



THE Malaspina Glacier, Alaska, is the largest of the world's piedmont glaciers and a superb example of folding due to glacial flow. This picture comes from the new paperback edition of *Glaciers* by Michael Hambrey and Jürg Alean (Cambridge University Press, £12.95, \$15.95), a well-illustrated introduction for lay people. Hambrey has also just written a more detailed textbook on the science of regions dominated by snow and ice: *Glacial Environments* (UCL Press, £40 (hbk), £14.95 (pbk)).

The map book

David W. Hughes

The Guide to the Galaxy. By Nigel Henbest and Heather Couper. Cambridge University Press: 1994. Pp. 265. £35, \$49.95 (hbk); £17.95, \$24.95 (pbk).

In the 1930s the problem of surveying our own Galaxy was likened to the problem of drawing a map of London based on observations made when sitting on the back of one of the lions at the foot of Nelson's Column on a foggy day. It was the cosmic equivalent of the forest problem: one could not see the wood for the trees.

But things have changed enormously in the intervening years. Instead of just relying on the light from stars, astronomers now have information from radio waves, millimetre waves, infrared radiation, ultraviolet radiation, X-rays and gamma rays. What was once supposedly an assemblage of ageless stars gyrating sedately through empty space is now a maelstrom of molecular and atomic gases, interspersed with clouds of dust and intertwining magnetic fields, all this being churned by the birth throes and death throes of stars.

Nigel Henbest and Heather Couper lay special emphasis on the pan-spectral nature of today's attempts to discern the shape and structure of the Galaxy we live in. They also stress the way in which our

understanding has developed, and their book abounds with portraits of past astronomers who have dedicated their lives to galactic mapping.

The Guide to the Galaxy is aimed at the nontechnical reader. There are no equations and very few line drawings. What the book does have, however, is both a superb collection of images and maps and an eminently readable text. The maps are especially fine and have been drawn for the book by Julian Baum. Here we see diffuse atomic hydrogen regions and hydrogen molecular clouds represented by different colours and intensities, these regions being interspersed by nebulae, stars and star associations. These maps make the whole structure of the Galaxy spring to life and the book's careful positioning of maps and images is a great aid to understanding the complexity of our star system.

The text is also first-class. After exploring the local neighbourhood and being convinced that our glade is just a typical neck of the Galactic wood, we are then encouraged to wander along the Perseus, Orion and Sagittarius arms before being transported to the mysterious regions of the Galactic Centre. The bubbling enthusiasm of the two authors springs from every page. They are Galaxy fans and gleefully enjoy taking the reader on this voyage of exploration. □

David W. Hughes is in the Department of Physics, University of Sheffield, The Hicks Building, Sheffield S3 7RH, UK.

New in paperback

The Private Lives of Albert Einstein by Roger Highfield and Paul Carter. Faber and Faber, £8.99. The authors "have used Einstein's personal correspondence, some of it discovered as recently as 1986, to produce a narrative that reveals him to have experienced angst and joys not uncommon to most mortals" (Arthur I. Miller, *Nature* **366**, 371; 1993).

Toward the Habit of Truth: A Life in Science by Mahlon Hoagland. The autobiographical memoirs of one of the pioneers of the biochemistry of protein synthesis. Norton, \$12.95, £9.95. Reviewed by Sydney Brenner in *Nature* **345**, 675; 1990.

From Stone to Star: A View of Modern Geology by Claude Allègre. Harvard University Press, \$16.95, £13.50. "Highly readable and deeply informative. . . An excellent introduction to the exciting geohistorical discoveries made in recent decades. . . it will serve alike the needs of the geologist and the general reader" (Gordon L. Herries Davies, *Nature* **358**, 719; 1992).

Fossil Horses: Systematics, Paleobiology, and Evolution of the Family Equidae by Bruce J. MacFadden. Cambridge University Press, £15.95, \$29.95. "A timely and readable text, a good advertisement for the biological fruits that the palaeontological tree can bear" (Adrian Lister, *Nature* **365**, 118; 1993).

DNA Fingerprinting by M. Krawczak and J. Schmidtke. BIOS Scientific, £16, \$30. An introduction to genetic fingerprinting and profiling. Aimed at lawyers and students of medical genetics, forensic science or medicine.

The Hutchinsonian Dictionary of Science edited by Paul Lafferty and Julian Rowe. Helicon, £12.99. Contains over 5,000 A-Z entries and 20 "feature articles".

How to Write about Biology by Jan Pechenik and Bernard Lamb. HarperCollins, £6.99. A guide for students that covers, among other topics, lab reports, essays, research papers and proposals, job and graduate-study applications and oral presentations. Geared towards British and European undergraduates and postgraduates, the book is an adaptation of the second edition of Pechenik's US forerunner, *A Short Guide to Writing about Biology*.

A Stillness in the Pines: The Ecology of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker by Robert W. McFarlane. Norton, £10.95. An ornithologist looks at the plight of this endangered species that is unique to the southeastern United States.