

# te ara



JOURNAL of museums aotearoa

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To raise the profile, strengthen the performance, and increase the value of museums and galleries to their stakeholders and the community.

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### **A Strategy for the Museum Sector in New Zealand**

The strategy document, published in the April 2005, sets out a road map for the Museum sector in New Zealand.



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te ara

# JOURNAL of museums aotearoa

Jane Legget, Editor

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# Editorial

## **The wisdom of the elders – museological legacies**

The museum sector has taken quite a hit recently, losing some extraordinary thinkers and visionaries. Canadian Michael Ames (1933-2006) leaves a legacy from various visits to New Zealand, influencing the different modes of bicultural practice evident in our museums. Stephen E. Weil (1928-2005) visited less frequently, but his fresh and challenging thinking about the real purpose of museums and the need to be able to assess and articulate their effectiveness and their worth, as opposed to their worthiness, has had far-reaching impacts on governing bodies and directors, established professionals and new entrants. Duncan Cameron (1930-2006), author of seminal articles on every museum studies reading list, spent 1995 at Massey University, a time cherished equally by him and the staff and students privileged to share it. New Zealand has incurred its own loss, too, with the passing of John Yaldwyn, who oversaw the first steps as our national institution was transformed into Te Papa, while firmly embedding its research tradition. These were all practitioners who made the time to think deeply about our field. We honour their wisdom and achievements.

## **Frontiers of knowledge**

The loss of these museum stalwarts marks a generational shift. Their prophetic insights underline the need for directors today and in the future to develop new skills to meet changing political and operational environments, keeping in touch with shifting demographics in their communities, considering the impacts and possibilities of new technologies, exploring creative responses to funding pressures and reinforcing the commitment to community engagement and workforce diversity. Fortunately Elaine Heumann Gurian, another champion and friend of New Zealand museums, continues to inspire and challenge us. At this year's Museums Aotearoa Annual Conference she urged us to put our users into the 'driving seat', and to consider the potential of museums to contribute to the spiritual side of life and work.

As this issue of *te ara* shows, New Zealand colleagues are seizing opportunities for their own professional development, whether internships here and overseas or international exchanges. Meanwhile a growing confidence engendered by the maturity and dynamism of our museums and galleries sector may be inferred from New Zealand contributions to, and hosting of, international conferences. These moves to keep abreast of, even ahead of, developments overseas, while at the same time welcoming international colleagues' responses to museum initiatives here, earn us a claim to sit with others at the forefront of the global museums movement.

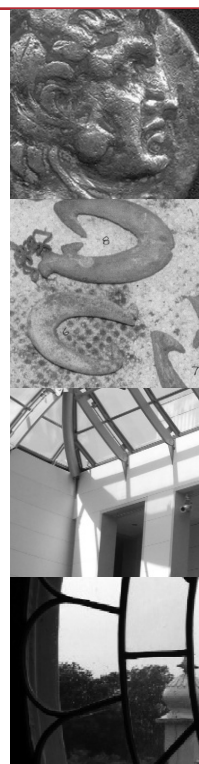
## **Risky business**

However, in order to harness this energy and creativity to strengthen the sector, some kind of consolidated succession planning maybe necessary to ensure that leadership positions are filled. Given the recent trend for repositioning public museums within – or outside – local authority structures, more than ever they need leaders able to influence policy-level decision-making armed with sound knowledge of sector issues, museum operations and community needs and perceptions. The worrying number of vacancies at director level suggests that the sector cannot afford to be complacent.



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# The Essential Museum

ELAINE HEUMANN GURIAN proposes a challenging new model of the museum, which empowers museum users to design their own museum experiences and share them with others.

"Ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists, economists, engineers, consumers and users never see objects. They see only plans, actions, behaviours, arrangements, habits, heuristics, abilities, collections of practices of which certain portions seem a little more durable and others a little more transient, though one can never say which one, steel or memory, things or words, stones or laws, guarantees the longer duration." (Latour, 2000: 10)

## Introduction

What if our profession created a museum in which visitors could comfortably search for answers to their own questions regardless of the importance placed on such questions by others? This paper will explore the philosophy behind, and the ingredients and procedures necessary to produce, such a museum. This new type of museum I wish to characterise as "essential." (We may, in the end, have to settle for "useful.")

I contend that most museums are "important" but not "essential" establishments. I acknowledge that the customary museum continues to be valuable for some, beloved by its adherents, and defended against transformation by those who understand and celebrate its value. Nevertheless, I propose that there is room for another kind of museum, one that arises not from organised presentations by those in control, but one that puts control into the hands of the user.

"People are somewhat exhausted after 25 years of blockbuster exhibits being served up with these heavy tomes and yammering 'acousti-guides' and all the learned labels. These days, they want the opportunity to escape that kind of directed discovery." (Ramirez, 2001)

I suggest that while some useful experimenting with such control shifts within museums is already afoot, there is no current category of museum in which the visitor is intended to be the prime assembler of content, based on his or her own need.

I am interested in transforming how users think of museum visits – from an "occasional day-out" to a "drop-in service." I believe small local museums are the best candidates for enabling this transformation

because they can programme more nimbly and with less fuss than larger establishments. If, and when, these small neighbourhood museums come to be regarded as a useful stop in the ordinary day of the local citizen, I believe that, like the library in that very same community, the museum will have become essential.

The essential museum would begin with four assumptions:

- all people have questions, curiosity, and insights about a variety of matters large and small;
- satisfaction of internalised questions is linked to more than fact acquisition and can include aesthetic pleasure, social interaction, and personal validation (recognition and memory);
- a museum could be a useful place to explore these; and
- visitors can turn their interest into satisfied discovery if the appropriate tools are present and easy to use.

Unfettered browsing of objects will be the main organising motif in this museum and to facilitate that, the majority of the museum's objects will be on view. The technique of visible storage installation will be expanded and take on renewed importance.

Attendant information, broadly collected, will be considered almost as important as the objects themselves, and thus a database with a branching programme of multiple topics will be available within easy reach. To access the database, a technological finding aid will be on hand so that the visitor can successfully sort through the multiplicity of available data. Visitors, once satisfied with their own search, can offer the results of their investigation or their queries to subsequent visitors. Everyone who enters has the possibility of becoming both investigator and facilitator.

Pursuing such a mission, the staff will concentrate on acquiring and researching relevant objects, locating, collecting and collating associated information from a broad array of sources, and facilitating the public's access to the same. The basic mediating role of the curator will have changed. The curator will not select the objects for view, nor determine appropriate topics. Instead almost all information and objects will be made available and the user will mentally combine them as he or she sees fit. The museum will become a visual non-judgmental repository in which many intellectual directions are possible. No topic will be off-limits and no idea will be rejected by the staff as unworthy. The museum will grow with the input of its users.

Before the reader finds this model too radical, consider that this is not dissimilar from the way shopping malls, the internet, or libraries currently operate. I wish to align the essential museum with these models.

### Why create a new kind of Museum?

Why create a new kind of Museum? In part because museum visitors remain a narrow segment of our society – predominantly well-educated and relatively affluent. Despite many different strategies to broaden the user group, the majority of our citizens remain outside our doors. If museums really wanted to include more people from the lower, middle, and working class, and more from minority, immigrant, adolescent, high-school credentialed, and drop-out groups than is currently the case, if museums are inherently important civic spaces, then we must propose new strategies.

Latterly curators have seen their role criticised. In response they have generally changed from benevolent but authoritarian leaders into benign and helpful teachers. They have incorporated new exhibition techniques and theories involving various learning modalities. (Gardner, 1983, Hein, 1998). Visitor amenities that encourage seating, eating, researching, shopping and socialising have helped most museums evolve into more inviting gathering places.

Additional approaches have included: collecting works created by under-represented peoples; exhibition themes appealing to specific disenfranchised audiences; exhibition techniques attractive to many ages, interests and learning styles;

and mixed-use spaces in response to theories of city planners (e.g. Jane Jacobs). Museums should combine these steps with continued thorough-going community liaison work and, ideally, free admission. (Gurian, 2001, 2002a, 2002b).

Reluctantly, I now concede that these measures, while good, will not permanently expand the audience very much. Museums of inclusion may be possible only if the object-focused mission is separated from the equally traditional, but less well understood, intellectual control of staff, substituting a new mission satisfying a range of personal motivation by facilitating individual inquiry. I am not advocating that all museums need to change in this way. Rather, I am saying that the role, potential relevance and impact of the traditional museum, while useful, is more limited than I had formerly believed.

I concede that the public wants, and may even need, the time-honoured, often iconic, museums. I remain a member of that public. However, these museums' history is intertwined with social and economic power. Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach describe these as the "Universal Survey Museum," (– one which operates as a ritual experience intended to transmit the notions of cultural excellence –): "The museum's primary function is ideological. It is meant to impress upon those who use or pass through it society's most revered beliefs and values." "The visitor moves through a programmed experience that casts him in the role of an ideal citizen – a member of an idealized 'public' and heir to an ideal, civilized past." "Even in their smallest details... museums reveal their real function, which is to reinforce among some people the feeling of belonging and among others, the feeling of exclusion." (Duncan and Wallach, 2004 pp. 52, 54, 62.)

If the view of Duncan and Wallach is only partially correct, then it is not just object choice or intimidating architecture that is keeping the majority of the public from feeling welcomed in museums, it is the nexus between those objects, what is said about them and by whom.

### The library model

Why do some contemporary collecting institutions, like libraries, serve an audience both larger and more diverse than museums, while others, for



ELAINE HEUMANN GURIAN.  
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ELAINE HEUMANN GURIAN

example archives, do not? I believe that libraries' easy access and intention to provide non-prescriptive service for its users are differences worth exploring and emulating. The perception of the library as a helping, rather than teaching, institution interests a broader array of users. I propose that there is a link between the public's greater use and appreciation of libraries and the fact that they are funded as a matter of course (rather than exception) by politicians. Changing museums so that they too serve a broader audience may result in enhanced funding opportunities.

The process for acquiring library materials uses a system equivalent to museums – but unlike museums, each item, once accessioned, is treated and presented similarly, more or less. Except for rare books, no value-laden hierarchy is imposed on the collection or access thereto. Most importantly for this paper, within a broad array of possibilities, the determination of the topic for research is in the mind of the user, rather than pre-selected by the librarian.

Most library filing and access systems are ubiquitous. Most library patrons, having used another library, can easily find their way and for those not completely acclimated, there is the help-desk where a librarian is available if needed, but unobtrusive if not. To facilitate queries, libraries use knowledge locator systems – i.e. catalogues – that, once understood, allow users to find information they seek, in a manner and time that fits within their ordinary day. Additionally, there are helping aids embedded in the catalogue (such as key words) that allow the inexperienced user to succeed. So, unlike museum visits where the unfamiliar attendee tries to see “everything,” library patrons can, if they wish, drop-in casually, focused on an errand that can be completed quickly. And because the library is free and is usually close-by, this pattern can be repeated often.

Both libraries and museums were seen as august, quiet, imposing places. Why has the library “democratised” more than the museum, and why do both the citizen user and the politician funder feel that the library is more “essential”, deserving more sustained support?

A central feature of public librarianship in the United States is that librarians have worked to develop a climate of openness by defining library policies to

create an institution where all are welcome. In 1990 the American Library Association adopted the policy, “Library Services for the Poor,” in which it is stated, “it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies.” (ALA Handbook of Organization, 1999-2000, policy 61). This policy was adopted because there had been a shifting level of emphasis in the interpretation of “openness” since the establishment of the public library. Open doors are very different from proactive service.” (de la Peña McCook, 2001:28)

While post-World War II museum and library rhetoric relating to public access might have sounded similar, libraries adopted transformative processes more seriously and continuously. Libraries “examined how the set of techniques, developed and promoted by the Public Library Association allowed public librarians to engage in user-oriented planning, community-specific role setting, and self-evaluation.” (de la Peña McCook, 2001: 34) Perhaps museum personnel are also ready to turn earlier museum rhetoric into actions producing equally inclusive outcomes.

### The shopping mall – another useful model

Shopping malls display materials chosen by others and placed in a visually pleasing and stimulating environment. Like the contemporary museum, the mall incorporates additional amenities that facilitate browsing, strolling and eating, and offers ancillary activities such as performances and social and civic events. The mall and the museum are both mixed-use spaces. Yet mall users comprise a much broader demographic than even library patrons.

While specific marketplace ambiances differ worldwide, all peoples, no matter what class or culture, are experienced shoppers and browsers. It is a skill everyone has learned from infancy. By extension, early training in museum use may have relevance in audience development. However, except for an occasional class visit, most young museum visitors are the children of the current users. Aligning museum-going with known elements of shopping practice might expand that.

It may be worth investigating shoppers' behaviour (motivational theory) further and the systems malls have created to satisfy shoppers' needs. Papers on



consumer motivation suggest a predictable sequence. The shopper decides that he or she “needs” something and determines the possible location to fulfill that need. That need leads to intention - the planning to go to that location – and then action. Once the shopper arrives, he or she begins a search which involves locating, browsing, and comparing. The material can be visually inspected, and often touched; shoppers process their experience, combining and recombining what they are seeing until they make a self-directed decision: to buy or not to buy.

The system is codified and relatively easy to learn. The grouping of merchandise is often repeated shop to shop (e.g. by size, by types or by price.) The purchase system is well-marked, easy to find and often separated from the inspection of merchandise. The wayfinding system is replicated in many locations, while browsing aids and amenities are conveniently sited.

The placement of articles in shops is as carefully controlled as the exhibitions presented in museums, a position substantiated by many marketing studies. Yet I would point out that people, comfortable as experienced shoppers, feel empowered to by-pass the shop-initiated preferred outcome and operate instead on their own. Those shops preferring a more restricted clientele intentionally impose barriers to free exploration, much like traditional museums.

Although we may wish these activities were unrelated, I suggest that the shopping and library experiences have important elements in common with each other, which might usefully become embedded in the new type of museum I propose – i.e. ubiquitous systems, free exploration and a large volume of visual material on view. Most importantly the decision to frequent a library or a mall originates from an internalised impulse, question or need (even a quest) sufficient to generate action.

Associating museums with shopping may offend some – there are important differences as well. Nevertheless, I expect that when consumer motivation theory is better understood and the physical facility of the museum adjusted to satisfy the individual's broader needs, the public will change their thinking about museums' usefulness.

## **What does a museum have? – Collections!**

After this encomium to other venues, what is the special reason one would go to a museum at all? The museum's comparative advantage remains the visual, and sometimes tactile, access to special physical things (some of them natural, some unique and original, and some purpose-built environments). The museum remains one of the few places where one can come face-to-face with hard-to-find, sometimes beautiful and potentially intriguing “stuff”. It is the physicality of realia that makes museums special.

While current technology makes it possible to see almost any item on a computer screen, the computer cannot accurately reproduce the nuances, especially of scale and texture, that individuals absorb in the actual presence of the objects. It is the “evidence” in its tangible form that the public values.

## **Visible Storage**

If the public wants access to things, then museums should provide access to lots of things; in fact, why not set up visual investigation of all, or almost all, that the museum holds? The exhibition practice of “study”, “open” or “visible” storage attempts this – many contemporary examples exist. However their scale vis-à-vis the area allocated to prepared or “curated” exhibitions is small. In this model I am suggesting that the amount of visual storage will be substantial.

I understand that when browsing amidst organised displays in today's typical museum, the visitor is already participating in a limited “free choice learning” space (Falk and Dierking, 2000). Most exhibitions allow visitors to wander at their own speed, and in their own pattern. Some organising structure is a comfort for the novice user, so I am not suggesting random placement of objects. In the essential museum there would be “light arrangement” – a framework– which might generally mimic the museum's own collections storage strategy, i.e. by topic, by material, by culture or by artist.

Some portion of the collection display square footage could be reserved for changing installations responsive to a timely idea. As an analogy, we have all visited libraries that shelve detective novels together alphabetically by author, yet some books from that



ELAINE HEUMANN GURIAN AT THE  
MUSEUMS AOTEAROA CONFERENCE 2006.  
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section are removed to appear on a new acquisitions shelf, among the librarian's choice of "good reads" or a current cinema or holiday selection.

To some extent I extol returning to a very old-fashioned role for museums – publicly available visual storage. It is ironic that after a quarter century of narrative exhibition development, I recommend museums re-focus on the non-narrative aspect of their collections, addressing collections care and collections management systems.

Before the 1950's museums often presented much of their collections with very little interpretation. Some visitors found that boring; others, bewildering. So why return to it now? What would be different from and better than those previous static displays?

Personally, I never found those installations tiresome. I have found that, even without associated information available, these old-fashioned visible storage installations were often the source of magic and wonder. Wandering in the Museum of Contemporary Zoology in the mid-60s with my own then small children was a delight. Their interest roving between cases and their associated flights of fancy are indelible experiences for me.

But I am in the minority. For most people, uninterpreted collections were mystifying. This new proposal adds a critical ingredient: information – lots of it, and readily connected to the objects on view.

### Information system needed

Previously, most object-centred museums contained only terse labels using highly refined and often technical words. There was no accompanying easy-to-understand omnibus system encompassing both information about the objects and cross-disciplinary references. Techniques such as user-friendly finding-aid systems existed only in libraries, as card-catalogues with key words.

Comparable systems are rarely available to museum visitors. To be fair, without technology, these systems were at best clumsy. While the technology needed to create a fully responsive system for museum use is not yet fully developed, there are experimental prototypes in various facilities that museums could employ to start down this road.

I propose coupling the power of the object's physical presence with the speed of the Internet, to encourage the visitor to investigate beyond just the information the museum has about a subject of interest. I am eager that the proprietary information held within individual museums be combined with related information from other sources for the public to use. It is the availability of linked (and often unexpected) information connected to the physical objects, and made readily available on the spot through an electronic search engine, that would make the museum fully interesting to the visitor.

The fundamental difference between what I now recommend and past practice is a freer relationship between the object and its many possible spokespersons. I am interested in making museum collections, and all associated information, accessible in ways that are analogous to browsing in the stacks. Further I am interested in expanding our information system to become like Wikipedia (with all its faults) – a collection of accumulated explorations.

The object becomes the fulcrum around which all kinds of information revolve, allowing an individual's exploration with the potential for cross-disciplinary connections like those referred to by Ian Wedde as "discourse spillage," in which he whimsically suggests we could go to "an exhibition about war for information about bicycles." (Wedde, 2005: 286)

Originally, museums held hand-written collections records containing only limited information: the object's name, its ownership history, dimensions and material, and some attribution as to the maker. But what of the stories? Stories (as in oral histories), even when appreciated by curators, were rarely recorded, and often lost. That is changing in some quarters. Information now linked to cultural artefacts of indigenous people often contains associated stories. To be encyclopaedic, the essential museum should gather and include such stories. Janet Hoskins observed: "What I discovered, quite to my surprise, was that I could not collect the histories of objects and the life histories of persons separately. People and the things they valued were so complexly intertwined they could not be disentangled." (Hoskins, 1998: 2)



In collecting stories as relevant and useful data, the museum must become comfortable with transcribing seemingly antagonistic, competing or overlapping knowledge systems – “differing world-views,” commonly polarised between “science” and “myth.” The internet as an example contains “accurate,” personal and potentially faulty information. The internet makes opinion blogs, factual reporting and skewed viewpoints all available simultaneously. Users themselves decide what they wish to see and how to regard it. Accordingly, users sometimes opt for “reliable” third parties to differentiate between, and choose among, the information gathered, just as people use Consumer Reports when determining the right dishwasher to purchase. In the essential museum, the curator would be one of several “reliable” commentators whose views would always be available as part of the record.

Advocates of a fully open internet vigorously discuss the best path between inaccurate, offensive and slanderous material versus censorship that impedes individual freedoms. The museum interested in such an allied information system would have to wade into that murky stream and get wet. This prospect is not sufficient to deny the public such broader information. This very mixing of unique proprietary information and the associated rumination by others would make visiting a museum a new and intriguing experience. One of the quickest and cheapest ways to begin this process would be to have the internet itself easily available in the exhibition space.

