NEW ZEALAND MUSEUMS JOURNAL

Volume 21 Number 1 1991

Journal of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand

EDITORIAL

This volume is the first of a new series of what was once called the AGMANZ Journal. Its new name and the change in editorial base do not, however, signify a major change in the reasons for such a publication or in the aspirations of the editors and the Council of the Association. The material contained herein is presented in the hope that some, if not all, will be of interest and of value to the museum profession, to trustees, to the 'Friends' and to the funding bodies of the nation's many museum institutions.

Because of the major development of graduate courses in museum studies at Massey University (See Butts in this issue) it is logical that the editorial servicing of the journal should be carried out at the University. The programme is already producing essays of such quality (See McCredie and Maré in this issue) that their publication is believed to be important not only for a much wider readership but also for the furtherance of academic study of areas of concern to all who possess a serious interest in the development of institutions acknowledged as vital to the social and cultural health of New Zealand.

The co-editors are grateful to those individuals whose papers are included in this issue. Comments on the format and content of the journal would be welcomed as would all offers of contributions for further issues.

The opinions expressed by authors in this journal are not necessarily those of the AGMANZ or the Editors.

Keith W. Thomson.

AGMANZ: TE ROPU HANGA KAUPAPA TAONGA

Sherry Reynolds, AGMANZ President, Auckland Institute and Museum

In May 1991 the AGM of the AGMANZ saw unanimous support for substantial refocusing and revitalisation of the Association's structure and services. The new name of the Association is to be "The Museums Association of Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated - Te Ropu Hanga Kaupapa Taonga". The new statement of purpose reads: "He kura tangata e kore e rokohanga. He kura whenua ka rokohanga. The Museums Association of Aotearoa New Zealand - Te Ropu Hanga Kaupapa Taonga (MAANZ) is the national body dedicated to the advancement of New Zealand museums and their work towards the care and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage". The new aims of the Association fall broadly into three categories of advocacy, communications and standards and development.

The composition of Council will change substantially to demonstrate the Association's commitment to a bicultural partnership with the tangata whenua. The new Council will comprise ten elected members from the Association's membership and ten members appointed by the Kaitiaki Maori.

The membership benefits for 1991/92 year include a regular quarterly newsletter, the biannual New Zealand Museums Journal, the opportunity to participate in the annual conference to be held in September 1992, as well as offering the opportunity to be part of the national organisation that promotes museums and their work and provides a broad forum and support network for museum peoples concerns and interests.

During the 1991/92 year the Council will continue its advocacy role to promote museums as essential community resources at the national level and as requested at the local level. Council will monitor and where appropriate make recommendations to Government and other agencies on policy impacting on museums. As well the Council will continue to cooperate with other bodies in New Zealand or elsewhere that have similar aims to those of the Association. Direct access to Council is encouraged from the museological special interest and professional groups, while regional membership groups are also being promoted.

A new draft Code of Ethics has been referred to Kaitiaki Maori for comment and once this feedback has been received Council will circulate the revised draft to the general membership for comment. Training opportunities and requirements are viewed as very important by Council and are currently being reviewed. Recently several informal discussions have been held to pursue issues of existing availability of courses and scope of training, content, levels and methods of delivering.

In the "foreseeable" future the way ahead generally for museums and museum workers is likely to become more difficult not easier. Such times however also ironically offer new challenges and opportunities: opportunities to review old "givens"; opportunities for change; opportunities for creativity and opportunities to form new relationships and partnerships. The recently formed partnership with the Department of Museum Studies from Massey University to produce the New Zealand Museum's Journal is an excellent example of how the Association has begun to respond to the environment in which it is now operating.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE OTAGO MUSEUM

Richard Cassels, Director, Otago Museum, Dunedin

Introduction

Over the last four years visitor numbers to the Otago Museum went from about 70,000 p.a. to over 200,000. Museum expenditure increased by over 70% with most of the increase coming from sources other than local authority levies - the traditional funding base of the Museum. Programmes like the 'Build-a-Bug' and 'Make-a-Mask' competitions, the 'A-Z Show', and 'What the Tide Brought In' combined with new facilities such as 'Discovery World', the Museum Cafe, the Craft Council Gallery and the new Maori Hall 'Tangata Whenua', raised the public profile of the Museum enormously.

So, what happened? How was it made possible? And why did it happen?

1. What happened?

(a) The public front

The 'A-Z Show' of 1987-8 amassed an amazing array of objects from the Museum's collections under each letter of the alphabet (e.g. anteater, amethyst, argillite, antelope, and tiger, toilet, tsuga and tapa); this very popular exhibition showed the Museum taking a very light-hearted look at itself, but also showed off the magnificent wealth and diversity of the Museum's collections.

A series of annual creative competitions - 'Build-a-Bug', 'Make-a-Mask' and 'Build-a-Bird' - involved the whole community, particularly school children, in an imaginative and enjoyable way of thinking about natural history and ethnology. The resulting display of creations were extremely popular.

In 1989 the old Great King Street gallery was converted into the venue for a programme of special (or 'temporary') exhibitions. Previously these short-term exhibitions had been held in the Museum Foyer, which had become increasingly unsatisfactory. The new venue was much larger, and was a very attractive hall in its own right. It enabled the Museum to continue its programme of community exhibitions (principally craft groups and educational institutions who hired the hall and set up their exhibitions); but, more importantly, it gave the Museum a suitable venue for travelling exhibitions, and for its own special-theme exhibitions.

The expansion of the special (or short-term) exhibitions programme will have an effect on the development of the 'permanent' (or long-term) exhibitions. However in the years 1987-91 the Museum also opened new 'insect' displays (the Forster Hall, actually including a wide range of invertebrates), the new Maori Hall display 'Tangata Whenua', and, in 1991, the new Science Centre 'Discovery World'.

The 'Te Maori' exhibition was held at the Otago Museum in 1986-7 and necessitated the complete dismantling of the old Maori displays. The resulting empty hall demanded that the Museum urgently address the matter of a new exhibition.

Te Maori was an incredibly important catalyst: Maori reasserted their primacy over ethnologists' visions of New Zealand's history. Museum conventions were shattered by swarms of people talking, arguing, demonstrating, eating and resting in the museum; the tangata whenua asserted their culture, their language and their presence in a way that meant that New Zealand museums could never be the same again.

The Otago Museum's 'Tangata Whenua' display was planned in consultation with the Otago tangata whenua, who discussed all principal issues. It was however carried out by a predominantly pakeha staff, and this shows. Labels are bilingual; a seven projector audiovisual is popular; a 'moveable glass wall' display system looks splendid; and the Hall incorporates a study room for groups and classes, together with study collections. This facility is becoming increasingly significant as in-depth use of the collections and displays by educational groups increases.

In 1990 the Museum engaged Mr. Cliff Whiting to direct a community carving project, which resulted in a magnificent contemporary gateway to part of the new Maori displays.

Issues of biculturalism, repatriation, (particularly resulting from the Ngati Awa claim for the return of the meeting house 'Mataatua') and political representation continue to be of key importance for the Otago Museum.

The Science Centre 'Discovery World - Matauranga Pu Taiao - Otago's Window on Science' developed somewhat unexpectedly as a result of several unrelated factors, principally (1) enthusiasm for developing a local science centre, particularly among University staff; (2) a desire to develop interactive exhibits and a Discovery room at the Otago Museum; (3) the rapid growth of science fairs, which were originally held at the Otago Museum; (4) the opportunity to buy the assets of the failed Auckland venture 'Microworld'; (5) the willingness of the Museum Trust Board to take risks.

When Lottery funding became available in 1990, the whole project shifted from being a relatively small museum-university 'Exploratory', to a regional science centre, a co-operative venture between the Museum, University, Polytechnic, local businesses and Otago science organisations.

Other important developments on the public front have been the refurbishment of the foyer, the opening of the cafe, the expansion of the shop (including its extension to include the Crafts Council Gallery, a co-operative venture with the Dunedin Chapter of the Crafts Council), the completion of market surveys (of both users and non-users), publication of a quarterly newsletter and revival of the annual report. Advertising expenditure has increased from $709 in 1986-7 to $10,861 in 1989-90. Also significant has been collaboration with other Dunedin attractions in publishing the 'Dunedin Naturally' and 'Dunedin: Heritage Alive' brochures; a dynamic programme of activities for schools, and a popular weekly 'Nature File' column in the Otago Daily Times.

(b) behind the scenes

A formal departmental structure was established, with Heads of Departments (e.g. Sciences, Humanities, Display, Maintenance, Administration, Security and Discovery World) regularly reporting to the Director. The scope of the two curatorial departments was deliberately broadened by changing them from Zoology and Anthropology to Sciences and Humanities respectively. The mission of the Museum was defined as focusing on nature, culture, and science, with two principal cultural themes - Otago's Polynesian heritage and its European/world heritage.

A successful annual corporate planning process was begun, using outside facilitators. The plans are kept as operational and practical as possible and have developed gradually in a more theoretical direction.

A major 4-year programme of urgent building maintenance was started, and the planning began for the next stage, climate control.

The price of emphasising the public front of the Museum has been lack of progress on registering, housing and researching collections, except in the field of entomology.

The scope of museum research was however broadened to include research on the ecology and conservation of living animals, particularly the Yellow-eyed Penguin. In a similar vein, the scope of Humanities collecting has been broadened to include contemporary Maori material culture and contemporary craft/decorative arts. The Otago Museum does not wish to condemn itself to focussing only on dead cultures and extinct species!

2. How did it happen?

(a) Money

Table 1 speaks for itself. The local authorities continued to fund the Museum, even approving increases above the level of inflation. This was undoubtedly due to the evident enthusiasm of the Board, Director and staff to implement changes. The most significant other source of income has been the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, with grants or subsidies of $109,572 towards the Maori Hall, $940,000 for Discovery World, and an annual subsidy for the Museum Liaison Service of $30-40,000.

Other principal sources have been Trusts, the University, the Dunedin City Council and the Museum's own Trust Funds, and a remarkable legacy of generosity and commitments by the people of Dunedin that owes its origins particularly to Willi Fels from the 1920s onwards.

Fund-raising events have been insignificant.

(b) Community Power

A science centre like Discovery World would not have been possible, nor would it have been undertaken, without the involvement of groups like the University, Polytechnic, and local business and service organisations. The Crafts Council Gallery is a co-operative venture with the Dunedin Chapter of the Crafts Council as is the Maritime Hall with the Otago Maritime Society. Three University Lecturers are honorary curators (in Classics and Costume). The carved gateway resulted from co-operation with Otakou marae in particular. The Friends of the Museum are active with support programmes and social events.

Community involvement is the only way that the present size of the Otago Museum's operation can be maintained. However the management, time and skills necessary for successful community projects should not be underestimated.

(c) Risk Taking

Discovery World, the expanded shop and the Cafe only happened because the Museum Trust Board was prepared to take the risk that these ventures might or might not pay for themselves. The courage of the Trust Board is notable, and is a good argument for museums to be administered by bodies at arms length from the funding bodies. Discovery World would not have happened if the Otago Museum had been a department of the Dunedin City Council.

