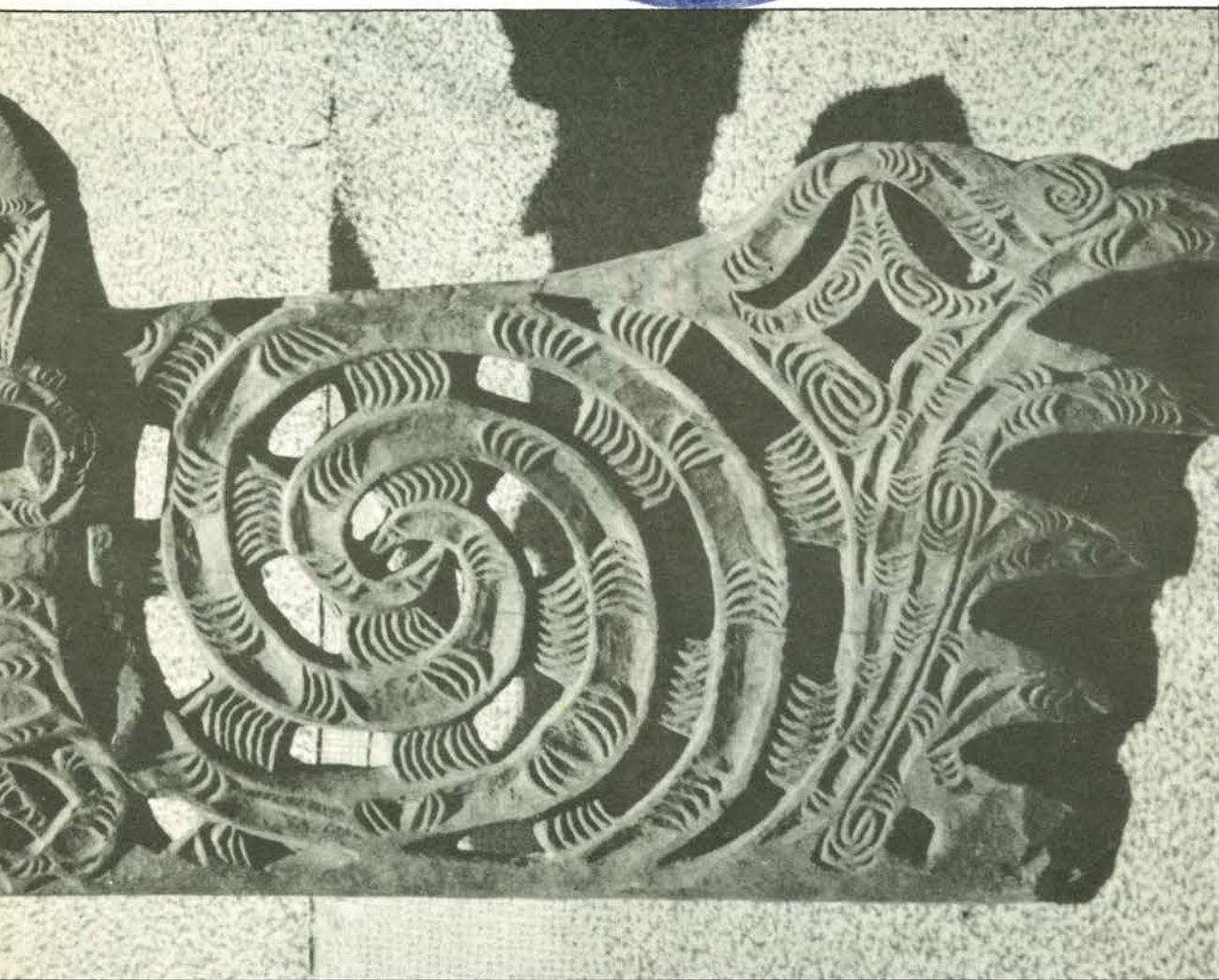


AGMANZ NEWS

THE ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND



November 1971



Lintel carving, Auckland Museum

The event of most concern to the Association during the past three months, and the saddest, has been the sudden death of Professor John Beaglehole, O.M.

His passing has deprived New Zealand of its most distinguished historian. His monumental work *The Voyages of Captain Cook* will remain his memorial. The editorial in the New Zealand Herald of October 12 commented, "Distinguished as were his books on New Zealand and the exploration of the Pacific, their outstanding merit lay in the author's skill in presenting the material as a virtually definitive interpretation of the past . . . Yet his methods and standards could well bear closely on the quality of New Zealand scholarship — and not only in history".

This Association marks Professor Beaglehole's death with deep regret. To those whose work impinges on the exploration and voyages of the South Pacific in recent history, his knowledge and scholarship will be sorely missed.

B.G.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Visit by Dr. H.J. Plenderleith

In October Dr. Plenderleith, C.B.E., M.C., B.Sc., PH.D., Hon. LLd (St. Andrews), F.R.S.E., F.S.A., F.M.A., the eminent authority on the preservation

WHO YOU SHOULD KNOW — 2

Compiled by Wendy Carnegie and Brenda Gamble

In this series we endeavour to present a balance between people working in museums and art galleries in the north and south.

BRIAN MUIR

Director of
Robert McDougall
Art Gallery,
Christchurch



AGMANZ NEWS Vol. II No. II

November, 1971

The Art Galleries & Museums Association of New Zealand Inc.

