Phanzine

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A memorable conference

The lion's share of this issue is devoted to looking back at our inaugural conference. It was, by popular verdict, an almost unqualified success. Great speakers with good topics certainly played their part, as did a superb venue and excellent food. New Zealand's first public history conference was long overdue in the minds of many but was well worth the wait.

October marked the 25th anniversary of the Waitangi Tribunal. There's no getting away from the fact that Treaty related research has proved a boon for historians. The Tribunal might be under more pressure than ever at present but we should all be grateful to an organisation that gave historians a chance to write history outside the academy. And it gave history a central role in New Zealand's public life for perhaps the first time.

This is our last issue for the year and the editorial committee hope you have enjoyed this year's crop of *Phanzines*. Don't forget the AGM on 7 December at the head office of the Historic Places Trust, Antrim House, 63 Boulcott Street, Wellington. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

All the best for 2001!

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Keynote speech: Dwight T Pitcaithley

Chief Historian, National Park Service

If your task is the commemoration of historic sites using public money, then be sure you are fully aware of whose history it is that you are commemorating. This was the message of keynote speaker at the PHANZA Public History Conference.

Dwight Pithcaithley is chief historian of the United States National Park Service. He grew up in New Mexico and his first major was in music at Eastern New Mexico University. He was on active service in the Vietnam War where he was wounded, receiving a Purple Heart. This was a life-changing experience which also gave him the opportunity for further study, taking a PhD in history at Texas Tech University. Although he has been with the Park Service for most of his career, which began in 1976 in Santa Fe, his appointment as Chief Historian was and continues to be seen as bringing a fresh, bold and challenging new approach to the administration. In 1998 he was president of the National Council on Public History.

History and memory in the United States: some thoughts on the art of structures amnesia

Prior to 1970, in the United States, there were few sites that commemorated the role of African Americans in American history, none that commemorated the role of women, and few, very few, that honoured writers and artists of the American past. The National Park Service collection of historic sites tended toward political and military themes.

The United States has not always been conscious of its past; new nations don't tend to think in those terms. While monument building began shortly after the Revolutionary War, it was not until a century later, during the latter decades of the 19th century, that Americans began forming historical and preservation societies and, in a collective sense, staking their claim, taking ownership of public memory. Michael Kammen has neatly chronicled this rise in memory consciousness in his expansive *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture.* But memory is different from history and arguments over the past tend to focus on ownership issues of who, or what group, is entitled to speak for the past. These arguments also have much more to do with the present than with the past.

Ever since history has been included in the public school curricula, there has been public debate over what kind of history should be taught. After the Civil War Southerners were concerned that history texts were not sensitive enough to the South and its institutions and launched a highly organized and unrelenting campaign to correct what they interpreted as misperceptions about the war and its causes. So successful was this revisionist effort that Northerners voiced the opinion that history texts, "slandered the North and the cause of the Union, ...depreciated the value of our troops, and represented that the South was in the right, and that the army which saved the Union was a wicked aggressor."

Following World War I, some textbooks favoured this country's English roots more than some thought they should. In response to textbooks that suggested that American constitutional practices had their source in English institutions one critic charged that "Such is not American history." "Such disparagement in revised school history is not mere unintentional error,...these and other gross alterations recently made in ten of our school histories, are a direct result of definite design and organized propaganda" conducted by "propaganda associations pussyfooting among us...to deaden our respect for our own birthright, inoculate us with contempt for our free institutions and fit us for coercion of re-colonization."

Within this early 20th century debate, the New York *Evening Globe* offered this calming and instructive corrective:

> The controversy over school histories is largely between defenders of doctrine and defenders of free inquiry, between those who do not believe that children can be trusted with the truth and those who believe that they can....A true American history need not rob us of the story of Paul Revere or the reverence for George Washington, but it will teach that personal anecdotes are not the life of a nation, that great men as well as mean men flourish in every generation....

That observation is no less true today than it was in 1922.

Another major thread that runs through public history discussions is the almost inherent tension between history and heritage. David Lowenthal has done much to clarify our thinking in this regard in his *The Past is a Foreign Country* and most recently in *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History.* In essence, Lowenthal's distinction is this: history "explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time, heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes." History involves the open and constant inquiry in any and all aspects of the past. Heritage, on the other hand, "passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group

with prestige and common purpose." Its, heritage, is largely left unexamined, unquestioned.

It is probably more useful to think of all history involving a bit of heritage and all heritage as involving a bit more of history. Nevertheless, an understanding of the "Lowenthal Dialectic" permits us intellectual entry into many, if not most, of the public history debates of the past decade in the United States.

One aspect of public history is the effort to remember the past through the erection of monuments, the development of museums, and the authorization and interpretation of historic sites. All of these involve the negotiation of the past between interested publics and historians and other scholars. The results of these negotiations can be enlightening, as in the case of the Smithsonian Institution's decision to use the Japanese internment during World War II as its contribution to the Bicentennial of the US Constitution.

Public monuments even more than museums and historic sites, reflect present day sensibilities over historical realities. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, for example, says much more about American memory in 1920 than it does about Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Because monuments and memorials go largely un-interpreted, they are argued over even more. The National Park Service is presently involved in two controversial memorial proposals in Washington. One addresses the appropriate location, size, and design of a monument to World War II. The other involves a monument to Japanese Americans where the Japanese American community itself is divided over the appropriate text for the site. Memorials run the added risk of becoming obsolete, of losing the emotional power of the moment or of becoming objectionable as cultural and societal sensibilities evolve. The emotional power that the public invested in General Ulysses S Grant's tomb in New York City during the early years of this century has waned as the Civil War generation passed on and their children and grandchildren attached less and less personal meaning to the monument. It will be interesting to observe how the passage of time affects the public's perception of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington. See Sanford Levinson's *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies.*

Washington County Courthouse

It is historic sites, however, that hold the most interest for me and possess fascinating rhythms and dynamics that link the public and their past with specific places managed by governmental agencies. How the past is moulded and packaged at these places becomes the subject of public debate as the meaning of history and heritage is argued. The fact that public funds are involved increases the intensity of the engagement. Historic sites become representative of collective memory at two levels. First, the very sites selected for inclusion of a national system of public parks is instructive on how a society thinks of itself. Prior to 1970, in the United States, there were few sites that commemorated the role of African Americans in American history, none that commemorated the role of women, and few, very few, that honoured writers and artists of the American past. The National Park Service collection of historic sites tended toward political and military themes. Secondly, the public's memory of the past is affected by the stories that are told at existing historic sites. If those stories match existing preconceived notions about the past, controversy is avoided. If new scholarship or increased cultural sensitivities lead to a revision in the story that is different from the dominant and publicly accepted narrative, things can get interesting. Over the course of the last 10 years, the National Park Service has been affected by both these elements. The Service itself has recognized that preserving special places is a beginning not an end, that the meanings embodied in cultural properties should take centre stage, that agencies that manage these places have educational responsibilities to the societies they serve.

