

FOREWORD

The frontispiece of this issue is a photograph of Dr V. E. Fuchs, who has successfully organized and led the first party to cross the Antarctic continent. On 2 March the trans-continental party, accompanied by Sir Edmund Hillary, reached "Scott Base" at the end of the 99-day journey from "Shackleton". The Trans-Antarctic Expedition formally began in June 1955. At the end of the year the advance party, accompanied by Dr Fuchs, Sir Edmund and other members of the main party, sailed for Antarctica on the *Theron*. A site for the base on the Weddell Sea coast was chosen and the advance party built "Shackleton" during 1956. At the same time three members of the New Zealand party had visited the McMurdo Sound area with the United States Operation "Deep Freeze I" to select a site for the New Zealand base. The British main party arrived at "Shackleton" in January 1957 and the New Zealand party at the site of "Scott Base" the same month. In April "South Ice" was established about 300 miles south of "Shackleton", and manned during the winter by three scientists.

The New Zealand party began sledging activities in September and, having laid the required depots, Sir Edmund Hillary went on to reach the South Pole on 4 January 1958. The trans-continental party left "Shackleton" on 24 November 1957, reached the South Pole on 19 January 1958 and "Scott Base" on 3 March. The total distance travelled was about 2200 miles, and included an initial very difficult terrain. The expedition's scientific programme was maintained throughout the journey. Dr Fuchs has received a knighthood and the special gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society. The Society's Founder's medal has been awarded to Sir Edmund Hillary. We congratulate all who have been concerned in the planning, organization and execution of this expedition.

The Royal Geographical Society has also announced the award of the Patron's medal to Dr Paul A. Siple, a member of many United States Antarctic expeditions, and leader of the first I.G.Y. party to spend a year at the South Pole; the Back Grant to Monsieur B. Imbert, who is in charge of the French I.G.Y. Antarctic expeditions; and the Mrs Patrick Ness Award to Captain A. G. Bomford, R.E., chief surveyor of the South Georgia Survey, 1955-56.

We welcome Dr G. de Q. Robin, the new Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, who took up his appointment on 1 April.

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