3. Why did it happen?

It is hard to be analytical about such recent events. The following key factors can be identified:

(a) pressure for change after 30 years of the previous Directorship;

(b) reform of local government; greater accountability, efficiency and professionalism in this area;

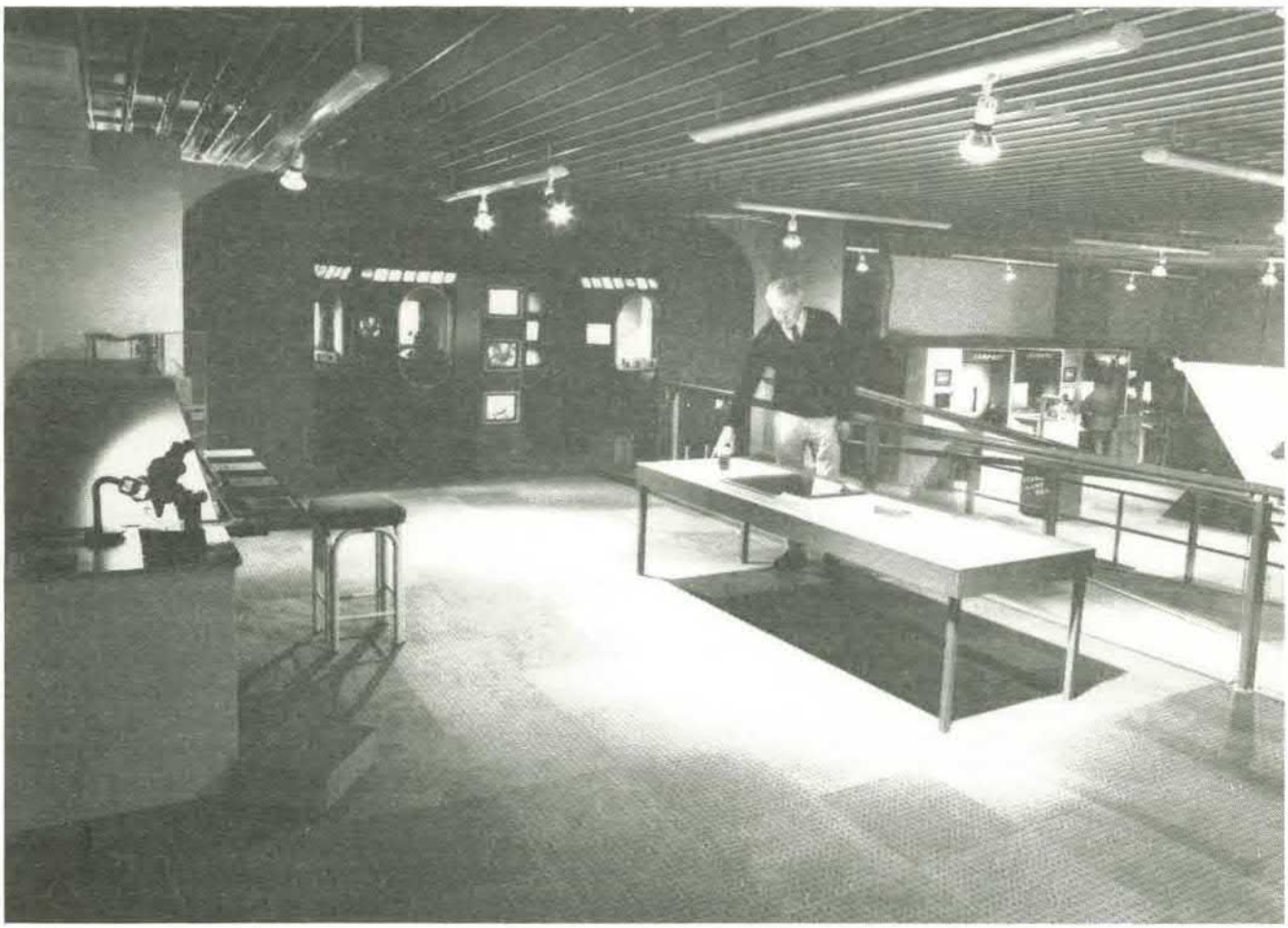
(c) greatly increased public expectations of museums, particularly because of increased overseas travel. Our visitors will now compare the Otago Museum to the Powerhouse in Sydney or the Natural History Museum in London, rather than with the Canterbury or North Otago Museums;

(d) necessity to develop self-funding commercial enterprises, with all the highly significant flow-on effects on the nature of museum organisations, of which the most important is the concept of SERVICE which comes to dominate the entire museum operation;

(e) the Maori renaissance and an accompanying backlash or swing back to 'traditional' values among the pakeha population;

(f) the remarkable growth of local history museums; in 1955 the Otago Museum was, in many people's minds, the only museum in Otago;

OTAGO MUSEUM: A view of part of Discovery World, the museum's new Science Centre.



(g) the growth of tourism;

(h) the increasing use of museums by educational organisations;

4. The Future

The last four years have seen the dramatic revitalisation of the Otago Museum as a dynamic and exciting community resource and community centre.

At the same time, and indeed partly as a result of these services, the profile of other museums, particularly local history museums, art galleries, visitor centres and other heritage attractions has been raised significantly. It is in the context of these local developments that the future role of the Otago Museum will be most drastically re-examined and the matter of the international cultural and scientific significance of its collections most seriously reconsidered.

Table 1 Otago Museum 1987-90: sources of total expenditure

	1	2	3	4	
Expenditure	1987-8	88-89	89-90* 15 mths	89-90 (12/15)	% increase 1-4
(a) Ex Local Authority levy	$854,864	978,301	1,334,623	(1,067,698)	+24.9%
(b) Other Funds:					
Special Funds	36,715	1,066	25,781		
Shop stock purchases	17,632	29,439	43,469		
Discovery World	-	593	355,272		
Trust Funds	14,149	44,026	70,581		
Conservation grant	-	6,972	265		
Maori Hall-	42,950	128,824			
Subtotal (b)	68,496	125,046	624,192	(499,354)	+62.9%
TOTAL (a) + (b)	923,360	1,103,347	1,958,815	(1,567,052)	+69.7

*15 months period, due to change in financial year.

Table 2. Otago Museum 1989-90 (15 months) - Where the Money came From

(A) Local Authorities*		%
Ordinary levy	$1,183,320	
Interest from levies	33,921	
SUB TOTAL (A)	$1,256,241	54%
(B) Other Sources		
Fundraising - Maori Hall (spent in year)	128,824	
Fundraising - Science Centre (spent in year)	355,272	
Shop Gross Profit	21,320	
University rentals	18,100	
Lottery Board and Government subsidies	43,936	
Other Museum income	21,022	
Bequests and legacies	165,702	
Other grants	5,500	
Interest from Special & Trust funds	153,706	
Government 'Restart' subsidies	39,309	
Value of voluntary work:		
Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu	20,000	
Other Dunedin businesses	10,000	
Trust Board (no fees)	44,000	
Honorary curators	45,000	
SUB TOTAL (B)	$1,071,691	46%
TOTAL (A) + (B)	$2,327,932	

* Proportions are approximately:

D.C.C. 85.2%; Central Otago D.C. 2.5%; Clutha D.C. 7.2%; Waitaki D.C. 5.2%

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONSERVATORS' CODES OF ETHICS AND THE CONSERVATION POLICIES OF INSTITUTIONS - COMMON THREADS, CONFLICTS AND FAILINGS.

Athol McCredie, Consultant Curator, Wellington

Conservators' codes of ethics provide rules for individuals, intended to ensure consistent and professional behaviour and to thereby help define a particular profession. Much of their content is a prescription for professionalism in the general sense concerning avoidance of conflicts of interest, refraining from criticising the work of other conservators, and so on. Institutional conservation policies, on the other hand, are formulated as guides for action which will help realise an institution's aims and objectives. They are about ways of bringing collections to the public with a minimum of harm.

In many situations codes and policies must interface. Conservators working for an institution have to follow its policies as well as their own professional code of ethics. Institutions, in turn, expect that where matters fall outside the scope of their policies the conservators codes will continue to preserve the interests of the institution and its objects. In practice, despite their functionally different intentions, the two types of document are largely compatible, sharing a number philosophical approaches in common. However, there are also problem areas where they do not seamlessly connect or complement each other, and respective interests conflict or are not followed through. Finally, there are certain issues of non-material value which neither manage to deal with.

THE COMMON THREADS

Prevention vs Intervention

Both codes of ethics and conservation policies stress a preference for prevention of damage rather than repair. For conservators, the principle which informs this attitude is one of respect for the object. The ICCM, AIC and IIC-CG codes of ethics, almost identically state that "all actions of the conservator must be governed by an unswerving respect for the physical, historic and aesthetic integrity of the object" (ICCM). Any intervention risks affecting these aspects of the object. In fact Ward (1988:3) goes so far as to say that all intervention diminishes originality. Codes of ethics therefore emphasise that treatments which entail a minimum of alteration to the object should be used.

From a philosophy of minimum intervention follows the principle of reversibility. Preferable treatments or materials are those which can be removed or otherwise "undone" without damage to the object. (However, reversibility has become debatable in recent years. Common and routine techniques, such as spot bleaching or washing works on paper are not reversible. And reversibility is usually a matter of degree. Removable consolidants applied to archaeological wooden material, for example, will still leave traces, or those of their solvents, which might contaminate radiocarbon dating.)

Caution, in fact, has to be applied at every turn. The long term stability of treatments is never 100% certain. Accelerated aging tests provide substantial evidence of permanency but do not constitute a watertight guarantee. And treatments which appear reasonable today may also mislead, hinder, or prevent future research. Renshaw-Beauchamp (n.d.: 194) mentions the case of traces of blood on 3,000 year old microblades. New techniques of analysis have allowed researchers to determine the species of animal last cut with these blades. If these artefacts had been routinely washed by ultrasound cleaning this evidence would have vanished.

Respect for the object also includes a presumption against restoration. As Ward (1988: 60) says, restoration is a contradiction in terms, "for in most cases it can only be prosthetic or cosmetic. It can never actually replace what is lost". Codes of ethics disallow restoration which modifies or conceals the "true nature" of the object. Restoration must be detectable so that original and repair can be distinguished.

Whereas codes of ethics focus on minimum alteration of the *object*, the content of most institutional policies almost entirely addresses the reduction of damaging influences on *collections*. Their informing principle is to ensure that when other important functions of the museum are carried out - acquisition, research, exhibition, and interpretation - that preservation of the collection is a primary consideration. Policy content is therefore less (or not at all) concerned with individual laboratory treatment options but with preventive conservation at the macro level[1].