The United States Congress has encouraged, even mandated, this expansion of purpose through the addition of parks whose history focuses on the contradictions of our democratic and egalitarian manner of government. Manzanar National Historic Site forces us to remember the federally imposed abrogation of civil liberties of Japanese Americans during World War II. The preservation of Monroe Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas commemorates the Supreme Court decision ending public school segregation in the United States. Nicodemus, Kansas stands as a tribute to black Americans who forged new communities in the West following racial violence that was visited upon them during the failed attempt at Reconstruction following our Civil War. And the creation of Little Rock Central High School is symbolic of the countless confrontations between white Americans and black Americans as the United States stumbled toward the Jeffersonian goal of equality for all Americans.

This shift in public, or at least federal sentiment, seems to have its source in the 1991 re-designation of Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana. This, the site of the annihilation of George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry by overwhelming numbers of Lakota, Arapaho, and Cheyenne warriors had, since 1946, been treated as a shrine to Custer. As with most shrines, the goal was not to present a balanced presentation of the event for the edification of the visiting public, but to immortalize George Armstrong Custer. Nine years ago, Congress changed the name of the park from Custer Battlefield National Monument to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, directed the National Park Service to institute a more balanced interpretation of the battle in accordance with current scholarship and, through an open competition, erect a monument to the Indians who were killed that day in 1876. The monument will occupy a spot directly opposite the tour road from the 19th century monument to the Seventh Cavalry. This new direction in the meaning and purpose of historic sites began a re-examination within the National Park Service of its interpretative philosophy, the result of which is a new commitment to public education that encourages park managers to deal forthrightly with controversial or contentious historical issues, present balanced and intellectually provocative interpretative programmes, and, in general, treat history as an exploration, not as a destination.

It should be noted that in 1996, Congress established Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, a park that recounts the 1868 massacre of a Cheyenne and Arapaho village by the Seventh Cavalry under the command of, yes, George Armstrong Custer. Custer sealed his victory by destroying more than 1,000 buffalo robes, 500 pounds of lead, 500 pounds of powder, 4,000 arrows, all the lodges, and killing 700 captured horses. History has a way of coming full circle. Eight years later, on the banks of Montana's Little Bighorn River, Sioux chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse achieved retribution for the attack at Washita by destroying Custer and his Seventh Cavalry. Washita and Little Bighorn are bookends of sorts in the history of Indian/Anglo conflict in the American West.

The National Park Service is also involved in public discussion and debate over the interpretation of Civil War battlefield sites. At the conclusion of his analysis of the Confederacy and the development of the New South, Gaines Foster observed that, "The rapid healing of national divisions and damaged southern self-image, however, came at the cost of deriving little insight or wisdom from the past. Rather than looking at the war as a tragic failure and trying to understand it, or even condemn it, Americans, North and South, chose to view it as a glorious time to be celebrated. Most ignored the fact that the nation had failed to resolve the debate over the nature of the Union and to eliminate the contradictions between its equalitarian ideals and the institution of slavery without resort to a bloody civil war. Instead, they celebrated the war's triumphant nationalism and martial glory."

Foster's assessment also describes the approach traditionally taken by the National Park Service in its interpretation of the Civil War. Over the 60 years during which the Service has managed Civil War battlefields, the agency has adopted a highly descriptive approach to explaining its Civil War parks. National Park Service-generated literature, films, and exhibits of the Civil War are filled with descriptions of troop movements and flanking actions and casualty numbers, but very little analysis of the meaning of the battle, a context for understanding the battle in the larger purpose of the war, or of the causes of the conflict itself. One walks away understanding much about what happened in a particular place, but very little about why it happened. Such an approach, while not inappropriate in and of itself, does not, however, promote an understanding of the war, its causes, and its place in American history.

The managers of the Service's Civil War battlefields, realizing that descriptions of battles alone do not lead to understanding of war, met in August of 1998 and decided to add to the military events an assessment of the war's causes and consequences. Interpreting historic sites in the context of the times in which they gained national prominence is fundamental to National Park Service educational programmes. Presenting that context occurs at sites as diverse as Women's Rights National Historic Park, site of the 1848 Women's Rights Convention; Marsh, Billings, Rockefeller National Historical Park which commemorates the conservation movement in the United States; and the USS Arizona Memorial which remembers the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. But interpreting the causes of the Civil War at battlefield sites turns out to be highly controversial. A portion of the American public is adamantly opposed to it. Some believe, and believe strongly, that only military events should be discussed at battlefield sites, others believe that a discussion about the causes of the Civil War might lead to a discussion about slavery. This group, in spite of scholarly evidence to the contrary,

USS Arizona Memorial

denies that slavery was a cause of the Civil War. In short, they argue, military history is good; any attempt to explain why these armies were at each others' throats is bad. The editorials and letters attacking the National

Park Service for its expanded interpretative programmes are useful in understanding how emotionally Americans feel about their history, particularly the history of the Civil War.

One editorial encouraged readers to "write your Senate and House Members ... and tell them that battlefield interpretation should be about battles and not about subjective judgements on socio-cultural trends which happen to be politically correct at a particular point in time...." A lawyer from Florida wrote, "I suspect that this decision has been made and that it is a decision promulgated in the interest of political correctness. Political correctness is hypocrisy at best; at worst it is falsehood. I am not impressed by Pitcaithley's citation from a report by NPS park superintendents. They are as infected with political correctness as any other federal employee. Like the Soviet Union in the 1930s, the United States government is trying to change past history." A Virginian wrote, "These Great Battlefields are the only means by which we true lovers of American History can get a full understanding and complete account of what actually took place in regard to the battle and the men who fought it. Why and how those two armies got to that battlefield is irrelevant at the point of the battle. The only thing that matters at that point is WHAT happened and not why. Allow the NPS to deal only with facts about the battle and leave the why to the educators."[3] And finally, a short email message from Massachusetts titled "Site tells lies." "Slaves was NOT the cause of the war between the states! Y'all don't know your history very good! Sad to say."

