

of parties on Heard and Macquarie Islands and the building of Mawson Station. There are many facets to this story of the voyage in *MV Kista Dan*, including the difficulties of navigating a small ship in ice, the problems of choosing a site for a new station and of setting the party ashore, the part played by the tiny seaplane she carried.

Everyone who has approached Antarctica by sea will have a nostalgic recognition of the difficulties which his own party once encountered; but this is an Australian story and Australians will be especially pleased to read a first-hand account of one of the early voyages and the original building of their famous Mawson Station. Perhaps the most vivid episode is in Chapter 12 when the vessel was all but lost in hurricane conditions;

'Suddenly...the ship heeled over until I was lying on my stomach on the bulkhead, practically horizontal, with my nose flattened against the submerged glass of the porthole, gazing down into the green-black depths. There I waited and waited for the recovery that would not come...and my terror mounted.'

That extract reveals something of the dramatic events which, in 1954, became known to the whole Antarctic community. Part I ends with the safe return of the ship and a look at the future of Australian work as seen at that time. In five chapters Part II discusses the headquarters arrangements and how these developed, the selection of Antarctic personnel, the design of huts and provision of equipment, the complex problems of deciding upon Antarctic place names, and finally takes a look at the continent as the scientific laboratory it has now become.

These are interesting records of a developing system of operation, and perhaps the most engrossing to the general reader is the chapter on selection. The problems of living in a small isolated group are clearly shown and discussed in detail. It is interesting to find that most of the situations and events recounted could equally well have occurred at a British base, and perhaps also at those of other nations. In drawing attention to these matters the author has provided a valuable service for, as he says, 'Life at a remote station is life in a test tube ... I feel that ... lessons which are learnt have important implications for the more complicated urban environment in which most of us lead our daily lives.'

The book will have a special appeal to all past and future members of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions, but it is particularly valuable in placing the activities it chronicles on record for the polar community at large. It contains thirty-one colour and fifty-three black-and-white pictures, together with ten sketch maps including the end papers.

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## LAST OF THE HULL WHALERS

CAPTAIN WILLIAM WELLS AND THE LAST YEARS OF THE HULL WHALING FLEET. Hepton, Philip. 1984. Malet Lambert Local History Originals, 17. Hull, Malet Lambert High School. 53 p, illustrated, soft cover. £1.25.

This account of the career of William Wells (1815–80), one of the last of the Hull whaling masters, is a valuable addition to the literature of the northern fishery. Wells's career was outlined by the same author in a recent *Polar Record* profile (21(133): 383–86, 1983). Here his career among the whalers and sealers is put into perspective, from his first whaling

command in the *Hebe* in 1844 to his final voyage in the celebrated *Truelove* in 1867. This booklet is one of an enterprising series edited and published by A. G. Bell. Inexpensively produced and illustrated with line drawings, they make available material which would otherwise lie unknown and inaccessible. Books in the series can be ordered directly from the school, or from the Town Docks Museum, Hull.

A. G. Credland  
Town Docks Museum, Queen Victoria Square  
Kingston upon Hull

### AFRICAN IN GREENLAND

AN AFRICAN IN GREENLAND. Kpomassie, Tété-Michel. 1983. Translated by James Kirkup from the original French. London, Secker and Warburg, Flammarion, Paris. 298 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-436-23680-X. £8.95.

Here is an oddity—a native of a mud hut in Togo pursuing a youthful dream of visiting the Eskimo in Greenland. It is not quite as simple as that, of course. Tété-Michel Kpomassie was an educated boy with great persistence; he set out in 1958 at the age of 16 and it took him eight years' travelling to reach his destination. He was obviously a likeable lad and he writes with some fluency and perception. However, I am not quite sure for what kind of reader the book is intended, except perhaps as a traveller's tale for his own people. He has been reported as saying that he would like a Greenlander to come to Togo and write about *his* experiences.

The author spent a year in west Greenland, travelling from settlement to settlement and taking part in some of the every-day pursuits of his hosts, who seem to have been remarkably hospitable. However, because of his lack of background knowledge, 'official' standing, and, presumably, common language, one gets a somewhat one-sided picture with inevitable misunderstandings and contradictions and rather naive statements of the obvious. There is plenty of graphic evidence of the seedier sides of Greenland life, especially in the larger, southern communities; although they have the ring of truth, one feels there must be another side to the story which is left out of this very personal and limited account. It seems the author intends to return to Greenland for a more extended stay. Perhaps he will then be able to give us a more balanced and comprehensive report.

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### RECENTLY RECEIVED BOOKS AND REPORTS

SIBERIANA 1983. Recueil d'études publiées en Union Soviétique sur la Sibérie du Nord, etc. Malaurie, J. (editor). 1983. Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. 250 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 2-222-03357-8. 112 fr.

A wide-ranging selection of French translations of Russian published papers, covering areas of the polar regions well beyond Siberia; one, surprisingly, is on Antarctic geology. Four papers on earth science, four on anthropology, six on natural resources; originals appeared mostly in 1958-64, but three are earlier, one later.