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CAPTAIN ALFRED RITSCHER, 1879 - 1963

by V. von Brunn

The name of Alfred Ritscher may closely, though indirectly, be associated with South African expeditionary teams operating in the Atlantic sector of Antarctica; the area shown as Ritscher Upland on a number of Antarctic maps (e.g. USAF Global Navigation and Planning Chart, 1961, 1-5,000,000) lies to the south of SANAE base, while the Ritscher Peak (Wohlthat Mountains) in western Dronning Maud Land, is one of the highest rock exposures in Antarctica.

A brief glance at Ritscher's life history reveals him as having been not only a seaman, but also an airman and a polar explorer who has published much, including several papers on aerial navigation. For his outstanding services rendered in both the Arctic and the Antarctic, Ritscher was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz and the silver Kirchenpauer Medal of the Geographic Society in Hamburg. Furthermore, he was elected as first chairman of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Polarforschung.

One of the most remarkable features in Ritscher's career is the part he played in the rescue of the ill-fated Schroeder-Stranz expedition in 1912-13. Captain Ritscher had been appointed master of the expedition vessel, *Herzog Ernst*, which sailed for Spitzbergen in summer 1912. Disaster befell the expedition when the leader, Lieutenant Schroeder Stranz, with three of his companions, disappeared on a reconnaissance journey. Not long afterwards the ship was enclosed by heavy pack-ice in the Treurenburg Bay and Captain Ritscher had to beach her in order to prevent the vessel from being crushed by the encroaching ice. As there was sufficient food for only another four months left on board, the majority of the expedition members decided to attempt to reach the mining settlement of Longyearbyen on Advent Bay, a distance of 210 km away. The ventures proved to end in failure—three men perished and six others were forced to find shelter in disused huts, due to foul weather and increasing darkness, as winter was approaching.

Alfred Ritscher, realising the precarious situation, set out alone on skis, accompanied only by an expedition dog, Bella, to seek aid for his crew and members of the expedition. In polar darkness and at temperatures varying from -27 to -29°C he accomplished the 210 km journey across Spitzbergen in $7\frac{1}{2}$ days, with only very little food, and without a tent or sleeping bag. Prevailing low temperatures did not permit much time for resting; however, when fatigue overwhelmed Ritscher, he lay down to sleep, pulling a rucksack over his head and covering his feet with snow. In his gloved hand he held against his ear an alarm clock which would wake him again after 10-15 minutes. When making lengthy detours around an ice-fjord he broke through thin ice and had to continue on the final 55 km of his journey without a prolonged pause. In a state of delirium and near-collapse, with both feet and a hand frozen, Ritscher succeeded in reaching Longyearbyen on the 27th of December 1912. On the following day he organized a rescue expedition from his bed, but as a result of mist and incessant blizzards the rescuers were forced to return to base after having abandoned all their gear. Telegraphic aid was sought from Germany. In April 1913, members of the Schroeder-Stranz expedition and crew, who had meanwhile managed to return to the *Herzog Ernst*

were rescued by Norwegian and German rescue teams. The expedition vessel was later brought back to Tromsø, still in good condition, by her master, Captain Ritscher.

In 1938, Ritscher, on merit of his wide polar and aeronautical experience, was appointed leader of the "Third German Antarctic Expedition", 1938-39. The scientific programmes of this expedition were to be a continuation of those previously carried out by the Erich von Drygalski (1901-03) and Wilhelm Filchner (1911-13) Antarctic expeditions, and were thus to include biology, geophysics, geography, meteorology and oceanography. The ship to be used by the expedition was the M.S. *Schwabenland* (ex-*Schwarzenfels*, built 1925) which was equipped with scientific instruments and two catapult-launched flying boats of the Dornier-Wal type. Apart from the scientific team, two aircraft pilots and two aerial photographers joined the expedition. The "Schwabenland Expedition" (as it has also become known) was sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (which, together with the German Hydrographic Institute is at present conducting oceanographic research from the new vessel *Meteor II*, launched in 1964).

