

survivors of Franklin's expedition had engaged in cannibalism, Lady Franklin took grave exception to this revelation and recruited Charles Dickens to counter Rae's report. Dickens jumped at the chance to discuss such a 'juicy' topic in his weekly publication *Household Words* (Dickens 1854a). Over two issues he published a discussion of Rae's report. While not blaming Rae, as having been obliged to submit a full report to the Admiralty, he proceeded to vent a vicious diatribe against the Inuit, both as to the reliability of their oral reports in general and to the probability that it was they who had been engaging in cannibalism, or even murder of the Franklin survivors. To give him his due, in a subsequent issue of *Household Words*, Dickens gave John Rae an opportunity to respond (Dickens 1854b). The contrast between Dickens's wordy, convoluted discussion and Rae's clear, well-argued, dignified and restrained response is very striking. Despite Dickens's disclaimer that it was the Admiralty and not Rae who forwarded Rae's letter to *The Times*, the British public was not prepared to make such a fine distinction, and Rae was generally vilified – which, of course, was Lady Franklin's intention.

It should be noted that while McGoogan has made a further useful contribution in making this important exchange of views, first published in what is now quite an obscure publication, available to a wide readership, it cannot, by any stretch of imagination be described as one of John Rae's 'Arctic journals'.

Twice (page 5, page 311) McGoogan has stated that John Rae discovered the 'final link in the Northwest Passage' when he discovered Rae Strait between King William Island and Boothia Peninsula in 1854. This is to ignore the fact that at that date a substantial section of what has subsequently become the most frequently used variant of the Northwest Passage further north was still undiscovered. This section, some 240 km in length, lying between Bellot Strait and the spot where James Ross discovered the north magnetic pole in 1831, has since been named Franklin Strait and Larsen Sound. This section of the passage was discovered and mapped by Sir Francis

Leopold McClintock and Sir Allen Young in the spring of 1859 (McClintock 1859), and thus became the 'final link' in the Northwest Passage (see Barr 2015a and 2015b).

In short, while there is some merit in the republication of Rae's account of his first Arctic expedition and of the exchange of opinions between John Rae and Charles Dickens in *Household Words*, McGoogan's argument as to why Rae's manuscript autobiography is incomplete is seriously flawed, and, incidentally the title of this book is totally inappropriate and misleading. (William Barr, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary AB T2N 1N4, Canada ([wbarr@ucalgary.ca](mailto:wbarr@ucalgary.ca))).

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**JOHN RAE'S ARCTIC CORRESPONDENCE 1844–1855.** Ken McGoogan (editor). 2014. Victoria B.C: TouchWood Editions. xii + 494 p, illustrated, softcover. ISBN 978-1-77151-084-4. CA\$21.95.  
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This volume represents a reprint of *John Rae's correspondence with the Hudson's Bay Company on arctic exploration 1844–1855*, edited by E.E. Rich with the assistance of A.M. Johnson, with an introduction by J.M. Wordie and R.J. Cyriax, and published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society. The correspondence, which is quite heavily annotated, consists almost entirely of letters from John Rae to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, to its secretary, Archibald Barclay, and especially to Sir George Simpson, the Company's Governor in North America (these latter being both official and private).

The correspondence pertains to all five of John Rae's Arctic expeditions, whose purpose was either to survey the remaining unmapped sections of the Arctic mainland coast of North America, or to search for the missing Franklin expedition, missing since 1845. During the first of these, in 1846–47, working from a base at Repulse Bay Rae, with a small party of men surveyed both shores of Committee Bay, Simpson Peninsula

and Pelly Bay as far north as Lord Mayor's Bay. This expedition is described in detail in Rae's book *Narrative of an expedition to the shores of the Arctic sea in 1846 and 1847*, the only book he ever published (Rae 1850).

His next expedition was aimed at searching for the missing Franklin expedition. Travelling by boat with Sir John Richardson, he searched the mainland coast from the Mackenzie Delta east to the mouth of the Coppermine River in the summer of 1848. After wintering at Fort Confidence at the head of the Dease Arm of great Bear Lake, in the summer of 1849 Rae tried to cross by boat from the mouth of the Coppermine to Victoria Island, but this attempt was foiled by ice, and he returned to Fort Confidence and headed south to Fort Simpson. Then in the early spring of 1851, travelling by dog sledge, he reached the mouth of the Coppermine again from Fort Confidence, then crossed to Victoria Island and searched its coast for some distance east, and subsequently west to Cape Back at the mouth of Prince Albert Sound, before returning to Fort Confidence.

Finally, in 1853, following his own suggestion to Sir George and the Committee, that he should fill the remaining gap in the map of the Arctic mainland coast, namely most of the west coast of Boothia Peninsula, having returned to his base at Repulse Bay in the spring of 1854, he again crossed to Committee Bay, and from Pelly Bay crossed to the mouth of the Castor and

Pollux River and headed north to Rae Strait, between King William Island and Boothia Peninsula. En route he met the first of the Inuit who were able to tell him about the fate of the survivors of the Franklin expedition; these details were later supplemented by further information provided by other Inuit at Repulse Bay, as Rae and his men waited for the ice to break up. With a view to preventing possible further fruitless searches which might be mounted in wrong areas, Rae returned south to York Factory, then back to England, with his news, the first news as to the fate of the Franklin expedition.

