

THE ROSS SEA SHORE PARTY 1914–17. By R.W. RICHARDS. Bluntisham, Huntingdon and Norwich: Bluntisham Books and Erskine Press, 2003. Scott Polar Research Institute Special Publication Number 2 (first published 1962). ISBN 1-85297-077-4. xx + 44 p., map, b&w illus. Hardbound. £14.95; US\$26.00.

The author, Richard W. Richards, was a 22-year-old Australian scientist attached to the Ross Sea Party sent to Antarctica in support of Ernest Shackleton's 1914–17 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. His book, a personal journal, was first published by the Scott Polar Institute in 1962, more than 40 years after Richards and his teammates were marooned in the Antarctic for two years.

The short introduction provides only a glimpse of the Antarctic expeditions preceding Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Even so, the reader will quickly recognize the British approach to polar exploration during the so-called Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration: the dreadful man-hauling of heavy sledges, inadequate rations, scurvy, haphazard planning, and the reluctant use of skis and dogs. As Richards points out, the onset of scurvy was more or less constant with Scott in 1901 and 1912, with Shackleton in 1908, and with the author's own party in 1915–16.

Shackleton's plans for the Trans-Antarctic Expedition were fairly straightforward: the main party under Shackleton's leadership was to proceed to the Antarctic on the *Endurance*. From the shores of the Weddell Sea, Shackleton and a small party would attempt a transcontinental sled journey (man-hauling) across the South Pole to the Ross Sea. Concerned that not enough provisions could be transported that far, Shackleton had decided to send a second ship, the *Aurora*, with a shore party, to McMurdo Sound in the Ross Sea. The shore party was instructed to place food depots every 60 miles as far south as Mount Hope at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier, lat. 83°37' S, a distance of some 360 miles.

Following the introduction, the author describes the 40-year-old former sealing vessel that brought the expedition to the Ross Sea. The *Aurora* had been built in Dundee and was more or less a sister ship to another famous Dundee vessel, *Terra Nova*, used by Scott on his last Antarctic expedition. The *Aurora* had seen service in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. In 1884, she was involved, unsuccessfully, in a race to rescue the Adolphus Greely party and reap the promised reward. In 1911, the *Aurora* was used by the Douglas Mawson Australian Expedition. By 1914, however, the ship was well past her prime. Leaking and overloaded, she left Hobart on Christmas morning after three days of what is described as mass confusion and a frantic rush to get ready. Eighteen dogs were the last addition to the cluttered deck load consisting of petrol, coal, sheep, and odds and ends. On January 7, the party sighted the Admiralty Range flanking the western shores of the Ross Sea. The following day they made out the snowy tip of Mount Erebus on Ross Island, the “promised

land,” as the author describes it. Their destination was Cape Evans in McMurdo Sound, where the *Aurora* was to be frozen in for the winter.

When the Ross Sea Party reached McMurdo Sound in January 1915, the South Pole prize had already been snatched by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen on December 15, 1911. A British party under Robert Scott had reached the same objective five weeks later, on January 17, 1912, but perished on the way back to McMurdo Sound. In October 1909, Shackleton and his party had man-hauled their way to within a hundred miles of the Pole before turning back, barely surviving the return trip. On that expedition, Ernest Joyce had been left in charge of establishing an emergency depot, which undoubtedly saved the lives of the return party. Joyce had also served with Scott in 1900 and was the only member of the Ross Sea Party with extensive Antarctic experience. Perhaps more importantly, he was one of the few British polar expedition members who appreciated the value of using dogs to haul sledges. One of many expedition details not mentioned by the author was the fact that Shackleton had originally promised Joyce the leadership of the Ross Sea depot-laying parties, a most sensible decision considering the man's experience. However, by the time the Ross Sea Party headed for McMurdo Sound, Shackleton had changed his mind and placed Captain Aeneas Mackintosh in charge. Much of what went wrong during the Ross Sea Party Expedition can be traced directly to this carelessly executed change of leadership.

In Chapter 3, the author briefly describes McMurdo Sound and Ross Island, pointing out the location of huts used by previous British expeditions. Hut Point (Discovery Hut), about 13 miles south of Cape Evans, was built as an emergency shelter by Scott's party in 1901. The hut at Cape Evans was erected by Scott's party in 1911, and the hut at Cape Royds was built by Shackleton's party in 1907. Fast ice prevented easy access to Ross Island and not until January 17 was the *Aurora* secured along the ice a few hundred yards offshore at Cape Evans. From the outset, the reader is struck by the poor judgement and incompetence often exhibited by the expedition leader, Mackintosh. Before taking the *Aurora* a short distance toward Hut Point to unload equipment and supplies for depot laying, he unloaded 10 tons of coal and 100 cases of oil during low tide at Cape Evans—unfortunately not far enough up the shore. By the time the *Aurora* returned to the Cape, the entire depot had vanished. Meanwhile, nine miles off Hut Point, the *Aurora* was made fast to the ice edge. From here, Mackintosh ordered four teams onto the Barrier for preliminary depot laying as far south as 83°S. The author was a member of the fourth team, chosen to use the motor sledge, which broke down shortly after reaching Hut Point. With great difficulties and hardships, the other sledding parties placed their depots and returned to Hut Point, losing all but four of their eighteen dogs. The author blames Mackintosh for subjecting the dogs to a sudden, severe depot journey, without doing something to harden

