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EDITORIAL

The Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand will shortly be known as the Museums Association of Aotearoa New Zealand. This change of name also signals significant organizational change. Most fundamental is the fifty percent Maori membership of the Association Council. This is the first step towards addressing issues from a bicultural perspective.

It is understandable that MAANZ has maintained a low profile during a difficult period of transition. After the election of a new Council in September one would anticipate a much higher profile within the profession and in public debate. There is a need for a national museum organization prepared to advocate on behalf of museums and museum professionals.

MAANZ must continue to build on the earlier achievements of AGMANZ including advocacy of museum issues to central and local government, providing a focus for professional development and the maintenance of links with other heritage and arts organizations.

Government has recently established the Ministry of Arts and Culture with responsibility for policy development. A priority for MAANZ should be to advocate the need for a 'museums policy' and to insist on effective participation in the policy development process.

This issue of the Journal includes a review and three papers from the Museum Education Association of New Zealand (MEANZ) annual conference held in Wellington in February this year. MEANZ has established a reputation for organizing stimulating conference programmes which address contemporary issues across a wide spectrum of subjects. Conal McCarthy's review of the 1992 conference confirms that this was no exception.

During the last decade specialist groups such as MEANZ, Kaitiaki Maori, the Registrars Group and the Exhibitions Group have been established and continued to meet the needs of professionals within and associated with the museum community. Others such as the Anthropology and History Curators Groups have come and gone. It is also important to note that Museum Directors are organizing themselves more effectively now than in the past. Much of this is an response to the demands of managing organizational change.

Continuity of such groups is generally determined by the willingness of a small core of individuals who are committed to organizing meetings and publishing newsletters. Perhaps this is an appropriate place to ask museum anthropology and history curators whether it is an appropriate time for them to begin meeting again. No one could argue that there are no contemporary issues for discussion. In recent years there have been major exhibition redevelopments that deserve evaluation. The review of the Antiquities Act is another subject worthy of a seminar with contributions from both anthropologists and historians.

Other groupings could also be established: Natural History Curators, Fine and Applied Art Curators. The need for professional seminars in all these curatorial areas to discuss collecting, exhibitions, and research has never been more evident. There has been an explosion of publication in all these areas in Europe and America. New Zealand museum professionals could make a significant contribution to contemporary debate but at the present time, with only a few notable exceptions, they are failing to do so. New Zealand is not a museological backwater. Some New Zealand museum professionals are involved in very innovative projects and it is important that they take the time to write about them.

It is also important that there is a relationship between these specialist groups and MAANZ. At the present time MAANZ maintains contact through the involvement of Council members in group activities. MAANZ should investigate the need for more formal relationships.

Recently the Queen Elizabeth II Art Council announced that museums that sell art works from exhibitions would no longer be eligible for Arts Council funding. It is interesting that it has taken a decision by the Arts Council to force many museum directors to confront a very fundamental ethical issue. The most compelling argument against art museums selling art from exhibitions is that art museums cannot claim the role of independent judge of aesthetic quality while at the same time participating in the economic life cycle of the artworks being evaluated. There is an inherent potential for compromise. This issue goes to the core rationale for art museums and is much more important than the more dubious arguments about competition with private dealers and confusing art museum visitors about whether the collection is on sale or not. Having said this art museums must also recognise the potential for compromising standards when heavily dependent on sponsorship deals or generating income from entry to particular exhibitions. The latter is perhaps far more dangerous then charging for the whole museum experience. Just as one would argue that avoiding compromise in these situations is dependent on strong policy and the exercising of professional standards, one might also argue, that in the case of selling from exhibitions

there may be some special local circumstances which justify very limited exceptions clearly controlled by explicit policy and professional judgement. Policies which are absolutely exclusive do not allow for the very wide diversity of institutional circumstances. Although the fundamental argument behind the Arts Council Policy is sound, a clearly defined transition period would have assisted some institutions which will need to terminate long standing commitments. In the final analysis however, one must congratulate the Arts Council on taking a stand and bringing the discussion of this issue to the fore. The Editors of this Journal would welcome contributions relating to this and other ethical issues..

Government is to be congratulated for its decision to proceed with the Museum of New Zealand project. The next issue of this journal will examine this project in more detail. While the debate about the design appears to have been a bit of a storm in a paua shell there are a number of issues that deserve critical attention from the museum community. National Services is one such issue. The museum community throughout New Zealand supported the Museum of New Zealand concept because of the clearly articulated commitment to the provision of `national services'. Nothing has happened in the intervening period to justify a retraction of this commitment. This is one issue that should leave museum professionals in no doubt of the need for a national organization that can publicly articulate the broad needs of the museum community above sectional interests.

Although one has already noted that Government is to be congratulated for allowing the Museum of New Zealand to proceed, recognition must be acknowledged for the work of MONZ Project Team, Staff and Board, led so ably by Sir Wallace Rowling.

Finally, one must also acknowledge the commitment over many years of the members of the Board and Councils of the National Art Gallery and Museum, now replaced by the new Board of the Museum of New Zealand.

David Butts

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR, THE SCIENCE CENTRE AND THE MANAWATU MUSEUM

The Palmerston North City Manager, Mr Michael Willis, announced the appointment of Mr Stuart Schwartz, to the position of Director, The Science Centre and The Manawatu Museum, on 28 July. As members will have read recently in the Association's Newsletter, the integrated Science Centre and Museum complex will be housed in the ISA Building which is to be completely redeveloped for the purpose. It is anticipated that the complex will open to the public in early 1994.

Mr. Schwartz is from South Carolina, USA and has had over twenty year's experience with museums and science centers. He has a professional background in archaeology, anthropology, cultural history and decorative arts. Until recently Mr. Schwartz was the Executive Director of the Museum of York County, South Carolina.

MEANZ CONFERENCE 1992

Conal McCarthy, Museum of New Zealand

The 1992 MEANZ Conference was held this year in Wellington during the March Arts Festival. With 150 delegates attending sessions over four days at a variety of venues, it is obvious that this Conference has become a major forum, not just for museum professionals, but for a wide range of people involved in galleries, parks, zoos, historic places, Department of Conservation and other cultural facilities. In fact this range and breadth may be the single most important signal that emerged from the gathering. MEANZ is growing because it has stretched out beyond the original confines of museum education to become an umbrella group for a network of organizations whose major focus is education-interpretation-public programmes. From the point of view of this journal, the significant thing is that this particular sector of art museums is flourishing because of the shift in emphasis marked by policy and funding trends towards audience, access and education - the public interface of our institutions rather than their "internal" functions (collections etc.)

The Conference opened on the first day at Science House with an unannounced performance by local duo "Glory Box". David Attenborough (Pinky Agnew) launched into a life-on-earth dissertation on the habits of that exotic beast "MEANZ" and it's peculiar habits, before Therese O'Connell led the bemused but delighted delegates in action-song renditions of familiar 50's show tunes interpolated with appropriate buzz words - a refreshingly non-serious start to things.

> "All I want is a client somewhere
> So I can interpret these paintings here
> So we can care and share
> Oh! wouldn't it be luverly!!"
>
> (to the tune of "Luverly")
>
> "Oh what a beautiful cultural site
> Oh what a lovely museum
> I've got a beautiful gallery
> If only they'd come in and see'em
>
> (To the tune of "Oh what a beautiful morning")

First up with a wide ranging paper was Maori writer Witi Ihimaera, (included in this journal), who managed to address most of the groups represented with the all-embracing idea of "culture". He took the competition between the native kiore and the introduced ship rat as a starting point for a witty, erudite meditation on culture and power - metaphors for the struggle of dominant and minority cultures. The paper was tough and provocative - you could see Conservation staff biting their tongues when Witi talked about rats and the Treaty of Waitangi! But ultimately his concept of "te taura tangata" - the great rope of humanity - called on both Maori and non-Maori to protect a common heritage.

Next was a panel of three speakers who elaborated on the theme: "identifying alternative living cultures". Sharon Dell, the Keeper of Collections at the Turnbull Library, spoke about the Maori Thesaurus and the Maori bibliographic network - the importance of using Maori categories for classifying Maori material and thereby maintaining a living connectedness to the ongoing social reality of the culture. Charlotte MacDonald, History lecturer at Victoria University, is well known for her work in the area of women's history with projects such as *The Book of NZ Women - Ko Kui Ma te Kaupapa*, but she spoke, not just about the importance of identifying and validating women's experiences, but of popular culture generally. What about an exhibition of food, or of sport and leisure? The problems of dealing with these living cultures were touched on by the last speaker, Phil Parkinson of the New Zealand Gay and Lesbian Archive. Popular culture - as opposed to the "great monuments" of "High Culture" - is ephemeral; difficult to define, collect and store. When the area being collected is "sexuality" (eg. sexual aids, erotica etc.) this raises particular questions, not only about these new fields on the threshold of heritage work, but about the nature of conventional museum activity itself. This was one of the common threads that emerged from the conference, bringing into view a different notion of what a museum is and how education functions within it. The museum in New Zealand today is firmly imbedded in the social realities of culture, class, gender and sexuality; and it's function is to provide a forum for the debate of these issues. The function of education is to facilitate this process of debate, which includes opening up the museum itself to critical enquiry and examining the way that we do things.

The second day of the Conference, held at the Botanic Gardens, was devoted to environmental education. It was good to see a good turn out of people from DOC and related bodies, and to see other delegates coming to these sessions. Too often museum workers dismiss cross-disciplinary opportunities as "not relevant to them" - their perspective remains narrow and myopic because they think that dealing with, say, art works in a gallery has nothing to do with talk of "trees

and bugs". In fact people from diverse backgrounds mixed together at this conference - and engaged in much fruitful exchange. The theory and techniques of interpretation have much in common with museum education - the objects may be different but the methodology is much the same - and it is important to build a national network of people involved in our common field: - communication, rather than to splinter into exclusive sector groups.

This cross-fertilising was apparent from the start when Dave Wakelyn, Advocacy Manager for DOC, presented a slide-show on environmental education which incorporated landscapes and other cultural references. Talking about the environment, he contended, was a matter of "joining the dots" - of making connections: between different aspects of the environment, between human culture and the natural world it interacts with, between all our different approaches to caring for the planet.

This holistic theme was picked up in different ways by the panel speakers, Bev Abbot, Te Aniwa Hona and Geoff Hicks (whose paper is also included in this edition). Bev stressed the importance of getting the conservation message across to young people in DOC's summer visitor programmes in national parks and reserves; while Te Aniwa, an extraordinarily strong speaker, put the case for the tangata whenua of Northland, presenting a vivid image of Papatuanuku, mother earth, battered and bruised under the stress of human pollution. Geoff briefly reported on exciting new developments at the NAGaM, where natural history exhibits can use a dual approach - both Western science and Maori oral tradition - to weave together a narrative that stresses the connectedness of nature and culture.