To promote and improve public galleries and museums.

Secretary, Wendy Carnegie
Hon. Editor, Brenda Gamble
Auckland City Art Gallery
P.O. Box 6842
Auckland, 1, New Zealand.

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Cover photograph by H.D.B. Dansey.

and conservation of antiquities, works of art and manuscripts, paid a short visit to this country. A tour to the four centres was arranged by Dr. Carnegie so quite a number of members will have had the pleasure of meeting Dr. and Mrs. Plenderleith before their return to Italy where they now make their home.

Brian Muir was born in Waiuku in 1943, where he received his primary and secondary education. After attending Auckland University and obtaining his B.A. in history and fine arts, he spent a year at Auckland Teachers' Training College. There followed a period of teaching at Pukekohe, near Auckland. A year later, to vary his career, Brian Muir joined the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation's News Service team based in Auckland.

For most of his life Brian has collected Maori artifacts and colonial bric-a-brac. In 1966 he opened the Waiuku Museum, which was housed in the local disused fire-station handed over to him by the Mayor for the purpose. Later he took an Agmanz in-service training course. In 1967 he was appointed director of Palmerston North Art Gallery, now known as the Manawatu Art Gallery. In 1969 he moved to Christchurch to become director of the McDougall Gallery on Mr. Baverstock's retirement, spending a month in Melbourne at the National Art Gallery of Victoria before taking up his duties.

Brian Muir would like to see capital subsidies available to art galleries and museums and greater assistance towards the purchase of works of art and artifacts. He feels there should be tax concessions to enable public and private patrons to donate works, or else direct subsidies.

His interests are music, reading reference works, writing, painting and sketching. For exercise he

chooses walking and swimming. He is a life member of the Auckland Institute and Museum, and the Waiuku Museum, and a member of the Visual Panel of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

*G.C. Docking
Director of the
Auckland City
Art Gallery.*



Gil Docking was born in Bendigo, Victoria, Australia in 1919. He was educated at Melbourne Boys' High School and later at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Art School.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, Gil Docking joined the R.A.A.F. and was attached to Coastal Command in England. Taken prisoner after being shot down he was a prisoner-of-war for a year in Germany. In 1946 he returned to Melbourne and continued studying at the R.M.I.T. specialising in visual education, and from there he was posted as visuals designer for a Commonwealth department producing material for rehabilitation of ex-service men. In 1959 he enrolled at Melbourne University to study Fine Arts and Philosophy, graduating in 1951.

1952 was an important year in his life because he married the painter Shay Lawson and was appointed Education Officer at the National Gallery of Victoria in charge of travelling exhibitions. He was there until 1957 when he took a teaching position and became art master at Mount Scopus College, Burwood, Victoria. In 1958 he was appointed director of Newcastle City Art Gallery, New South Wales, then in 1965 he moved to New Zealand to take up his present post.

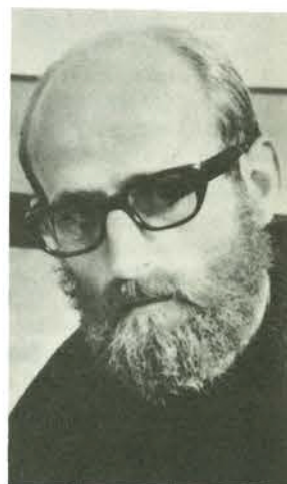
He is now planning Stage II of the City Council's project to extend the City Art Gallery into the remaining part of the building vacated by the Public Library. As well as new galleries for prints and drawings and small exhibitions, Stage II will include the conversion of the former reference library into a Gallery Hall for lectures, musical performances, intimate theatre and film shows as lunchtime events. This 19th century Hall is to be restored to its original condition with cast iron columns supporting a balcony enclosed by decorative panels. Gil Docking

would also like to see the City Art Gallery develop as a teaching centre where visiting exhibitions and the permanent collections are more effectively used by schools and adult education groups. He would rather see branch galleries established in such places as new shopping centres than one central art gallery grow into a monolithic institution isolated from life in the new suburban areas.

Gil Docking is anxious to see the In-service training scheme, which is organised by Agmanz, extended; a travelling road unit designed to take exhibitions to schools and country towns; a space in the Gallery where experiments may be carried out, and a greater development of the National Conservation Service Scheme based at Auckland.

Gil Docking's recreations? Writing (he is the author of *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, published by A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1971), reading, listening to music and watching grass grow.

*LUITJEN BIERINGA
Director of Manawatu
Art Gallery,
Palmerston North.*



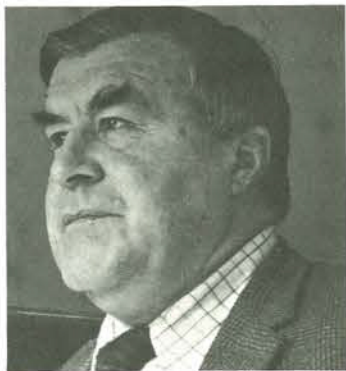
Born in the Netherlands in 1942, Luit Bieringa received his early schooling in Holland. With his parents he moved to Hamilton in 1956 and attended the Hamilton Boys' High School.