As these letters attest, passions run high on subjects dealing with the Civil War. For its part, the National Park Service is being guided by the philosophy that organized killing requires an explanation, and organized killing on the scale of the American Civil War demands it. What the Service is confronting is the effects of over 100 years of Southerners trying to find meaning, vindication, and perhaps redemption in a war that dealt them a crushing defeat, not only militarily, but also socially and economically. At the opening of the war in 1861, slavery, states' rights, and Constitutional concerns joined together as the reasons for secession. Following the war, Southern politicians and former Confederate officers sought to explain the war in the loftier cause of states' rights alone and engaged in a widespread and organized and highly successful effort to revise the meaning of the war. The thorniest issue the United States confronts today is the legacy of slavery. Racial inequality continues to persist in much of the United States 225 years after Thomas Jefferson's eloquent assertion of human equality. It is the hope of the National Park Service that by opening a national discussion on the causes of the war and confronting the war's origins in the South's "peculiar institution," the public will not only gain a clearer understanding of the war and battlefield sites, but also find a way of exploring, assessing, and addressing the pressing contemporary issue of race.

Robin Winks, the noted Yale historian, once wrote, "The true test of the nature of national character is in what people choose, by a conscious act, in the face of contending choices, to preserve. These visible symbols of the past, survivors of a fierce competition for national attention, make tangible the past that would otherwise remain obscured." This nation's historic places likewise are individually and collectively symbolic of how New Zealand chooses to remember itself. They are, in a very real and physical way, your society's memory.

Parks are places to teach about natural and cultural heritage. And teachers, the best teachers, have always understood the power of objects, images, and place to enhance understanding. Museums are obvious places where learning occurs with real objects. But learning also occurs in real places, the places where events actually occurred, the places where people intersected with other people and other species of living things and with the environment. That reality, the tangibility of place and the authenticity of place, defines the primary reasons parks are wonderful places for learning. That is as true for learning about "nature" as about human experience, about the environment, and the context of human endeavour.

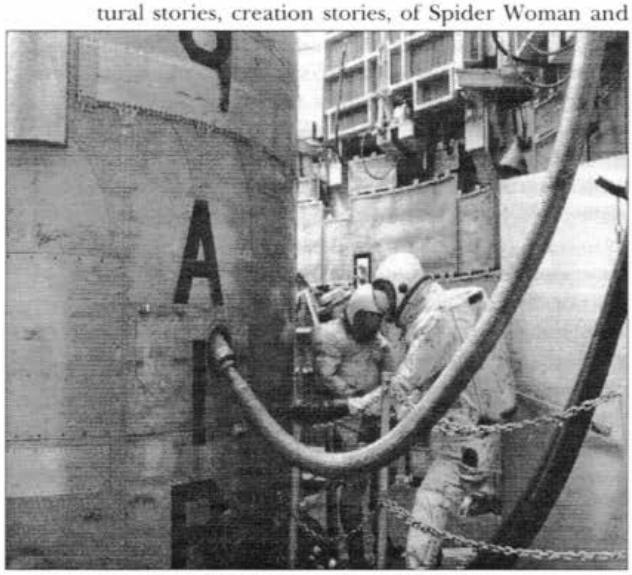
It is my belief that managers of historic sites, especially publicly owned historic sites, have a responsibility to teach (and to learn) in these places because they have something important to say to all of us. These are not only authentic places, but significant places. They have been selected over time because they are instructive of truths beyond their singular existence.

The presence of these broader stories is what distinguishes education from information. The task at historic sites is not limited to identification and description, as important as these are. After the question, "what?" logically and naturally comes the question, "why?" It is a question as relevant at Gettysburg as at Manzanar; as relevant at the Waitangi Treaty House as at Kemp House; it arises when standing before Ruapekapeka or the Pancake Rocks at Dolomite Point. Most historic parks do not speak for themselves, they require, even demand, some sort of interpretation or explanation. They require description, but description is only the beginning. It provides the platform for reaching beyond the tangible and explaining its significance: "why did this event happen?" "why did it happen here?" and "why is it important to all of us?"

It seems to me that this interaction between the public and historians and interpreters, in this discussion we have about the past, is what makes the places we manage and interpret *powerful places*, powerful in that they convey to a receptive public far more than mere description. It is the ability of these places to reflect intangible values, values of humanity, values that touch and move us, that some have termed the "power of place."

In the National Park Service, we are beginning to

expand upon the traditional narratives of history and introduce other, parallel stories, alternative interpretations. In the process we have moved away from the idea that historic places can be interpreted in only one way; we are exploring the use of multiple stories, varied voices, various perspectives. To return to the American Civil War for a moment, it is clear that the North did not view the war in the same manner as did the South; officers, likewise, took a different view from enlisted men. In the American Southwest, we have learned that expanding upon the traditional narrative brings clarity to the story and enriches rather than confuses the public. Canyon de Chelly, for example in the northeast corner of Arizona, is in many ways the spiritual home of the Navajo Indian people. In a series of canyons with dramatic vertical sandstone walls hundreds of feet high, the Navajo and their predecessors, the Anazazi, built their homes, raised sheep, and lived an isolated existence for generations. Their existence was one with the landscape. Traditional cultural stories, creation stories, of Spider Woman and



The Titan II ICBM Missile Site 8 in Pima County, Arizona

Monster Slayer and Born for Water anchored generation after generation of Navajo to the land and its striking geographical features. In 1864, the United States Army, under the leadership of Kit Carson, invaded the stronghold of Canyon de Chelly attacked the Indians, burned their crops, destroyed their livestock. Those who resisted were killed, the remainder, several thousand in number, were rounded up and forced to leave their ancestral homeland and march 300 miles in the dead of winter to the Pecos River in New Mexico. Four years later, they were allowed to return to their homes where their descendants remain today. What is the dominant narrative here? Whose voice speaks for the site? How does the federal voice accommodate the Navajo voice? Is Kit Carson hero or villain? These and other questions have shaped an interpretive programme at Canyon de Chelly that addresses the park from multiple, yet mutually respective, perspectives. The Navajo creation story is told alongside the traditional Anglo narrative of Indian expansion throughout the America's across the Bering Straight.