I propose the creation of a visual and technological support system allowing individuals to delight in the adventure of making individualized connections amidst real things. I am interested in supporting equally the visitor whose quest may be information gathering, and others with more subjective goals. “While studies show that some visitors may seek and experience relaxation, social bonding, self-identity, self-esteem, and other outcomes from the museum experience, it is still relatively rare that museums choose to focus explicitly on facilitating outcomes other than cognitive gain....What museums can uniquely offer is an opportunity for individuals to encounter collections of evocative artifacts, and a laboratory for understanding the powerful connections between people and things.” (Silverman, 2002: 75, 77)

This could become a two-way street with these self-same visitors leaving some imprint behind that allows others to enjoy and participate in their new discovery. Technology makes that possible. Young people are already creating and downloading personalized tours of museums on their Ipods and giving them to friends.

### Essential reference tool

To fulfill the need I have described, the essential museum will have to create an understandable reference aid that is replicated, at least in general outlines, in many other museums. Like the Dewey Decimal System, imperfect as it may be, there are a number of such models or analogous systems. The phone book is available in most households to be consulted when needed. The internet utilized by the computer literate is currently even more convenient, and is used often to find answers to questions in a timely manner. On the internet, Google's search engine is not much different than Yahoo's. Every railway has a timetable quite like each other's, and every newspaper reader can find sets of useful and timely information (e.g. weather forecasts or cinema programme times) within every issue. Individuals, having learned how to use finding aids in one context, can assume that they will be available in other related venues.

Museums would have to invent, and then generally adopt, such a transferable system. Museum professionals have been working on collections management systems based on agreed taxonomies that might prove useful. The system may therefore partially exist. However, regardless of the current state of these electronic finding-aids, they are not generally known by or available to the museum visitor.

### Collections care

A renewed focus on visual storage could be useful at this time in our history. A report on the state of American collections concludes that they are in substantial disrepair (Heritage Preservation, 2005). The museum community has mostly under-financed collections care because, compared to other activities, it has been a low priority. This funding deficit may be exacerbated because grant funders, politicians and the public currently see no connection between collections care and public

service. Funders are right to believe that, once collections are conserved, they are generally locked away, awaiting uncertain rebirth in an exhibition in the unknown future. No compelling case has been argued for collections care for its own sake.

Unfocused collecting in many museums has been compounded by problematic deaccessioning decisions, provoking public controversy. So the system I am proposing requires both substantial collections care, and a focused mission with rigorous decision-making about which collections to retain. In this transformed museum where the objects fit within the mission, where most objects are visible (and sometimes touchable) and where abundant attendant information is available, collections care would achieve higher funding priority.

#### **The role of the curator in the essential museum**

To transform the museum, its leaders will have to take delight in helping patrons learn what they wish. This will require staff to rethink their role, their passion and their skill set. I respect curatorial scholarship and do not suggest discarding it, but I am recommending that their role changes from teacher and transmitter to facilitator and assister.

"Clearly, in this kind of contestable, unstable and multi-user knowledge domain, the museum-based researcher needs disenchantment as well sympathy, intellectual rigor as well as relativist flexibility, in order to find and disseminate the narratives about collections that will entertain and inform audiences, and add to the nation's useful store of scholarship." (Wedde, 2005 p. 287)

Exhibitions other than open storage should continue, but they should occupy a smaller percentage of the available square footage than at present, and their content and installation design should allow for frequent change. Rather than expensive exhibitions that take years to develop and remain unchanging for decades, the developer's identity should be revealed in smaller exhibitions that are more personalized and involve open and evolving dialogue with the public.

Having struggled for decades to get museums to see education as a priority, I am now suggesting that the word needs a changed definition – from one implying the inter-relationship between teacher and student to one clearly denoting the facilitation of individual inquiry. In the essential museum, fostering individualised learning will be listed first in the

mission, preceding the usual "collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and researching" menu.

To help create prepared staff who embrace this new concept, museum trainers will have to rethink their course offerings, elevating customer-focused assistance to a valued endeavour. Students would study such topics as motivation theory, enquiry-based technology, and oral history in addition to their academic discipline.

#### **Space and design considerations necessary to implement this new museum model**

To be welcoming, this new visible storage and knowledge system will need to be coupled with responsive space design. Comfortable physical amenities must include access to terminals, research tables and implements for close looking that fit the needs of visitors. These will be combined with platforms for story tellers or performers, and added interactive elements of interest to families.

The shopping mall and the library have space elements worth emulating. Their designs intentionally allow patrons to enter anonymously, and to sit and stroll without committing to organized activity. These amenities allow 'lurkers' – unfamiliar users – to figure out the services and customs required without drawing attention to themselves. Access to facilities such as toilets is available without entrance fees, and malls and (increasingly libraries) offer opportunities to socialise while eating.

In an earlier paper I wrote, "I have reluctantly but unequivocally come to the conclusion that the first encounter with the ticket taker may be the single greatest impediment to making our museums fully accessible". (Gurian, 2005a) I believe that the essential museum, like the library and the mall, must be free to enter.

Library designs include other special elements that also fit within this new model. They include:

- Spaces both for small group interaction and for private contemplation that do not interfere with each other.
- Help desks that are in a physical location that can be easily seen, but do not require the visitor to interact.



- Front doors that are convenient to public transportation and foot traffic as well as parking for the automobile.
- Hours of operation that suit neighbourhood users.
- Acceptance of behaviour, clothing choice, sound level and styles of interaction that are consistent with norms of courtesy within the individuals' community.
- And unobtrusive security systems.

### Small museums as pioneers

I believe that the museums most receptive to this transformation will be the smaller natural history, cultural, and local history museums. It is these rather unprepossessing and certainly underfunded places that hold the most promise for me. I suggest we leave the great, national, omnibus, encyclopaedic museums alone to continue on their valued way. I do suggest, however, that the open storage that many are installing become richer by adding the kind of information overlay and finding aids suggested throughout this paper.

In the small museum the audiences, current and potential, are local, and can get to the museum easily and often. The collection has local relevance but is usually neither rare nor valuable enough to need intrusive security. The associated stories are easier to find because they often reside in local memory. And these institutions have particular importance to local schools. These local museums have the advantage of being below the radar screen and thus can experiment with less risk. They can become relevant to the people who use them with more ease than large museums.

Over the last century there have been many examples of smaller museums which have experimented. They often had charismatic directors with vision and talented devoted staff. These institutions became the incubators of new ideas which were later emulated when deemed to be safe and no longer novel.

Well-known American experiments include: the New Museum, the Exploratorium, the Wing Luck Museum, the African Art Museum, the Newark Museum under John Cotton Dana, the Boston

Children's Museum and the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. However once famous, the pressure to maintain that high regard has sometimes blunted their ability to experiment further.

Local history museums in many countries are experimenting with new forms while serving their local public without fanfare. Britain's Gulbenkian prize always recognises a few, while my own current favourites are the MoIndahl Museum in Sweden and the children's art museum in Rosario, Argentina, which have inspired much of this paper.

Ron Chew of the Wing Luke Museum has written,

*"At the small museum, there are no inflated expectations, no pretensions, and no awful waits. The exhibitions may be small and somewhat idiosyncratic, but they mirror the small, somewhat idiosyncratic world we know, close to home."* (Chew, 2002)

### Funding and Approbation

I would hope that this important transformation would lead local governmental agencies to see that these newly dynamic institutions – right in their own backyard – are serving a real public need and should be supported. They will regard the essential local museum as a service that is as relevant and constant as the local library.

And as this new form emerges, I hope that the museum community will value the unique position of these small local museums, create a separate niche that has criteria all its own and begin to develop a rhetoric that no longer compares them with the much larger iconic museums.

### Summary

To create more inclusive museums, I believe that we must change our basic mindset and emulate aspects of those institutions deemed essential by a large cross-section of our citizenry. These include libraries and shopping malls. In order to be regarded as essential, museums would have to understand, respect and facilitate each visitor's individual quest and applaud a broad motivation for entering.

To become essential, the museum will provide visible access to holdings in a lightly organized manner, concentrate on access to information systems that are easy to understand, repeatable and transferable. In addition to making the object and the associated

proprietary information available, the museum will accumulate and merge information that resides elsewhere – in books, records, movies, slides, etc., – so that each object becomes the impetus for unexpected exploration. Finally, museums would have to include ways for the public to add information to the system and respond to the information left by others. Physical layouts and concomitant training will be needed to ensure visitor's ease upon entry, welcoming attitudes among staff, help available only when needed, and clear ways to learn how to use the system by simply watching.

This proposal turns museums upside down, transferring authority to the visitor and transforming the staff, who have been knowledge accumulators, preservers, and translators, into knowledge brokers and sharers. Some museums have experimented with bits and pieces of this in the past. I am certain that this new system could – and should – be created, wholesale, in the future.

Elaine Heumann Gurian has made a significant contribution to museums in the United States and internationally, including serving as a senior consultant during the development of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Her collected writings have recently been published by Routledge as *Civilising the museum* (2006).

This paper was the keynote address at the Museums Aotearoa Annual Conference 2006, Napier, April 20, 2006. A version of this article will appear in *The Manual of Museum Learning*, edited by Barry Lord and published by Alta Mira Press, a division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Anticipated publication date is late 2006.

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# Houses outside the museum: *Savage Crescent: Designing the future of State Housing*

NOEL WAITE and TONY RASMUSSEN outline  
a novel approach to community exhibitions  
at Te Manawa, Palmerston North

## Community-based exhibitions at Te Manawa

Te Manawa first gave serious attention to exhibitions developed in collaboration with community groups in 1997, assigning dedicated gallery space for this specific purpose. Between 1998 and 2003, eight ethnic community exhibitions were run under the title of the *Origins* series. These exhibitions relied heavily upon active consultation with community members (particularly the leaders), and substantial investment in building close working relationships to ensure their success. Because these exhibitions were heavily object-based and dependent upon resources supplied by the community, virtually all of the consultation occurred at the 'front end' of exhibition development, typically occurring between six and eight months prior to opening. Ongoing community contact after the opening was limited to a few public programmes.

The opportunity to present the history of local retail icon of Collinson & Cunninghame Ltd. (hereafter C&C) heralded a shift in the focus of community exhibitions. 2004 marked the centenary of the store's founding, offering the chance to draw on the experiences of a large number of ex-staff and customers still living in the Palmerston North area, and add to emerging interest in department store history.<sup>1</sup> In the twelve months prior to the exhibition, a series of afternoon tea events were held to introduce the exhibition project team to the wider C&C community and to share information about exhibition development and encourage community involvement. A significant collection of C&C objects

and ephemera donated to the Manawatu Museum in 1986 provided an obvious starting point. *The Grand Old Lady of Retailing* entailed a broader concept of 'community', and a renewed drive to work with other organisations in developing certain exhibitions. The Savage Crescent project similarly involved multiple partnerships, from the concept development stage onward.



LOCAL MP AND FORMER SAVAGE CRESCENT RESIDENT AND MINISTER OF HOUSING STEVE MAHAREY OPENED THE SPECIAL RESIDENTS' PREVIEW IN DECEMBER 2005. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NOEL WAITE

## Te Manawa and Otago University

Dr Noel Waite of the University of Otago Design Studies Department (formerly Curator of Social History at Te Manawa) proposed the Savage Crescent exhibition in 2003.<sup>2</sup> An Otago Research Grant supported his research and funded a Research/Design Assistant to develop exhibition concepts in 2004.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Lancaster, W., 1995. *The Department Store, A Social History*. New York: Leicester University Press and Laurenson, H., 2005. *Going Up, Going Down: New Zealand Department Stores*. Auckland University Press.

<sup>2</sup> The Dunedin team consisted of the curator, designer and contributing staff from the Department of Design Studies, and, in Palmerston North, Te Manawa's Head of Exhibition Services, exhibition staff, and Assistant Curator Tony Rasmussen, an experienced curator of community exhibitions.



VIDEO LOOP NEAR EXHIBITION ENTRANCE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE AROUND SAVAGE CRESCENT AS IT IS TODAY. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NOEL WAITE

Since two project teams were working on the exhibition, a clear contractual agreement and regular communication were critical success factors.

#### Palmerston North City Council and Housing New Zealand

Te Manawa is a Council Controlled Organisation, and thus enjoys a close working relationship with the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC). In this case, the Planning Department assistance enabled all residents and property owners in the Savage Crescent precinct to receive personalised invitations for the residents' preview, along with additional copies of the Council's *Savage Crescent Design Guidelines*. The Global Information System Unit provided a high-resolution aerial photograph of the precinct, which features prominently within the exhibition. Housing New Zealand's celebration of the centenary of State housing included commissioning Ben Schrader's history of state housing in New Zealand (2005) and running an architectural competition to design State housing for the 21st century. Both the book and the winning entries were included in the exhibition.

#### A heritage matrix for Savage Crescent

Fortuitously, 2005 was the centenary year for both State housing in New Zealand and the New Zealand Institute of Architects, the Year of the Built Environment and the start of activities commemorating the jubilee of the Historic Places Trust in 2006. As the most complete realisation of the first Labour Government's ideal of a garden-city style State housing precinct, Savage Crescent

seemed the perfect focal point for this remarkable matrix of anniversaries around New Zealand's built heritage. More importantly for the exhibition curation and design, it enabled exploration of contemporary shifts in cultural heritage away from a narrowly formal and stylistic architectural history towards a broader social history that includes the stories and experiences of the people who designed, built and lived in these buildings.<sup>3</sup>

How exactly did Savage Crescent intersect with this "commemorative matrix"? Savage Crescent was instigated in 1937 and built 1939-46 as part of the first Labour Government's State house programme. It is a unique example of welfare state modernism, integrating architecture, urban planning and landscaping in a meticulously planned garden suburb, nationally recognised for its social and architectural importance. Savage Crescent is particularly notable for the variety of house designs and styles represented, the result of an innovative architectural competition organised by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

While the State housing programme was a response to a pressing housing crisis, its implementation was informed by a modernist desire to create community housing appropriate to the Machine Age. This meant industrialised production to a high standard and the application of Home Science principles to the interior design. This proved an enduring mix and Savage Crescent remains a vibrant community and architecturally intact today, even though more than 70% of the homes are privately owned. Recognising this, PNCC commissioned a cultural heritage report, followed by a Conservation Plan in 1994. In the same year the Manawatu Branch of the Historic Places Trust prepared a Savage Crescent Heritage Trail. In 1996, the Council commissioned Design Guidelines for the area, which were distributed to residents. This was one of the first applications of a heritage designation to a precinct (rather than individual buildings), as well as the use of Design Guidelines in place of compulsory regulation.

#### External curation and design

The exhibition design was approached as a 'wicked problem' in the sense outlined by Horst Rittel: 'Wicked problems have no definitive formulation, but

<sup>3</sup> Ben Schrader's book also reflects such a shift with its extensive inclusion of oral histories.



every formulation of a wicked problem corresponds to the formulation of a solution' (quoted in Buchanan, 1995:14). This approach recognises the fundamental indeterminacy in most design problems and recognises the need for a collective and integrative use of knowledge from all relevant fields. This article will consider the key issues addressed in the Savage Crescent exhibition in terms of curation, design and community engagement.

In order to accommodate both a brief contextual history of State housing in New Zealand and the stories of Savage Crescent residents, a simple initial split between public and private histories was adopted for the content. This synchronic horizontal axis was complemented with a conventional diachronic axis of past, present and future. This involved histories of State and private participation, community involvement in the heritage planning process, as well as an explanation of design as a future-oriented activity. Design – defined as 'changing existing situations into preferred ones' (Simon, 1996:111) – was offered as a means for current residents to engage in the future directions of their community.

The exhibition's architectural content posed specific problems – to what extent did it need to be reproduced, given that almost all buildings were intact and within walking distance of the Museum. The proximity of Savage Crescent to the Museum and the existence of the Heritage Trail provided an invitation for visitors to move beyond the confines of the gallery. Three strategies were adopted to address the dearth of specific existing collections at Te Manawa to support the exhibition:

- filming of a video loop (physical and editorial) of the current Savage Crescent precinct.
- inclusion of an aerial photograph of the precinct enlarged to cover a tabletop and the development of four separate house plan jigsaws which could be reconfigured to consider alternate floorplan layouts and designs
- The inclusion of an expandable portrait wall, so that oral history interviews could be conducted and information resources on Savage Crescent developed during the course of the exhibition.



**TABLETOP AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH ENABLED EVERYONE TO MAP THE PRECINCT.**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NOEL WAITE

The video and aerial photograph provided points of recognition and engagement for existing and past members of the community, attracting considerable attention and discussion at the preview opening.

The inclusion of a portrait wall containing photographs of residents with excerpts from existing oral histories encouraged participation in oral histories conducted during the exhibition, which has added to museum resources. This approach extends the curator's and designer's roles beyond installation completion. It explicitly acknowledges the value of community knowledge and input and the contingency of curatorial research. Most importantly, it proactively enhances the collection during the time of its highest public profile – the exhibition. Research is then an ongoing collection-oriented process. This approach has obvious implications for both exhibition and collection planning, but the development of a design template as part of the exhibition blueprint means that this can be quantified and scheduled.

This approach was determined primarily by pragmatic considerations of external curation, but it was also an experimental response to observations coordinating previous community exhibitions at Te Manawa. While communities showed a willingness to participate, they often found the museum and exhibition processes difficult to negotiate, both from the practicalities of attending public meetings and in terms of envisaging the final exhibited outcome of their contributions.<sup>4</sup>

### Design dialogues

While external curators are not unusual in museums, the inclusion of an outside designer added to the

<sup>4</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this article, there would seem to be a role for designers in assisting the community – in cases of prior consultation – with visualising likely exhibition outcomes in the form of graphic scenarios or storyboards.



**BETTY EVANS AT THE GATE OF HER MANSFORD PLACE HOME, JUST OFF SAVAGE CRESCENT.** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: THE IAN MATHESON CITY ARCHIVES, PALMERSTON NORTH.

complexity of this exhibition process. The designer was Alice Lake-Hammond, a Design Studies Masters student completing her thesis on exhibition design supervised by Dr Waite. The Savage Crescent project was one of three case studies for her thesis. This enabled close collaboration between curator and designer in the off-site development of exhibition concepts, with the designer having access to research in the early stages of the process. Communication with the exhibition team at Te Manawa was primarily via a blueprint document with critical paths and a master spreadsheet that could be updated.

This designer/curator dialogue also allowed for modification of the exhibition design in response to feedback from the Te Manawa Management Committee. The major changes were a relocation from a smaller gallery to a larger one, and the consideration for potential future use of content in a longer term social history development at the Museum. The curator and designer therefore adopted a modular approach to the exhibition design around the three-part diachronic split of the history of State housing and Savage Crescent, current community activities and future

developments in the area. While this accommodated the exhibition to the larger space, in practice it entailed considerable redesign of the exhibition layout. The result was a more coherent pathway through the exhibition, but transformed a graphically intense exhibition into something sparer and more minimalist in effect.

### **Building connections with communities**

The Curator had earlier made contact with several long-term residents, who featured in the exhibition. However, for practical purposes, it was agreed that further liaison work undertaken with the residents would be most effectively managed from *Te Manawa*. *Savage Crescent: Designing the Future of State Housing* was opened by local MP and former Housing Minister and resident of Savage Crescent, Steve Maharey, on 11th December, 2005. A special preview for residents and property owners held immediately before the official opening evoked many spontaneous and convivial exchanges. The preview thus served as both an invitation to, and a platform for, ongoing dialogue with the community.

The Savage Crescent project is a good example of why we should think broadly when defining a 'community'. You can think of a community as a set of concentric circles, with the immediate community being, in this case, the people currently living within the physical limits of the Savage Crescent precinct. The next circle comprises those people who still live in the city or region, but who have had some association with Savage Crescent through friends or family. A third circle might be those people who have long since moved away but who, on hearing that there is going to be an exhibition, are keen to visit or share their memories of the place. Consider this comment from a former resident now based in Christchurch:

A big feature of the Savage Crescent development, in those days, was the huge area of vacant land in the middle of the area. Initially, in my time there, the grass was left to grow and cut for hay using a horse drawn harvester, similar to the one depicted on the Aulsebrook biscuit tins. We used to play in the long grass and make "rooms" in which to hide. In later years I remember the area being sown in grass which was mown regularly and swings and slides were installed in one corner.



