

eral look at the area and is beautifully illustrated with colour photographs. In **The vanishing Arctic**, Bryan and Cherry Alexander combine photographs and readable text to try to capture the life of five indigenous cultures of the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

The explorers of the polar regions, particularly the pioneers, were an intrepid breed. A good overview is provided by Richard Sale in **To the ends of the earth: the history of polar exploration**.

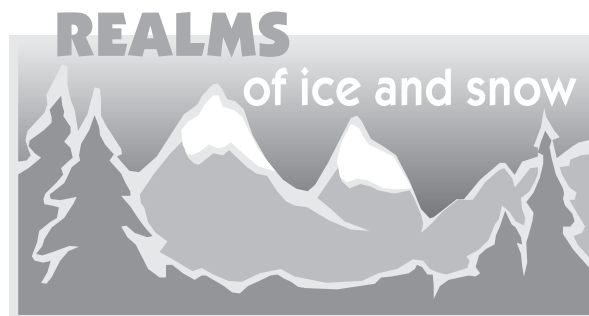
The quest for the North Pole is described in **Farthest North**, edited by Clive Holland, and **Ninety degrees north**, by Fergus Fleming, while Mick Conefrey and Tim Jordan offer a readable history of the Arctic and its explorers in **Icemen**, a companion volume to a BBC television series. **Nansen: the explorer as hero** is Roland Huntford's biography of Arctic explorer Fridtjof Nansen. The eighteenth-century search for the Northwest Passage, a sea route through or around North America from Hudson Bay to the Pacific, is the subject of **Voyages of delusion**, by Glyn Williams.

Samuel Hearne is not a name that immediately springs to mind when one thinks of Arctic exploration. Yet this eighteenth-century British sailor, who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company in the Arctic for 17 years, was the first European to travel overland across the Arctic Circle and his diaries comprised one of the first accounts of Arctic exploration. He is also thought to have been the inspiration for Coleridge's *Ancient mariner*. Hearne's story is told by Ken McGoogan in **Ancient mariner**.

In **Shipwrecked on the top of the world: four against the Arctic**, David Roberts tells the story of four Russian sailors who survived for six years after being shipwrecked on the uninhabited Svalbard archipelago in 1743. An exciting account of a disastrous early twentieth-century Arctic expedition is given by Jennifer

Niven in **The ice-master: the doomed 1913 voyage of the Karluk**.

Two names forever associated with the exploration of Antarctica are those of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Robert Falcon Scott. Over the past few years there have been several beautifully-produced books about Shackleton, superbly illustrated with photographs, many of them historic reproductions of works by



## Some books about very cold places

MARGARET ISKANDAR

### Book Selector

**A**ustere beauty and incredible cold, blizzards and life-threatening hardships, challenges, triumphs and disasters - these are some of the things we associate with the coldest parts of the earth, especially the poles.

**Antarctica**, by Mike Lucas, takes a gen-

Shackleton's photographer, Frank Hurley. These include **Shackleton, the Antarctic challenge** by Kim Heacox; **The Endurance: Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition** by Caroline Alexander; **The Shackleton voyages** by Roland Huntford; and a new illustrated edition of Alfred Lansing's **Endurance**. There is also a new edition of Shackleton's own work, **The heart of the Antarctic: the Farthest South Expedition, 1907-1909**. Sir Ranulph Fiennes, a well-known explorer and adventure traveller, was the first man to cross the Antarctic continent unsupported. (He writes of this in **Mind over matter**) His own experiences of Antarctica and his understanding of the sort of dangers and hardships involved give him a natural empathy with the ill-fated Scott, the subject of his readable biography, **Captain Scott**. One of the classics of polar exploration and travel, **The worst journey in the world**, was written by a member of Scott's expedition, Apsley Cherry-Garrard. This was originally published in 1922 but is available in a new edition, with an introduction by Paul Theroux. A man who accompanied both Scott and Shackleton was Kerry-born Tom Crean. His story is told by Michael Smith in **An unsung hero: Tom Crean - Antarctic survivor**.

Today's journeys in the far north and the far south tend to be adventure travel rather than pioneering exploration, and they are sometimes narrated with more than a touch of self-deprecating humour - though the going can still be tough. In **Cold oceans: adventures in kayak, rowboat, and dogsled** Jon Turk writes of various excursions he and his wife Chris have taken over the years in the Arctic regions. Patrick Woodhead's **Misadventures in a white desert** tells of a small group of young men skiing to the South Pole. Catherine Hartley's **To the poles without a beard** gives an entertaining account of her adventures and misadventures when she took part in two extreme tourism expeditions: to the Antarctic in 1999 and the Arctic in 2001. Caroline Hamilton narrates the story of five women's journey by ski and sledge in Antarctica in **South Pole 2000: five women in search of an adventure**. In **Between two poles** Amyr Klink tells how he realised his dream: to attempt a solo voyage from Brazil to Antarctica and then cross the Atlantic to the North Pole. The dangers encountered at the poles are not always the obvious ones. During her year-long stay at

the Amundsen-Scott Research Station in Antarctica, Dr Jerri Nielsen had to treat herself for breast cancer, as she relates in **Ice bound: one woman's incredible battle for survival at the South Pole**. The poles are amongst the places described by David Hempleman-Adams in his account of his life and expeditions, **Toughing it out: the adventures of a polar explorer and mountaineer**.

