

Submission by **A.N.A.R.E.** Club to Committee of Review of Activities of the National Museum of Australia.

SUBMITTING BODY

The ANARE (Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions) Club was formed in 1951 to promote knowledge of Australia's national Antarctic program and a broader understanding of the nature of Australia's engagement with Antarctica. It also promotes and facilitates fellowship amongst men and women who are or have been involved in ANARE expeditions or other national and supranational expeditions, and others with a demonstrated involvement in furthering the interests of Australia's Antarctic endeavours. Those eligible for membership are persons who have served with **ANAR** Expeditions or have significantly contributed to the purpose of those expeditions. Members of other nations expeditions and **non** expedition contributors to the furtherance of Antarctic endeavours may be eligible for Associate Membership. The Club presently comprises some 1100 members.

THE SUBMISSION

Australia has had a close and active engagement with Antarctic discovery and exploration since the establishment of our nation in the 18th century.

Despite having had a distinguished and prolonged association with Antarctic endeavours which have earned it a place at the forefront of Antarctic scientific and Treaty forums, Australia has no national repository of Antarctic materials and memorabilia and no national or regional museum devoted to Antarctic matters. Australians are generally very ill informed on our national engagement in Antarctic matters. In these respects we are close to unique amongst the major world participants in Antarctic discovery, exploration, research and political affairs. For example. New Zealand, with a history of Antarctic achievement significantly less than Australia's, supports Antarctic sections in three major museums. One such museum displays the medals and other memorabilia of a great Australian **Antarctican**, Dick Richards!

While a few archive - keeping type organisations, such as the **Mitchell** Library and the Museum of South Australia have significant holdings of historic Antarctic related material in their own right and the Queensland Museum holds material on loan from the ANARE Club in that state, probably at least an equal amount of important material, particularly from the ANARE period, during which some 85% of the total amount of exploration of Antarctica was done, is held by the Australian Antarctic Division and private individuals. There is no comprehensive inventory of what material exists, no record of who holds it and no plan to ensure its preservation and availability to researchers or for its public display.

Unless moves to collect and preserve this volume of important material are put in hand as a matter of urgency it is inevitable that great amounts of it will be lost as those knowing its nature and significance die out.

From a social history point of view, Antarctica presents an unique window of opportunity to study the evolution of isolated societies from discovery, through exploration, pioneering and on to "colonisation and exploitation". Some of the discoverers are still alive, as are most of the explorers and practically all of the pioneers and later occupants. The Antarctic expeditions and stations of today are almost unrecognisably different in terms of isolation and the rigours necessarily endured by participants to those of even 40 years ago, yet today's expeditions are used by NASA as analogies to long term space travel, in

respect of human adaptation to isolation. While some oral history has been recorded by the ABC, by far the great majority of knowledge of Antarctic history reposes, unrecorded, in living minds. The ANARE

Club believes that the value of this knowledge is such that it should be collected, archived and made available to researchers through a national repository.

Experience with displays of Antarctic memorabilia mounted by the ANARE Club during the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the ANAREs showed that there is widespread and eager interest in the community in having access to this sort of material. Australians are, not surprisingly under the circumstances, ill informed about their country's past and present engagement with Antarctic affairs but, when informed show keen pride and enthusiasm for further understanding.

Of particular success and value was a mobile exhibition which was taken to major provincial centres in Queensland, and which popular demand caused to be made available to regional museums, libraries and civic venues for some two years beyond its originally planned five month lifetime. It was terminated when the Club's human resources to support it became over taxed.

RECOMMENDATION

The ANARE Club believes there is a pressing need for a national museum and repository of Antarctic artefacts, memorabilia, writings, maps and relevant audio-visual material. We believe the museum initially should conduct a national inventory of available materials and attempt to bring together within itself, or at least establish a data base of the extent and location of all relevant material throughout Australia and encourage its preservation. A National Antarctic Museum should provide display, archival and curatorial resources for Antarctic related materials and make them available for research purposes. The ANARE Club strongly urges the establishment of an Antarctic component within the National Museum. It is also strongly felt that, from inception, the National Antarctic museum should be planned to support a semi-permanent touring exhibition to be made available to State and regional museums and similar bodies.

It is the view of the ANARE Club that strong possibilities of commercial sponsorship exist to support an Antarctic collection, and particularly to support a substantial travelling exhibition.

The ANARE Club would be pleased to expand upon relevant matters

A CONDENSED ACCOUNT OF AUSTRALIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANTARCTIC AFFAIRS

James Cook's association with Australian and Antarctic discovery and exploration through his first circumnavigation of the globe in high southern latitudes in 1772 - 1775 is well known.

