

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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Over the last week I've visited the film sites of "Oku Tuakana – My Brother". The weather was appalling when we filmed The World's Fastest Indian but this Matthew Inns' film, set during the land wars, has been plagued by earthquakes, gales, snow and icy hail. The heroic voluntary performers from Cosy Nook and Daffodil Bay deserve medals for their contribution to the film industry in Southland.

I had a small role in a Geoff Murphy film called "Utu", New Zealand's first Puha Western. It was a well produced film but it flopped at the box office. This was probably a different country in 1980. We still supported apartheid sport in South Africa and there had been no settling of Maori land grievances in New Zealand.

Films about our colonial past only made Kiwis feel uneasy. However, once the Muldoon era was over and we had tolerant, liberal Prime Ministers such as Lange, Clark, Bolger and Key we have, as a nation, become a lot more comfortable about confronting our past.

This Matthew Inns' film has a similar theme to the Christmas rebellion that took place in WWI when British and German troops fraternised in no mans land. It explores the relationships that can develop between English soldiers and Maori warriors despite the conflicts over land.

One of my favourite jobs as Mayor is visiting primary schools and giving away books as part of Alan Duff's "Books in Homes" Project. As part of the ceremony we all sing the "Duffy Anthem" but after seeing Alan's programme on TV 1's Sunday Programme I'm not so sure this is a good idea. I've got no issues about Alan Duff going broke. In a capitalist system that encourages the entrepreneur it is inevitable that some will fail. It's how you handle failure that is a real test of your character. Lashing out is not a good response for a national role model.