Although good at mathematics, Luit Bieringa says he was "pushed" into languages and took his M.A. with honours in German at the University of Auckland. Talking with Luit one would never know that his first language was not English. He would like to have been an architect but he took art history. His M.A. thesis was on the work of M.T. Woollaston and Colin McCahon in the '30's and '40's. Later he taught German at Selwyn College, Auckland.

His comments on his work are that he has to be a jack-of-all trades and has insufficient time to give to research for exhibition work. He gives planned lectures to the public and says that young people (fifth and sixth formers) become very involved in art and have many questions.

Married to an ex-nurse and with two young children, Luit Bieringa, when time permits, tries to do research for the Ph.D. for which he has enrolled.

R.S. Duff,
Director
Canterbury Museum
Christchurch



Born at Invercargill but educated at Christchurch Boys' High School (Dux scholar, 1930), Canterbury College (senior scholar and Honours M.A. in Education, 1935), Roger Duff was able to develop a schoolboy interest in drawing Maoris to a scholarly interest in Polynesian prehistory and anthropology, pursued across Oceania to Southeast Asia. His D.Sc. was awarded by the University of New Zealand in 1951 for research and publication into the Moa hunter phase of Maori prehistory. A S.E.A.T.O. Fellowship, during 1961 enabled him to classify the stone adzes of the Austronesian culture area of Southeast Asia.

Study of the smaller museums of Britain under a British Council Scholarship of 1947 inspired Roger Duff to initiate sweeping changes at Canterbury Museum, to which he was appointed Ethnologist in 1938 and Director, at the age of 36, in 1948. The changes in brief were to restrict to a local scope the traditional world encyclopaedia prescription of anthropology, zoology and geology and to introduce colonial history and archives. Roger Duff was fortunate to preside at the opening in 1958 of the Museum's Provincial Centennial Wing, and current plans include a Hundredth Anniversary Wing (of the Museum itself) with an incorporated national Antarctic Museum Centre.

Speaking as the longest serving Director to guide the present destinies of the metropolitan museums, Roger Duff feels that the chief requirement of the museum is to rediscover the purpose which justified the original rise of the museum movement and caused museums to spread like schools through the world. That purpose, he believes, is popular education and specifically at the level of the local community. So the chief guarantee of success in popular education is to be under the continual necessity to woo the local public. Roger Duff is wary of any proposal for a national museum service which could hardly avoid the impersonal control of bureaucrats housed in Wellington.

Where the state could best help would be in the most generous subsidy assistance of capital building projects, and in the provision of small annual research-needs grants to supplement the limitations of local body rates for this purpose.

Dr. Duff is confident of the future of museums and

believes they will have an increasingly important role to play. In addition to counteracting delinquency at the individual level, the museums will be vital to maintaining the quality of the urban environment. If there are three great causes in our land, he says, they are the conservation of the natural environment, the conservation of the cultural past and the achievement of integration of our European and South Pacific culture streams and the museums can carry a proud banner in all three.

Leisure time interests include archaeological excavation with the Museum's Club; shallow scuba diving (without aqualung); planting native shrubs; attendance at Maori gatherings; membership of cultural societies with interests from China to Scottish country dancing.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

SWAMPS YIELD UP THEIR TREASURE

Harry Dansey

For safe keeping, put it in the swamp. That seems to be the advice taken by old-time Maoris all over New Zealand, judging by the examples of their material culture which so many times have been discovered in the clinging mud of swampy valleys and marshy hollows.

Latest example to come to light was a small door lintel from South Head, Kaipara, found on September 12 in a swamp where drains were being dug. The finder, Daniel Quigley, a schoolboy, presented the lintel to the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

It is a fine example of the art of the Northland Maori carvers of several centuries ago, fashioned in a style considered to be that of Ngati Whatua craftsmen but bearing distinctive secondary features, possibly evolved by the carver of the lintel himself.

Look through museum catalogues and you will find entry after entry telling of the recovery of carvings and other objects from swamps in Northland, the Hauraki Plains, in Taranaki, in the Waikato and Manawatu areas and many other places.

The most unusual carving ever found in the country, the un-Maori-looking house decoration in the Auckland War Memorial Museum called the Kaitaia lintel, came from a swamp between Kaitaia and Ahipara.

Incomparable lintel

In a showcase close to it is the incomparable Hauraki Plains lintel remarkable for its grotesque and yet graceful, lively, twisting, dancing, figures.

Some say it is one of the greatest works of art ever produced in New Zealand. It came from a swamp at Patutonga.

Two carved slabs from a house which tradition says was named Tutangi-mamae were found in a mangrove swamp near Otakanini, north of Helensville. Their serpentine sculptured figures on the museum wall awaken the admiration of all with a feeling for form and design.

Over the years many fine carvings have come from North Taranaki swamps, particularly those close to the town of Waitara.

Eleven years ago a systematic search was made in one of these swamps under the director of the Canterbury Museum, Dr. Roger Duff. Although much valuable evidence of early Maori life was found, no carvings were discovered.

Ironically, at the very time the museum teams were digging in one swamp, a drainlayer unearthed a carving north of the museum's site and then a Waitara Borough Council employee, ploughing land to form a children's playground, found another carving west of the museum's site.

These finds are in the pattern of most of the spectacular discoveries of carvings. They are found by accident, seldom by experts and often by young people.

Schoolboy's find

For instance, it was Jim Eyles who, in 1939, when he was a primary schoolboy, found the moa-hunter camp at Wairau, in the South Island.