The key-note speaker, Joseph Cornell, was a major highlight. Despite the reservations some delegates had beforehand about this "green-guru" from California, Cornell's session was a brilliant tour-de-force of interactive teaching. Delegates found themselves pretending to be a tree - the front row became the "sap", another row the "bark", another the roots and so on - each group acting out biological processes like photosynthesis to the accompaniment of appropriate movement and sound effects (and the not inconsiderable amusement of the onlookers). As well as being a lot of fun, this dramatic tableau was a wonderful graphic illustration of a living organism. As I watched I immediately thought of applications to the art museum setting, of how the static approach of groups of kids sitting looking at exhibits could be enlivened by movement, role play and games.

This participatory style was followed through into the afternoon when several workshop options were offered. While a large number of people pranced about among the trees with Joseph Cornell who demonstrated his "flow learning system", other smaller groups were walking around the Gardens, the historic buildings of Thorndon, or the seal colony at Red Rocks.

For many of the delegates, especially the school-based education officers who make up the core of the organization, the practical hands-on aspect was crucial. For Dharan Longley, Education Officer at the Nelson Provincial Museum, it was essential to avoid dry, theoretical "talking heads" by sharing practical ideas and resources that could be taken away and used. To this end the third day was set aside as a resource "show and tell". Delegates brought material which was displayed in the Theatre of The National Art Gallery and Museum throughout the day, so that between sessions it was possible to browse amongst the videos, displays, kits and books.

This did not mean that the theoretical side of things was neglected however, as day three saw Bonnie Pitman's keynote address, which put us in touch with the latest developments in museum education in the U.S. Bonnie spoke about the new report of the American Association of Museums *Equity and Excellence*. As an educator who is now a leading administrator in one of the country's top art museums, Bonnie was ideally placed to talk about the importance of the "public dimension" in American institutions, and of the central role that education has to play, in contrast to its formerly marginal position. It was good to see the large audience, sprinkled with directors and administrators, hear this spelt out in a clear and unequivocal way:

> "As the task force considered museums and education against a backdrop of global change, a central question arose repeatedly: how can museums - as multidimensional, socially responsible institutions with a tremendous capacity for bringing knowledge to the public and enriching all facets of the human experience - help nurture a humane citizenry equipped to make informed choices in a democracy ... Museums can no longer confine themselves to preservation, scholarship and exhibitions independent of the social reality in which they exist. They must place education at the centre of their public service role - a term we use in its broadest sense to include exploration, study, observation, critical thinking, contemplation and dialogue".

Education is thus seen not merely as an addition, the "sauce" added on to the dish, but is a central ingredient. Far from museums being culture bunkers turned in on their preservation-collection-scholarship activities, museums had now to face outwards - orientated towards the public, and as broad a cross section of the public as possible.

This shift is made necessary not just by funding imperatives, but by considerations of equity. The report states the museums must "reflect social pluralism". A recent *Artforum* article on multi-culturalism states that the demographies of American museum

audiences are an increasing embarrassment. Attracting new audiences means including them in the representations of art and culture, and critiquing the old idea of history as the steady march of DWEM's (Dead White European Males) - ethnocentrism in a glass box. 1992 will not, therefore, see a celebration of Columbus' "discovery" of America - just the "first sighting" by Europeans of a country already occupied by its indigenous inhabitants.

This "re-alignment" may lead to curators' fears that museums will be hijacked by educators intoxicated by survey results who will run about crying "audience!" and "evaluation!" in a fit of righteous "Disneyland-populism", and will turn their temples of art into cultural supermarkets.

But Bonnie dispelled any overreactions like this with her sensible, matter of fact grasp of the issues. These new changes represent a shift of power, not a coup, that is necessary to meet the needs of museums in the 90's. Revisionism does not mean that traditional activities are redundant. But it does mean that public programmes be given the same status. Scholarship and conservation are valued as well as education - it is "excellence and equity" that are sought.

The next two speakers presented blueprints for realising these goals. Barbara Moke-Sly talked about the exhibition *Ng Iwi o Tainui Waka* at Te Whare Taonga o Waikato. Here an exhibition of tribal history is not organised on behalf of the people, but in partnership with them. Through biographies and lectures the iwi represent themselves by telling their own story, thus avoiding what Foucault called "the indignity of speaking for others". It is the human presence that maintains that living link with taonga - without it a museum with Maori collections becomes a cold, dead, static place, a colonial mausoleum whose frozen ethnographic past is truncated from the living, changing present.

This theme of "keeping it alive" was also the focus of Lesley Walker's talk. Education Officer at the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Lesley had undertaken a study tour of historic sites in England and Wales which had revealed ideas she has since implemented at Trust properties in the Sydney region. Instead of telling schoolchildren about a convict station, children "become" convicts for a day: complete with a life history (including their crime) they are incarcerated in an institution run by their peers. They experience first-hand, in a piece of "living history", what it was like to be "a guest of Her Majesty".

After lunch Bonnie returned with a workshop on learning theory. Sometimes we have a very vague idea of how our visitors and students actually learn - we teach a great class and it seems they just don't "get it". There are several kinds of visitors, Bonnie pointed out, who each learn in a particular way. "Imaginative learners" for example, seek meaning and tend to learn by sharing ideas. Their favourite questions is: Why? This contrasts with "analytic learners" who have a different style of absorbing information. They tend to be more abstract, will seek facts, and their favourite question is: What? It follows that these factors will affect the success of their experiences in the museum. If your exhibit or worksheet or programme does not cater for these different learning styles then it quite simply won't work. This was a very popular session, which for many listeners applied in a very direct way to their lessons, guided tours, label text and displays. There were many gasps of "Ahhh!" and "Ohhh!" and "So that's what happened!"

The second speaker in this tandem act was Karen Wizevich, a Fulbright scholar and Post-Doctoral student in Architecture at Victoria University, who brought the discussion right down to the tin tacks of exhibition design. Following on from where Bonnie left off, Karen talked about the difference between the museum's expectations of an exhibit, and the reality of visitor's responses. So often she finds that curators and designers are driven by what their peers will think, not how the public will react. (Her paper is also included).

After this heady discussion, it was back to the grim reality of industrial survival, as the day finished with a forum chaired by Philip Tremewan. The uncertain situation faced by many education staff - school-based officers with the Ministry of Education and others in small museums with their local bodies and city councils, along with deteriorating conditions and pay - has highlighted a need for MEANZ to adopt a supportive network and an assertive advocacy role on behalf of its members.

If the day ended on a somewhat bleak note, the after match function - an evening cruise on a beautifully calm Wellington harbour - did something to raise everyone's spirits.

The last day of any conference is often a let-down, as delegates wander off early and the programme meanders to a halt. Not so this time. Day four at Victoria University's Te Herenga Waka marae was a wonderfully full, friendly and warm finale - just the right atmosphere to bring the several themes of the conference together and farewell our visitors and guests.

After the early morning powhiri, Pakake Winiata talked to us about the whare. As he outlined it's history and function: a place for meeting, learning, history, genealogy and art all rolled into one, it became obvious to me what an ideal setting this was for the day's topic - "people as cultural resources". Here was this whare tipuna, an ancestor with it's arms flung wide in welcome, and here we were gathered inside the belly listening to the stories being unravelled from the carved figures and woven panels on the walls.

Pakake's introduction to oral traditions led very nicely in to the topic of oral history, which Judith Fyfe introduced

in a very interesting discussion. Her talk reminded me of how essential it is to cater for the aural in our exhibitions and activities.

Question: How do we hear the voice of the people? Answer: By involving communities in their own representation. Rachel Barker, a Human Ecologist with DOC, and Michel Ducat, Education Officer at the Petone Settler's Museum, both stressed project planning as a community process and education work as participation and celebration of community life. In doing a coastal resource inventory, Rachel gathered Maori cultural information as well as scientific evidence, stored on a data base which local people controlled access to. Michel showed how, in programmes with Petone's various ethnic groups, she had established links between community elders and their young in a series of storytelling sessions which were then recreated in the exhibition in the form of children's art.

The last word went to Aunty Bessie. Irihapeti Walters, who for many years has been working with Maori art in art galleries and museums throughout New Zealand, and who spoke with telling directness and honesty of her role as a kaiawhina - a guide - at Te Whare Taonga o Aotearoa. What did it mean to her to work with taonga, to lay out fresh, green leaves every week, to show young people and adults the treasures of her people? As she talked about the Taonga Maori exhibition: the waka, Teremoe, the whare, Te Hau ki Turanga, and the great Tainui treasure, Korotangi; she talked not about "the Maori as they were" but "the Maori as we are". This is not ethnology but a celebration - a testament to the reappropriation of cultural property:

> "In the Maori view we are not dealing with inanimate objects but living treasures ... Maori do not look at the beauty of art because of it's harmony of form, colour or excellence of craftsmanship. Rather it is beautiful because it has mana (power) ihi (awe) wehi (fear) and wana (authority)."

By being there warming the taonga, moving among them, touching and talking about them, Aunty Bessie provides the missing link, that human ingredient that is summed up in the conference theme "Keeping it alive!" - and what better way to finish four days theorising on this topic than Bessie's simple but direct testament. For me, the MEANZ conference is one of those few chances we get to sit together and talk and chart future directions. Wiebke Heuer, MEANZ conference secretary and freelance art educator, reminded me of the value of doing this when she commented that New Zealanders always seem to be rushing around doing things, and never seem to have time to stop and talk. I think she's right - conferences, literature, sharing ideas and theories are not luxuries to be left aside for other priorities in these hard times. These things are part of our work. It is important that we keep doing them, and maintain our means of doing them through strong national associations such as MEANZ. Only through such effective networks can we maintain a museum education that is responsive to a constantly changing society. Moreover the shifts and changes among the constituents of this organization make it clear that MEANZ itself, as a name and as an association, will soon have to change, if it is to capitalise on the new audience that it has captured through lively conferences such as this.

How it can do this, to cater for the needs of different educators while maintaining overall focus and unity, is the challenge that presents itself to the new President, Katrina Stamp, and the incoming Council.

KEEPING IT ALIVE: TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE AND CULTURE IN AOTEAROA

A Conference for Museum, Gallery, Zoo, Library Science and Environmental Education and Interpretation

Witi Ihimaera

Let us consider the case of the kiore or Polynesian rat.

The kiore lives mainly on offshore islands of the South Island and parts of Fiordland. The same islands are also the retreat of the indigenous tuatara and endangered birds.

Last month the Department of Conservation said that eradication programmes targetting the kiore may be prudent.

The Department's proposal coincided with the holding of a Maori hui at the University of Auckland. The hui decided to ask the Department to put a moratorium on the kiore to prevent its extinction. The timing was fortuitous.

At the hui Dr Ranginui Walker outlined the kiore's significance for Maori people. It came to New Zealand with the Maori canoe migrations, was depicted in carvings, sung about in traditional songs and was considered a delicacy by some tribes.

"In other words," Dr Walker said, "the kiore is a Maori taonga, or treasure, and is entitled to be preserved under the Treaty of Waitangi."

This might be the first occasion in world history where a Treaty has been invoked for rats.

Dr Walker went on to say that "It's a neat little fellow like a large mouse. It's not repulsive like the Norwegian rat."

