

## OBITUARIES

The death of WALTER WILLIAM ARCHER on 28 January 1944 removes one of the few remaining members of the mess deck of the Cape Evans base of the *Terra Nova* Expedition, 1910–13. After nearly two years as ship's cook on the *Terra Nova* he came ashore at Cape Evans to replace Clissold who had hurt his back in falling off an iceberg. He immediately made his presence felt both by his excellent cooking and by his cheery cockney attitude to all the ups and downs of life at a polar base. As a master cook in the Navy he ranked with the more senior of the Petty Officers, and he was in many respects actually the leading spirit of the mess deck during the last winter, when cheerfulness was a most decided asset. After the last war he retired from the Navy and ran his own catering business in London. He was a very constant supporter of the Antarctic Club, where every year he would be the centre of a small group of "Terra Novas".

F. D.

Captain ALBERT BORLASE ARMITAGE, R.D., R.N.R. (retd.), died on 31 October 1943. A separate Appreciation appears on pp. 186–87.

By the death of Petty Officer HARRY DICKASON in 1943 the Northern Party of the *Terra Nova* Expedition, 1910–13, has lost the last of its three long-service naval seamen. All three were physically hard, mentally alert and morally sound. For six months we lived in a hole in the snow and the three men stood the strain as well as did the three officers. Dickason did nothing out of the way, but everything he did he did well. He was our chief cook and as, through the winter of 1912, I was his partner and bottlewasher, I, more perhaps even than the others, had the opportunity to appreciate to the full his efficiency and unvarying cheerfulness.

R. E. P.

Baron GERARD DE GEER was born in Stockholm in 1858 and died in July 1943. He had been Professor of Geology at Stockholm from 1897 to 1924. To geologists he is best known as the originator of a geological time scale by whose application he was able to measure the retreat of the ice-age glaciers in southern Sweden. The scale was based on the regularity of certain clay layers, originating in summer melts, from which de Geer was able to work out a geo-chronology of the last 12,000 years. The method was extended to other countries, and to further this work de Geer founded the Institute of Geochronology in Stockholm. He was the recipient of the Wollaston Medal, the highest award of the Geological Society, in 1920, and was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society in 1930.

The importance of de Geer's contributions to glacial geology, and the foundation in effect of a sub-science, may have tended to obscure his important contributions to Arctic geology and survey, for he originally made his reputation as one of the distinguished line of Swedish geologists and explorers who investigated Spitsbergen in the 19th and early 20th centuries. De Geer's first visit to Spitsbergen was made to the west coast along with A. G. Nathorst in the *Bjona* in 1882. His next was in 1896 in the *Virgo*, this time as leader, when by using photogrammetric methods he was able to survey the greater part of Ice Fjord. In the Russo-Swedish Arc of Meridian Expeditions of 1898–1902 he was first a guest member of the Russian section in 1899, visiting Horn Sound and Stor Fjord, and was back again in 1901 as leader of the Swedish party in the *Antarctic*, which went from Stor Fjord through Heley Sound to Hinlopen Strait. His last visits were to Ice Fjord with B. Högbom in 1908 in the *Svenskund*, and as guide for the seventy members of the International

Congress party in the *Aeolus* in 1910. During these later visits his interest was mainly directed to the physiographical evolution of the country, and the structural changes which had taken place as a result of warping and distortion of the old land surfaces.

De Geer also made his mark on the place-names of Spitsbergen. He found himself in 1896 mapping a great area of almost horizontal sediments with few if any names. He was impressed by the regularity of the mountain blocks and proposed names on an almost mathematical pattern. Many of these names, for the most part with Swedish origins, have survived, but others have not been so fortunate, and the recent Norwegian volume on "The Place-names of Svalbard" (*Skrifter om Svalbard og Ishavet*, No. 80, Oslo, 1942) has not found it possible to adopt all de Geer's methods and rules.

J. M. W.

KRISTIAN KRISTIANSEN, the last surviving member of Fridjof Nansen's expedition across Greenland in 1888, died recently in Norway, at the age of seventy-eight.

Lieutenant EDWARD DEREK LEAF, D.S.C. and bar, R.N.V.R., was born in 1918 and was educated at Marlborough and Trinity College, Cambridge. In the interval between school and university he was a member of the Cambridge Expedition to Ellesmere Land and Baffin Island in the summer of 1937, and was particularly active in all ship matters and ice navigation; on land his interests were mainly directed to Eskimo archaeology. After gaining honours in Part I of the Geographical Tripos he took part, along with R. W. Feachem, in a survey expedition in 1939 to the Bay Islands, Honduras. The outbreak of war prevented the completion of their plans, and Leaf immediately joined the Navy. He had always been a keen and skilful yachtsman, and on joining up he was attracted to motor gun boats. Leaf was a natural fighting leader, resourceful and daring, and in due course was promoted to command an M.G.B. flotilla. He was frequently in action, was twice wounded and mentioned in despatches. He gained his first award of the D.S.C. in 1941, and his bar in February 1944 when he fought his last battle in a spirited action off the Dutch coast.

J. M. W.