Between 1819 and 1821 the **Russian** navigator **Thaddeus von Bellingshausen** completed the second circumnavigation of Antarctica and made the first sighting of land in Antarctic regions. This voyage complemented Cook's work and, with it, defined the nature and only possible location for the great southern continent which had long been thought to exist. Bellingshausen **revictualled** and refitted his ships in Port Jackson in April 1820 and used it as a base from which to conduct explorations and scientific studies in the South Pacific during the austral winter, before returning there to again refit and **revictual** before returning to Antarctic regions in October 1821. Information Bellingshausen received in Sydney of the discovery of the South Shetland Islands led to his extensive exploration and charting in the region.

In 1831, an **English** whaler, **John Biscoe**, led an expedition which discovered the first land within the sector which was to become Australian Antarctica. Between forays into Antarctic regions, his expedition vessels refitted and **revictualled** at **Hobart** and Port **Phillip**.

The **French national Antarctic expedition of 1837-1840**, under the leadership of **Jules Dumont d'Urville**, was extended considerable assistance and advice in Hobart before beginning his voyage which led to the discovery of the narrow sector within Australian Antarctica which was to become French Antarctic Territory. Dumont d'Urville announced his discoveries in Hobart on his return there before proceeding home.

The **United States Exploring Expedition of 1839-1841**, under **Charles Wilkes**, reached Sydney in November 1839, ill prepared for its task and with ships in poor condition. The ships were repaired and **resupplied** in Sydney and the expedition was extended much help by the community there, before sailing almost due south to Antarctica. The extent of Wilkes' discoveries is subject of much debate, though, while there is no land in most of the regions he reported seeing it, it is certain that his expedition saw much of the land discovered by Dumont d'Urville and it is likely that he did discover but wrongly located, land at, at least, two locations within what is now Australian Antarctic Territory.

On his return to Sydney, Wilkes announced his **sightings** as being the discovery of the Antarctic continent and was immediately embroiled in controversy with Dumont d'Urville over priority of discovery in this region. It is beyond doubt that several others had sighted the Antarctic continent in several places before Wilkes, but, probably, he was the first to use the term "Antarctic Continent".

A **British expedition** charged with the task of locating and, if possible, reaching the South Magnetic Pole and led by the renowned navigator **James Clark Ross** arrived in Hobart in August 1840 and there learned of the work of **Balleny**, Dumont d'Urville and Wilkes. He then decided to try to approach the Magnetic Pole from further to the east than had previous navigators.

His bold approach of driving his ships into the ice, rather than attempting to skirt it, paid great dividends when he penetrated into the **Ross Sea**, which was to be for 100 years the primary gateway to continental Antarctica, and far south to the edge of the ice shelf which came to bear his name. The extent of Ross' discoveries was far greater than any previous expedition. He was also to accurately determine the position of the magnetic pole and to make, practically, as close an approach to it as was possible by ship at its then location.

Ross returned to **Hobart**, where he set up and continuously operated magnetic and astronomical observatories through the winter of 1841, during which his ships were repaired and **reprovisioned**. The expedition sailed south again in November 1841 and made further important discoveries before returning to England in September 1843.

The **Challenger** expedition of 1873-1874 is generally seen as being the birth of the science of oceanography and fundamental parts of the work in this field were conducted off the later discovered **Amery Ice Shelf** in Australian Antarctica.

Henryk Bull was a Norwegian business man who had made his home in Australia. After failing to get support from the Australian Antarctic Committee and the **Tasmanian** Government for a proposed whaling expedition, he returned to Norway and mounted his 1894-1895 expedition with the help of his friend **Svend Foyn**, the inventor of the explosive whaling harpoon. This expedition made discoveries in the Ross Sea and suggested the possibility of wintering on the Antarctic continent. Uncertainty remains as to which expedition was the first to set foot upon the Antarctic continent, but the Bull expedition is the first expedition to produce contemporaneous and **unchallengeable** evidence to support its claim.

Carsten Borchgrevink was a Norwegian born Australian who had been a member of Bull's 1894/95 expedition and may have been the first person to land on Antarctica. **Borchgrevink** mounted an expedition which made the first wintering on the Antarctic continent, at Cape **Adare**, in 1898-1899 and also achieved a new "furthest south" when sledging on the Ross Ice Shelf during the return voyage. An Australian physicist, Louis Bemaçchi, was a member of this expedition.

Louis Bemaçchi was also a member of the **British National Antarctic Expedition** (*Discovery* expedition) of 1901-1904 led by **Robert Scott**, which made the first extensive land travels in Antarctic regions.

