

Antarctic Place-names Committee, of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has been responsible for providing advice on the adoption of place-names by the administrative authority for the Territory. The background to this Committee, its work and objectives are described, and some account is provided of the work of similar place-names authorities in other countries. A review is then given of the evolution of the place-names in the British Antarctic Territory as a result of voyages of discovery, sealing and whaling operations, and scientific and other expeditions, from the time of William Smith's voyage, in 1819, to the present. After a consideration of principles in place-naming, the names are then treated systematically according to prescribed rules and listed alphabetically. Each entry gives the latitude and longitude of the feature, the locality with reference to features named on the included maps, and (in chronological order) details of discovery, mapping and naming, and references to first publication of the name and of any synonyms. Cross references link the synonyms to these entries. About 1700 published and unpublished sources in eight main languages are listed in the references.'

This is the author's abstract; it cannot be bettered as a concise account of the contents of the work. That it is a work of scholarship is readily apparent throughout, emphasized by the concise accounts of the expeditions, particularly the earlier ones. Many of the accounts include aspects of the expeditions that, being pertinent only to place-names, are often excluded from the more popular accounts, if available at all. The list of references demonstrates the thoroughness of the research. The maps are sufficient for their purpose, but obviously it would require a companion set of volumes of maps to show the position of every name. The principles and practices of the British Antarctic Place-names Committee are described in some detail. These will provide a valuable guide to anyone proposing new names, and adhering strictly to them will ensure a greater degree of success. They will also provide an excellent foundation for any nation about to embark on the business of place-naming in Antarctica, and existing practitioners might also be encouraged to regularize some of their own practices to provide a greater degree of conformity. This is not to say that all the British practices are necessarily the best. The definition of geographical terms, as used in British Antarctic Territory, is a useful glossary. It can also be used to demonstrate the occasional fallibility of committees: when a prominent but relatively level ridge projecting into a glacier (a 'river' of solid water) was proposed as a 'point,' the Committee rejected the generic part of the name on the grounds that a point is a coastal feature and substituted the term 'needle,' because it is a projection (despite a needle usually being a vertical, not a horizontal, feature). The name '.... Needle' is still uncorrected.

The entries themselves, which form more than 80% of the text, are remarkably comprehensive. Many of them, particularly the more recent ones, provide a potted biography of the individual so honoured, often including years of

birth, useful for determining the ages of one's contemporaries! Definitions are given for 'Antarctica' (the continental block excluding the islands of the 'Scotia Ridge') and 'The Antarctic' (the area south of the 'Antarctic Convergence'), terms that, although different, are all too often used synonymously. Also, 'Greater' and 'Lesser' Antarctica are given precedence over 'East' and 'West' Antarctica, although, sadly, the latter pair are overwhelmingly used in the literature today despite their obvious shortcomings. The system of group names within an area often makes fascinating reading, such as the features within 'Pioneers Escarpment' that commemorate the names of individuals who developed equipment and techniques used in the polar regions, such as F.W. Lindqvist, the Swedish inventor of the Primus stove. Popular misconceptions of the origins of some names may be rectified: 'Funk Glacier' was named not for a sledger who retreated but for Casimir Funk, who developed the theory of vitamins. On the other hand, 'Fullastern Rock' was named for very obvious reasons, and 'Hell Gates' defines a dangerous passage used by sealers and described in the *Antarctic Pilotas* 'where many boats and lives have been lost.' Some names illustrate the humour of the polar explorer: 'Weather Guesser Nunataks' indicating high regard for the meteorological department; 'Stinker Point' using the vernacular expression for the giant petrel.

Due acknowledgement is made to Brian Roberts, who began the work, but it is very largely the author's own extensive research and he is to be warmly congratulated on a magnificent achievement. Only a saint could reach perfection, and there are inevitably some errors, although those noticed by this reviewer are insignificant. The only criticism is the strange point of division between the two volumes, not just in the middle of an entry but even in the middle of a bracket!

These volumes form an essential work of reference for any polar library and, indeed, for many others. No student of toponymy should be without a copy. It is not, of course, a book to read cover to cover, but once picked up it is impossible to put down. The price will be excessive for some, but it is tremendous value for money and could never reflect the true cost of the research or even the production. Here is a concise history of the explorers and their explorations in British Antarctic Territory seen through the application of place-names. Finally, in this case, the answer to Juliet's question 'What's in a name?' is quite simply 'an awful lot.' (P.D. Clarkson, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**THE QUIET LAND: THE DIARIES OF FRANK DEBENHAM.** June Debenham Back (editor). 1992. Bluntisham: Bluntisham Press; Harleston: Erskine Press. 207 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 01-85297-037-5. £24.95.

