

Round the World in 90 Days (IV) Australia Title 298

I only stayed in Sydney for a few days, saw my family, went to a performance at the Sydney Opera House and then flew to Canberra, where I stayed with Arthur Birch in his magnificent home in Yarralumla, the Diplomatic Suburb. [See Title 7] In his usual generous manner, he gave a splendid evening party for me, which I enjoyed greatly and where I met Canberra's academic élite. I originally knew him through Fränk Söndheimer when Arthur held the Chair of Organic Chemistry at Manchester University. I was pleased when he joined the Editorial Board of *ISR*, and during our many meetings he told me much about his chemical work, his life and his travels. He was very proud of the fact that he, as an Australian, had started the Chemistry School at Australia's National University and that he was awarded the Foundation Chair in Organic Chemistry.

Another Member of the Board whom I visited in Canberra was Tony Barnett, Professor of Zoology, a truly interdisciplinary biologist, far more than an academic zoologist. His work on animal behaviour with rats was a classical contribution to the subject. The titles of his later books, *Modern Ethology* and *Biology and Freedom* showed his interdisciplinary philosophy and were eloquent proof of his scholarship and his scientific wisdom. Our talks and his suggestions for future articles in the *Journal*, as well as the excellent meals at his home, were always a great pleasure for me during my visits to Canberra.

I called on Sir Harold White, the Chief Librarian of the Australian National Library, whom I knew well from my scientific film days in the 1950s. He had always considered motion picture films as an integral part of a National Library and had collected an archive of Australia's classical films, including the pioneering films of the early Antarctic explorers, notably *90° South* by Herbert Ponting, one of the greatest documentary films ever made. [See Title 51] It recorded the 1911 expedition by Scott, but as Ponting did not accompany Scott to the South Pole and stayed behind at the base camp, a hut still preserved today near McMurdo, and therefore, he survived. He had filmed much of the preparations and took part in the preliminary trials and today one cannot even imagine his difficulties. He hand-cranked every foot of film he exposed, and then developed it there and then in the Antarctic, having first melted the ice to make up his chemical solutions.

For his superb still pictures, he was even more fastidious. They were all exposed on glass plates and if any failed to satisfy Ponting, he smashed them at once. When I visited Scott's hut in which Ponting had his working corner, I had hoped to find a few of his old broken glass plates, but other admirers of Ponting must have been there before me. Sir Harold White agreed with me in my admiration of Ponting, and told me that his film alone justified all his efforts to include historical moving pictures in the National Library. Thanks to him, my manuscript drafts of *Research Film*, [Title 57] are in the Library for permanent preservation.