishniac), 'Antarctic freshwater lakes: sampling and chemical analysis' (J.C. Ellis-Evans), and 'Assessment of environmental impacts' (R.D. Seppelt). In their introduction, Ron Lewis Smith and the editor point out the main functions of BIOTAS, and stress the need for accurate and detailed inventories of biota and environmental parameters and for assessing biological process rates in areas affected by both human activity and climate change. The manual encourages a unified approach by offering tested, often standardized procedures and recipes.

This is a timely offering, for the new Antarctic Treaty environmental protocol requires much in the way of baseline and monitoring studies. BIOTAS seeks to establish a network of individuals and groups of scientists involved in this kind of research, to encourage the establishment of monitoring sites, and, above all, to develop a simple, unified approach. Armed with this practically-oriented manual, almost any field worker may contribute something useful to the programme. The book is loose-bound, and all are encouraged to offer the editor new techniques for inclusion in later editions. Obtainable from the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB 2 1ER, and from British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET; the price includes postage and packing. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER).

BRIEF REVIEWS

SOUTHERN OCEAN CRUISING HANDBOOK. S. Poncet and J. Poncet. 1992. Stanley: published by the authors. 60 p, illustrated, soft cover. £3.50.

Cruising in the Southern Ocean? Certainly. Dozens of privately owned yachts head to the Antarctic each year,

some to spend the season there, a very few to overwinter in the ice. Many crews behave impeccably, but some break into refuge huts; steal food, fuel, and equipment; and leave doors and windows open to the weather. Sadly, the bums gain a bad name for the rest, inviting restrictive or even punitive legislation against this small-scale tourism. This little book, by the two best respected, most responsible, and most warmly regarded Antarctic yachters, is a guide to the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic coasts and islands — no substitute for good charts and sailing directions, but a wise, conservation-oriented summary, and enjoyable armchair reading into the bargain. Obtainable from the authors, Beaver Island, Falkland Islands, or from British Antarctic Survey, NERC, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET UK. Include £3.50 for airmail or £1.00 for sea mail.

THE ANCIENT ART OF NORTHERN ASIA. A.I. Martynov. 1991. Translated by D.B. Shimkin and E.M. Shimkin. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 320 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-252-01219-4. \$39.95 (US).

Described as 'the first book devoted solely to the primitive art and worldview of the peoples of northern Asia,' this work provides systematic description, stylistic analysis, and iconographic interpretation of the basic genres of Siberian archaeological art from the Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages. The author is an eminent authority on Russian archaeology who has conducted numerous expeditions in Siberia and can claim to have investigated at first hand virtually all of the materials discussed. The book is well illustrated with both photographs and line drawings and has an extensive bibliography. The translation reads well. This is clearly an essential work on its subject, but those whose interests are specifically in Arctic peoples should note that most of the peoples and sites discussed are located in southern Siberia.

WEATHER AND WAR. T.A. Fitzpatrick. 1992. South Church: Pentland Press. 148 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-872795-39-0. £12.50.

The author served as a meteorological officer throughout World War II, initially in Scotland and later in besieged Malta. This book, based on personal experience plus a good deal of research, provides insights into how the RAF meteorological service organized itself during the early years of the war, ultimately to forecast effectively for air and sea operations as far north as northern Norway, Svalbard, and Murmansk. A well-documented account, valuable both for its personal touches and historic interest.