

BOOK REVIEWS

Capt. Robert F. Scott. *The Voyage of the Discovery: Scott's First Antarctic Expedition, 1901-1904*. Preface by Fridtjof Nansen, new introduction by Ross MacPhee. New York NY : Cooper Square Press, 2001. Vol. I. xlvii + 570 pp., 147 b & w illus. US \$35.00, cloth; ISBN 0-8154-1079-4. Vol. II. xliii + 508 pp., 123 b & w illus. US \$35.00, cloth; ISBN 0-8154-1151-0.

Herbert G. Ponting. *The Great White South: Traveling with Robert F. Scott's Doomed South Pole Expedition*. New introduction by Roland Huntford. New York NY : Cooper Square Press, 2002. xxxiv + 306 pp., 175 b & w photos, 3 maps & diagrams. US \$ 18.95, paperback; ISBN 0-8154-1161-8.

Charles Neider. *Edge of the World, Ross Island, Antarctica: A Personal and Historical Narrative of Exploration, Adventure, Tragedy and Survival*. New introduction by the author. New York NY : Cooper Square Press, 2001. xx + 461 pp., 45 b & w photos, 15 maps. US \$19.95, paperback; ISBN 0-8154-1154-5.

Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell. *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer*. Preface by Alexandra Shackleton. New York NY : Penguin Books, 2001. xvi + 238 pp., b & w illus., maps, bibliography. US \$15.00, paperback; ISBN 0-1420-0236-4.

The human history of the Antarctic is not long and its cast of characters is small. In the English-speaking world it is headed by two men, Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton. The long-standing interest, amounting almost to obsession, with Scott and Shackleton, is curious given that a) they failed in what they set out to do and b) it could be argued that perhaps there was not a great deal of point in what they set to do.

But one might say that if plodding about in the Antarctic is pointless, so too is the *Tour de France*. What a painful and ridiculous

way to get around that beautiful country, unable to appreciate the scenery and the food and the wine! Yet millions of people are enthralled by the *Tour* and the qualities of mind, heart and body it reveals. Our interest is not so much in what the men are doing but in what we learn about them as we watch them do it. Significantly, a recent issue of *Sports Illustrated* (16 December 2002) which has Lance Armstrong on its cover as Sportsman of the Year includes a list of the top 100 sports books. Sitting at Number 35, between a book by Ben Hogan on golf and a book by C.L. R. James on cricket, is Apsley Cherry-Garrard's Antarctic classic, *The Worst Journey in the World*. So also the Antarctic careers of Scott and Shackleton revealed qualities of character that would not have appeared so starkly elsewhere. And with polar travel, as with sports, the writing about (or in some other way recording) the experience is essential. The experience needs to be re-lived, talked about, endlessly analyzed, sides taken.

This work of analysis requires grist for the mill, which Cooper Square Press does an excellent job of supplying. It is a New York publishing house which has as one of its specialties the reprinting of exploration literature, both well-known and not so well-known. Modern developments in book reproduction make it possible for them to produce high-quality books at reasonable prices. They also go to the trouble to have new introductions written.

Herbert Ponting was the photographer and cinematographer of the *Terra Nova* expedition (1910-1912). Many of his photos are reproduced in *The Great White South*. (His film is now available on DVD.) Those with a particular interest in photographic techniques and the peculiar demands of photographing in such cold temperatures will enjoy the book. But those of us who are only occasional photographers will find much of interest too. Photography is not just about technique; it is about seeing and appreciating what is going to

be photographed. Ponting was a photographer who was also good with words (Scott was a fan of Ponting's slide lectures) and his descriptions of the natural beauty of the Antarctic show the keenness of his eye. For contemporary taste his style may sometimes be too facile, almost overblown, but set against this is his ability to convey his sense of the Antarctic in vivid detail. He can also be very funny, albeit in an orotund Edwardian way - his descriptions of encounters with penguins are wonderfully humorous and affectionate.

