

College in 1989.

The author, like Shackleton, was educated at Dulwich College, southeast London. It was while he was preparing a book on old boys of the school that he grew interested in Shackleton and subsequently in 1994 founded the James Caird Society, based at the College. Its aims are to bring to the notice of the general public all aspects of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions and related aspects of Antarctic history.

The first part of this well-illustrated book tells the story of the *Endurance* expedition of 1914–1917. Part two is entitled 'The James Caird in retirement.' It sets out the lesser known years of the boat's 'biography' after her return to England, following the great boat journey. There is an appendix about the construction of *James Caird*, plus short biographies of those who sailed in her, Worsley's log of the boat journey, and a chronology. The illustrations came mainly from the college archives, but include four little-known paintings by the expedition artist, George Marston, which were sold at Christie's in 1996.

There is much of interest in the book, and the tale is well told. One is full of admiration for the octogenarian author, who wryly acknowledges his wife's forbearance in 'putting up with a husband who in all reason, should have given up these activities years ago.' There are a few minor errors: the stones on which the boat lies came originally from Cape Rosa, South Georgia, but were supplemented by a lorry-load from Aberystwyth on the advice of Dr R.J. Adie of the British Antarctic Survey (page 109); and Captain Cook, alas, had no direct descendants (page 126). Mention might have been made of the vessel in which Shackleton began his polar career (*Discovery*) being sent by the Admiralty as a relief ship to rescue his men. All in all, however, this is a most welcome and heart-warming addition to polar literature. It is pleasant to see the old tradition revived of listing the subscribers to the publication at the end. (Ann Savours (Mrs Shirley), Little Bridge Place, Bridge, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5LG.)

FEDOR PETROVICH LITKE. A.I. Alekseev. Translated by Serge LeComte. Edited by K.L. Arndt. 1996. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xvii + 262 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-912006-86-2. \$US18.00.

Despite the distinguished efforts of such scholars as William Barr of the University of Saskatchewan, the work of Russian explorers in the Arctic is not nearly as well known in anglophone countries as it should be. Nor is there sufficient knowledge of the institutional framework that promoted and supported the work of the explorers. Therefore this publication, a biography of a central figure in Russian scientific circles, and also an important explorer in his own right, is to be welcomed. The original biography was published in the Soviet Union in 1970, and the current translation by Serge LeComte is part of the University of Alaska Rasmuson Library Historical Translation Series.

Litke (in German, Friedrich Benjamin Lütke), who was born in 1797 into a family of 'Russianized Germans,' participated in several expeditions, most of which have

polar interest. Between 1817 and 1819 he was on board *Kamchatka* under V.M. Golovnin, and in 1821–1824 he undertook four voyages to Novaya Zemlya. This was his first experience in command. He is perhaps best known for his circumnavigation of the globe in *Seniavin* between 1826 and 1829. This expedition set new standards in the practice of hydrography and surveying in the Russian Navy. He then, and somewhat against his will, became a courtier, having been selected as tutor to the Grand Duke Constantine, aged five, who was, upon reaching his majority, to become head of the navy. This appears to have been an almost intolerable duty, involving attendance on his young charge for long periods of time, 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Litke eventually became a friend of the Grand Duke and received a number of honours and promotions, in part due to his work in this respect.

In parallel to this, Litke's rise in Russian scientific circles was rapid. He was active in the Academy of Sciences and was instrumental in the founding of the Russian Geographical Society. He continued to interest himself in science, maintaining a large correspondence with such men as Wrangell and von Baer until his death in 1882.

Alekseev's work, which is still the only biography of Litke, is typical of those published at the time in the Soviet Union. There are several inaccuracies relating to Litke himself and many textual inconsistencies. It is seriously outdated. Moreover, there is a bias running through the entire work. To take some trivial examples, there are several references to the Battle of Navarino, but from the text one might conclude that this was an exclusively Russian victory. There is no mention of the allies in this respect. Secondly, the allied, not merely the 'English,' capture of Bomarsund in 1854 was a great deal easier than is implied. Furthermore, there is virtually no comment on the complete inactivity of the Russian Navy in the Baltic and Black seas in 1854 and 1855. On page 230, it is stated that Joseph Wiggins' voyage through the Kara Sea in 1874 was at the expense of the well known Russian entrepreneur M.K. Sidorov. This is simply wrong: Wiggins paid for it himself.

