

Though the continental shelf begins to be much better known, the detail still tends to be limited to the neighbourhood of the Antarctic land bases. Less accessible areas have little or no information, especially the areas of persistent ice cover in the western margin of the Weddell Sea and south of the Bellingshausen and Amundsen seas. The Ross Sea with an abundance of tracks leading to McMurdo Sound and the Bay of Whales is the best known. The Antarctic shelf is abnormally deep and its topography irregular. Especially in the Indian Ocean and Australasian sectors there are characteristic outer banks with soundings less than 500 m enclosing deeper shelf basins, broken here and there by radial ridges and canyons.

The continental slope—generally more accessible—is better known. It is traversed by innumerable canyons, 30 of them already named. It is particularly close to the land in 0°–10°E and 19°–28°E. The new contours attract attention to some prominent radial ridges, and to the striking chain of seamounts from 115°–131°W in 65°S, now named Amundsen Ridges. The combined picture of undersea, ice-surface and under-ice, contours is likely to facilitate study of the morphology of the continental margin. The topography of the shelf and slope is shown in much greater detail than is possible for the shelves and slopes round the Arctic Ocean (GEBCO, Arctic Sheet, 5th Edition).

Research will be further assisted by four Mercator sheets, GEBCO numbers 5.13 to 5.16 covering the ocean between 46°40'S and 72°S, planned to appear in 1981–82, but for purposes such as plotting circumpolar distributions of physical variables and biological patterns oceanographers would also like to have a polar-projection chart covering the whole ocean as far as 30°–35°S on a single sheet. They could make good use of a simplified version and extension of the present polar chart on about quarter the scale.

TALES OF THE ARCTIC

[A review by Graham Rowley* of J. M. Scott's *Red hair and moon water: Arctic short stories*. London, Robert Hale, 1980, 201 p, £6.25.]

In *Red hair and moonwater* J. M. Scott has drawn heavily on both historical episodes and his own wide experience in the north to write this collection of seven short tales. In some cases fiction and history are strangely combined. For instance *The Inanimate voyage* is clearly based on the drift of HMS *Resolute* and the author has thinly disguised the fact by altering some of the names and the ultimate fate of the ship.

The book suffers from slipshod proof reading. Many words are misspelled, some are incomplete or missing, and in *Red hair* the text seems to have been set in the wrong order, with what is logically the end of the story appearing in the middle.

The stories themselves are light and entertaining. *The sledge patrol*, set on the Greenland ice cap, and *The rifle*, based on a journey in Labrador, are particularly successful. Both are about the relations between two men travelling together, and both are about places where Mr Scott has himself made memorable journeys. The book will be read with enjoyment whether or not the reader has a particular interest in the north, and with some nostalgia by those who knew the old north.

IN BRIEF

MUSK-OXEN ON OSTROV VRANGELYA

In the spring of 1975, 40 musk-oxen were airlifted to the USSR from Nunivak Island, Alaska, where a herd of 31 had been introduced from Greenland in 1930 (*Polar Record*, Vol 18, No 112, p 89–90). It was understood that they were taken to two sites in the Soviet Arctic, on Ostrov

* 245 Sylvan Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1M 0X1.