Both with his camera and his pen Ponting provided excellent descriptions of other members of the expedition, including Scott, of course, but not just Scott. Ponting, an American, took a democratic interest in all his fellow-voyagers. For some though, what Ponting has to say about Scott may be the main incentive for reading the book. The introduction by the polar historian Roland Huntford suggests that Ponting thought of Scott as an incompetent naval gentleman. He held the same view of him as Huntford does, in other words. As Huntford sees it, Ponting, writing after Scott's death, covered up his faults as best he could, with his true opinion peeking through now and then. We do have to be aware that Ponting was writing about a dead hero and that this would naturally affect how he presented his memories. But I see no reason to doubt that he genuinely admired and liked the man he had known. The fact that he did not find him to be perfect, e.g. the delightful account of Scott's continually forgetting to take off the lens cap when Ponting was teaching him to use the camera, makes his portrait seem more real. It does not, to me at least, seem to be a veiled criticism of Scott as too scatter-brained to lead a party to the South Pole!

The Cooper Square reprint of *The Voyage of the Discovery* is actually a facsimile of a *de luxe* edition. With its wealth of illustrations and the text beautifully set out with wide margins and nice big print, generously spaced, *de luxe* it certainly is. But what counts most of all is Scott's actual words. Whatever else he may have been, Scott was a gifted writer.

As to his other abilities, museum curator Ross MacPhee says in his excellent introduction "Scott cannot be regarded as particularly incompetent or negligent when compared to many other Arctic and Antarctic explorers of the time." [I, xxv] Or, as Scott put it himself, writing to Sir J.M. Barrie as he lay dying, "I may not have proved a great explorer..." Given his fate one does not like to say that he was lucky in finding a career in Polar exploration but it undeniably provided him an outlet for his literary abilities. Scott's best subject was himself. It could even be said that to a certain extent he created himself by his writing. The unsympathetic have attacked him for this, considering that he was an average sort of man who presented himself as a hero. The more sympathetic might argue that that it is Scott's self-consciousness that makes him an important modern figure.

Be that as it may, if one wants to be critical of Scott, or simply wants to learn about him, there is more than enough to go on in his own writing. Here is the believer in naval protocol, the fussbudget and stickler for detail, the lover of dogs. Less well known is the humorist. At times the book reads like a polar version of that late-Victorian classic, Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat (Not to Mention the Dog)*. There is an hilarious account of an unintentionally hilarious performance of *The Ticket of Leave*. Scott was quite willing to poke fun for himself, as in his description of the effects of gorging after days of eating too little [II, 118] or his first trip with dogs [I, 270-271]: "I don't know that we had any very good reason, but we had never thought but that our dogs, when they got the chance, would be found straining at their traces with heads and tails held high. To see them now with both ends at the maximum depression was a severe shock to our inexperience." Admirers of Scott find that sort of thing endearing; the non-admirers gnash their teeth.

Charles Neider (1915-2001), author of *Edge of the World*, was an admirer of Scott and a man of many parts - novelist, expert on Mark

Twain, photographer. He had a great love for Antarctica and a deep knowledge of its human history. As the subtitle promises, this book combines the personal and historical and does so brilliantly. The format of the book is difficult to describe - saying that it is like an overstuffed duffle bag might give an idea. There is wonderful natural description, in addition to the photographs. There is a detailed account of Neider's trip to Antarctica in 1970-71, full of vivid and often humorous details about himself and the sailors and scientists he encountered. I was especially fond of the remark that the ubiquitous pin ups might be explained by a fear that the men would forget what a naked woman looked like! Interwoven with the personal narrative are excerpts from classics such as *The Voyage of the Discovery*, *The Worst Journey in the World* and Shackleton's *Heart of the Antarctic*. There is also a transcript of an interview conducted in 1973 with the Canadian, Sir Charles Wright, who had been one of the party who discovered the bodies of Scott and his companions. As well, there is much advice on photography in the Antarctic, a sort of update of Ponting, who did not have the advantage of being able to shoot from the cockpit of a helicopter.

Nieder was interested in how men behaved in situations of extreme stress. Fortunately (if that is the right word) for him, one of his experiences was to crash land in a helicopter on the slopes of Mount Erebus. It was twelve hours before they were rescued, more than long enough for Neider to find out how he and the young men with him behaved when facing the prospect of death by exposure. Here, as throughout the book, Neider writes with great candour.

In his interview Wright gave his views as to why Scott had not made a desperate attempt to reach the depot, despite the terrible weather. Why did they stay in their tent and wait for death? This puzzled Wright, who came to believe that Scott wanted to be sure that they - and his journals and letters and photos - would be found. Had they died in their tracks their

bodies would have been hopelessly lost. And nobody would ever know that they had reached the Pole or read what Scott had written. Wright seems to have been suggesting that at the end words were more important to Scott than life itself.