Study of the remarkable assembly of objects subsequently found there has significantly influenced thought in many Maori and Polynesian pre-history areas.

Then there was the case of Shaun Ainsworth, 13-year-old Waitara schoolboy who on Good Friday, 1959, got into a ditch to release a frog whose aquarium had run dry.

He saw six inches of wood projecting from the side of the ditch and on it was a carved head. Eventually dug out, it proved to be a magnificent carved lintel 5ft 8½ inches long.

Then there was Ray Watemburg, then aged 18, who in 1961 found the fore-end of a canoe in a swamp at Waitara. It was a fine example of the work of an old-time craftsman, dovetailed to fit into a canoe hull to form a new prow.

His assistants were all schoolchildren.

Then there was the storehouse carving, an angle-ended slab known as an epa, neatly lifted from a swamp by the steel jaws of a mechanical ditch-digger operated near Waitara in 1960 by Mr. J. Kilpatrick and his assistant, Mr. M. Topine.

The obvious question which arises is this: Why did they put the carvings in the swamps?

The answer is that, as observation had shown timber did not deteriorate there, the Maoris placed the carvings of which they were so proud in the swamps to hide them in times of danger.

Thus, if the impending battle was lost and the houses burnt, the survivors or their descendants in good time could return and recover these works of art.

Sometimes the carvings would be taken from houses and placed in swamps when the people were leaving their homes for a long time.

Examples are the carvings of the historic house Tutangi-mamae. These were taken from the house and placed in the swamp when Ngati Whatua was threatened by its musket-armed Ngapuhi enemies. In this case the carvings were left for more than a century before being recovered and placed in the museum.

It is possible that some of the Taranaki carvings were put in the swamps when Waikato invaders marched south in raids at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

Some may have been swamp-stored when some of the people migrated to Wellington and Marlborough Sounds and the Chatham Islands in the 1820's and 30's.

Swamp excavation by skilled archaeologists has resulted in the recovery of many articles less spectacular than large carvings, but most valuable in the clues they can give to the daily life and customs of other days.

An excellent example of this is the collection of wooden combs found in a swamp at Kauri Point, Tauranga, by Auckland archaeologists in 1962. They found 189 combs and thousands of fragments. Most appeared to have been used and then deliberately broken.

It is presumed that the combs, having acquired the tapu from the owner's head, could not be left to lie around when they became worn. They were therefore broken and placed in a wahi tapu — a sacred place — where they would not be touched and would therefore not harm anyone.

Thus the evidence stored in the swamp can throw light on to old social custom.

Garden implements

Another aspect of pre-European life to which swamp excavation has been able to add knowledge is agriculture. A great many recovered Maori gardening implements, in particular the ko used to break up ground, come from swamps.

It was not until the Waitara excavations of 1960 that it was proved conclusively these implements were put deliberately and carefully into the swamp. Until then it could have been assumed that they were lost or had just been discarded there.

Careful excavation showed that pieces of wood were first placed at intervals in the mud and bracken fern put over them. Then the ko was laid on the fern which was folded over the top of it. The whole bundle was held firmly in place by stones placed on top of it.

In many cases the teka, or foot rest, of the ko was still in position, firmly lashed by split vine.

Other articles recovered from swamps include fern-root beaters and wooden bowls. In one excavation at Waitara, close to where Shaun Ainsworth found his lintel, thousands of chips of totara were found, pointing to the possibility of the carving, or at least the rough-hewing of it, being done in the swamp itself.

One of the hazards of taking sodden wood from a swamp is that as soon as it comes into the air and begins to dry, it splits.

In the past the primary agent of preservation has been raw linseed oil. The carving was allowed to drain and was kept painted with the oil, sometimes mixed with kerosene, which assisted in carrying it deep into the wood.

The theory was that as the water drained out, each minute cell in the timber became filled with oil, which then hardened and held it firm.

This treatment, in which the oil was darkened by the mud in the timber's surface cells, resulted in a dark brown or sometimes jet black carving.

The most acceptable modern preservative is polyethylene glycol. It has the advantage of not staining the wood, and treated objects do not look as if they had lain in mud for centuries.

Archaeologically speaking, New Zealand's swamps have scarcely been touched. Who knows, therefore, what wonders of the art of the old-time Maori still lie hidden in their cool, damp depths?

(This article originally appeared in The Auckland Star on October 2, 1971)

(See cover photograph)

Cap in hand for culture

It was predictable that the Government would not be moved by pleas to make provision in the supplementary estimates for an additional grant to the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council this year.

The fact that the provision of funds for the council was made in tribute to the Queen has not led the Government to any subsequent display of generosity, though it has upped the original ante, and with the change to a triennial allocation has made the council's budgeting easier.

The next triennial period begins with the 1972-73 financial year. The council should not need to prepare a very strong case to win at the least an increase capable of absorbing inflationary rises in costs.

It deserves a lot more, and everyone who wants New Zealand to be able to provide something more intellectually and culturally satisfying than sporting thrills and a healthy outdoor life will be backing its claims.

New Zealanders should by now be getting a little self-conscious about their reputed lack of culture and their attachment to mediocrity. They may shrug off the strictures of visiting highbrows but surely when visiting sportsmen adopt a similar critical attitude they should be taking notice.

The British Lions' coach Carwyn James, pointed out that there are other worthwhile things if life besides sport, even cultural things.

