

seen not as a disaster and to be pitied, but as a blessing and to be envied. The beliefs of many decades have been stood on their heads. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

BIOTAS MANUAL OF METHODS FOR ANTARCTIC TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER RESEARCH. David D. Wynn-Williams (editor). 1992. Cambridge: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. 271 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-948277-13-0. £10.00 or \$15.00 (US).

This manual of the BIOTAS (Biological Investigations of Terrestrial Antarctic Systems) programme gathers together details of techniques, equipment, suppliers, reagents, hardware, software, and other practical information for fieldworkers in polar terrestrial and freshwater ecology. It comprises 29 articles, ranging in length from one to 34 pages, covering topics such as 'Selection of research sites' (R.I. Lewis Smith), 'Airborne spores at high altitude: their collection and occurrence' (J. Lacey and H.A. McCartney), 'Media for isolating Antarctic yeasts' (H.S. Vishniac), 'Antarctic freshwater lakes: sampling and chemical analysis' (J.C. Ellis-Evans), and 'Assessment of environmental impacts' (R.D. Seppelt). In their introduction, Ron Lewis Smith and the editor point out the main functions of BIOTAS, and stress the need for accurate and detailed inventories of biota and environmental parameters and for assessing biological process rates in areas affected by both human activity and climate change. The manual encourages a unified approach by offering tested, often standardized procedures and recipes.

This is a timely offering, for the new Antarctic Treaty environmental protocol requires much in the way of baseline and monitoring studies. BIOTAS seeks to establish a network of individuals and groups of scientists involved in this kind of research, to encourage the establishment of monitoring sites, and, above all, to develop a simple, unified approach. Armed with this practically-oriented manual, almost any field worker may contribute something useful to the programme. The book is loose-bound, and all are encouraged to offer the editor new techniques for inclusion in later editions. Obtainable from the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB 2 1ER, and from British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET; the price includes postage and packing. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER).

BRIEF REVIEWS

SOUTHERN OCEAN CRUISING HANDBOOK. S. Poncet and J. Poncet. 1992. Stanley: published by the authors. 60 p, illustrated, soft cover. £3.50.

Cruising in the Southern Ocean? Certainly. Dozens of privately owned yachts head to the Antarctic each year,

some to spend the season there, a very few to overwinter in the ice. Many crews behave impeccably, but some break into refuge huts; steal food, fuel, and equipment; and leave doors and windows open to the weather. Sadly, the bums gain a bad name for the rest, inviting restrictive or even punitive legislation against this small-scale tourism. This little book, by the two best respected, most responsible, and most warmly regarded Antarctic yachters, is a guide to the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic coasts and islands — no substitute for good charts and sailing directions, but a wise, conservation-oriented summary, and enjoyable armchair reading into the bargain. Obtainable from the authors, Beaver Island, Falkland Islands, or from British Antarctic Survey, NERC, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET UK. Include £3.50 for airmail or £1.00 for sea mail.

THE ANCIENT ART OF NORTHERN ASIA. A.I. Martynov. 1991. Translated by D.B. Shimkin and E.M. Shimkin. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 320 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-252-01219-4. \$39.95 (US).

Described as 'the first book devoted solely to the primitive art and worldview of the peoples of northern Asia,' this work provides systematic description, stylistic analysis, and iconographic interpretation of the basic genres of Siberian archaeological art from the Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages. The author is an eminent authority on Russian archaeology who has conducted numerous expeditions in Siberia and can claim to have investigated at first hand virtually all of the materials discussed. The book is well illustrated with both photographs and line drawings and has an extensive bibliography. The translation reads well. This is clearly an essential work on its subject, but those whose interests are specifically in Arctic peoples should note that most of the peoples and sites discussed are located in southern Siberia.

WEATHER AND WAR. T.A. Fitzpatrick. 1992. South Church: Pentland Press. 148 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-872795-39-0. £12.50.

The author served as a meteorological officer throughout World War II, initially in Scotland and later in besieged Malta. This book, based on personal experience plus a good deal of research, provides insights into how the RAF meteorological service organized itself during the early years of the war, ultimately to forecast effectively for air and sea operations as far north as northern Norway, Svalbard, and Murmansk. A well-documented account, valuable both for its personal touches and historic interest.