During the short period of time that the *Schwabenland* steamed off the coast of Dronning Maud Land, from the 19th January to the 15th February 1939, aerial reconnaissance and photography of the hitherto still unknown inland areas was carried out between meridians 20°E and 12°W , and from the edge of the ice shelf down to latitude 78°S . On these photogrammetric route-flights a total number of 11,600 aerial photographs (18×18 cm) and 2,285 m of 16 mm film was taken over a flying distance of 16,000 km. The area was named Neu-Schwabenland within which the major geographical units constitute the Wegener-Inlandeis of the polar plateau, the newly-discovered mountain ranges, namely the Wohlthat Massiv and the Mühlig-Hofmann Gebirge, and the Ritscher Hochland, west of the Penck trough. No names were designated to the coastal areas, as the Norwegian names, Kronprinsesse Märtha-Kyst and Prinsesse Astrid-Kyst were recognised. The flying boats landed on the ice on one or two occasions but sledging journeys were not undertaken by the "Schwabenland Expedition". Meteorological work included 119 radiosonde soundings, in the South Atlantic Ocean (36 of them south of the polar circle) while depth sounding was also carried out with echo-sounders in the Antarctic coastal waters.

The weather had been particularly favourable for the aerial reconnaissance work, but the political climate in Europe was meanwhile deteriorating rapidly. Shortly after the return of the expedition to Germany, World War II broke out. In the dark years that followed, several of the expedition's young scientists were killed and much of the valuable data collected by the "Schwabenland" team was destroyed, including the geophysical material which was lost in the fire which gutted the Geophysical Institute in Leipzig. Captain Ritscher set himself the exceedingly difficult task of publishing that which could still be saved. In 1942 the first volume of "Wissenschaftliche und fliegerische Ergebnisse der Deutschen Antarktischen Expedition 1938/39" appeared, followed by the

second volume in 1958. A preliminary copy of the Neu-Schwabenland map (1-500,000) based on photogrammetric data, was published two months after the return of the expedition and was presented at the International Whaling Congress in London. A revision of the map was completed in 1952 and includes data collected by the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition (1949-52) which had carried out valuable field work within the Dronning Maud Land area reconnoitred by Ritscher's expedition before the war.

Mountain ranges, peaks, nunataks, etc., shown on the Neu-Schwabenland map bear the names of outstanding scientists (e.g. Alexander Humboldt Gebirge, Penck Mulde), polar explorers (e.g. Filchner Berge, Drygalski Berge), expedition members (e.g. Gburek Spitzen, Regula Kette, Barkley Berge, Lange Platte), or personalities associated with the organisation of the expedition (e.g. Wohlthat Massiv). As a matter of interest it may be added that the two cone-shaped dolerite nunataks, Boreas and Passat, which were visited by members of S.A.N.A.E. I (1960), were originally called Kugel (ball, bullet) and Kegel (cone) by the pilots for whom they served as useful landmarks on their reconnaissance flights into the interior. Captain Ritscher, when he flew over these outcrops himself, suggested that the names be changed to Boreas and Passat, the names that had been given to the two aircraft. The names given to the various geographical objects by the German Antarctic expedition were accepted and published in the "Bundesanzeiger" (No. 149, Aug. 1952) and were taken over by the U.S.A. "Gazetteer" (14. Antarctica, 1956). The Russian expeditions based at Novolazarevskaya, in Dronning Maud Land, have apparently accepted the German names and have also added more of their own. On a 1-2,500,000 geological map accompanying a preliminary report in the "Information Bulletin" of the Institute for Arctic Geology (Leningrad, Vol. 25, 1961), names such as Vol'tat Massiv, gory Hofmann, gory Hermans and Drygalskogo are shown. The

latest (1961) 1-250,000 Norwegian maps show some changes and also additions of names to both small isolated rock outcrops, e.g. Robertskollen (=Witte Spitzen on the 1952 Neu-Schwabenland map) and to major topographical features such as Gjaever-Ryggen, Jelbartisen and Jutulstraumen.

Those who knew Alfred Ritscher personally have described him as a man of tall, broad-shouldered stature who bore out perseverance and endurance, but also one of great modesty, restraint, and cautiousness, a person with wisdom in leadership, combined with an ability of grasping the essential. Towards his subordinates he showed great respect, encouraged interest in their tasks and guided them as a companion.

