

experiencing such rapid developments, it is not something that will remain current for long — probably only until the proceedings of the next international hibernation symposium are published, in fact. (E. Cruwys, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

THE ANTARCTIC DICTIONARY: A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ANTARCTIC ENGLISH. Bernadette Hince. 2000. Melbourne: CSIRO Publishing and Museum of Victoria. 394 p, hard cover. ISBN 0-9577471-1-X. Aus\$39.95.

We all know what a dictionary is — a volume we examine when we want to find the meaning and origin of a word. Since Dr Johnson's first dictionary of English, the study of dictionaries themselves has allowed an insight into the evolution of words, spelling, and meaning. And how these change!

Evolving meanings usually reflect the gentle change (not so gentle these days) of communities that themselves evolve. In the past, people tended to move over a limited area and occupation was continuous through generations. Individuals or families may have occupied one house or lived in one town for several decades — the normal security of 'home.'

Antarctic communities are very different. It is the one continent with no indigenous population or even long-term occupants. It has no language of its own. Antarctic communities are all of temporary residents, usually of fewer than 20 people over winter, and the people who live there do not choose their own companions, who are chosen by someone else for their technical expertise. Most are there for 12 months or less and most have a single term there. Thus there is not the continuity that typifies 'home.' The role of a dominant personality is very important in influencing the language of a small group. And different small groups, even all nominally speaking the same language, may develop in very different ways.

The total population of Antarcticans (excluding tourists and ship crew) who have English as their mother tongue is probably about 600 in winter and 2000 in summer. Thus, *in toto*, the chance for very rapid change and simultaneous differentiation is very strong. Add to this the different English-speaking traditions — the UK, New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and a sprinkling of other nationalities — and there is scope for the Tower of Babel, nominally all speaking the same language. It is difficult to imagine comparable small communities anywhere else, although perhaps mining camps or those on oil exploration rigs are closest. These are different because their members keep returning and a companionship develops. Furthermore, the length of occupation is not continuous but interrupted by return to 'normal' society.

Bernadette Hince has made a valiant effort to assemble a dictionary of Antarctic English. Some of it will be out of date by now and new potential entries will have arisen already. The dictionary will stand as a source of information on words and meanings in the year 2000, but even more as

a document drawing out the characteristics of rapidly changing, small, isolated communities. The dictionary is a testament to a different lifestyle and its communication needs.

While clearly a labour of love, representing an immense amount of dedicated work, the volume is not simply an idiosyncratic collection but is a genuine piece of scholarship by one who is an appropriately qualified editorial specialist who has worked in the Antarctic. Much thought has gone into choice of entry, and the entry then follows 'dictionary best practice.' This is well explained in the introduction which, surprisingly to me, does not dwell on the influences on the evolution of the language but launches quickly into the dictionary itself. The volume is somewhat different from the usual dictionary in that it refers as much to expressions or phrases as to individual words.

Some language is that of 'ordinary' people — the equivalent of those we can meet in the pub at home — cooks, carpenters, plumbers, diesel mechanics, etc. This is the rapidly changing ephemeral language, and Hince has been careful not to dwell too heavily on it. She has been careful to filter out those expressions that are one-off, and has concentrated on those that have lasted through the years.

Most entries are derived from biology, ice features, clothing, or home. Experiences in the southern and northern hemispheres are different, and thus new expressions have evolved to describe new experiences or features. Many of the words or expressions are new to me, and some (for example, 'period of averted interest') may be useful in my own writing. A high proportion of the entries is from the sub-Antarctic, especially the Falkland Islands, reflecting long British involvement there.

Some words, especially those from science, do have a long currency because the specialists or their supervisors may be long-term employees of a national Antarctic institution, or because there is a large external community with long-term continuity, for example, biologists who are part of a global community.

The volume draws out the specific use of some words (decay), transferred meanings (doggo), and how recent is the origin of some widely used and accepted words or phrases (calf or calve, for icebergs). Their wide use and acceptance probably reflects their high value. The reader can readily make a reasonable guess at the meaning of many of the entries, but there are several unique words (degomble, dingle, manked). What do you think dogloo means? The word 'impossible' also is not in this dictionary.

It was interesting, as an Australian from a nation with a long reputation for generating slang, to find that others are just as good (bad?) as we are.