The British squash and hockey player, Mike Corby, criticised the conformity of New Zealanders. Another squash player, this time the Indian Sanjit Roy, says the New Zealand emphasis on outdoor life and sport can result in isolation from the intellectual and cultural world. To those who might answer "so what?", he would reply that this can make New Zealanders boring people.

So there it is. Sportsmen from outside New Zealand see the problem this country faces with its parsimonious attitude to the arts. It's time New Zealanders did too.

(The Dominion, September 2, 1971)

Report on a Course on Ethnographic and Archaeological conservation in London, Copenhagen and Amsterdam, November 1970 to February 1971.

J.T. Jacobs

In October 1970, I completed a two year contract as Chief Technician, with the National Museum of Tanzania.

With the assistance of a grant-in-aid from the de Beer Fund administered by the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, I left Dar es Salaam on 7 November for London.

The purpose of this visit was to study current methods of conservation with the view to setting up a laboratory in the Centennial Wing of the Canterbury Museum, for the treatment of objects from the collection. It is a long felt, urgent need that a conservation laboratory be established in a museum in New Zealand, and this will be the first of its kind. This enquiry was concentrated on water-logged, cracked and rotten wood, stone, leather, feather, leaf-textile and also furniture, sculpture and ceramics, paper and archival material, prints and drawings, costumes, and textiles, and metals.

In London the course was organised by Mr. Norman Bromelle, Curator of Conservation and Technical Services, Victoria and Albert Museum, and Dr. Werner, Research Laboratory, British Museum, and in Amsterdam, by the Director of the Central Research Laboratory for Science and Art, I.R. Lodewijks. In Copenhagen, I worked with Mr. B. Brorson Christensen of the Danish National Museum. Mr. Christensen is probably the authority on the conservation of waterlogged wood. He has

been in charge of the treatment of numerous ships and smaller wooden objects, by the Danish National Museum over a period of more than 20 years. I made the journey to Copenhagen as a private visit, privately funded and regretably it was rather short but I was very fortunate in my chance meeting with Mr. Christensen and being able to spend a full day with him before he left Copenhagen.

London

It is of some interest that in the two museums where I worked in London, namely the Victoria and Albert and the British Museum, they have quite different arrangements of their conservation staff. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a curator in charge of a large unit for the conservation of fine and applied art objects. This unit has six departments, staffed by expert conservators. They specialise in one field and every worker is extremely competent. Many of the objects that come to them for treatment are very valuable. Due to the highly specialised and repetitive nature of their work I found many of the conservators were bored and they envied the working conditions of the British Museum staff, while at the same time realising its limitations.

At the British Museum, a small team of conservators is attached to each "collection department". These people handle a wide variety of objects which makes their work very interesting, but for this reason they do not reach the standard of craftsmanship of their Victoria and Albert colleagues. In the Mediaeval Department one conservator was working on iron, wooden, leather, textile and glass objects from one excavation. At the Victoria and Albert Museum these objects would have been handled by separate departments.

The system at the Canterbury Museum will by necessity, be a reduced version of the British Museum system. All the objects will be treated in the one laboratory which must be designed to cope with a wide variety of functions.

Through the entire "course" I concentrated on ethnographic conservation but also tried to cover many techniques of applied and fine art restoration and conservation, relevant to our collections, and as a personal background to the whole field of conservation. As the Victoria and Albert was the first museum where I worked, this plan was very effective and the time well spent. Continuing this search for a general knowledge of conservation, the excellent library of museum and conservation material in Amsterdam was invaluable. This library is probably the best of its kind.

For the 7 weeks I was attached to the Victoria and Albert I spread my time over the 6 conservation departments and the Departments of Textiles, and Prints and Drawing.

The most outstanding feature, common to the 6 conservation departments is the extreme care and respect that the objects receive. Each object is

carefully examined, the materials analysed and the method and type of conservation work to be undertaken is discussed thoroughly by the members of the department, before the work commences. Accurate documentation is also very important. A careful description of the object and its condition is made on arrival at the laboratory. Each step during treatment is recorded and in addition black and white and colour photographs "before and after" of the whole object and details of areas of damage are made. This photographic material is useful for illustrating lectures and publications and invaluable as a record of what materials and methods have been used on an object when it comes back to the laboratory for further treatment. While the actual work is in progress, so much emphasis is placed upon the care and welfare of the object, that the work progresses very slowly. This caution is encouraged by the curatorial staff.

The list is rather a long one, but some of the more useful techniques studied while at the Victoria and Albert Museum are listed hereunder.

Reviving of old furniture lacquers and polish.

Cleaning of gilt, ivory, enamel, posters and prints, marble, metals (iron, pewter, gold, silver, bronze).

Dry cleaning and bleaching of textiles.

Neutralising paper

Mounting of prints and drawings

Treatment of bronze disease.

Cleaning of oil paintings and miniatures.

Synthetic compounds for repairing and artificially representing limestone, marble, terracotta, glass porcelain, ivory and some metals.

Storage of prints and drawings, textiles and costumes.
British Museum

My visit to the Research Laboratory, British Museum, coincided with the treatment of waterlogged timbers of the Graveney ship excavated from the Thames estuary. Together with a technician from the Maritime Museum where the ship will ultimately be housed. I worked on this project for one week. The impregnant being used was the polyethylene glycol marketed as Carbowax 4000. This was a very valuable exercise as the fragments of the ship were relatively small, similar in size to those excavated by Dr. Duff at Kaiapohia.