THE STANDARDISED LETTER BOX WAS BOTH AN ICONIC DEVICE AND AN EXPLICIT CONNECTION TO THE COUNCIL'S DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE PRECINCT. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NOEL WAITE

The writer clearly has vivid childhood memories (in this case, the late 1940s) and yet by the early 1950s, he and his family had moved out of the area.

The inclusion within the exhibition of a section dedicated to the future of the community offered a further public space for speculation and active participation in shaping that future. Specifically, it offered two departure points, one local and one national. An inclusive<sup>5</sup> playground prototype developed by Otago University Design Studies Industrial Design students was suggested as an addition to the central commons area in Savage Crescent. This example was chosen as a contemporary response to the universal ideals informing the original concept of Savage Crescent. It was not intended as prescriptive, but merely a prompt for speculation about future development. The choice of site also responded to recent planning surveys which showed that residents considered the central commons critical to the identity of the precinct but felt that it had not kept pace with the changing requirements of the area. This was complemented by the interactive house design game that provided an opportunity to reflect on changes in housing design since the 1940s – changes reflected in the winning 2005 Housing New Zealand competition designs on display.

The deliberate involvement of the community close to, and immediately after, the opening of the exhibition took the pressure off front-end community involvement where, alongside exhibition preparation, communicating an exhibition concept and trying to explain museum practices can impose constraints. Instead the community have been able to enjoy the exhibition and add their voices when and how they see fit. People with a close connection with the Savage Crescent area have already set about organising a reunion within the next two years. Former residents who visit the exhibition and

5 Inclusive design involves the design of products that are accessible to as many people as reasonably possible, benefiting people of all ages and abilities.

make contact with Te Manawa staff are referred on to the reunion organiser.

## Conclusion

The Savage Crescent project demonstrated that heritage need not reside primarily in the Museum's collection to make a successful exhibition. By adopting a future-oriented approach to collection development, the exhibition, with appropriate planning, can act as a collection point for further contextual resources on the topic. Designer Dick Powell suggested that 'Design is like an explosion in reverse,' a description that could perhaps be applied to the exhibition process. To minimize any volatility, particularly with regard to external curation, genuine dialogue between curator and designer is vital for a flexible and multi-layered outcome. Finally, a holistic and explicitly contingent approach can treat the exhibition as the start of community consultation rather than its conclusion. Whatever decisions are made with regard to community involvement, it is perhaps worth remembering the final maxim of Horst Rittel's formulation of wicked problems: 'The wicked problem solver has no right to be wrong – they are fully responsible for their actions' (quoted in Buchanan, 1995:15).

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Tony Rasmussen is Team Leader: Social History at Te Manawa, Palmerston North. He has a special interest in the development of community-based exhibitions.

The exhibition *Savage Crescent: Designing the future of State Housing* continues at Te Manawa, Palmerston North until 16 July, 2006.

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# Postcards from antiquity: Travellers, teachers and treachery

JOANNA COBLEY fossicks for the stories behind some  
New Zealand collections from the classical world



SILVER TETRADRACHM OF  
ALEXANDER III "THE GREAT"  
(OBVERSE) SHOWING THE  
HEAD OF THE YOUNG  
HERACLES, CLAD IN A LION  
SKIN, MACEDON C. 315 BC  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:  
CANTERBURY MUSEUM, REF.  
1994.704

The aspirations of the museum staff and the motivations of museum donors are key to this collection of stories about classical antiquity collections in New Zealand museums. To some extent I felt like I was "going on a dig". I certainly uncovered some treasures. At the Otago Museum I stumbled literally upon a visiting archaeologist and archaeological artist connected with the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum. Their academic mission was a self-funded research project – to catalogue Samian ware (circa 50 - 300 AD) in New Zealand and Australian museum collections.<sup>1</sup> One of these two travellers was a teacher whose holidays were spent either on digs<sup>2</sup> or research projects. "Oh just like Indiana Jones!" I exclaimed (yes, really), provoking a polite but thorough tutorial differentiating archaeologists and "treasure hunters".<sup>3</sup> It was time for me to acquire a better understanding about classical antiquity, and quickly.

In the context of this article I use the term "classical antiquity" to encompass objects from the period 1000 BC – 5th century AD. My geographical scope includes Mesopotamia (Iraq), Persia (Iran), Egypt, ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire (including Britain and most of western Europe).<sup>4</sup> The museums featured are the Otago Museum, Canterbury Museum, the James Logie Memorial Collection at the

University of Canterbury, the Classics Museum at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), and Te Papa.

## Travellers

Containing over 4000 objects, the Otago Museum's antiquities collection is reputedly the largest in New Zealand. *The Peoples of the World* gallery presents a wide range of objects from Greece, Crete, the Roman Empire and Egypt as a teaching collection. With many informative labels for the general public to read, students of the Classics could get up close to Greek vases, Roman coins, replica busts, amulets and the Egyptian mummy. Yet it was the stories of the collectors behind the antiquities that struck me most.

These collectors, such as Willi Fels (1858 - 1946) and Lieutenant Colonel Fred Waite (1885 - 1952) and, to a lesser extent, Charles Brasch (1909 - 1973) (see insets) epitomised a period of great adventure. Their travels in exotic and ancient lands in pursuit of academic knowledge, with perhaps a hint of mercantile initiative, were certainly motivated by philanthropic ideals. Fels and Brasch could afford to travel and purchase ancient artefacts. Waite's war-time posting in Cairo during World War II enabled him to acquire ancient Egyptian artefacts for the Otago Museum. All three men had a desire to educate their community, expressed through donating their collections, or organising others' gifts of

1 Another term for Samian is terra sigillata, although this is now used as a more generalist term incorporating not only Samian but also other fabrics such as Arretine ware. The fabrics of Samian ware are usually divided up into the three main production centres, namely Central, Southern and Eastern Gaul. (H. Beames, email communication, 27 March 2006).

2 Participating in an archaeological dig is the best way for budding archaeologists to get a taste of the field. Literally. Excavations are usually organised by universities, museums, cultural organisations and historical groups. While the duration of digs varies, the season usually covers the summer months. Many organised digs accept student interns and/or volunteer labour. Volunteers generally need to fund their travel, meals and accommodation. Some dig organisers provide an opportunity for the whole family to partake such as dinosaur digs located in Montana, USA. Internet fossicking found <http://www.archaeological.org>, the website of the Archaeological Institute of America, to be the most frequently cited page.

3 The characterisation of Indiana Jones is a composite of archaeologists, palaeontologists and adventurers from the past. Examples include Roy Chapman Andrews (1884-1960) explorer, naturalist, palaeontologist and director of the American Museum of Natural History. It is said that his expeditions almost always "nearly ended in death" (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy\\_Chapman\\_Andrews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Chapman_Andrews)).

Another example is Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778 - 1823), archaeologist, explorer and Egyptologist (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni\\_Battista\\_Belzoni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Battista_Belzoni)). Robert Braidwood (1907 - 2003) was a more contemporary figure whose significant studies in Iraq during the 1950s were cut short by a worsening political situation which he was forced to leave, instead channelling his energies into Iran and Turkey ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Braidwood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Braidwood)).

4 The antiquity collections I visited included artefacts from the following broad periods: the Neolithic Period (6000 - 3000 BC), the Bronze Age (3000 BC - 1000 BC), the Geometric to Archaic Period (1000 BC - 500 BC) and the Classical Period (500 BC - the fall of the Roman Empire circa 476 AD).



artefacts to the Museum for the educational benefit to the people of Dunedin. Without these collectors the Museum's holdings from the ancient world would be much more modest in quality and quantity.

**Trader, collector and philanthropist: Willi Fels (1858 - 1946)**

As a child, Fels started collecting stamps and coins. His collecting habit remained throughout his adult life. While serving as director of his father-in-law's businesses (Hallenstein's and D.I.C Ltd), Fels built a significant collection of ethnographic and decorative artefacts and in 1893 initiated some key projects for the Otago Museum. These included establishing an ethnographic collection endowment fund, overseeing fund-raising for a wing to house growing ethnographic collection, contributing to the salary of a keeper of anthropology, H. D. Skinner, and sitting on the management committee (Anson, 2005; Strathern, 2005).

Showing his commitment to Dunedin's cultural wealth, Fels acted as a purchasing agent for the Otago Museum when travelling through Europe, Greece, Crete and the Far East, whether for business or pleasure. The Museum became the beneficiary of his extensive collection of over 80,000 objects. These included over 5,000 coins from ancient Greece, Rome and Britain, the core of Otago Museum's numismatics holdings. Likewise the Museum's Oriental strengths draw on Fels' donation of Tibetan, Persian, Indian, Burmese and Japanese material. The University of Otago library received valuable books, including illuminated manuscripts and rare first editions (Anson, 2005).

**Poet and short-time archaeologist: Charles Brasch (1909 - 1973)**

Dunedin born, Brasch overrode his father's wishes for an Oxford law degree, preferring to study the Ancient World. Childhood years spent with his grandfather, Willi Fels, fostered these life-long interests. Brasch participated in excavations in Egypt in 1932, and studied Arabic and Egyptian history at the University of London's School of Oriental Studies (Quigley, 2005). Thoughts of an

archaeology career were soon dispelled. Brasch returned to New Zealand to assist the family business in Dunedin, although he later taught briefly in Britain. As a lecturer at the University of Otago, he served on the management committee of the Otago Museum and the Hocken Library. His personal collection of antiquities was not large, but he influenced the Egyptian Exploration Society's award of artefacts from Tell el Amarna to the Museum (<http://www.ees.ac.uk/home/home.htm> Anson, 2006).

Writing and publishing poetry were always Brasch's priorities, yet he maintained his enthusiasm for ancient civilisations. Blessed with family wealth, he was able to travel extensively throughout Europe, the Middle and Far East, collecting as he went.

He bequeathed the University of Otago and the Hocken Library his books, papers and art works, while the Otago Museum received the objects acquired during his time as an archaeologist-in-training.

**Soldier and historian: Lieutenant Colonel Fred Waite (1885 - 1952)**

Lieutenant Colonel Fred Waite served for New Zealand in both World Wars. At the close of World War I he was commissioned to write *The New Zealanders at Gallipoli* (1919). Upon his return to New Zealand he wrote various local histories alongside other public duties in the Rotary, rural politics and farming. In World War II Waite was based in Cairo from 1941 - 1944, acquiring over 2000 artefacts for the Otago Museum (Anson, 2006; Green, 2005). Records indicate that Waite's 'bounty' posed problems for the Museum, then lacking adequate storage space (Anson, 2006). In retirement, Waite became honorary keeper of Middle Eastern archaeology at the Otago Museum and sat on the Museum Management Committee until his death in 1952 (Anson, 2006).



**STUDENTS IN ACTION AT THE JAMES LOGIE MEMORIAL COLLECTION.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

In contrast the Canterbury Museum holds approximately 1,500 objects of "interest and merit" from ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, Cyprus

and from the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup> This collection was built on the trades and exchanges made by the founding director Sir Julius von Haast (1822 - 1887). Utilising his European museum connections, Haast first exchanged moa bones and native bird specimens, then later taonga Māori, for artefacts such as the Egyptian mummy, coins<sup>6</sup> and medals as well as casts of Greek and Roman statues and the Rosetta Stone. Haast, like Fels, was driven by contemporary Victorian ideals – to "educate the colonials" about the history of western civilisation, the sciences and natural history, and Māori and Pacific cultures via the ethnographic collections.<sup>7</sup> Following established Victorian practice, Haast's galleries and display cabinets were crammed with artefacts, curios and replicas to educate and entertain the museum visitor. Today's exhibition galleries display coins and medals dating from 350 BC to the Renaissance, and a comprehensive exhibition of Egyptian tomb arts.<sup>8</sup>

### Teachers

The two university teaching collections which I visited were smaller still when compared to those of Canterbury and Otago Museums. They were also much younger. The lack of didactic labels at VUW's Classics Museum and Canterbury's Logie Collection struck me immediately. I had half expected an exaggerated version of an academic's office with the walls papered with academic graffiti such as essays,

maps, timelines and sundry other teaching aids.

These university holdings combine permanent collections with long-term loans from other museums or private collectors. Each object is a prop for a teaching moment.<sup>9</sup> Discussions focus on themes such as manufacturing techniques, iconography, or the artefacts' historical and artistic merit. The white board and large tables in these spaces indicated visitors intent on serious work. While Classics students are the most frequent users of the university teaching collections, art history, anthropology, museum studies, and film and theatre students also consult them. High School classics teachers regularly bring their classes.<sup>10</sup>

Again, behind these teaching collections lie the stories of their founders. An energetic classics lecturer at the University of Canterbury, M. K. Steven (see inset), from 1942 to 1976. was responsible for the James Logie Memorial Collection. A sabbatical at

### Teacher and collector: M. K. Steven (1912 - 1999)

In 1950 Steven married the University of Canterbury's registrar, James Logie. Steven's passion for the classics reportedly inspired Logie to sponsor an application to the University Council for an annual purchase grant for Greek pottery (Holcroft, 1999). Widowed in 1956, Steven channelled her inheritance into further growth of the University's classics collection, and support of the University of Melbourne's excavations in Cyprus (Holcroft, 1999). Miss Steven's collecting focus extended beyond antiquities, to include her significant bequest of detective novels left to the University of Canterbury Library.

5 Fyfe 2006.

6 In May 1874, Prof. E. Cornalia, of the Civic Museum of Milan, sent four cases of material, including 468 bronze and silver coins, mostly Roman. These were in exchange for several consignments of moa bones and bird skins sent by Julius von Haast the previous year (Quéree, 2006).

7 The following theme rooms were listed in the Canterbury Museum's 1906 Annual Report: fossils, minerals, mammals, ethnographical, sculpture, Māori and New Zealand.

8 Canterbury Museum's numismatic collection comprises approximately 800 Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins, Roman coins predominating. The Museum's earliest record is for "one Greek coin" (unspecified), gifted during the period Oct-Dec 1872, by a "Master John Clark" (Quéree, 2006). In 1875, Mr A. R. Creyke sent in "75 bronze coins, Carthaginian and Medieval, collected by him at Constantine and Carthage, North Africa." Jennifer Quéree, Senior Curator, Decorative Arts, points out, "this

sort of sporadic gifting, unfortunately usually without any detailed description, but sometimes with a provenance, seemed to be a pattern over the years, from assorted private donors in the community. Donors included wealthy run-holders and landowners, military, clerical and professional people" (2006). Quéree also adds, "most of our collection seems to have been given prior to 1904, with some short bursts during and immediately after the First and Second World Wars. The latter are usually from soldiers who had served in Egypt and the Middle East" (2006).

9 Naturally the purpose of teaching collections differs between organisations. Some museums have a separate teaching collection comprising replaceable artefacts or replicas. Used for hands-on learning, the objects are replaced as their condition deteriorates from the handling.

10 For example, the annual "Classics Day" at the University of Canterbury brings 400 - 600 students into the Department.



ANTIQUITIES AGAINST A PASIFIKA BACKDROP AT THE CLASSICS MUSEUM, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHARLES SCHATZ

the University of Sydney showed Miss Steven the value in students being able to see and touch real Greek vases. Returning to Christchurch, Miss Steven promptly purchased a number of small Greek pots – the classics collection at the University of Canterbury was born.<sup>11</sup> The Logie Collection currently houses approximately 250 objects and its collection of Greek vases, according to the curator Roslynne Bell, is one of the best in the southern hemisphere.

The Classics Museum at VUW also provided hands-on learning experiences for classics students. Here an eclectic array of small pieces was purchased principally to support the Departmental teaching programme. “A little bit of everything” is the informal collection policy. Denise Kalfas, a lecturer in Greek Art, initiated the collection in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Originally it mainly comprised Greek vases, much like the Logie Collection at that time. Department records suggest that Kalfas gifted her collection to the Classics Department when she retired (Dueling, 2006). The coin collection came later; then in the 1970s and 1980s, under Professor Dearden, the Classics Museum diversified further. It continues to collect, and at the time of writing the Museum’s first “big” piece, a Black Figure Column Krater attributed to the Leagros Group, circa 510 BC, had just arrived (Dueling, 2006).

Victoria University has instigated various teaching initiatives that extended beyond the realm of Classical Studies. In 2005, Museum and Heritage Studies students at VUW helped with the cataloguing and display of the coin collection. Dr Deuling, curator, would like to extend this collaboration into further projects.

Another joint research exercise involved scientists conducting pollen analysis, carbon dating, infrared microscopy, and energy dispersive x-ray analysis on remnants of water plants found inside a Cypriot Bichrome Ware jug (circa 800 -700 BC) (Deuling, 2004).<sup>13</sup> Test results revealed that plant “resin dated to the 5th or 6th century AD” while the pot “was stylistically dated to the 8th century BC”. Having the dates verified, Classics Department staff continue research to account for presence of the resin, water and soil inside the jug (Dueling, 2004).

### Treachery?

More popular collaborations centre on unveiling the Egyptian mummy (see inset); both Te Papa and Auckland, Canterbury and Otago Museums have carried out such exercises. The place of the Egyptian mummy has been widely debated within the museum community and, to some extent, in the media. Te Papa’s policy excludes public display of human remains. Other museums’ human remains policies generally only cover koiwi. Canterbury Museum sought the advice of their governing tangata whenua and permission from the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and Antiquities in Cairo to display Tash pen Khonsu to the public (Fyfe, 2006).

The mummy exercise also reveals unease in the museum sector about the ownership of artefacts from the Ancient World. Von Haast purchased Tash pen Khonsu in the 1880s from a collector of Egyptian antiquities in London, yet tests clearly reveals a 300-year difference between that of the coffin and the linen wrap of the mummy. This discrepancy suggests a “body swap”, presumably at the point of sale in Egypt in the late 19th century.<sup>14</sup> Bendix Hallenstein (see inset) (1835 - 1905) obtained the Otago Museum’s mummy from a German consular agent in Egypt. The circumstances of early acquisitions are often confused.

The British Museum’s right to house the Elgin

11 Another staff member, Professor Gordon Peterson (1921 - 1996), from the Maths department temporarily loaned his collection of Roman coins to the Logie Collection. True to academic eccentricity, Peterson supposedly “knew something discreditable or scandalous” about each of the Emperors portrayed on the coins. (<http://www.rsnz.org/directory/yearbooks/ybook97/obitPeterson.html>). When he died, Petersen left the coins to Cardiff University, so in 1997 the curator had to deaccession them and send them to Wales.

12 For further information see: R. O’Rourke (1996), *The Mummy and coffin of the Lady Merhit-em-Wesekht*, a chronological document bank compiled in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. R.

O’Rourke (1998), *The Dominion Museum and the Egypt Exploration Fund*, London, 1909-1938, presentations and documentation in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. R. O’Rourke (1998) *The Egyptian Collection 1869-1998*, accession and associated documentation in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

13 The VUW Institute of Geophysics conducted the pollen tests. The carbon dating was undertaken by the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences Ltd., Rafer Radiocarbon Laboratory (they have also dated items for the British Museum). The infrared microscopy and energy dispersive x-ray was done by an analyst at Agriquality Ltd. (Deuling, 2004; 2006).