Typical policy topics are: climate control and lighting levels in storage and exhibit areas; storage and display supports and housings; pest control; periodic collection checks; condition reporting and other documentation of collection and loans (inward and outward); protection of material loaned to other institutions; packing and freight standards for loans; standards of staff handling; protection from fire, water, theft; and disaster planning.

Decision Making

Who has the final say on whether treatment of an object is to proceed, and the nature of such treatment, is an important matter to address. Obviously the owner should have, or share in, this authority but not only may the owner have insufficient specialist knowledge to make a judicious conservation decision, the ownership of museum objects is a question which can be broader than simple physical, legal possession. (An issue discussed later.)

Of the conservators' codes of ethics, the AIC alone is not very clear on the issue of decision making. The ICCM, NZPCG, and IIC-CG all explicitly state that the consent of the owner/custodian is necessary before any intervention which may alter the object. AIC and NZPCF say that sincere and honest advice is to be given if the owner/custodian is unable to judge an object's conservation requirements.

Regarding institutional policies, the British Columbia Provincial Museum policy says, "The care of collections is clearly a curatorial responsibility [and that] before any treatment is undertaken there must be consultation and agreement with the curator responsible for the object" (1982:2). The primary responsibility of conservators in this museum is to provide information on standards and to actively participate at the request of curators.

Correcting the curator's lack of conservation knowledge with good advice is one thing, but this advice needs in turn to be informed by understandings of the historical, cultural or aesthetic significance and background of the item - neither party alone can possess full knowledge of the object. Although both the ICCM and IIC-CG assign final decision making to the owner-custodian, they do also make the philosophical point that conservation and treatment is a shared responsibility of owner and conservator. The best way to formalise this in an institution, and to ensure a two-way flow of information, is to make conservation decisions bipartite. The National Museums of Canada go even further than this, to include a third person from whichever user area is currently most relevant - research, design, education, or registration. This stems from the museum's philosophy that it has three equal fields of responsibility with regard to collection items: for what the object means - historically, scientifically, aesthetically; for what it is - physically and for ensuring its physical integrity is protected; and for its appropriate and effective use - in exhibits, research, education, etc. (Ward, 1988: 5-6).

Training and Propagation of Knowledge

In encouraging high standards of professionalism, conservators' codes of ethics invariably stress that conservators have a duty to improve their own knowledge and skills and to share this information with their fellows. Being a profession also implies some form of public service orientation and most codes of ethics additionally mention a responsibility to promote awareness and understanding of conservation amongst the general public. (Curiously, the NZPCG says nothing about a responsibility to educate the public, not even to train future conservators and technicians.)

For institutions, educating the public is narrowed to training of all staff who handle or whose actions may affect the welfare of collection material. Educating here becomes a matter of crucial importance, since deterioration of objects can be adversely caused by any one of many incorrect museum practices. The conservator is the person at whose door the onus on providing this education usually is placed.

Documentation

Both codes of ethics and policies insist that records of the physical conditions of objects are written and preserved. Codes of ethics concern themselves with the creation of examination and (if applicable) treatment reports for objects entering the laboratory. Examination reports are to include information on historic or cultural significance and causes of deterioration (NZPCG) as well as on details of composition and physical condition. Treatment reports document the materials and processes used, as well as including observations and justifications. Both are to be held as permanent records so that reversal of treatments can be performed and the pre-treatment nature of the object can always be ascertained.

Institutions stress that both the physical condition and any treatment needs of collection items should be routinely recorded. This provides information on the state of the collection as a whole as well as a record against which individual deterioration or damage can be detected. Material entering or leaving the building is always required to be condition-reported so that causes of damage and responsibility for it can be traced.

DISCONTINUITIES

Responsibility for Preserving Meaning

Museum policies tend to leave issues of the alteration of the object's nature by treatment to be covered by conservators' codes of ethics, yet this is an area in which they have a strong interest: a museum's very purpose and activities concerns the meaning of physical objects. The treatment of an object, as codes of ethics implicitly acknowledge, can alter or obscure any one of a number of different meanings and significances an object may hold. Codes of ethics require the conservator to understand these different meanings, to be "governed by an unswerving respect for the physical, historic and aesthetic integrity of the object" (ICCM). And, in restoration, to consider which previous state of an object's existence to represent.[2]

Institutional policies do not seem to explicitly support this philosophy. A trivial but indicative example is an experience I had recently in borrowing original historical illustrations for an exhibition. It was apparently Archives' policy that all material loaned out be "conserved" but this conservation was not just to prevent immediate exhibit damage or for cosmetic reasons. It included general preventative treatment - removal of acid mounts, rubber cement, sellotape, etc. While undoubtedly beneficial to the work's long term physical survival, it did mean that all traces of being artwork in the publishing sense were removed. In their new, individual, acid-free housings and squeaky clean condition, the drawings became elevated to the status of artworks. The curators (typically) seemed happy with this - they were keen to bathe in the prestige of now owning artworks, heedless of the subtle change in meaning.

Codes of ethics, let alone policies, have little to say on spiritual meaning, although most include a section about the necessity of maintaining a balance between the cultural needs of society (which society?) and the preservation of cultural material. Mibach and Wolfe (1986) have written about this issue in relation to the demands of American Indian groups for the use of sacred objects held in museums; for their performance of spiritual maintenance of

the objects; and concerns about spiritual damage and its reversibility. New Zealand conservators, and institutions, face very similar issues - whether museum-held cloaks should be used for tangi and the spiritual effects from the handling of sacred objects by female museum workers, for example.

Extended Ownership

Related to these issues is that of ownership of ethnological material. Mention of spiritual or other senses of extra-legal ownership or interests in objects seems absent from policies and codes of ethics. If, as is happening in New Zealand, museums are beginning to recognise that they are no more than custodians of ethnographic material then conservation treatments should require the consent of the originating people as well as of curators.

The interests of artists in their work are less supportable but also deserving of respect. Only the IIC-CG code mentions that conservators have a duty to understand, as part of an object's meaning, the intentions of its creator. In some situations, more than just the intentions could be considered. Artists often feel a strong identification with, and sense of spiritual ownership of, their artworks. To consult with, or at least inform them about proposed treatments of their creations demonstrates sensitivity, maintains good artist/institutional relations, and will probably provide useful information.[3]

A difficult issue which this consultation can raise is the attitude of the creator who has no inclination to see his/her work actively preserved. Some artists even deliberately intend their work to self-destruct. Karel Peters (1983: 12) cites the case of an elderly Maori woman who felt that ancestor carvings should die a natural death, presumably in the belief that this was a more respectful way of treating them than restoration.

Taking Account of Value and Significance

Conservation policies tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the physical aspects of objects. (Perhaps because they are often written by conservators rather than curators?) These policies frequently take as their starting point or raison d'être, the ICOM definition of a museum[4], claiming that preservation is a prime (if not the prime) function of a museum. But to say, as Ward (1988: 1) does, that preservation is a first priority because without preservation there is no point to collecting and that there would be no collections to research or present is a chicken and egg argument, for obviously without a collection there is nothing to preserve. (Lack of proper preservation never bothered museums in past - they functioned perfectly well in the terms of their own time.) Moreover, if one takes "researches, communicates, and exhibits" to read as "interprets" in the ICOM definition of a museum, the functions do not represent a sequence. Collecting is itself an act of interpretation. In summary, the "a museum's purpose" argument justifying conservation policy assumes and emphasises the physicality of collection material, taking it as an a priori fact, a uniform, equal valued collection of objects to be treated - rather than recognising the constantly negotiated and negotiable values and meanings of these objects.

These issues make themselves felt in the fact of the "one standard" philosophy of conservators' codes of ethics. This requires that the quality of treatment is never limited by the quality or value of an object, "although circumstances may limit the extent of treatment" (IC-CG). Vitale et al (1985) suggest that, like reversibility, this is a valuable ideal to aim for, but that in practice it can be difficult to follow. "Extent" and "quality" are not always easily separable, and curators simply do assign relative values to collection items. Although preventive conservation measures such as climate control can be applied across large volumes of collection material, laboratory treatment in most institutions does have to be prioritised, and, especially with multiple works, treatments limited. All items are not equal, as codes of ethics and most policies seem to propose. (This proposal is taking the argument that today's rubbish could be tomorrow's treasures and vice versa to an extreme. Naturally caution must be constantly and rigorously exercised, but it is precisely a curator's job to try and gain a perspective on those relative values.)

CONCLUSION

In summary, codes of ethics and policies should recognise their functional relationships more fully. Museums cannot just leave the preservation of meaning up to conservators' codes of ethics and they need conservators to be able to limit their commitment to the "one standard" (with appropriate safeguards). Although not as strongly oriented to private consultancy as some codes, there is nothing in the NZPCG code to acknowledge that the majority of New Zealand conservators work in institutions. The orientation of most codes to laboratory treatment also seems particularly out of place when so many conservators are finding that the bulk of their time is taken up with advising on and overseeing environmental conditions, handling and other forms of non-interventionist conservation.

Even with the best codes and policies there is still a need for high levels of dialogue. With conservators and curators/owners/custodians better informed of each other's perspectives not only can the objects themselves benefit, but greater access by users can ensue: too often what is merely a general recommendation by a conservator is passed on to researchers and public as an all encompassing edict set in stone. The conservators receive a reputation as unreasonable dictators when the blame is often due to curators, librarians, or archivists who possess insufficient knowledge to be able to judge individual cases on their merits.

Footnotes

1. This is a relatively recent development and in the past restoration in museums was more dominant. On purely economic grounds it obviously makes more sense to prevent deterioration than repair it. Awareness that past treatments have failed is another factor in this shift in practice, as is a change in public perceptions. In an age of the artificial and imitation - the simulacra of postmodern existence - museum audiences demand evidence of authenticity - those objects which show their age.

2. Usually to the state existing at the end of its useful life, though for art works it may be the original appearance intended by the artist.

3. An example is Anne Noble's iron toned photographs held in a number of NZ public gallery collections. These were originally blue in colour but have slowly and unevenly changed to an blotchy green. I suspect that the photographer would not want these works to be exhibited in their present state and I think curators should defer to this wish. For technical reasons treatment options may not include restoring the original colour - they may be restricted to removing tone altogether or else creating a uniform green. The photographer would be able to suggest which would be closest to her intentions. To ensure that the artist's original intention is followed, not their current feelings, the final decision should be the curator's.

4. "a non-profit making institution in the service of society and its development and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment".

5. Though some, such as the National Library's, do outline broad priority groups of collection types.

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[This article was originally submitted as an essay for the Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies, Massey University in 1991]

BOLA AND BEYOND: SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE GISBORNE MUSEUM & ARTS CENTRE

Wayne Orchiston - Director, Gisborne Museum & Arts Centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

March 1988 witnessed the simultaneous arrival in Gisborne of Cyclone Bola and yours truly (though no causal relationship should be inferred). After nearly twenty years in Australia, I found a very different New Zealand, and a regional museum and arts centre of which the staff were justly proud (see Thomson, 1981: 93-98).