It is unlikely that anybody would suggest such a thing about Ernest Shackleton but nonetheless for him, as for Scott, it is words that have lasted. In their book, *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer*, Morrell and Capparell make explicit the idea of using biography as a guide to naming our own lives. From a crisply told account of the *Endurance* expedition (1914-1916) they draw out lessons in effective leadership. These are set out in bold and also summarized at the end of each chapter under headings such as "Shackleton's Way Of Getting The Group Through A Crisis," e.g. "Be patient. Sometimes the best course of action is to do nothing but watch and wait." [152] Various notables such as Richard Danzig, former U.S. Secretary of the Navy, and Apollo 13 commander James Lovell offer testimonies to what they have learned from Shackleton. Those of us in humbler walks of life can also ponder such striking notions as the importance of indulging the emotionally needy rather than following one's inclination to avoid them!

Apart from its potential usefulness for anyone who has to lead or work with others, the book is an illuminating way of coming to know Shackleton. His people skills, his "feminine" side, if you will, are seen as contributing as much to his success as a leader as his toughness and courage. *Shackleton's Way* would make a good present for anyone who wonders about the point of studying history.

One of the emotionally demanding people Shackleton had to deal with was Thomas Orde -Lees, reputed to have been the likely first item on the bill of fare had the men on Elephant Island been reduced to eating each other. His journals, unpublished at the time this book was written, are made good use of for their insights into Shackleton. An edition by John Thomson is

expected in early 2003. Something to look forward to and more grist for the never-ending discussion of polar heroes!

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George W. Hilton. *Lake Michigan Passenger Steamers*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002. xii + 364 pp., photographs, line drawings, deck plans, harbour plans, notes, appendices, index. US \$75, cloth; ISBN 0-8047-4240-5.

George W. Hilton, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of California and author of *The Cable Car in America* (1982), *American Narrow Gauge Railroads* (1990) and *Eastland: Legacy of the Titanic* (1995), has turned to a subject which has fascinated him from early youth: the cross-lake passenger steamships which graced the waters of Lake Michigan from about 1834 until 1970. The result is a comprehensive study of all the principal lines to carry passengers on the big lake, primarily between Chicago and Milwaukee to the smaller ports on the east side.

The book is written essentially as a reference work, and hence is divided into two parts. Part 1 begins with a geographic description of Lake Michigan, including the navigating hazards caused by ice and weather conditions and harbours located almost exclusively in river estuaries. The second chapter deals with early navigation, beginning with the pioneer paddler *Walk-in-the-Water* of 1818, up to 1863, plus the arrivals of the railroads and the not-very-successful attempt to form a cartel to regulate fares and prices in 1839. The third chapter discusses the different types of ships used (including schooners), plus advances in technology and the respective advantages and disadvantages of each type. The fourth chapter discusses the types of traffic that sustained the steamers, notably the fruit industry of southwestern Michigan and later the tourist and

recreation industries centred at such popular destinations as Holland and St. Joseph, Michigan, and notes the interactive roles of railroads and interurban trolley lines. The final chapter deals with the decline of the industry, including such factors as the La Follette Seamen's Act of 1915, which forced shipping companies to employ, as one of them put it, "three crews for two ships" (mainly to man lifeboats in emergencies), the effects of disasters such as the *Eastland* tragedy of 1915, the commandeering of ships by the American government during World War I, the advent of motorized land transport, and the desperate attempts of the last survivors to avoid the inevitable by merging during the late 1920s. By 1932 most of the Lake Michigan passenger ships were gone, although a few holdouts managed to survive as late as 1970.

Part 2 presents a separate corporate history of each of the ten principal lines on the lake. Although each chapter is named after a particular company, in fact each deals with all the lines that plied from a particular port: thus the Indiana Transportation Company chapter covers all the firms that operated out of Michigan City. The greatest of these was the Goodrich Transit Company, which plied primarily between Chicago and Grand Haven (and other routes) between 1856 and 1932. The histories are presented geographically, from south to north. Thus the book ends, rather abruptly, with the Hart Steamboat Line, which operated mainly around Green Bay, Wisconsin, until 1919.

The book is a timely addition to the marine lore of the Great Lakes. Apparently it is the first to deal extensively with most of the major lines that served the Lake Michigan communities. The author has consulted many of the surviving newspapers from the region (on which he relies heavily), and his training as an economist affords him numerous insights into the effects of the various forces that buffeted the boats in the course of their careers. For the scholar and the student of transportation management, this work is likely to prove a

definitive study of its subject.