On the 30th of March 1963, Captain Alfred Ritscher passed away in Hamburg, having attained an age of almost 84 years.

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- Note: The writer is greatly indebted to Frau Ilse Ritscher, Hamburg, for having kindly made available much of the above information.

THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH (SCAR)

by J. J. Taljaard

Whenever I hear or see the name SCAR I think of a practical joke played by Dr. T. Gjelsvik of the Norwegian Polar Institute on Dr. Gordon Robin of the Scott Polar Research Institute. The occasion was the official dinner given in the Castle, Cape Town, in honour of the delegates to the Seventh Meeting of SCAR in September, 1963. Dr. Gjelsvik handed round a book and asked all the delegates and advisers to sign it for presentation to Dr. Robin as a token for his many years of devoted service as Secretary of SCAR. The book was entitled "The Scar", but it was nothing more than a cheap, soft-cover novel, showing a man with a blood-stained gash across his arm!

Before the International Geophysical Year of 1957/58 a special committee was established by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) to plan and co-ordinate the scientific programmes for this period of international co-operation. A sub-committee of CSAGI, as this special committee was called, was appointed to take care of the programmes of the twelve nations which undertook investigations on Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands. These nations were Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. I attended (by chance) one meeting of the Antarctic Committee in Paris in June 1957.

As the IGY neared its conclusion some of the nations which had established scientific stations in the Antarctic felt that it would be a great pity to close their stations after only two or three years, with so much remaining to be investigated. The United States took a lead in this matter and so it happened that ICSU established its Special Committee for Antarctic Research, SCAR, in 1958. This Committee met for the first time in the Hague in 1958, where its constitution and the main recommendations for the scientific programmes were drafted.

In the constitution it is stated that "SCAR is . . . charged with furthering co-ordination of scientific activity in Antarctica, with a view to framing a scientific programme of circumpolar scope and significance". As a non-governmental body with limited funds it can act only in an advisory capacity, but in practice it is found that its recommendations bear great weight in the formulation of the Antarctic programmes of the participating nations.

Because the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research is the South African institution adhering to ICSU, it is appropriate for the CSIR to liaison with SCAR and not the Department of Transport. The Department provides the funds for supplying and maintaining our stations on Antarctica, Marion and Gough Islands.

Soon after the establishment of SCAR, national committees for Antarctic research were formed by the member nations, including South Africa. The South African National Committee for Antarctic Research, SANCAR, was composed of the co-ordinators of the various scientific disciplines, together with representatives of the Departments of Transport, External Affairs and Defence and of the universities. Mr. M. P. van Rooy, Director of the Weather Bureau, was chairman of SANCAR until 1962, when the organization was reconstituted. A Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research was established within the CSIR and Dr. S. M. Naudé became chairman. The Scientific Committee advises an Inter-departmental Committee, consisting of the Secretaries of Transport, and External Affairs and the President of the CSIR, on the scientific aspects of the research programmes at SANAE and the islands.

When the Antarctic Treaty was drafted and ratified by the twelve "Antarctic nations" during 1959/61, SCAR felt apprehensive of maintaining its position as scientific advisory body for Antarctic research, but at their first meeting in Canberra in 1961 the Treaty powers decided that SCAR should be looked upon by governments as the appropriate body for making recommendations on scientific research in Antarctica. Reassured by this governmental blessing and of its continued existence, SCAR changed its name to Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research.

Since its establishment in 1958 SCAR has assembled regularly each year. I have been privileged to attend four of the eight annual meetings held so far, viz. those in Canberra (1959), Cambridge (1960), Cape Town (1963) and Paris (1964). A suggestion in my report after the Cambridge meeting, viz. that South Africa should invite SCAR to meet in Cape Town in 1962, germinated successfully, but invitations from New Zealand and the U.S.A. had already been deposited and so South Africa got its turn only in September 1963. The Cape Town meeting, I feel sure, was one of the most enjoyable and sociable meetings of SCAR held to date.

