

ISLAND AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD. Stephen Venables. 1991. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 177 p, illustrated with colour plates, hard cover. ISBN 0-340-55600-5. £16.99.

This book is an account of a trekking expedition to South Georgia, one of the most spectacular and mountainous of the peri-Antarctic islands. As with many Antarctic expeditions, the weather dominated and caused great gaps between intentions and accomplishments. Nevertheless, the expedition achieved several of its goals under adverse conditions. After a difficult traverse with heavy equipment (along an area quite difficult to trek even carrying only a rucksack) and the establishment of a base camp, reconnaissance parties set out up a glacier system that crosses the southern part of the island. Conditions deteriorated, and a snow cave was dug for refuge. This was flooded due to föhn winds, and the party had to repeat its performance at a higher altitude, from where it was reduced to making forays between blizzards. The party had problems in maintaining supplies, and several other misfortunes were experienced consecutively; the book gives a running account of the party's survival techniques. The amount of time spent in the 'Ice Palace,' as the second refuge was named, is well indicated by gargoyle carvings and column ornamentation made in the walls — safety and survival enforced a series of prolonged lay-ups.

As well as the account of the climbing, descriptions of the trek between Sörling Valley and Royal Bay and of the logistics of the operation are given. Much of the rest of the book is an account of South Georgia based on several sources, and a cursory chronology of climbing expeditions is appended. There are several other accounts of South Georgia mountaineers who had better luck with weather, but this is an essential work for those considering such expeditions and looking for descriptions of the range of conditions that might be encountered. The book is one of

several similar works by the author and is also available in a paperback edition.

ARCTIC POLITICS: CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN THE CIRCUMPOLAR NORTH. Oran Young. 1993. Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England. xv + 287 p, soft cover. ISBN 0-87451-606-4. US\$17.95.

In this collection of essays, some of which have appeared in slightly different format elsewhere, the author sets out to lay the foundations for Arctic politics as a field of inquiry that deals with issues not only specific to the region, but of a more generic nature that demonstrate its international importance. There is not much that the specialist will find new or provocative here, but the book is well-written and covers an impressive range of topics that make it an invaluable introduction for those attempting to understand the complexity of political, economic, and strategic issues being played out throughout the circumpolar north today. Among other things, the author considers the problems facing the region's native inhabitants as they struggle to maintain cultural integrity and identity, outlines the major resource conflicts, examines the prospects for the future of Arctic shipping in the Northwest and Northeast passages, ponders the consequences of militarization in a post-Cold War era, and argues for more attention to be given to the international dimensions of sustainable development in the Arctic. This is clearly a work that will become a standard text.

Publications Received

A PHYTOGEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE VASCULAR PLANTS OF NORTHERN GREENLAND — NORTH OF 74° NORTHERN LATITUDE. Christian Bay. 1992. *Meddelelser om Grønland Bioscience* 36. 102 p, illustrated with 218 maps and 27 figures, soft cover. ISBN 87-503-9972-1. DKK 190.