

Obituary

Captain A.R. Williamson, OBE, DSC, died on 20 August 1995, aged 104. He was born in Bedford on 9 July 1891. He completed a three-year apprenticeship in steam ships belonging to the King Line, and then served as an ordinary seaman in the sailing ship *Dechmont*, in 1909–1910, going out to Australia via the Cape and returning via Cape Horn.

Williamson's adventurous life included 20 years in China with Jardine Matheson, whose senior marine superintendent he became. This and other service at sea are too extensive to be recounted here, but readers of *Polar Record* will know of his 1911 voyage in Robert Falcon Scott's *Discovery* (built in Dundee at the turn of the century). The auxiliary barque had been bought by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1905 on the return of the National Antarctic Expedition. She made a series of annual supply voyages from London to Charlton Island

and York Factory, on Hudson Bay, 1905–1911, making the Atlantic passage under sail. Her master, Captain J.G. Ford, was a wise and experienced seaman, used to commanding and handling a sailing vessel in dangerous high northern latitudes. Williamson learned much from him.

Late in life, with the help of the ship's log, Captain Williamson published an account of the 1911 voyage in *The Beaver* (Spring and Summer 1983). He generously helped the present writer with the Hudson Bay chapters of her *The voyages of the 'Discovery'*. Upright, brave, and kindly in character, his friends and family remember him at the age of 100, as his granddaughter Elizabeth Randall wrote, 'tackling the stairs in almost as sprightly a fashion as he must have climbed the rigging over 80 years before, and with his mind still acute and his chuckle jolly.' It was a privilege to have known him.

Ann Savours

In Brief

150 YEARS OF THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY. This year the Hakluyt Society celebrates the sesquicentenary of its foundation. Named after Richard Hakluyt (1552–1616), the great Elizabethan editor of travel writings, the Society now has more than 2000 members around the world. Since 1847, more than 300 scholarly editions of voyages and travels have been published, many being translations into English. A special anniversary volume will be published this year and distributed to members. Recent editions include *The travels of Ibn Battuta*, *The voyage of George Vancouver*, and *Eighteenth century voyages to Hudson Bay in search of a Northwest Passage*.

On the occasion of an earlier anniversary, in 1911, the then president of the Society, Sir Clements Markham, began his address with these words: 'The Haklyut Society is an institution which has been doing steady work for 65 years, without much stir, without attracting any large share of attention; but diligently, usefully, and successfully. During these years, the Society has issued volumes — bearing on their sides that famous ship *Victoria*, which was the first to circumnavigate the globe — and usually containing the texts, the very words of travellers and voyagers in all parts of the world, which were previously unedited, untranslated, or unknown.'

Magellan's ship still appears on the covers of publica-

tions, and today the subscription fee is £25 per year (\$50 US). For this, members receive all volumes in the Ordinary Series, at least one and often two each year. An Extra Series is also published, available at a reduced rate to members. Membership is open to anyone interested in the subject; there are also institutional members. It is run by a president and elected council, an honorary secretary, and two honorary editors. Each volume has one or more specialist honorary editors. For membership forms, apply to the Administrative Assistant, The Hakluyt Society, c/o The Map Library, The British Library, London WC1B 3DG. (Source: Ann Savours)

ANTARCTIC MEDALS AWARDED. Antarctic Medals were awarded in June 1995 to six individuals in recognition of their outstanding service in the Antarctic with the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE). The six were: Captain Leigh Hornsby, a senior helicopter pilot for 15 years; Robert Kiernan, a field leader for three Lambert Glacier Basin oversnow traverses; Vincent Morgan, who has made contributions in palaeoenvironmental research on ice cores; Meredy Zwar, a chef with ANARE; Dr Peter Franzmann, an award-winning microbiologist; and Dr Erwin Erb, an Antarctic medical practitioner. (Source: *ANARE News*)