My predecessor, Warner Haldane, had left a fine legacy: a complex comprising the main museum building (opened in 1977), two historical houses and associated outbuildings, and "The Star of Canada Maritime Museum" (opened in 1986); a popular art/craft changing exhibitions program; historic "photobooks" which had drawn international recognition (Haldane, 1979); the widely-read "Museum Miscellany" column in the Gisborne Herald; a well-patronised educational service; a professional collections management system; and a recently renovated, though already congested, collections store. The collections themselves had been rationalised through the introduction of a "Collections Policy", and particular strengths were costume and historical records and archives.

Staff comprised a Director, Deputy Director, Historian, Exhibitions Officer, and Registrar (all full-time), and part-time Education Officer (0.6), Supervisor (with front-of-house responsibilities), Technician, Cleaner, and Weekend Supervisors (two of them).

I came to Gisborne with a smorgasbord background in astronomy, ethnohistory, ethnology, geology, museology, palaeoanthropology and prehistory, and an employment history spanning a state museum, a government research department, and academia (including the curatorship of a major university's ethnographic and archaeological collections). My particular museology interests and expertise lay in children's museums, computer applications in museums (e.g. see Bhathal and Orchiston, 1981), fund-raising, marketing, museum architecture, the museum-tourism interface, public programs, and science centres (see Orchiston and Bhathal, 1984), but as the foundation Head of a graduate Department of Museum Studies for nine years I had a more than passing familiarity with other areas of museology.

The challenge, then, was to harness the available resources, marshall new resources, and assist the Executive Committee in planning an exciting and vibrant future direction for the Gisborne Museum & Arts Centre (henceforth "Gisborne Museum", for convenience). This paper summarises some of the developments that have occurred during the intervening three and a half years, and is a witness to the dedication of the staff and the support and vision of the Executive Committee.

2. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 Strategy Considerations

By accommodating the Constitution of the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre Incorporated and adapting the ICOM definition of "a museum", we arrive at a viable working definition for the Gisborne Museum:

> ... a non-profit making regional institution for residents of and visitors to the Gisborne District, which encourages practising artists and crafts people, and acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, information about and material evidence of mankind and the local environment.

In terms of strategy development, the critical aspects of this definition were the regional focus, specified target audiences, and role and function elements. Furthermore, as a public institution, funded to a large extent by rate-payer contributions, the Gisborne Museum had a primary responsibility to service the needs of the local (Gisborne District) population. As Hooper-Greenhill (1990: 215) has pointed out, the concept that museums are consumer-oriented, user-friendly, and there to serve their public(s), is a relatively new one.

Over the last thirty years or so, progressive museums worldwide have experienced an interesting quantum shift in primary function towards increased public usage and relevance, as a more knowledgable public with increased leisure time on its hands, has sought education, enjoyment and recreation in once hallowed halls (see Alexander, 1979; Levin, 1983). The perceived chronological focus of the modern museum has also changed in the mind's eye of the public to a place which helps people "... become aware of the past, present and future of the area in which they live" (Hudson, 1977: 11, my underlining).

Modern museums discuss contemporary issues (Hancocks, 1987; Prakash and Shaman, 1987), and serve as local information centres and tourism orientation centres. They espouse - at least in part - a "hands-on" approach (see Cleaver, 1988), and should not be afraid of taking the best elements of all progressive museums and modifying and adapting them to their own specific requirements (e.g. see Berrin, 1978; Henderson, 1986; Phillips, 1986). Where possible, modern museums should exploit the latest technological innovations to their own advantage (see Beniger and Freedman-Harvey, 1987; Besser, 1987; Femenias and Mansfield, 1985). Modern museums should be alive!

Museums of the future will focus increasingly on public education and enjoyment (*Museums for a New Century*, 1984), and adopt a "modern" as opposed to "traditional" stance to ensure their vitality and survival. Hudson (1977: 91) elaborates:

> The most fundamental difference between an old-fashioned and a modern museum lies in the limits within which it permits itself to operate. An 'art' museum which is concerned entirely with the aesthetic and technical aspects of painting is old-fashioned, no matter how modern its building, its lighting and air-conditioning may be. So too is a natural history museum which excludes living creatures or recorded sounds or ecology, and a museum of science and technology which fails to include people and human problems in its displays ... Equally, a 'don't touch' museum is not a modern museum, no matter how wonderful its galleries and equipment.

Any attempt to further modernise the Gisborne Museum called for prioritizing decisions and the development of a staged implementation strategy. It was decided, given the basic soundness of the existing collection management systems, that collections-related matters would be assigned minimal priority and initial efforts should centre on acquiring the resources to immediately improve the corporate image and develop the public facilities (especially The Shop) and public programmes (but particularly the exhibitions, displays, other support programmes, and publications). Of secondary priority was the substantial expansion of the main museum building. Both of these objectives focussed directly on better-serving the existing client-base, expanding the local clientele, and improving the level of repeat visitation.

In order to achieve the primary objective, increased funding and manpower resources would be required, and the introduction of microcomputers (for word-processing, desktop publishing, and financial management) and refined administrative procedures and structures also were deemed essential. These aspects, and other inter-related developments, are discussed below.

2.2 Administration and Funding

The Museum is operated by an autonomous incorporated society through a Council and an Executive Committee of that Council. After a year of discussion, planning, and huis, a Maori Advisory Committee was formed to provide input to the Council on museum matters of relevance to Maori people. Practising artists and crafts persons, the District Maori Council, and both local runanga are represented on this Committee. As Museum Director, I am also a member, ex officio.

A staffing structure and promotional hierarchy was developed (Table 1), and some existing staff positions were renamed in line with international terminology. Honorary curators were appointed for decorative arts and natural history, collection areas in which there were inadequate salaried staff. Consultants were appointed to service newly developing areas, such as public relations and publishing. In 1991, the Museum's first Visiting Fellow, Dr Ragbir Bhathal of Sydney (former founding Director of the Singapore Science Centre), was appointed and commissioned by the Executive Committee to carry out a study of aspects of the Museum's operations (Bhathal, 1991).

Contacts were established with local resource people, other local museums and tourism ventures, and local government and local branches of central government departments. By networking in this way, particularly with DOSLI, the Eastland Promotion Council, the Geological Survey, the Forest Research Institute, MAF (Fisheries Branch), and the Tairawhiti Area Health Board, a range of joint ventures involving public lectures, temporary displays, field trips, and publications was developed. On a wider geographical front, the establishment of the Gisborne-Rotorua-Hawkes Bay regional directors' group has allowed networking on an inter-regional basis, to the mutual benefit of all institutions involved.

Through aggressively marketing the Museum to targeted niche audiences, significant increases in both the Gisborne District Council annual grant and non-Council funding and non-monetary support in kind have been obtained.

The healthier financial situation allowed us to improve the staffing situation and gradually bring salaries in line with those typical of other regional museums. We were also able to purchase microcomputers (three, to date), a VCR and monitor, a fax machine, a new Kodak carousel slide projector, and a range of other essential modern equipment. A number of staff attended introductory computer courses at the Tairawhiti Polytechnic, and most staff now have an elementary level of computer literacy.

A new public relations campaign was developed using the "FOB Formula" which was piloted successfully in Australia and Singapore (see Bhathal et al., 1983). A range of different niche markets was identified, and some of these are already being addressed. Large monthly advertisements summarizing the "public menu" are now inserted in the *Gisborne Herald* at the commencement of each month (in addition to other more specialised advertisements during each month), and close links have been established with the two news reporters from radio station 2ZG. The local media have been very supportive of developments at the Museum.

From time to time, brochures that specifically target children and families are produced in support of selected public programmes, and these are distributed to all dairies, fish and chip shops, motor camps, takeaway outlets and video shops in Gisborne and adjacent Makaraka and Wainui. Such a strategy is only possible because of the relatively modest population (34,000) and areal extent of the city. In a number of instances, the contacts established when personally distributing these posters have proved invaluable.

The public relations strategy calls for staged implementation, and while most local markets are now targeted, elements of the campaign relating to non-local visitors are still being developed.

In order to generate an improved corporate image, Museum house colours were selected (blue and white), and new stationery and publicity brochures were designed. Some new external signage was introduced, but this is an area requiring further development.

2.3 Exhibitions and Displays

The already-established changing art/craft exhibitions have been embellished from time to time through the screening of relevant videotapes and the running of workshops, public lectures and other supporting activities. In order to attract artists (particularly emerging artists) intimidated by the size and scale of a major exhibition in The Gallery, a smaller, more intimate temporary art exhibition space was established in The Concourse, and this has proved popular and significantly increased the range of new exhibitions mounted monthly.

Following discussions with staff and the Maori community, the Executive Committee decided to dismantle the old, somewhat tired permanent exhibition in the Maori Wing and institute a changing exhibitions program. Following representations from Nga Tamanuhiri, an exhibition on tribal links between the East Coast and Canterbury was opened in October 1988 to support a hui at Muriwai involving Kai Tahu visitors. Since then there have been temporary exhibitions on Maori Folk Art, and Cloaks. The present exhibition, "Te Taonga a Ruatepupuke - Carvings of the East Coast", is scheduled to close in October and will be replaced by "Nga Mahi a Rehua - Maori Games and Pastimes".

All Maori Wing exhibitions are now organised by a Maori Wing Planning Committee, composed of four representatives of the Maori Advisory Committee and four museum staff. The latter are the Exhibitions and Assistant Exhibitions Officers, the Registrar, and the Director; two of these four are of Maori ancestry. The run-time of exhibitions has been set at 10 months to one year, and funding for the present exhibition and the following two has been provided by a local philanthropic trust. The Maori Wing developments at the Museum demonstrate the enormous value of a bicultural partnership, and the response to the changing exhibitions program from local Maori communities has been heartening.

Visitors to the Museum interested in topics other than art had on various occasions been heard to exclaim "Just the same as last time!" when catching their first glimpse of the history and natural history part of the main building, and this prompted an immediate response on our part. As a result, many of the cases housing long-term or so-called permanent displays have been changed (some of them a number of times) in the course of the last three years or so, and there is an on-going program of display changes.

A policy of changing mini-displays has also been implemented, involving the display panels (and occasionally mobile tabletop display cases) in The Concourse area. Most of these mini-displays last only 1-2 months. Some have documented the history and achievements of local clubs and societies; others have expounded the virtues of our local tourism colleagues (e.g. at Eastwoodhill Arboretum). There are mini-displays that have commemorated significant local anniversaries (e.g. the centennial of Morere Springs thermal developments), while others have focussed on important local events (e.g. the Eastland Disabled Games). A number of displays prepared jointly with government departments have dealt with issues of local community concern, such as pollution, erosion, and endangered species.

One of these latter "issues" displays, co-sponsored by the Tairawhiti Area Health Board, dealt with smoking and lung cancer, and including the continuous screening of three related videotapes. Special events were arranged for World Smoke Free Day, including the arrest of "Smoking Suzie" (for contravening the Museum's 1991 Smoking Policy) - see Figure 1.