them up after their long period of inactivity aboard ship. Since the author was barely involved with this episode, his impressions and statements about the dogs undoubtedly echo Joyce's description of events. Richards also fails to mention that during the final stages of the preliminary depot laying, Joyce and Mackintosh had strong disagreements over the continuing use of the dogs, who were dying from fatigue. The loss of the dogs was to have serious repercussions the following year.

Having accomplished essentially nothing, Richards and his team returned to Hut Point, where there was no sign of the *Aurora*. During their brief absence, the ship had been carried out of the sound by a blizzard. Several days later, spotting the crow's nest of the ship over the headland of Cape Evans, they lit a fire as a signal for the ship to steam back and pick them up. The depot-laying members at Hut Point, including the author, were taken aboard and brought to Cape Evans, leaving six men still out on the depot trail. The anchorage at Cape Evans was less than ideal. During the first night, the ship drifted away in heavy seas, and rigging and gear were quickly coated in thick ice. The Chief Officer, Stenhouse, brought the ship back to Cape Evans through newly formed ice and ordered steel hawsers attached to two embedded anchors on shore as part of the wintering preparations. Expedition plans called for a shore party to occupy Scott's hut while the remaining personnel wintered on the ship.

In Chapter 4, the author describes the amazing trials and tribulations experienced during the first winter at Cape Evans. Incredibly, few supplies and no equipment had been landed while the ship was nearby. During the evening of May 6, 1915, a blizzard tore the *Aurora* from the moorings, sending her out to sea. As soon as the weather moderated, the four men at Cape Evans climbed the cliffs behind their camp and scanned the sea for any signs of the ship. There were none. In early June, the six members who had been stranded at Hut Point made a hazardous crossing over newly formed ice and reached Cape Evans. In spite of being left without extra clothing, equipment, and supplies, the ten marooned men decided to carry out the original depot-laying plans for the following year. Fortunately for them, enough stores and old equipment had been left behind by Scott's party to make that feasible, as long as the larder was supplemented with plenty of seals.

Preparations for the 1915–16 depot laying are presented in Chapter 5. Given their lack of new equipment and basic clothing, the men faced a gruelling challenge. By the time the sun reappeared on August 22, stores and equipment were ready to be transferred to Hut Point. In celebration, the men had their first sponge bath in eight months. By October 1, the depot party of nine was assembled at Hut Point, ready to begin the dreary task of man-hauling heavy sledges across the vast barrier, while Rev. A. Stevens continued meteorological observations at Cape Evans. The first of three depot-laying excursions from Hut Point was carried out without the use of dogs. To begin with, the nine men tried to haul all three sleds. When that proved

nearly impossible, each sled was hauled separately by three men. Relay trips were necessary, adding three miles to the advance of one. On the second spring depot journey, Joyce insisted on bringing the dogs. Not only did they perform well, but the author admits that, had it not been for the dogs, the entire party would have perished. The third and final depot-laying journey started out from Hut Point on December 8. The men were exhausted and undernourished, and for several of them, the onset of scurvy added to their misery. At a point where the author and his party were supposed to turn back, the deteriorating condition of both Mackintosh and Spencer-Smith dictated a change in plans: all members of the depot party continued south. The monotonous, miserable march continued day after day, interrupted only by endless hours spent in ice-cold sleeping bags, waiting out blizzards while nervously eyeing diminishing rations. Cocaine was administered as eye drops to relieve the pain of snow blindness. On January 6, a defective Primus lamp caused one team of three men to turn back. They reached Cape Evans 10 days later. The remaining party struggled on. Forty miles from their final destination, Spencer-Smith was unable to continue and was left behind in a tent. On January 26, the five men reached Mount Hope, where they placed Shackleton's depot, consisting of two weeks' bagged food, three weeks' oil, and biscuits for six men. Of course all of this was to no avail—by this time, about 1000 miles away, the *Endurance* had already sunk, leaving Shackleton's party camped on the drifting ice.