Hmmm. The Norwegian rat? We have an escalation in the implicit rhetoric, for this rat otherwise known as the ship rat was introduced along with the common brown rat, by European settlement. In other words a pakeha rat and repulsive at that, a parallel which I'm sure was not lost on Dr Walker.

Nobody has questioned the obvious right of the tuatara, indigenous like the Moriori, to live unmolested by the kiore. The tuatara after all is a living relic of the age when dinosaurs ruled the earth. International scientific opinion would be outraged if the kiore was favoured - neat though it might be. After all, a rat is a rat. It's the wee timorous beastie that makes women climb up on chairs, brings about plagues, infests villages and needs a Pied Piper to entice out and to drown in the sea. And if it isn't a rat it's a mouse which still does not make it smell sweet. Mean as a rat. You rat fink. Cunning as a mouse. It runs up clocks, hickory dickory dock, and like the Maori is a bit of a nuisance. Or it imbibes tea with a Mad Hatter and lives in a teacup; and one actually had the audacity to sit under a Queen's chair.

Not that the tuatara is any prettier but it does have a sort of dignity which makes it attractive - to other tuataras that is. Crucially, it does not engage negative emotional responses as does the rat. I mean whenever you see a rat what is your first response? And don't tell me it isn't to kill it. Because where one rat is there might be another. So out comes the rat poison or the rat traps.

Yet it is the kiore and not the ship rat which is being targetted. And for that matter a species of rat that has become symbolic of the Maori. Dr Mere Roberts, for instance, from Auckland University has recently completed a doctorate on parasitology of the kiore. Research on kiore parasites here and around the Pacific could provide important clues to migration routes taken by Polynesians and other peoples. Thus the kiore becomes a more significant artefact, a Walt Disney kind of Mihaere Rat with his own version of the Aotearoa Tail.

Conservation has had the last word. "Nobody is taking radical steps to eradicate the kiore until the issue is sorted out." That begs the questions. By whom? And who will make the decisions? And what about that repulsive ship rat?

This is the case of the kiore. And in it is a parable which might be of value for we who work in the field of museum, gallery, zoo, library, science and environmental education and interpretation.

The first is that it is always easy to target the obvious culprit. The kiore is such an easy patsy and, even though the tuatara is uglier, nobody wants to get rid of something that's indigenous. The case against the kiore would have been more cut and dried, for instance, if instead of the tuatara it was endangering say, the white heron colony at Okarito. Not only is the kotuku beautiful but it also represents the Queen of England.

The second is that this is an issue which has all the classic symptoms of evaluating a minority against another minority. The tuatara against the kiore in offshore islands and parts of Fiordland.

But what actually happens is that the context is obscured. And what, in the end, we are left dealing with is the

symptom of the problem rather than the problem itself.

This is the question that I wish to explore. That "identifying alternative living cultures" is all about the context not the issues within. It is about the context which has the power base. It is about the dominant culture. It is about the other alternative living cultures battling for space, sometimes against each other, within that majority context. And there, within, it is about politics, lobbying, fortuitous timing, language and who uses it best, escalation, advocacy, about who has money and who has the power.

Ultimately, for all cultures, either vertically or horizontally throughout the world, the major question is: Can we turn that repulsive ship rat? Can we obtain his retreat from his majority space so that we too can fit inside the context? And, most important of all, will he in the end understand that we are talking about bottom line: not only ours and the world's but also his survival?

E nga waka
E nga hau e wha
E nga mana
E nga iwi
E nga manu korero o runga i nga marae
Whakarongo Whakarongo Whakarongo
Ki te tangi a te manu e karanga nei, "Tui, tui, tuituia"
Tuia i runga, tuia i raro, tuia i roto
Tuia i waho, tuia i te here tangata
Ka rongo te Po, ka rongo te Po
Tuia i te kawai tangata i heke mai i Hawaiki nui, i Hawaiki roa, i Hawaiki pa-mamao
I hono ki te wairua, ki te whai Ao, ki te Ao Marama

Na reira, apiti hono tatai hono,
te hunga mate o te wa,
haere haere haere
Apiti hono tatai hono, te hunga ora katoa
Huihui mai nei ki tenei Whare Tonga o Aotearoa
Kui ma, pa ma, hoa ma,
Ka nui te honore kua homai ki au, taku aroha ki a koutou
Tena tatou katoa.

It was Esther Glen, one of New Zealand's earliest children's authors, who described the fiordlike and jagged coastline of New Zealand as looking a little like a piece of cheese whose edges had been nibbled at by mice. Samuel Butler called us Erewhon or Nowhere backwards. We ourselves like to call our country Godzone, a kind of place where, if we build it He will come. My own image of New Zealand is as being the well at the bottom of the world or, more mischievously, the place where everything comes to die. Old MGs, Model T fords, aeroplanes with propellers, trains that run on steam, you name it we've got it. I can remember just over a decade ago one of our politicians, Fran Wilde I think, proposing that Government actually build some kind of centre for world culture down here. Indeed New Zealanders, Vikings of the South Pacific, have long made New Zealand a base of operations from which to make outward forays raiding and pillaging the earth's treasures and retreating with them to this island fortress.

With this and the parable of the tuatara, kiore and Norwegian rat in mind let us now consider what has happened to New Zealand culture. In particular let us consider the case of the majority context, the Pakeha, and the minority culture, the Maori.

Apart from the Moriori, New Zealand, of course, is a country historically peopled by two breeding stocks. The first is the Maori and the other is the Pakeha. It astonishes me sometimes to realise that we are the southernmost peoples in the world. Our position here at the bottom has given us an extraordinary island world view. It has made us fiercely proud of our independence and we hold tenaciously to our values. We may not be big, at three million people, but as we all know it's not size that counts but what you do with it. And so we race in the Americas Cup. We send small ships out to stop French testing. We are still ornery enough to disallow nuclear powered or nuclear armed ships to come into our ports. We hold strongly to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the South Pacific and Antarctica.

This is still the dream of the Maori people whose immediate gene pool is the Pacific or more accurately the Polynesian triangle which includes all the islands inside Hawaii to the north, Tahiti and Easter Island to the east and of course Aotearoa, New Zealand in the southwest. According to our history our ancestor Maui went fishing with his brothers, used the blood from his nose as lure, and hooked up the fish which we now live on. Our canoe traditions tell of epic voyages of various canoes across the Pacific from Tahiti between 700 and 900 AD. The canoes brought with them a rich and sophisticated set of tribal cultures with their own genealogies, histories, folklore and customs. The range extended from the sublime to the ridiculous for they also brought that pesky kiore.

The Pakeha hearth is primarily the United Kingdom including England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Although rediscovered by a Dutchman, Abel Tasman, and host to French explorers, it was Great Britain which raised the flag of White colonisation on these shores and proclaimed New Zealand a new Albion. Anne Salmond in her recent book "Two Worlds: first meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772" has offered a penetrating re-thinking of the received view that the explorers were heroes and the Maori were simply passive participants. In this clash of two active cultures, both were fully human following their own practical, political and mythological agendas.

But the culture of the Pakeha was driven by different imperatives and a power structure which emphasised

domination. The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 was a document which could not restrain the pakeha settlement and by the middle of the 19th century Maoridom was ourrun. By the end of that century dire warnings were issued about the future of the Maori race and assimilative techniques were attempting to put an end to the religious and cultural framework. The Maori, in a space of only some fifty years had become a minority in his own country, isolated on rural maraes in psychic retrenchment.

It could be said that like the kiore the Maori thus similarly retreated. As recently as World War Two Maori were still primarily rurally based. However, then came the turning and the urban migration to the cities where began the engagement with the Pakeha. Today, it is estimated that 80 percent of the population is now mainstreamed in urban areas where we can't be avoided, where space has both been given and taken, and where negotiations have begun over power sharing.

The impact of pro-Maori initiatives has been one of the most profound challenges to the development of culture in New Zealand. It has not been easy, requiring so much energy and vigilance and courage to confront the majority context. Once upon a time, for instance, when anybody asked who discovered New Zealand the answer would have been Abel Tasman rather than Kupe. New Zealand does not of course have the monopoly on a majority view of history; many Americans consider Christopher Columbus the discoverer of the New World. And I can remember visiting the gracious city of Charleston, South Carolina, marvelling at the beautiful antebellum houses. There was a museum I wanted to visit but when I got there I found a notice on the door saying that it had closed for lack of patronage. I guess that a Museum of Slavery is not high on the list of tourist attractions. It reminds one of the injustices in our genealogy.

This is what happens with majority minority confrontations. By virtue of its power the majority is able to take over, rather like that repulsive ship rat. To make everything within that context unto its own image. Indeed, the majority context was so profound when I was growing up in the 1950s that like every other Maori kid I cheered on the cavalry and booed the Indians - they were only White men painted up anyway. Another example, in 1953, the year of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, I was a patriotic brown boy proud of our own Edmund Hillary who had just conquered Mount Everest. He was our Antipodean God. It wasn't until some years later that I ever heard of Sherpa Tensing. I am still teased by the thought that, say Tensing was first at Everest's summit, Sir Edmund Hillary would still be the Tasman or the Columbus of our times.

All this is a very quick sweep, with some asides, through a cultural trauma which has seen New Zealand twice at civil war. The consequences of huge land loss, of destruction of the Maori economic base and years of cultural deprivation are still being felt. The lesson here is, as stated earlier, that ensuring alternative cultures sometimes encompasses a bottom line which is simply marked Survival. And, often, this cannot be achieved without a fight. There is a saying in Maoridom, Tama tu tama ora tama noho tama mate. If you stand you live, if you lie down you die.

Of course the situation is not as black and white as a mere Maori and Pakeha confrontation. The definition for Pakeha, for instance, has been expanded to include other breeding stocks from all over the world. From a bicultural country we are rapidly turning to a multicultural country in which other Polynesians and, particularly, Asians are changing the course of our cultural history. Two years ago an attempt was made to define these new immigrants as tauiwi. I can think of no better term than that to express the continuing Maori concern about preservation of Maori culture.

Identifying alternative living cultures is therefore not only about politics, about lobbying, about fortuitous timing, the rhetorical flourish of language, escalation, and power bases. Sometimes cultures have to be prioritised where such cultures are competitive. As far as Maori are concerned, we wish to ensure some power sharing and decision making from our own centre of gravity, not anybody else's. We must ensure acceptance that Maori culture has an intrinsic right to exist, that it is as great as Greek or Roman or British culture. And that more importantly, because Maori culture is only to be found in New Zealand, that it therefore is New Zealand's most prized cultural possession.

I would now like to enlarge the perspective of this discussion on the politics of culture and dominant power structures to accommodate other constituents so that it is not only a discussion of the Maori minority. Although this is and must continue to be the predominant issue in any resolution of New Zealand culture its outcome is predicated on developments beyond the purview of this address.

But before doing this I would like to turn to the concept of te taura tangata, the Maori Rope of Man.