In a bid to "take Gisborne to the people of New Zealand", in 1989 the Museum prepared its first major national touring exhibition. This focussed on that well-known New Zealand icon, Footrot Flats, the product of Gisborne cartoonist Murray Ball, and was approved as an Official Project by the New Zealand 1990 Commission. Funding came predominantly from the Commission and Inprint (a branch of INL), which publishes the Footrot Flats books. Because of its catholic appeal, this Exhibition was accepted by both museums and galleries during its almost 2-year tour of New Zealand. Arrangements are being finalised for the Exhibition to tour Australian museums and galleries for two years between 1992 and 1994.

2.4 Holiday Programs

One of the major innovations at the Museum has been the introduction of special holiday programs designed for primary school and pre-school children, and families. The emphasis throughout has been on participatory experiences, and this hands-on approach has been enthusiastically adopted by local visitors. The success of these holiday programs, and their high public profile has meant that sponsorship has been relatively easy to secure.

The "Sand and Sea Holiday Centre" is typical of the December-January programs. It occupied a section of the main exhibitions gallery, and included various maritime paintings from the Museum's Art Collection, an aquarium tank with marine plants and various small fish, displays on whale strandings and the dangers to birds and marine mammals of plastic, and an assortment of hands-on objects and specimens (including "disposable" seabirds, which through wear and tear will eventually be deaccessioned - all are duplicates, and represent readily-available species). The signs say "please touch", and encourage our little visitors to explore and participate in the exhibition. The sight of an engrossed four year old with "my little duckie" under arm, examining other "treasures" in the exhibition, is unforgettable!

Each day over a two week period children involved in the District Council's "Summer Fun" program at four different local beaches collected unusual shells, pieces of driftwood and all the plastic they could locate. All of the plastic, and the "top ten" shells and pieces of driftwood, as judged by the children themselves, were brought back to the Museum and displayed in the Holiday Centre. The plastic accumulated throughout the two weeks, and the press recorded the

Figure 1: Arresting 'Smoking Suzie'
(Photograph - Gisborne Herald)

MAY AT THE GISBORNE MUSEUM & ARTS CENTRE

MAIN EXHIBITIONS:
"Works by Museum & Arts Centre Honorary Life Members" (until May 6).
"Their View There" — Works by 14 New Zealand Women Artists (May 4-27)
"The Great Indoors" — Recent Paintings by Jan Shone (May 8-June 3)
"Te Whatu Kakahu" — "The Woven Maori Cloak" (all month).

NEW DISPLAYS AND MINI-DISPLAYS:
Artist of the Month (Artists' Society).
"Early Flying Days on the East Coast" (until May 2).
"Gisborne Purchases from the Goodman Suter Biennale" (until May 2).
"Pieces of History: Fragments from the Berlin Wall" (until May 27).
"Poho-o-Rawiri — 60th Birthday".
"Pot of the Month" (Pottery Group).
"Recent Acquisitions" (from May 10)
"Victoriana Miscellany".

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY — MAY 18:
Free entry to the Museum Complex 10.00am-4.00pm.
Guided tours "behind the scenes" at 10.00, 11.30 and 2.30.

PUBLIC LECTURE:
Thursday, May 31, at 7.30pm. "All about the New Zealand Dictionary of Biography" by Dr Claudia Orange. Entry: $2.00. Supper provided.

VIDEOS AT THE MUSEUM (supplied by the Tairawhiti Polytechnic):
Continuous screenings from 11am:
"Bushcraft — Safety in the Mountains" plus "So You Want To Go Kayaking" (May 5, 13 and 19)
"But I'm Not An Addict" (May 6, 12 and 20)
"The Art of Surviving in Brazil" (May 26 and 27).

THE SHOP:
For local jewellery, handicrafts, cards and postcards, Maori arts and crafts, and various books on Maori culture and local history.

THE DECK:
Now operated by Pinehurst Manor Restaurant and open for lunches Tuesday to Friday between 11.30 and 2.00pm. Museum staff can provide light refreshments on weekends.

HOURS OF OPENING:
Special longer hours during May:
Tuesday to Friday and Mondays 7 and 14 May 10.00am-4.00pm
Saturdays and Sundays 11.00am-4.30pm
Other Mondays ..... Closed

ENTRY CHARGES TO THE COMPLEX:
(Main Building, The Star and Wyllie Cottage)
Adults $2.50
Children & Students $1.00

FURTHER DETAILS
Phone 83-832

Figure 2: May 1990 Monthly Advertisement from the Gisborne Herald.

growth of our "Plastic Pile"! At the end of each week judges selected the most interesting shells and pieces of driftwood from those on display and their collectors received prizes in the form of food vouchers from a number of local businesses. Each participating child also received a McDonalds French Fries voucher, and the *Gisborne Herald* provided free advertising of the program; both sponsors have supported most of the Museum's special holiday programs.

2.5 Publications

In addition to the Bird, Bug and Tree Information and Activity Booklets referred to above, the Museum has produced a range of other publications. The starting point for the publications programme was to develop a publications strategy based on a matrix listing different Museum target audiences against the types of publications required to get specific messages across to these audiences.

After a succession of quarterly or bi-monthly word-processed news updates for members of the Museum society, in 1991 an A3 size desktop-published *Newsletter* was introduced.

The Museum has also instituted the *Information Sheet* series to provide specialist information on topics of local interest. Thus far 20 of these *Information Sheets* have been produced, the majority of them on aspects of the physical environment, natural history, and Maori culture. The *Information Sheets* are currently sponsored by a local businessman, and are sold virtually at cost.

The Museum's first *Occasional Paper* on the early history of oil exploration in the Gisborne District, is nearing completion, as is the first in a series of 22 to 28-page *Information Booklets* (this deals with rare and endangered birds in the East Cape region).

In order to support the Footrot Flats touring exhibition the Museum embarked on its first book, and produced *Footrot Flats in Focus - A 1990 Perspective* (Berry and Orchiston, 1989). This was prepared with financial support from the New Zealand 1990 Commission and the assistance of a professional journalist employed under contract. In 1990 this same journalist and our Senior Curator of History and Archives teamed to produce our most ambitious publication to date, *Gisborne Exposed: The Photographs of William Crawford 1874-1913* (Robinson and Berry, 1990).

2.6 Activation and Support Activities

Over the last three years or so, the Museum has sought to provide the public with an enhanced range of supporting activities and events. Video-screenings occur each weekend, on public holidays and throughout school holidays; there are occasional music afternoons (to date these have included piano, harpsichord, violin, folk music and Choral Society performances); fieldtrips to sites of historical and/or geological significance; guided historic walks round central Gisborne buildigns, sites and monuments; interpreted marae visits; public lectures, seminars and workshops; and other occasional activities, such as antiques Appraisal Days, and book auctions.

2.7 The Museum Shop

From the end of 1990 there has been a dramatic development of the Museum Shop. The floor area occupied by the Shop has been increased by 370%, new furniture manufactured, and stock lines diversified enormously.

Careful research was carried out over more than two years on potential stock lines that would appeal to the different niche markets that most frequently visit the Museum, and care has been taken to include a range of local arts and crafts as well as the usual pot pourri of books, cards, ornaments, postcards, and collectors' curiosities. Reasonably priced quality products have been sought, representing good value for money, and when purchasing product for our international tourist clientele the special profile of our typical European backpacker mid-way through a tour of the country has coloured our stock-selection decisions.

The Shop, which has also served as an important outlet for the Museum's expanding range of publications, is regarded by increasing numbers of local residents as a worthwhile place to visit in its own right. This is an attitude that we actively encourage. Meanwhile, although it is easy to view The Shop solely as a profit centre, it also has educational and public relations functions, and must be seen as a vehicle for the promotion of local arts and crafts.

2.8 Pure Research

Unlike many regional museums, the Gisborne Museum & Arts Centre has an active, albeit small-scale, pure research program. The Honorary Curator of Natural History is a former Director of Fisheries Research in Sri Lanka and a world authority on aquaculture (i.e. fish-farming). Apart from his research into the potential for farming fish in the Gisborne District, as part of the District Council's economic development strategy, he has been carrying out research on two new species of deep water crab collected in 1989 and 1990 on behalf of the Museum by staff on one of Fletcher Fishing's Gisborne-based trawlers.

As time permits I have continued to research terminal prehistoric East Coast Maori culture, on the basis of published and unpublished literary and pictorial accounts derived from Cook's first and second voyages. This on-going project has already resulted in the appearance of seven different specialist Museum Information Sheets, with others in the pipeline. It is hoped ultimately to combine these as a Museum Information Booklet.

2.9 Building Extensions

From the very time of my appointment, the space limitations of the main Museum building dictated that building extensions were inevitable. The storage facility, while modern and adaptable, was filled virtually to capacity; there was no base from which the Education Officer could plan or conduct her classes; opportunities for introducing large-scale non-art/craft or Maori culture changing exhibitions were non-existent; and public access to the Museum's valuable collection of historical records and photographs was often severely curtailed through lack of adequate accommodation for visitors.

In 1989 an Extensions Committee was formed, and a two-stage Building Extensions Project was decided upon (Figure 4). Dame Kiri Te Kanawa kindly consented to be the

Project's patron, and in 1990 a Fund-Raising Committee was established to pursue the target cost, which exceeded $800,000. A grant of more than $200,000 from the Winifred Lysnar Charitable Trust allowed a start to be made on Stage 1 in October, and in April 1991 the Winifred Lysnar Discovery Centre was officially opened by His Worship, the Mayor. The Education Service at last had a permanent home!

Further fund-raising ensued, and in September 1991 a start was made on Stage 2 (the new gallery, Regional Archives and Records Centre, and collections store). This considerable, two-part extension (see Figure 4), is expected to take one year to complete, and that should be ample time in which to eliminate the funding shortfall, which at the time of writing stood at less than $100,000. To secure more than $700,000, mostly from local sources, in these trying economic times, has been one of the Museum's major challenges and triumphs.

3. CONCLUSION

The Gisborne Museum & Arts Centre has evolved markedly during the last three years or so, and in some areas of the discipline is now at the cutting edge of international museology. This circumstance vindicates Hudson's 1977 prediction (page 16) that "... within the next ten or twenty years the most adventurous, exciting and socially relevant work [in museums] will be taking place in provincial centres ..." rather than in the capital cities. In the short-term, further significant progress is forecast in some existing growth areas, such as international touring exhibitions, publications, and niche marketing.

Despite the progress to date, much has yet to be achieved, and this will occur gradually as new components of the implementation strategy rise to the fore. For instance, a changing role and function for The Star of Canada Maritime Museum is vital if the Gisborne Museum complex is to optimize its recreational and educational potential and The Star is to attract repeat visitation from a local clientele. On another front, completion of the new collections store in 1992 will refocus attention on the collections, and the need for a revised Acquisitions Policy which includes the collecting of contemporary local culture. The national Swedish policy will probably be used as the role model. And with the purchase of a fourth microcomputer in the course of the next year or two, the Museum will be poised to implement the Vernon collections management system.

