

BOOK REVIEWS

The Falkland Islands and their Natural History by Ian J. Strange. David and Charles, Newton Abbot, Devon. 1987. 160 pp., illustrated. £12.95. ISBN 0 715 38833 9.

This book by Ian Strange, a well-known naturalist resident in the Falkland Islands since the early 1960s, comprises six chapters on this archipelago of more than 340 islands, which range from the two major islands of East and West Falkland down to small islets occupying a few square metres. The first and the last chapters deal, respectively, with the discovery of the islands and their settlement. The other four chapters give an overview of the landforms, plants, animals and relevant historical events of, in sequence, the coastal regions, the offshore islands, the interior and mountain regions, and the lowlands and plains. There is, in addition, a short bibliography of pertinent publications, a chronicle of the salient historical happenings affecting the islands, a selected list of the plants, birds and mammals, and an index.

This is neither an encyclopaedia nor an exhaustive account of the plants and animals of the Falkland Islands. Rather, written in the first person, it is one man's odyssey, frequently punctuating his story with extensive quotations from the journals and other publications of early visitors such as Darwin, Byron, Hooker, Moody (the first Governor) and the masters of numerous sealing and naval vessels, both British and foreign. Ian Strange is first and foremost an ornithologist, as is revealed, for example, by his perceptive comments on the Johnny rook or striated caracara (*Phalcobaenus australis*). This raptor was apparently much more abundant in the early days of settlement than it is currently. It has been much persecuted for its supposed depredations on stock, but the author considers that its major error was in being too inquisitive about man and all his doings. Twenty-four years ago, when Ian Strange afforded me great hospitality and assistance during a botanical study in the Falkland Islands, he was already fascinated by the Johnny rook; clearly, the love-affair still continues. But this book is more than an account of a bird-watcher's rambles. To be sure, penguins and upland geese, albatross, oystercatchers and prions, rightly, figure prominently, as do seals, trout and krill. However, the author places these into the perspective of their environments, outlining the plant communities, geological features, water-relations and human impacts, which so shape the current scene. As a botanist, I was somewhat disgruntled to note that the celebrated and showy Falkland Islands endemic, *Nassauvia serpens*, found no place in the book, even though the stone-runs, to which it is now virtually restricted, are given a full treatment, while the pale maiden (*Sisyrinchium filifolium*) should now be recognized as part of *S. junceum*, widespread in Patagonia. But these are very minor carpings. In a rather 19th-century style, and no worse for that, Ian Strange takes the reader to various parts of the Falkland Islands, describes what he sees in the perspective of what is known and allows some access to his thoughts and hopes. As a convinced conservationist, his short epilogue on current and future trends in the archipelago is especially pertinent.

This book is an excellent 'read', but the many photographs are an especial treat. All taken by the author, they are of uniformly high quality, though some of the captions might have been a little more helpful (perhaps I just wanted to know where some of them were taken to let me return there in my imagination). Whilst it is invidious to select any of the photographs for special note, I must say that the one entitled 'Early morning mist on Carcass Island' (pp. 94-5), whilst not overtly

biological, conveys most of the magic and interest of these islands, which the author knows and helps others to appreciate. The book is well produced, reasonably priced and should be read by anyone interested in the life of the Falkland Islands.

DAVID M. MOORE

The Antarctic Treaty Regime: law, environment and resources edited by Gillian D. Triggs. Cambridge University Press, 1987. 233 pp+1 map, 12 figures and 2 appendices. £30.00. ISBN 0 521 32766 0.

This publication originated primarily from the *Whither Antarctica?* conference held in April 1985 at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law. Most chapters represent unrevised versions of conference papers, although three chapters have been added, including two by the editor. Although the title implies a wide-ranging survey, this book possesses nevertheless a strong legal emphasis, a point accentuated by the conference's location and by the fact that the editor is a lawyer at Melbourne University.

It begins by recognizing in the opening chapters the manner in which the Antarctic Treaty has fostered the development of Antarctica as 'a continent for science'. David Drewry and Richard Laws, an appropriate SPRI/BAS duo (when the chapters were written), present a clear, expert and concise overview of the nature of Antarctica and of scientific work therein, with particular reference to the logistical and financial burdens, the balance between fundamental and applied research, the contribution of international cooperation, and the 'very limited knowledge' still on such aspects as the continent's geology, climatic history, sea ice and resource potential. These introductory chapters, while intended primarily for the general reader, can be regarded even by scientists as useful summaries and reference sources.

Drewry describes Antarctica as 'a unique yet integral part of the environmental systems of planet Earth', and those wishing to investigate the wider context might profit from his subsequent paper designed in part to place science in the 'broader geopolitical milieu' and to remind us that 'science is only one of several spheres which make up the total sum of a country's activities in Antarctica' (Drewry, 1986).

One chapter, which has been added since the conference, by Hazel Fox, is on the relevance of Antarctic studies to the lawyer, or at least to the international lawyer. It identifies four key areas for detailed legal analysis: the validity of sovereignty claims, the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty (e.g. the implications of article IV), the treaty regime structure, and future possibilities in the context of such challenges to the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) as that deriving from the common heritage concept. This framework leads smoothly into Gillian Triggs' analysis of selected legal issues, including sovereignty, common heritage, the impact of the Law of the Sea Convention, and decision-making processes of the ATS. This chapter throws up various points for debate, most notably, regarding the inter-connection of politics and law; thus, she concedes that the common heritage principle possesses 'no independent legal content' and stresses that the issue of participation in the treaty regime is 'a political rather than an essentially legal one. However this part of her argument would benefit from the use of case studies designed to cast light upon the acquisition of Consultative Party status. Triggs, discussing the common heritage approach, claims that the Antarctic Treaty already includes various common heritage elements such as environmental protection, but this does not obviate the need for the ATS to remain dynamic and flexible.