**TASH PEN KHONSHU,  
EGYPTIAN MUMMY, LATE  
PTOLEMAIC PERIOD C. 150 BC**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:  
CANTERBURY MUSEUM,  
REF. EA 1989.13

marbles is often debated on Museum Studies courses. More recently, an ex-Getty curator was charged by the Italian government for "receiving stolen antiquities and conspiring to deal in illegally acquired artefacts" (BBC News, 3 October 2005). While the case still runs, the Getty has opted to donate the disputed items to Italy. Greece,

### Unveiling the mummy

Te Papa had a 40-year head start on the other museums. In 1961 Ross O'Rourke, then Egyptian collection's technician/display artist organised an X-Ray of the mummy, Lady Mehit-em-Wesekhth. Life-size X-ray plates revealed her gender and the state of her teeth. Her dental details revealed more about her social and life history. The hieroglyphs indicated that Mehit-em-Wesekhth was a young woman (aged 18) of modest status, alive during the Greek occupation of Egypt circa 300 BC, but offered no conclusive evidence about her death (Dominion Post, 27 March 1998).<sup>12</sup>

Canterbury, Otago and Auckland Museums undertook computerised tomography (CT) scans between 1998 and 2005. Again, these more detailed scans enabled museum staff to find out more about their mummies' medical and social life histories.

### The father of a family of collectors: Bendix Hallenstein (1835 - 1905).

A progressive and well-liked businessman, Bendix Hallenstein's name is now associated with two well-known New Zealand retail stores: Hallenstein's and D.I.C Ltd. Hallenstein was both uncle and father-in-law to Willi Fels. One of Hallenstein's four daughters, Agnus, married Siegfried Brasch and together they had a son, the literary figure, Charles Brasch. Another daughter, Emily, married Isidore de Beer. Their children, Mary, Dora and Esmond were all collectors, and in 1982 a significant portion of their collections were gifted to the cultural institutions of Dunedin, including the art gallery, museum and university (Anson, 2006; Entwistle, 1990).

meanwhile, has renewed claims to return various artefacts believed to have been stolen. Then in December 2005 a group of internationally prominent museums, including the Louvre, the Prado Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Rijksmuseum and the Getty, signed a proclamation not to hand back ancient artefacts to their counties of origin, declaring that "their collections act as universal museums for the good of the world" (BBC News, 9 December 2005). Since then, in February the Metropolitan Museum of Art returned to the Italian government several antiquities thought to have been exported illegally. The Met's actions, packaged as an "act of good faith", may smooth negotiations for future long term loans of any illegally excavated artefacts found to have been unintentionally acquired (Online NewsHour, 28 February, 2006). Museums scrupulously investigate an artefact's provenance before contemplating acquisition. Similarly, contemporary archaeologists carefully negotiate ownership of any artefacts excavated. This, however, cannot address the past actions whereby ancient artefacts ostensibly were safely "housed in the collection of an English gentleman or the collection of a Swiss collector" for some years, before being offered for sale on the legitimate art market; nor does it protect sites from being looted now (Online NewsHour, 28 February, 2006).

The modest size and calibre of New Zealand's public antiquity collections may safeguard our museums from these repatriation headaches faced by the larger museums overseas. However, our antiquity collections, while representative and probably adequate for Classical Studies students, apparently remain more or less static and disappointingly under-resourced.<sup>15</sup>

### Past imperfect – future indicative?

Theme-based cataloguing projects have proved to be particularly fruitful. Collating descriptions and catalogue numbers for artefacts held in New Zealand collections produces an essential reference tool. Past projects include Anson's projects of Cyprus pottery and seal

14 R. Fyfe (29 March, 2006). Email communication.

15 The Logie Collection sits within the College of Arts at the University of Canterbury. At the time of writing the College was faced with the task of 'saving' NZ\$1.6 million from their annual budget. As a result, the position

of Curator seems likely to be disestablished. This move, combined with a currently non-existent purchasing budget, will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on the Collection as a teaching resource for the University, local schools and the broader community alike.



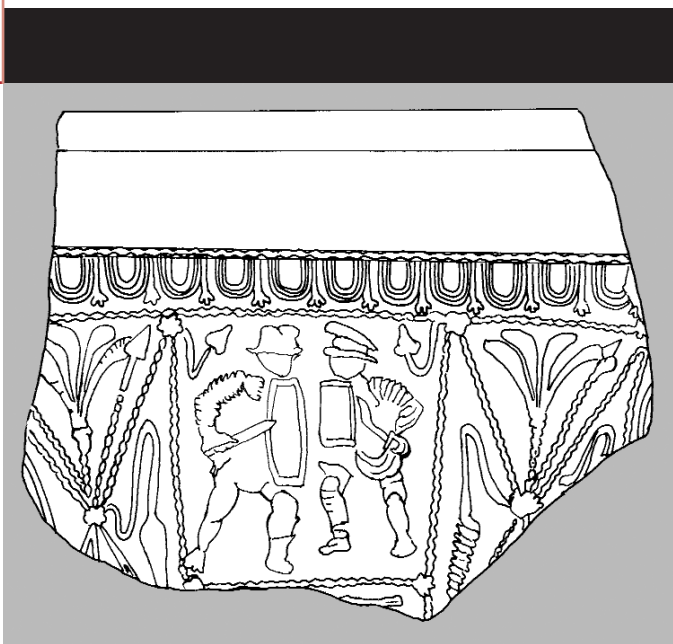
stones from Iraq, while a published catalogue of ancient lamps in New Zealand collections is imminent. The Logie Collection has two projects in the pipeline. One is a comprehensive catalogue complete with illustrations, descriptions and scholarly essays. The second involves a treasures-style publication featuring collection highlights. I have already cited the Samian ware corpus.

Requirements for description, especially with photographic images and specialist hand-drawn archaeological illustrations, add to the expense of these endeavours. The time spent drawing the object and the use of the magnifying glass often reveal invaluable insights. Fyfe (Canterbury Museum) and Anson (Otago Museum) both harbour potential cataloguing projects for ambitious Masters or Doctoral students.

The antiquities collections that I consulted were strongly influenced by their collectors' histories – testament to their vision and purpose. The university-based collections function well for teaching, with significant potential to continue this role, if sufficiently funded. The metropolitan museums visited have small but representative holdings, consistent with their founders' intentions and/or collecting policy. I sensed that Otago Museum was actively acquiring antiquities, while Te Papa and Canterbury Museum assigned lower priority to their Classical collections. To be fair, the Canterbury Museum has loaned several objects to the Logie Collection, thus supporting an excellent teaching collection which neither could achieve alone.<sup>16</sup> In Wellington, the Classics Museum appears able to satisfy its target audiences, without needing Te Papa to complement it.

### Realism reigns

Yet what am I comparing these collections to? Our museums will never house antiquity collections worth millions of dollars – it simply won't happen. There is no tradition of large acquisition budgets, little tax incentives for donations, and no wealthy donors (unlike most large international museums). Overseas visitors seek out the history and culture of Aotearoa New Zealand, through collections firmly rooted in our place in the Pacific. I am left asking myself what would be the best way to assess the value of these collections? If enjoyment was a currency, then I believe that the university-based



RIM FRAGMENT FROM A SAMIAN WARE BOWL, SHOWING DETAILS INCLUDING A PAIR OF ARMED MEN. THIS ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KENNEDY DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DRAWING. THIS FRAGMENT HAS BEEN DATED TO THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIRST CENTURY AD, SOUTHERN GAUL (MODERN FRANCE). OTAGO MUSEUM REFERENCE D28-98. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: JOHN KENNEDY AND OTAGO MUSEUM

collections were comfortably off, albeit modestly so. These teaching collections had a specific purpose, their scope was focussed but comprehensive and the spaces were cosy and intimate. The Otago Museum is included in this assessment, explicitly presenting their antiquities as a “scholar's gallery”. Canterbury Museum displays its ancient coinage discreetly on one floor, while locating its Egyptian Mummy close to such popular exhibits as dinosaur fossils and *Discovery*. In contrast, Te Papa rarely exhibits its classical antiquities, and the mummy is out of sight. (Auckland Museum was not included in this project).

These collections came to life for me through passionate individuals. My hopes lie in the fact that those who manage these antiquity collections were more than willing for further collaborations to occur.<sup>17</sup> Joint ventures are not unusual. Back in the 1950s archaeologist Robert Braidwood (another model for that Indiana Jones character) worked closely with biologists and geologists – on the first archaeological project to win a grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation.<sup>18</sup> Today's museums can certainly model their practice on researchers such as Braidwood, strengthening research projects by capitalising on cross-disciplinary knowledge, skills and the resulting potential to engage with new audiences.

Joanna Cobley blogs at the [museumdetective.com](http://museumdetective.com)

<sup>16</sup> Fyfe, R. (29 March, 2006). Email communication.

<sup>17</sup> The Otago Museum and the University of Otago have a Memorandum of Understanding which assigns honorary lectureship roles to some museum staff, while university staff serve as honorary curators at the Museum (Anson, 2006). A similar arrangement operates between the Canterbury Museum and the University of Canterbury (Fyfe, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Braidwood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Braidwood)

SIR JULIAN VON HAAST C. 1880  
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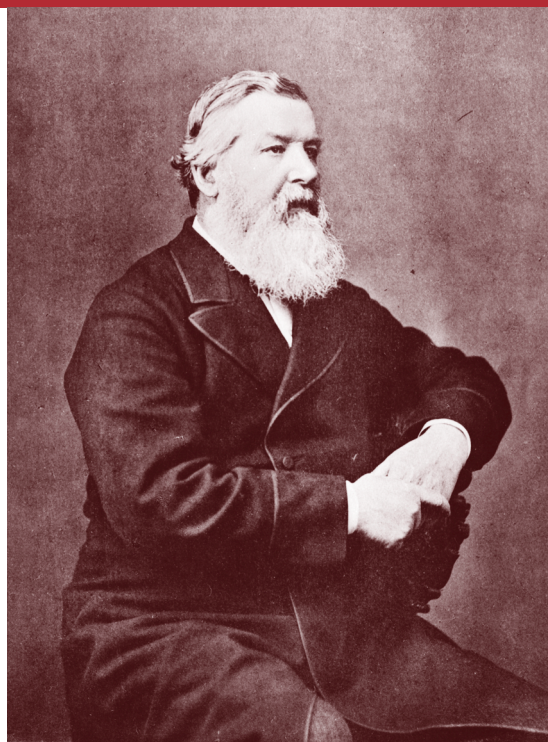
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On Indiana Jones see <http://en.wikipedia.org>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Braidwood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Braidwood)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy\\_Chapman\\_Andrews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Chapman_Andrews)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni\\_Battista\\_Belzoni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Battista_Belzoni)

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# Arctic anniversary: Centenary of the "Arctic Group" at Auckland Museum

The musk ox and polar bear habitat group, a spectacular piece from the heyday of British taxidermy, has survived 100 years of display at Auckland Museum. Curator of Land Vertebrates BRIAN GILL outlines the history of this Edwardian show-piece.



THE ARCTIC GROUP'S  
POLAR BEAR, 2005.  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: B. GILL.

A century ago there was no zoo in Auckland, and given the expense, there would have been few coloured books about exotic animals in the average home. That left the Museum and the Public Library to give enquiring Aucklanders an impression of the wonders of the Animal Kingdom. For this reason, Auckland Museum was just as keen to exhibit foreign animals as to show our own unusual native fauna.

In 1876 Auckland Museum had moved to a new building in Princes Street, but it was small, the Main Hall was crowded with exhibits, and extensions were needed (Wolfe 2001). In 1892 an Ethnological Hall was opened, a Statue Hall followed in 1897, and an annex to the Ethnological Hall was completed in 1905. This allowed the Main Hall to be devoted entirely to natural history. A plan was devised to fill the centre of the Main Hall with groups of large mammals, additions which "more than any other would enhance the appearance of the Museum, and add to its value as a means of recreation to the general public" (*Auckland Institute and Museum, Annual Report 1899-1900*).

## Welcome bequest

In 1902 the Museum received a bequest from Mr E.A. MacKechnie, which included £500 for "procuring groups of the larger mammals and the necessary show-cases" (Cheeseman 1917). Edmund Augustus MacKechnie (1823-1901) was an Auckland solicitor and local politician (Powell 1967). He served on the Museum's governing board and was President in 1882. His main interests were literary and artistic, and the Auckland Museum Library and Auckland Art Gallery were major beneficiaries in his will, but there was also a smaller bequest for the mammal groups.

Four mammal groups were obtained over four years. All were prepared by the prominent London firm of

Edward Gerrard & Sons, "Taxidermists & Articulators", from whom the Museum's Curator expected "a higher class of taxidermy than we could hope for in the Colony" (Auckland Museum Library MA96/6, Letter-book 4, p. 132). The first group comprised lions (male, female and four cubs) and was placed in the Main Hall upon arrival from England in 1904. Each group came knocked down in sections that were not to exceed 4 feet (1.2 m) wide, because the entrance door to the Main Hall was small. The "show-cases", with glass on four sides framed by wood, were locally built. The second group – male and female tigers and a leopard – followed in 1905.

## Special request

The Museum had preferences for particular exotic mammals but this was tempered by availability. Gerrards proposed the Arctic Group – a polar bear *Ursus maritimus* and three musk oxen *Ovibos moschatus* – with the bear "coming after the young musk ox" (MA96/6, Letter-book 4, pp. 589-91). The Museum wanted "plenty of action in the group, always provided that the attitudes, etc, are correct and characteristic, and true to nature." The Arctic Group was the largest and most expensive (£100), intended for the centre of the hall, and needed to "look fairly well from all sides". It arrived safely in 1906, shipped to New Zealand free-of-charge by the Shaw Savill Line. The final group came in 1907 – four South African herbivorous mammals comprising zebra, waterbuck, springbok and impala. The mammal groups "attracted considerable attention, and are no doubt responsible for a large proportion of the increased number of visitors to the Museum" (*Annual Report 1905-06*). There were 61,000 Museum visitors in 1905-06.

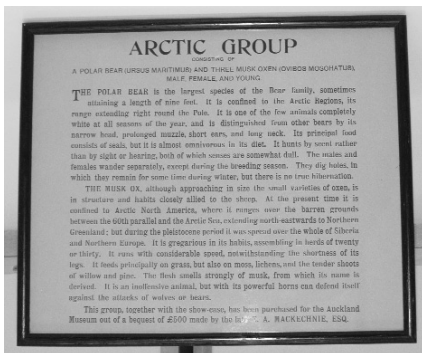


ARCTIC GROUP UPON UNPACKING AT AUCKLAND MUSEUM, 1906. FROM *THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC AND LADIES' JOURNAL*, 19 MAY 1906. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: AUCKLAND MUSEUM.



## The art of taxidermy

The standard of taxidermy in the Arctic Group is first rate, with an excellent finish to each of the animals, particularly their faces. After 100 years there are no obvious signs of failure in the mounts (apart from fading), attesting to top-level craftsmanship and materials. Artistically, there is perfect realism in the pose of the constituent animals. The elegance and dynamism of the group, viewed from any angle, is as pleasing to us now as it must have been to the public of 1906.



ORIGINAL PRINTED LABEL FOR THE ARCTIC GROUP (360 X 295 MM). ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: B. GILL.

The taxidermy firm of Edward Gerrard & Sons began in 1850 and flourished during the late Victorian and Edwardian heyday of taxidermy (Morris 2004). The company was wound up in 1967. Their prices were less expensive than those of their more famous London competitors, Rowland Ward, and their work was more variable in quality, though their best work was exemplary. They produced an extraordinary range of products, from habitat groups for museums, to trophy heads on shields, birds in glass cases, and a startling diversity of "animal furniture". Their mounted mammals were supplied to museums in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, to the British Museum (Natural History), and to museums in Europe, North America and Africa.

## A new Ark

All the mammal groups were moved in 1928-29 to the Museum's new building in The Domain. The Arctic Group was exhibited in the Hall of General Natural History (currently the Oceans Gallery) until the 1960s when it was moved to the Natural History Cross Gallery (see Gill 2000). That gallery was closed in 1994 for redevelopment as the *Weird and Wonderful* Children's Discovery Centre, so the Arctic Group moved to the Cheeseman Hall until 1997 and was then stored off-site. The flimsy wood-framed display case was not retained after 1997. The diorama base is in three sections with the joins hidden by the powdered gypsum that covers the floor of the display to resemble snow.

In 2002 the Arctic Group was brought back for the Museum's 150th anniversary exhibition. After that it

was installed behind Perspex in the refurbished *Weird and Wonderful* gallery. Besides the move to the 1929 building, and the recent storage off-site for five years, it seems the Arctic Group has been exhibited continuously since 1906.

Of the big cats in the first and second mammal groups, no traces remain, nor even any records of their fate in the Land Vertebrates Collection files. Of the fourth group, only the zebra and waterbuck are present, damaged and removed from their original decorative bases. Happily, the polar bear and musk oxen survive, in excellent condition and still together as a habitat group on their original interconnecting bases. So the Arctic Group soldiers proudly on – a tribute to Mr MacKechnie's generosity, a testament to the heyday of British taxidermy, and a reminder of the time when New Zealand museums had a world-wide view of natural history.

Brian Gill is Curator of Land Vertebrates at Auckland Museum.

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Musk oxen roam the Arctic tundra where they eat grasses, sedges and herbage. They live in groups of 10-20, and at times of danger they bunch together, often in a circle or semi-circle with the calves inside. The largest males reach 400 kg. The coarse outer guard hairs shed rain and snow and protect an inner coat of fine, soft hair that keeps out the cold. Polar bears are predators of musk oxen and other animals. Their front paws are large and oar-like to assist swimming. The soles of the feet are hairy, which insulates against the cold and provides a grip on icy surfaces.



# Te Aitanga a Hauiti and the Tairawhiti Museum

MIKE SPEDDING discusses the strengthening relationship between Māori and museums through an East Coast case study

## Introduction

The Tairawhiti Museum enjoys a hard-won but very constructive relationship with Te Aitanga a Hauiti that can be viewed from many perspectives including governance arrangements, strategic issues, museum practice, and personal relationships, all of which influenced its development.

This article documents the developing relationship, while recognizing the risk in presenting something that is simply “progressive”, moving in one direction, without giving due regard to the complexities and problems inherent in any relationship. While the experience has mostly been positive, the challenges encountered are also addressed.

Victor Walker, a member of Te Aitanga a Hauiti closely involved, commented, “Uawa or Tolaga Bay is home to one of the most prestigious whare wananga, or house of learning on the eastern seaboard of the North Island called Te Rawheoro. Te Rawheoro was established by Hingangaroa (circa 1550), and was famous for its arts curriculum, and presided over and, attended by, a number of experts in this area. The whare wananga flourished up until the 1900s...Uawa has produced a number of excellent artists, traditional and contemporary. As a new generation of tohunga has emerged, so has a strong relationship with the Tairawhiti Museum been forged”.

## Background

The Tairawhiti Museum, formerly known as the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, has existed for over 50 years. It is a combined museum and art gallery, currently employing ten full time staff and offering diverse museum programmes for the people of the Tairawhiti. Now a Charitable Trust, it has changed significantly over the last ten years.

The Museum's strong relationships with the iwi of the Tairawhiti date back to the early 1950s. The first collection of Māori artifacts deposited at the Museum arrived via Canterbury Museum. A Māori museum committee established in 1954 signalled the beginning of an enduring connection between some local Māori families and the Museum. In the 1970s some emerging Māori artists (Nga Puna Waihanga) began working with the Museum, offering education programmes with a particular Māori focus.

Developments in the 1990s provided a platform from which relationships such as that with Te Aitanga a Hauiti were able to prosper.

## C. Company

An association developed between the Museum and the people connected with C. Company of the 28th Māori Battalion. The 28th Māori Battalion served in the Second World War and comprised five companies. C. Company recruited from the East Coast region from Torere in the Bay of Plenty to Muriwai south of Gisborne, representing Ngai Tamanuhiri, Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngati Porou, Te Whanau a Apanui, and Ngai Tai iwi. Over 1000 men served during the war.

During the 1990s a major research project began documenting, recording and collecting material associated with the Company. The Museum was approached to support this project, perhaps by hosting an exhibition. Difficulties surfaced as both parties began working together. The issues were complex and included access to material, control of the process and intellectual property rights. At one point members of C. Company seriously contemplated removing their material from the Museum and ending the association. Eventually,



**TAIRAWHITI MUSEUM DIRECTOR MICHAEL SPEDDING RETURNING THE MERE POUNAMU TO PUKETAWAI MARAE. (L. TO R.) BOYDIE KIRIKIRI, TEMPLE ISAACS, MICHAEL SPEDDING, JOE PIHEMA, WIREMU KEREKERE. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: TAIRAWHITI MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY – TE WHARE TAONGA O TE TAIRAWHITI.**

however, the relationship evolved into one which remains valued by both parties.<sup>1</sup> The Museum and C.Company have since formalised their partnership, collaborating on various projects: mounting exhibitions, delivering presentations at national events, co-hosting dignitaries at the Museum, and developing and delivering education programmes.