The volume is well produced by CSIRO and the Museum of Victoria, both institutions with a long history of quality publication. Editorially, it is very good and I noted only one spelling error. The price is modest in Australian dollars, which means that it is even more modest in other currencies.

It will be interesting to hear readers' reactions to the absence of favourite words or expressions. If you have a reaction, I would be interested to hear it, with the reasoning behind it.

It is clear that there is an Antarctic vocabulary and that it should be recorded. Hince has made a valuable, learned start. In 50 years, there will have been much evolution, and many of these entries will have lost currency and new ones will have been generated. (Patrick G. Quilty, School of Earth Sciences, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252-79, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia.)

BRIEF REVIEWS

QAYAQ: KAYAKS OF ALASKA AND SIBERIA. David W. Zimmerly. 2000. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. 103 + x p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-889963-10-0. US\$16.95.

In 1986, an exhibition dedicated to Siberian and Alaskan kayaks was mounted in Juneau, Alaska. David W. Zimmerly, an anthropologist with an interest in these traditional craft, wrote a slim volume originally intended to be a catalogue to accompany the exhibition. Because little has been written on kayaks since then, a second edition was published by the University of Alaska Press in August 2000. This later edition contains additional material, including information about the Mackenzie Eskimo kayak.

Although only just over a hundred pages in length, this book contains everything a reader might want to know about kayaks. Intricate diagrams accompany the entries, which are organised geographically. There are chapters for Siberia (Koryak, Chukchi, and Siberian Eskimo), the Aleut, the Pacific Eskimo (Kodiak and Chugach), the Bering Sea (divided into Nunivak/Hooper Bay and Norton Sound), Bering Strait (divided into Cape Espenberg and King Island), north Alaska (Kotzebue Sound/Point Barrow, north Alaska retrieval kayak, and Nunamiut), and the Mackenzie Eskimo. In addition, there are chapters on kayak design and paddles, along with a comprehensive index, a glossary, and a helpful list of references for further reading on the subject.

The book is a good deal more than a listing of the technical specifics of different kayak designs, however. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction to the people, including their geographical distribution, and the use that each group made of the craft — whether for hunting whales and seals, for fishing, or for transport. References to historical texts that mention kayaks are also included,

along with relevant extracts from the peoples' oral history. In addition, there are sections on where readers might see examples of specific kayak types in museum collections, along with descriptions of kayak 'accessories' — such as harpoons, paddles, and deck loops for the securing of lances — that accompanied the traveller.

This short book will be an essential reference tool for anyone interested in the construction, design, and use of traditional hunting craft. The blocks of text are divided by a wealth of black-and-white photographs, diagrams, and figures. My only criticism is that the cover makes it look like a children's book — which it certainly is not.

FLOWERING PLANTS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. Robin W. Woods. 2000. London: Falklands Conservation. 108 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-9538371-0-6.

Lovers of the polar regions know that there are exciting things to be seen in the relatively depauperate biotic zones of the high latitudes, and books such as *Flowering plants of the Falkland Islands* certainly make it all the easier for people to enjoy them. This handsomely illustrated volume is sized to slip easily into a rucksack (or parka pocket) and provides concise information on the identification of 46 species of Falklands plants. The book is geared toward the non-specialist, and the author has wisely included a glossary of botanical terms and a metric ruler to make the experience of plant-hunting as easy as possible. Indeed, a botanical novice was turned loose with this book in the Falklands and had no trouble putting it to good use on a walk in the camp. The excellent colour photographs and black-and-white drawings allow for easy identification, and the accompanying text provides helpful habitat clues. The text also lists the non-Falklands range of these species, which is good for placing these plants in a 'bigger picture.'

As part of a 'project in progress' this book is a useful waypoint, but it does make one long for more information about the species included (for example, wouldn't most visitors want to know if bead plant berries are edible?) and wish that more of them were described in this volume. As it is, many of the species most likely to be encountered are not in this book, having been included in the previously published booklet *Wild flowers of the Falkland Islands* by Tom Davies and Jim McAdam. That said, the author acknowledges the limited scope of this volume, and we can only hope that progress continues on a guide to the remaining 200 or so species of Falklands plants.