

VANSTONE, J.W. 1965. Exploration of Alaska, 1865-1900. (Book Review.)
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POLAR PORTRAITS: COLLECTED PAPERS. By A.G.E. JONES.
Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1992. 428 p., illus. Hardbound,
£25.50. Softbound, £14.50.

Few books have more protein and less roughage than this collection of the papers of A.G.E. Jones, the noted polar and maritime historian. In 428 pages are reprinted some fifty of his articles that originally appeared in well-known journals, for example, *Polar Record* and *Mariner's Mirror* (not *Mariners' Mirror*, as is claimed in the contents page), and in some not so well known, for example, the *Falkland Islands Journal* and the *Royal Naval Medical Service Journal*. The publishers, Caedmon of Whitby, whose works on Scoresby, Rae and James Clark Ross are found on the shelves of all polar libraries, have, presumably in the interests of economy, printed direct copies of the papers as originally presented.

There are some infelicities. The most serious of these is that those articles that appeared in a page size that could not be accommodated in the volume are not included, and these omissions are some of Jones's most important contributions. More to the point, not all of those that appeared in journals the page size of which would permit inclusion are presented, such as his paper "The voyage of the *Hopefull* and the *Rose*, 1833-34," published in *Mariner's Mirror* in 1965. Less significant is that in one article, "Robert Shedden and the *Nancy Dawson*," reprinted from a note in *Mariner's Mirror*, the footnotes are not collected at the bottom of the page but are interspersed in the text. Moreover, while most of the original illustrations have reprinted well, some have had to be rephotographed or new pictures introduced, and there are no cross references with the articles, though in most cases they are obvious enough. Unfortunately, in at least one article, "Voyages to South Georgia, 1795-1820," the illustrations seem to have been completely omitted. The article "John Biscoe's Voyage Round the World, 1830-1833" is wrongly attributed in the contents to the *Falkland Islands Journal*, rather than to *Mariner's Mirror*, in which it appeared, and the immediately following article, "John Biscoe in the Falkland Islands, 1830-1832," is omitted from the contents altogether. Furthermore, the selection of articles seems to have been somewhat odd, bearing in mind the title of the book, since in one case, "Sir Thomas Slade, 1703/4-1771," the subject had no obvious polar connection at all, except for being the builder in 1759 of HMS *Carcass*, which participated in the 1773 expedition to Spitzbergen and in which sailed midshipman Horatio Nelson. All the above features are irritating and some make for uneven reading, which is accentuated by Jones's rather jerky and abrupt style.

However, this is to cavil. What a feast is here for a rainy winter's evening or an interminable flight. Each article is based upon thorough and detailed research in the archives, and those that focus on individuals present an authoritative portrait of the subject. It is in the unravelling of intricate detail of chart and log that Jones is at his strongest, and it is here that he places us most in his debt. But he goes further and seeks to exercise his historical judgment in a way that is often idiosyncratic and sometimes open to serious objection, but which is always astute and thought provoking.

Significant articles in the collection include "Scott's Transport, 1911-12," which is an account of the use of dogs, ponies, motor sledges and skis on the last expedition, two papers on James Clark Ross covering the voyage of HMS *Cove* (1835-36) and his Franklin search

expedition (1848-49) and "Sir John Ross and Sir John Barrow," in which the relations between those two titans are examined.

But it is the less significant articles, those which relate to the "small, unexamined fringes of the subject," in Jones's own words in his brief introduction, that are in some senses more interesting. Taking one of these more or less at random, "Captain Peter Kemp and Kemp Land," we find a detailed description of the background to the voyage of *Magnet*, Kemp's ship, to the Antarctic, an account of the voyage itself, during which on 27/28 December 1833 he sighted that part of the continental coast now named Kemp Land, and as much as is known about Kemp himself. Jones also examines the question of whether Kemp was or was not the discoverer of Heard Island, based upon his "observation" of land in the appropriate area on 27 November 1833 and, after a detailed analysis of all the evidence, concludes that he was not and that the credit should indeed go to Captain John Heard, after whom the island is named. At once, this is an interesting and informative article. And yet it is clear that Jones is no storyteller; otherwise he would never have permitted himself the throw-away line early in the article that "On 21 April Captain Kemp fell overboard and was drowned."

The book is replete with articles of this type. On reading them, one becomes aware of the breadth and depth of Jones's interests and, in the case of this reviewer at any rate, of the limitations of one's own knowledge. Any selection of those most meriting mention must be personal, but one would contend that anyone interested in polar history would find something worthwhile. The reviewer's preference would be for those articles relating to the Franklin search, that on James Clark Ross mentioned above, "Frederick John Hornby" and "Robert M'Cormick, Deputy Inspector General RN," although Jones's view of M'Cormick seems unduly censorious. Certainly, a surgeon who did not lose a life in seven years of polar service was either not as bad as Jones makes M'Cormick out to be or incredibly fortunate. Further articles in this group are "Captain Robert Martin: A Peterhead Whaling Master in the 19th Century" and "Henry Pegler, Captain of the *Fore-top*" (of HMS *Terror*). Martin was captain of the last ship to have contact with Franklin before the disappearance and Pegler is one of the very few 19th-century seamen for whom it is possible to construct a biography.

To sum up, this is a most valuable publication at a very modest price. One trusts that the publishers will consider preparing a companion volume containing the rest of Jones's papers in order that his complete works be available in easily accessible form.

Polar Portraits is available directly from the publishers, Caedmon of Whitby, Headlands, 128 Uppang Lane, Whitby YO21 3JJ, United Kingdom.

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GUIDE TO MARINE MAMMALS OF ALASKA. By KATE WYNNNE.
Illustrated by PIETER FOLKENS. Fairbanks: Alaska Sea Grant College
Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1992. Softbound.
US\$15.00.

This is a very "user friendly" guidebook to the marine mammal fauna common to waters offshore Alaska. In the preface, the author states that the guide "is intended to be informative yet readable, complete yet brief and equally useful in a fisherman's wheelhouse, tour boat stateroom, or biologist's backpack." Overall, the author has succeeded on all accounts. The guide's size, spiral binding and color-coded pages — keyed to three sections depicting 1) cetaceans, 2) pinnipeds, and 3) fissipeds — facilitate flipping through entries to locate specific identifiable traits for the subject at hand. This quick and easy access to basic information is, after all, what a guidebook should provide.