

Graduate Women New Zealand - Final Report

Harriette Jenkins Award 2018/19

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Topic:

How different countries collect, study and communicate their Antarctic history, and what is the value for today's New Zealand's Antarctic research

The Harriette Jenkins Award allowed me to continue my research which started with a New Zealand Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship in 2018 on how different countries collect, research, and communicate their Antarctic history. Based on my studies in the US, German and UK archives, museums, personal conversations, and institutions I compared my findings with Christchurch's state of awareness of their historical Antarctic connections. My intention to compare this matter with another important town and port brought me to Dunedin and Port Chalmers. Many early Antarctic expeditions used Port Chalmers as very final gateway to the South or as the first port coming back.

I arranged study visits to the Hocken Archives, Otago Museum, and Port Chalmers Museum. Originally, I planned the research stay from mid-January to mid-February 2019 but work related circumstances (a season on the Antarctic Peninsula) made a change of plans necessary. The stays were split into two visits in April and May which worked out very well.

The staff members in the Hocken Archives are very helpful and supportive which allowed me to process big quantities of archival material. My focus was on several topics:

- Whaling (from the beginnings in New Zealand until the 1970s)
- Expeditions and research undertaken by New Zealand researchers and institutions after the International Geophysical Year (IGY, 1957–1958)
- The Admiral Byrd Expeditions from the late 1920s onward to the IGY
- Gender topics in the Antarctic

I examined a vast amount of documents from various New Zealanders who were engaged with Antarctic matters. One was Gerald Doorly (1880 – 1956). He was with Robert F. Scott in the Antarctic. Doorly lived later in Dunedin and collected Antarctic related newspaper and magazine clippings, reports, and had correspondence with Admiral Byrd, Sir Douglas Mawson and other significant expedition leaders all over the world. He was also very much interested in the whaling industry issues.

Another interesting find are the documents, reports and correspondence from Howard Ninnis (died 1956). He was a motor engineer at the Ross Sea relief expedition (1916–1917). Ninnis lived in Dunedin and was his entire life interested in Antarctic matters and had a vast correspondence with his fellow Antarctic colleagues.

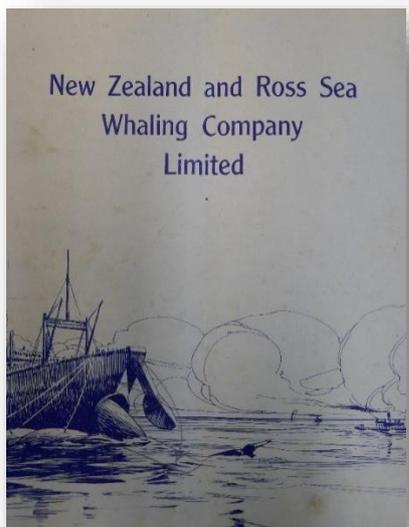
For the more recent history, I could find a vast amount of material about the Vanda Station expedition events from 1969 onward. The estate comes from Harold Lowe. He was several

times the leader of the station and also field leader at Scott Base. In his files are lots of original reports, especially for improvements on the living conditions at the stations and training programmes for the field events.

The archives hold also minutes from the New Zealand Antarctic Society (NZAS), Otago branch, from the 1930s until the 1950s. This is an important find because the NZAS was very active in the 1950s which is the time of the International Geophysical Year (1957–1958)

These are only few examples of the findings in the archives. I could also look at very interesting photo material from Admiral Richard Byrd, Hubert Wilkens, and Lincoln Ellsworth all three famous for their pioneering work on using aeroplanes for areal observation in the Antarctic. There is also rare photo material about the whaling industry in the Ross Sea region in the late 1920s and 1930s, especially the Rosshavet Whaling Company.

Examining the numerous files in the Hocken archives, the whaling business and the claiming issues in the Antarctic were a dominant factor especially from 1900–1970s. Many of the men who were participants of the Heroic Era expeditions showed a great interest in the whaling business. I found even the correspondence and the promotion of the “New Zealand and Ross Sea Whaling Company Limited”. Fortunately, it is allowed to take photos from the documents. (Picture 1: Title page from the New Zealand and Ross Sea Whaling Company, Limited)



Picture 1: Title page from the N.Z. and Ross Sea Whaling Company, Limited; (Hocken Archives, MS-1168)

In May, I also focused on the museums. The meeting with Moira White in the Otago Museum went very well. We had a good discussion; however, the museum’s focus is on science and how to engage especially the younger generation to take it on. Moira White is the curator of the Museum and she herself writes often on the museum’s blog about their artefacts and she touches very frequently Antarctic history. <https://otagomuseum.nz/blog/a-walk-on-the-wild-side/> Also exhibitions in the past dealt with the more current history in the Antarctic such as “The Big Ice” which celebrated the fifty years of New Zealand scientific exploration in the South. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU0708/S00334/the-big-ice.htm>.

In the discussion it was revealed that there are artefacts from the Heroic Era (1897 – 1917) in the museum. Especially when expedition ships returned from the Antarctic, expedition

member left some artefacts in the museum like a preserved specimen of a crab eater seal. There was also an article on an Antarctic glove what has undergone repair by a taxidermist after the “*Aurora*” arrived from the Antarctic in 1916. The article is written by Moira White in the *Otago Daily times, Saturday, 25 May 2019, The Weekend Mix, p.6*

A small exhibition is the Sir Edmund Hillary display which is stretched over the entire museum along the stairwell. <https://otagomuseum.nz/whats-on/see/display/sir-edmund-hillary-stairwell>. This will change in the near future to give the artefacts a more permanent display as Moira pointed out to me.

