Throughout his account, for security reasons McLaren is somewhat vague as to his exact course; thus the somewhat cryptic phrase 'the contour of interest' recurs quite frequently. For those interested in such things, the technical details of the submarine are covered in considerable detail. However this reviewer found the excessive use of abbreviations somewhat tedious and confusing; some 31 abbreviations are listed in a glossary. Many of then seem superfluous, for example, it is not necessary to refer to an iceberg detector as an IBD.

Previous exploration of these Arctic waters is covered adequately. However, McLaren has relied on only two sources, namely Holland (1994) and McCannon (1998). While these are excellent secondary sources, it would be useful to have reference to some primary sources, all of which would have been easily accessible to McLaren while working on his MPhil degree at the Scott Polar Research Institute. The total absence of Russian-language sources is particularly noticeable.

The title of the book, and the recurring comment that these waters were unexplored, are also troubling and misleading. While the detailed bathymetry of the Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi seas was undoubtedly unknown to the United States Navy in 1970, the characterisation of these waters and of their ice-cover as 'unknown' does a great disservice to the scientists and men of the USS *Jeannette* (1879–1881), of Fridtjof Nansen's *Fram* (1893–1896), of Baron Toll's *Zarya* (1900–1902), of the Tsarist Russian icebreakers *Taymyr* and *Vaygach* (1910–1915), and of the Soviet research vessel *Sadko*, which along with *Georgiy Sedov* and *Malygin* drifted around the Laptev Sea, beset in the ice for the winter of 1937–1938. Soundings, water sampling, and ice-observations were carried out in these waters on a regular basis by all of these vessels.

The number of mistakes in the spelling of place-names is rather unexpected. Thus, 'More Lateryka' (page 132) should be 'More Laptevykh'; 'Lotel'ny Island' should be 'Kotel'ny Island'; and 'Maly Lyakhov Stolbovoy Island' is in fact two islands, 'Maly Lyakhov' and 'Stolbovoy'. And the description of the trans-polar drift as having an 'easterly set' (page 165) is not one to be expected in a book dealing primarily with navigation. (William Barr, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary AB T2N 1N4, Canada.)

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ICE CAPTAIN: THE LIFE OF J.R. STENHOUSE. Stephen Haddelsey. 2008. Stroud: The History Press. xviii + 238 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-0-7509-4348-2. £20.00.

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In recent years, much attention has been drawn to the long-neglected Ross Sea party of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (ITAE) (McElrea and Harrowfield 2004; Tyler-Lewis 2006). As most readers of this journal know, this part of the expedition was tasked with laying supply depots across the Great Ice Barrier to the base of the Beardmore Glacier, so that food and fuel could be picked up *en route* by Shackleton's transcontinental party. But just as events failed to go according to plan on Weddell Sea side of Antarctica, they went awry in the Ross Sea as well. On 6 May 1915, while 10 members of the expedition, including Æneas Mackintosh, the commander of the Ross Sea operation, were ashore, the expedition ship *Aurora*, ice-bound off Cape Evans, was caught in an intense blizzard. The wires and chains mooring her to the shore snapped with the sound of gunshots, and *Aurora*, still helplessly enclosed in a vast slab of ice, was blown out to sea.

Previous accounts of the Ross Sea part of the expedition have concentrated on the grim conditions and back-breaking labour that faced the 10 marooned men, three of whom, including Mackintosh, died before they could be rescued in 1917. But in *Ice captain*, the focus is rather on the dramatic story of what happened to those still aboard the ship as it drifted aimlessly north and west for the next 312 days. The figure who truly stood out in the midst of that drama was the man who had been hired as chief officer of *Aurora*, but who, with Mackintosh ashore, became her *de facto* captain: J.R. Stenhouse. It was Stenhouse who held the crew together during their long imprisonment in the pack ice, and who then guided the broken ship, with no anchors, a jury rudder replacing the original damaged one, and running out of fuel, across some of the most terrible seas in the world to Port Chalmers, New Zealand. And it was Stenhouse who then immediately began preparations for a relief expedition for his abandoned comrades, an effort that would involve almost unprecedented political wrangling with three different governments and numerous individuals before it could finally get under way. When it did, Stenhouse somehow had been left behind.

Remarkably, this series of events was only one of many dangerous and thrilling episodes in the life of Stenhouse, a man who, despite a raft of rare seafaring accomplishments, has remained relatively unknown. Now his story comes to light in the sure hands of Stephen Haddelsey, who only three years ago gave us a biography of Frank Bickerton, another little-known Antarctic personality who went on to live a life of high adventure (Haddelsey 2005). And like Bickerton, Stenhouse seemed to experience one exhilarating job or incident after another, leaving the reader to wonder if anyone else could have been exposed to so many, and such a variety of, encounters with history.