I first heard about te taura tangata, the Rope of Man, from the wonderful scholar John Rangihau about five years before he died. This rope, which stretches from the Beginning to the End of Time, is made from numerous strands of the family of Man. Sometimes it is strong and thick with fibre. At other times it is thin and but a single thread. There are different colours and textures to the rope, which has become my personal image for the epic and changing nature of the human odyssey. It is a magnificent icon emerging out of Te Kore, The Void or

Chaos from which all life has had its genesis.

The point I must stress is that the Rope changes. As far as Maori destiny is concerned my view is that the inclusive trait of our culture rather than its exclusiveness strengthens the Rope even further to enable us to meet the challenges of a bigger wider world than our ancestors ever dreamed of. The challenge for Maori is to ensure that the Rope and our Destiny always has our moko, our mark.

In identifying alternative living cultures inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness should also be what we should be telling our majority context. Because only with this motivation can the ship rat be turned.

In the past decade we have all been witness to extraordinary change. In New Zealand our nuclear position put us out on a limb. Economically, market driven objectives, which led to market deregulation under Roger Douglas, dismantling of protectionism, floating the dollar, competing on world markets, privatisation, the sale of SOE's and onflows from a new economic order have taken us far from the society we used to be. The jargon tells us about being cost-effective, insists on cost-recovery, talks about economic agendas, imperatives and corporate plans, turning us into a nation of accountants. The ongoing recession has exacerbated the situation with unemployment and the destruction of our deeply held beliefs and traditional freedoms under the welfare state. A gigantic freeway has been blasted through the fabric of our society and we are hurting. No longer economically secure we are also damaged socially. We live with high economic and personal anxiety.

Coupled with this has been the drive to find the balance, in a world totally transformed by new power structures in Asia, the Middle East and what used to be Russia and the Eastern bloc, between the international drift to conformity and commonality and our own nationalistic desire to maintain our difference.

All unempowered people, not only vertically through our genealogies but horizontally through our different strata, become the casualties of such transformations. We have seen, for instance, in news media reports how minority workers in Germany, Italy and throughout Europe are being pushed out. The scrabbling for the big piece of cheese defines the empowered as the victors.

Although the scale is different in New Zealand, the situation is similar. For Maori, the Treaty of Waitangi has still not been honoured. For others the empowering process has lost its momentum at the highest levels. For such people the words of the American colunist Ann Landers might be applicable. "It is always darkest just before it becomes totally black."

But I say "might" because despite the majority there are constituencies, cultures, people who speak out. The reason why alternative cultures still manage to achieve is that by sheer insistence, by dint of challenge, of speaking out, of taking ground, of nibbling cheese, of desire to end suppression of self, they refuse to continue to be casualties and to accept the contractions inherent in the transformations.

For the majority context too has a Treaty.

Democracy has enabled a framework within which we can individually express our personal rights and desires, the validation of our personal histories. The results confirm the infinite capacity of human expression. The hooker in the film "Pretty Woman" expresses the dilemma perfectly. When asked by the client what her specialty is she responds "I can do anything you want me to do and I can be anything you want me to be."

There is a cost, but minorities can achieve their aspirations within a majority context by virtue of personal advocacy and activism. There is no doubt, for instance, that the feminist movement has changed all our lives; but it only continues to be a force because of personal advocacy. New Zealand feminists must surely be the strongest in the world, and I am delighted to see the strength of the women's movement in this audience. There is no doubt that the gay and lesbian movements have also achieved successes and again I am delighted to see representatives of lesbian and gay archives here today.

Indeed history is filled with ironies and sometimes has a habit of investing mana to some event or artefact which in its time was thought of as having little worth. Some things achieve this status by virtue of simply surviving and being discovered or reevaluated as representative of that time and culture. One of my main nightmares is that thousands of years from now someone might dig up my collection of bad B movies of the 1950s and consider them to be representative of the best of our times.

But consider if you will the case of William Yate, in the 19th Century, the first person in New Zealand to suffer discrimination on the grounds of his sexual orientation. A missionary, and belonging to the Church Missionary Society, he wrote the first catechism in Maori. His relationship with a sailor led to his being removed from his post and sent back to England. When he was gone all his possessions were burnt except for his diary. Today that diary is in the Alexander Turnbull Library where, by virtue of its having survived and being an artefact of its times, it serves to shed light on our history.

Assuredly the world has changed. Like Dorothy and her pet dog, we have been transported over the rainbow into the great land of Oz. And, in her immortal words, "Well, Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore."

It is not just the centre but the perimeters also that need to be taken into account. For somewhere between is the interconnectedness which must be protected for it makes sense of the infinite variety of our lives.

Interconnectedness. Synthesis. Tuia i runga. Tuia i raro. Tuia i roto. Tuia i waho. Tuia. Tuia. Tuia.

I offered a chant in Maori which once would only have been heard in a Maori context. As we approach the 21st Century the words of the chant seem to me to be part of the song of that great taura tangata, that great Rope of Man of which we are but interconnecting threads between past, present and future.

O canoes, four winds, great ones
Tribes, distinguished elders
Listen Listen Listen
To the call of the spirit calling "Unite, unite, be one"
Unite above, unite below, unite within
Unite without, unite all in oneness
The Day hears the Night hears
Unite the descent lines from Great Hawaiki
From long Hawaiki, from Hawaiki far away
Joined to the spirit, to the daylight, to the world of light
The past and the present with the future.

The past and the present with the future. We are all, in our respective organisations in the business of uniting the descent lines, the whakapapa or genealogies of our world, our lives, or the things which live in the world. All things in the world are taonga. Are treasures. Some of those lines are endangered. Some art threatened. Some are only remnants. But the songs of the many can still be transmitted even through but one strand. We must protect all the strands and especially those which are only single threads.

All of us here today have a responsibility for the many whakapapa of our world. All those taonga which have come down to us from the ages and all those expressions of the human and world condition. We are their guardians and must always seek to convey their relevancies, their importance to us, so that they are never forgotten and, hopefully, are always with us. We cannot leave to the future an insufficient legacy.

As Ranginui Walker has suggested these taonga may include rats. They must always traverse the sublime to the ridiculous. Whatever selection processes we may wish to apply must be guided by inclusiveness.

Our major challenge is that majority context. It forces us into the politics which make of our business a maze. It turns us into lobbyists for all our alternative cultures. For the money to keep programmes going. For the staff to make things happen. I hope that we are all brave enough to fight for all the cultures we have in our care. To demand equality of representation. This is after all a legitimate aspiration. Negotiate you must. Because for the ship rat to triumph it only needs good men and women to do nothing.

Perhaps the most important issue will not be how much we each are able to obtain for our constituencies - whether Maori, feminist, gay, whatever - but how much we can obtain from the majority framework. The warning I have is that in the scrabble do not turn against each other. Minority against minority is counter productive in this kind of negotiation. I pray that success does not ultimately depend not on how much we can obtain for our people but how much we are prepared to concede.

Finally, there is a proverb in Maori which asks, "He aha te mea nui o te Ao?" What is the greatest treasure on earth? The reply is "He tangata, he tangata, a he tangata." It is man, it is man, it is man.

But it is also man who is the greatest threat to man, his histories and his environment. Voracious, he has rampaged the world almost in some mindless eating frenzy. In this coming 21st century he, the ship rat, must be turned.

My daughter Jessica has a badge which reads "Please leave me a green and peaceful planet." She is right. Our international politics are still in a helluva mess. We've had wars, wars and more wars. The histories of people are the casualties of our inability to come up with a corporate plan aimed at world peace, equality and the distribution of food and wealth. Governments will simply have to try harder to come up with solutions that put people and not politics first.

Environmentally, the yellow-eyed penguin, Hector's dolphin, the blue duck, the tuatara, now the blue penguins, possibly the kiore at some time - all these world taonga are also casualties. Perhaps not of wars but certainly of an ever increasing trend towards taking what can be taken from the world and if you get in the road, tough.

All international organisations, Governments, the business and corporate dollar, educational institutions and media must place top priority on our environment.

If we can our greatest challenge will be to engineer a change in man's mentality which diverts us from careless and mindless development to caring participation. Towards rediscovering the interconnectedness between ourselves, our neighbours and our world. The bottom line is indeed survival.

Until then people like you must continue to pick up the pieces. The pieces of jigsaw and hold them and protect them for all our sakes. That implies battles for you, also, for you are therefore at the frontline. I know that you are not good men and women who will do nothing. Perhaps in the image of an island fortress or weel at the bottom of the world is a kind of

dream. Is it possible for us to take our own unique extraordinary world view to the people at the top? Can we grasp that Rope of Man and bind our own concepts of environment, whakapapa, value for the intrinsic right of things to exist, alternative histories to make it stronger? Can Te Whare Taonga O Aotearoa warp itself into Te Whare Taonga o Te Ao? Someone has to start gathering up all the threads, holding them tight, protecting them. And never ever letting them go.

Maori people believe that the past is always in front of us. So too is the past of the world so much of what you work and live with. With out past in front of us we are able to pursue and honour, through its talismans, its contribution to our present and future. To our culture. To our identity.

In this respect I would hope that you always embrace the tough options. To fight, negotiate, expand the spaces for whatever kiore there are in your lives, and to negotiate to win. For assuredly the past is not something which is behind us. The past is before us, a long unbroken line of ancestors, to whom we are accountable and whose guidance must be accepted. This is our implicit contract.

I congratulate you all for being the guardians that you are. For ensuring that the taonga of our world, its failures as well as its successes, its triumphs and defeats, its strengths and weaknesses, its tuataras, kiore and ship rats have your advocacy and your witness. For without that, how can we expect the future to know?

E hara i te mea no inaianei te aroha e
No na tupuna tuku iho tuku iho e.

Na reira ma te Atua tatou e manaaki
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

MAANZ CONFERENCE: INVERCARGILL/STEWART ISLAND

Southland Museum and Art Gallery has earned the reputation of doing things differently and the MAANZ Conference in September will be no exception. The three days have been designed to be stimulating, informative and memorable, with the emphasis on the latter! At a time when accountability is supreme and we enter into a phase of user pays, Museums are playing an increasingly important role for their people. Appropriately the theme for the conference is "Museums and people a new perspective". A draft programme has been circulated and possible speakers contacted. Confirmed speakers to date are ...

Jonathan Mane Wheoki, Canterbury University - 'Imag(in)ing our Heritage: Museums and People in Aotearoa'; **Cheryll Sotheran**, Dunedin Public Art Gallery - 'If this is an Art Gallery where are the Pictures?'; **Richard Cassels**, Otago Museum - 'Are Heritage Parks and Science Centres really Museums?'; **Elizabeth Hinds**, Otago Early Settlers Museum - 'I haven't any Heritage so what are Social History Museums about?'; **Pamela Lovis**, Museum of New Zealand - 'Going Public: a new Natural History initiative at the MONZTPT'; **Greg McManus**, Manawatu Museum - 'Tribal Museums and Cultural Centres in British Columbia, Canada; **Karen Wizevich**, Capital Discovery Place - 'Research Findings at CDP'. We also have several short papers by people from small museums and so far include ... **Jim Geddes**, Eastern Southland Gallery; **Bruce McCulloch**, North Otago Museum; **David Clarke**, Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown. Of course, part of the programme is an in depth look at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery redevelopment which includes the new live tuatara display (now with 39 animals) plus view the spectacular multi image audio visual of the Subantarctic Islands. Rather than sit in a lecture theatre all day and then do some touring, we have designed the programme to incorporate the sightseeing and formal sessions together. This means taking everyone across to Stewart Island and resuming the conference there. Stewart Island is now serviced by a fast catamaran vessel which can skim across Foveaux Strait in less than an hour. For those who cannot abide boats of any kind, there is a 20 minute scheduled flight service available (at extra cost).