For the general reader, the book poses some problems. Due to the enormous complexity of the subject-matter (notably the vast numbers of ships that served different lines under different names at different times), it becomes exceedingly difficult to keep track of the various vessels and their owners. It is rather disconcerting to read about the 1870s on one page, then move back to the 1840s on the next. The author's attempt to clarify things by describing general trends in the first part, and the various companies in the second, is handy for reference but makes the contents repetitious and disjointed. Although the author writes in a pleasant, erudite style, spiced with a little ironic humour, he has a tendency to repeat himself, sometimes within a single paragraph, and also to pack so many ideas into a paragraph that the reader is sometimes forced to go back to the beginning to remind himself of what the current subject is. Although the book is well illustrated with photographs (plus drawings of the early ships, and some ports), one wishes that there were *more* of them, since without them it is hard to form any clear impressions. But perhaps there are no likenesses of many of the ships available, or perhaps the cost of including them all would have made the volume too thick to sell.

The most disappointing feature of the book, however, is what it does *not* tell us. The author seems to presuppose that the reader is well acquainted with the Lake Michigan area, and hence he says very little about the historical evolution of the region, or the various towns and ports around the lake. A partial exception is the harbours from which the various shipping companies operated (most of which are diagrammed with good maps), but even so we hear too little about such places as Grand Haven, St. Joseph or Michigan City to form much of an impression of them (except for their dockyard areas). Seldom are we told what the population of a given place was at any time. Benton Harbor and St. Joseph are called the Twin Cities, but were they really city-sized? How did they compare with Chicago? We are not informed.

Similarly, we are told that Holland and St. Joseph became popular resort centers, but we are left to imagine what their attractions were like.

The author also assumes that the reader is quite familiar with marine terminology (what is a "bustle" or a "guard"?). Similarly, though we learn a lot about shipping companies, we hear relatively little about the men who founded them. Nor do we hear much about the ships themselves: Many are mentioned, but often without much information as to size or appearance or eventual disposition. A few like the *Christopher Columbus* get more attention, but mainly because of their uniqueness: the *Columbus* was the only whaleback passenger ship ever built. Those who want more must flip to the registration data in the appendices. The result is that the only ships that make much of an impression are those portrayed with pictures. We hear a certain amount about the numbers of passengers or quantities of cargo they could carry, but we are never given any idea of what a cruise on Lake Michigan was like (although the author took trips on the *Theodore Roosevelt* in his youth). Sometimes the pictures do not follow the text very closely: we hear of the *Eastland* disaster several times, but we do not find a photo of the *Eastland* until Page 228. Also, the dust jacket of the book is uninspiring: it might sell better with something brighter.

The most frustrating thing about the book is its failure to provide good maps, except of various ports. Near the beginning we are offered a chart of Lake Michigan, which has been scaled down so much as to be nearly illegible. Buried in the text is a second map of the various ports. Those are all. As a consequence, a lot of space is taken up with descriptions of the various railroad and shipping routes, with the result that the uninitiated reader really needs a good historical atlas to figure them out. Surely a historian owes his reader something more.

Despite its drawbacks, *Lake Michigan Passenger Steamers* provides a wealth of well-researched and well-organized information, along with scores of fine pictures and deck

plans. The book is a must for all those interested in the era of passenger shipping on the Great Lakes.

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Peter T. Haydon (ed.). *Naval Challenges and Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region*. "Niobe Papers;" Halifax, NS: Maritime Affairs, 1999. ix + 85 pp., maps, figures, bibliography. ISBN 0-9698343-7-3.

This volume of the well known *Niobe Papers* provides both a concise and thorough review of the challenges that lie ahead for those who must define the maritime and naval policies that will best serve Canada as a member of the Asia-Pacific region. The editor has created a very balanced and informative document by drawing on the experience of recognized Canadian maritime strategists, senior naval officers, analysts and academics. The individual essays have been chosen in order to look at the strategic environment of the region from different perspectives. The reader is presented with discussion that ranges from the mechanics of allied military cooperation, to the detailed analysis of the main western Pacific naval powers such as Japan and China. As well, the collection emphasizes the important influence of economic development and emerging international trade on the definition of Canadian maritime strategy. The complexity of the region becomes clear in the diversity of topics discussed in this essay collection.

