

the dive. An internationally known icon key provides a quick summary of the characteristics of each site. The depth of the dive is given as well as comments on potential ice conditions and lists of the marine flora and fauna which might be encountered. 'Special note' boxes are given for dive sites where possible dangers like leopard seals or small boat traffic might occur. Unfortunately some of the boxes (e.g. on p. 50) end with an unfinished sentence.

For me the book has two negative features; one is the description of the dive sites in the relation to safety and the other is the biological information provided.

In her introduction Trotter refers to the special conditions for diving in Antarctica and the non-availability of hyperbaric chambers. She writes that diving is often limited to a depth of 18 m, which I see as a sensible statement. Unfortunately nine dive sites, including Aitcho Island and Paradise Harbour, are described down to 40 m, a depth not recommended for either the Antarctic or indeed anywhere for sports diver. These descriptions could encourage the recreational diver to break depth limits and explore to these depths. I cannot agree with her statement 'that most companies limit diving to profiles where decompression problems won't be an issue' (p. 18). Decompression sickness (DCS) can be an issue also on shallow dives, especially where they are repeated, and the readers should be made aware that increased circulation and movement during dives in Antarctica, e.g. to keep the body temperature high, can increase the risk of gas bubble formation in the diver's blood which is the first stage to DCS. Research has been carried out in on the formation of microbubbles in Antarctic divers and I would recommend that any edition of this book includes a section on this.

The author describes the Antarctic marine flora and fauna using common names and provides a glossary for scientific names. Unfortunately not all the information is correct, and I do not refer just to the misspellings in particular scientific names. For example, information given about Antarctic octopus (p. 73) is wrong - currently there are 36 species known from Antarctica. The animal group called 'Chitins' are chitons, also called Polyplacophora or 'Coat of mail shells'. Chitin is a polysaccharide found in the skeleton of invertebrates. I was disappointed to see a photo of a diver's hand holding a sea spider (p. 79), encouraging recreational divers to touch or pick up animals during their dives. Marine animals or plants should not be touched by recreational divers, either in the Antarctic or anywhere else.

Overall the book has many interesting features and is well worth consulting, even if some of the details are not correct. The book is at present the first and only dive guide to Antarctic waters and will be read by scientists and tourists.

The main market for the book will be divers and tourists to Antarctica.

KATRIN LINSE

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South of sixty: life on an Antarctic base

M. Warr

Antarctic Memories Publishing, Prince George, Canada, 2006.

ISBN 13 978-0-9738504-0-6, 188 pp, CA\$24.95.

Perhaps the ease with which a book can be published is one of the major reasons for the sudden flowering of Antarctic memoirs in various countries. In the UK this has a respectable history, starting with Kevin Walton's account of life at Stonington Island in 1947 published in 1955. Since then we have had accounts of life at Maudheim (Swithinbank), Hope Bay (James and Herbert), Halley (MacDowell), Fossil Bluff (Pearce), Argentine Islands (Airey), Fuchs' account of the early adventures at all the British stations and now in this book on Deception Island and Adelaide Island. The fact that many were self-published indicates that commercial publishers feel the market is either too small to be worth the effort or the quality of the manuscript is not high enough. Of course, the way in which the British stations have been run has changed over the last 50 years, as has the science, but what does this book tell us that makes it worth reading? Michael Warr was recruited in 1963 with minimal qualifications to work for two years as a meteorologist. He travelled down and back on BAS ships, and his experiences at Deception and Adelaide did not include any major dramas. What is clear is that the experience proved to be both enduring and to some extent life shaping for him. In his final chapters he visits the sites again as a tourist aboard the *Polar Star* and comments on how different the life at Rothera now seems from his experience with no dogs, instantaneous communications, central heating and no snow-blocking. He does however understand that although his "golden years" cannot be recreated for those going there now their experience is unique for them. His story tells us little new but epitomises an earlier age when Antarctic science was seen as interesting but not important, when the Antarctic Treaty was just finding its feet, and when the lack of communications meant a greater reliance on initiative and a greater community spirit in the remote stations than is possible these days.

D.W.H. WALTON