Elsewhere in the volume Rolf Trolle-Anderson, a Norwegian diplomat, mentions the 'deeply-rooted' nature of sovereignty claims and in turn, John Heap; (Head of Polar Regions, British Foreign Office), criticizes those who interpret Antarctic sovereignty as irrelevant, unjust and neo-colonialist, pointing to the effectiveness of territorial sovereignty as compared to universalist regimes. Obviously, this debate is of particular relevance to the future of British Antarctic Territory as well as of BAS.

The paper given by Chile's ambassador in London, Francisco Orrego Vicuña, places the current UN debate about the ATS *vis-à-vis* universalism in the wider historical context. Like most other contributors, he presses the merits of the ATS, which, as outlined authoritatively by Arthur Watts, a legal counsellor at the British Foreign Office, is moving towards the conclusion of an Antarctic minerals regime. A legal analysis of Beeby II, an early negotiating text, is offered by Triggs, even if this account has been partly overtaken by the progress of the negotiations beyond even Beeby III and IV. Later, Geoffrey Larminie of BP examines the development of a minerals regime and discusses its future possibilities in various contexts. Noting that the commercial prospects for Antarctic minerals are virtually nil he nevertheless identifies the confidentiality of geological data as a possible threat to the Antarctic Treaty.

The preoccupation with resource matters provides the foundation for contributions on conservation; thus, James Barnes of the Antarctica Project presents a kind of world park/Greenpeace view, while John Gulland of Imperial College and the FAO interprets CCAMLR as offering a balance of fishing and conservation interests preferable to alternative IWC-type models. In turn, Martin Holdgate (Dept of the Environment) and BAS' Nigel Bonner, admitting imperfections in the present regime, argue that further conservation measures should be developed through the ATS.

Basically, most contributors to the book, whether scientists, diplomats or lawyers and whether Australian, British, Chilean or Norwegian, create a positive image of the ATS as an effective, successful and evolving international system which has achieved most of its objectives. Certain contributors imply but gloss over the emerging challenge to the international acceptability of the ATS. The UN aspect is covered, albeit only briefly and descriptively, by Triggs. Zain-Araai of Malaysia ploughs a relatively lonely furrow in urging the case – this appears more moderate than many of his government's public statements – for the replacement of the ATS because of its undemocratic and elitist character.

Being derived from an early 1985 conference, the book offers minimal coverage of events during and after that year and readers seeking a more up-to-date view will need to look elsewhere (Millar, 1986; *Polar Record*; *The World Today*, November 1986). However, this particular volume provides a sound, albeit selective and pro-ATS picture; thus, the critical lobby's views receive insufficient space, while the natural stress on general trends means that individual national policies are overlooked.

Frequently, the conference discussion after papers proves of greater interest and value than the papers themselves, and, writing as someone present, perhaps these could have been included rather than covered somewhat inadequately by editorial introductions to the book's sections. Like other compilation volumes, the varying quality of the chapters in terms of content and presentation (e.g. footnoting) is paralleled by the absence of an index. However, compilation volumes are here to stay, and perhaps one could suggest that a topic suitable for a future conference and compilation book might be Britain's Antarctic policy options.

REFERENCES

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P. J. BECK

Beyond the Roaring Forties by Conon Fraser. Government Printing Office, Wellington, New Zealand. 1986. 214 pp. illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0477 01362 7.

This book is an appreciation of the remote islands south of New Zealand – the Snares, Auckland, Bounty and Antipodes groups, Campbell Island and (marginally) Macquarie Island. Generally called 'subantarctic' islands, they are no more subpolar than Orkney or the Isle of Man; all lie in waters between the Subtropical and Antarctic convergences, and are unequivocally cool-temperate in latitude and climate. The Snares and Aucklands are forested, the Antipodes and Campbell Island are swathed in tussock and other grasses, the Bounty Islands are bare, granitic humps, soilless and washed over completely in heavy seas. None has permanent ice; snow may fall in any month, but seldom persists except on Campbell Island in winter.

United by remoteness, these are inhospitable islands and, through varying degrees of chill and wetness, curiously dispiriting to man. Most were discovered by 19th-century sealers and whalers, stripped of their seals, infested with pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits, mice, rats and other aliens, and left to their fate. Sailing ships fell foul of them; the New Zealand government erected castaway depots and sign posts, and sent a ship to search the islands annually for survivors well into the present century. Settlers formed a whaling and farming colony on the Auckland Islands, sheep farming was moderately successful for a time on Campbell Island, and other islands had their quotas of voluntary or involuntary inhabitants who coaxed precarious livings from salty peat soils.

Today the islands are a nature reserve, cherished each for its own pattern of scenery, vegetation, animal life and human history. One is forested almost entirely with daisy trees and haunted by its own species of penguins; another has parrots and albatrosses nesting side by side, a third is shared by endemic sea lions and large black-and-white rabbits. Many have lonely graves of 19th century mariners, two have abandoned settlements, and the ribs of tall ships lie scattered along the beaches of many. There is a fortune in gold beneath one high sea-cliff, and for naturalists every island has a wealth of seabirds, seals, and endemic flora and fauna to be studied and enjoyed.

Conon Fraser visited the islands recently to make a documentary film. He fell heavily for what he saw, did his homework on the islands' history and background, and prepared this book in their honour. He writes well and interestingly, bringing out the islands' uniqueness in words and superb pictures. *Beyond the Roaring Forties* is an excellent book, recommended equally for reference libraries and for Christmas stockings.

B. STONEHOUSE