

CHARTING THE SEA OF DARKNESS: THE FOUR VOYAGES OF HENRY HUDSON. Donald S. Johnson. 1993. Shrewsbury: Airlife Publishing. xiv + 242 pp, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-87742-321-0. US\$22.95.

Virtually nothing is known about Henry Hudson except that he was an accomplished navigator, spent at least part of his career as a ship's captain for the Muscovy Company, and commanded four voyages to the Arctic between 1607 and 1611. Those four Arctic expeditions are the only surviving records of his life, but fortunately they are all reported in some detail in journals written by himself and others.

Hudson's Arctic expeditions had the object of discovering a new sea route from Europe to the Orient by way of either the North Pole (1607), the Northeast Passage (1608 and 1609), or the Northwest Passage (1610–1611). Although little is known about him, the journals of his expeditions allow some interesting deductions about his personality, and the character who emerges is a fascinating subject of study. He is shown to have been, for example, a most tenacious explorer. When he tried to reach the North Pole in 1607 from the waters between Greenland and Svalbard, he tried time and again to penetrate into the ice, despite knowing from a very early stage that the task was hopelessly beyond the capability of his tiny 40-ton barque *Hopewell*. Later explorers, in stronger ships, tried once or twice then fled for safety, but one imagines Hudson striving honourably to show his sponsors that his failure was not caused by want of effort on his part. Likewise, in 1609, when the Northeast Passage proved equally unattainable, he turned around, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and tried for the Northwest Passage instead. It was on that occasion that he discovered the Hudson River in present-day New York. Finally, on his Northwest Passage expedition of 1610–1611, his stubborn tenacity cost him his life. After discovering Hudson Bay in 1610, and spending a miserable winter in James Bay, he provoked deep unrest among many of his crew by expressing an intention to carry on with his exploration, so certain was he that in Hudson Bay he had found the key to the Northwest Passage. The dissenters mutinied, set him and eight supporters adrift in a boat, and he was never seen again. It has long been debated whether the mutiny showed him to be a weak leader, unable to sustain the morale and respect of his men, or a strong leader cursed with an unruly crew; whatever the truth, his record shows him to have been a quite exceptional explorer.

The full record of Hudson's four expeditions has been out of print for far too long. Some of the journals were published by the distinguished seventeenth-century chronicler of exploration, Samuel Purchas. In 1860, a more complete collection of journals and other records was edited for the Hakluyt Society by G.M. Asher. Neither version has ever been widely available, and, although there have been a few minor biographies of Hudson in the twentieth century, the public still has only limited access to the full story. This new edition of the journals and associated documents is therefore very welcome.

The book has been intelligently edited. In addition to an informative and interesting introduction, each expedition is preceded by a useful prologue, setting it helpfully in context. The editor has decided, boldly, to modernize the spelling of the journals throughout. This is fully justifiable. The texts supplied by Purchas and Asher, with contemporary spellings intact, are still available to the fastidious historian; for a more general readership, there is no question that the revised text with its modern spellings makes the journals more accessible and enjoyable.

There are minor flaws. Any polar enthusiast shivers at the persistent mis-spelling of Spitsbergen with a 'z.' But in general the editor and publisher have produced an attractive and readable book aimed at making the details of Hudson's achievements available to a wider readership than hitherto, and they deserve to succeed. (Clive Holland, 3 Lilac End, Haslingfield, Cambridge CB3 7LG.)

POLAR PEOPLES: SELF-DETERMINATION AND DEVELOPMENT. Minority Rights Group. 1994. London: Minority Rights Publications. x + 270 pp, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-873194-51-X.

Polar peoples is one of a series of books and reports prepared for and published by the Minority Rights Group of Great Britain. In this regard, it is not unlike the Copenhagen-based International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs. And, also like the IWGIA, it has developed a reputation for the anthropological quality of the materials it presents on the state of relations between minority/aboriginal peoples and the nation-states within which they live.

Polar peoples will by no means diminish this reputation. While, as the preface to this volume points out, there is no attempt by the authors to achieve 'ethnographic completeness,' the northern societies examined in these five chapters—Canadian and Greenland Inuit (Creery and Nuttall, respectively), Alaskan Eskimos and Indians (Korsmo), the Saami of Fenno-Scandia (Beach), and the small peoples of Russia (Vahktin)—are well covered as to their contemporary situations. Indeed, this coverage is such that the scantiness of the traditional culture histories offered for each is easily forgiven, especially as more detailed sources concerning the pre-modern state of these peoples are provided in accompanying end notes and bibliographies.

The heart of each chapter concerns the efforts toward self-determination and/or socio-political autonomy that are being made by the peoples living in each of these regions. The completeness with which the authors have attacked this necessarily particularistic process speaks volumes about the knowledge and concern each brings to his or her contribution. Each chapter is as well written and clear as the sometimes convoluted nature of these groups' independent journeys permits. An example of how difficult this can be is illustrated by Creery's chapter on Canadian Inuit, where the legal and political struggles of the British Columbia Tlingit, Quebec Cree, and Mackenzie Valley Dene, all more southerly Indian societies, have

had profound ramifications for Inuit land claims.