Born in 1887, Stenhouse went to sea at the age of 16, and like so many of his generation fell in love with the great sailing ships even as their era came to a close. He reached manhood in the tough, physical environment aboard ships, having loaded nitrates in Chile, coconuts and corals in the South Pacific, and timber in Vancouver,

not to mention experiencing the crime and licentiousness that went along with the saloons, brothels, and dangerous back streets of San Francisco's 'Barbary Coast.'

But even as he rose through the ranks aboard ship, Stenhouse maintained a fascination with the polar regions, which he had first gained at a young age reading Fridtjof Nansen's classic expedition account, *Farthest north*. Therefore, when he saw an opportunity to explore the Antarctic himself, Stenhouse wasted no time in applying for a position on Shackleton's ITAE. He was turned down, but persisted, and after his second interview with Shackleton found himself chief officer on *Aurora*, which would eventually prove his first command.

After the remaining members of the Ross Sea party were rescued in January 1917 by *Aurora* under the command of John King Davis, Stenhouse, like so many of his contemporaries, rushed to join the war effort as the Great War dragged along. As was his new friend Frank Worsley, Stenhouse initially was assigned to the fleet of Q-ships, or 'mystery ships,' which were designed as armed decoys in the struggle against German U-boats. But it was not long before both Worsley and Stenhouse were reassigned to the far north of Russia, where British, French, and American troops were sent to try to keep open an eastern front against the Germans, who had recently signed a peace treaty with the new Bolshevik government in Russia. At the end of the war, the allied governments decided to continue the front in an effort to resist Lenin's government, which had quickly become an avowed enemy of the capitalist west. Working out of Murmansk, Stenhouse initially oversaw the attempts to establish a safe rail network between that city and Archangel. But he was thereafter placed in command of a small flotilla of gunboats that was designed to work on the rivers and lakes of the region in support of the main allied military efforts against the Bolsheviks.

With his demobilisation in January 1920, Stenhouse returned to England, where he developed a friendship with Mackintosh's widow Gladys. They were married in 1923, the same year that Stenhouse was named to command RRS *Discovery* in a series of oceanographic, hydrographic, and biological studies. Known as the Discovery expeditions, these cruises were made under Stenhouse in 1925–1927, primarily in the region of South Georgia and the South Shetland Islands, and they produced extremely valuable scientific data.

Through the 1930s, Stenhouse tried his hand at a number of different jobs, all the while hoping that he might participate in another Antarctic expedition. He even unsuccessfully tried to launch a pioneering voyage aimed at Antarctic tourism. But the end of the decade saw him back doing what he really loved: commanding ships. At the start of the second world war, he was placed in command of a motley flotilla of tugs to patrol the Thames estuary and keep out German submarines and other raiders. Following the loss of his main vessel to a mine, he was commended for his gallantry in working to save his men. Shortly thereafter, he was reassigned to Massawa in Eritrea. A port of great significance, Massawa had been taken by the allies, but not before the Italian forces had attempted to permanently close it by ruining the docks and sinking many ships *in situ*. Stenhouse was to be in charge of the salvage operation that needed to be undertaken before the port could again be functional. It was while returning to Massawa from a journey to Aden that the ship on which Stenhouse was traveling struck a mine and sank. Along with many others, Stenhouse's body was never found.

As was his previous biography of Frank Bickerton, *Ice captain* is a valuable addition to the polar literature, in that it is the first study of a significant, but little-known, figure in the exploration of the Antarctic. It also goes into excellent detail about the initial Discovery expeditions, which is a great bonus, as many readers will not be as familiar with those voyages as with, say, those of the ITAE. There are a few minor errors; Scott's hut at Cape Evans, for example, was not built in December 1911 (page 36), by that time Scott was approaching the South Pole, but in the first half of January of that year. But such complaints are niggles compared to the great value of the book in taking the reader through the life of a most fascinating, and until now forgotten, hero of Antarctic exploration. The Antarctic community owes a debt of gratitude to Stephen Haddelsey for bringing Stenhouse back to life, and doing it in such a thoroughly enjoyable manner. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

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THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS: LAND-SEA INTERACTIONS IN A CHANGING ECOSYSTEM.

Steven L. Chown and Pierre W. Froneman (Editors). 2008. Stellenbosch: Sun Press. xvi + 470 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-920109-85-1. 300 Rand; £20.00; US$37.00.
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The sub-Antarctic islands that encircle the continent are tiny in area, yet have proved fascinating for scientists from the days of the Challenger expedition onwards. Each one is different in its geology and age and, although all are species poor, the similarities and differences in their floras and faunas provide test cases for hypotheses on colonisation, speciation, competition, and the potential to understand and quantify land-sea interactions.

The Prince Edward Islands were ceded to South Africa by the UK and formally annexed by a party from HMSAS *Transvaal* in 1947. The South African