

GALAPAGOS: A NATURAL HISTORY GUIDE

by M.H. Jackson

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Despite the recent flood of Galapagos books, this latest one covers a somewhat different field from the rest and so meets a different need. It is neither a slim pocket guide such as M.P. Harris's *Field Guide to the Birds of the Galapagos* nor yet an authoritative compilation of scientific information written by experts on their specialist subjects, such as *GALAPAGOS* in the Pergamon Press's *Key Environments* series. Mr Jackson's guide book falls somewhere between the two and he very properly draws freely on these and other sources. It is a substantial soft-backed volume dealing with the historical background, the environmental setting, conservation problems and information for visitors, as well as eight substantial chapters on the various divisions of wildlife (plants, reptiles, seabirds, etc.). There is also a 15-page bibliography to help those who wish to give further study to particular aspects and a useful checklist of plants and animals.

The author's history is a little less accurate than his natural history but this is not a matter of great moment: scientists often fail to check historical information with the care they would consider obligatory in their own disciplines. Mr Jackson is a sound biologist and knows the islands intimately, having taken part in the Cambridge University Darwin Centenary Galapagos Expedition as well as serving for years as a naturalist guide. He writes simple, straightforward English with a minimum of scientific jargon even in his chapter on Colonisation, Evolution and Ecology. When he is driven to use technical expressions, he explains them.

Altogether this is a useful addition to Galapagos literature. How I wish there had been a comparable book when I first visited the Galapagos a generation ago.

G.T. Corley Smith

ANOTHER DARWIN CENTENARY

On 22 December 1985, one of Charles Darwin's grandchildren, Lady Barlow, reached the age of 100. She has always taken a very keen interest in her grandfather's papers and has published a number of books on his work. Under the name of Nora Barlow she edited *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*, Cambridge Univ. Press (1933), *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle* (1945) and *Darwin's Ornithological Notes* (*Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)* 1963). She also wrote *Darwin & Henslow: the Growth of an Idea* (1967). Her publications are frequently cited in current scientific papers, though the change of her name on marriage must frequently obscure her Darwin descent. Her son, Captain Sir Thomas Barlow, was Secretary General of the Darwin Foundation from 1967 to 1972.