While acquainted with the Research Laboratory staff I used the opportunity to discuss techniques and also followed the progress of the objects being handled at that time.

The Ethnographic Department of the British Museum was in the process of moving its entire collection, exhibitions offices and laboratories from Bloomsbury to its new home in Burlington Gardens near Piccadilly. The old laboratories were being refurnished for other departments' expansion and the new laboratories had neither electricity or water laid on. However I was

fortunate in having a number of very interesting talks with the Chief Conservator of the Ethnographic Department, Mr. Harold Gowers, at a time when he was very preoccupied with the moving arrangements and installation of new exhibitions.

At Dr. Werner's recommendation, I made a day trip to the Horniman Museum in South London. They have a small ethnographic collection and excellent conservation staff.

I also visited the conservation laboratories of other departments in the British Museum to study the layout of small laboratories handling a wide variety of objects. This was very useful for planning the Canterbury Museum Laboratory.

England

I made a short one week tour to visit the Museums of Bristol, Liverpool and Leicester. My main interest in these museums was the conservation laboratories and freeze-drying equipment.

I wish to record my appreciation of the grant-in-aid I received from the British Council. This helped me to meet the high cost of accommodation in London.

Copenhagen

Mr. Christensen, of the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, has developed a new technique for the conservation of waterlogged wood incorporating an earlier discarded method — freeze drying — with the standard method in use in England and the United States, — impregnation with polyethylene glycol 4000. Tests have been very encouraging and two tanks, 8 metres long, were being constructed to treat the timbers of a ship.

Mr. Christensen was very helpful and co-operative, and I appreciate his interest and advice for setting-up our laboratory.

While in Copenhagen I visited the Zoological Museum, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum, and the outstanding Open-Air Museum, and in north Zealand, the Louisiana Art Museum and Frederiksberg Castle Museum of National History. I was particularly interested and impressed with the Zoological Museum. Only one floor of exhibition has been opened to the public.

The points worthy of note :—

- (a) A small hole cut in the glass, so that just one finger can compare a hedgehog and a furry mammal.
- (b) Recorded bird song and synchronised spot-lighting arrangement to identify the songster, neither written label nor spoken word being necessary.
- (c) Small chairs and low tables grouped in a corner, with ample pencils, crayons and paper and mounted birds (old specimens) to sketch and stroke. This was very popular and nearby a softboard panel displayed some of

the works of art that had not been born proudly home by the young artists.

- (d) Samples of fur and skin of crocodiles with the invitation "please touch" adjacent to the mounted encased exhibits.
- (e) The refreshing ecological treatment of the Danish wildlife exhibits.

Holland

The Central Research Laboratory of Science and Art, Amsterdam has been set up to investigate methods of restoration and conservation of all materials that suffer from deterioration by ageing or exposure to the atmosphere. It is a government agency and handles enquiries from all sources; public, private, commercial, museum and art gallery. At present the only conservation that is being undertaken is in the textile, painting and leather departments. All other efforts are concentrated on research and publication.

The Central Research Laboratory was recommended to me as suitable for learning the practical aspects of the conservation of waterlogged wood. On my arrival in Amsterdam I was very disappointed to learn that no conservation of waterlogged wood was being attempted in Holland. The development of a satisfactory method was still in the research stage and to date without encouraging results.

At the Ship Museum, Kettlehavn, the hull of a large wooden ship was being exhibited and maintained in a saturated condition while awaiting the perfection of a method to conserve it. I think it was the anticipation of their having found a suitable technique to conserve the ship, that was a major consideration when it was recommended that I travel to Holland.

I spent a number of days with Mr. Munnikdam, the chemist in charge of the research project and his two laboratory technicians, discussing the problems involved in impregnating waterlogged wood. The meeting with the technical staff was particularly worthwhile, in addition to their work on wood they had just developed a technique for the consolidation of crumbling sandstone, suitable for treating the weathered exteriors of old buildings. Its application to crumbling portions of our Museum frontage would be a sound investment against future erosion. I also had useful discussions with leather, prints and drawings, and textile experts. The laboratory has a fine library of museum and conservation works, and is housed in the grounds of the Rijksmuseum which provided ample facilities for private study.

I made four day trips away from the Central Research Laboratory.

1. To meet the ethnographic conservator of The Tropical Museum, Amsterdam.
2. To meet the conservation staff of the Archaeological Institute, Amersfoort.
3. To the Aquarium of the Amsterdam Zoological Gardens, to investigate the seawater circulation system.

4. To Kettlehavn to visit the Ship Museum and Mr. van de Heidl. The main exhibit, a large wooden merchantman, was excavated from a wheat field, which at one time had been 5 metres below sea level in the Zuider Zee. For 3 years this ship has occupied the centre of the main gallery fenced off with polyethylene sheet, and sprayed every 30 minutes to maintain saturation. In some areas the wood has been badly eroded and a deadline of 6 months has been set for finding a suitable technique for preserving this beautiful ship.

I wish to express my appreciation of the student grant I received from the Ministry of Culture of the Netherlands Government. Having completed my specified research in Europe, I decided to invest my own private funds to enable me to visit some outstanding U.S.A. institutions en route to New Zealand. This proved an outstanding success and I was able to study conservation, freeze drying, vacuum forming of plant material, storage requirements for collections, taxidermy and many other display techniques, and to contact the people working in these fields.