The benefits to the Museum cannot be underestimated. One measure of success is the thousands of first-time visitors connected to C.Company. These interactions have helped to shift attitudes and perceptions on both sides, generating a new “constituency” of the community that recognises that the Museum has some relevance for them. Consequently the Museum's practices, policies and strategic direction have been influenced.

Changes in the Museum's governance structure represent the most striking example.<sup>2</sup> For 50 years the Museum operated as an Incorporated Society, governed by a council of 26 members representing a

small range of local art and heritage groups. In the mid 1990s the Society's constitution was reviewed. Following numerous meetings (some very large) to consider different models, the Museum became, by unanimous agreement, a Charitable Trust, with a Board of Trustees with equal representation from Māori and Pakeha. This demonstration of partnership had the strong support of Māori, especially those connected with C.Company. It was partly a response to mounting pressure for Māori to be more fully involved in the Museum. One local kaumatua stated forcefully that Māori had had enough of being used simply in an advisory capacity in such organisations. The message was clear: the best way to effectively engage Māori was to have their full participation at the decision making end of the organisation. Another key figure added that, unless their views were taken seriously, Māori might remove collections and develop some alternative museum-like facilities. After further meetings, the Museum adopted a governance model guaranteeing representation from the five iwi of the Tairāwhiti: Ngai Tamanuhiri, Rongowhaka, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Te Aitanga a Hauiti, and Ngati Porou.

### **Te Aitanga a Hauiti and the Tairāwhiti Museum**

Against this background the Museum began to develop a relationship with the people of Te Aitanga a Hauiti.


#### **a) Repatriation**

In early 1999 members of the iwi enquired about a mere pounamu thought to have been deposited in the Museum in the 1970s. A schoolteacher at Karaka Bay (north of Tolaga Bay) found the mere in an urupa exposed by the sea. The Museum established that they held the mere, and Kourateuwhi Ahuwhenua Trust, a Trust associated with the people of Puketawai marae, subsequently asked the Museum to consider returning it. The Museum agreed to its return and established that the repatriation could proceed once the Trust had registered as a collector under the provisions of the Antiquities Act.

The mere's return was not straightforward. It raised issues about the relative merits of repatriation. Firstly Te Aitanga a Hauiti needed to be confident that the mere was definitely theirs, a point initially questioned. Although this was established, some

1 Soutar, M. and Spedding, M. (2000). *Improving Bicultural Relationships – a Case Study: The C.Company 28 Māori Battalion collection and exhibition at the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre*. Wellington: Te Papa National Services.

2 Butts, D. (2003). *Māori and Museums: The Politics of Indigenous Recognition*, [PhD Thesis], Palmerston North, Massey University.



people still wanted the mere to stay at the Museum, which they regarded as a neutral “safe” place, provided the taonga remained accessible. Others wanted it returned and then buried. These debates continued right up until the mere was returned, illustrating the complexity of repatriation issues for both the institution and those requesting the return.<sup>3</sup>

Finally in May of 1999 a large delegation associated with the Museum formally returned the mere pounamu at Puketawai. This repatriation generated several collaborative ventures between Te Aitanga a Hauiti and the Tairāwhiti Museum.<sup>4</sup>

## b) Governance

Within a month of the Tolaga Bay visit, the Museum was formally constituted as a Charitable Trust. The constitution required that the five iwi representatives on the Board of Trustees included one from Te Aitanga a Hauiti. This was a significant milestone in the relationship between the two parties. These governance changes clearly signalled that the Museum was serious about wanting to work with iwi. The iwi groups could now further their own aims through participation on the Museum's governing body.<sup>5</sup>

Anne McGuire was mandated to represent Te Aitanga a Hauiti on the Board, a position regarded as highly important. She commented that she is there as a watchdog, expected to report anything of interest at hui a iwi. “While my primary role is to consider the governance of the Museum, I am particularly interested in ways that the Museum can assist and further the aspirations of my iwi. That representation also extends to building relationships with other museums and representing both my iwi and the Museum at national forums”.

A busy time ensued. Museum staff began drafting a new set of policy statements, progressively considered by the Board throughout 2000. Collection management policies were approved, some of which were of particular interest to the Museum's Māori Trustees. These included a kōiwi tangata policy, kaitiakitanga (guardianship) policy

and a repatriation policy, much influenced by the experience of returning the mere pounamu to Puketawai marae. Board members appreciated the practical side of policy development, which proved a positive experience.

## c) Education

In the late 1990s, contracts negotiated with the Ministry of Education (Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom) shaped the Museum's education service. Given the region's size (c. 12000 square kilometres), the mission to deliver services to all students resident in the Tairāwhiti was problematic. One solution involved establishing an outreach facility at the rural schools in Tolaga Bay Area School, which was deemed a suitable distance from Gisborne. In 2002 The Ministry funded this pilot project, operating a museum classroom, named *Ruakaka* after a former whare wananga.

While the year long pilot met the needs of students in the immediate vicinity, this was less satisfactory for schools further afield – they often chose to travel the extra 45 minutes to Gisborne and visit other places while they were in town. The Museum's objective of making its services more accessible was thus only partially achieved. The services offered had to be more mobile, to really increase access. A truck was therefore purchased, thanks to a local Trust, for conversion into a mobile museum. Museum teachers now travel to the remotest schools, frequently basing themselves at marae and offering a range of wananga-type lessons.

## d) Exhibiting

The Museum also explored the notion of co-operative exhibition projects. Following the earlier achievements with C.Company, a series of iwi exhibition projects began. In 2001 members of Te Aitanga a Hauiti approached the Museum to discuss ideas. In 2002 a landmark exhibition opened, combining taonga and contemporary work from members of the iwi and the Tairāwhiti Museum's collections. *Toi Hauiti* was a truly collaborative project and the opening was a huge success.

3 Anne McGuire, who was and still is the Te Aitanga a Hauiti representative on the museum Trust Board, recently commented that the ultimate aim is the repatriation of taonga back to their own museum. She went on to say; “we understand now that repatriation is not always the answer so we look to other things and ways of connecting with our heritage”.

4 Personal communication with Anne McGuire and Victor Walker.

5 Nor was this a straightforward process with some arguing that the amount of representation on the Board ought to be a reflection of the size of the group, in this case iwi.

Toi Hauiti's popularity prompted a proposal for the next major initiative to be based at home, i.e. in Tolaga Bay. Thus *Te Pou o Te Kani* was conceived as a celebration of the arts and culture of Te Aitanga a Hauiti. The centrepiece for the proceedings at Puketawai marae in December 2003 was the mere that had been returned to the same place 3 years earlier. It had come to symbolise both the relationship between the Museum and Te Aitanga a Hauiti and the journey that was being experienced by the iwi.

An outstanding success, *Te Pou o Te Kani* ran throughout the summer of 2003-2004 and included the establishment of a museum, art gallery and artist-in-residence, numerous workshop and wananga activities, a local radio station and various cultural heritage tours. It provided a focus for the iwi and diverse opportunities for visitor experiences. While Museum staff provided collections for display and exhibition expertise, their role was noticeably secondary to the iwi initiators'.

The development of both personal and institutional relationships is consistently critical in these initiatives. Working together toward mutually beneficial goals is the best way to develop a positive relationship. The experiences discussed directly built trust and genuine friendship between Museum personnel and many members of Te Aitanga a Hauiti.

### Issues for the Museum

The Museum, as a public institution unique in its region, must be seen to be fair. How best to balance the – at times – competing interests of the different iwi and many, many hapu within the Tairāwhiti<sup>6</sup>, as well as the Pakeha community? The honest answer is that there are too many interested parties and the resource base is too thin to accommodate everyone. Inevitably the organisation to some extent works with the people it knows it can work with. The partnership with Te Aitanga a Hauiti could become problematic if comparable ventures are not undertaken with other Māori groups, and groups within the Pakeha community.

6 With C. Company the museum has been fortunate in that all iwi of the region have an association with that organisation. More often than not that will not be the case.

Changes of personnel present related challenges. The successes outlined depend heavily on the quality of the relationships and the ability of people from both organisations to work together. Inevitably people come and go, and their replacements may have different priorities and interact differently.

Despite both parties to a relationship being committed to making it work, difficulties arise.

Views differ or different criteria and standards may apply, for example concerning the handling and care of artefacts. When the Museum made taonga available for *Te Pou o Te Kani*, it stipulated both environmental and security requirements for the duration of the exhibition. In practice, few of those requirements were initially met. What was the Museum to do? In this case the parties worked together to attain minimum requirements. However another organisation was less accommodating, causing that relationship to falter. The institution must consider to what extent it should impose its standards on heritage that "belongs" to the people requesting its display or return. Whose responsibility is it if something happens? These are hard issues and will ultimately be resolved according to the importance the parties place on the relationship.

### Where to from here?

These experiences have implications for the Museum's future direction. They clearly demonstrate the value of collaboration. The Tairāwhiti Museum's strategic planning statements explicitly articulate this value.

In August 2004 the Board of the Museum adopted a strategic plan for a major initiative. This involves developing significant heritage sites, creating an exhibition centre, and facilitating various art and heritage projects with iwi and community organisations across the region. The principle of active collaboration underpins this plan – not merely consultation but actually working together toward mutually agreed goals. To this end, the Museum has already signed two memoranda of understanding with heritage, commercial, local authority, and iwi interests. The Te Aitanga a Hauiti and C. Company experiences already influence the Museum's strategic thinking and future direction.



This approach enables a more efficient use of resources, not just financial but, of equal importance, human resources. People are the most precious commodity for both the Museum and the iwi, with all involved managing their time amongst many other competing priorities.

Information technology is a consideration important for future initiatives. So far the Museum and Te Aitanga a Hauiti have used IT in different ways. Potential collaborations include collection databases, web site design, oral history, and writing and publication projects. The possibilities are endless and already some are being pursued. Computer technology offers real potential for a “virtual museum” incorporating suitably adapted museum-like functions.

For over 20 years the development of cultural centres has been discussed nation-wide. To date few have materialised. The expense of capital development and on-going operation is a major obstacle. Potentially these dilemma can be addressed through joint ventures like those discussed here. Art and heritage initiatives can happen without capital-rich facility development – a “nimble” pragmatic approach can be very effective, particularly in smaller communities.

The Museum is still recognized as having an important function as kaitiaki or guardian over its collections. What has changed is the involvement of “other” parties with relationships to these collections, and interests in the Museum’s activities. Victor Walker emphasised this connection: “Considering that the Museum has for so long been the kaitiaki or guardian over many iwi taonga, many being the crafted artforms and utensils of a bygone era, certainly since the time of Te Rawheoro, it is significant, if not somewhat fateful, that such a close relationship be considered, recognized and developed.”<sup>7</sup>



THE OPENING OF RUAKAKA AT THE TOLAGA BAY AREA SCHOOL BY THE MINISTER OF MĀORI AFFAIRS PAREKURA HOROMIA, KATE WALKER, AND C.COMPANY VETERANS NOEL RAIHANIA AND TAUTINI GLOVER. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: TAIRAWHITI MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY – TE WHARE TAONGA O TE TAIRAWHITI.

In April 2005 the inaugural Puketawai Cultural Experience was held. Twenty people enjoyed a guided tour of the Tairawhiti Museum before travelling up to Tolaga Bay to be hosted by the whanau from Puketawai Marae. This was the most recent manifestation of the collaboration between the Museum and Te Aitanga a Hauiti.

A final word from Anne McGuire, the Te Aitanga a Hauiti representative on the Museum Trust Board: “For those with the experience, iwi is a very difficult animal to work with. The staff of the museum handled the animal admirably..... In the year 2005 the relationship between the Tairawhiti Museum and Te Aitanga a Hauiti is robust and firmly established, and we look forward to developing this relationship further in the next 5 years”.<sup>8</sup>

Mike Spedding was Director of the Tairawhiti Museum from 1997 until 2005. Trained as an historian, he is currently developing programmes in heritage and museum studies at Tairawhiti Polytechnic in Gisborne. He is on the Board of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>8</sup> Personal communication.

# The Marylyn Mayo Internship at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

CATHERINE LOMAS and GREG ANDERSON describe the new internship established for developing art curators. Catherine provides the background on this initiative while Greg's account of his experience as the first incumbent is also partly a response to Ashley Remer's examination of internships in the last issue of *te ara*.

## The Marylyn Mayo Internship – developing professionalism

The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki established the Marylyn Mayo Internship in 2005, with the generous support of Dr John Mayo of Queensland, to provide training and professional development opportunities to art gallery workers and post-graduate students who are seeking to further their careers in the art gallery sector. Greg Anderson has recently completed six months at the Gallery as the inaugural Marylyn Mayo Intern.

The Auckland Art Gallery was aware of the need for this type of support because it has hosted a number of informal internships over the years for students from Museums Studies, Conservation, Photographic and Art History courses who have sought practical work and learning experiences at the Gallery.

Dr John Mayo and his late wife, Marylyn Mayo, have had a similar commitment to education and the arts. After her death in 2002, the Marylyn Mayo Foundation was established to benefit a number of causes in the arts, education, law and health sectors. After discussions with Auckland Art Gallery Director, Chris Saines, this internship was established at the Gallery on an annual basis. The 2005 internship provided an opportunity to work alongside Auckland Art Gallery staff on the *Art & the 60s from Tate Britain* exhibition project, which offered a range of training and work experiences. Chris Saines acknowledges the Gallery's gratitude to Dr John Mayo for his generosity and foresight in providing

this Internship, because the support and encouragement of young people of the calibre of our first intern will make a huge difference to the professionalism of New Zealand's art galleries in future years.

The first Marylyn Mayo intern was Greg Anderson of Auckland. Greg has an MA in Art History from the University of Auckland and an MA in Fine Art Administration and Curatorship from Goldsmiths College, University of London. He had also worked on exhibition projects at Artspace; a private gallery in Auckland; as a gallery manager in London; completed independent curatorial projects and had been a curatorial assistant in the Applied Arts department at Auckland War Memorial Museum.

As the Internship organiser, I can report that Greg was selected for the inaugural internship because of his strong commitment to working as a curator and the fact that he is at a point in his career where this professional development experience at the Gallery will assist him in applying for a curatorial position.

### Marylyn Mayo

Born and raised in New Zealand, Marylyn Eve Mayo (nee Mason) had a lifelong interest in education, law and the visual arts. Her academic career establishes her place as a legal pioneer in Australasia. The University of Auckland had fewer than two dozen women law graduates when Marylyn Mason completed her BA/LLB in 1960. It was at this time that Marylyn began to collect the work of artists Colin McCahon, Don Binney and Richard Killeen.



MARYLYN MAYO. COURTESY: AUCKLAND ART GALLERY – TOI O TAMAKI

Her mother Mavis Mason was an artist, taught for a time by Colin McCahon.

In 1969 Marylyn moved to Australia to teach law at the University of Queensland's Townsville campus, soon to be known as James Cook University. It was here she met and married John Mayo in 1970. Dr Mayo founded economics as a discipline at the same institution. Marylyn's vision to establish a separate Faculty of Law at James Cook University was realised in 1989 when she was the Foundation Head of its newly established Law School until her retirement in 1996.

Marylyn's links with James Cook University remain with the establishment of the Marylyn Mayo Medal and annual Mayo Lecture. Her legacy is also honoured at the Auckland University Law School with the Marylyn Eve Mayo Endowment Scholarship and Marylyn Mayo Rare Book Room. Her special interest in art is recognised at the Auckland Art Gallery by the Marylyn Mayo Internship and the EH McCormick Research Library's annual art history journal, Reading Room.

Catherine Lomas has been the Manager, Collection and Exhibition Services at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki since 1976.

The 2006 Marylyn Mayo internship will be advertised and interviewed in May – July to take place at an agreed time between August 2006 – July 2007. There will be a choice of three projects which applicants can select from. The final project and intern will be selected on the basis of the merit of the applicant. These projects will be in the Curatorial, Education and Registration areas. This year there will also the option for an applicant to nominate their own project, in which case the Art Gallery will assess whether it can resource and supervise an independent project.

Further information is available from :

Marylyn Mayo Internships  
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki  
P O Box 5449, Wellesley Street, Auckland, New Zealand  
Email: [aucklandartgallery@aucklandcity.govt.nz](mailto:aucklandartgallery@aucklandcity.govt.nz)

## The Inaugural Marylyn Mayo Internship – the experience

When I first heard about the Marylyn Mayo Internship I felt that it would fill a gap in my experience – one not easy to obtain. I had, up until that time, worked only for small galleries or on independent projects. While I have thoroughly explored all avenues of gallery and curatorial work, I had not been able to apply all of my knowledge and experience on one major project in an important and prominent space. In other words, I needed to have experience in a large institution to consolidate all of the practical and theoretical work I had done to date. This Internship provides a rare, holistic opportunity to participate in the processes of a major art institution and, at least in my case, it has allowed access to all areas of its business.

### Background reading

The first weeks were taken up with familiarising myself with *Art & the 60s from Tate Britain*, the project to which I was assigned. Doing this required me to revisit what I had learned in the course of my art history degrees, in order to make sense of the complex and diverse array of artworks proposed for the show. Reading through all of the exhibition materials, supplementing artist details and compiling a bibliography relating to each artist in the show, was a good practical application of my many years of study. Bibliographical preparation meant that each book about an individual artist had to be considered in terms of its relevance to the exhibition and how useful it would be to any interested party seeking further contextual information regarding the artist and this period.

### A multi-faceted enterprise

Obtaining an overall picture of the ways each department in the Gallery contributes their expertise, was the focus of nearly two weeks of back-to-back meetings. With the Exhibitions Designer, I was able to discuss the intricacies of redeveloping an existing gallery space in order to physically accommodate a variety of artworks, as well as redeveloping the space in harmony with the show's themes. Aesthetic considerations must always be tempered with a need to preserve the exhibition's narrative. I was

also introduced to the latest computer software, which presents a three-dimensional virtual gallery space, wherein the designer can 'hang' works, giving the curator an impression of the potential look of the show.

The Gallery's conservators were happy to discuss their roles. In fact, I was fortunate enough to accompany Sarah Hillary to the Waikato Museum of Art and History and help her as she did a number of condition reports on works on loan from the Auckland Art Gallery's collection. Regardless of the type of show you find yourself involved with, it is important to understand how objects and artworks need to be treated and stored in order for them to be in optimum condition as exhibits. Working alongside the conservators extended throughout the development and installation of the *Art & the 60s* and *Atlantic Crossing*.

I had little experience with art education programmes, so it was useful to get to know and work with the Curator of Education, his staff and volunteers. Importantly, they are not spoon-feeding their charges, but have developed programmes that allow the children to help themselves understand and relate to the different works on display. Moreover, schools now are more ethnically diverse than they have ever been, so their attendance at the Art Gallery is an important way of reaching a greater potential future audience.

With the registrars I was able to see the mechanisms used by the Gallery when receiving artworks. The mammoth task of bringing sixty-five crates into a building barely large enough to contain them, as was the case with *Art & the 60s*, and accounting for their contents was a major logistical feat. Furthermore, I was able to participate in the process later on when, after negotiations with an overseas lender, an artwork came into the collection to be exhibited in my show *Atlantic Crossing*. I was also interested to see how various types of loan agreements are arranged and tailored between individuals and the Gallery, as well as between institutions, to the satisfaction of all parties.