.Back on the Mainland on day three, we visit the brand new Bluff Maritime Museum and resume the papers at Anderson Park Art Gallery in Invercargill. Anyone wanting further information about post-conference tours please contact me as soon as possible. We know that Invercargill and Stewart Island are a long way to travel to, but be assured that we will make the effort worth while. The last AGMANZ conference to be held in Invercargill was in 1965 and this gathering in September is so important for the future of MAANZ and the profession. Who was it who said "Anything worth while contains effort"??? We look forward to giving you a great Southern Experience and a most successful conference.

Russell J. Beck
Director - Southland Museum and Art Gallery

"WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT OR APPROPRIATE TO ADDRESS IN EXHIBITS AND HOW CAN WE BEST INTERPRET THEM?"

Geoffrey Hicks, Museum of New Zealand

It is probably appropriate that I should follow two speakers who have presented perspectives relating fundamentally to the ways we might interpret the contemporary natural estate. By virtue of their provenance, however, museums have a unique advantage over agencies such as the Department of Conservation, while at the same time offering complementary experiences. Museums are repositories of natural and historical objects and artefacts. Museum collections are what set them apart from any other organisation and they are the currency of the nation's cultural and natural heritage. They also present opportunities for recreating or evoking the social and environmental past. One environmental issue that I think museums are ideally placed to address is the presentation of the archaic so the contemporary can be placed in perspective with greater clarity.

The stereotype of a museum being a place where dead objects from the past are presented is not actually a limitation to interpretation. Take for example the National Museum's collections of priceless extinct bird specimens like large moa, tiny tree-bark creeping wrens and the magnificent huia which will appear in an upcoming major new exhibition entitled 'Voices', which will tell a social history of the last 1000 years in Aotearoa, and the influence human beings have had on the fabric of the land. An introductory court to this exhibition will reconstruct the shoreline and the pristine coastal bush of central New Zealand at the time of the first footfall.

How will this be done?

Scientific evidence bound up in fossil and subfossil pollen, bone and shell deposits accurately dated with radiocarbon techniques, allows us to build a picture of what these communities would have looked like a millennium ago. It tells us that huia were about as abundant as contemporary bellbirds, it also tells us the shore plover, now restricted to one small island in the Chathams, was about as abundant around the shores of Cook Strait as oystercatchers today. It tells us that the giant Haast's eagle, with a wing span of nearly three metres cruised the skies on the hunt for moa, just around the Eastbourne coast. It shows a bushline of mature beech and podocarp trees reaching to the waters edge of Lambton Harbour.

Why should we do it?

I know some people will question why even try and reconstruct a natural world inside a gallery when the real thing is right outside, or at least a couple of hours drive away in the Orongorongo. Surely evocations or recreations of nature will be our Achilles heel, totally unsatisfying to the environmental purist. On the other hand I agree, it is indeed up to the DoC, the Botanic Garden, Mt Bruce, Otari and the Zoo to present and interpret the real living article to the public. But on the other hand where do you go, other than to a museum, to gain an appreciation of what the prehistoric environment was, how it looked, how it sounded, even how it smelled, before the cataclysmic changes brought to bear on our landscape by successive waves of human settlement? We have in our care if you like the flotsam and jetsam of a natural system that failed to sustain the onslaught of humanity. These are the natural objects that we now wish to reinterpret in an environment beyond the comprehension of many people, most particularly young local urbanites. Indeed the urban landscape and the family farm will appear as direct counterpoint to the pristine world met with by the embarkees of the first canoes. We can do this because we have in our collections the raw materials to faithfully recreate the landscape of 1000 years ago. It is only by showing it as it was that we might come to appreciate what it is that we have lost.

There is another compelling edge that museums have when addressing environmental issues, that allows an altogether more enriching form of interpretation, still largely unexplored in New Zealand. There is in this island archipelago an undeniable linkage between culture and nature. Stories, beliefs, myths embodied in oral traditions of the Maori, together with their material expression in carved and woven objects, are further currency of a new and refreshing form of interpretation. Descriptions of the natural world and portrayed in taonga, coupled with understandings from the western science tradition, when treated together greatly enhance the story, adding both depth and illumination. Let me explore but one example. Picture if you can a shoreline scene in our new exhibition - a shoreline teeming as it was, 1000 years ago, with hundreds of excitable small reptiles. A little piece of natural history well known to most of us is the way in which lizards throw off their tails to distract and escape from predators. Now we could go on to describe the evolutionary history of this behaviour and the energy costs and benefits to the beast from a purely biological perspective - and this is how we have all seen it portrayed. But think of how enriching this becomes when we add the notion of kaitiaki, where because

the demon lizard was regarded as a harbinger of misfortune, they were placed as deterrents to would-be trespassers to tapu burial places. The lizard is frequently portrayed in carvings of barge board and poupou in museum collections. Further still, we could lay over that the wonderful folk tale narrative of Te Whakaruaki. Te Whakaruaki was once a monster who resembled a huge lizard. A woman found roaming alone in the forest was captured by this monster and compelled to live with him as his wife. Te Whakaruaki was, as we would medically assess him today, a rather paranoid chauvinistic fellow who used all sorts of techniques to prevent his wife running off and leaving him. But one day she managed it and she set in place a plan to destroy the monster. You may be wondering by now what this has to do with lizards' tails - well, she set fire to his house and as Te Whakaruaki struggled to escape the flames his body was destroyed, but the tail parted from it. The tail seemingly with a mind of its own wriggled out through the fire and escaped into the forest. From that time lizards because numerous, for the escaped tail of Te Whakaruaki was the origin of the species of lizard known as moko papa, the common brown gecko, and lizards now can cast off their tails whenever they are in danger. So using this imagery we can tie together elements of cultural belief with elements of living species and biological processes. Exhibitions are as much about storytelling as hanging objects on walls. Indeed without the context that the story provides the object becomes meaningless. But the multidimensional way in which we may present and interpret the story of lizards is the unique preserve of the museum, since they are capable of combining their own resources of oral history, artefact and natural history specimens.

I guess what this says and perhaps the challenge I may issue is not one of philosophy but one of institutional practise. That nature and culture are inextricably woven together in this land is undeniable, particularly when viewed from the context of tangata whenua. The challenge to museum interpreters is to see that we actually do depart from the simplistic objects on walls approach and adopt more meaningful holistic interpretations which exploit the richness evident in connections between people and the natural world.

I have dwelt mainly with a couple of ways museums in particular are, because of their special nature, capable of interpreting issues of the past. But I think also museums must be capable of provoking thought and dialogue with their audience by presenting exhibitions that not only address issues of the day, such as habitat loss, encroaching urbanisation, wall of death fishing and pollution, but also looking forward to issues of global significance in the 21st century and beyond. Climate change and the impact of sea level rise on the low lying atolls of the Pacific and cloning of the human genome are but two examples.

The second challenge I would issue then is to environmental agencies like DoC and Forest & Bird Society and various scientific organisations such as the upcoming Crown Research Institutes. These organisations do not have the presentation of exhibitions strictly as part of their mission, yet they do have a component output called 'technology transfer'. What this means is the ability to translate scientific findings into user friendly information. Usually it takes the form of popularist publications. But why not fabricate an exhibition around new findings on giardia or myxomatosis or the impact of declining krill stocks on Adelie penguins for example? These are all currently Crown funded research projects that would benefit by being exposed to the public gaze. That some of these organisations do undertake displays, for example DoC's national park visitor centres is recognised, but they will always have limitations and dedicated exhibit space. Perhaps we in museums should be looking to develop closer liaison with these groups where the quid pro quo is that the museum offers the exhibition space and support services, while the environmental agencies provide the content of the exhibits and the funding to install them. One highly successful joint exhibit now on tour, was 'Forgotten Fauna' hosted at the National Museum in 1990 and with a substantial input from DoC. I see this as a win/win situation with both the museum and the science agency being seen by the public as responding to the increasing demand for new information about the natural environment.

Before ending I would like to add a promotional postscript. Following a restructuring exercise late last year the National Art Gallery and Museum now has a natural environment interpretation group consisting of three people. Its role is to plan and develop new natural history exhibitions and contribute to educational programmes. It will do so within a climate committed to biculturalism. Some of the points I have made here embody this approach.

WHOSE VALUES DO OUR EXHIBITS REFLECT: A LOOK AT EXHIBITS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXHIBIT PLANNERS AND CHILDREN

Karen Jamison Wizevich

I come from an environmental design background and have worked with various informal education facilities, both in New Zealand and in the U.S., as an evaluator, exhibit developer and as a tour guide. I am now conducting research towards my doctorate in architecture, comparing the expectations of exhibit developers prior to an exhibit's opening, with the reality of visitors' responses.

Architects are notorious for producing buildings and other places that fail to meet user needs. The profession has started examining possible causes for these failures, and some of the emerging answers hold relevance for our museums. While my architecture background almost obliges me to critically address some of the physical conditions of exhibits, I will also be talking about some of the underlying structural problems associated with design processes. I will be drawing upon new research from the architectural profession, exploring possible explanations why our exhibitions continue to fall short of our expectations.

Museums and other informal education environments are faced with increasing demands for public accountability, a result of pressure to ensure that their facilities and messages are accessible to a wider audience than ever before. There is a great deal of discussion about how to break down psychological and physical barriers to public use of museums. However, exhibitions continue to be created that fail to meet the intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of their audiences, and also present built-in impediments to learning, enjoyment and satisfaction.

A central question remains: Why, despite the best of intentions, do we continue to place physical and psychological barriers in front of our visitors?

Some insights into these important questions comes from looking at architectural research into building types as diverse as schools, office buildings, housing, movie theatres, and playgrounds. This research compared PEOPLE WHO DESIGN and otherwise participate in the PRODUCTION of environments, with PEOPLE WHO USE these environments. In all cases there were significant differences found in the way USERS and PRODUCERS BEHAVE IN, PERCEIVE, EXPERIENCE, and EVALUATE the built environment.

These differences are particularly important because PRODUCERS tend to design as if they, or people like them, are going to be the primary users of that space, building, or exhibit. You can see the potential for problems with all parts of our built environment.

The mis-matches we find between people's needs and the environmental offerings are the frequent result of a design process which has one set of people, with a certain set of values, needs, etc., designing for another set of people, with a completely different set of values and needs.

When producers encounter a building, etc., they tend to react in perceptual terms, viewing the environment symbolically and focusing on aesthetic issues: form, style, historic significance, design approach used.