The volume describes how Canada has generally followed an activity-based deployment of naval forces in the Pacific for designated international exercises rather than policy-based on-going operations. In recent years our ships have undertaken operations in support of USN carrier battlegroups and also various trade missions but have not operated in support of any consistent and clearly designated strategic

rational. To this end the essay collection invites the Canadian security community first to establish a defined maritime Pacific policy and thereafter to use this to manage our national naval presence in the region.

The sole criticism of the collection that must be offered is the presence of the essay dealing with Canada's north. It is clearly understood that the western Canadian arctic is a Pacific domain, however, the issues that are raised are not well linked to the general discussion of the volume.

In general the majority of the volume makes a solid contribution to Pacific maritime studies in Canada, an area that has not seen much public attention. However, other areas that could be included in future discussion are the impact of a Canadian submarine presence in the Pacific. As well, it would be valuable to discuss the effects that continued illegal immigration by sea into Canada might have on our maritime policy for the region. Further, the requirement for Canada's navy to cooperate in the development of a seabased theatre missile defence capability would deserve attention. Finally, the vast nature of this oceanic region should be considered in any future discussion about Canadian naval sealift capabilities.

This edited collection makes a very valuable contribution to the discussion of Canada's future Pacific maritime policy. By fusing the experience of respected civilian authors and senior naval officers, the volume presents many important points that must be considered in the future. This essay collection should serve to stimulate informed discussion as Canada continues to develop a Pacific policy that will allow it to make a meaningful contribution to the security and prosperity of this immense and diverse maritime region.

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Spencer C. Tucker, (ed). *Naval Warfare: An International Encyclopedia*, assoc. eds. John C. Fredericson ... *et al*, introduction by James C. Bradford. 3 volumes. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2002. xlvii + 1231 pp., maps, illustrations, photographs. \$US 295.00, cloth ; ISBN 1-57607-219-3.

Handbooks and encyclopaedias dealing with a multitude of topics are currently rolling off the presses at a great rate. One dealing with naval warfare was bound to appear. *Naval Warfare: an International Encyclopedia* is intended to meet a growing demand for quick reference works by busy people. This work is not an encyclopaedia of seafaring. *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, Peter Kemp's well known book, is safe. Indeed, the work under review is greatly indebted to it.

Spencer Tucker, John Biggs Professor of Military History at the Virginia Military Institute, is a serious student of military history and a well published scholar and editor. This latest work is likely an outgrowth of his *Handbook of 19th Century Naval Warfare* which appeared in 2000. But though he and his associate editors have largely confined themselves to their topic, the finished result is not entirely successful. But how does one review an encyclopaedia? The question whether there is a need for this encyclopaedia is unfair? It is hard to know if it meets a perceived need; only the market will tell. Most entries are good; some are fair to middling; and a few leave something or much to be desired. How to give a balanced, fair assessment remains? This reviewer turned every page and read many entries; in the long run, any review of an encyclopaedia is probably made with prejudice. Would I consult this work for a brief synopsis of the Atlantic Slave Trade? Probably not; but the synopsis of the Cold War was useful. Entries on prominent explorers, discovery, nautical archaeology and naval fiction are included, but the encyclopaedia concentrates on naval warfare. The bulk of the entries treat prominent naval commanders, naval innovators, inventors and educators from all places and ages.

Coverage spans two and a half millennia from the galley warfare of the Greeks to the American fleet in the Persian Gulf today, but the twentieth century is the encyclopaedia's chief focus. Entries on famous warships and ship types and classes also abound as do others concerning weapons and weapon systems, and sea actions and battles, everything from Actium to Zeebrugge. These convey the chief substance of the work. They are interesting, useful and handily packaged, though unexceptional. Longer entries about Convoy Systems, Naval Architecture, Naval Medicine and Submarine Warfare are especially helpful.

Aside from some confusion over the date of Confederation, the entry for Canada, Navy, is useful, but Canadians may be startled to discover that the entry for Corvettes (Ship Type) devotes as much space (5 lines) to the warship *General Pike*, launched in 1813, as it does to the most ubiquitous warship on the North Atlantic during World War II. Nowhere is there mention that Canada built more than 130 and Great Britain more than 100 of these vessels. We read, instead, that the Italian navy still refers to its submarine hunters as corvettes. If you search, you will find the requisite information under the entry *Sackville*, (Canadian Navy Ship, 1941).