Other plans call for the further development of the museum grounds and adjacent Kelvin Park, in order to accentuate the "indoor-outdoor museum dichotomy" and offer a more effective interpretive environment for botanical classes, and the upgrading of the 0.7 Education Officer's position to a full-time post.

Bola may have come and gone, but at the Gisborne Museum the challenge remains...

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DEACCESSIONING AT THE GOVETT-BREWSTER ART GALLERY

Barbara Maré, Registrar, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.

Museums acquire objects for posterity and hold them in public trust. This makes deaccessioning a controversial issue. If the decision is made to deaccession an object, many questions of ethics arise: Even if the museum's legal right to deaccession an object has been established, it may have to decide how to deal with precatory restrictions placed on gifts. A decision will have to be made about when to seek outside appraisals or opinions about a proposed deaccession. It must be decided how donors are to be advised of the deaccession; and to what extent information is to be made public. One of the most difficult issues is the disposal of deaccessioned objects. The means of disposal depends on such variables as the financial value of the object, its cultural or scientific value, its condition, as well as its means of acquisition. Perhaps the most controversial issue surrounding deaccessioning is the use of the proceeds. Some museums use funds from deaccessioning solely for new acquisitions. Sometimes these funds are used for the conservation of the existing collections. With museums today struggling to meet rising costs, there is much debate about whether deaccessioning proceeds should fund operating expenses or capital works. Some fear that collections are coming to be viewed as financial assets instead of being retained for their cultural significance. If a museum is to approach deaccessioning in an informed, objective, consistent and thorough manner, it must have a written policy which establishes guidelines for the resolution of these issues. A policy can also act as an acknowledgement of public accountability.

The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery opened to the public in February 1970. The Gallery collects contemporary art from the Pacific region, with particular emphasis on New Zealand art. While the New Plymouth District Council provides operating expenses for the Gallery, no Council money is used for acquisitions. The Govett-Brewster is unusual among New Zealand galleries in that it adopted a deaccession policy quite near the start of its history:

> "That after a period of five years from the date of acquisition, the [GBAG] Committee shall have the right to deaccess and dispose of however they see fit, any work of art recommended by the Director as dispensible within the structure of the collection". (1968)

The Committee also has the right to deaccession gifts and bequests. The policy states that deaccession funds can only be used for further acquisitions. There has never been any detailed written procedure to guide the Director and staff through the many ethical issues and administrative details involved in deaccessioning.

There is some evidence that initially the Govett-Brewster's deaccessioning policy was part of a radical approach to collections management. Writing about the Gallery in 1981, Derek Schultz noted:

> "The original intention was to develop a collection that was fluid: i.e., works would be purchased, held for a period, and then sold. In so doing it would always be representative of contemporary art".[1]

This contradicts what is often held to be one of the prime functions of museums, "to acquire objects and keep them for posterity" (ICOM Code of Professional Ethics). Discussing the 1968 policy in 1982, John Maynard, the first Director of the Govett-Brewster, stated:

> "... to be truly contemporary, somewhere along the line the collection would have to be reassessed and some works may have to be disposed of."

But he added:

> "I made sure that potential was there. Whether or not it's done is really a matter for whatever administration there is around at the time."[2]

Altogether 59 artworks have been deaccessioned by the Govett-Brewster. This is 6.6% of the collection.

In April 1982 Director Dick Bett invited two of the former Directors, Ron O'Reilly and John Maynard, to review the collection, which was put on exhibition under the title 'The Great Deaccession Exhibition'. To many people, it sounded as if the whole collection was going to auction. Instead, after much deliberation, 21 artworks were deaccessioned. Any radical collection management ideas which may have been held in the early 1970s, had been replaced by a more conservative approach. One press reporter raised the question:

> "Should a gallery like the Govett-Brewster be involved at all in the buying and selling of art?"[3]

Although admitting that the $10,000 or so available per year for purchases, was "peanuts", the Directors and City Councillors took some pains to point out that obtaining money was not the prime objective. The *Daily News* reported a City Councillor as saying that a lot of people thought the artworks "would be 'hocked off' to get 'gold'. However he said this was the wrong impression and that the gallery was not short of funds".[4] Altogether 9 of the 21 works were sold, for a total of $13,180.00. However, $12,000.00 of this came from the sale of one work. One painting sold at auction locally fetched only $1.00.

In 1982 the Gallery deliberately made its deaccessioning review a public issue. A public forum was held on 22 April 1982, which was attended by about 80 people. The *Sunday Express* reported that reactions to the Gallery's deaccessioning programme "have ranged from quiet acceptance of the situation to mind-boggling horror".[5] One writer demanded to know "why the collection is to be vandalised".[6] A few local artists asked to reclaim their work from the Gallery's collection. The Gallery received several letters from past donors concerned that their donations would be deaccessioned. As a result, a clause was added to the Policy on Gifts and Bequests saying that donated works will be disposed of: a) If the original donor is still alive, by giving the donor the choice of repossessing the work, or; b) by any method that the Council sees fit."

From 1985 to 86 the Govett-Brewster staged a series of sculpture installations. In July 1987 Director Cheryll Sotheran asked permission to purchase four of these works. The total cost was to be approximately $52,500.00. Jeffrey Smart's *Public Notice, Hove* had been singled out in 1982 as a possible deaccession. Sotheran stated: "When John Maynard bought the painting, it was quite realistic for us to think about collecting works by mid-career Australian painters, but [this is] no longer appropriate to the policy of the gallery".[7]

In March 1988 the painting was sold through the Ray Hughes Gallery in Australia for the sum of $NZ40,023.75. This was eleven times the amount the Gallery had paid for the work in 1970.

The Gallery did not see the need to give this deaccession any particular public advertisement. In response, a local artist put forward a submission to the New Plymouth District Council asking among other things, that artworks to be deaccessioned by sale be illustrated in the media, and the public should have a month to make submissions. The Cultural Committee said that this would be impractical. Both the Gallery and the City Council rejected the idea of greater public participation in deaccessioning decisions.

The Govett-Brewster has a policy which enables it to carry out a far more radical programme of deaccessioning than has so far been the practice. There are signs that in the 1990s the Gallery may be obliged to adopt a more radical deaccessioning practice; not for the reasons originally envisaged in the 1970s, but under the pressure of economic necessity. The permanent collection storage area is almost filled to capacity, and it seems unlikely that funding will be available to extend it. The Govett-Brewster may be forced to deaccession in order to pay for this itself. The Gallery may have to face the choice: deaccession or stop collecting. Which would be the more ethical option?

Footnotes

1. Derek Schultz, "The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery", *Art New Zealand*, No. 20, 1981, p. 50.
2. "The Great Deaccession Debate", GBAG, 22 April 1982, two C60 cassette tapes.
3. "Why sell good pictures?", *Sunday Express*, 17 April 1982.
4. "Collection moves 'could take years'", *Daily News*, 22 April 1982.
5. "Why sell good pictures?", *Sunday Express*, 17 April 1982.
6. 'Ars Gratia artis', *Taranaki Herald*, 19 April 1982.
7. "Painting profit for gallery", *Daily News*, 17 March 1988.

[This paper is a revised version of part of an essay submitted for the Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies, Massey University, 1991.]

THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN MUSEUM STUDIES, MASSEY UNIVERSITY 1989-1991

David Butts, Director of Museum Studies, Massey University.

The Museum Studies Programme in the Social Sciences Faculty at Massey University was established in 1989 with the financial support of the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board. The funding from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board ends in December 1991. From January 1992 the programme will be fully funded by Massey University.

It is important to record briefly the developments that led to the establishment of the Museum Studies Programme at Massey University. Throughout the 1980s the Art Galleries and Museums Association had administered a Museums Diploma and Certificate programme offering in-service training to museum staff and volunteers. The programme was administered by Professor Keith Thomson and the first tutors included Luit Bieringa, James Mack, Stuart Park and Dr. Rodney Wilson. The Diploma consisted of three components: academic papers, theory papers, and practical workshops. The Certificate was awarded to people who completed the theory papers and workshops but not the required number of university papers. By 1988 more than one hundred people had been enrolled in the Diploma and the Certificate and by 1990 about 25 had been awarded either the Diploma or the Certificate.

AGMANZ had always relied on senior members of the museum community to tutor the theory papers voluntarily. By 1986 the Association was experiencing some difficulty with the provision of the programme and it was decided to ask Dr. William Tramposch from Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, to undertake an investigation of the training programme and to make recommendations for future developments. Dr. Tramposch submitted his findings to AGMANZ Council in 'A Review of the Museum Studies Diploma Programme in New Zealand and Recommendations for its Enhancement'. The recommendations included the employment of a paid coordinator, strengthening the connection with Massey and that faculty be paid on a contract basis. Dr. Tramposch stressed the value of developing the relationship with Massey University because of the expertise and experience Massey had in the delivery of extramural programmes and the academic credibility the association would give to the programme. This was also a recognition of the contribution Massey University had already made to the AGMANZ Diploma.

After consideration of Dr. Tramposch's recommendations the AGMANZ Council decided that it would not be possible to provide the funding necessary and that other options would need to be explored. In 1987 the concept of a Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies at Massey University began to develop and initial discussions were held between Professor Keith Thomson, Dean of Social Sciences at Massey University, (also a member of AGMANZ Council from 1962 to 1987) and an AGMANZ Council subcommittee, regarding curriculum and funding. In 1988 Massey University agreed to support AGMANZ in an application to the Lottery Grants Board for sufficient funding to initiate the Museum Studies programme from 1989 to 1991. The University agreed to fund the programme if sufficient students enrolled in the 1989-1991 period.

In February 1989 David Butts was appointed to the position of Director of Museum Studies. The Museum Studies programme was to consist of a Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies and one 100 level undergraduate paper. For the first three years the Graduate Diploma programme has been available only as an extramural course. The undergraduate paper is available to internal students only. The Graduate Diploma consisted of four core museology papers, a Research Project and an Optional Paper. One core paper 44.644 *Museums and the Public* (now numbered 67.644) was offered in 1989 and twenty eight students enrolled. Sixteen of these students were employed in museums or related organizations. Twenty five students enrolled in the undergraduate paper '*Introduction to Museum Studies*'.

The first year of the programme was difficult for both staff and students. Study Guides and Readings had to be written and printed quickly. This task was made more difficult by the fact that Massey Library had very few of the necessary books. The Auckland Institute and Museum Library was very helpful in loaning books and providing photocopies of journal articles. Massey Library interloan service was helpful and the acquisitions department processed orders for new books with remarkable efficiency. Still students had difficulty getting access to some of the required reading for the course. One can only admire their co-operation and initiative in this regard. To a lesser extent access to books has continued to be a problem during the first three years although it is anticipated that forward planning will eliminate most of these problems in 1992. The Museum Studies collection at Massey University Library has been enhanced by the purchase of books funded by grants from the Cultural Conservation Advisory Council and the Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa.