### Copy rites

In terms of the administrative side of my participation in *Art & the 60s from Tate Britain*,



I discovered the tortuous world of copyright. While Tate had initially sanctioned the use of ten images of works in the show, to be used for advertising purposes, each subsequent gallery taking the show had to reapply to various copyright bodies, individuals and private galleries (representing estates) in order to use them again. However difficult (midnight calls to Tate & other UK galleries) this process might have been, and however fraught it was legally and bureaucratically (endless forms and misunderstandings at opposite sides of the globe), I was eventually able to master the process. I also gained an enormous respect for those who do this as a part of their daily routine. Moreover, I fully understand the need to protect the artists' rights in this process, as well as balancing and prioritising the paperwork to ensure that the needs of the Gallery's advertising and communications team are met. The considerable effort that went into this undertaking was made all the more worthwhile when the images were released and began to appear in public. What is more, it also gave me the chance to use my own foreign contacts to help facilitate approaches that would otherwise be difficult to manage from this side of the world.

Mary Kiser, the curator who was given the task to supervise my Internship, on top of an already immense workload, has proven inspirational. It was through her good offices that I was able to attend and participate in many strategy meetings relating to *Art & the 60s* and gain the broadest understanding of exactly what it takes to embark on an exhibition of this size. It definitely boosts your confidence to be treated as a colleague and to be asked your opinion on matters of importance. Impressive too was the fact that I was involved in critical discussions about the content of the show and that this level of conversation was extended to me by other curators in the Gallery, as well as Chris Stephens, curator of the original Tate exhibition.



**GREG ANDERSON IN ATLANTIC CROSSING, THE EXHIBITION WHICH HE CURATED DURING HIS INTERNSHIP AT AUCKLAND ART GALLERY.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: AUCKLAND ART GALLERY – TOI O TAMAKI

### Big picture

Apart from the hands-on work I participated in, I was also afforded a view from the top down. It was definitely a great opportunity to attend dinners with Chris Saines and have the benefit of his extensive experience in conversational advice regarding any future career moves. Being able to have dealings at all levels of the Gallery has cemented my ties with colleagues there and reinforced my firm belief in building lasting professional and collegial relationships.

Dr Mayo's philanthropy in the name of his late wife and his understanding of the attendant difficulties involved in pursuing a career in the arts, will ensure that those who follow me in this Internship will be set on the best possible course in a professional and welcoming environment.

*Greg Anderson, the Inaugural Marylyn Mayo Intern currently lives in Auckland and hopes to continue working as a curator, with an emphasis on contemporary New Zealand and International art.*

# The Protected Objects Amendment Bill

EDWARD SIDDLE provides a progress report on proposed legislation, which aligns New Zealand's cultural heritage legislation with key international conventions

The Protected Objects Amendment Bill was introduced into Parliament in February 2005. The Bill substantially amends the Antiquities Act 1975, which provides for protection of New Zealand's most important movable cultural heritage.

While the Bill will change the name of the Act to the Protected Objects Act 1975, the amendments continue the policy of targeting a limited number of objects, meaning that the changes will not affect the majority of collectors and traders. The Bill seeks to preserve the delicate balance between the national interest and private property rights that was established in the Antiquities Act 1975. The amendments are primarily about improving the operation of the Act, by improving the clarity of definitions around protected objects generally.

## Why does the Antiquities Act need updating?

The Bill seeks to address a number of shortcomings in the current statute. Firstly, the definitions and criteria applying to the export of heritage objects are ambiguous. Decision-making processes are not clear and inconsistent decisions may arise. Secondly, provision for establishing the ownership of newly-found Māori artifacts have not been utilised with the frequency originally intended. Thirdly, low penalties provide few sanctions for non-compliance with the Act, particularly with respect to the wilful damage of objects subject to export applications.

The other key problem with the current Act is that important objects – such as the 'Ortiz' or Motunui pataka panels (Day, 2001, p. 38-39) – have been illegally exported overseas and cannot be recovered. One solution, which will make it more likely that such objects can be returned to New Zealand, is for New Zealand to become party to the 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions regarding illegal export or theft of cultural heritage objects. The Bill introduces the required provisions for New Zealand

to participate in these Conventions, which are not currently in the Antiquities Act.

## Consultative process

### The Motunui Pataka Panels, and the 'Ortiz' case

The Motunui Pataka panels have been described as representing "the single most exciting unit of the now-extinct Taranaki carving style" and "a true masterpiece of Māori art".

The panels had been dug-up from a swamp in Taranaki, sold to a dealer, exported from New Zealand in breach of the predecessor legislation to the Antiquities Act 1975, and purchased by Mr. Ortiz. Some time later they were put up for auction at Sotheby's in London, at which point the Crown issued proceedings in the English Courts in an attempt to recover the panels. The claim to recover failed in the House of Lords, on the ground that the then applicable legislation did not automatically vest title to illegally exported artefacts in the Crown. In a previous ruling, the English Court of Appeal also considered that the claim should fail on the ground that it would involve the enforcement of a foreign penal or public law.

It is understood that the Motunui pataka panels remain in the ownership of the purchaser.

The Bill is the culmination of a long process of review of the Act that began in the late 1980s. This review resulted in a discussion paper about proposed amendments to the Act which, in 2004, was widely distributed among heritage experts, collectors, dealers and the general public. Following this discussion paper, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage further developed the policy proposals into the Bill which was introduced to the House.

Last year, the Bill proceeded through its initial Parliamentary stages, including consideration of public submissions and examination by a select committee. The Bill is now awaiting the final parts of the legislative process, which are expected to take place sometime in 2006.

### Key differences

To address the problems with the system for controlling the export of heritage objects, the Bill creates a schema of nine categories of "Protected New Zealand Objects" (this phrase replaces the term "antiquities"). These categories describe precisely the types of objects subject to export regulation (see box). The significance of objects in the categories is then assessed according to the extent to which an object is significant to New Zealand for aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, artistic, cultural, historical, literary, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional reasons. Export permission will be refused for objects of such significance that their permanent export would substantially diminish New Zealand's cultural heritage. Formally engaged expert examiners will give the Chief Executive of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage advice on export decisions.

#### Categories of protected New Zealand objects

See Schedule Four of the Protected Objects Amendment Bill for full descriptions

- 1 Archaeological, ethnographic, and historical objects of non-New Zealand origin, relating to New Zealand
- 2 Art objects including fine, decorative, and popular art
- 3 Documentary heritage objects
- 4 Ngā taonga tāturu
- 5 Natural science objects
- 6 New Zealand archaeological objects
- 7 Numismatic and philatelic objects
- 8 Science, technology, industry, economy, and transport objects
- 9 Social history objects

### Ngā taonga tāturu

One key change represented by the nine categories is that of ngā taonga tāturu, *known in the current Act as artifacts*. These are objects that relate to Māori culture or society and were (or appear to have been) manufactured or modified in New Zealand by Māori (or brought into New Zealand by Māori), and are at least 50 years old. This new definition expands the old one, which only covered objects from before 1902.

When such objects are found, it is the intention of the Act that ownership of those objects is determined. However, this has only happened infrequently, with iwi generally having been granted *custody* of found artifacts, rather than *ownership*. The Bill provides a more streamlined administrative process for ensuring that ownership of found Māori cultural objects is established. This requires the Chief Executive of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to notify the find, provide for care of the object during the process, receive and, if possible, resolve competing claims, and seek confirmation of ownership by the Registrar of the Māori Land Court where correct ownership is resolved. Where there are competing claims that cannot be resolved, the Bill requires the Chief Executive to facilitate the claims to the Māori Land Court for resolution. Grants of custody (for example, to museums) will continue to be made where there are no ownership claims.

### More realistic sanctions

The Bill also substantially increases penalties for non-compliance with the Act. For example, failure to adhere to provisions in the Act on disposal of taonga tāturu will make an individual liable to a fine of up to \$10,000, and a body corporate up to \$20,000. The previous fine was \$1,000. A new provision is also introduced, which creates a new criminal offence relating to wilful damage of objects that are subject to export applications, or have been refused permission for export.

Finally, the Select Committee recommended that Parliament amend the Bill so that expert examiners of protected New Zealand objects will not be able to be held personally liable for advice or recommendations they make, provided that advice



**PROTECTED OBJECTS:** A HIGHLY UNUSUAL AND FRAGILE FIND AT TARAKOHE OF MATAU (FISHHOOKS), SOME STILL WITH FLAX FIBRES ATTACHED. THE MUSEUM CONCERNED, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LOCAL IWI ALL HAD AN INTEREST IN THE ARTIFACTS AND TOGETHER IT WAS DECIDED FOR THE FISHHOOKS TO BE HOUSED AT THE MUSEUM IN SPECIALISED CONDITIONS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: MINISTRY FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE.

was given in good faith. This provides an important protection for any museum staff acting as an expert examiner in their role as an employee. A future article in *te ara* will provide more detail about operational aspects of the Bill, particularly as they relate to museums, once it is enacted.

Edward Siddle is a heritage policy adviser at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. He has previously worked at the New Zealand Customs Service and the Ministry of Justice, and has BA (Hons) in English Literature.

Editors Note: At the time of going to press, the Bill has had its second reading

#### **Reference**

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# The museum sector strategy – one year on

PHILLIPA TOCKER summarises key activities undertaken by Museums Aotearoa in the past twelve months

Museums Aotearoa launched *A Strategy for the Museums Sector in New Zealand* one year ago to unanimous endorsement by the sector. This set out a range of issues and challenges facing museums and galleries, as well as strategies and specific implementation tasks to address them. Some strategies and tasks have been reprioritised in the last year in response to changing circumstances and evolving needs. A number have progressed significantly.

## Common ground

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between Museums Aotearoa and National Services Te Paerangi. This covers areas of responsibility, cooperation and collaboration on matters of common interest, and was formally signed at the recent Museums Aotearoa conference in Napier. The clarification of the MoU, and the recent review of the priorities and structure of National Services Te Paerangi, offer a strong platform from which to work on our future endeavours.

## Collection direction

A meeting has been convened in June 2006 to prepare more intensively for the development of a Distributed National Collection concept and to identify the steps that will need to be followed to bring it to fruition. The meeting will consider the establishment of an appropriate structure for liaison and support of a Distributed National Collection, and include consultation with the heritage, libraries and archives sectors.

## Training on track

Significant progress has been made on improving the range of training and development options for staff and volunteers. This year's annual Museums Aotearoa conference offered excellent learning opportunities, including a focussed session hosted by National Services Te Paerangi, who have also continued to provide workshops throughout the

country based on regional needs. The new Certificate in Museum Practice launched by the Aviation, Travel and Tourism Training Organisation earlier this year, has already signed its first trainee. This certificate allows staff and volunteers who have no museum-related tertiary education to acquire appropriate skills, and for those they already have to be recognised formally. This is the culmination of many years' work by many individuals in our museums and galleries around the country, and fills a gap in the continuum of museum and gallery staff training options.

## Technological advantage

The importance of the Internet is highlighted in several of the implementation tasks of the Strategy. It has a significant role to play in enhancing access to collections, national databases, life-long learning opportunities, sharing information on touring exhibitions, as well as being an essential communication tool. Museums Aotearoa has been working on a new website, which will enhance our capacity as a clearing-house for information. It will be launched in June, and will enable us to offer support services to the museums sector that are not currently possible.

## Counting for something

Another area identified in the *Strategy* for sector-wide consideration is the development of collective projects to improve information on which to base further work. These projects include benchmarking, remuneration and sector-wide statistics. Without comprehensive data, it is difficult to predict future trends or to prove the potential worth of new initiatives. Museums Aotearoa will be working on these in 2006. Input is invited into the development of this project, and all museums and galleries will be asked to contribute to it.

Phillipa Tocker is Executive Director, Museums Aotearoa.



PHILLIPA TOCKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MUSEUMS AOTEAROA, ENJOYS THE 2006 CONFERENCE IN NAPIER. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST

# Museums Aotearoa Conference 2006 – Museums as a central focus of community life

FIONA HALL reflects on this year's conference hosted in  
Napier by the Hawkes Bay Cultural Trust, April 19-21, 2006

## Spirited start

What a remarkable, thought-provoking, insightful and challenging speaker Elaine Heumann Gurian is. For those of us fortunate enough to attend the pre-conference event organised by National Services Te Paerangi, Elaine's master class was "a guided discussion" addressing "The role of spirituality in the 21st century museum", perhaps not the kind of discussion many museum people would anticipate having in their professional lives – those that do not live in New Zealand anyway.



REGULAR DOSES OF SUNSHINE AND COFFEE KEEP DELEGATES ATTENTIVE.  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST

With Elaine's expert facilitation, the group covered a wide range of topics and manifestations of museum spirituality and the benefits and challenges these can entail. Perhaps some of the most useful discussion concerned creating "safe" spaces for staff, visitors and taonga and the importance of training to ensure such safety with a level of comfort and acceptance for spirituality within the museum. At its most basic, how do we enable the expression of emotion and a spiritual connection within our organisations, and do we believe that there is only

one central story that is to be told?

Certainly, it is a challenge for managers to enable and encourage diversity and expression and, most importantly, to understand that initially not everyone will be happy to foster these concepts. Gone are the days where one easy solution would fit each issue as it arises, yet the opportunities for understanding and growth for us, our staff, our institutions and our community involvement are extraordinary when we take a wider and more diversified view.

## Elusive essence – acknowledged but still undefined

Elaine's keynote address the following day, entitled "The Essential Museum", challenged us to consider where the power lies in our organisations and in our relationships with our communities. By using comparisons with other community organisations or services such as libraries, shopping malls and the internet where visitors are driven by 'flights of fancy' or by a quest, a question or a need, she urged us to think of our relationships in a different way.

She set out to be controversial and provocative and, whilst not everyone was in complete agreement with the analogies she presented, there was general consensus about her underlying concept. I would concur with her view that small, more focused museums have the greatest ability to make these changes and several examples of museums were cited that are already on this track.

## Reports from the frontline

Many of the other conference speakers continued the theme of the interactions between museums and the community. Some fascinating talks from various museum workers detailed projects that they have undertaken. It is so refreshing to hear about



**NGAHIWI TOMOANA, CHAIR OF NGATI KAHUNGUNGU, SHOOTS FOR THE STARS, SHARING FUTURE PLANS FOR A CULTURAL CENTRE.**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST

not only the parts of the projects that were successful, but also the failures, the obstacles and, invariably, the thought patterns and operating procedures that needed to change.

These accounts provoke us into thinking about the future projects we may have in mind and how to deal with issues likely to be encountered. The examples of the various projects that had experienced difficulties were as insightful as those that did not. I was particularly struck by both the integrity and courage of Tairāwhiti Museum in sharing their experiences.

There were also presentations from people involved with government projects relating to culture, tourism and museums. Tourism New Zealand's work was very useful – particularly for those of us who do need to keep explaining in quantifiable terms what we do to attract visitors and why. I will confess to being rather confused about the Cultural Portal, not because I did not understand the concept but because I simply would not want to visit it, initially based on the presentation.

### A new bible?

Coming from one of the museums audited as part of the *Management of Heritage Collection in Local Museums and Art Galleries* study by the Office of the Auditor General, I was delighted that the conference organisers asked Bill Gebbie to report their findings to the wider museum community. Whilst Bill did express a desire that we not use the report to bludgeon our governing bodies into action, the mere existence of the report is, I have already found, very useful in creating action. It is from a body respected by local government, and written in a way that appeals to politicians and bureaucrats, and thus provides an antidote to the unfortunate scepticism, which is sometimes expressed about our ability to function in a professional, business-like fashion.

As a community of museum workers, this openness and willingness to share advice and experience is

invaluable for all. It was also pleasing to see such a large attendance both from the smaller museums and from volunteers and others associated with museums – either in a community or governance role. A request for the next conference though – could the organisers please produce a list of attendees, as this encourages networking?

The introduction of a trade show was an excellent idea as it allowed people to discuss and see new technology, even if we are not yet able to afford it, and make contact with new suppliers. Certainly, most of the people I spoke with found it an invaluable experience and something they would like to see continue.



**RELATIONSHIP ISSUES: MIKE SPEDDING AND MONTY SOUTAR'S DOUBLE ACT WAS REFRESHINGLY HONEST.**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST

### Fitting finale

Returning to the conference theme of *Museums as a central focus of community life*, Te Taru White and others, after his presentation, sang the waiata *Hutia te rito o te harakeke*. What could be more appropriate, as Elaine Heumann Gurian noted, than the last two lines:

He aha te mea nui o te o maku e ki atu,  
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

What is the most important thing in this world?  
It is people, it is people, it is people.

Fiona Hall has been Manager of the Whakatane Museum and Gallery for three years. Previously she was a Curator at Te Papa for seven years, Manager of the New Zealand Geographic Board, Project Curator with the Museum of City and Sea in Wellington and Curator at the Whanganui Regional Museum. She has also worked with several small museums and other organisations as a freelance curator. This was her fourth, and best, Museums Association conference.



**WELCOME TO THE CONFERENCE! STAFF OF THE HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST, HOSTS OF THE 2006 CONFERENCE, ENSURE THE ORGANISATION RUNS SMOOTHLY.**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST



# 'Oceans Apart, Museums Together' – the International Congress of Maritime Museums 2005

CLAIRE FREEMAN reports on the 12th Triennial International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM), held in Auckland, 7–11 November 2005, proudly co-hosted by the New Zealand National Maritime Museum and the Navy Museum.



**AOTEAROA ONE SAILING PAST THE ICMM DELEGATES ABOARD HMNZS RESOLUTION. BUILT AND OPERATED BY TE WANANGA O AOTEAROA, AOTEAROA ONE IS USED FOR TRAINING IN TRADITIONAL VOYAGING SKILLS. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005**

The Congress opened with a powhiri at the Maritime Museum, welcoming more than 70 delegates and speakers from 14 countries as diverse as the Bahamas, Finland, Argentina, Canada, Portugal, and Jersey. The evening also provided an opportunity for delegates to view the 'Snapshots' exhibition – highlighting moments from New Zealand's maritime history – which was jointly curated by the two host museums.

## Pacific compass

Kerry Howe of Massey University made an immediate impact on the Congress with his presentation of 'The Last Great Migration – The Human Discovery of the South Pacific and New Zealand'. He spoke of the artefactual, linguistic and

biological evidence that allows us to trace the remarkable settlement of the Pacific islands by the Austronesian people. This story, of humans reaching the end of the habitable world, was clearly one of the highlights of the Congress.

This theme is also the subject of the forthcoming 'Vaka Moana' exhibition, described by Rodney Wilson. The exhibition, curated by some of the world's leading scholars, is due to open at the Auckland Museum in December 2006 before touring to Asia, Europe & the United States.

This story of the Pacific migration was the first of several sessions that brought a local flavour to the International Congress. Other papers included Te Papa's Seddon Bennington outlining cultural responsibility through the involvement of, and consultation with, iwi; and an insight into the "cultural centres" of the Pacific Islands. Here, traditional heritage management practice is being challenged by the cultural and intellectual renaissance in the Pacific. Museums have had to broaden their sense of heritage and are working to reconnect with their communities through local involvement in developing exhibitions and public programmes.

## Keeping afloat

Another prevailing theme of the Congress was addressing the challenges that maritime museums are facing – making themselves relevant to a wider audience and being effective in telling their story. Such was the message in Paul Thompson's informative paper entitled 'The reinvention of Wellington Maritime Museum as the Museum of Wellington City & Sea'.





**JOINT VENTURE: REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RNZ NAVY MUSEUM AND THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM ENSURE EVERYTHING IS SHIP-SHAPE WITH CONGRESS ORGANISERS CMSL. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CLIFF HEYWOOD (DEPUTY DIRECTOR, RNZNM), DEREK WEDEKIND (NZNMM FRIEND), PAUL WALKER (CMSL), LARRY ROBBINS (CEO NZNMM), SHELLEY CALLANDER (CMSL).**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005

In the 1990s, the governance of the Wellington Maritime Museum was passed from the Wellington Harbour Board into the care of the Wellington City Council run Wellington Museums Trust. As the recipient of public funding, the Museum now had an obligation to make itself accessible to as broad an audience as possible. The result was that the Museum widened its focus; a change of name, to the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, signalled this shift. Although it still retains a nautical feel today, about two thirds of the Museum's exhibitions and education programmes encompass non-maritime themes. Overall, the transformation has been an outstanding success with an increase in both admission numbers and visitor satisfaction.