In contrast, the public generally reacts in associational ways, looking for links and associations between the new situation and something more familiar; the public also relies on available environmental cues, translating messages in a personal manner; the public is able to make quick, lasting judgements based on the physical appearance of a place, developing preferences for certain design styles.

Essentially, producers and users of the built environment may be viewed as belonging to two separate "cultures", each with a separate set of values and world views.

Currently there is a great deal of discussion in our museum world about how we display one culture to another, and about how we can honestly deal with bi-culturalism in our facilities. But we don't hear much about the differences between people who create our exhibitions and museums, and those who come to visit.

It might help if we look at the exhibition design process as a form of cultural production, in which a group of producers - designers, directors, educators, etc. - creates artifacts (exhibitions) for interpretation and use by another group - our visitors.

Exhibit producers possess certain norms and expectations with respect to exhibit performance, and exhibits are (unconsciously or consciously) created with built "codes" which can only be interpreted "correctly" if the viewer understands the coding system. The communication of information rests on visitors being able to "crack" the codes.

When the gap between designer and user is wide the potential for environmental failure and communication breakdown increases.

Clearly, the gap between producers and most users is always relatively wide, but children (and especially minority children) represent a worst case divergence between user and provider. Children differ from their producers in terms of their: size, cognitions, values, control, and experience. For the remainder of my talk I will focus on children as users of our facilities.

Children as Environmental Users

What do we know about children as users of informal education environments? Not much, in fact children as a separate user group are routinely neglected, not only in the design of these spaces, but in research on environmental use. The work that has been done demonstrates that children prefer: being involved, the ability to touch, being shown how something works, having things at their level.

In general children are not well catered to in most museum settings. Physical barriers present an initial deterrent, precluding any higher level involvement. Display cases contain material children cannot see, signs are mounted at levels above their heads, labels (if at a proper height) are written in "adult language", places to rest are scarce, touching material is usually forbidden, talking is usually discouraged, and energetic outbursts are banished to the outside of our buildings.

It is clear that our facilities do impede public use - especially by children. Why does this continue to happen?

One explanation is that producers have unexamined beliefs about how our visitor's learn. EXAMPLE: ZOO DESIGN. Naturalistic exhibits are overwhelmingly preferred by exhibit designers, most administrators, and adult visitors, but there is some new doubt about whether the elderly and children prefer newer exhibit styles. The elderly have reported feeling uncomfortable and frightened by new enclosures, mainly due to their lack of distinct boundaries. Children appear bored by newer exhibit styles, and more stimulated in traditional zoo settings, possibly resulting from children's shorter attentions spans or perceptual limitations. Both causes would diminish the impact of obscure animals in large, open areas. In any case we need to explore all possible reactions to our new experiments with exhibit styles.

A second explanation is that producers may want visitors to act in a style that reinforces our notion of appropriate audience behaviour, the proverbial "Museum Set". Although we might be hard-pressed to define this set of behaviours, we probably all realize there is some truth to this. For example, why aren't there more seats in our galleries? Why are visitors supposed to whisper? Some of these behaviours help protect the experience for other visitors, but if we are serious about wanting to bring our institutions alive, we need to examine why we continue to treat them as sacred temples.

The exhibition design process further perpetuates the schism between users and producers with professional standards that overtly and discretely favour creation of certain types of exhibition. EXAMPLES: FAMOUS, ARCHITECT-DESIGNED MUSEUMS. These spaces may have won professional design awards, but what experience, impression, and messages do they provide our visitors? Another important point to consider is that long before children are bored by a certain design style or exhibit theme, adults (producers and visitors) decide these are passe. Children don't judge exhibit styles the way producers do, and children are better at experiencing a place on its own merits.

The propositions I am discussing lead to the suggestion that some of the misinterpretation occurring in exhibitions may be avoidable. A recent museum conference at the Smithsonian concluded that exhibit producers "can choose strategies that can make some portion of the public feel either empowered or isolated. If the audience or some portion thereof, feels alienated, unworthy or out of place ... it is because we want them to feel that way".

Recommendations

There are three main recommendations I would like to propose.

First, we should start looking at exhibit producers and users as two separate cultural groups. And once we accept this, adopt a fresh approach to improving our galleries and facilities. Are we equipping our exhibits and museums with the necessary information for visitors to de-code our messages? How might this exhibit, or this museum be alienating our visitors? Impeding their progress? If we want them to explore all of our offerings why do we have poor (or non-existent) maps? If we want them to spend more time looking at our exhibitions, why don't we have more/better seating? Softer flooring? Places to lean? If we claim to encourage families to visit, why don't we let them bring their strollers through? And why can't families use our eating facilities with some relative abandon without being reprimanded by staff? Museums are public places. Our public has every right to feel (relatively) at home. We desperately need to start questioning the inconsistencies between our mission statements and the reality of what our facility can support.

Second, as we are starting to explore with respect to bi-cultural design, we need to increase the use of participatory methods. Input from our visitors, adult and child, needs to be obtained at all stages of the design process: pre-design (conceptual stage), during design (formative evaluation), and after the design (summative evaluation). In architecture, people who use buildings are starting to be called the "new experts", a reference to the trend away from reliance on traditional architectural experts to tell us what is good and bad about our environments. In the museum setting, visitors are indeed the experts at telling

us how our places work from their perspective.

However, as we are also learning with respect to bi-culturalism, truly effective participation only occurs when we increase the power of participants. There are several ways to increase participation in planning, but most are not terribly effective. Methods range from rubber-stamping (providing an illusion of participation) to active involvement and decision-making power. For my own research I am using a combination of architectural evaluation techniques and exhibit evaluation methods. Touring interviews will be conducted with groups of visitors: families, adults only, and children only. These will elicit the visitors' perspective on how the place works. I'll also be observing visitors as they interact with exhibits, followed by in-depth, one-on-one interviews. These methods differ from traditional evaluations by adopting a purely visitor-oriented perspective, thereby increasing the potential for them to participate in actual decision making.

We should implement processes for children to be involved in the design process in more imaginative ways. They are able and willing to contribute positively to the creation of new, and changing of existing environments. They can draw pictures of the type of exhibits they would like to see. They can be asked to respond to slides/ photos of many different types of exhibits. Most importantly, we need to observe children as they interact with our facilities and then talk to them. It is no longer acceptable for us to assume we know what children (and other visitors) want or need. Getting down on our knees to see the world as seven year olds do is important, but not sufficient. Let them tell us themselves, in their own words, what being seven in a museum feels like.

Third, the role of educators in the planning and evaluation of exhibits should be increased. In exhibit design educators have a foot in both the producers' world and that of visitors. They can be valuable as mediators between these two groups. Having been an interpreter in one museum, and now having watched educators in the National Museum, I see that this is already a position of gap bridging. Educators deal with the limitations of exhibits, the conditions of which frequently work against the learning process. To accomplish their task of bringing exhibitions alive, educators must augment the exhibit offerings. Without augmentation, and without the invaluable asset of insight into the visitors' perspective, few exhibits would make the necessary leap between the producer's intentions and the reality of a visitor's experience.

Why don't we take a hard look at how educators are already making exhibits work: what materials do they supply (things to touch, look at, etc); What verbal connections do they invent for their audience, what associations and links are they forced to make. If we examine how educators routinely compensate for exhibit drawbacks we may have some answers for how to improve our facilities.

Museum educators have the potential to contribute positively to the design of many aspects of museums. Hopefully, you are already being asked to participate in design projects; if not, start asking why.

So the bad news may be that we have another inter-cultural issue to deal with in our facilities, but the good news is that this one may be simpler to confront.

INCREASING ACCESS TO MUSEUMS - HOW VISIBLE STORAGE CAN HELP

PAMELA LOVIS
Museum of New Zealand

In the last few decades museums have attempted to become more useful and relevant to society. The process of appealing to a wider audience and shaking off their image as elitist, exclusive establishments has been termed the "democratisation" of museums (Ames, 1985: 25). Collections form the heart of a museum and one means of achieving democratisation is for museums to make their collections more accessible. This can involve adopting innovative approaches to collection management which bring the public into direct contact with a greater proportion of a museum's total collections. It also involves increasing intellectual access to collections by providing access to collection information and by encouraging independent investigation of collections, free from the interpretations of the museum specialist. Placing more of a museums collection on view and reducing curatorial selection thus serves to "demystify" the museum and make it more accessible.

Museums must therefore deal with the philosophical question of whether collections truly belong to the public and whether the public has a **right** to increased access to these collections (Rebora, 1991:50; Johnson & Horgan, 1979:20). Cameron argues that there are good legal, moral and ethical grounds for considering that the collections of a museum are a **public trust**, in the custody of an institution for proper care and management (Cameron, 1983:85-86). As the beneficiaries of the trust it is argued that the public have the right to optimum physical and intellectual access to the collections and their related information. The museum resource must be designed to give physical access to the collections; intellectual access to information about the collections; and access to the human resources of the museum, such as curators and educators, in order to interpret, decode and make the collections meaningful.

The problem of increasing public access to collections has been the subject of experimentation and debate since the 1950's. New approaches to collection management in which collections have been made available to the public with unhindered visual access, have been termed **visible storage**, and are a major departure from traditional collection storage (Johnson & Horgan,1979:20). Other terms such as "open storage", "accessible storage" and "study storage" have also been used to describe similar developments (e.g. Ames,1985; Rebora,1991).

Museum experiments with visible storage have been few in number, with fewer still being described and evaluated in the literature (Cameron,1986; Greenwood et al,1989:215; Sayes,1990; Thistle, 1990; Rebora,1991). Many of the visible storage developments have been problematic, and successful to only varying degrees. Clearly, visible storage is still in the experimental stages in museums, with much research and development work required. A wide range of issues and questions need to be considered in relation to visible storage developments (Thistle, 1990). Not least of these are how visible storage relates to the overall purpose and objectives of the museum, the nature and size of the collections, the museum's role in the community, and the image of the museum. A range of factors to be considered are summarised as follows.

Conservation considerations are of primary importance in considering visible storage and care must be taken to reduce the risks involved in presenting collection items in this way. Particular problems include exposure to prolonged and excessive light levels, and physical damage to items stored in pull-out drawers resulting from vibration and movement. For these reasons some sensitive collection types, such as textiles, may not be suited to visible storage. The display of collections in visible storage usually requires specifically designed, often complex, and possibly expensive, storage furniture and cabinetry. The storage system chosen must meet conservation requirements and be robust enough to survive visitor pressure. Variation in collection types, materials and item sizes may require complex cabinetry, as for example with ethnographic collections. Visible storage also raises security issues. Cabinets must be secure and lockable, yet easily accessible to museum staff, and surveillance systems may be needed.

The presentation of collections in visible storage and their arrangement within the system raises several issues. Decisions are needed about the assignment of items between visible storage, exhibitions and reference collections. A stratified system of access to collections is often advocated, beginning with traditional display, moving through to visible storage and finally to full use of reference collections. Such a system has the advantage of catering for the varying needs of users and the different museological needs of collections.