Rae's letters are augmented by an appendix containing 19 letters from Simpson and two from Barclay, which help to complete this remarkable correspondence. All the letters are preserved in the Hudson's Bay Company's Archives, housed at the Manitoba Provincial Archives in Winnipeg, and a citation to the original is supplied with each document. And finally Rich added biographical sketches of 52 individuals whose names crop up in the correspondence, including those of many of Rae's men. Rich also augmented the text of the letters profusely with footnotes, which, in the new edition, McGoogan has converted to endnotes.

We are clearly heavily indebted to Ken McGoogan for having made this invaluable source on the history of the mapping of the Canadian Arctic to a wider readership. And he is certainly correct in stating that the correspondence 'gives us the clearest of all windows into the mind of John Rae' (page viii). This is particularly true with regard to his relationship to Sir George Simpson. The latter is famous (or infamous) for having been extremely hard-nosed and even ruthless whenever any potential diminution of the Company's profits was concerned, yet his attitude towards Rae was one of strong approval bordering on affection. A measure of Simpson's regard for Rae is that he appointed him to the charge of the important and profitable Mackenzie River District with his base at Fort Simpson for the 1849–50 season when he had not previously been in charge of even the smallest post. Their relationship was quite severely strained on one occasion, however, when in May 1853 Rae complained about the wine with which he had been provided (page 318) when, in fact, as Sir George angrily pointed out, he had selected the wine himself, from his own cellar (page 403–404).

Since Cyriax and Wordie had provided a fairly detailed description of John Rae's background, right back to his childhood in the Orkney Islands, it was not necessary for McGoogan to repeat this information. But since those original editors had provided no information on Sir George Simpson, the recipient of most of Rae's letters, it was incumbent on Rae to fill this lacuna. He has not done so. Worse still he describes Sir George as 'governor of the HBC' (page vii). The Governor at the time was Sir John Henry Pelly. Simpson certainly never rose to such heights, although, as the Company's 'Governor in North America' he had still attained an impressively high position.

Surprisingly, McGoogan tells us nothing about the institution responsible for the compilation and publication of this correspondence, namely the Hudson's Bay Record Society. Incorporated on 29 April 1938 and funded by subscription, its mandate was to publish selected records of the Hudson's Bay Company preserved in the Company's Archives (now located at the Manitoba Provincial Archives in Winnipeg). Initially (from 1938 until 1949) the Society's volumes were co-published with the Champlain Society, but thereafter, it functioned independently on its own. The series was discontinued in 1983, by which time an impressive total of 33 volumes had been published. Until 1959 every volume was edited by Professor Edwin Ernest Rich, Master of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge University (1957–73) and Vere Hamilton Chair of Imperial and Naval History (1951–73).

As in his earlier work, *The Arctic journals of John Rae*, McGoogan returns to the theme that in discovering Rae Strait in 1854 Rae had discovered 'the final link in the Northwest Passage'. And yet McGoogan demolishes his own argument when he poses the question '[w]hy did Rae not claim that the strait he discovered represented the missing link in the only Passage navigable by ships of his time?' (page xii) McGoogan's entirely accurate reply to his own question is that 'he could not prove it. And he would not advance claims for which he had no evidence'. Indeed, in 1854 Rae had no way of knowing whether there was any straits or channels linking Rae Strait with the main east-west artery of Parry Channel further north. Specifically some 240 km of what has become a section of the most frequently travelled variant of the Northwest Passage, namely Franklin Strait and Larsen Sound, extending from Bellot Strait south to where James Clark Ross discovered the north magnetic pole in 1831, had still not been discovered and mapped in 1854. It was first surveyed by Captain Francis Leopold McClintock and his sailing master Sir Allen Young, each mapping opposite sides of the channel (each of which is visible from the other) in the spring of 1859. Thus McClintock and Young, between them, by reporting the presence of this channel became the discoverers of 'the final link in the Northwest Passage'. John Rae's achievements are impressive enough without attributing to him a false claim to fame, one which he himself never made. (William Barr, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary AB T2N 1N4, Canada ([wbarr@ucalgary.ca](mailto:wbarr@ucalgary.ca))).

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**AN EMPIRE OF AIR AND WATER. UNCOLONIZABLE SPACE IN THE BRITISH IMAGINATION 1750–1850.** Siobhan Carroll. 2015. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 290 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-0-8122-4678-0. £39.00  
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In the introduction to this thought-provoking monograph, the reader is immediately drawn into the intrigue when confronted with the statement that, in 1749, a French cartographer 'erased

the world'. What today seems logical – to provide a clear depiction of known locations on maps and to eliminate the rumoured unknown – jolted the sensibilities of eighteenth-century geographers accustomed to decorative, even speculative, representations. This less-decorative map offered fascinating blank spaces, representing unknown territory, which appealed to geographers, to explorers, and to regimes with territorial imperatives.

Carroll examines the potential for conquest and colonization, which this new approach to cartography highlighted,