Kate Timms-Dean is the Education Manager of the Otago Museum. She pointed out to me that the museum has no focus on Antarctic history but teaches curriculum-linked programmes to Year 0–13 students in New Zealand schools. The most common age group visiting the museum is Year 3-6 but there are also programmes for early childhood and tertiary groups which use the museum’s education offer. The museum has a set of about forty off-the-shelf education programmes available. Teachers, however, are encouraged to work with the museum together to tailor the programmes to their students’ needs.

The other museum I visited was the Maritime Museum in Port Chalmers <http://portmuseum.org.nz/> which is open seven days a week. This is only possible because of the great work by the volunteers who run the museum. Brian McCormack, one of the volunteers, was looking after me and he was very helpful and let me go through piles of documents. The documents and newspaper clippings cover also the more recent history on Antarctic research, often linked to Otago University. There is an Antarctic exhibition related to Port Chalmers which gives a fine overview from the early explorers such as Dumont d’Urville. Often overlooked is the whaling business and its close connection to the port, however, also this part is covered in that special exhibition.

The volunteers have invited me for a presentation on my work in Antarctic history for 19 September 2019. So I will return and look to more material as I already organised it with Brian.

In Dunedin are some visible signs of Antarctic history. One plaque is only visible to people who know the place, but I could find in the archives more information about it. (See picture 2: unveiling of the plaque)



Picture 2: Unveiling of the plaque to commemorate Captain Robert F. Scott and Captain L.E.G. Oats which is still to see on the corner where Scott Street and Oates Street meet. (Hocken Library, MS-1214)

Another monument is dedicated to Admiral Richard E. Byrd. The bust was unveiled in 1967 also to demonstrate the strong connections between the U.S.A. Antarctic programme and New Zealand. (Picture 3: Admiral Byrd bust in Dunedin)



Picture 3: taken by U.Rack on 26 May 2019, Admiral Byrd bust. At McMurdo Station is a similar bust and this is a symbol for the close relationship between the U.S.A and New Zealand.

There are other monuments but they are not in the inner city of Dunedin as the Scott monument on the way to Port Chalmers. It is already so much hidden by trees and bushes that it is easily missed.

Female history is almost not existing. I could nothing locate on Antarctic female history in the archives. The current exhibition in the Otago Museum shows a female physicist and sea ice specialist: Prof. Pat Langhorne. She is still active and a living example of female Antarctic history. However, one has to know the photograph to recognise her during fieldwork in the Antarctic. (Picture 4: poster for the 150 years celebration Otago University)



Picture 4: Otago University, promotion poster for the exhibition in the Otago Museum

I am very grateful for the financial support through the Harriette Jenkins Award, facilitated by the Graduate Women New Zealand otherwise it would be not possible to extend my research across New Zealand. This studies in the Hocken archives and the visits in the museums have shown that there is also material available for research. Several personal discussions have also shown that especially the more recent Antarctic history is known and is communicated with the wider public.

The research stay in Dunedin brought me great insight in the material which is stored in the Hocken Archives. Also in the museums is Antarctic related research material stored. That will help me for future applications to point out and to undertake more research in that regard.

Reference list on archival material I worked on in April and May 2019:

Misc-MS-1424	James Paton Dairy on board the "Aurora" 1916–1917 (<i>completely transcribed</i>)
MS-3819	NZAS Otago branch minutes 1936–1962
MS-1201/057	Notes on politics of Antarctica and in New Zealand (1950s–1960s)
MS-1138/005	Copy of minutes of first Antarctic Lodge Number 777 (Admiral Byrd)
MS-1138/03	Crew lists, invoices and bills of lading "S.S. <i>Jacob Rupert</i> ", 1934
Misc-MS-1585	Francis de Hamel Antarctic summer 1957–1958
MS-1214/01	Doorly – newspaper clippings relating to Antarctica Folio I

MS-1214/02	Doorly – newspaper clippings relating to Antarctica Folio II
Nisc-MS-0087	Papers relating to the NZ TAE 1956–1957
MS-1078/069	Nutrition Committee for the NZ TAE
MS-1078/107	History re nutrition Research Committee
MS-1078/090	Correspondence Dr. Shorland
MS-1078/080	Correspondence Dr. Schwarz, reprints
E3a (Box 210)	Photo material in picture collection (Admiral Byrd etc.)
MS-1168	Ninnis, Howard, 2 boxes
MS1416/099	Notebook relating to whales and dolphins, and whaling in NZ waters
MS-1416/058	Notebook and photographs relating to Stewart Island (whaling)
MS-1416/099	Whaling – Stewart Island
MS-1414/018	Notebook of research notes on Maori, moa, whalers
Misc-MS-1487	Campbell Island diary 1923–1924 (<i>completely transcribed</i>)
AG-724	Typescript of station diary (Vanda Station) and reports
AG-724/06	handwritten diary- Harold Lowe
AG-724/12	Photographs of Scott Base 1972–1973
AG-724/10	Scott Base Summer diary 1972–1973
AG-724/14	Vanda Station Leader/s report for 1975–1976
AG-724/11	Correspondence including Field Leader's reports
AG-724/15	Miscellaneous papers incl. correspondence, clippings and photographs
MS-3553/002	Correspondence, notes, clippings, maps, articles: Peter Strang
MS-3553/003	Weekly News featuring article on the 1968 expedition in the Antarctic
MS-3553/004	Peter Strang files (photographs)