A similar story of transformation was told by John Kearon of the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Britain. This was a "traditional" maritime museum, which, in response to falling visitor numbers, recently radically changed direction. It installed a temporary exhibitions space that encompasses general and more wide-ranging maritime-related themes, and is also expanding the use of its historic vessel to serve as a corporate event venue, education area, and gallery.

### Making waves

Burt Logan from the USS Constitution Museum in Boston spoke of a three-year study they are undertaking to research family learning. The study has measured the effectiveness of simple family interactives through the use of prototype exhibits and extensive visitor evaluations. The project is into its first year – it will continue into 2008 with the outcomes summarised in articles, a website, and a "do-it-yourself" toolkit for museums.

The Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, USA,

tackled a project on an even bigger scale. Their rebuilding programme sought to address audience needs. It utilised a combination of interpretive strategies that emphasise a visual perspective to focus visitor attention on the objects, but still provided contextual information, not only through labels, but also with optional reference material, audio guides, etc. The building itself has a diversity of gallery spaces and design features to allow multiple pathways through the building, giving the public different, and hopefully fresh, experiences on repeat visits.

"Interpreting Adventure – pushing the boundaries of Museum Practice" was the title of a fascinating presentation by the Australian Maritime Museum's Daina Fletcher. She outlined the story of Australian Kay Cottee, the first woman to sail around the world unaided. The Museum purchased Cottee's boat and over 1000 associated artefacts. So began the challenge for the Museum – how to communicate the danger, drama and emotion of Cottee's story whilst still preserving her boat and related artefacts? To do this, the Museum chose 10 days of Cottee's actual voyage and demonstrated how the boat was used at that time, both by the careful placement of artefacts (replicating moments recorded in Cottee's photographs) and through the Museum guides' narratives.

### Other currents

The conference also included a chance for short reports from various maritime museums. One delivered by the South Australian Maritime Museum explained the creation of education programmes



**BEATING THE RETREAT AT DEVONPORT NAVAL BASE.** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005



**ATTENTIVE DELEGATES LISTEN TO THE OPENING SPEECHES IN THE EDMISTON GALLERY OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM.** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005



**ALL ABOARD. DELEGATES SET OFF FOR THE RECEPTION AT THE DEVONPORT NAVAL BASE ABOARD THE HISTORIC HARBOUR FERRY GLEN ROSA (BUILT IN 1949).**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005

using Centra, a computer software programme. The programme allows the facilitator to give a presentation using live footage that is viewed in real-time by the participants who can interact with the facilitator. The Museum has used the programme to encourage children, schools and community groups to create their own exhibitions and undertake community projects.

Other conference topics ranged from the place of women in maritime museums, to the Saltwater collection of bark paintings at the Australian National Maritime Museum; and from early leisure boating in New Zealand to the ubiquitous Captain Cook.

### Nautical networking

The Congress also provided a chance for informal networking, involving several excellent social events.

These included a formal dinner at the Auckland Museum and an evening hosted by the Royal New Zealand Navy that included a 'Beating the Retreat' display by the Navy Band and a Guard of Honour. Delegates were most fortunate to spend the final day of the conference relaxing onboard the Navy's hydrographic survey ship, HMNZS Resolution.

In summary, the ICMC Conference was a most enlightening and interesting event. The variety of papers presented prompted much discussion and provided a great deal of food for thought. New Zealand was honoured to be able to host an international conference of this magnitude, and delegates remarked upon the high standard of the event's organisation, as well as the warmth of the local hospitality.



**STILL LISTENING. DELEGATES ABOARD HMNZS RESOLUTION HEAR ABOUT THE WORK OF THE NAVY'S HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY SHIP.**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARITIME MUSEUMS 2005

Claire Freeman is Collection Manager at the Navy Museum, Devonport, on Auckland's North Shore. Her previous employment has included working in the Registration section at the Auckland Museum and at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, UK.

The International Congress of Maritime Museums is a self-supporting network of maritime museum professionals. Its museum membership numbers well over 100 with a focus on bringing together professional counterparts from all over the world for its biennial (previously triennial) conference. It publishes a thrice-yearly newsletter and hosts a website: [www.icmmonline.org](http://www.icmmonline.org)



# Leading from the Edge – the 2005 Public Galleries Summit

Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, was the venue for this ground breaking Trans-Tasman conference, 9-11 November, 2005. TRACY PUKLOWSKI was impressed.

This third Public Galleries Summit was coordinated by Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW), following almost two years of planning. The aim of the summit was to present new concepts and explore philosophies, whilst provoking discussion and exchange. The programme addressed four key themes, each exploring aspects of the roles of regional galleries in Australia and New Zealand. The themes were:

- Creative Programming and Leadership
- Perceptions of Regionalism
- New Protocols: Dialogues Across Cultures
- Perceptions of Audience

## Local participation

Notably, this summit marked the heaviest New Zealand involvement to date, in terms of planning and participation. Indeed the primary theme itself – that of *Leading from the Edge* – was heavily influenced by the Australian perception of New Zealand, and its museums and galleries, as risk-takers and leaders in spite of, or perhaps due to, geographical isolation.

New Zealand involvement prior to, and during, the summit was made easier thanks to the assistance of the Australian High Commission, IAS (International Art Services) and Creative New Zealand (CNZ). CNZ provided funding for ten bursaries, which were made available to New Zealand delegates through Museums Aotearoa.

The summit itself was attended by well over 100 delegates, and was complemented by thematically aligned masterclasses and exhibitions. The speakers came from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and the United Kingdom.



GREGORY BURKE DISCUSSES CREATIVE PROGRAMMING AND LEADERSHIP WITH PANELLISTS AMANDA LAWSON, SARAH MILLER, ANNA WALDMANN. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: MUSEUMS & GALLERIES NEW SOUTH WALES

## Leitmotiv

Although the four main themes guided the format of the summit, there was really only one theme that predominated; that of Leadership, and its many explicit and implicit forms.

Leadership in terms of planning and vision was explored by speakers such as Faith Liddell (former Director of Dundee Contemporary Arts), Greg Burke (former Director of the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery), Sarah Miller (Director of Perth Institute of Contemporary Art) and Elizabeth Ann McGregor (Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney).

All reinforced the need to have an unwavering vision – particularly in terms of exhibition planning, and the need to position the viewer as central to the art experience, thereby empowering the visitor.

Faith Liddell made one of the summit's most compelling statements – and challenges – when she



NGAHIRAKA MASON OF AUCKLAND ART GALLERY CONTRIBUTES TO SESSION ENTITLED NEW PROTOCOLS: DIALOGUES ACROSS CULTURES. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: MUSEUMS & GALLERIES NEW SOUTH WALES

exhorted attendees to give people not only what they want, but what they might never have imagined, and never to allow your strategic direction to be diluted. Certainly this determined approach paid dividends for both Liddell and Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA); established in 1999 in an overwhelmingly conservative and working-class city, DCA is now regarded as having reinvigorated Scottish art.

These principles were reinforced by Elizabeth Ann McGregor, who gave an account on the second day of how she managed to turn perceptions of the MCA around, from it being seen as an elitist and irrelevant institution to a dynamic and successful organisation. The most interesting aspect of this transformation was that it relied in no way upon 'dumbing down' the art presented, or on 'blockbuster' exhibitions to increase visitation. The visitation to the MCA trebled in a space of 4-5 years under Elizabeth Ann's Directorship, which she attributes to a number of initiatives and concepts, including free access, and a steadfast refusal to adjust programming to drive visitation. She believes programming should be driven by passion. In

addition, the MCA's interpretive strategies are based on demystifying rather than explaining; a subtle yet powerful difference.

### Mastering leadership

A more traditional exploration of Leadership emerged in the masterclass run by Professor Roger Collins, who reviewed the latest research findings on effective creative leadership. Amanda Lawson (Head of School, Art and Design, at the University of Wollongong) also contemplated the meaning of leadership, and presented the notion of distributed or collective leadership as a viable model not only for the creative industries, but also for business per se.

Yet other speakers on different topics reinforced the theme of leadership through their vision, their passion, and their determination.

### New frontiers

Themes and sub-themes aside, the most beneficial aspect of the summit was the opportunity to exchange ideas on both individual and organisational levels. The reaction to the level of New Zealand participation and attendance was overwhelmingly positive. There is a hunger, it seems, to learn more about what we do in our galleries and museums, and how we do it. Accordingly, New Zealand has been approached to develop and host the next summit, planned for 2008, and it is hoped that this might herald a new era of trans-Tasman creative exchange and interaction.

An experienced art curator, Tracy Puklowski is now General Manager of National Services Te Paerangi. After a period as Curator of Art Collections with the Waikato Museum of Art and History, she served as Director of Aratoi in Masterton and Te Awamutu Museum, and more recently as Curator of Art at Te Papa.



# Witches, Writers, and Whalers: A New England Adventure in Salem

An historic New England seaport casts its spell on CHANEL CLARKE during a museum exchange to investigate the early collections of Māori material by Salem's sea captains.

## Destination Salem

In an earlier issue of *te ara* (2005, 30 (1)), I described my experience on the UNESCO Training for Young Leaders Programme held in Nara, Japan. My most recent international journey was an exchange to the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts, U.S.A. This time I had my parents and three year old daughter in tow. The exchange arose from an approach in 2002 by the PEM's then Associate Curator of Oceanic Art, Christina Hellmich, raising the possibility of collaboration on a project to catalogue their extensive Māori collection, the majority of which was collected by sea captains and traders from the East India Marine Society. Some of their earliest Māori acquisitions dated from 1802. We were successful in being awarded an International Partnerships Among Museums (IPAM) Programme grant organised by the American Association of Museums. This grant enabled Christina to visit New Zealand in November 2004 and me to study the Salem collections from July to August 2005. My family and I spent approximately five weeks in Salem, visiting a few other nearby States, including New Hampshire, Washington D.C. and New York.

Almost every State in the U.S. has its Salem, but ours was the oldest, formally founded in Massachusetts in 1629. Naumkeag, loosely translated as "the fishing place" had been occupied for many centuries by the Algonkian before the arrival of English settlers in 1626. Migrating from nearby Cape Ann, led by Roger Conant, these settlers were hoping to find a haven of peace in this New World. They renamed it Salem (from the Hebrew word Shalom) around 1830 after the Old Testament city of peace.



VIEW OF EAST INDIA MARINE HALL WHICH IS DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK. IT WAS BUILT IN 1825 BY THE EAST INDIA MARINE SOCIETY, WHICH FOUNDED THE MUSEUM. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHANEL CLARKE

## Good spells, and bad

Salem is now most widely recognised for the one year (between 1692-1693) in its very long history where mass hysteria overtook the good judgement of the townsfolk. Nineteen women were hanged and one man was pressed to death with stones for suspected witchcraft. This very small incident is one which its local businesses fully exploit, generating a decent share of New England's tourist market, evident in the many witch-related museums, tarot stores and shops selling other related paraphernalia. However, this one event overshadows Salem's considerable historical significance on a number of other fronts, not least its importance as the major American sea trading port during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At its peak in 1807, Salem's fleet numbered some 200 vessels in one of the busiest and best known ports in the early modern world. The citizens of China Trade Salem were among the first Americans to fly the stars and stripes into Pacific waters.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM'S NEW ATRIUM DESIGNED BY RENOWNED ARCHITECT MOSHE SAFDIE. THE PROJECT, WHICH WAS COMPLETED IN JUNE 2003, RENOVATED EXISTING SPACES AND CREATED 250,000 SQUARE FEET OF NEW FACILITIES. THE ATRIUM PROVIDES AN IMPRESSIVE SPACE THAT UNIFIES AND INTEGRATES THE OLD WITH THE NEW. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHANEL CLARKE

### Purposeful endeavours

The East India Marine Society had three purposes: the first was to help the needy families of mariners engaged in a hazardous enterprise; the second to gather a library of information to improve navigation; and the third was to form a museum of objects found on distant shores. Eligibility for membership of the Society was restricted to shipmasters and super-cargoes (owner's representatives) who "shall have actually navigated

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES (TURNER INGERSOLL HOUSE C.A 1668), WHICH INSPIRED THE BOOK OF THE SAME NAME BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. ANIMATED JUNIOR TOUR GUIDE, HANA-RAWHITI MAIPI-CLARKE, ENJOYS THE PERIOD GARDEN WITH HER GRANDMOTHER EILEEN CLARKE. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHANEL CLARKE



the Seas near the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn." Each member bound for sea was given a blank journal, to be filled with the log of the voyage, descriptions of channels, ports, reefs and headlands and, in some cases, with sketches or even water-colours of coastlines and foreign craft.

The Museum of the East India Marine Society was established in 1799 to house the collection of "natural and artificial curiosities" brought back by Salem's captains and merchants from those far off shores. Its extensive library of logs and journals were invaluable aids to captains sailing routes for the first time. It was moved to the East India Marine Hall in 1824 and renamed the Peabody Institute in 1867, after philanthropist George Peabody. With the amalgamation of the Essex Institute in 1992 it is now known as the Peabody Essex Museum and is the oldest continuously operating museum in the U.S.

### Early contact – New Zealand connections – taonga

Salem had an extensive trade passing through the Pacific Islands to China and occasionally local vessels

reached Australia and New Zealand. Some of the taonga within the Museum were brought back by these vessels, while others were obtained from whalers operating from New Bedford's large whaling fleet which touched in at New Zealand for wood and water. As a result the PEM now has one of the country's finest ethnological collections of Oceanic origin, including approximately 300 Māori items.

Many of the objects contained within the Māori collection are of more than passing interest, due to their early known date of accession obtained from the relevant captain's logs and journals. The earliest accessions date from 1802, 1803, 1807, 1812 and 1823. Indeed our time spent studying the PEM collections was useful in that, when comparing pieces with examples in New Zealand museums with known ages, it became apparent that some stylistic conventions may have been present much earlier than was previously thought.

### Exploits of the *Eliza*

The accessions of 1807 came from Captain William Richardson who sailed on the brig *Eliza* of Salem, leaving the Isle of France, eventually arriving in Sydney on 20th December, 1805. It has been presumed that the taonga he collected and then deposited in the Museum were obtained from the Bay of Islands. A logbook of the voyage has survived but unfortunately there is a gap in the ship's log for the period that would have placed him in New Zealand, posing the question of whether he did reach New Zealand at all. If not, then it could be presumed that he may have acquired the artefacts during his ten-week stay in Sydney before departing in early March 1806. Careful on-going research as a result of this project has helped to dispel some previously held assumptions that much of the material in the collection was of Northern origin. For example, can we be certain that the first and sometimes the only New Zealand port of call for reprovisioning many of these ships on these early voyages was in fact the Bay of Islands?

### Revelations

In this respect the exercise was very useful in making one more aware of the tendency with which we here in New Zealand assign provenance and age by comparison with established stylistic attributions, that



CARVED PIPE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM ATTRIBUTED TO ROTORUA CARVER PATOROMU TAMATEA AS A RESULT OF THE RESEARCH EXCHANGE VISIT. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM



CARVED DOG IN THE COLLECTION OF THE PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM ATTRIBUTED TO ROTORUA CARVER ANAHA TE RAHUI AS A RESULT OF THE RESEARCH EXCHANGE VISIT. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM

in some respects have become almost “gospel”. In order to make more valid provenance assumptions, examining all evidence is crucial; in this case this went as far as plotting the course from the ship’s log to determine the supposed destination. The research we undertook together in Salem merely skimmed the surface; further probing and comparison will be necessary to try to unlock some of the tribal histories associated with many of these taonga.

### Guided by youthful experience

While in Salem my family and I also passed the time in the usual tourist manner by visiting local sites of interest. The State of Massachusetts abounds in historic houses and Salem is no exception. Our first Saturday in the town was spent walking along the famous Chestnut Street, awestruck by inscriptions on plaques attached to the houses, dating them anything from the mid 1600s to the early 1900s. The street was also home to Steven Phillips, a major collector and donor to the PEM, and in particular to its Oceanic collection, including several Māori pieces. It is the only house on the street that is open to the public and has a guided tour. This became our first ‘kid’s eye view’ of Salem. Totally befuddled with why we were in this house that was empty of people, my daughter Hana piped up during the tour, “This is no one’s house, Mummy”, looking at me rather bemused, as though we were complete idiots to be walking around in someone else’s house when it was apparent no one actually lived there! Clever cookie!

As soon as we got home to our apartment (itself a three-story Federal-style building ca.1805, known as the Gilbert Chadwick House, owned by the museum and used as scholars’ quarters), Hana professed that she was a guide and jabbered away about nothing in particular directing with her hands “and over here we have the bedroom”, scoring full marks for animation! She is very bossy by nature, so I guess that being a guide was something right up her alley. On subsequent tours of the apartment she informed us all that, by the way, photography was not allowed, and “Oh, please don’t touch the walls!” Moreover when I sat on the pull out couch in the apartment trying to listen intently to this guide’s very engrossing spiel, I was promptly told off for sitting on the bed!

### Literary lights

By the time we reached the House of Seven Gables (or more accurately the Turner Ingersoll House ca. 1668) on our last day in Salem, Hanna was well versed in the proper etiquette expected when visiting historic houses, earning “what a well behaved child” comments from the intriguing, informed and good-humoured guide. This was the actual house that inspired the author Salem resident Nathaniel Hawthorne to pen the acclaimed eponymous novel, and other classics of American literature, including *The Scarlet Letter*, after service as Surveyor in the US Custom House at Salem. If the shop is a measure of the museum, this one probably rated a four out of five with the usual trinkets supplemented by a good selection of books - the majority, as to be expected, were reprints of Hawthorne’s literary works. My only purchase was an attractive book entitled *Twenty Days with Julian and Little Bunny by Papa*, based on Hawthorne’s note books recording his experience left in sole charge of his five year old son for three weeks in Salem in 1851. 150 years later, I could identify with that, so it became the “must have” for the plane ride home.

By the time we headed to Washington the poor soul was, I think, experiencing museum fatigue! Washington was an essential on the itinerary to check out the newly opened National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The trip to NMAI is another story in itself and by the time my tribe gets anything near its own fully functioning museum, my daughter will be a good candidate for Director with years of guiding experience behind her!

### Not the end of the story

The exchange was a wonderful chance to look at U.S. museums and in particular to view some of our taonga that somehow made it to that side of the world. The project will be ongoing as we try to piece together the evidence and contemplate some of the journeys of these taonga across the oceans. At this stage all I can say is “Watch this space”.

Chanel Clarke (Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngati Porou and Tainui) is Curator Māori at Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira.



THE WEST INDIA GOODS STORE CA. 1800 WAS ONE OF MANY SUCH SHOPS THAT LINED SALEM’S WATERFRONT IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, PROVIDING ITS CITIZENS WITH ACCESS TO THE LUXURY GOODS OBTAINED FROM THE FAR EAST. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHANEL CLARKE



THE CUSTOM HOUSE BUILT IN 1829 IN THE FEDERAL STYLE WHERE NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE WORKED AS CUSTOMS SURVEYOR FROM 1846 - 1849. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: CHANEL CLARKE



# Attingham and beyond – personal perspectives

ANGELA LASSIG's eyes were opened during her experience on The Clark Collection/Creative New Zealand Scholarship



INTERIOR OF A BEDROOM, BRODSWORTH HALL, SOUTH YORKSHIRE.  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ANGELA LASSIG

## All around the houses

In late June 2005, I arrived in London for the start of my term as the Clark Collection/Creative New Zealand Scholar for 2005.

The centrepiece of the Scholarship is The Attingham Summer School, founded in 1952 by Helen Lowenthal and Sir George Trevelyan. The Attingham Summer School provides the scholar with the opportunity to study English country houses, their contents and their settings. The second of the School's three goals particularly applied to my areas of specialization – *"to study the contents of these buildings – their paintings, sculpture, furniture, ceramics, silver, textiles and other applied arts – as well as the planning, decorative treatment and the use of the interiors"*.