Frank Debenham, CBE, is best remembered by the academic world as the founder of the University of Cambridge's Department of Geography and as its first profes-

sor. Readers of this journal are more likely to associate him with the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), of which he was first director, and which owes its being largely to Debenham's prophetic vision of Cambridge as a centre of polar excellence and an enduring memorial to Scott and the ill-fated polar party. It was as a postgraduate geology student at the University of Sydney that Debenham was chosen by Scott and his scientific director Edward Wilson to represent Australia on the British Antarctic Expedition of 1910–13. For the young Debenham, 'keen to get down here at any price,' this was the chance of a lifetime to prove his worth in an environment then virtually unexplored. From the start he set himself the task of keeping a regular journal of his activities and impressions, not with publication in mind, but rather for the information of family and friends. This journal was written in hardback notebooks with perforated sheets interleaved with carbon paper, the top copy of which has been edited for publication by Debenham's daughter, June Debenham Back. The carbon copy, along with the original geological notebooks and sketches, have long been held in SPRI's archives. Inevitably the author on occasion found himself in arrears, and there are a number of gaps in the entries. These have been very adequately filled by Mrs Back, using extracts from other source material and some hitherto unpublished letters by Debenham to relatives.

The diary entries have been grouped under chapter headings, each covering the main episodes with which Debenham was involved during the expedition. Prefacing the seven chapters is an isolated diary account of the journey south aboard *Terra Nova*, during which a violent storm almost capsized the grossly overlaid vessel. The first chapter partly repeats this account and then continues with the remainder of the journey south and the eventual landing at Cape Evans. Chapter two contains Debenham's account of the expedition to the western mountains in January to April 1911 under the leadership of fellow Australian Griffith Taylor. Debenham's chief preoccupation on this trip was collecting geological specimens, mapping their occurrence, and photographing their relationships with adjacent rocks. His chief contribution was the introduction of the plane-table as a method of speedily and accurately plotting geological detail, a contribution that earned him accolades from Taylor and Scott. The third chapter presents a graphic account of hut life during their first long Antarctic winter (April–September 1911), which, despite the lack of opportunity for active field work, revealed Debenham as characteristically busying himself with his geology and petrology, preparing lectures for the 'University of the Antarctic,' contributing to *The South Polar Times*, and writing up his journals and fieldwork. There is much discussion of Scott's plan for the Pole and whether he or Amundsen would attain priority — Debenham rather favoured Amundsen! Scott made it clear that no geologist would be taken south, so Debenham had to resign himself to a second trip subordinate to Taylor in November 1911 to March 1912. An account of this journey occupies chapter four, and is here retold by the

editor, as it appears that Debenham's diary on this occasion was 'a very poor one.' However, a revelatory letter home to his mother, which prefaces the narrative, gives added interest.

In March 1912 Debenham, back at Cape Evans, was able to 'commence the comfortable diary again.' Chapter five provides an interesting insight into expedition life during the second wintering, clouded as it was by the gradual realization that Scott's party was never to return, together with added anxieties for the fate of Victor Campbell's northern party. Chapter six completes the diary entries with Debenham's account of a geological expedition up Mount Erebus in December 1912, followed by the welcome arrival of *Terra Nova* in January 1913 and the departure for New Zealand. The book concludes with a chapter by the editor, entitled 'Et sequentis,' that outlines both Debenham's career at Cambridge after World War I and the early history of SPRI. Appended is a full bibliography of Debenham's publications and a geological glossary. The title, by the way, is derived from the author's eponymous poem reproduced as a prologue to the main text.

Debenham's biography remains to be written. Clearly this volume will prove a prime source of information when the time comes. It is clear from these diaries that he was blessed with those qualities that added up to the good expedition man of his time — physically robust, highly intelligent, an ability to 'get on' with a mixed assortment of idiosyncratic characters in the context of a hazardous environment, a willingness to perform tasks well outside one's contractual obligations, and a burning desire to profit from a once-in-a-lifetime experience. By nature artistic, Debenham learned the art of photography from Herbert Ponting and was eager to acquire the basic techniques of sketching and painting from Wilson; there is evidence enough of this in his sketches and photographs reproduced in this book. In the field, he was determined to master the arts of polar travel and survival. A keen student of human nature, his observations on his fellow explorers are naturally of compelling interest. He seemed critical at first of Raymond Priestley as a geologist, and regarded Taylor as a sophist ready 'to produce ideas by the score and give them to the world at once rather than waste time in verifying them.' Teddy Evans he wrote of as 'a very jolly fellow...but he is not unfortunately the right man in the right place.' Wilson was 'easily the best man in every way,' while Birdie Bowers was 'the marvel of the party.' Apsley Cherry-Garrard was 'the most serious,' Edward Nelson was 'weird,' and Tryggve Gran 'another disappointment.' As for Scott, Debenham confessed that he was 'very disappointed...tho' my faith dies hard.' His best friend seemingly was Captain Oates, whom he described as 'the stableman with unusually good manners.' One wonders what the two had in common. Maybe Oates' interest in history and chess. Or was it a shared feeling of isolation from the group? In a letter home, one finds Debenham complaining of 'colonial prejudice' — 'The Australian is more or less disliked by the Englishmen I've