The author's description of the return journey brings to mind the desperate race for life of every British Antarctic expedition prior to 1914. With Mackintosh barely able to walk and others suffering from snow blindness, the depot party reached Spencer-Smith on January 29. Unable to walk, he was hauled on the sled for the next 40 days. Only by desperate, exhausting marches did they reach each life-sustaining depot. On February 18, a blizzard halted the desperately weak men ten miles from the large depot at Minna Bluff. Only three days' rations remained: time and options were running out. Ernest Wild volunteered to stay behind with the ailing Spencer-Smith and Mackintosh, while the author and his party with the dogs struggled towards the depot. The author credits one dog, Oscar, in particular for making the difference between life and death. As Richards states, it was Oscar alone who provided the extra strength needed for the party to reach the depot. Forty miles from Hut Point, Mackintosh was again left behind, while the others proceeded to get the rapidly failing Spencer-Smith to Hut Point. Sadly he died shortly before they reached Hut Point on March 11. With no sign of the *Aurora*, the men knew that they would have to endure yet another winter in Antarctica. Their most immediate problem was to get everyone from Hut Point to Cape Evans—over 13 miles of open water.

The author describes vividly the four months spent at Hut Point before a safe crossing could be made. In early May, Mackintosh made what the author considers an ill-

advised decision. Accompanied by one other man, Haywood, he headed out across the young sea ice for Cape Evans. The two men were never seen again. The remaining Hut Point party waited until July 15 before crossing and arrived safely at Cape Evans. Ten months had passed since they began the final depot-laying journeys. In total, they had man-hauled sledges some 1500 miles, nearly twice the distance to Mount Hope and back.

In the final chapter, Richards describes his sighting of the *Aurora* on January 10, 1917. For the men ashore, the sight of the ship brought great joy, not only because of their own imminent rescue, but also for the fact that the ship had survived the blizzard that broke it away from Cape Evans nearly two years earlier. With Shackleton on board, the *Aurora* had left Port Chalmers on December 20, 1916. On January 10, 1917, as the ship reached the ice edge off Cape Royds, the crew sighted seven men with dogs and sleds coming from Cape Evans. The author recounts that the first man to reach him and the other men and shake their hands was Shackleton. The *Aurora* arrived in Wellington Harbour on February 9, 1917. Later that same year, the ship disappeared without a trace after leaving Sydney, Australia. Readers well versed in South Pole expedition literature may well say of the Ross Shore Party story, “three cheers for the dogs.” Oscar died in the Wellington Zoo in 1939. Richards died in 1985 at the age of 91.

The Scott Polar Research Institute is to be commended for re-issuing Richards’ account of his participation in the Ross Sea Party Expedition. A broader and more general readership of this work would have been well served by a new introduction to the book that was more historically inclusive than the brief statements provided by the author. One or more updated maps would also have been a great aid to the reader. Richards’ book adds little to Joyce’s 1929 account, which also served as the source for Shackleton’s description of the Ross Sea Party in his book, *South*. The account of the Ross Sea Party remains vastly overshadowed by Shackleton’s *Endurance* calamity. The fact that three men, and very nearly the entire party, died while carrying out their part of Shackleton’s lofty trans-Antarctic plans may further explain the relative obscurity of this episode, as it somewhat tarnishes the heroic shine of Shackleton’s efforts.

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HUNTERS AND BUREAUCRATS: POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND ABORIGINAL-STATE RELATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST YUKON. By PAUL NADASDY. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003. xiii + 325 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$85.00; Softbound, Cdn\$29.95.

Setting out to dispel the myth that co-management and land-claim processes are working, *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* is an important and sobering look at the nature of Aboriginal-state relations in northern Canada today. Because of the complex nature of the struggles and logic of engagement involved, Aboriginal peoples often pay a tremendous price for entering into co-management and land-claim agreements. Nadasdy’s in-depth ethnographic analysis of Aboriginal-state relations in the southwest Yukon suggests that, far from being empowering, the participation of Kluane First Nations peoples in land-claim negotiations and on the Ruby Range Sheep Steering Committee has threatened the very fabric of who they are and how they relate to land, to animals, and to each other. They have had to adopt the unfamiliar languages, rules, and assumptions of wildlife biology and property law, in some cases translating their own cultural values and understandings into a “currency” that the state can use. By accepting western European assumptions about land, animals, and property, Kluane peoples have been forced to set aside their own ways of knowing and speaking. To engage bureaucratic representatives of the state in co-management and land-claim processes, Kluane peoples have had to learn, think, act, and organize themselves in very different ways and to develop bureaucratic behaviours and institutions modelled after the state. These new patterns have engendered a host of changes and tensions that undermine the very culture and ways of life that co-management and land-claim processes were supposed to protect in the first place.

Nadasdy’s focus on the use of power and knowledge in co-management and land claims is both refreshing and long overdue, as he identifies many of the systemic barriers and insidious processes of assimilation inherent in these discourses. In fact, everyone currently involved in these processes should attempt to read *Hunters and Bureaucrats* before contemplating another decision. Unfortunately, because of the way the book is written, it may not be very accessible to those who could most benefit from its message (i.e., Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parties to co-management and land claims). Nevertheless, much of what is said in this book will strike a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of most engaged in struggles to make these processes work.

*Hunters and Bureaucrats* is actually one book and a journal article. The “book” deals with the issue of Aboriginal-state relations in co-management and how the Kluane people have been forced into accepting the language and institutions of “wildlife management” to protect their