

Reviews (History in Other Media)

NZhistory.net.nz website, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/>. Created and maintained by the History Group of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (Chief Historian: Bronwyn Dalley). Accessed June 2007.

THE NZHISTORY.NET.NZ WEBSITE was launched in 1999. It is now a large site, with many internal and external links, and succeeds magnificently in bringing New Zealand history to teachers, students and the wider public in a form that is interesting and accessible. The site's self-description is that it 'features information and resources from within the History Group of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, New Zealand. Three broad categories showcase themes in New Zealand history: Culture and society, Politics and government, and War and society. A Hands-on history section includes links to guides, external websites and other material for those who are "doing" and teaching history. New features will be developed and the Calendar of New Zealand history events will be added to on a regular basis.'

When you first enter the site there is always a new treat in the form of a 'Today in History' sidebar. For teachers who have, over past years, painstakingly typed such gems from the *New Zealand Herald* or textbooks into a spreadsheet, this is indeed a boon. Each school day my students love to find out about what has happened on that date in the past. Better still, they can type in any day and month to discover previous events linked to that date, or browse by week or month. Another feature that will appeal to the technology- and media-savvy, without daunting those easily scared, is the wide range of media used in the site. I had no problems in accessing the various image, sound, interactive and movie files, and schools with the usual internet and software packages should not experience problems either.

For regular visitors, the 'New site: what's changed?' link is useful. For example, you can now click on 'Map Locations' for key events such as the Tangiwai rail disaster and link to a Google Earth map. You can do the same for 'Waitangi', although that location/map option is only available after clicking on 'Treaty House'. A search for Pukehinahina (Gate Pa) produces no map, but you can quite cheerfully drive to the first state house in Miramar. Presumably this admirable feature is a work in progress. The 'Hands-on History' section offers advice on researching and publishing history, plus other useful links. More links are provided at the bottom of each page to other Ministry for Culture and Heritage sites, including the very useful online encyclopaedia Te Ara and the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*.

Great effort has been expended on providing useful features for navigating around NZhistory.net.nz. As well as tabs at the top of the home page that take users to the main theme-based pages, there are featured topics that change each month. At the time of this review these included 'New Zealand Music Month'. There are links for 'Popular topics' (those with the highest number of hits) and further links to 'Latest media'. Another very useful feature, which complements the site's overall search function, are site tags, such as 'housing', 'drink', 'Springboks' and so forth. When clicked, these link directly to related articles. For example, clicking on 'Suffrage' brings up over 20 tagged articles or media resources. Each of these has further tags that link to even more relevant articles or media. Finally, there are 'Quicklinks' to the major themes and their topics. If all of this sounds a bit overwhelming, it need not be: you can choose how far down the information super highway you wish to go.

Within the themes themselves there are a varying number of categories, each of which has topics. For example, 'Culture and Society' has ten categories, such as 'crime

and punishment', 'immigration' and 'health and welfare'. The latter category has two further topics: 'the 1918 influenza pandemic' and 'state housing'. Presumably these areas, too, are works in progress, for there is little as yet on Plunket or other efforts to improve mother/baby welfare. There is, however, a feature on 'Wellington café culture 1920–2000'. While this Victoria University Master of Public History project might at first seem somewhat light-hearted, it provides an interesting means to consider larger aspects of the changing nature of New Zealand society.

The 'NZ History Classroom' has a section for teachers ('Teachers' Toolbox') as well as a curriculum focus. The former is useful for all teachers in terms of a quick refresher of the skills used in the classroom, with links to professional reading. The latter covers NCEA Levels 1–3, and Levels 4 and 5 of the current Social Studies curriculum. Level 1 focuses on the Springbok tour, New Zealand forces in Asia, and nuclear issues; Level 2 is about issues of 'identity' and Maori leadership, while Level 3 examines race relations up to the Treaty of Waitangi, and Maori leadership. The Social Studies section covers ten topics, including 'Jockey underwear', 'capital punishment', 'Treaty of Waitangi', 'Anzac Day', and 'Chinese New Year'. Although the NCEA topics provide some good classroom tasks, teachers are called upon to contribute material that has worked well in the classroom and could be adapted for use on the site. Perhaps an area that could be focused on more is *interactive* resource interpretation tasks for NCEA Achievement Standards 1.3, 2.3 and 3.3 under the topics above: such resources are the strength of this site, and it is to this strength that the tasks should be directed.

Because all departments and teachers tackle teaching programmes in their own way, no single website or textbook will ever fulfil all of their needs. This site is no different. What it does provide are easily accessible topics that are *interesting*. Contemporary culture is linked to historical events and developments. For example, an audio file of Hayley Westenra singing the national anthem before a rugby test match provides a way into discussion of issues of identity. NZhistory.net.nz's main strength is in the drawing together of all manner of related media. It offers suggestions on how to use these but, as with all resources, teachers will need to adapt these to suit their own programmes.

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Te Ara: The Online Encyclopedia of New Zealand website, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/>. Created and maintained by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, New Zealand (General Editor: Jock Phillips). Accessed March 2007.

ACCORDING TO ITS ENTRY IN WIKIPEDIA ('The Free Encyclopedia'), Te Ara is a long-term on-line encyclopedia of New Zealand, backed by the New Zealand Government's Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Launched in 2005, the site's entries so far cover the themes of 'New Zealand Peoples', and 'Earth, Sea and Sky' (entries on natural resources, the sea and the environment), while a 'New Zealand in Brief' section 'presents summary coverage of themes to be explained [sic] later'. Seven further themes will be progressively rolled out from 2007.

Wikipedia's is a 'stub' entry: 'an article that is too short to provide encyclopaedic coverage of the subject, but not so short as to provide no useful information', and might be 'so incomplete that an editor who knows little or nothing about the topic could improve its content after a superficial Web search or a few minutes in a reference library'.¹ From the Te Ara site itself,² we learn that Te Ara means 'the pathway' in Maori, and that it is intended, when completed in 2012, to be 'a comprehensive guide to the country's