

BRIEF REVIEWS

THE ARCTIC: A HISTORY. Richard Vaughan. 1999. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing. ix + 340 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7509-2256-7. £14.99.

This is the paperback edition of Richard Vaughan's book, originally published in 1994 (see Barr 1994). No changes or edits were made, so buyers of the softback will be getting the exact same copy as the hardback.

As originally noted by Barr, this is an ambitious book, which aims to review the history of the entire circumpolar Arctic from prehistoric times (around 12,000 BP) to the negotiations surrounding the Nunavut agreement in 1993. With such an enormous undertaking, any author runs the risk of simplifying issues and events to the point where they may be wrong. Vaughan does not, and the result is a masterly synthesis of information that provides the reader with clear and concise chapters of Arctic history.

Vaughan's command of Dutch, Norwegian, German, and Russian means that this overview of the Arctic is complete, and it does not suffer from the emphasis on English language accounts of some other histories. Thus, although the Royal Navy's search for the Northwest Passage is covered in detail, so are the Russian expansion across Siberia, the Russian Navy's Great Northern Expedition, and a social and economic history taken from the viewpoint of the indigenous peoples. Chapters are also devoted to whaling, the development of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Royal Greenland Trade, and mineral exploration. The book opens with a description of the indigenous peoples who lived around the circumpolar north at the time of first contact, and ends with developments in the Nunavut claim.

The paperback is a nicely produced edition, using good quality paper and the same cover design as the hardback. Since the hardback edition went out of print in August 1998, it is recommended that anyone who does not possess this valuable summary of Arctic history buy the paperback edition while he can.

Reference

Barr, W. 1994. Review of *The Arctic: a history*. *Polar Record* 30 (174): 226–227.

OVER THE POLE! Kjeld Mahler Sasbye. 1999. Skagen, Denmark: Sjøbeck Grafisk. 160 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 87-985141-1-3. Published privately.

Kjeld Mahler Sasbye is a former director of the Danish Civil Aviation School, and he has long had a fascination with flights across the polar regions. During his life, he made an extensive collection of press cuttings, artefacts, memorabilia, and academic articles concerning flights across the North Pole, and it is the essence of these that are reproduced in his privately published (limited edition of 1000 copies) *Over the Pole!* There are photocopies of newspaper clippings, articles from journals such as *The Geographical Review* and *Polar Record*, archival photographs of the commercial pilots who have flown Scandinavian Air Services (SAS) flights across the Pole since the 1950s, and copies of charts provided to pilots to be used in the event of emergency landings.

Much of the information in the book is in Danish, which is to be expected in a history of Danish polar overflights, but some of the pieces are in English. An example is a copy of a press release from the Royal Canadian Air Force (page 40) outlining the career of Group Captain Kenneth C. MacLure, who flew across the geographical North Pole and made two magnetic survey flights across the magnetic North Pole in a Royal Air Force Lancaster in 1945. However, Sasbye makes no reference to where the original document might be located.

On the same note, photocopies of articles (from *Polar Record*, at least) have been reproduced without first obtaining permission. Often, only as much of the article as fits on one page has been reproduced (see, for example, page 45), so that the copy ends mid-sentence. It is recommended that anyone using this collection as a research resource should refer to the original articles and photographs wherever possible, due to possible issues of copyright. It is also not clear which are the author's own photos and which have been used from other collections.

This gathering of information will be of great value for anyone interested in the history of SAS polar overflights, before their re-routing across Siberia in 1993, and Sasbye is to be commended for his diligence in establishing such an archive.