met. There is a decided “down” on things Australian in the expedition.’ Scott’s decision not to take Taylor on the southern party deprived Debenham of his one chance of leadership on the second western expedition. During the second wintering, he found himself unable to join the search party owing to trouble with a knee injured at football, and he complained of being passed over for promotion by Surgeon Atkinson in favour of men his junior. His remedy for all these setbacks and dark thoughts was creative activity in the realization that ‘I’m jolly lucky to be here at all and to be talking of seniority is a bit tall.’ Eventually he was rewarded by Campbell with command of the expedition with Priestley up Erebus — clearly a great morale booster, for he wrote: ‘There was a time when I thought that it didn’t matter much who was in charge, but I know now that it makes a lot of difference to one’s work.’

Enough has been said as evidence of the importance of this publication to the history of Scott’s last expedition. The editor is to be congratulated on letting her father tell his own story with a minimum of distracting notes, and the publisher for producing a volume that is a pleasure to handle. At the risk of seeming captious, I would like to have seen some indication of where certain omissions in the original manuscript have been made, and also a note on the physical nature of the diaries themselves. An index would also have been useful. (H.G.R. King, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**ARCTIC HOMELAND: KINSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWEST GREENLAND.** Mark Nuttall. 1992. London: Belhaven Press, in association with the Scott Polar Research Institute; Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 194 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85293-225-2. £39.50.

Since Home Rule, politics in Greenland has increasingly been informed by a nationalist agenda in which the dominant theme is an attempt to homogenise the indigenous Inuit culture: in the name of development, the distinctiveness of the various Inuit ways of life in the different regions of Greenland is being ridden over roughshod by national leaders whose early careers, forged in colonial times, were founded directly on symbols of ethnic particularity. Set in such a macro-context, this book is an anthropological study that precisely grasps the nature of a particular Inuit way of life in a particular region of Greenland — in this case the far northern ‘West Greenland’ village of Kangersuatsiaq in Upernavik district. This is one of a diminishing number of Greenland settlements where a reasonably viable subsistence economy based on sealing still prevails, coupled with a modest commercial halibut fishery. The author’s interpretation of the Inuit way of life in this village is a cultural one. For him, there is more to Inuit institutions and customs than a knee-jerk ecological response to harsh environmental conditions. And he asks: ‘to what extent will the Inuit culture in Kangersuatsiaq be able to absorb and “domesticate” the changes, especially the commercial changes, that are relentlessly impinging on the village from the outside?’

The bulk of description in the book is taken up with discussing the features that make society in Kangersuatsiaq (and, by implication, in other, comparable Greenlandic villages) noteworthy, such as place-naming, personhood, the network of kinship, and subsistence life with its all-pervading egalitarianism; the interface between the village community and the outside world also prominently features. Highly influential throughout is the work of the anthropologist A.P. Cohen. The author concentrates less on giving an objective account of institutions and social processes, and much more on grasping the understandings (often the multifarious understandings) that the members of the community hold about the social life in which they participate. The presumption is that through these understandings the people in Kangersuatsiaq secure a vital sense of common identity, or ‘community,’ that encompasses them not just in a contemporaneous sense but through time as well.

A fascinating example of this latter sense of ‘continuity in community’ comes from the complex of Inuit ideas relating to kinship and personhood. These especially revolve around a naming system in which certain psychological essences from someone recently deceased are believed to be incarnated in a newborn child who has been given the deceased’s name: the deceased, so to say, lives on in the new body. This is given explicit recognition in modes of kinship address in which people will call the newborn by the term that they will have used to address the deceased. Here is an ideology of personhood where there are effectively a restricted number of transcendent personalities, each one waiting for a human in which to be embodied. Such a corporation of personalities directly symbolises the existence of a community that outlives the birth and death of village members and into which these members, whilst alive, get caught up.

I have glossed, in this example, just one aspect of Kangersuatsiaq society that, in the book, is shown to be vastly more complicated. Overall I found that in this and the other themes the author is an excellent guide. He has provided us with a sensitive ethnography that moves smoothly from issue to issue, and which is clearly founded in fieldwork, on excellent rapport with informants, and by a first-rate command of the Inuit language (most people in Kangersuatsiaq are monolingual). His allusions both to anthropological theory and to other studies of the Inuit are light but enhancing. In addition, the focus in the book on people’s understandings is but a short step to evoking their feelings and thus to giving the reader a sense of what people in Kangersuatsiaq are really like (there is an effective section on Inuit emotional expression). Many of the ethnographic themes in the book feature in other work on the Inuit — they are, after all, central to Inuit culture. Yet, among recent work, only Ann Fienup-Riordan’s on the west Alaskan Eskimo achieves comparable coverage, authenticity, and accessibility to the general reader as well as to the specialist; Fienup-Riordan’s account of the Nelson Island Eskimo, it is interesting to note, is written from a not-dissimilar ‘cultural perspective.’