(Mr. Jacobs is Assistant Preparator at Canterbury Museum).

Auckland City Art Gallery

The most important and valuable collection of drawings ever to come to this country *100 Master drawings; from Cezanne through Picasso* was on exhibition for six weeks during September and October. During that time 15,000 people visited the show and 2,500 catalogues were sold.

This has been followed by an exhibition of paintings by *Morris Louis* the American post-abstract expressionist painter who died in 1962 at the age of fifty. The first time the work of a major American artist has been shown in New Zealand it is also the first time that any of Louis's work has been sent on an overseas tour. The property of the New York art dealer Andre Emmerich, the eleven paintings — some of them seven and eight feet wide — are being shown in Auckland, Melbourne and Santa Barbara.

Morris Louis reached one of the most extreme conclusions of contemporary painting. He developed a notion of pictorial space and a new method of paint application, that of flooding wave upon wave of colour onto unprimed cotton duck. He worked alone for many years and enjoyed recognition only a few years before his death. The exhibition closes on 28 November.

Auckland War Memorial Museum

The Museum shares with the Dominion Museum a generous benefactor in Mr. Charles Edgar Disney, an 80-year-old Englishman who has presented many valuable gifts to the two museums. In 1967 he established a trust of \$108,966 the income of which

was to be divided equally between Auckland Museum and the Dominion Museum.

Mr. Disney recently gave Auckland Museum a gift of \$7,100 to enable a hall of English furniture to be installed. The former director, Sir Gilbert Archey, began collecting English furniture for the Museum many years ago.

Other major monetary gifts to the Museum during 1970 and 1971 have been \$1,000 from the Auckland Savings Bank and a further gift, this time of \$4,000 from the Sir John Logan Campbell Trust, towards the major project, the Hall of New Zealand Birds, which is at an advanced stage of preparation.

Dunedin Public Art Gallery

T. Esplin

At the beginning of October the members of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery paid tribute to the retiring Director, Mr. J.D. Charlton Edgar, after his six year term of office but as I write plans are made to have Mr. Edgar continue work in the Gallery until the end of November. Mr. L.C. Lloyd who succeeds him as Director has already outlined plans that will perhaps see the Gallery enter a new era of its history.

The building programme that initially envisaged only two new exhibition gallery rooms seems now quite inadequate in the light of Mr. Lloyd's far-sighted ideas on what a gallery is all about, housing a complex of cultural activities and acting as a dynamo of artistic endeavour in the community and the country.

Basically it is all a question of money and plans are already in hand to find the means to up-date the Gallery to modern standards. We particularly need at least one air conditioned exhibition room or we will miss out on the more valuable exhibitions that come to New Zealand.

Directors seem to dominate the news however and the Gallery is the recipient of a valuable Bow figure bequeathed by the late Mrs. G.L. Ferguson in appreciation of the twenty years of service given to the Gallery by Mrs. A.G. Pearse during her term of office as Director preceding Mr. Edgar.

On this subject of acquisition six Frances Hodgkins paintings were recently acquired from a London dealer making thirty works by this artist which will be hung in a special Frances Hodgkins Room in the Gallery.

(Mr. Esplin is a Council member of Dunedin Art Gallery).

The Papers of Sir Douglas Mawson

The Hocken Library has been given the Antarctic explorers papers relating to his work as financial Commissioner in London for the New Zealand Sounds Hydro-Electric Concessions Limited. This was a scheme, anticipating the present venture, to generate power by driving a tunnel from Lake Manapouri to Deep Cove. Nitrate, calcium carbonate and aluminium

industries were to be established. To Sir Douglas was charged the work of raising funds in London. The Library has also received a set of letters of Mrs. P. Van der Velden wife of the influential Dutch painter who settled in New Zealand in 1890.

Museum of Transport & Technology, Auckland

A London double-decker bus has been presented to the Museum by Waikato Breweries Limited in association with Bass International Limited. The bus will be used to take museum visitors round the seven acre grounds.

The museum may soon broadcast music through the grounds. It now owns the first private radio station in the British Empire, Radio 2YM, of Gisborne, which went on the air in 1919. Restored and presented by Mr. Little, a senior NZBC announcer, it is housed in a special studio built for the purpose.

Ewelme Cottage, Parnell

Her Excellency Lady Porritt recently paid a visit to Ewelme to inspect the now completely restored cottage. She expressed delight in what she saw.

A full-time curator is in residence and the cottage is open daily. Many organised groups from clubs and societies are shown round by members of the *Friends of Ewelme*.

Just published is *The Auckland Journals of Vicesimus Lush 1850-63*, edited by Alison Drummond and published by Pegasus Press, in which daily life in Auckland as well as the Lush family life is delightfully recounted.

Auction of Paintings and Drawings

In Auckland last month the Mackelvie Trust auctioned a collection of paintings and drawings from its holdings. The works were considered by the Trustees to belong to periods of painting which are already well represented in the collection and through their sale, funds would become available for the purchase of more important works.

The announcement of the auction did not go unchallenged.

Letters in the press from Dr. E.H. McCormick, Professor Keith Sinclair and Mr. Paul Potter questioned the decision to spoil the "completeness" of the collection and it was suggested that a dangerous precedent could be set.