By adopting a more inclusive philosophy toward the stories presented, the National Park Service believes it will make its sites more meaningful to a larger portion of the visiting public, to a larger portion of American taxpayers. In many places, we will ask more questions than we answer for an underlying tenet of this new approach to the public educational process is that parks should not necessarily be final intellectual destinations. Parks, natural as well as cultural, should serve as mental provocateurs. They should provide information and interpretation and analysis, but they should also prompt the visitor to undertake a personal journey of inquiry and exploration. (Why else do we sell books at parks, but to assist them on this journey?) They should also, and we in the National Park Service are just beginning to grapple with this, explore the construction of history and memory. How is the perceived George Washington different from the historical George Washington? How have we constructed the memory of the Revolution? Why is Betsy Ross, who had no connection with sewing George Washington's flag as far as we know, the most widely recognized female figure of the Revolutionary period? Why do we revere the memory of George Armstrong Custer beyond all reason? How have we as a society come to separate slavery from the causes of the Civil War?

These and other questions are leading us to engage the American past with a heightened sense of exploration and excitement, and, yes, on the part of some, a bit of trepidation. If the managers of historic sites are to play a meaningful role in the cultural life of a nation and not simply be passive participants in the recreational/tourism industry, these are reasonable questions to ask. They permit us, even require us, to think beyond the boundaries of our parks and offices to imagine a future where public parks are forums for the civil discussion and debate of historical topics that affect contemporary conditions. Public parks are different from private parks in that their responsibility is larger, more expansive, more daunting. Whether we like it not, whether we acknowledge it or not, federally managed public parks are an integral part of the public education process. In the United States, the vast majority of the visiting public never take a history course beyond high school. They receive their history from movies and television and historical novels. Yet a recent survey of the American public reveals that the sources of historical information they respect over all others are museums and historic sites. This respect for what we do, for the time and energy we invest in our public programmes, provides an added incentive for us to conduct ourselves as educators not merely as the purveyors of information. It is this acknowledgment of the public's trust that will direct the energies of the National Park Service in the coming decades.

Conference feedback

Attendees' thoughts on our first public history conference

I was only able to attend the conference on the first day, due to other commitments. This was my bad luck because there was easily enough stimulation and food for thought on day one to make me regret missing day two.

Why was the conference so enjoyable? For a start, it avoided the common pitfalls. Organisation was efficient without ever becoming impersonal. The venue, the Air New Zealand Suite at the Wellington Town Hall, was suitably welcoming. True, the chairs in the conference room were a bit high for the vertically challenged - apologies to anyone annoyed by my constant shuffling to get comfortable - but the armchairs and sofas dotted about the foyer were a masterstroke. They enticed participants to sit around talking to each other. Early in the day I spent some time working at the registration table. This was great for putting faces to names and helped me avoid the nightmare scenario of some conferences, where all the participants seem to know each other and studiously ignore outsiders. The friendliness of the PHANZA conference atmosphere was remarkable, especially considering the diverse backgrounds and interests of those attending.

Sadly my stint on the desk meant that I missed Dwight Pitcaithley's presentation, 'History & Memory in the USA'. By all accounts it was excellent.

The other papers I heard were never less than interesting and some were much more than that. For me the most enjoyable were those given by Robin McLachlan and, in a joint session, by Bronwyn Labrum and Fiona McKergow. McLachlan's account of the vicissitudes involved in preserving the modest Bathurst home of one of Australia's best-loved Prime Ministers, Ben Chifley, proved how a judicious blend of practicality and scholarship, leavened with a spice of humour, is the best recipe for a successful conference presentation. No one who heard the paper is likely to forget McLachlan's engaging take on Chifley's passion for powerful cars or his description of the Prime Minister's favourite form of relaxation: covering every scrap of spare space around his cottage with concrete.

McKergow and Labrum talked about specific exhibitions each had curated. In the process they gave a fascinating insight into the haves and have-nots of the museum world. McKergow's exhibition of 20th century dress at the Manawatu Science Centre and Museum had been ingeniously devised and mounted at a total cost of $2000. Labrum's exhibition about the Dutch in New Zealand, currently showing at Te Papa, cost an unspecified sum which she admitted was vastly more. The common considerations were as fascinating as the differences and I suspect I was not the only one surprised to find that, while greater funding leads to a more sophisticated end product, it does not necessarily produce a more enjoyable or effective one.

Were there aspects of the conference that could be improved? Two points occur to me. First, I don't believe a conference run by an association of professional historians is the place for papers by postgraduate students. Second, a high proportion of the papers were on museum/heritage/conservation topics yet those who belong to PHANZA represent a far wider range of public history. Where were the papers on sporting, business, political, social and welfare, economic, performing arts, historical biography and all the multitude of other subjects being tackled by members? Next conference - and here's hoping there will be a next conference although not, perhaps, for a couple of years (to avoid committee burn-out and keep the sense of expectation alive) - how about deliberately setting out to show the variety of work encompassed by the term 'public history'?

Adrienne Simpson, Wellington

My list of highlights from the PHANZA conference in-

Megan Hutching

The two Bronwyns and Stephen Clarke

cludes the varied programme, superb organisation, relaxed atmosphere, enjoyment of meeting with colleagues, and the stimulus of hearing about the impressive array of projects through which historians are applying their skills in the public sector. Our students are constantly asking about employment prospects and it is not always easy to think of specific examples at a moment's notice. As a consequence of attending the conference, I've been able to devise some new departmental displays which clearly demonstrate the vocational relevance of our subject and I now know more fellow historians to whom I can refer students for advice.

Jeanine Graham, Hamilton

There are three compnents of a successful conference: thought provoking papers, stimulating people and conversation, and wonderful food (probably in reverse order). Since I was not able to make it to the dinner, I can't speak for the food, although others were suitably enthusiastic, but the other two came up trumps.

I did not hear a bad paper and there were plenty which stretched the mind and took us into new areas. I particularly enjoyed the participant/observer approach which characterised so many of the sessions and which follows naturally out of public history work. This included the inspiring beginning from Dwight Pitcaithley, whose modesty did not disguise how much he has transformed the US National Park Service. That his work is a model for us here became obvious when we heard of Janelle Warren-Findley's tales from New Zealand's heritage sites where the only historical characters on interpretive panels appeared to be sheep. Other observer/participants who held me gripped were Robin McLachlan with his stories of reinvigorating local interest in the house of Ben Curtin, an Aussie Prime Minister who liked to come home at the weekends to lay concrete paths and drive around Bathurst in grand old cars, Rachael Egerton whose superb presentation and evident passion to give historical meaning to sites in Southland was a real highlight, and the joint presentation Thinking Visually by the museum curators, Bronwyn Labrum and Fiona McKergow.

