

Does Anyone Read Lake Hazen?

C. Ian Jackson was one of four graduate students who embarked upon Operation Hazen, part of Canada's contribution to the 1957-58 International Geophysical Year. Their work at the weather and research station at Lake Hazen on Ellesmere Island exposed them to unusual cold -- 121 days with temperatures below -40o -- as well as isolation. The failure of their radio shortly after their arrival deprived them of contact with the world beyond. Based on lengthy letters written to his fiancée during their twelve month separation, this account of the physical challenges, intellectual excitement, and quiet rewards of Operation Hazen is an engrossing and often humorous narrative in the tradition of some of the classic accounts of polar exploration.

C. Ian Jackson was one of four young graduate students who embarked upon Operation Hazen, part of Canada's contribution to the International Geophysical Year in 1957-58. Their work at the Defence Research Board weather and research station at Lake Hazen on Ellesmere Island exposed them to unusual cold - 121 days with temperatures below minus 40°C - as well as isolation. The failure of their radio shortly after arrival deprived them of contact with the world beyond, notably with news of the launching of Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite, until months later, when the radio could be repaired. Jackson describes the scientific measurement and research he and his companions conducted, their adventures on northern Ellesmere Island, and the practical uses of a light airplane and a prototype snowmobile, harbingers of the future of scientific research in the high Arctic. With charm and insight he vividly details camp living conditions and cuisine, mechanical failures and resourcefulness, and survival strategies for avoiding tedium and personal conflict. Based on lengthy letters written to his fiancée during their twelve-month separation, this account of the physical challenges, intellectual excitement, and quiet rewards of Operation Hazen is an engrossing and often humorous narrative in the tradition of some of the classical accounts of polar exploration.

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