To facilitate the co-ordination and formulation of research programmes in Antarctica, SCAR established eleven working groups for the various scientific disciplines and other essential activities, such as logistics and radio communications. These working groups constitute the scientific core of SCAR. They meet once every second or third year with SCAR, or at other suitable occasions, but during the intervals deliberations are carried out by correspondence. They sponsor occasional symposia on Antarctic investigations, e.g. the exceptionally successful symposium on Antarctic geology which was held in Cape Town during September last year.

SCAR members publish annual reports which contain information on work done during the preceding year and the planned programmes for the next year. The South African reports for the past few years can be obtained from the Information Branch of the CSIR, which is responsible for compiling and publishing the reports.

The Eighth Annual Meeting of SCAR was held in Paris from 24th till 28th August this year. South Africa was strongly repre-

sented by Dr. S. M. Naudé (delegate) and four advisers, viz. Prof. van Zinderen Bakker (biology), Mr. A. M. van Wijk (geomagnetism and upper air physics), Mr. W. C. Watson (cartography) and myself (meteorology). The delegation was chosen in order to have representation on all the working groups which had to meet on this occasion. Three members of the delegation had considerable other work to carry out in Europe.

I will not attempt to discuss the lengthy reports and recommendations approved by the meeting. The atmosphere was cordial, even between the representatives of South Africa and the U.S.S.R. As far as my knowledge goes this was the first meeting of SCAR at which representatives from all twelve SCAR countries were present.

An important decision was taken about future meetings of SCAR. It was decided that SCAR will in future meet only when the Executive considers that a meeting is justified. Thus the next meeting will probably be held in 1966 in Chile. It will be the occasion for celebrating ten years of international scientific co-operation in the Antarctic.

NEWS FROM SANAE AND THE ISLANDS

SANAE—23rd July:

We here at SANAE welcomed the return of the sun on 21st July, having seen it last on 27th May. During the past two months, spent mostly indoors, we have found that man is indeed able to conquer his environment. Indoor life has not been found to be so much of a handicap as anticipated. During these months all possible indoor work was done in anticipation of the coming summer, including the ordering of all next year's supplies. Our indoor supply of diesel oil is also running short and this means some back-breaking work after the inactivity of winter. With the return of the sun we expect to see the snow petrels and skuas soon again. The skuas will pester the huskies in the hope of getting a stray scrap of seal meat.

Various problems have been experienced with our motorised toboggan but we hope to use it soon for a short trip to the sub-station, which is only three kilometres from the edge of the ice shelf. We should be able to inspect the frozen buktas in the vicinity.

Another coreless winter is being experienced again, for down here the winters do not reach a climax. Weather conditions oscillate back and forth. This phenomenon is characteristic of Antarctic winters and should normally continue for another two months.

Our doctor and deputy leader, Tollie Traut, has been keeping a close check on our health. Every now and then a blood sample is taken and numerous tests performed with same. He states that everybody is in good health. We also undergo exposure tests from time to time, when the doctor takes numerous body and skin temperatures within a fixed time interval. We simply love these tests. The husky, Flap, was seriously ill recently, but after treatment he is now recovering.

SANAE—30e Julie:

Met die son se verskyning is die winter wat ons betref verby en gaan ons vol goeie moed die tweede helfte van ons verblyf aanpak. Voorbereidings word getref vir die veldekspedisies. Buite-aktiwiteite neem toe namate die dae langer word. Die lang, donker winter is nou 'n herinnering wat ons nie sal vergeet nie. Die hoogtepunt was natuurlik midwintersdag, wat ons baie lekker gevier het, maar daar was ook drie verjaarsdae om te vier, naamlik dié van Tollie Traut, Noel Jay en Trevor Robertson. Die verjaarsdagvierings is altyd baie gesellig. 'n Besondere ete word vir die aand voorberei deur die kok op diens en daarna lewer Zac Ezekowitz, ons seremoniemeester, sy toespraak ter ere van die jarige. Presente word uitgereik en toesprakes word oor-en-weer gelewer. Veral Trevor Robertson verstaan die kuns om lank te praat en tog niks te sê nie. Die manne se harte trek maar sterk huis-toe. 'n Paar kalenders met kleurprente wat Rheta aan Skroef van Zyl gegee het is uitgedeel en pryk nou in die kamers en woonvertreke.