As for the people, it was a great mixture from diverse places - academics, government servants, conservationists, freelancers and a nice addition of a few Aussies who had followed their interests across the Tasman. The remarkable thing was that out of this diversity came a strong sense of a

Megan Hutching

Hilary Stace with David Verran

community - people who really cared about the past and wanted to bring the enjoyment of history to other New Zealanders. The creation of that community is the long term legacy of this conference and it needs to be kept together. Roll on the next one.

Jock Phillips, Wellington

Relatively new to New Zealand (from Australia) I relished the opportunity to better understand the New Zealand history 'scene' - and to meet up with visiting Australian friends.

My own research has been moving in the direction of critiquing 'history in the museum' which might be described as part of the 'public history' project. Part of this has been an interest in historicising place and making sense of memories about places. It was useful then to hear papers about the Chifley House Museum in Bathurst, New South Wales, from Robin McLachlan, and exhibiting history in museums from Bronwyn Labrum and Fiona McKergow. Fiona raised some useful questions about historians interpreting material evidence, and the importance of providing contextual detail - and suggested that the very meanings of objects change when they are relocated. Both Fiona and Bronwyn showed the potential for visual renderings of the past in museum settings.

Melanie Lovell-Smith's paper on the history of the Waitangi Treaty House drew attention to an important theme which might have been emphasised more by other participants: the very createdness of historic sites, the ways they are constructed in the popular imagination as having real or natural significance, and yet have complex histories.

One of the most useful sessions from my point of view (learning about New Zealand history and resources) involved Malcolm McKinnon (talking about the Te Waimano website which showcases historical sources from the Alexander Turnbull library), and Jock Phillips and Jamie MacKay (e-History: theory and practice). I am sure that these developments will enhance teaching and learning in history: the potential of technology must be harnessed by historians (we should never be accused of living in the past!). I was inspired to think about the relationships between technology

and displaying, writing and understanding histories.

I am not convinced however that thus far, e-History has disturbed our conception of what constitutes the stuff of 'history', as I think it ought to. A future challenge for historians everywhere?

Cathy Colebourne, Hamilton

As an Aucklander I am pleased to say that my trip to Wellington to attend the PHANZA conference was well worth it. The papers presented covered a wide range of topics and on the whole the standard was very good. Also, the standard of coffee and food (including vegetarian options) was excellent and helped to keep eyelids open and brain cells in action. The Sunday morning walk to the Plimmer's Ark site was a great idea and was not only interesting but also helped to break up the more sedentary activities of the rest of the weekend. Full marks to the organisers on a successful weekend. I look forward to attending the next PHANZA conference!

Tania Mace, Auckland

I enjoyed it, although I have to confess I skipped most of the sessions on Sunday in order to do university work. Many of the papers were interesting and stimulating. The venue was good for the large sessions (not so good when parallel sessions were held, because of technical problems) and the conference dinner relaxed and pleasant.

I think it would have been good if the programme could have been made available in advance, with more information about speakers and their topics, and perhaps some of these could have been 'screened' more closely. It would also be useful if the conference could be made more interdisciplinary in future, involving more professionals other than historians who deal with public history issues (eg planners, archaeologists, museum professionals etc). There were a few such people there, but if there were more there could be some useful and thought-provoking exchanges.

Nancy Swarbrick, Wellington

I felt the conference was a great success. The speakers all did really well. As an historian working as a heritage manager for parks and other conservation areas in NZ it was a real treat to get to hear and meet Dwight Pitcaithley of the USNPS. I was also interested to hear about the exciting ways in which the History Group are presenting their research information in forms that are really accessible to the public, and in so doing, raising the profile of New Zealand history.

The two days made me realise just in the nick of time that I must have been kidnapped by the archaeologists and have been going through a cross disciplinary metamorphosis. Consequently it was an especially enjoyable few days for me to be immersed in the historian community once again.

I felt it was a great opportunity to make and renew contact with a wide range of historians working in the public arena and I look forward to the next conference. Many thanks to the organisers!

Rachael Egerton, Te Anau

Megan Hutching

Ben Schrader talks to Fiona McKergow

It was a great experience to be at the Wellington PHANZA Conference in July to catch up with New Zealand historians I'd met at Australian conferences and to meet colleagues with whose names I'd become familiar from their published work or from the H-ANZAU discussion list, but never met face to face.

I found it useful to compare issues in both countries, as well as having a chance to hear about US developments. The NZ/Aotearoa comparisons are important for me because being geographically close gives us the potential for sharing ideas and supporting

each other. While we clearly face some different issues there are many common areas for us.

The sessions I went to emphasised for me our common experiences in public sector history work, as heritage researchers or managers. We are all enmeshed in the contests about 'nation making' narratives, and at the same time trying to do research and develop accessible and challenging interpretations for public discussion. The NZ/Aotearoa situation is different in detail from Australia, but we are each involved in working out the relationships between colonised and coloniser and recent immigrant peoples. NZ public historians, both Pakeha and Maori, are right in the centre of this process, as are historians in Australia. We are finding it hard and perplexing on all sides in Australia, but as historians, we are being increasingly involved structurally in, for example, inquiries like that into the Stolen Generations and in the Native Title research and determination process. So having a chance to talk about your experiences arising from work in the Waitangi Tribunal and your developing collaborations between Pakeha and Maori historians was really welcome.

The area of teaching public history was also an important one for me to have a chance to talk over. I learned a great deal from the range of ways you are approaching the interaction between professional, academic and community practices of history. There are strong pressures on us in Australia to develop programmes which concentrate on professional practice. And in the climate of shrinking resources for tertiary education as well as public sector work, we are forced to mount fee paying courses to do this, which limits the people who can take the courses. This poses us with challenges in balancing professional skill training with community-oriented work, in which professional skills are essential but so too are a whole range of other types of skills and experience. So seeing how you in NZ are exploring the many diverse roles of the historian in public was just fascinating.