Despite its deficiencies, the work deserves better treatment than it has received from the editor and translator. To deal with the latter first, the translated text is fairly straightforward, but there are some jarring expressions that would irritate most readers. For example, the reader is informed that the young Litke 'could already decipher quite a bit' (page 4), that he 'began to hang around with officers' (page 11), that the brig, or 'big' (page 50) had 'gotten stuck' (page 51), that the Russians were greeted by 'a friendly and sensible bunch of islanders' (page 112), and so on. The editing is equally poor. None of the factual errors in the original text are the subject of correction, although a few typographical errors are, and there is little attempt to clarify the inconsistencies in the text, which would be the least one might expect of an editor, no matter how little he or she desired to interfere. In particular there is confusion in the use of place names. While the reader is informed, for example, that Gangut is Hangö and that Smyrna is Izmir,

this courtesy is not accorded to Tallinn or to Suomenlinna. There is also a muddle in the use of the different calendars, which the editor only attempts to clarify in the case of the chapter on the *Seniavin* voyage and that entitled 'The sea calls.' In other sections, dates are sometimes given according to both calendars, but more usually only in one, with no indication which. On page 198, referring to the actions at Petropavlovsk in 1854, a letter sent to Litke on 4 September, commenting on the doings of his son, states that 'On the twentieth and twenty-ninth,' not mentioning a month. As the two actions at Petropavlovsk were not that time distance apart, these dates must be wrong even if the quotation is complete. The translated text is here, as throughout, a faithful reproduction of Alekseev's, even where it is patently absurd.

There is no editorial introduction, surely essential, which might, for example, provide information on the confusing rank structure of the Russian Navy and other background material. The editor confines herself to additional footnotes, and, as there are fewer than 20 of these in the entire book, it cannot be said that her work was irksome.

The illustrations also betray a lack of care in compilation. They are selected from those that appeared in the original volume, with some additions. Curiously, the editor has chosen no fewer than four pictures of the pendulum apparatus used by Litke, and it seems equally superfluous to have two virtually identical portraits of the subject of the book (pages xii and 215). The maps are strictly as in the original; the Russian place names have not been transliterated to assist a reader unfamiliar with the language.

All in all, a remarkably slipshod effort and one that lowers the standards of the series as a whole. In this context it is interesting to compare the original volume with the translation, as exemplars of the cultures from which they came. The Russian book is substantially bound, in attractive colours and with embossed lettering. The paper is poor and the illustrations badly reproduced. The current volume is clearly printed but the cover is grey and unattractive. Of course, in the original, cost was hardly a factor in the production, whereas in that of the translation, cost considerations were obviously important.

Despite this negative review it should be repeated that this book is most welcome as filling a gap in the literature in English relating to Russian exploration. It is a pity that the opportunity was not taken to provide a properly edited text with appropriate corrections and clarifications, which

would have made the book more useful. (Ian R. Stone, Tartu University, Ulikooli 18, Tartu, Estonia.)

BRIEF REVIEW

EXPLORE ANTARCTICA. Louise Crossley. 1995. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 112 p, illustrated, hard cover (ISBN 0-521-49591-1) and soft cover (ISBN 0-521-45566-9). £19.95 (soft cover).

Hardback and paperback editions of Louise Crossley's *Explore Antarctica* were published simultaneously in 1995, produced by the Australian Antarctic Foundation and the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (AUSLIG). Not surprisingly, the book has an austral lean, and the view of Antarctica presented is very much in the vein of Australia's post-CRAMRA policies, particularly evident in the sections on managing Antarctica and issues for the future. However, this does not detract from the book, which is well researched, attractively presented, and imaginative. It is aimed primarily at school children, although it will appeal to adults who want basic information on the southern continent, including geological history and structure, ice and climate, discovery and exploration, ecosystems, human adaptations, science, politics, and environmentalism. Each spread covers a different topic, each one generously illustrated with clear colour diagrams and photographs.

Particularly well-designed is the section on the ice sheet, with short paragraphs designed to answer simple questions such as how deep is the ice, how is it measured, and how fast does it accumulate. Maps of mean annual snow accumulation and Antarctic ice-sheet thickness are provided, along with an ice radar profile and micrographs of slices of an ice core. The section entitled 'Images of Antarctica' contains part of Coleridge's *The rime of the ancient mariner* and examples of illustrations by Edward Wilson, Herbert Ponting, Gustave Dore, and the contemporary artists Sidney Nolan and Jan Senberg, all selected to demonstrate different ways in which Antarctica has been presented to the public. The Australian angle is seen in the section '50 years of ANARE,' which describes the origin of the programme, Philip Law's contributions, and Australia's active stations.

This is not a volume that will educate the hardened polar specialist, but that is not the audience at which the book is aimed. As a basic introduction to the south, the book is excellent, and would be a valuable addition to any public or school library.