Students working in institutions have been supported by their colleagues and have access to institutional resources. Students not working in museums have been required to nominate an institution with which they can associate during their period of study for the Graduate Diploma. Those directors and staff who have made this scheme possible are making a major contribution to the training of the future generation of museum professionals. The continued

success of this scheme of nominating institutions is dependent on students respecting the fact that directors and staff are very busy people and that established institutional policy and practice must be observed.

In 1990 two Graduate Diploma papers were offered to extramural students. Thirty six students enrolled in *67.641 History and Philosophy of Museums* and twenty seven enrolled in *67.644 Museums and the Public*. One student also completed the *Research Project*.

In 1991 there are thirty five extra mural students enrolled in *67.642 Collection Management* (24 are employed in a museum or related organization) and twenty five in *67.643 Museum Management*. Thirteen students are taking two papers. One of these students is also enrolled in the *Research Project*. This level of enrolments has been sufficient to demonstrate the viability of the programme.

Extramural study requires a high level of commitment at the graduate level. Each paper is designed with the expectation that students will allocate eight hours every week to study. Those students who have done very well in their papers to date demonstrate this level of commitment in the assignments submitted. Extramural students must also be well organized. Books and journal articles for assignments must be requested and time must be taken to reflect on the assignment topics. Employers can be sure that extramural students who have completed the Graduate Diploma have had to come to terms with their own time management and forward planning skills.

An important aspect of the extramural courses are the compulsory on-campus courses in May for all Graduate Diploma papers. The on-campus course is an opportunity for students to discuss the course topics with a group of experienced museum professionals who are invited to participate as tutors. The evidence to date is that students value these courses as an opportunity to meet fellow students, participate in small discussion groups, use the book and audio-visual resources in the library and to discuss problems with the course controller.

Significant new developments are planned for 1992. The Graduate Diploma will be offered as an internal program for the first time. Mina McKenzie (Director of the Manawatu Museum) and Julie Catchpole (Director of Manawatu Art Gallery) have been appointed as Associate Lecturers and each of them will be teaching one of the core papers. Students will be spending a significant proportion of their time at these two institutions involved in seminars and practical exercises.

There will also be significant changes in the 100 level paper which has been renamed *67.101 Cultural Heritage Preservation in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. This paper will examine the national and local strategies developed to date to preserve our material cultural heritage with particular focus on museums, historic buildings and archaeological sites. 67.101 will be available to extramural students in 1993. A new paper will be introduced internally in 1993 and extramurally in 1994 at 200 level entitled *67.201 Contemporary Issues in Museum Studies*. *67.381 Special Topic* will also be introduced internally in 1993 and extramurally in 1994. This paper will provide an opportunity for senior students to pursue a particular topic in more depth. Two topics that will be offered are Cultural Property Control Legislation and Repatriation.

The Museum Studies Programme at Massey is now clearly established as a viable academic programme and it is anticipated that with increasing enrolments the faculty could grow and teaching facilities be further developed.

It is important to remember that the Museum Studies Programme is only one component in the full range of museum training services required by the museum industry in Aotearoa/New Zealand. A number of agencies are currently involved in examining their policies in relation to museum industry training. AGMANZ Council is reviewing it's role in training policy and delivery and Mike Capper of the Museum Of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa is co-ordinating a group of museum people involved with training which will explore options for the delivery of training at various levels.

Although the Museum Studies Programme is now firmly established at Massey University there is a need for the museum community to initiate and develop other training programmes. In particular there is a need for a Certificate of Museum Practice for people wanting to acquire a range of basic practical skills appropriate for museum work. Equally urgent is the need for mid-career and management training. The development of training in these areas will confirm the growing maturity of the museum industry in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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EXHIBITION REVIEW

NGA TUPUNA, AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM.

Robert Jahnke, Lecturer, Department of Maori Studies, Massey University.

> "At early dawn on 10 September, 1984, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, witnessed for the first time the opening of a traditional Maori exhibition. *Te Maori*, a collection of Maori artefacts, the first ever to leave its homeland with the approval of the Maori people, had arrived in the United States of America. And, in accordance with ancient customs and traditions, the exhibition was opened with the rituals and chants handed down from ancestors long departed ... Thousands who participated have described the experience as incredible. *Te Maori* has broken attendance records. It has drawn comparison with and paralleled those great world exhibitions, the Tutankahmen and the terracotta figures of China. On 8 June, 1986, *Te Maori*, ended its tour of North America and began the journey home" (Statement by Tamati Reedy, 1986, In: *Te Maori: Te Hokinga Mai*).

On its return to Aotearoa *Te Maori*, subtitled *Te Hokinga mai. The Return Home*, was welcomed home at four exhibition venues which included two Museums and two Art Galleries. The response from its New Zealand audience was equally ecstatic with attendance records falling in its wake.

It appears somewhat ironical that the artefacts that constituted *Te Maori* had to be elevated on an international stage before New Zealanders could appreciate an artistic heritage that existed in their own backyards. However, such apathy may be traced to the imposition of a European art aesthetic transplanted from foreign shores which continues to perpetuate a fallacious demarcation between art and craft on the one hand and Gallery and Museum on the other.

While it is not the intention of this article to critically examine the issue of aesthetics, it remains a fact of history that the public perception of art continues to be essentially monocular under the dogmatic institutionalisation of Western aestheticism.

The study of Maori art has remained to a large extent the prerogative of the ethnological fraternity whose perception of art well into the twentieth century has been clouded by the 'classicist' vision of personalities like Augustus Hamilton. His distilled vision of Maori art published in 1901 provided a compendium of art-forms that was to determine the appearance of Maori art for half a generation. It was an appearance which shunned the liberal extravagancies of painted houses like Rongopai at Waituhi and the alien effigies of Te Mana o Turanga at Manutuke. The recent writings of Roger Neich and Alan Taylor have helped to dispel some of these delusions but it is difficult to alter an entrenched perception of 'traditional' Maori art.

One does not have to look much past the proliferation of writings of Art Historians to find that the development of New Zealand painting begins with the discovery of this country by Captain Cook in 1769 dismissing the fact that people and art were part of the landscape that was Aotearoa.

In his introduction to 'Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting', Gil Docking casually dismisses Maori rock painting as 'highly interesting' but 'outside the scope of ... study'. According to Docking, New Zealand painting 'begins with the arrival in 1769 of the commissioned artist Sidney Parkinson, who sailed on Cook's first Pacific voyage, ...' (Docking, 1971:11). However, the acknowledgement of the painters of Rongopai amidst a dominantly Euro-centric concentration is some small tribute to a painting tradition that was stifled by the demands of an imposed aesthetic and not by the imposition of tapu as indicated by Docking. The artistic licence afforded to painters in the meeting house continued through into the 1920s before its retrenchment under the march of 'traditional' Maori art sanctioned by an act of Parliament in 1926.

Eight years later Peter Cape tentatively offers an insight into a blossoming Maori art-form "by bringing together paintings by Maori artists and Maori-orientated paintings by Europeans" in order that "we may bring into focus something which will tell us a little bit more about a particularly indigenous cultural development". Like Docking before him, the rock-drawings prove to be the closest approximation to the European tradition of "making marks on a flat surface and hanging the results on a wall" (Cape, 1979: 88). The fact that the artists of Pompeii and Florence painted on walls and ceilings tends to undermine this rather exclusive definition.

The inclusion of the contemporary Maori artists within the mainstream of the New Zealand European artistic tradition was pre-empted in 1976 by a series of articles for the Department of Education school journals by Frank Davis. The perceptions of Davis place the contemporary art forms within the context of Maori culture while Cape struggles to rationalise the emergence of an indigenous painting style according to the conventions of the 'New Zealand aesthetic'. However, one must not decry the fact that Cape attempted to redress the absence of a Maori artists within the landscape of 'New Zealand art'.

Since *Te Maori*, several books on 'traditional' and 'contemporary' Maori art have emerged and *Art New Zealand*, the aesthetic adjudicator of art and artists, has discovered Maori art. One only has to survey the articles prior to 1984 and after

to discover a dramatic change in cultural focus. This newfound awareness has motivated some Art Galleries and Museums into exhibiting 'traditional' and 'contemporary' Maori art forms in juxtaposition to reveal a continuity of tradition. While such exercises in artistic revelation are to be applauded and encouraged it is evident that there still exists beneath the veneer of cross-cultural artistic awareness a persistence of aesthetic subjugation.

While some institutions attempt to redress their perceptual monopoly on Maori aestheticism through the consultative process one is led to wonder whether such a process is aimed at an objective evaluation of the criteria for exhibition or as a convenient means of supporting their selection with a list of consultants that may be cited if the exhibition should draw criticism.

The Auckland Museum School Service Bulletin introduces 'Nga Tupuna', an exhibition of Maori artefacts in the Auckland Museum, as "a celebration of the diversity of tribal expression in art, material culture and history. The display is intended to give visitors a feeling and understanding of the ways in which tribal identities are defined through these differences. Thus, the stories told about the artefacts are just as important as the artefacts themselves".

In view of the fact that one of the prime functions of any Museum is the presentation of artefacts for 'educational' and 'aesthetic' purposes the objectives outlined in the Bulletin are indeed admirable. However, a brief survey of this exhibition highlights some of the anomalies in aesthetic conditioning alluded to earlier while revealing a eurocentric bias in the criteria for artefact selection despite a deliberate attempt by the designers to present the artefacts in a more culturally sympathetic environment.

The attempt by the Auckland Museum to establish a Maori advisory panel of "individuals rather than tribal representatives", who would "advise" the museum on "the processes of consultation with various tribal groups concerning the exhibition" must be viewed as commendable. However, as a member of the Maori advisory panel who might be cited as having made some contribution to the structure and appearance of the exhibition I must protest.

In the first instance, the recommendations I made are not evident and, secondly, it is my impression that the panel's role was merely one of endorsement to provide the substance for an ideological display which is essentially European in terms of concept and context.

In view of the innovative displays of Maori art that have preceded 'Nga Tupuna' like *Te Hokinga mai* during its national circuit in 1986 and the exhibition of *Nga Tukemata: Nga Taonga o Ngati Kahungunu* which opened at the Hawkes Bay Museum in the same year, it is apparent that the cloistered embodiment of artefact still prevails as part of the Auckland Museum's exhibition philosophy. Although the design of this new environment offers the viewer a logical progression through the display of tribal artefacts, such a conservative approach to exhibition layout is conceptually 'linear' which tends to reinforce a predisposition towards the formality of historical succession and linearity. A more holistic approach that attempted to endorse Maori kinship with land and sky could have provided a welcome alternative. Although such a concept might seem insurmountable, the fact that art forms may be linked symbolically to such aspirations and that the scale of objects can be used as an abstract denominator to generate sensations of evolution, growth and ascendancy suggests that such an approach is not beyond the realms of possibility. But the realisation of a cultural dimension demands consultation with the Maori artists, educators and elders at the conceptual stage of exhibition design rather than after the foundations have been set in concrete.