Russian researcher Nikita Ovsyanikov spent several years in the Arctic studying polar bears at close range. In **Polar bears: living with the white bear** he writes about his experiences and the lives of these fascinating animals. Gary Paulsen's **Winter-dance** describes Alaska's marathon Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

A few books about travels to other regions traditionally associated with extreme cold are **This cold heaven: seven seasons in Greenland**, by Gretel Ehrlich, Colin Thubron's **In Siberia**, and Roger Took's **Running with reindeer: encounters in Russian Lapland**.

As beautiful, icy and inhospitable as the polar regions are the world's high mountains, and towering above them all, literally and metaphorically, is Everest. George Band wrote **Everest: 50 years on top of the world** to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first successful ascent to the summit by Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953. This attractive title is well illustrated with black-and-white and colour photographs. Hillary's own account of the historic climb, **High adventure** has been reprinted with a new introduction. Tenzing's son, Jamling Tenzing Norgay, led the 1996 IMAX Everest expedition. In **Touching my father's soul: a Sherpa's journey to the top of Everest** he writes about both his own experiences and about his father.

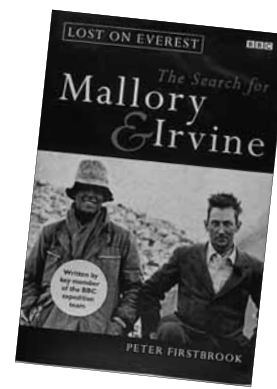
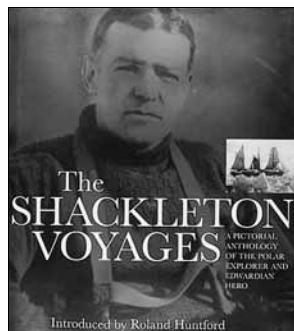
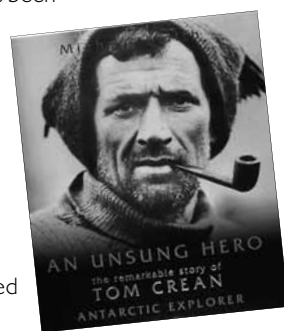
In 1999 an expedition discovered the body of George Mallory on Everest. He and Andrew Irvine had perished in an attempt to conquer Everest in 1924. The story of the discovery and of Mallory and Irvine is chronicled in **Lost on Everest: the search for Mallory & Irvine and Ghosts of Everest: the authorised story of the search for Mallory & Irvine**. Journalists Peter and Leni Gillman provide an

intriguing portrait of Mallory in their biography, **The wildest dream: Mallory, his life and conflicting passions**. Julie Summers has used previously undiscovered letters to write about Irvine (her great-uncle) in **Fearless on Everest: the quest for Sandy Irvine**.

Distinguished mountaineer Reinhold Messner combines a tribute to Mallory with meditations on the spirit of mountaineering and the attitudes and motivations of climbers past and present in **The second death of George Mallory: the enigma and spirit of Mount Everest**. Among Messner's other mountaineering titles is **The crystal horizon**, an account of his 1980 solo ascent of Everest.

In **Doctor on Everest**, Kenneth Kamler (who has accompanied four expeditions) tells what it is like to practice medicine at high altitudes and in freezing temperatures. South African climber Cathy O'Dowd was the first woman to climb Mount Everest from both the north and south sides. She writes of this in **Just for the love of it**.

Finally, here are a few points to ponder about ice. It may seem strange, but ice can be treated as a commodity. In the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, selling naturally-formed ice was an established trade. Gavin Weightman describes this in **The frozen water trade: how ice from New England lakes kept the**



**world cool.** Ice is a powerful preservative. The frozen remains of mammoths, extinct for 4 000 years, have been found (**Mammoths**, by Adrian Lister and Paul Bahn) and in 1991 a frozen mummy emerged from an Alpine glacier. It proved to be that of a prehistoric man who lived some 5 000 years ago. Brenda Fowler writes about the mummy and about the scientific research and controversies sparked by the discovery in **Iceman**. Most people have heard of Ice Ages but there is a theory that some 700 million years ago there was an extreme ice age that turned the whole earth into a gigantic snowball. Gabrielle Walker discusses this in **Snowball Earth: the story of the great global catastrophe that spawned life as we know it**. If this theory is correct, the world was once a very, very icy place indeed.