SANAE—27th August:

The long Antarctic summer is just round the corner now. Back are the dark glasses to protect our eyes from the glare of the snow. It is not surprising that with summer approaching there is already talk of going home, particularly among the married men.

Monday, 24th August, saw the departure of geomagneticist Trevor Robertson, geologist Andre du Plessis and diesel mechanic Noel Jay on a geomagnetic survey past the old Norwegian base, various ice rises, numerous buktas and on to the sub-station. We wish them good luck with this trip and hope the weather will be

kind to them. At the base Trevor's geomagnetic programme has been taken over by Zac Ezekowitz. Together with Tollie Traut he will also manage Andre's driftsnow measurements. Franco du Toit is meanwhile taking care of Trevor's airglow apparatus.

With the advent of warmer weather outdoor work can be undertaken more readily now. Pieter de Waal is busy erecting a new rhombic antenna beamed on Mawson. We extend congratulations and thanks to mechanics Koos Pretorius and Noel Jay for getting the muskeg and Oliver tractor snow-worthy again. This took much painstaking effort at very low temperatures.

Ionosphericist Zac Ezekowitz keeps his ionospheric programme going very efficiently. The vertical incidence programme has been functioning soundly so far. The ionosonde transmits every quarter hour and by now we are all used to its never-failing noise caused on the radio receivers. Zac compiles reports of the values obtained from the ionograms and these reports are regularly transmitted to the Republic. He also runs an oblique incidence programme between SANAE and Rhodes University in Grahamstown. He intends to install an oblique incidence receiver soon for which an extra rhombic antenna will have to be erected. Last but not least, Zac plays a major role in the handling and feeding of the dogs. He hopes to stay at SANAE for a further year. In fact he has already applied for the post of geomagneticist. We wish him good luck.

MARION—28e Julie:

Hier op Marion gaan dit baie goed. Die ballonne gaan mooi hoog op en veral die Darex-ballonne gaan klokslag hoër as O mb—"into outer space", as'tware. So van die buitenste ruimte gepraat, Steve en Wolfie is ywerig aan die vuurpyle maak. Een van die dae as die wind weer so sterk waai dan stuur ons 'n rocketsonde op. Hulle salpeter-en-suiker-aangedrewe vaartuie het dusver 'n knaende onwilligheid getoon om die aarde te verlaat. Die rookwolke en indrukwekkende lawaai is darem daar. Hulle verseker my dat die verdere ontwikkelings later sal kom. Juliemaand was die maand van die groot "droogte" hier, vanweë toegeeste waterpype vir etlike dae. Hier was net geen water beskikbaar vir ander doeleindes as koskook en drink nie. Ons moes mettertyd amper daaglik water uit die poele in die riviertjie pomp vir skottelgoed was. Verder word die dae reeds langer. Die klein albatrossies word nou groot. Almal sien net uit na Desembermaand se skip. Ons het 'n ernstige tekort aan tamatiesous. Wolfie kom kort-kort tevoorskyn met 'n konkoksie wat hy tamatiesous noem. Cedric Roberts maak weer gemmerbier en yslike potte van die goed staan aljimmers in die spens en gis. Ons sal so 'n bietjie by die R.S.A. smous as hulle in Desember hier aankom.

MARION—1st September:

This has once more been a very cold month on Marion. We had some heavy snowfalls and at one stage actually experienced a real blizzard with drifting snow and zero visibility. We had the opportunity to use unusual parts of the present weather code. In some places snow piled up to three feet and everybody, including Oubaas (the dog), enjoyed frolicking in the snow. Meanwhile everybody on Marion seems to be making something. Roberts of P.W.D. hammered together a trumpet to call the family for meals. This diabolical instrument is rapidly driving Oubaas past his normal state of semi-madness. A model steam engine was constructed by the local Met and, strange to tell, the thing actually

works with the application of two blowlamps and a primus. We intend building a go-cart this month but the project is still definitely in the planning stage. In view of the growing tendency to put on weight, people can be found at odd hours of the day doing physical jerks and weight-lifting, but in view of the uneven struggle against odds, some have already given it up again. In short we are all healthy and happy here on Marion Island.

