

GRAHAM WESTBROOK ROWLEY (1912–2003)

Most readers of *Arctic* will have heard with sadness the news of Graham Rowley's death in Ottawa on December 31, 2003. And many will have read with gratitude the heartfelt tributes his passing occasioned in the press on both sides of the Atlantic, which variously detailed Graham's lifelong, wonderfully eclectic engagement with the Canadian Arctic through exploration, administration, scholarship, and scientific enterprise.

Graham's introduction to the Arctic came in 1936. Fresh from Cambridge University, where he had studied natural sciences and archaeology—and at a loss what to do next—he seized the chance to join Tom Manning's British Canadian Arctic Expedition (1936–39), which was headed for northern Baffin Island and the largely unexplored east coast of Foxe Basin. The expedition's other members included Reynold Bray, Pat Baird, Peter Bennett, and Dick Keeling. As the expedition's archaeologist, Graham had one main quest, set for him by Diamond Jenness at the National Museum in Ottawa: to unearth conclusive evidence of an ancient Arctic culture quite distinct from the so-called Thule culture described by Danish archaeologist Therkel Mathiassen. Jenness had received artifacts from various locations in the Arctic—Cape Dorset in particular, hence the label “Dorset culture”—that differed materially from the accepted Thule specimens, pointing to a culture of a much older origin. Graham's excavations at Arctic Bay during the first phase of the expedition turned up nothing revealing. He had more success with his exploration and mapping work. Along with Reynold Bray and Inuit guides Kutjek and Mino, he added several new features to the charts—including a number of islands in northern Foxe Basin, one of which now bears his name—and forged the last remaining link in the coastal map of Baffin Island.

With little left to do in Arctic Bay, Graham travelled south on the Hudson's Bay Company vessel *Nascopie* in the autumn of 1937. He spent the winter in England, missing Igloolik and concerned that he had not been able to follow up on a collection of artifacts shown him by Fr. Bazin from Avvajja, near Igloolik Island. Fortunately, a grant from Cambridge University enabled him to return to Foxe Basin and resume his archaeological work, this time successfully. At Avvajja, he was able to excavate a uniquely “Dorset” site, confirming Jenness's hunch, and establishing the Dorset culture as archaeological fact. He published the results of his archaeological investigations in an article entitled “The Dorset Culture of the Eastern Arctic,” which appeared in the *American Anthropologist* (New Series 42, 1940).

News of the outbreak of the Second World War ended Graham's hopes of staying longer in the Igloolik area. He sailed south on the Roman Catholic mission vessel, *M.F. Thérèse*, enlisted in the Canadian Army, and served out the war in Europe.

The British Canadian Arctic Expedition left its mark on Igloolik's recorded oral history. Graham and Reynold



Graham Rowley with Zacharias Panikpakuttuk, Igloolik Island, 1991.

Bray (who tragically drowned in September 1938) are especially remembered. They both had Inuktitut names, Graham being Makkuktu'naaq ('the little, or likeable, young man'), and Reynold, Umiligaarjuk ('the little bearded one'). A mixture of surprise, amusement, and admiration had greeted their arrival in Igloolik by dog team in February 1937. Here were two young white men, remarkably ill-dressed, lice-infested, walking on the shanks of their skin boots, and almost out of supplies, who had journeyed more or less alone from Repulse Bay, some 200 miles away, in the middle of winter. Even more remarkably, they knew how to manage a dog team, build snow houses, and (especially Graham) communicate in basic Inuktitut. Inuit elders interviewed in Igloolik during the 1990s still remembered Graham's departure for the war and the doubts they had entertained at the time about his chances of survival. But survive he did.

Graham returned to Ottawa after the war. Still serving in the Canadian Army, he commanded the advance party of “Exercise Musk-Ox,” an operation designed to test the effectiveness of motorized vehicles in the Arctic and Subarctic regions of Canada. The assignment took him from Churchill, Manitoba, across the barrens by tractor-train to Baker Lake. Retiring from the Army in 1946, he joined the Defence Research Board, where he was responsible for Arctic research. He oversaw the Board's sponsorship and support of Operation Lyon, which brought a medical research team, including Graham, to Igloolik by R.C.A.F. Canso aircraft in the late summer of 1949. Needless to say, he took the opportunity to engage again in archaeological excavation, picking up where he had left off ten years previously, and uncovering some interesting Dorset and Thule material.

In 1947, responding to the burgeoning post-war interest in all things Arctic, Graham and his wife, Diana, along with Tom and Jackie Manning and their like-minded friends, founded the Arctic Circle Club, an Ottawa-based association that quickly became the focus for all those with northern interests. The club's journal was aptly named the *Arctic Circular*. Issued frequently in its heyday, under Diana Rowley's deft editorship, the *Circular* gave an unequalled glimpse into Arctic research, development, and administration, particularly in the first two decades following the war. The final issue of the journal appeared in 1998; the Club, however, continues to thrive.

In 1951, Graham began his 23-year career with the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (later Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), serving first as Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, responsible for the coordination of government activities in the North, then as Scientific Adviser. In this latter capacity, he was closely involved with the planning and establishment of the Eastern Arctic Scientific Resource Centre, now the Igloolik Research Centre, which opened in 1975 and, through federal and now territorial administration, has supported scientific research in northern Foxe Basin ever since.

After Graham retired from the Public Service in 1974, his involvement in Arctic matters remained as passionate and as committed as ever. He co-authored, with T.E. Armstrong and G.W. Rogers, a well-received book, *The Circumpolar North*, (Methuen, 1978), and from 1981 to 1986 was a research professor at Carleton University's School of Canadian Studies, where he initiated the Northern and Native Studies program. In 1996, Graham published his memorable book, *Cold Comfort: My Love Affair with the Arctic* (McGill-Queen's University Press), an enthralling piece of writing, unique among Arctic reminiscences for its acumen, intelligence, and humanity.

The archaeological work of Graham's daughter Susan on Igloolik Island, which spanned a decade beginning in the mid-1980s, happily gave Graham the opportunity to

return frequently to his old haunts. Summer after summer, he and Diana were tireless supporters of Susan's archaeological field school organized annually for Igloolik students. Graham's vigour in the field was astounding. It seemed his ideal of peaceful contentment was a day spent excavating on Igloolik Island, preferably in miserable weather, with little or no sustenance. Igloolik, of course, was the touchstone of Graham's deep attachment to the Arctic, this area and its people being his standard of comparison for all other places in the North. He was always cheerfully aware of this bias and made no apologies for it. Some years ago, I asked him to review an article of mine, eventually published in this journal, on Igloolik's exploration history. He offered helpful comments, mentioning how much he had enjoyed it, but added, frankly, that he "of course liked anything about Igloolik"! His visits here in old age, working happily with Susan and Diana and in touch again with some of his surviving Inuit companions from the early days, particularly Aipilik Inuksuk and his family, gave Graham an enormous sense of satisfaction and completion.

Graham's professional achievements were widely acknowledged: investiture in the Order of Canada, honorary doctorates from Carleton University and the University of Saskatchewan, the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and the Northern Science Award, to name a few. He was also a past Chairman of the Arctic Institute of North America.

On the personal level, Graham will be fondly remembered by the many of us who, over the years, have benefited from his broad, interdisciplinary approach to things Arctic, his wide network of contacts on both sides of the Atlantic, his unsurpassed grasp of northern literature, and his always thoughtful advice, given freely and enthusiastically.

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