The suitability of some items for presentation in visible storage for cultural,spiritual and ethical reasons

must also be a consideration. In the New Zealand context the possibility of displaying taonga Maori in visible storage will require careful deliberation by Maori curators.

Complementary facilities for visible storage, such as reference collections, study rooms, curatorial offices and exhibition areas must also be considered. Within the visible storage system itself collections may be arranged thematically,regionally, systematically, or by object function, medium, or material. The assignment of items to visible storage must also take into account the possibility that this will effectively decrease specialist access to these collections for visitors undertaking serious research and for curatorial staff.

Issues of intellectual access are also of fundamental importance in visible storage developments, including how information about collection items will be presented and how and to what extent the items will be interpreted. Detailed information about collections can be made available in several ways, including manual catalogues, computerised access systems and videodisc technology. The issue of what collection information should be made freely available requires consideration, particularly how to deal with sensitive information such as purchase prices and donor names. The extent to which collections presented in visible storage should be interpreted also needs to be addressed. For example, will areas of interpretive exhibits be included within the facility; to what extent will items be labelled; will design and aesthetic consideration influence the presentation of items or will the items be presented in a totally unmediated fashion?

An important factor influencing the use and interpretation of collections in visible storage is the level of staffing present in the facility. While provision of staff may be a major cost factor it is essential for the success of visible storage to have reasonable numbers of trained interpreters or demonstrators available to assist visitors in use of the facility and to aid in interpretation. The extent to which curatorial staff will be on hand in the facility is another important consideration, as is the relationship in general between curatorial staff and a visible storage development. In some instances curatorial staff may oppose visible storage as it is seen to threaten the traditional role and authority of the curator as the interpretive link between collection items and the visitor.

A final crucial consideration for museums contemplating visible storage is whether the public will actually find such a facility useful and meaningful or, as suggested by some authors, visible storage merely serves to confuse, overwhelm or threaten the visitor. This difficult question may be answered by front-end audience evaluations and the design and evaluation of prototype facilities. Cost is obviously also a major factor involved in developing visible storage, not only in the initial set-up but in maintenance of the facility and staffing.

In order to examine some of these issues further several important visible storage developments are discussed.

A. UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, VANCOUVER, CANADA:

This teaching museum, associated with a university, is under the directorship of Dr Michael Ames. In 1976 the museum opened its new building with most of its ethnographic collections accessible in visible storage. The facility was designed primarily for students and faculty members, with the additional aim of increasing public access to the teaching collections.

The visible storage facility occupies 3,000m^2 and holds about 14,000 ethnological items, or roughly half the total collections. All the items presented are relatively non-light sensitive, the textile, clothing and other light-sensitive collections being excluded from visible storage. Small objects are displayed in wooden cabinets with perspex covered drawers and glass-covered display tops; medium size objects are in large, locked, glass cases with glass shelving; and large objects are in locked glass rooms with no ceilings (see photos in Sayes, 1990). The information access system is manual and consists of catalogue books of computer-generated data sheets. Handling of items is possible only under staff supervision in adjacent areas.

As one of the first developments in visible storage the UBCMA facility has been the prototype for other developments and has highlighted some of the problems involved. Viewed very much as an experiment, the staff of UBCMA differ in the extent to which they consider it to have succeeded. Ames evaluated the facility in his 1981 and 1985 papers, while Cameron studied the UBCMA visible storage closely for the planning of the Glenbow development (Cameron, 1982; 1983 and 1986). Sayes (1990:7-10) provides a recent account of the facility.

One of the problems encountered concerns the conservation needs of the collections. While temperature, humidity and air pollution can be controlled with air conditioning, lighting presents a problem in the large glass cases (Ames,1981:26). Top lighting creates lux levels which are excessive for objects at the higher levels and, coupled with the cumulative effects of exposure to light, could endanger some collection items. The cases also develop a temperature differential, being hotter at the top than at the bottom. Vibration and movement caused by the opening and closing of cabinet drawers does not seem to be damaging objects (Sayes,1990:9).

A survey of visitor behaviour in the facility (Cameron, 1986:47-48) indicated that it was of limited success for the general public. Most visitors

did not understand the purpose of visible storage and were confused and overwhelmed by it. Much of the confusion could be attributed to the lack of a clear transition from the exhibition spaces to the storage area (Ames, 1981:24). The catalogue data books also presented a problem as most visitors did not use them, found them difficult to use, or found the information provided unsatisfactory (Sayes, 1990:8).

The extent to which the facility is useful to students and scholars is not clear. While Ames stated that "it works reasonably well for students and scholars" (Ames, 1985:27), Cameron reported that it was not used to any significant extent by this group, for whom it had been primarily designed (Cameron, 1986:45), a finding supported by Sayes (1990:7). A possible explanation for this is that visible storage actually decreases accessibility to the collections for serious study purposes, since this requires items to be handled, measured and examined closely. Although the visible storage facility allows visual access, objects needed for specialist study have to be removed by staff, a process which can be awkward and time consuming (Sayes, 1990:8).

The organisation of the material in visible storage is also a problem, as it does not relate to any scientific classification, but is rather arranged for aesthetic appeal (Cameron, 1986:46). As the "designer placing" of objects involves value judgements, it can be argued that the objects have been mediated (Sayes, 1990:9), rendering the facility somewhere between a useful study resource and a conventional display. However, it can also be argued that an aesthetically appealing presentation is more likely to attract visitor interest. All the items are numbered only, without descriptive labels, so that additions to this actively expanding collection require changes to all the case numbers and the catalogue.

Staffing arrangements for the UBCMA visible storage area are not clear from the literature. However, one staff member consulted by Cameron emphasised the importance of staff involvement with visitors in order to make the system effective (Cameron, 1986:50), implying perhaps that staffing levels were inadequate.

A suggested improvement to the UBCMA visible storage facility would be the development of a computerised information access system, preferably incorporating video disc. However, in 1990 the information access system still consisted only of manual data cards generated from the computerised Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), a system not yet adapted for public access (Sayes, 1990:5 & 8). Additional improvements might include a better organisation of storage; inclusion of a clear signal to visitors of a transition from exhibition gallery to visible storage e.g. doors or turnstiles; and higher staffing levels with greater staff- visitor interaction.

The facility is currently being reviewed, but without any proposed change to its basic philosophy. The glass cases are being redesigned to overcome conservation problems and interpretive displays may be incorporated in the visible storage area (Sayes, 1990:10).

B. GLENBOW MUSEUM, CALGARY, CANADA:

The Glenbow museum is one of the largest art and history museums in Canada. Until recently Duncan Cameron was the Director of the Glenbow and has been one of the main proponents of visible storage, involved in considerable research and planning of such developments.

In 1979 the Glenbow took custody of a large collection of art works and artefacts, known as the Devonian Collection. One condition of the gift agreement was that the Glenbow would investigate the concept of visible storage as a means of "maximising the accessibility of collections to the maximum number of publics and providing for the best care of the collections possible" (Cameron, 1982: 185). There then followed a lengthy period of research and planning of new collection management approaches. This included research into cabinetry systems suitable for different collection categories, which provided visual access while remaining secure (Cameron, 1983: Figs. 12 & 13). The various museum functions and their physical and functional relationships were also researched, leading to the production of schematic diagrams (Cameron, 1982: Figs 3-11). These diagrams embody Cameron's important principle of **stratified access** to collections (Cameron, 1982: 183, Fig.2; Ames, 1985: 28; and Figure A) which involves:

1 working from an introduction and creation of interest using highly interpreted, conventional didactic exhibits;
2 to exploration of study collections in publicly accessible visible storage;
3 to examination of controlled access "reference" collections under staff supervision, with access to curatorial staff and resources for serious research.

Cameron's "plans" for visible storage also included the positioning of curatorial staff within public areas and central to the collections; "islands" of didactic exhibits; education resource areas e.g. classrooms, audio visual units; and computer terminals for information access.

In 1981 a research and development project was established at the Glenbow to create an experimental visible storage gallery. Following development of a public access computer programme; research into new lighting technology; and the testing of prototype storage cabinetry, the experimental facility was installed and opened to the public in April 1983 (Cameron, 1986:65). After such extensive research and planning the number of problems experienced (Cameron, 1986:65-69) and the eventual failure of the project was unexpected and disappointing.

A major problem with the facility was the apparent lack of visitor interest and confusion over its purpose, despite the inclusion of explanatory signage. Even visitors given a personal demonstration of the facility by staff failed to then go on to use it themselves. This lack of visitor interest in using visible storage is a major problem which requires further investigation.

Many visitors appeared more interested in the mechanics of the system, as opposed to what they might learn from it. Considerable testing and rough usage of drawers and timed lighting devices resulted in breakdown of drawer and lighting mechanisms. Technical problems were experienced with the computer access system and more importantly the vast majority of visitors were not interested in using the computer terminal. Despite the design of special mounts to protect objects within drawers from damage through vibration and movement, damage to collection items did occur.

Finally the visible storage system effectively reduced scholarly access to the collections. Although the cabinetry had been designed so that individual drawers or units could be removed when required for serious, hands-on study, this proved complex, time consuming and impractical. The reduction of specialist access to collections by visible storage facilities seems to be a universal problem requiring attention.

In 1985 the visible storage at Glenbow was closed to the public. Consideration was given to modifying the experimental facility to correct the problems but it was decided against, the overall conclusion being that "this mode of visual and intellectual access to collections through visible storage is not effective" (Cameron,1986:68).

C. THE NATURAL HISTORY CENTRE, LIVERPOOL MUSEUM, ENGLAND:

The Natural History Centre at the Liverpool Museum aims to increase public access to natural history collections (Greenwood et al ,1989). The success of this Centre, one of the most recent visible storage developments in museums, negates Johnson and Horgans' comments that visible storage in natural history museums would be of little interest to the public (Johnson & Horgan, 1979:20). Most museums however make no attempt to make their enormous scientific reference collections more readily available to the public, and still regard these collections as being of interest only to specialists.

In 1978 the Liverpool Museum began researching the possibility of increasing public access to its large natural science reference collections which incorporate over one million specimens. Following positive responses to "behind the scenes" visits and workshop sessions, a prototype Natural History Centre was established in the natural history gallery in the summers of 1983 and 1984. This proved popular with the public and user surveys found that visitors did want to see and use the collection material provided in the Centre. In 1986 a permanent Natural History Centre was established as an important facet of the overall policy of the Trustees to improve public access to collections (Greenwood et al,1989:215).

The Centre covers about 104 m^2 and is positioned within the Natural History gallery, but operates as a separate and distinct entity for security and noise reasons. This may also reduce visitor confusion about its purpose, which has been a problem in other visible storage developments. The Centre is linked visually with the gallery by windows and by a series of display cases running around the outside of the Centre containing interpretive natural history displays and visitor information.