As might be expected in a work that is American produced and directed towards the American market, the entries are heavily American in orientation. But even so, some entries are surprising. Take, for example, the entry on Aviation, Naval. While it is true that officers of USN made aviation history by flying the first aircraft, naval flying boat NC 4, across the Atlantic Ocean, there is no mention of the fact that they stopped on the way. The honour for the first non-stop transatlantic flight remains with Sir Arthur Whitten Brown and Sir John Alcock, D.S.C. The absence of any mention of the work of Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN, on the bubble sextant which contributed so much to improve the accuracy of astral navigation and safety over great ocean distances in this entry or in the biography of the aerial pioneer is more surprising,

There are other problems. There are two entries for Vera Cruz, but neither deals with the sacking of the city by pirates in 1684. The entry for Cartagena deals with Captain Sir Charles Wagar's attack on some of the ships of the Spanish flota in 1708 outside the city, but contains no mention of the French capture and sacking of the city eleven years before. The entry for the Seven Years' War is simply inadequate. The content of some entries, like the one on Buccaneers, is debatable at best. Other entries omit vital facts. The entry on Higgins Boats mentions the difficulties encountered by A.J. Higgins's in the face of US naval planners' favouritism of "the big eastern shipyards," but it does not indicate the location of Higgins Industries. The entry for PT Boat (U.S. Navy 1938-1946) yielded the desired information, New Orleans. The entry for Barque (Ship Type) notes that the aftermast on barques is always fore-and-aft rigged, but offers no explanation why this was a useful feature on some sailing ships. Perhaps the reason may be found by reading *Moby Dick*. There are many entries for ship types, but Destroyers, Tribal Class, is not included. Perhaps I am being unfair; entries for trimmer, scotch boiler, greaser and donkeyman are all missing from Kemp's, *Companion*.

Naval Warfare contains nearly 1,600 entries. It is accompanied by a select bibliography, glossary of terms, list of contributors and a very detailed index. The text, presented in double-column pages is clear and easy to read; no single volume is too heavy to handle. All entries are generously cross-referenced and accompanied by brief bibliographies. Presentation of the complete table of contents and the eleven area maps in the front matter of each volume is a great convenience. In brief, the production values are excellent. Despite some difficulties, *Naval Warfare* provides a ready, comprehensive reference tool on a broad range of naval warfare topics. While pricy for personal use, it will be a useful addition to research libraries.

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Andrew Norman. *HMS Hood: Pride of the Royal Navy*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. 2001. xvi +160 pp., photographs, maps, chart, bibliography, index. \$26.95; ISBN 0-8117-0789-x.

The 1941 cruise of the *Bismarck* and her consort the *Prinz Eugen*, the sinking of the *Hood* and the destruction of the *Bismarck* have long fascinated naval professionals and general readers alike. The entire series of events took only a week, from *Bismarck*'s sortie from Dobric Fjord near Bergen, Norway, on 21 May, until three torpedoes delivered the coup de grace to the crippled German battleship the night of 27 May. Since then the events of that brief cruise have inspired more books than anyone could read in twice the time *Bismarck* prowled the Atlantic.

This is one of the best of those books. In it Norman traces the career of *Hood* from her launching in 1916 to the outbreak of World War II, describes her shadowing of *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen*, and then analyses her loss, an event viewed by many Englishmen as a national disaster. In the first section of the book, Norman draws on his skills as a biographer (of T. E. Lawrence, an individual as much imbued with legend as the *Hood*), weaving together the recollections of six members of her crew to describe life aboard the *Hood* and the battle cruiser's globe encircling cruise of 1923-1924. The middle third of the book describes, again from the perspective of several participants, the interception and battle with the *Bismarck*, and the final section examines the findings of the boards of enquiry empanelled to determine the cause of the sinking of the *Hood* and the judgments of historians.