GOUGH—12e Augustus:

Hier op Gough is die onderwerp wat die tweede meeste bespreek word, die naderende koms van die kreefskepe na hierdie uithoek van die wêreld. Soos maklik verstaan kan word is die belangrikste besprekingspunt natuurlik die gehalte van Suid-Afrikaanse rugby. Dit gebeur ook slegs die enkele kere wanneer Noord-Transvaal, die Vrystaat en selfs Westelike Provinsie nie onder bespreking is nie. Die toetsneerslaag (teen die Franse) het so 'n indruk op party van die manne gemaak dat hulle reeds die reëls van dameshokkie deeglik bestudeer het. Die vernaamste dryfveer vir hulle toetrede

tot die spel sal natuurlik die feit wees dat dit so 'n vinnige spel is. As 'n mens egter die weer van die afgelope paar maande in aanmerking neem sou waterpolo miskien 'n meer paslike spel gewees het. Op die tradisionele vraag: "Hoe gaan dit?" kan ons as maatstaf van ons welvaart die feit noem dat selfs die trietsige rooi hoendertjies (of was dit kuikens?) wat saam met ons gekom het, nou so tuis voel dat hulle ons toegooi onder die eiers. Die hoender vraagstuk het sulke buitensporige afmetings begin aanneem dat ons al etlike Sondae genoodsaak was om afsprake vir ons geveerde vriende met die oond in kombuis te reël. Dit was 'n dowerende sukses, sodat die hoenders nou dikwels in die kombuis onthaal word. Ons oorvol spyskaart word verder aangevul met die enkele verdwaalde kreef wat hulle weg na ons nette vind. Selfs die gehardste Vrystaters onder ons het al 'n sagteplekke vir die rooi krappe ontwikkel. Ons hoop dat die 5e Augustus 'n gedenkwaardige geleentheid sal word want op daardie dag is 20 eiers in die plaaslik vervaardigde broeikas geplaas en al wat ons nou kan sê is dat almal in spanning wag om te sien of dit 'n broeriery of brouery sal uitloop.

NEWS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Meeting of 30th July 1964: This meeting was one of the most successful held by the Association to date. It was attended by 27 members and about 80 visitors, most of them Pretoria Boys' High School and Afrikaanse Seuns Hoërskool pupils.

Two films were shown, viz. "Die Koue Suide, Deel 3" and "Scott's Last Journey".

"Die Koue Suide, Deel 3" deals with the activities of the third South African National Antarctic Expedition. It shows the erection of the buildings of the present SANAE, trekking over from the old to the new base, life at the new base, the scientific programmes and the summer expedition to the mountains. Most members of the team co-operated in taking the film, sometimes under severe conditions. Martin du Preez, leader of SANAE III edited the film and it was produced by State Film Productions (Department of Education, Arts and Science). The film is in colour and forms a worthy record of SANAE III. It is also obtainable in English.

The following members of SANAE III attended this first public showing of "Die Koue Suide, Deel 3" and they were introduced by Martin du Preez: Henry Fulton, Sean Kavanagh, Charles Lautenbach, Dirk Neethling, Douw Moller and Sewes van Wyk.

"Scott's Last Journey" is a masterful composition of the photographs and filmed record of the fateful last expedition of Captain Robert Falcon Scott in 1910/12. Herbert Ponting's photographs, many of which are masterpieces which can hardly ever be excelled, are skilfully used to give the impression of motion. These photographs are interwoven with the cine film and so the effect of the still photographs are hardly noticed. Dr. Frank Debenham, one of the expedition's geologists, was interviewed and this personal link with the expedition lends a great deal of reality to the film.