The sale on October 1 resulted in the Mackelvie Trust making about \$10,000. Two oil paintings, *Trees at Avignon*, by Frank Brangwyn and *A Flying Squadron of the Old School*, by Thomas Somerscales were passed in after failing to reach their reserve prices.

Unesco

Professor K.W. Thomson, of Massey University and an Agmanz Council member, has been re-appointed to

the National Commission for Unesco for a second four-year term.

Arts Council subsidy

The Waihi Arts Centre and Museum Association have received a subsidy of \$150 from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

Arts Council Director

Mr. Michael Nicolaidi (33), has been appointed director of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

Mr. Nicolaidi is at present director of publicity for the National Development Council, and public relations officer to the Treasury.

Sculpture prize awarded

Twenty-three year old Ian Berquist, an honours graduate of the Auckland School of Fine Arts, has been awarded the Hansells Prize for Contemporary Sculpture. He was presented with a cheque for \$1,000 at a function held at the Wairarapa Arts Centre at Masterton. His entry *Stand* is described as a slender shaft of steel painted in a shade of deep purple with supports of polished aluminium.

A member of the New Zealand Society of Sculptors and Painters, Ian Berquist is touring the society's sculpture exhibition through the country under Arts Council sponsorship. He also works as a technician in the Auckland University department of cell biology.

McLauchlin-National Art Gallery Award 1971/72

The National Art Gallery invites applications for consideration for the newly established McLauchlin-National Art Gallery Award. The Award is for \$1,000 as assistance towards overseas study. The age limit for applicants is normally 20-25 years. For further details write to:- The Director, National Art Gallery, Private Bag, Wellington.

STAFF NEWS

Mr. David Armitage, until recently Exhibitions Officer at the Auckland City Art Gallery, has left the profession to take up a post in publishing.

Mr. Peter Webb, at present managing director of John Cordy Limited, fine art dealers in Auckland, has been appointed Exhibitions Officer at the Auckland City Art Gallery. He will take up his duties in January, 1972.

Mr. Gilbert Docking, Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery, has resigned for health reasons. He will be returning to Australia to live next year. Mr. Docking has been responsible for guiding the planning of the Edmiston Wing as well as many other developments at the Art Gallery.

Mr. Don Gregg, Keeper of Geology at Canterbury Museum, has been appointed Director of the

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart. He takes up his duties in February 1972.

The Wellington painter Wong Sing Tai is at present working at the Auckland City Art Gallery, as temporary exhibitions assistant.

OBITUARIES

Dr. John C. Beaglehole, O.M., C.M.G., M.A., Ph.D., HON. D LITT (OXON), HON. D LITT (Victoria N.Z.)

A scholar of world stature.

(The Alexander Turnbull Library has mounted a very fine tribute to the late Dr. Beaglehole, with photographs, copies of his publications and his O.M.)

Alison Pickmere (Mrs. T. Bond)

It is with sincere regret that we record the death of the Auckland painter and printmaker Alison Pickmere. Trained at Elam School of Art, East Sydney Technical College and in England and France, Alison Pickmere is represented by oil paintings and prints in many collections. For some time she was Secretary of the Auckland Society of Arts and she was always an enthusiastic supporter of the arts.

OVERSEAS NEWS

La greve pourquoi pas?

In 1970 major strikes hit two countries famous for their museums. The national museums of Paris were partially paralysed for several days by stoppages on the part of the attendants; though very soon, notwithstanding protests from the research personnel, which had gone on working normally, the military took over, at least in those museums most popular with the tourists. In Italy the museums coming under the Fine Arts Administration were affected for a longer period by a general strike of all grades of personnel, of which the tourists were the unfortunate victims. Then, in March 1971, there took place the biggest strike, to our knowledge, ever to have hit a whole series of museums; this again was in Italy, where the museums remained shut for four weeks. The profession has been singularly free from wage and employment disputes. What is happening to it?

Let there be no mistake; it is not merely a question of wage-claims. It is true that museum attendants, especially those employed by museums, coming under the State or other public bodies, are particularly badly off. As its 7th General Conference, Icom made a study of the status of the profession and adopted recommendations which, though reasonable, have not so far been put into practice.

What our Italian colleagues wished to stress was the humiliating nature of the treatment afforded them, and also the absence of any policy with regard to the national heritage. But Italy is not the only instance. In the United States, famous for the

richness of its museums, the millions of dollars spent on acquisitions, museum buildings and museum activities of every type, members of the profession are now talking about trade-unionism, and the National Museums Association is trying to persuade the Federal Government, the individual States and the town councils to devote a progressively larger portion of their budgets to a cultural policy.

Accumulating treasures in museums is an excellent thing, but it is not enough. They must be conserved and displayed to the best advantage, and not merely for the benefit of tourists or of the elite of the mother-country. This presupposes credits, but it also presupposes personnel ever more highly qualified, trained in a wider range of specialities, and increasingly responsible. Not only must such personnel, whatever its grade, be paid; it must also have the means of assuming its responsibilities.

So the staff goes on strike, joins unions, refuses to be held responsible for the thefts which are a daily occurrence in museums which are ill-protected. Will this suffice? Can museums be saved from the consequences of official indifference? Would it not be better to close all these museums down?

(Editorial, Icom News, March, 1971)

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