I'm looking forward to continuing to participate in the dialogue between public historians across the Tasman. The strengths you have in digital history there in NZ/Aotearoa will make that much easier. Your NZ/Aotearoa History site is just wonderful and it was a great eye-opener to see a government department hosting such an effective way to mount and circulate the great work of NZ historians in museums and other public areas. So thanks for your generous hospitality and warm welcome. I'm looking forward to catching up again at the Oral History conference next year.

Heather Goodall, Sydney

Megan Hutching

The assembled throng on Sunday in conference room2

History in the Making

The latest on what historians are doing around the country

David Young is completing the Ngati Tama/Ngati Maniopoto customary rights project for the Office of Treaty Settlements and is about to embark on a short history of the Resource Mangement Act.

Tracy Tulloch is doing contract research for the Waitangi Tribunal.

Frank Rogers has completed an essay on Murray Beresford Roberts, the King of Con Men, for the NZDB, vol 5. He has also been working on getting a paper he presented to the Public History Conference ready for publication on the internet. The paper is entitled 'The New Zealanders: The decline of immigrant dominance in New Zealand: When did New Zealanders Become New Zealanders'.

Tony Nightingale is currently employed as a report writer for the Waitangi Tribunal. His role is to facilitate the report writing process. The two most recent reports he has worked on are:

The Whanganui River Report and the Ngati Awa Report. He is currently working on a number of projects that include: the Chatham Islands, the Tarawera Forest, the Petroleum and the Hauraki reports.

Anne Else has been lecturing for the Master of New Zealand Studies, the new course offered this year by the Stout Research Centre.

Hilda McDonnell has completed two essays for the *BNZB* vol 5, on the inventor Karl Pallo and Mayer Annie Huggan. She has also completed cameos of early Wellingtonians and an article on Robert Southey and New Zealand.

Malcolm McKinnon is currently working on a commissioned history of The Treasury.

John Mitchell is working on 'This Day in New Zealand History', which is searchable by day/month/year/text in a computer database.

Kathleen Loncar is still translating Latin medieval texts to assist Associate Professor Stephanie Hollis of Auckland University. She has also completed four biographies of early Anglo Saxon women saints of the eighth to the eleventh centuries and has embarked on the fifth.

Margot Fry has been doing some regular lecturing at Massey University and is currently employed on a short term contract at the Waitangi Tribunal, working on the Chatham Islands Report.

Canterbury History Foundation comes up trumps

Canterbury Community Historian

The Canterbury History Foundation's first major community initiative is well underway. The Canterbury Community Historian annual award is a grant for a 'historian-in-residence' at the Department of History, Canterbury University.

Funded by a grant of $11,800 from the Community Trust, the contribution will allow the successful applicant 12 weeks full-time research and writing towards a particular project. The appointee does not have to be a professional historian or history graduate but full-time academics are not elegible. The appointment is due to be made shortly.

The Foundation, a charitable trust run by volunteers, has had strong academic and community backing since its inception. Founded by the Canterbury Historical Assocation and headed by president and chairman of the executive, Ian Leggatt, former Chancellor of Canterbury University, the Foundation was established to promote history and historical research in the Canterbury region. It has already held the inaugural Jim Gardner Lecture, named after the acclaimed Canterbury historian, and several more lectures since then.

The award and lectures will be annual events and the Trust hopes to raise more money next year to expand its activities.

New books

PHANZINE has a policy of not reviewing our members' publications. There are good reasons for this. Two that spring to mind are we don't want to offend by omission and we don't have the time. Phanzine seems to be enough of a challenge to get out without adding another dimension. However, we are very aware of the need to publicise our work and to encourage members, hence the decision to run 'New Books' as a regular feature.

Michael Bassett has completed *"Tomorrow Comes the Song": A Life of Peter Fraser*, with Michael King, which is to be published by Penguin in March 2001.

Ian Dougherty has just had published a revised edition of his 1996 biography *Arawata Bill*, (William O'Leary).

Anne Else's 'Up the Garden Path: Janet and John Revisited' is part of a collection of papers from the History of the Book Conference, *A Book in the Hand*, which will be published by AUP in 2000.

Adrienne Simpson has recently completed a commissioned history of the Wellington Professional Opera Company. *Capital Opera: Wellington's Opera Company 1982-1999*. It was launched by the Mayor of Wellington, Mark Blumsky, at the Council Chambers on 7 November 2000. Here is an excerpt from the flyer.

> ... The company's first major production was Verdi's La Traviata. 'La Traviata was mounted on the proverbial shoe string. Its entire budget was $15,000, most of which was spent on the orchestra and on theatre rent. Elaborate sets and costumes were out of the question. Putting the production on required a tremendous co-operative effort from a small army of volunteers

Leah Taylor has completed a biography, *Leslie Bourneman Neale: A Man of Faith and Vision*, which will be published this year. The biography was commissioned by Dunedin Methodist Mission and it was written and published with the help of the New Zealand History Research Trust Fund and the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Prince Albert College's Trusts Media and Communication School.

Brownyn Labrum and Bronwyn Dalley's edited collection of 11 papers, *Fragments* was published this year by AUP. As they say of it:

> This is not the world of elections, famous men, Acts and Bills, but [the book] offers new topics, new histories and new ideas about the ordinary lives of nineteenth and twentieth century New Zealanders. Some of the essays address less familiar subjects such as gardening, clothes or buildings. Others such as that by Chris Hilliard or by Maori historian Danny Keenan, explore the ways in which we have described the past. Bronwyn Dalley writing grippingly about the mysterious death of a young woman in 1928 and Giselle Byrnes discussing the early surveyors, look at how we have interpreted and defined events and places. The welfare state in the 1950s is the subject of Bronwyn Labrum's essay while Margaret McClure deals with work and the body in the later 19th century.

David Grant's commissioned history of the TAB was launched in a multimedia event at Parliament on 24 October, by Annette King, Minister for Racing. David has spent 18 months researching and writing this history, part of the time as the Stout Research Fellow. *Two Over Three on Good Time Sugar* (VUP) is a title derived from a 1960s newspaper article on a police raid on a private house. A vice squad detective was sitting in the lounge of a suspected bookmaker. The phone rang, and the detective grabbed it. As private bookmaking was illegal, clients usually used code words for just such a situation. This time however, the client forgot and said 'two over three on Good Time Sugar'. Says David, 'I don't know if Good Time Sugar won, but the bookie was nicked.'

