

Nevertheless the author is to be congratulated on her industry in completing the task she set herself and on publishing a hitherto unknown source for the study of sub-Antarctic shipwrecks. (Ian R. Stone, Laggan Juys, Larivane Close, Andreas, Isle of Man IM7 4HD.)

A WINDOW ON WHALING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. Joan Goddard. 1997. Victoria, BC: Jonah Publications. viii + 114 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-895332-14-1.

This is a very readable and well-illustrated account of whaling in British Columbia, dedicated by the author to the memory of her grandfather, a Newfoundlander who had been an active participant in whaling in the early part of this century. The publication was evidently produced largely as a piece of local history, but makes a fascinating addition to the world-wide picture of man's exploitation of the whale. Those wishing to research the subject in more detail are referred to archive deposits in the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the University of Washington.

After briefly sketching the evolution of commercial whaling in the Pacific, which started in the late eighteenth century, the author describes the six-year campaign by T.W. Roys, who brought his rocket harpoon methods to British Columbia in 1868. The twentieth century saw the arrival of the modern techniques, devised by Svend Foyn, involving fast catcher boats and explosive harpoons shot from a cannon mounted on the foredeck.

Two Nova Scotians established the Pacific Whaling Company in 1904, and the first shore station was constructed in Barkley Sound on the west side of Vancouver Island in the following year. Other stations followed, and by 1910 the company was operating 10 catcher boats and a freighter. The whale catcher boats were sailed from Norway, around the Horn, an epic voyage for such small craft, some 100 tons and 90 ft long, lasting four months. Once in British Columbia, they worked between 30 and 50 miles from the stations, bringing their catches for processing by shore crews largely made up of Japanese and Chinese labourers. The main quarry were sperm, blue, fin, and sei whales; the highly vulnerable populations of humpback that lived close to the shore were wiped out in one season.

Apart from the Norwegian gunners, who because of their expertise were rated as skippers, most of the boat crews were Newfoundlanders. Some of these initially came west to take part in the fur sealing, but this was an industry in serious decline; others came from the shore-whaling in Newfoundland (again, through over-exploitation, this lasted only six years and ended in 1904). Reluctantly, the Norwegians taught their skills to the Newfoundlanders and after 1910 were gradually replaced. After several company reformations, the west coast stations closed in 1946, although one enterprise was established at the northern end of Vancouver Island, 1957–1967.

This volume concludes with a summary of the whaling

species hunted, details of the whale products and their uses, a chronology of commercial whaling in the Pacific, a glossary, and suggestions for further reading. (Arthur Credland, Hull Maritime Museum, Queen Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX.)

ANTARCTIC OASIS: UNDER THE SPELL OF SOUTH GEORGIA. Tim Carr and Pauline Carr. 1998. New York and London: W.W. Norton. 256 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-393-04605-2. £29.95.

This is an elegant and informative book. At first glance, thumbing the pages of striking photographs, one might surmise it is simply another coffee-table volume on the Antarctic or Southern Ocean. However, this book is a great deal more than that, as Tim and Pauline Carr's lively narrative portrays. On the one hand, this work is an account of the natural history and magnificent wildlife of South Georgia, and, on the other hand, it is a unique cruising guide and personal memoir about one of the most isolated islands on the planet.

Tim and Pauline Carr are internationally known sailors who have roamed the world's oceans during the past three decades. They have lived nearly all of this time aboard their stout Falmouth cutter (or, more correctly, quay punt) *Curlew*. During the past five years they have sailed the 28-foot *Curlew* in the waters around South Georgia and have worked as resident curators of the South Georgia Whaling Museum. South Georgia's location — south of the Antarctic Convergence, more than 720 nautical miles southeast of the Falkland Islands, and nearly 800 nautical miles northeast of the Antarctic Peninsula — makes it among the most remote destinations for any ship, let alone a small sailing cutter. The Carrs have written about many of the unique challenges they have met living year-round in such an isolated place. They have made the most of their stay on South Georgia: cruising the coast to unbelievably small harbours and coves, skiing, climbing several of South Georgia's peaks, photographing wildlife and scenery, and finding time to build the Whaling Museum at Grytviken. Their exploits during summer and winter 'cruises' are vividly told. All these adventures aboard *Curlew* require exceptional navigation and seamanship skills made all the more challenging since *Curlew* has no engine! Also quite unusual is the story of the cutter itself — in 1998 celebrating her centenary year since launching in the West Country of England. The book's final chapter is a tribute to this remarkable gaff-rigged boat, including deck and interior layouts and a sail plan. This history also includes the Carr's return in *Curlew* to Falmouth and a chance meeting with the relatives of the first owner, Frank Jose.

The subtitle 'Under the spell of South Georgia' is highly appropriate, since throughout each chapter the authors are in praise of South Georgia's abundant wildlife and majestic mountain scenery. Even HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's foreword notes the unique natural environment of South Georgia and that *Antarctic oasis* captures that essence. In addition to the nearly 200 stunning