There are two relatively minor criticisms of this volume. The first is that an adherence to standard scientific referencing, as opposed to end notes, would have been much appreciated by this reader. The present system was distracting, especially with the relevant notes being presented not at the end of each chapter but at the end of the volume.

The other is that this material as a whole is so strong (again, kudos to each contributor) that the volume could well have borne an overview chapter that integrated the salient points common to the socio-political circumstances of all these peoples. Admittedly, this is very much an academic's bias, but such a chapter would have been very useful to those seeking to adopt *Polar peoples* to an advanced undergraduate classroom audience. As it is, this book has considerable potential for upper-level students studying northern peoples and may well prove a worthy successor to Graburn and Strong's *Circumpolar peoples: an anthropological perspective*, now two decades old. (George W. Wenzel, Department of Geography, McGill University, Burnside Hall, 805 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2K6, Canada.)

SHADOWS ON THE WASTELAND. Mike Stroud. 1993. London: Jonathan Cape. 182 pp, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-224-03846-X. £14.99.

More than just a re-telling of the tale of the crossing of Antarctica with Ranulph Fiennes, this is the story of the Stroud/Fiennes relationship from their unsuccessful North Pole adventure to the end of their Antarctic expedition. The crossing of Antarctica, 95 days of manhauling across 1350 miles, was an incredible feat, but this book, by way of an introduction, also includes both men's attempts to walk unsupported to the North Pole.

For many readers of books of this genre, it is the relationships between the characters that are of the greatest interest. Few can imagine the environment in which these tales are set, nor relate to the effort of not merely surviving but also travelling on foot hundreds of miles — pages of 'white hell' descriptions lose their interest very quickly. Stories about people, however, are frequently fascinating, as they are in this book. The author, Mike Stroud, is a doctor, the fourth man of the 'In the Footsteps of Scott' expedition. Stroud's companion, the man he admits to elaborately planning to kill at one point, is 'arguably Britain's greatest living explorer,' Ranulph Fiennes.

The book is written in a much more accessible style than Fiennes' own book — less of the 'epic tale of derring-do,' and more down to earth. The tone of the book and the two men's relationship is set out early on: a television crew sent to the airport to meet Fiennes' new companion for an attempt on the North Pole embarrassingly fails to identify him, since he is not the 'brute of a companion' that Fiennes, who has never met Stroud, expects.

It is easy to identify with Stroud, to sympathise with him as he is forced to conform with Fiennes' way of doing things — forced, for example, to abandon their radio on

one of the North Pole journeys, days before Stroud's child is due to be born. Fiennes has decided it is too much weight and must go; Stroud, desperate to keep in touch, can only carry it alone for a few more days before he is crushed by its weight and has to discard it. When he abandons the radio he cannot even tell his base that this is what is being done. Inevitably, the relationship between Stroud and Fiennes comes to dominate the book, with arguments about who is making the greater effort, who is responsible for the decisions, and, post-expedition, who led the way for most of the trip.

This book is subtitled 'Crossing Antarctica with Ranulph Fiennes' and sells in competition with the Fiennes book. Really they should be sold as a box set — or better still the padding cut out of both and combined into a single volume — for about the same cost. To be fair to Stroud, however, his book contains only a brief equipment list, unlike the Fiennes book, which contains many superfluous pages of padding. To appreciate some of the detail of Stroud's book, it is worth reading Fiennes'. But if only one can be purchased, this is the one. (Stephen Wells, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

WHALING AND HISTORY: PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDUSTRY. Bjørn L. Basberg, Jan Erik Ringstad, and Einar Wexelsen (Editors). 1993. Sandefjord: Sandefjordmuseene (Christensens Hvalfangstmuseum publication 29). 214 pp, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 82-990595-6-9. NOK 250.

This excellent collection of papers is the result of a conference held in 1992. It fills an important gap in the literature of whaling history, particularly in that dealing with the earlier period. Especially noteworthy are an essay by Uwe Schnall on 'Medieval Scandinavian laws as sources for the history of whaling' and another by Ole Lindquist with the somewhat verbose title 'Whaling by peasant fishermen in Norway, Orkney, Shetland, the Faeroe Islands, Iceland and Norse Greenland: mediaeval and early modern whaling methods and inshore legal regimes.' These two papers provide the reader unfamiliar with Old Norse and the early Scandinavian languages with a complete body of evidence documenting the practice of whaling 800 years ago or more. Lindquist's work is to be incorporated in a PhD thesis, but shows a very mature level of scholarship.

The other paper dealing with an early period, 'Scrimshaw: an introduction and overview, AD 800–1960,' by Stuart M. Frank, is unfortunately mistitled, as it really does not go so far back. Although equipped with a useful bibliography, the author unfortunately does not reference his sometimes quite unusual view by precise textual citations. A fuller treatment of the early development of scrimshaw is still awaited.

Einar Wexelsen's paper 'Working conditions and work-related injuries and illnesses on board Norwegian floating factories after World War II' is an important addition. However, one looks here, as elsewhere, for the utilization of the corpus of life-history material contained in Nor-