

industry and thus may be a disappointment to those concerned with the conservation of the endangered species of this area.

*Simon Mickleburgh.*

**Gerald Durrell's Army** by Edward Whitley (John Murray, London, 1992, ISBN 0 7195 4949 3, 224 pp., HB £16.95)

The Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (JWPT) has had 300 trainees from 70 countries through its gates over the last 15 years, and Gerald Durrell's inspirational project to train people to fight for their countries' conservation is slowly bearing fruit. Edward Whitley, himself heavily involved with his family in promoting conservation projects including, significantly, for FFPS, followed in Durrell's footsteps around the world, visiting 26 former trainees in 10 countries – St Lucia, Jamaica, Brazil, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Mauritius, India and the Philippines. His factual, thoughtful and entertaining account should do much to publicize and promote the aims of the Durrells and JWPT.

It is a very perceptive account, as I especially appreciated when he dealt with countries with which I am familiar. While some of the subjects are making great strides in promoting more effective conservation, others face serious political and practical obstacles which prevent them from implementing what they have learnt – what they know to be essential – once they return to their jobs back home. Whitley's refreshing humour in his encounters with people and rare wildlife helps to offset such depressing problems, including the devastation that he observed in his travels around the tropics. His optimism that people will surely

realize what is going wrong in time to save the planet is reassuring and, it is hoped, realistic. *David J. Chivers, Cambridge.*

**Memories and Musings of an Octogenarian Biologist** by Colin Bertram (Colin Bertram, ISBN 1 85421 157 9, 256 pp., HB £14.95 from Images, Units 7/10, Hanley Workshops, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire WR8 0DX) and

**Memories of Three Lives** by Guy Mountfort (Merlin Books, Braunton, Devon, 1992, ISBN 0 86303 554 X, 228 pp., HB £10.95) These two very different books are by two very senior conservationists, one a professional and the other an amateur biologist. Colin Bertram, who has already written his autobiography (*Antarctica, Cambridge, Conservation and Population: A Biologist's Story*, 1987) offers 80 short essays and four short stories. Guy Mountfort, on the other hand, has written 'what amounts to an autobiography'. Both authors, incidentally served on our Society's Council in the days when it was called the Fauna Preservation Society.

Guy Mountfort's book reflects the sanguine temperament needed for his highly successful career in advertising and public relations. His three lives are his family and business, his brief wartime army interlude, and his final years in wildlife conservation, when his great achievement was the launching of Operation Tiger. He was fortunate in belonging to that all too brief period in the history of wildlife conservation when an amateur could actually achieve something. One is tempted to call it the Peter Scott period, for everything has certainly changed since that many-sided man retired from the scene.

Before World War II nature conservation was hardly seen

as a public need, and those few able people in the field, like Charles Rothschild and Mrs Lemon of the RSPB, were only able to achieve in a minor key. Between 1945 and 1980 a comparatively small group, headed by Julian Huxley, Max Nicholson and Peter Scott, created or helped to create two major international bodies, IUCN and WWF, and in Britain the Nature Conservancy Council. This was the milieu in which Guy Mountfort was able successfully to lead four pioneer expeditions, to the Coto Donana in Spain – in the heroic age when you could only get in on mule-back – the Danube, Jordan and Pakistan, and to invent and largely help to raise the money for Operation Tiger.

So he has a story to tell that few of his successors will be able to match, for conservation has now become a matter of mission statements, grant-aid applications and lobbying. The pioneers riding their mules always have the best of it!

Colin Bertram's collection encompasses a remarkably wide field, from skating on the fens near Cambridge in the winter of 1917, to musings among the wreckage of the whaling station on South Georgia after the Falklands War, passing through the tropics *en route* for a shipwreck on a river in Guyana and fishing for tuna in the Red Sea. His versatility even extends to a short poem for a cat in the Antarctic. He ends on a somewhat sombre note, fitting to one who has spent much of his life warning the world of the risks of human overpopulation. World population has more than doubled since he started to warn us.

Conservationists, especially bureaucratic ones, should read both books to see what they have missed.

*Richard Fitter.*