David is also about to publish a volume of racing cartoons, that he collected during the course of his research. It will appear early next year.

Remember, if your book is going to be published, let us know. Send us a story or publicity material for use in the next Phanzine.

What history on TV?

Michael Kelly reveals a history of our history on TV

History on TV? There isn't enough of it. Well, that's the lament, and of course there certainly aren't enough programmes on New Zealand history, but there's plenty of history if you look hard enough.

The New Zealand Wars, which screened in 1998, was fronted by a brollie carrying, arm waving Jamie Belich, augmented with some nifty computer-generated images, and it did a great deal to change perceptions of the appeal of historical New Zealand programmes. And it was provocative – always a winning concept.

New Zealand history on our TV screens in all probability started with a dramatised documentary on Baron de Thierry sometime in the 1960s, hosted by Ian Johnstone. For those who can't recall that, the starting point would probably be *The Governor*, which screened 25 years ago at the launch of the second channel and the separation of South Pacific Television. While it didn't exactly shed that much meaningful light on one of this country's best known political leaders, *The Governor*, scripted by Keith Aberdeen, did introduce the notion of New Zealand history to local audiences, who enjoyed it. But the Government's anxiety at the sheer cost of *The Governor* and the critical drubbing the programme took, meant it would be more than two decades before another grand historical drama, *Greenstone*, was embarked on. It didn't look like much had been learned.

Immediately following *The Governor* there was a splurge of activity in locally made television, and history benefited. In general though these were dramas, and although often about real historical figures they were not dramatised documentaries. Can anyone remember *Hunter's Gold* (boy has adventures set in beautiful Central Otago scenery during gold-rush days), or *Hanlon* (real 19th century Dunedin barrister saves clients from the gallows), or even *Seddon* (Tony Currie not quite managing to boom and bluster in imagined King Dick-style)? History found its way into a soap; *Country Doctor* had an historical setting. *An Angel at My Table*, which also had a cinema release and was a very convincing portrayal of Janet Frame's early life, forms part of the historical oeuvre on the small screen. In the early 90s we had the dramatised documentary series *Journeys* on the exploration of Thomas Brunner, missionary William Colenso and Johann Dieffenbach - a rare exception.

As far as telling straight stories from our past, however, there really has been precious little of it. Documentaries, even in the days before 'Real TV', have been mostly about current affairs. In more recent times they have become increasingly trivial and/or sensationalised.

New Zealanders at War is possibly the best (or should that be the worst?) example of this. A marvellous opportunity was presented to the producers – Communicado and the late Neil Roberts – to create a commemorative event with a decent budget, and they blew it...spectacularly. Not only did the series smack of the worst excesses of '90s' superficiality, it displayed precious little scholarship. Historians went on the attack, so to speak.

From the same stable of ephemera came *The Way We Were*, which may have been a good viewing if you were into nostalgia, but the whole thing was little more than a tableaux of vaguely connected images of New Zild in the good old days, courtesy of the old National Film Unit's archive. And it was fronted by Paul Holmes, which seemed to ensure a lasting impression of shallowness.

More recently we have had the very popular *Epitaph*, which tells good stories well although the jury is still out on the dramatic music and dim lighting. Keith Quinn's documentary on the history of rugby in New Zealand was aimed at the broad band of New Zealand and carried it off well. Along with *New Zealand Wars*, perhaps the most innovative and authoritative attempt at putting our history on TV was *Our People, Our Century*, which screened last year. It followed a theme through generations of New Zealanders. Some found it mature and thoughtful documentary making, although others, like Melanie Nolan criticised its anecdotal focus and lack of coherence.

There have been other examples but the overwhelming impression is that as a nation we have generally failed to translate our understanding of our past onto the small screen. But all is not lost. The Government's draft broadcasting charter asks TVNZ to place more emphasis on history in its programming. While it is still hard to see how this is going to be imposed on TVNZ, which will remain commercially driven and has a culture implacably opposed to state interference, a direction has been set.

There is another reason for optimism. Choice. Prime Television currently occupies the more highbrow end of the television spectrum and amongst its offerings of comedy repeats and TVNZ discards are some real gems. There are usually at least one if not two historical documentaries every week, if you count the likes of *Great Romances of the 20th Century*

and the *History of Flight* among them. The end of the millennium has thrown up a great many 'reviews' of the past 100 or 1000 years and Prime has latched on to many of these. We shouldn't forget the great British costume drama, which has been part and parcel of New Zealand TV viewing for 40 years. Among them have been some outstanding portraits of significant historical figures.

If you have access to them, and are keen and wealthy enough, it is possible to subscribe to a plethora of cable or satellite channels. On the Discovery and, more particularly, National Geographic Channels, hidden amongst programmes on sharks or migrating wildebeest, there are many high quality history programmes, frequently repeated if you missed them the first time. You can find documentaries on polar exploration, war (extremely popular in western countries), treasure hunters, archaeology and so forth. Recent programmes have had unrealistically exotic titles such as *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls, In Search of Lawrence of Arabia, Return to the Valley of Kings – Tutankhamen, Empires of India, The Story of the Statue of Liberty, Hindenburg* and *Total War.*

Clearly it will always be hard for New Zealand history to make it into primetime but there are encouraging signs. Early next year *Captain's Log,* a history of New Zealand's maritime past woven round Cook's first voyage around New Zealand, will reach our screens. And, just to hand, TVNZ has announced that a major new history series will go into production next year. It is expected to be the most expensive programme ever made in New Zealand. There's sure to be more. Keep watching.

Conference in the black

The Phanza Committee would like to announce that not only was the conference a lot of fun and a fascinating insight into other people's jobs, it was also a financial success. Unless there are creditors lurking around corners, and at this point it seems unlikely, the conference not only paid its way, it made a healthy $303.12 profit. When we initially looked at different venues in the city, the Town Hall was one of the more expensive options. Once we explained the importance of the conference with its international speakers, historians from all over the country, a focus on heritage and so on, they immediately discounted the rate by $200.00 a day. So a thanks to the Wellington City Council for their support.

The other major expense was the dinner at the Wellesley Club. It cost us $2,159.50 to dine in an enchanting, other-worldly chocolate box setting. It was worth it just to look at the ceiling. The company was great, the wine flowed freely and everyone had a great time.

