

such facts there can be no hope of a history of the whaling trade. Details of hundreds of ships need to be dug out of *Lloyd's Register* and the *Register of the Society of Merchants*, to unravel the background of the trade.

Lloyd's List survives in an almost continuous series from 1741, while *Lloyd's Register* is continuous from 1789, with a broken series back to 1764, and the *Register of the Society of Merchants* exists for 1800 to 1833. In addition, *Lloyd's Captains Registers* from 1869 give the careers of masters, sometimes back to 1851; many of the Scottish whaling masters are to be found there, and others like Captain William Colbeck. In this collection there are many other sources which provide a mass of detail. For example Lloyd's records show that when in 1901 Ernest Shackleton joined the *Discovery*, he had three times as much sea time as Commander R. F. Scott RN, and years serving in sail, where Scott had no such experience. This helps to explain much.

Most of the Lloyd's collection is irrelevant to polar historians. To find what is valuable, the historian needs this list, which will tell him quickly what would be of use. That and the knowledge of the Guildhall Library staff can be a short cut to many maritime questions in polar history. For example, many of the facts concerning the shore whaling stations on Baffin Island are in the pages of *Lloyd's List*. Much of the history of the South Shetlands can be found nowhere else.

A Guide to the Lloyd's marine collection at Guildhall Library is obtainable direct from the Sales Office, Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ. (A. G. E. Jones, The Bungalow, Bayhall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 4UB.)

ERNEST SHACKLETON; MUDDLE AND MAGIC

SHACKLETON. Huntford, R. 1985. London, Hodder and Stoughton. 774 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0 340 25007 0. £19.95.

Ernest Shackleton was born in Ireland in 1874, grew up in south London, and became a merchant service officer in sail and steam. In 1901 he sailed with Scott's *Discovery* expedition to Antarctica. With health broken by a traumatic sledging journey he returned at the end of the first year, married, started a family, and became secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in Edinburgh. In 1908 he returned to Antarctica in a bid for the South Pole, pioneering the Beardmore Glacier route to the plateau and man-hauling to within 100 miles of the pole. Fêted in Britain, but hard up and unsuccessful in both business and politics, he again headed south, in 1914 leading an expedition that aimed to cross Antarctica from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea. His ship *Endurance* was crushed in the pack ice and sank; Shackleton's open boat journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia saved his marooned party and confirmed, with a flourish, his flair for leadership. After service in World War I and further unsatisfactory business dealings, still only in his late forties, in 1921 he led a final expedition to visit the little-known islands of the Southern Ocean, and perhaps a sector of the Antarctic coast. Reaching South Georgia in his tiny ship *Quest*, he died of a heart-attack.

Roland Huntford, the controversial polar historian who recently flayed Scott, has turned a sharp, cool gaze on Shackleton. He is not the first to write of this complex, commanding figure; Marjory and James Fisher's biography has served well for almost 30 years, and Hugh Robert Mill's, published a year after Shackleton's death, is still a vivid reminder of the man and his times. Huntford is more searching and less forgiving than his predecessors, with an eye for detail and an ear for well-authenticated gossip. He clearly has more time for Shackleton than he had for Scott; neither adulation nor acid mar this book, though his continuing dissection of Scott becomes tiresome. My impression after

first reading *Shackleton* is of a long, compelling play (perhaps a TV serial?) crammed with character parts. Worsley, Wild, Orde-Lees, Crean, Mackintosh and Wilson jostle for the limelight; there are lesser parts for a dishonest brother and a sad, shadowy wife, and behind stands a chorus of randomly-selected scientists, explorers, sponsors and creditors—including the disgruntled deckhands of *Endurance* whom everyone else seems to have forgotten. The main character, Shackleton himself, is never off-stage for long, but his bit-players get the best lines and upstage him shamelessly.

This is strange, for the real-life Shackleton cannot often have been upstaged. Perhaps after writing of Scott and Amundsen, Huntford has found less to hate and to admire in this restless Anglo-Irish adventurer, and drawn a pale figure who only marginally stands out from his dramatic background. Shackleton was certainly not everyone's hero; as Huntford reports, Mawson, Edgeworth-David and many of his early backers found reason to distrust and dislike him. His muddling, improvidence and proneness to disaster are fully and faithfully reported in this biography, and very interestingly too. But there must have been more to Shackleton than muddling; there was magic too, and that emerges less clearly. Shipmates from cooks to scientists spoke joyfully of 'The Boss'; he was a well-loved leader to whom hard-bitten characters repeatedly trusted their lives, and hard-headed backers their money. Antipodeans prejudiced against him (quite reasonably—he left them to foot the bills) met him and ended up firmly on his side. Leadership of Shackleton's quality is rare and interesting, but this fat and detailed book draws a surprisingly thin portrait. Perhaps the secret is in there among the gossip, the bit-parts and the well-marshalled masses of facts and opinions. I'll happily read *Shackleton* again to find out, because it is a book to be re-read and pondered. Meanwhile it complements the Fishers' biography but does not replace it. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

AN EARLY RECORD OF ALASKAN NATIVE PEOPLES

HOLMBERG'S ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCHES. Falk, M. W. (editor), translated by F. Jaensch. 1985. Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press. (Rasmuson Library: Historical Translation Series Vol 1). 133 p, map, soft cover. ISBN 0 912006 17 X. US\$15.00.

H. J. Holmberg (1818–1864) was a Finnish mineralogist who visited Alaska in 1850–51. As a result of his spare-time investigations of native life, he published in Helsinki a number of essays *Ethnographische Skizzen über Völker des Russischen Amerika* between 1855 and 1863. These have now been translated and issued as the first volume in a new series devoted to making available in English both primary and secondary source material on Alaska. It is a valuable addition to our knowledge. Holmberg discusses with both precision and sensitivity the Tlingit and Koniag peoples of Alaska, as well as providing an account of the early relations of Russian fur-traders with these groups. This gives an interesting picture of the Russian–American Company and its operations. Finally there is a verbatim account of the wreck of the *Saint Nikolai* on Destruction Island, Olympic Peninsula (Washington) in 1808. Here a different indigenous population was involved in the aftermath. Considering the date when he was writing, Holmberg was a most enlightened author. One welcomes the translation, and looks forward to other useful additions to this series. (Ian Whitaker, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6.)