

turned filmmaker whose previous works are not best noted for their *vérité*. It is hard to take the portrayal of Eskimos seriously in a film where the invincible Seagal rides around in buckskins like a bad imitation of Daniel Boone and Clint Eastwood's 'The man with no name' rolled into one.

Such misrepresentations, though, are becoming a little too hackneyed, not to mention damaging, crass, and overtly misleading. In the face of such a cinema, where created myth, it would seem, is still preferable to any semblance of actuality, Fienup-Riordan's achievement is her recognition that differing cultural perceptions not only exist, but co-exist, in a way that should be illuminating for all concerned. Her careful exposure of the processes through which naive westerners have been taught by film to perceive Eskimos, is worthy of our attention. (Ian Higginson, Centre for History and Cultural Studies of Science, Rutherford College, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.)

THE ICE-AGE HISTORY OF NATIONAL PARKS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. Scott A. Elias. 1996. Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. ix + 170 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-56098-524-0. £13.25.

This book is the second in a series that details the Quaternary history of several regions within the United States (the first being *The ice-age history of Alaskan national parks*). The aim of the series is to educate the non-specialist reader in aspects of Quaternary science that are of specific relevance to the areas in question. In doing this, it is hoped that the reader will gain an awareness of the natural world in these places. This book is not intended to be used for textbook purposes, nor is it sufficient in terms of field examples to be regarded as a tour guide. However, it provides an interesting overview, written in an informal manner, of the physical processes that acted to shape the landscape, and of the biological issues that relate to the evolution of the modern environment in the national parks of the Rocky Mountains.

The book is split into two sections. The first consists of an introduction to a number of subjects within Quaternary science that are useful, in terms of background knowledge, to the reader to understand the subjects discussed in section two. Information about Quaternary palaeontology and geochronological methods are presented in a way that assumes no previous knowledge of these topics. This section of the book is very similar to the comparable section in the first volume in the series and begs the question whether every book in this series will carry the same first section. In fairness, however, the two books published to date benefit from the inclusion, albeit duplicated, of a simple summary of science relating to the understanding of the last ice age.

Having presented the necessary background information, the book describes the ice-age history of each national park in the Rocky Mountains. It is written in a style that reads as though the author is giving a public lecture. As various stories unfold, there are often interesting tangen-

tial discussions that relate indirectly to the subject matter, but that are fascinating to read nonetheless. This feature of the book is a credit to Scott Elias, whose writing style I find to be thoroughly entertaining. A very useful glossary is provided as an appendix, which will help the lay-person in understanding the text. In addition, a number of publications are cited that give references for readers wishing to know more about the subject.

Readers of this book will acquire an appreciation of the formation of the geomorphology within these parks, and therefore will be educated about geological and glaciological processes that acted, during the past 1.7 million years, to create the dramatic scenery in these regions. The various methods of formation of the numerous lakes that exist in these regions are also discussed.

The text is well supplemented by many instructive diagrams and pictures. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed maps, which could have indicated the exact locations of some of the field examples, will disappoint those attempting to find the features described. The scope of the book does not end with the Earth sciences; Elias also includes discussion on the biological and ecological issues since the last ice age. In addition, he also indicates what is understood about the human and other animal inhabitants of these regions at around the end of the last glacial. In doing this, he describes the transition of the post-glacial world from 10,000 years ago to the present-day situation.

In summary, this book provides the reader with an awareness of the natural world within these unspoilt regions of the United States. Although this is not an academic book, it will be of much interest to visitors who wish to know about the formation and evolution of these majestic regions, and how the floral and faunal communities have dealt with the significant climate change that has occurred since the end of the last glaciation. (Martin J. Siegert, Centre for Glaciology, Institute of Earth Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3DB.)

SHACKLETON'S BOAT: THE STORY OF THE JAMES CAIRD. Harding McGregor Dunnett. 1996. Benenden (School Farm, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN174EU): Neville & Harding. x + 150 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-948028-02-5. £20.00.

The story of the epic voyage of *James Caird* from Elephant Island to South Georgia will be familiar to readers of *Polar Record*. However, that should encourage, rather than deter, them from buying this book. Not only is the journey of 1916 recounted, but, as Sir Vivian Fuchs writes in his foreword (page iv):

Here, for the first time, is the consecutive story of the *James Caird's* survival. Originally she was saved by the Norwegian whalers at South Georgia in 1916. The boat then arrived in Birkenhead in 1919. Thereafter the history of her travels is quite remarkable — Middlesex Hospital, then the Albert Hall, the roof of Selfridges, Ely Place in Frant, Kent, Dulwich College as a gift, the British Polar Exhibition, the National Maritime Museum; and so to her final resting place back at Dulwich

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,