The Natural History Centre consists of two main parts - an Activities Room and a Collections Room (Greenwood et al,1989:218; Figure B). Visitors enter the Centre via the Activities Room. This includes a childrens' area and specimens selected to arouse interest and curiosity laid out on benches and shelving. Many of the specimens can be handled and microscopes linked via video cameras to TV monitors give enlarged viewing while allowing whole groups to examine the same image.

Adjacent to the Activities Room is the true visible storage facility, known as the Collections Room. This contains 30 cabinets housing about 20 000 specimens drawn from the reference collections of all the natural history departments. The specially designed cabinets each contain 11 "captive" drawers, although these can be removed by staff. Each drawer has a lockable, sliding, perspex cover which protects the items while allowing visual access. Eventually a significant proportion of the entire natural history reference collections will be circulated through the Centre. The collections are not subjected to undue risk and are in no way seen as expendable. Damage to specimens has been minimal through a policy of restricting free handling to only robust items, those lacking scientific data and specimens specifically obtained for handling. Visitors requesting consultation of the main reference collections can be accommodated in a short period of time. The system therefore provides a stratified access to the collections, as conceived by Cameron, by initially exciting interest and curiosity in the Activities Room, developing greater interest in the Collections Room, and finally leading to use of the full resources of the main reference collections and access to curatorial staff.

An important feature of the Natural History Centre is a microcomputer providing access to information about the entire geological reference collections (about 30,000 records). This specially developed computer programme has proved to be very successful and is connected to videodisc (Greenwood et al,1989:219-221; Foster & Phillips,1988:129-131). As documentation of the natural history collections proceeds this facility will

be developed further, along with a computerised catalogue of all the material in the Collections Room.

One of the features which undoubtedly contributes to the success of the Natural History Centre is the high level of staffing. There are 3 permanent staff working within the Centre, who maintain close links with the curatorial departments. At peak times up to 10 staff are required, recruited from a team of trained, temporary demonstrators. The staff of the centre have an interpretive role providing a crucial dynamic and personal link between the specimens and the visitor (Greenwood et al, 1989:222) as well as ensuring that the collection material is secure.

Evaluation through user surveys and qualitative observations has shown that the Natural History Centre is a great success, in contrast to the other visible storage developments described above. In a five week experimental opening period in 1987, during which the centre was only open in the afternoons, there were 20,000 visitors to the Natural History Centre. While most interest was in the Activities Room, considerable use was made of the Collections Room, including full use of the computer access system. Many visitors to the centre are family groups and it appeals to a broad cross-section of the public, not just the committed amateur naturalist. Future expansion of the Centre will probably focus on developing local community interest and involvement in natural history.

D. THE NATURALISTS CENTRE, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, WASHINGTON D.C.:

The Naturalists Centre at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History was opened in 1976. The facility was designed to provide opportunities for amateur naturalists, collectors and students to study natural history collections in more detail than is possible from more conventional museum exhibits. The Centre covers 675 m2 and includes representative, systematic collections of rocks and minerals, insects and other invertebrates, plants, vertebrates and anthropological material, housed within collection storage units. Collections focus on material from the local Washington area. The Centre also provides a reference library and various scientific equipment.

One of the services offered by the Naturalists Centre is the provision of identifications of natural history specimens and information about them. In most cases the staff of the Centre can assist with enquiries and if not the material is accepted for referral to the appropriate curatorial department. The staff of the Centre consists of a full-time Manager and a large team of part-time trained volunteers. Opening hours of the Centre are restricted to weekends and from Wednesday to Friday during the week.

The Naturalist Centre is a successful facility targeted for use by members of the public with an existing interest in natural history. The Centre allows these users to study natural history collections in detail and encourages self-learning.

E. THE REFERENCE CENTRE, QUEENSLAND MUSEUM, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA:

The Queensland Museum's Reference Centre was developed as a new display area and facility when the museum moved to a new building in 1986. The Centre has several functions, one of which is to display a wide range of specimens and objects in a form of visible, or open storage. Specimens are presented in large, well spaced, display cases with only basic information labels. the majority of the cases house systematic displays of natural history specimens including insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, fish and molluscs. However ceramics, glassware, guns and ethnographic objects are also presented, the ethnographic material being displayed in reduced lux levels. Visitors are able to view a wide range of specimens and objects and often use the display to recognise or identify particular items. The open display area covers about 300m2 and also includes a range of "touch" specimens, small displays on topics of interest, and a supply of information leaflets on many different subjects.

Adjacent to the open display area is the "secure area" covering 112m^2, which is accessible to the public on request. This area contains a series of collections presented in steel cabinets with pull out, glass covered, drawers and includes collections of rocks and minerals, fossils, bones, eggs, coral and molluscs. However many visitors are seemingly unaware of the existence of these collections or their availability for public use, such that this part of the Centre is relatively underused. The secure area also contains a Reference Library and a "Naturalist's Corner" equipped with microscope, specimens and magnifier.

The Centre is staffed by a full time Curator and Technician, a Receptionist, and a large team of Interpretation Officers. The Centre offers a public identification and information service and deals with about 600 public enquiries per month, in person, by phone and by mail. Interpretation and information services throughout the museum are also coordinated through the Reference Centre.

The development and function of the Queenland Museum Reference Centre, including the results of a visitor survey, will be presented in more detail in a future paper. This paper will also describe a related facility at the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, known as the Information Centre.

OTHER VISIBLE STORAGE DEVELOPMENTS:

A number of other visible storage developments in North American museums have been recently visited and reviewed by Sayes (1990). The **Strong Museum,** Rochester is a social

history museum with a collection of 500,000 objects, of which 4% (20,000) are on display in visible storage "Study Collections" (Sayes,1990: 36-38). Visitor interest in the Study Collections is high. In this regard the nature of the collections is an advantage since visitors can identify with and remember using many of the everyday items presented. The objects are housed in long display cases placed in rows, which produces an undesirable "boxed-in" maze effect. Information access is through computer-generated manual cards linked to object numbers, a system which does not work well and receives little visitor use.

The Strong Museum is dissatisfied with the visible storage system as it currently exists and has begun a process of evaluation and re-planning. Possible improvements include the re-design of the display cases and layout; the possible inclusion of more object interpretation; and the provision of videodisc access to the entire collection.

The **National Gallery of Canada,** Ottawa has a 400 m2 "open storage" facility for Canadian paintings (Sayes,1990:24). The paintings are on long-term display and are presented in a densely packed "cabinet" style. Basic, bilingual labels are provided and more information is available from the computer access system. No information is available on visitor response to this facility.

Finally the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York has an open storage facility known as "The Henry Luce Centre for the Study of American Art" (Rebora, 1991). Opened in 1988 the Center contains about 10,000 works from the museum's American fine arts and decorative arts collections. The objects are arranged generally by material or medium and are presented in forty four specially designed, large glass cases. Light sensitive objects such as works on paper and textiles are kept in closed storage. The Centre has been the focus for a major collection documentation project, resulting in an extensive computerised public access system. Sayes reported that the centre "does not appear to be an overly popular part of the Met" (Sayes,1990:54) although these observations are qualitative and based on only two brief visits.

CONCLUSIONS:

Although visible storage is a philosophical ideal which would serve to increase public access to museum collections, in practice most visible storage developments described in the literature to date have, with the exception of the Liverpool initiatives, been of limited success. To some extent this can be attributed to the absence of clearly defined objectives for these developments, beyond the basic philosophical aim of increasing access to collections. Any New Zealand museum developing visible storage should therefore formulate a series of precise objectives - what will the visitor do, find out or feel during a visit to a visible storage facility? Museums should also examine whether alternative methods of increasing public access to collections are possible or preferable.

Some collection types are clearly more suited to visible storage than others. Dried natural history collections seem to be particularly suited to visible storage (Thistle,1990) as shown by successful developments at Liverpool, the Smithsonian, the Queensland Museum, and the South Australian Museum. This is partly because natural history specimens are often more "expendable" than other collection types, and can often be duplicated, with the exception of course of specimens of rare or extinct species. The storage systems needed to present many kinds of natural history specimens in visible storage are also relatively less complex. The specimens are often smaller and different types of specimen such as shells, insects, and rocks can all be presented in reasonably uniform pull-out drawer systems. The NMNZ is currently investigating the possibility of placing a selection of natural history collections in visible storage as part of a Natural History Resource Centre development.

Special problems arise in presenting ethnological collections in visible storage, when questions such as for whom? why? and on whose terms? may be relevant. New Zealand museums attempting to facilitate access to Maori collections for Maori people may consider the option of visible storage. However the heavily object-centred philosophy which has dominated visible storage developments to date may be inappropriate in the context of taonga maori, in which tribal and spiritual factors relating to the artefact may be more important. In this case other means of increasing access to collections may need to be considered.

Lack of visitor interest in visible storage is a major problem to be addressed, and was anticipated by Johnson and Horgan (1979:20). Further experimental developments, accompanied by visitor surveys to investigate visitor behaviour and interest levels would be useful. Levels of staff involvement and interaction with visitors may be a critical factor in overcoming visitor confusion, generating interest and aiding interpretation in visible storage facilities, so increasing the effectiveness of such developments. Proposals for visible storage must therefore take into account the high costs involved in providing reasonable staffing levels.

The care of collections in visible storage must always be a priority. Conservation problems experienced with visible storage such as light levels and mechanical damage, need to be addressed. Given sufficient financial resources the appropriate technology to overcome these difficulties is probably available.

The type of information access system used in visible storage facilities is an important feature determining their success. Computerised, user-friendly systems appear to be vital to the success of visible storage. The incorporation of visual images of museum objects onto computer e.g. using videodisc

technology, is likely to become more common and this exciting development will further aid the democratisation of museums and their collections (Doty,1990:78). Some museums e.g. Glenbow, are reported to be moving away from providing actual objects in visible storage to developing high quality, information-only access systems (Sayes,1990:5). A valuable spin-off from developing computerised access systems is the documentation of collections that must necessarily precede it.

Stratified access to collections seems to be unavoidable since it is not possible for museological reasons e.g. conservation, security, for all collection types to be presented in visible storage. Inevitably some collections will therefore always be access controlled, but access to these collections for the general public should always be facilitated, not avoided.

The decrease of scholarly access to collections as a result of visible storage remains a very real problem. However, at some point a museum will need to determine its priorities - to serve the needs of the general public or those of the specialists. It should be remembered that visible storage increases access to collections for the general public while only inconveniencing, not denying, access to those collection items for the specialist.

One of the innovative qualities of visible storage in museums is that it allows a freedom of information and gives individuals the option of making their own interpretations about collections. However, this is perceived by some museum workers as a threat to the authority of curators (Ames,1985:29-30) and the museum itself (Doty,1990:78). The fear of losing this authority and status may be one reason why visible storage in museums is not more popular, particularly among curatorial staff, or more successful.

In conclusion, as museums undergo a process of democratisation, their collections are ceasing to be the preserve of the elite, the specialists and the museum curators. Visible storage can increase public access to and understanding of collections, and can so demonstrate to decision makers and funding bodies the value of museum collections to a broader public. In hard financial times such approaches may be the only way of securing the funding and resources necessary for museums to keep, maintain and research their collections.

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