Our other expenses were more modest. And again, we had invaluable assistance. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage kindly donated us the conference folders, so we only had to pay for the stationary that went within.

A full set of accounts will be presented at the AGM and you can request a copy by emailing:

margot.fry@paradise.net.nz

Soviet-watching in Trans-Atlantic holdings

Tony Wilson provides a lonely planet-like guide to two major overseas research institutions

Experienced PHANZA hands should not find difficulty with these two archives, namely, the US National Archives and Records Administration [www.nara.gov] outside Washington, DC and the Public Record Office [www.pro.gov.uk] at Kew, London. Initial inconvenience, including re-orientating to new and bigger environments, should not impede research; I found less than expected when I visited the two institutions in July this year, with help from a MFAT travel grant, to check out their holdings in regard to NZ-Soviet relations, 1950-91. Those readers who haven't visited them may appreciate the following observations/tips.

The very modern, spacious Archives building at College Park, Maryland (opened in the mid '90s and now housing most Federal Government records) can best be reached by a free shuttle bus. This departs on weekdays, usually every hour (on the half-hour), from near the old Archives building on the corner of 7th St and Pennsylvania Ave, in downtown Washington. The departure point can be reached by taking the Metro (subway) to Archives-Navy Memorial station. The trip to College Park itself takes about 30 minutes.

Access to NARA requires computerised registration and the issue of a Research Card, valid for 3 years; take ID like a passport or credit card to assist this process. NARA has spacious lockers, regular 'pull' times (American for delivering requests) and substantial, largely non-electronic, finding aids. Declassification, at least for the State Dept. Record Groups I was seeking, has extended to 1973, under a liberally interpreted 30 year rule.

Two surprises: one, the predominance of males in front-line staff (about 20-30% of whom, on a rough, visual count, were African-American); two, the reliance solely on manual (multi- carbon) rather than electronic methods for making requests. The latter and the sometimes broad Southern accents of some archives staff tested one's patience; DC/Maryland are, in some ways, part of the South. Offsetting this was an American staple in most institutions, a fine place to eat, with a great variety of pizzas, bagels, coffee etc; plain or frugal culinary tastes could be overwhelmed.

Besides archival material, NARA has bound volumes of printed documents on shelves in the main reading room that should not be overlooked; in my case, two volumes in the series *Foreign Relations of the United States* (on relations with the USSR) proved useful.

The Public Record Office carries the subtitle 'The National Archives' (of England and Wales and of the UK); Scotland must have its own. Further, you are politely corrected if you say 'records' in the plural; 'record' sounds more grandly, seamlessly historical. This institution has also transferred to a newer, more spacious site, though the external structure is uglier than the US one, even if it is graced by some sort of small lake and fountains arrangement, unenhanced by a cold, overcast summer's day.

The archives can be reached by District Line tube (Richmond, not Wimbledon terminus) to Kew Gardens station. (The cheapest options are 'unlimited travel'/4-zone passes of one or more days duration; ask London Transport for whichever one suits the length of your stay; Kew is a 4-zone trip.)

Remember also to stay on the same side of the station that you arrive at, walking from it, along Burlington Rd and Ruskin Ave to get to the PRO. Once there, a Reader's Ticket is required, necessitating ID like a passport or credit card. Optional induction tours are offered. Some observations on the archives' operation:

(i) The PRO is very busy and full of visitors/researchers, much more so than its US equivalent. The main reading room, with 60 or more multi-desk work areas, was crowded. In part, this is because the archives offers a very substantial display area, with widely advertised, changing displays.

(ii) Also it is so much more accessible, with large carparks, full of vehicles that might have just been driven down the M1 from the North; much harder to drive from California, say, across to Maryland. Further, US researchers may well go to their state archives, first, whereas in Britain, as a unitary state (Scotland excepted) you have to go to London for official archives.

(iii) The British are also more highly geared, electronically. Finding aids are still focused on often unwieldy registers; ordering, however, is by computer and you are issued with a personal pager with an assigned desk number, alerting you when your request is available. Front of house staff are brisk, helpful and (as at College Park) mainly male. Some of them - no criticism - could read out a grocery list and make it all sound so 'civilised', worthy of fuller research or analysis.

(iv) Apart from the archives with their 167 km of shelving, there is a library at the PRO; there and in the Registers/finding aids rooms, useful volumes of printed records can be found.

All told the visit was quite productive (more so, for my particular research, in the US than the UK). For researchers on a budget, reasonable accommodation ($US45, per night-single) can be had at: Davis House, 1822, R St NW, Washington, DC, 20009. Phone: 001-202- 232-3196; in London, at an LSE hall of residence, Passfield Hall; check out availability for casual guests in the summer break via: Passfield@lse.ac.uk

Website Review

Michael Kelly finds that the world's fascination with Antarctic explorers extends to the web

The recent sale of the first volume of Shackleton's classic *South*, the story of "the greatest rescue adventure ever" is a reminder of the kind of pull polar exploration still has on our imaginations. For those obsessed with the 'heroic' era of polar exploration, especially to the Antarctic, there are many sites to sate the need. If you are keen on good factual accounts of Antarctic explorers with extensive biographical information then try http://www.south-pole.com.

Essentially an Antarctic philately site, it contains comprehensive, soundly written and well researched biographies of the key explorers. There are stacks of choices, from de Lozier to Weddell to Byrd, many of whom have strong ties with New Zealand. Click on the relevant link to the left on the homepage.

http://news.mpr.org/features/199905/31_rabej_walking/index.html is the site for you if you can't get enough of Sir Ernest's utterly astonishing feat. It is run by, oddly enough, the Minnesota Public News Service and is an interactive exhibition of a documentary the service ran on the ill fated expedition. It contains many of Frank Hurley's remarkable photos but is mainly made up of descriptive audio clips. Among the many web-sites devoted to Shackleton is http://indigo.ie/~jshack/ernest.html, which does a fair job of summarising his complicated life.

Captain Robert Scott is commemorated all over the web, with many sites devoted to reviewing books that either eulogize him as a hero or dismiss him as an bumbling idiot.

You could check out http://www.who2.com/robertfalconscott.html, which has some decent links to Scott material (including the philately site) or, for a little something different, a slide show of rare glass negatives (although some are wrongly captioned) and a patchily written text devoted to his last expedition at http://www.art-mitchell.freeserve.co.uk/scott/slide3.html.

And of course, any decent search engine should do the trick.

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