The Australian government gave financial support to **the British Antarctic Expedition** of 1907-1909, led by **Ernest Shackleton**, and three Australians, Professor **Edgeworth David**, Douglas **Mawson** and Bertram **Armytage** carried most of the scientific burden of the expedition. **Mawson** and David, with **Forbes Mackay**, undertook the greatest man-hauling journey ever made to reach the South Magnetic Pole. The community of Sydney, and Professor **Edgeworth David** in particular, gave considerable support to the first Asian expedition to venture to Antarctica, the **1910-1912 Japanese Antarctic Expedition** led by **Choku Shirase**.

The 1911-1913 **Australasian Antarctic Expedition of Douglas Mawson** was by far the most scientifically productive expedition to its time. It also made major geographical advances and its members undertook epic journeys to equal those of many earlier and later expeditions where that was the sole or primary purpose of the endeavour. This expedition also occupied **Macquarie** Island as a meteorological and other research station for two years and made the first radio communications in Antarctica.

The tragic events associated with Scott's attempt on the Pole and the work of the **Australasian** Antarctic Expedition and its tragedies has overshadowed the sterling work done by the Australians **Debenham** and **Taylor** as scientist members of Scott's **1910-1912** expedition. Their contributions to the exploration and geological understanding of the southern **Ross** Sea regions are unexcelled.

The announcement of **Amundsen's** successful attainment of the South Pole was made by cable from **Hobart**, where Amundsen was warmly received and feted. He also left some of his dogs there for Mawson to use.

The photographer for perhaps the most well known Antarctic expedition of all, **Shackleton's** blighted **1914-1916 Endurance** expedition was the Australian Frank Hurley. Another key member of the party and in no small measure responsible for the avoidance of loss of life during it, was the Australian by adoption, the renowned Antarctic explorer, Ernest Joyce.

It is likely that for sheer nobility of purpose and commitment to a cause in the interests of others the almost unknown **Ross Sea** depot laying party of Shackleton's aborted **Trans Antarctic Expedition** is unexcelled. Three Australians, Richards, Jack and Gaze, and the Australian by adoption Joyce were important parts of this endeavour, with Richards and Joyce conducting themselves with outstanding heroism. Their examples of service and commitment are awesome and utterly inspiring.

The Australian **Hubert Wilkins** had his first association with Antarctic endeavours in 1920 as a member of what was perhaps the weirdest Antarctic Expedition ever. Despite its grandiose plans to employ 12 aircraft to carry out unprecedented exploration and science, its realisation was with two men living for an Antarctic wintering in an abandoned and beached 9 meter water boat. Wilkins was later to make three further expeditions to Antarctica and is the pioneer of Antarctic aviation, having made the first flight in the region in 1928. In addition he was for many years a pressing advocate of the establishment of a network of scientific, particularly meteorological, stations in Antarctica. He is one of the most distinguished Polar explorers and, ironically in view of his staunch determination to retain his "**Australianism**", is much better known in the United States where he is greatly admired, than in his own country

The first major commercial **whaling expedition** to the **Ross Sea** in **1923** had 10 Australian members, including the journalist **A J Villiers**.

The 1929/31 British, Australian, New Zealand Antarctic Expedition (**BANZARE**) led by Sir Douglas **Mawson** undertook extensive scientific and geographic research during the summers of 1929/30 and 1930/31 along the Antarctic coastline from approximately 40° E Longitude to approximately 160° E Longitude and was the precursor to the creation of Australian Antarctic Territory by the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act of 1933.

The Australian John **Rymill** led the British Graham Land expedition of 1934-1937. This expedition had remarkable achievements for very little expenditure. It established what was to become the Australian pattern of operations through the 1950s to the 1970s of the highly opportunistic merging of ship borne, aircraft supported or tractor and dog sledging parties of highly versatile expedition members, operating out of small bases with virtually no expedition non-productive staff. It was an approach which enabled Rymill's party to produce scientific and geographical results far beyond its expenditure of a meagre 20,000 pounds. Similarly, the same approach allowed the early **ANARE** parties to produce results unexcelled by nations with vastly greater resources.

In 1948, largely at the urging of Sir Douglas Mawson, the continuing Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions were established. In that year scientific stations were established on the sub-Antarctic Heard and **Macquarie** Islands. In 1954 a continental station, Mawson, was established in **MacRobertson** and is now the longest continuously operating station in Antarctica. Further continental stations, **Davis** and **Casey**, were established during the latter 1950s. From these stations and on ship borne expeditions extensive exploration and scientific programs have been conducted ever since. Australian Antarctic exploration and research has been, and continues to be, of world class, and has at various times, and in various fields, been world leading. Some 2,500 expedition members have now wintered over in the continental and Sub-Antarctic bases, and perhaps the same number have been associated with the expeditions for the shorter summer seasons