While the first two-thirds of the book provide interesting perspectives from which to view well-known events, it is the closing section that is most engaging. In it Norman rejects the verdict of the official boards which concluded that a 15-inch shell penetrated *Hoods* armour, struck one of her magazines, and that their explosion was fatal. He rejects other theories as well, including that a fire, starting on the boat-

deck or among above-deck torpedoes, caused the destruction, and that an enemy torpedo penetrated *Hoods* hull underwater. He admits that only samples of the steel used to construct *Hood* can lay to rest speculation that her loss resulted from the use of inferior-quality steel in her construction, but he believes this is highly unlikely. Instead Norman makes a convincing case that it is much more likely *Hood* was destroyed when a high-explosive shell from a plunging salvo fired by *Prinze Eugen* went down one of *Hoods* funnels, exploded in one of her boilers, and ignited fuel oil. Future historians will certainly have to take into consideration the case presented by Norman, but no conclusive explanation for the sinking of *Hood* is likely until the remains, discovered on the seabed of the Denmark Strait in July 2001, are thoroughly examined. Their location 2,800 meters below the surface makes such a study unlikely in the near future.

James C. Bradford
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Ken McGoogan. *Fatal Passage: The Untold Story of John Rae, the Arctic Adventurer Who Discovered the Fate of Franklin*. Toronto: HarperFlamingo Canada, 2001. 328 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$34.00 cloth; ISBN 0-00-200054-7.

John Rae is the quintessential Canadian hero - his achievements are largely unknown despite some important scholarship Over the last half century. He was the subject of a special museum exhibit, "No Ordinary Journey," put on by the National Museums of Scotland with an accompanying volume published by McGill-Queen's Press. A 1985 biography by R.L. Richards, published by Caedmon of Whitby, a small publisher in Yorkshire, and in 1953 a volume of his arctic correspondence edited by the late Professor E.E. Rich and published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society. While Rae's story may not literally be "untold" it is certainly

unknown to most, and is deserving of this popular biography.

Rae was born 30 September 1813 near Stromness on Orkney and as a youth had an outdoor life full of activity that included sailing, fishing and shooting. He qualified as a medical doctor and then joined the Hudson's Bay Company. His first ten years in their service were spent at Moose Factory. There he acquired a love for the north and learned from the natives how to travel and live in it. His outdoor skills enabled him to take a party of seven men on a journey of thirteen months with rations for only three, confident they would be able to live off the arctic land. His style of travel could not have been more different from that of Franklin's party, some of whose remains were identified by their crested family silver and similar impedimenta.

McGoogan, described on the dust-jacket as a novelist, writer and teacher, has written a straight-forward narrative of Rae's life and achievement. This should be the discovery of the final segment of the northwest passage. In doing so he also came across artefacts which clearly pointed to the final fate of Sir John Franklin's expedition. The incontrovertible evidence of cannibalism did not sit well with the muscular Christianity and racial superiority of Victorian England. His report to the Admiralty was forwarded, unedited, by them to *The Times* which published it. Rae, whose native style of travel and acceptance of their reports were viewed with disdain, became the subject of widespread disapprobation and his evidence was widely rejected. He spent much of the remainder of his life fighting to establish his rightful place amongst arctic explorers.

McGoogan wants to make Rae a hero, and to do so it is necessary to have villain. Lady Franklin, the explorer's widow, and those who supported her, such as Charles Dickens, are cast in that role. One might be tempted to say that this is overdrawn, the work of a novelist. Certainly there is some purple language, such as describing boats as "packed to the gunwhales" (sic, p55); Lady Franklin is (irritatingly) given the style Lady Jane Franklin, incorrectly making

her the daughter of a senior peer rather than the wife of a knight, and Rae's manuscript autobiography (at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, England) is grandly and wrongly described as a palimpsest. These are all minor errors at which a professional historian might sniff, and use to support a contention that a novelist also overplayed the hero/villain theme. However, this characterization will be recognized by those who have had the opportunity to read the manuscript as an accurate reflection of Rae's own view.

McGoogan's biography includes some important detective work. He has tracked down the fate of the lost part of the autobiography. His emphasis both on the role of Lady Franklin fighting the proper recognition of Rae and on his discovery of Rae Strait are also new. This popular biography deserves a wide readership. It is unfortunate that the lack of footnotes, particularly for the Lady Franklin debate, will not offer great assistance to future scholars.

Rae's life and work were appreciated by his fellow Orkneymen. He was buried in the kirkyard of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall in 1893. In the east ambulatory of the Chancel there is a magnificent tabletop monument to him, paid for by public subscription. (It is amusing to note that opposite him, in the west ambulatory, is a similar monument to the great African explorer, Mungo Park.) It is only to be hoped that McGoogan's biography will help raise Rae to a similar level of appreciation by a wider audience.

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