One may also question whether or not the student of Maori art or culture is able to gain a sense of the differences in tribal styles presaged in the introduction. If the purpose of such a display is to educate one needs more than a map and a few stories to negotiate one's way through the complexities of form and content.

In several instances in this exhibition the label detracts from an appreciation of the object that it is meant to compliment. Although the juxtaposition of object and label in close proximity allows for the most intimate co-relationship, it negates aesthetic deliberation as one is forced to visually divorce the object from the impingement of its immediate environment. This contextural relationship between object and label, together with dilemma over content and its extent continues to provide a major design problem for museums. This problem could be eliminated if the aesthetic priority of the object is maintained as the most critical determinant for exhibition. In order to realise this objective the labels must be placed outside the line of contemplation and related to the objects through a system of graphic codification which permits unencumbered visual relativity between object and content. An extension of such a system to exploit the potential for comparative graphic analysis could also permit a more critical selective process to be actioned to reduce the penchant for overcrowding that predominates in museums throughout the country.

As suggested previously, the organisation of displays to coincide with geographical distribution of tribal regions is 'linear' in orientation and merely intensifies ones inability to comprehend stylistic differences because physical distance imposes barriers to perception through spatial isolation. One may argue that these limitations may be overcome by negotiating the imaginary boundaries between one tribal area and another in order to appreciate the "art styles characteristic of each group". However, the ability to retain retinal imprints of images is a gift of but a few. For most of us we need images in juxtaposition to decipher even the most basic elements of composition, let alone the overwhelming complexity of inter-related elements that can be manifested in some Maori carvings. With due cognizance of the fact that the imposition of label may some times undermine an aesthetic consideration of the object, it is possible to disseminate information through a strategic deployment of real object, reproduction of object, and label.

In keeping with accepted design practice the designers of this exhibition have opted for neutral shades of pastel vogue against which objects are placed with a change in tonality defining the vertical perimeter of vision. The latter technique with its psychological reinforcement is both slick and erudite. However, one has the uneasy feeling that this visual delineator merely reinforces the architectural severity of the space and its neoclassical omnipresence. This is further highlighted by illumination that evokes an overall clinical patina. It would be instructive for the designers to visit the exhibition at the Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum designed by Sandy Adsett to witness an innovative use of colour and light. In this case, the priority of the object takes precedence over label while light helps to invoke a mood of intimacy.

It is the element of intimacy afforded by Adsett's environment that should be the goal of any exhibition of Maori 'taonga'. Such an intimacy permits an aesthetic communication with the object unencumbered by extraneous visual considerations. And, if enlightenment is sought, one can avail oneself of 'korero' unobtrusively sited to enrich the total experience.

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BOOK REVIEW

HISTORY CURATORSHIP

by Gaynor Kavanagh

published 1990 by Leicester University Press and Smithsonian Institute Press; 183pp; illust.

Reviewed by Rose Young, Project Officer, Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa

Introduction

Author Gaynor Kavanagh urges that history curators, "pause to consider what it is that informs the choices they make in their own work and in what way they discover the theory which underpins it". Her book is intended as part of an ongoing debate on the "nature and direction of current professional practice" and proposes to strengthen history curatorship by giving it a theoretical foundation.

The book *History Curatorship* is provocative and demanding but I found the author's central thesis unclear. She notes, but fails to adequately address, the diversity of history museums. The need for a more flexible and integrated approach is suggested but not developed, instead Kavanagh proposes a single theoretical framework. The problem of dealing with history is resolved by proposing a theoretical model which acknowledges the ongoing debate between history and anthropology and which excludes 'history' as such.

Gaynor Kavanagh lectures in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester and this book is one of a series of texts aimed at graduate students. In that context one supposes the overall course structure serves to provide additional understandings, to pose some of the unasked questions, to give practical examples, and to suggest applications which link the theory outlined in this book to museological realities. As a text for those outside the university and perhaps less familiar with the UK tradition of academic studies it may be less satisfying. Nonetheless it will be valuable if readers care to take up the challenge and enter the debate.

The book is arranged in three parts. The first discusses the development of history museums in the UK, exploring the background and ideas which have informed history curatorship. The second considers theories and methods for history curatorship, emphasizing the importance of documentation and fieldwork in the development and study of collections. The third section discusses the organisation and interpretation of history exhibitions, and considers the processes of learning in history museums. A final chapter in this section considers the future for history museums in terms of the market place and changing curatorial roles.

The stated objectives of this book focussed my attention, and expectations as a curator, and consequently my criticism as a reader, upon the section dealing with theory and methodology.

History of History Museums

In summarizing the development of history museums the author argues that the major shifts are shaped by current configurations of popular interest, ideological circumstances and the direction of professional curatorship. In this section there is an underlying suggestion that the proper focus for history museums is folklife studies as exemplified in Sweden by the early work of Hazelius at Skansen and the Nordic Museum. I felt this preference curtailed a fuller examination of the diversity of history museums and the implications of current thinking about material culture studies and history in museums.

While there is acknowledgement of the liberating effect of regional museums in opening opportunities for broad-based and provocative studies which cross disciplinary boundaries and permit a more open chronological span in both collections and exhibitions, the potential of a multidisciplinary approach is not seriously examined. Elsewhere the author suggests that a diversity of academic approach, rather than reflecting a conscious discovery of ideas about the past, may simply be a sign of intellectual chaos perpetuated by lack of training in theory or method where "history curatorship staggers about in search of a viable name, common purpose and approach".

History in History Museums?

In discussing history in museums, and advocating a theoretical framework for curators I had a strong suspicion that the author does not have great sympathy for history. To my surprise it is suggested that, in the main, the "history museum's period of concern ... begins with the birth of consumption and consumerism - the mid eighteenth century", and that the English past before that is more the business of archaeologists and medievalists" (p. 76).

Furthermore, while acknowledging the growing dominance of the term 'history' in museums over recent years the author suggests that the history banner is simply an historical accident, that the potential of folk-life studies in history museums has been ousted by self-styled historians who frequently have no clear idea of what they are doing anyway.

> "Whether curators are actually engaged in historical studies is open to question: 'history in museums may, in fact be nothing more than a catch-all term, a title of convenience rather than a deliberate affirmation of intellectual intent. Hence, professional self definition has been a consistent problem" (p. 53).

> "In past 20 years or so, history curatorship has become in many senses a prisoner of its own self-justification and language ... Despite the influence of Scandinavian schools of ethnology ... and of

> historical geography in Ireland, Scotland and Wales ... the skills of the geographer, sociologist, or cultural anthropologists were set aside in an effort to operate under the 'history' banner and a new generation of curators emerged self-styled as 'social historians' who consolidated the immediate language of 'history' in the museum" (p. 58).

What is needed, suggests Gaynor Kavanagh, is a theoretical foundation which provides a basis for curatorial activity, and gives some definition to the nature of history in museums and how knowledge of the past can be put together there. In proposing such a foundation the author suggests that museum historians need to move away from conventional history which imposes a narrow and inappropriate range of interests upon the museum. History, she says, leads to questions which cannot be answered by objects. New questions are needed. Historians should look to the current debate between the disciplines of history and anthropology and borrow ideas and concepts from a range of other disciplines and fields. In fact only one discipline and set of ideas is put forward for consideration: anthropology with its emphasis on social relations and social interaction.

> "For the historian and the museum this prompts adjustments: the event giving way to action, story to episode, the diachronic to synchronic, sequence to structure and relationships. Shared or common experiences ... become the central concern in the effort to read past action and to get inside an episode. But to make any sense of the past, the cultural context has to be reconstructed" (p. 64).

History museums, it is argued, need to address questions concerned with being rather than becoming, and what is needed is a framework within which these questions can be addressed. Such a framework, based on the concept of community, on the role of individuals, and on networks of relationships within a community, is briefly outlined.

Unfortunately the author fails to clearly show how this model might work in practice, and does not show how it might be applied to museums which currently employ a different approach. I was particularly disappointed that there is no attempt to integrate being and becoming, synchronic and diachronic, at this theoretical level. The recommended 'slice of life' approach is not the only one which has a place in history museums. Why a single theoretical framework? Is the author saying that **all** history museums should conform to this approach? How useful will this model be? Is the problem of dealing with history in museums resolved by not dealing with it?

This focus on a single chapter is perhaps unfair. The book includes valuable discussion on other aspects of curatorship. It proposes various methods, mainly derived from the Swedish SAMDOK (Contemporary Documentation) model, for defining fields of study, for documenting contemporary society, and for analysing and thinking about museum collections. The final section on the public takes up the increasingly common themes of caring about visitors, addressing audiences in appropriate ways, and being relevant. I appreciated the discussions on ways of organising and interpreting history exhibitions but would have like to have had these linked more closely to the earlier chapters on methodology, research and fieldwork.

In these discussions the author comes back to notions of history and of becoming, and many of the socially relevant research projects and historical interpretations she cites do express change through time. I wondered what framework was applied by the curators involved in these projects and why these examples were not linked back to the discussion on theory? In fact, as I read these later chapters and tried to follow through the thread of the author's argument I also wondered whether this book is more a compilation of lectures rather than the result of a carefully developed theoretical argument.

So, the stated objective of creating a satisfactory theoretical framework was not achieved for this reader. However, I was provoked to think hard about the author's suggestions and I believe her advocacy for imaginative, intellectually aware curatorship is vitally relevant. The discussions she puts forward are wide-ranging and demanding. I hope they will provoke curator readers to examine their basic curatorial assumptions, to identify more closely the values they ascribe to objects, and to think more carefully about what they interpret and why. I also hope readers will test Kavanagh's theory, apply the methodologies she outlines and then communicate the results. This, after all, is what this book is really about.

Te Ropu Hanga Kaupapa Taonga

Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand
Museums Association of Aotearoa/New Zealand

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DUNEDIN.

Published twice a year by
Museum Studies,
Massey University, Private Bag, Palmerston North, New Zealand,
for the *Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand.*
Printed at Massey University Printery, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
Typesetting by Toni Snowball, Secretary Museum Studies, Massey University

The New Zealand Museums Journal was formerly known as the Art Gallery and Museums Association Journal.

The New Zealand Museums Journal will be published in June and December each year. Copy deadlines are 30 March and 30 September. All papers will be reviewed by the Editors and may be referred to confidential referres at the Editors discretion. Address all correspondence or contributions to:

New Zealand Museums Journal
C/- Museum Studies
Massey University
Private Bag
Palmerston North

ISSN 0112-6210

Journal Subscriptions: See inside back cover.

Cover Photograph: Otago Museum: the new 'tangata whenua' displays use a moveable glass wall system. This exhibit is a reconstruction of a sixteenth century settlement at the Shag River Mouth (Photo by Lindsay McLeod).

NEW ZEALAND MUSEUMS JOURNAL
(formerly the Art Galleries and Museums Association Journal)

Volume 21 Number 1 Summer 1991

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