Vergadering van 31e Augustus 1964: Mnr. W. A. Nieman van die Aardrykskunde-departement van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika het oor seeys gepraat en veral oor die ystoestande wat gedurende die vaart van die "RSA" ondervind is in Desember 1962/Januarie 1963 na en van SANAE. Mnr. Nieman het 'n weldeurde dagte bestudeerde voordrag gelewer oor die vorming van seeys, die vorme waarin dit voorkom en die prosesse wat dit gedurig vervorm, naamlik waterbewegings, die drukking van wind, sneeuneerslag en smelting. Dit was besonder welkom om die Afrikaanse benamings van die veeltallige vorms van seeys in 'n voordrag te hoor. Mnr. Niemann het kleurskyfies van die ys wat hyself geneem het vertoon. Hy het ook kortliks melding gemaak van die seetemperature wat gedurende die vaart gemeet is. Soos by vorige geleenthede is die skerp daling wat die Subtropiese Konvergensie kenmerk weer by 42/43°S gevind; daarna betreklik vinnige afname tot by die Antarktiese Konvergensie naby 51°S en dan die stadige afname verder suidwaarts tot by die ongeveer -1.5°C wat gewoonlik gevind word waar die pakys aanwesig is.

Suid-Afrikaanse Antarktiese Medalje

The following members of the S.A.A. Medal Award Committee were appointed:

W. J. Chapman (chairman), I. H. Lloyd, E. R. Boden, with Mrs. C. M. Taljaard as *ex officio* secretary.

Nominations for the 1965 award of the medal were stipulated to be deposited before 15th September.

Uitstalling by die Pretoriase Industriële Skou

Die Vereniging het 'n spesiale poging aangewend om 'n interessante uitstalling te hou by geleentheid van die jongste Pretoriase Industriële Skou. Bo-en-behalwe die materiaal wat deel is van die Permanente Wetenskaplike Uitstalling is daar vanjaar 'n model van die stasiegeboue van SANAE, asook 'n versameling van Antarktiese gesteentes te sien gewees. Die stasie Modelle is deur die Departement Vervoer geleen en die gesteentes is deur die Geologiese Opname uitgestal. Die model van Antarktika, wat deur die Aardrykskundedepartement van die Witwatersrandse Universiteit geskenk is, is ook vir die eerste keer gedurende die Industriële Skou te sien gewees. 'n Aantal fotos van Antarktika en die Eilande is deur die Weerburo geskenk.

OBITUARY: PROFESSOR R. W. JAMES

Professor James was one of the three honorary members of the South African Antarctic Association. We were fortunate to have received a contribution from him for publication in the *Bulletin* shortly before he died in Cape Town on 7th July of this year. This article appeared in the previous number of the *Bulletin*.

Reginald William James was born in Paddington, London, on the 9th January, 1891. He was educated at the Polytechnic School, Regent Street, London, and at the City of London School. In December 1908 he won an Entrance Scholarship for Natural Science at St. John's College, Cambridge and on leaving the City of London School in July 1909, he also won the Beaufoy Mathematical Scholarship, tenable at Cambridge. He entered St. John's College in October 1909 as a Foundation Scholar and obtained First Class passes in Physics, Chemistry and Geology. After obtaining the B.A. degree in 1912 he worked as a post-graduate student in the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, under Sir Joseph Thomson from 1912 till 1914. Meanwhile he also obtained the B.Sc. degree of the University of London, with First Class Honours in Physics in December 1913 as an external student.

From July 1914 till November 1916 he took part in the ill-fated "Endurance Expedition" of Shackleton to the Weddell Sea. From 1917 till the end of the War he was in France with the Royal Engineer's Sound Ranging Section. For the next 18 years he was on the staff of the Physics Department of Manchester University under Professor W. L. (now Sir Lawrence) Bragg. He specialised in X-ray diffraction and published several works of high standard on this subject.

From 1937 to 1957 he was Professor of Physics at Cape Town University and from December 1956 till January 1958 he was Acting Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University.

He was awarded the Polar Medal for participation in Shackleton's Expedition. In 1938 he was elected to Fellowship of the Royal Society of South Africa, of which Society he was President during 1950-53. The D.Sc. degree (*honoris causa*) was conferred on him by the University of the Witwatersrand in 1957.

The Association elected him as honorary member in his capacity as an Antarctic veteran which chose to settle in South Africa. The first South African Antarctic Expedition under Hannes la Grange in 1960 also honoured him by naming one of the sledges after him.

(The editor wishes to express his gratitude to Mrs. Anne James and Prof. E. S. W. Simpson for supplying the above details of Prof. James' career.)