In 2005, together with forty-seven fellow students, I spent eighteen days studying twenty-four properties including West Dean House, Arundel Castle, Uppark, Petworth House and The Royal Pavilion in Sussex; Broughton Castle, Kedleston Hall, Calke Abbey, Chatsworth, Bolsover Castle, The Workhouse, Southwell, Flintham Hall, Winkburn Hall, Temple

Newsam and Hardwick Hall in Nottinghamshire; and Boughton House, Stowe House and Landscape Garden, Claydon House, Woburn Abbey, Chicheley Hall, Wimpole Hall, Moggerhanger Park, Avenue House, Dynevor House and Waddesdon Manor in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

## Internship insights

The Clark Collection/Creative New Zealand Scholarship incorporates a number of short internships in addition to attendance at the Summer School. This makes for an extremely stimulating and comprehensive two months of study and active involvement in the British heritage sector.

In 2003, the first year of the scholarship, three internships were undertaken – at English Heritage, the National Trust and at the Victoria & Albert Museum. In 2004 an additional study day was included with staff of The Royal Collection. In 2005 I was fortunate to have the day at The Royal Collection extended into a week, allowing me the opportunity to work alongside key staff involved in exhibition development.

## 1. English Heritage

My first internship, with English Heritage, was undertaken soon after I arrived in the United Kingdom, on the 19th June 2005. English Heritage is a major British heritage organisation with responsibility mainly for historic sites and the historic environment. It is government-funded and has wider responsibilities with national and local government.

## The Brodsworth Challenge

Because of my specialisation in dress and textiles, I was assigned a project at Brodsworth Hall, an Italianate Victorian mansion in South Yorkshire, acquired by English Heritage in 1990.

My project, devised by English Heritage Head



Curator, Martin Allfrey, and Brodsworth Curators Crosby Stevens and Caroline Carr-Whitworth, was to make some suggestions for the redisplay of two rooms in the upstairs West Wing, which had never been open to the public before.

I had only a week to get to know the property, to come to grips with the very unusual, even radical approach that English Heritage took in its interpretation of Brodsworth Hall, and to formulate my report. English Heritage's approach to the conservation of Brodsworth's interiors and its interpretation of the contents is visible in the very fabric of the house, the seemingly disorganised contents, and the way these contents are displayed. The challenge for Brodsworth's curators is to clearly convey to the visitor the rigorous yet subtle approach to the conservation of the interiors and the multi-layered presentation of the history of the continuous occupation of the house. It was my perception that much of the detailed and subtle work undertaken by English Heritage was largely invisible, and was in fact, so subtle that some members of the public left the house thinking that the interiors were awaiting conservation! This led me to recommend in my report the use of the two rooms awaiting development as interpretation rooms. I won't elaborate here further on my actual report; suffice to say that I felt confident that I had made a solid contribution to the discussion on the future development of the two rooms.

My experience at Brodsworth, effectively as a volunteer, was one of the best I had. I was treated as a colleague and the curators were extremely interested to have my thoughts on their upcoming project, even though my direct areas of responsibility do not involve interpretation of historic interiors. I learnt that I could be stretched and that I was able to apply my skills much more broadly than I had thought, and was actually very proud of the work that I did in that week.

## 2. The Royal Collection

My second internship took me from the depths of South Yorkshire to the heart of London and into the front door of one of the most famous landmarks in Britain – Buckingham Palace.

This experience again was one where I was treated



**BRODSWORTH HALL, SOUTH YORKSHIRE** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ANGELA LASSIG

as a colleague to the extent that within the first hour I was 'mucking in' with the Curator Caroline De Guitaut, the designer and installers of one of the exhibitions opening in the State Rooms of Buckingham Palace in the Summer of 2005. This exhibition, with its long title: *Queen Elizabeth's White Wardrobe and the 1938 State Visit to France*, explored the pale and beautiful wardrobe designed by Norman Hartnell for the late Queen Mother, which has been immortalised in evocative photographs by Cecil Beaton.

### *Rolling up our sleeves for royalty*

When I arrived on July 25th, the exhibition was due to open to the public in five days time, and to be inspected by Her Majesty the next day, so it was 'all hands on deck' to complete the exhibition, as well as to keep the space tidy for any royal visitations. The press had also started to visit, so it was a little chaotic at times. During those interviews I made myself scarce, but useful, by assisting the medal specialist with the displays of all the orders of the Commonwealth that were being prepared in the adjacent ballroom. I was alarmed when asked to iron the wonderful woven ribbons that accompanied the orders, but managed to negotiate the use of a clean souvenir tea towel of Scotland from one of the installers to use as a barrier between the warm iron and the ribbons!

I had an extremely enjoyable time at the Palace and learnt a great deal about the major effort required to transform a living palace into a tourist attraction which includes major exhibitions. This work often has to occur within a fortnight or less and involves, for example, the lifting of all the historic carpets and the laying of new carpet.

I felt that my skills were valued and utilised but I was surprised to encounter an assumption at the



VIEW FROM INNER DOME WINDOW AT BRIGHTON PAVILION.  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ANGELA LASSIG

Royal Collection that a curator was also a conservator and an installer. Fortunately multi-tasking was something that I have experienced – and very much enjoyed – while working in other institutions.

I had a similarly positive experience while based for the remainder of the week at Kensington Palace where I assisted the Curator

of Royal and Ceremonial Dress, Joanna Marschner, with research for their current exhibition on dresses worn by Princess Diana and photographed by Mario Testino. There was also a little time to use the extraordinary library to do some research on items of ceremonial dress in Te Papa's collection.

### 3. The National Trust

My next internship – with the National Trust – took place immediately after Kensington Palace. The National Trust is a charitable trust with major responsibility for the preservation of built heritage and their interiors in Great Britain. My internship included the study of five properties in five days, and a meeting in London with key National Trust staff.

The National Trust internship essentially offers the scholar the chance to extend their knowledge in their field/s of expertise by selecting properties rich in material relating to those areas, as well as to gain understandings of the way the National Trust cares for, and administers, its properties. The natural exchanges between the scholar and National Trust staff provide an excellent opportunity for sharing information about the scholar's institution and country.

#### *The New Zealand connection*

All the properties, apart from one, Clandon Park, were suggested by me and decided on in collaboration with National Trust staff. Clandon Park, in Surrey, has been on the itinerary of all the

Scholars to date, which I believe to be a deliberate ploy to make the New Zealander homesick, ensuring their return home! In Clandon's grounds rests Guide Sophia's whare, Hinemihi, and inside the house is a New Zealand-themed museum including objects, mainly Māori, assembled by the 4th Earl of Onslow, Governor of New Zealand between 1889 and 1892.

#### *Further afield*

The other four properties – Tyntesfield in North Somerset, Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire, Blickling Hall and the National Trust Conservation Studio in Norfolk and Powys Castle in Welshpool – taught me more about both English interiors and particularly English textiles, as well as the day to day issues of running properties, through discussions with my hosts – usually National Trust area managers responsible either for Interiors or the Building Structures.

### 4. The Victoria and Albert Museum

At the Victoria and Albert Museum (the V & A), where I undertook my last internship, I was based in the Metalwork and Jewellery Department. Here I worked in practical terms as a volunteer Curator, carrying out day-to-day curatorial tasks such as cataloguing and researching collections. It was satisfying, as well as encouraging, knowing that my work was directly adding to the curatorial effort by the department's staff on the new Medieval and Renaissance Galleries, planned to open in 2009 as part of the ten year FuturePlan programme to revitalise the 150-year-old museum. At the same time, I was supported by introductions in meetings with various key staff to learn about the development of other new galleries that form part of this adventurous and exciting FuturePlan, which I believe could prove an excellent model for managing change in the redevelopment of galleries and museums in New Zealand.

#### *Museological make-over*

I was fortunate in being able to spend some time with Christopher Wilk, the Curator responsible for overseeing the development of the British Galleries which I feel represent the most exciting and innovative development in the interpretation of the decorative arts and design in recent history. He and

colleague Nick Humphrey have written an extremely informative book about the new galleries, titled *Creating the British Galleries at the V&A: A study in museology* (reviewed by Louis Le Vaillant in *te ara*, 2005, (30 (1), p 44). I highly commend this as a must-read for any person interested in cutting-edge museology.

I feel that the V&A experience was mutually beneficial and is the type of positive experience that the New Zealand museum worker, who is interested in professional development overseas, should be seeking.

### Extending professional networks

In my experience with British museums and other cultural institutions, there is goodwill towards 'foreign' visiting curators and always jobs to be done, as there are in many of our institutions. Working in a museum overseas offers an excellent opportunity to experience different systems and ways of operating, and also to make time to talk to other colleagues in the institution and often to be introduced to other institutions' staff.

### Absolutely Positively Attingham

The Attingham Trust Summer School alone would have been an astonishing opportunity. Combined with the four Internships, this was, for me, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Being able to extend one's knowledge and experience alongside peers and colleagues is incredibly valuable. For me it provided much positive reinforcement, which in turn gave me the confidence to ask the questions I needed answered, and enabled me to participate fully in all these immersive experiences.

I have developed a very good understanding of the major heritage organisations in Britain, as well as the issues confronted and dealt with on a daily basis. From these organisations I gathered some great ideas for different modes of communication and interpretation of heritage items.

I now have a much stronger contextual framework in which to place my existing knowledge and new learning. Armed with a much clearer understanding of the different historical and stylistic periods prior to the 18th century, I can visualise the distinctive characteristics of each style from first hand

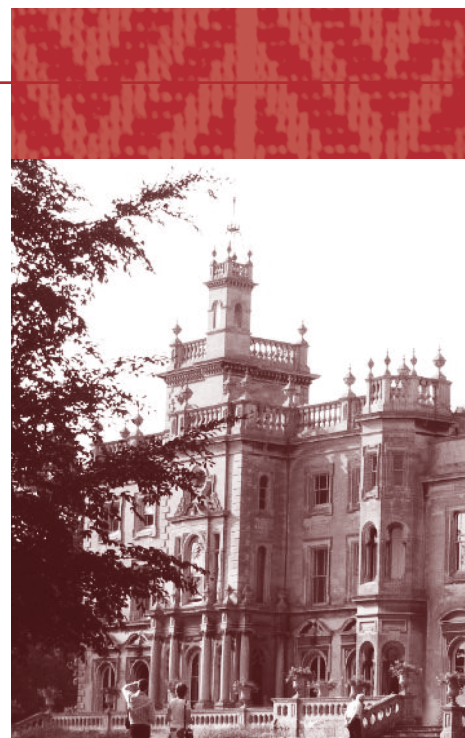
experience. Being a visual person, this new learning will be invaluable in my work and career. Decorative arts objects in New Zealand collections tend to be divorced from their original historical context. Attingham has allowed me to reconnect such objects with that context.

As well as taking from this experience, I hope that, even in some small way, I was able to contribute positively to the organisations that have assisted me in such a profound way. One of the most enduring benefits of the Scholarship will be the ongoing relationship with my new colleagues in Britain's most significant heritage organisations and with my 48 new friends from England, Europe and America.

### Acknowledgements

This wonderful experience would not have been possible without the vision and generosity of Errol Clark, founder of this Scholarship and sponsor of my attendance at the 2005 Attingham Trust Summer School. My thanks also must go to Creative NZ for their support and partnership of the Scholarship by providing funds to make this trip possible, and to the NZ-UK Link Foundation and the British Council for organising and sponsoring my flights. I would like to thank Ross Tanner, former Chief Executive of Museums Aotearoa, for his hard work on grant applications and for his advice and support, and Louis Le Vaillant, the 2004 Scholar, for his practical advice and excellent suggestions. My employer, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, generously supported my Scholarship by allowing me the time away, and for this I am also grateful.

Angela Lassig was awarded The Clark Collection/Creative New Zealand Scholarship for 2005. She is currently employed as Senior Curator of History at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa where she specializes in Dress & Textiles, Decorative Arts & Design. Born and trained in Australia, Angela has worked at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and the Auckland Museum and this year marks her 22nd year in the curatorial field.



FLINTHAM HALL  
EXTERIOR.  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:  
ANGELA LASSIG



# John C. Yaldwyn 1929 - 2005



JOHN YALDWYN AT SEA OFF QUEENSLAND IN 1962, ON THE FIRST-EVER SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO SWAIN REEFS, COLLECTING MARINE LIFE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM. COURTESY OF JOHN YALDWYN JUNIOR

**SANDY BARTLE** honours an exceptional colleague and committed curator, with whom he was proud to work.

John Yaldwyn was Director of the National Museum of New Zealand from 1980 to 1989. These were turbulent years for the Museum, just before it was incorporated into Te Papa. John's caring and supportive style ensured that the transition was well managed, that staff morale remained high, and that collections remained intact.

## A natural history

John was a naturalist with broad interests in biology as well as in the humanities. As a schoolboy in Christchurch in the 1940s he became very interested in archaeology and in fossils, especially birds, associated with middens and natural sites. His interests were fostered by R. A. Falla and Roger Duff at the Canterbury Museum, and shared with his lifetime friend, Elliot Dawson. The first of his more than 100 scientific papers was published in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in 1952. Over the next 50 years he managed to squeeze in another 15 papers and notes on archaeology and fossils, being particularly proud of his 2002 paper on Gideon Mantell's historic find in England of the first iguanodon tooth, now at Te Papa. This provided the first proof of the existence of dinosaurs. In this article he was able to bring together his interests in the history of science, in palaeontology, and in museum collections as historical records.

## Marine research interests

In 1949 John returned to Wellington to study zoology at Victoria University, working during his vacations at the Museum. He immediately became very interested in marine biology, particularly crustacea (prawns and crabs). It wasn't long before he was participating in the kind of deep-sea expeditions he loved, to Cook Strait, the Bay of Plenty, and the Chatham Islands. Following a brief period as Assistant Zoologist at the Museum, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study marine biology at the Allan Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, in 1960-61. At this time he also visited the Smithsonian, and established life-long connections with that great organisation.

He then took a post as a marine curator at the Australian Museum, Sydney, a happy and productive

time, with many expeditions (see photo) and new discoveries. His children John and Sarah were born during these years. Finally, he rejoined the Dominion Museum as Assistant Director in 1969 and, from that point on, was able to provide the enthusiastic leadership and strategic direction for which he is so warmly remembered.

## Leading from the front

His period as Director was illuminated by his wide knowledge of, and interest in, all matters relating to museums, especially collections, research, and exhibitions. He had a clear vision of the role of museums as guardians of the nation's heritage and as promoters of knowledge. He was a very kind man, taking a personal interest and concern in the welfare of all who worked for him. His enthusiasm was infectious.

John established the Museum's Conservation Laboratory, which went a long way towards ensuring the long-term care of the collections. Under his direction the Museum Library became one of the finest natural history libraries in the Southern Hemisphere. John was the first Director to be fully active in caring for the National Museum records and documentary history, extending back to 1865.

He actively strengthened the Māori collections and appointed the first Māori staff. When the opportunity came to host the *Te Māori* exhibition, he enthusiastically embraced it, thus laying the foundation for biculturalism at Te Papa today.

## Curatorial commitment

John strongly supported the work of AGMANZ and facilitated co-operation among museums in New Zealand and Australia.

During his "retirement", John continued to work as an Honorary Research Associate of Te Papa, successfully completing a number of major research projects begun much earlier. The death of his beloved wife, Barbara, in 2003, and ill-health during the last few years cast a shadow over what was otherwise a very happy time for him.

**Sandy Bartle**, Curator of Birds at Te Papa since 1976, wrote this summary of John Yaldwyn's life and work.



# Michael Ames 1933 - 2006

SUSAN ABASA remembers a true friend of New Zealand's museum community whose pioneering work in Canada encouraged new kinds of relationships between First Nations and museums and whose empathy and example emboldened museums and Māori here to explore novel ways of working alongside each other.

"Be bold, be radical, use your imagination, forget about stuffy museum practice and have fun", said Michael Ames on his retirement as Director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia.

This approach to experimental museology infused his teaching, his writing and his museum practice.

It is not surprising that he found a place to stand in this country. Ames' relationship with New Zealand's museums deepened following a series of visits here beginning in the mid 1980s. Familiarity with issues related to indigenous peoples and museums offered opportunities to examine parallel perspectives about Canadian and New Zealand experiences. To these discussions he brought not only his wide ranging expertise but also his deep engagement with the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest.

## Challenge and change

Michael did not skirt the difficult issues. Whether as a contributor to the *Taonga Māori Conference*, a participant in local seminars, or as a mentor, he was alert to the tough questions which disturbed existing museum prerogatives. Sensitive to the vicissitudes confronting museums, he drew on case studies which illustrated both the deficiencies and the virtues of their practices. Critically alert to their shortcomings, he remained, nevertheless, optimistic that museums could be reconfigured to better serve the interests and needs of indigenous peoples. And he worked to do just that. Seeking beneficial change through positive action, his call was clear: "no curation without consultation"; "no curation without co-operation" and "curation through negotiation". That deceptively simple credo, easier said than done, was at the heart of his belief that sharing authority enhances understanding.

With an informed appreciation of history Ames sought not only to critically assess museums' contributions but also to locate that critique within social, political and economic contexts. With considered prescience and sustained intellectual probity he challenged the ideologues, populists and

traditionalists alike to address the political and economic ideologies under which museums are increasingly obliged to operate.

He championed the independence and autonomy of museums – not as ivory towers distanced from the communities they serve – but as places of profound social relevance and civic responsibility where the serious questions of representation, ownership and control could be debated.

## A rare gift

"If the rationale for anthropology", he once wrote, "is the careful study of others to better understand ourselves, if knowledge of the self passes through others, then equal attention needs to be given to what returns: there lies a direction for reconstituting scholarly and curatorial relationships along more democratic, responsive, reciprocal and critical lines".

If self-knowledge passes through others, then Michael Ames' scholarship, his writings, work and vision of what museums might become, are a continuing source of knowledge and understanding.

Michael Ames writings include:

A selection of essays, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (1992); 'Biculturalism in exhibits' in *Taonga Māori Conference Proceedings* (1990); 'How to decorate a house: The renegotiation of cultural representation at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology' in *Museum Anthropology* volume 22, no. 3 (1999); 'Museology Interrupted' in *Museum International* volume 57, no. 3, 44-50 (2005).

Susan F. Abasa is a Lecturer in Museums Studies at Massey University.

## Interpreting Historic House Museums

Jessica Foy Donnelly (Ed.) 2002  
American Association for State  
and Local History, Altamira  
Press, Walnut Creek, California  
Paperback 272 pages  
ISBN 0-7591-0251-1  
\$27.95 US

Reviewed by KATE MARTIN

This book recognises that house museums have been conservative in both their origins and purposes, and slow to change. In addressing this, emphasis is placed on developing well-researched knowledge of the site, its surrounds and contextual history, and on its content-related strengths and weaknesses – the alternative lack of knowledge (backed with physical evidence) being no credibility, no visitors.

The thirteen contributors, with wisdom gained from wide experiences of working with house museums, consider the historic development of the house museum movement in the US (which is easily paralleled with ours in New Zealand) and the need to look at familiar concerns from new perspectives and with new techniques. Their essays reflect challenges common to all museums, and acknowledge that those who manage house museums must keep abreast of developments in the wider museum, heritage and history fields. Underpinned always with descriptions of developing values – some changing, some constant, spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic and monetary – and peppered throughout with further references, this is a useful and relevant book for both heritage manager and student.

### Planning for people

The authors stress that planning is essential for interpretation to be engaging and effective, and that an interpretation plan influences nearly every on-site choice made, even defines the site's management. As well, furnishings and landscape plans are as integral to successful house museum interpretation as to management. Practical and theoretical advice, given with case studies, emphasises these plans' ability to contribute to maximising visitor experiences. The creation of successful tours, with or without guides, and the importance of training guides in the house's history, interpretation philosophy and the necessary people skills are discussed, together with the significance of understanding rapidly changing technologies and increasingly diverse and sophisticated audiences. And to achieve all of this, the need to gain the enthusiasm and support of the institution and its partners is observed.

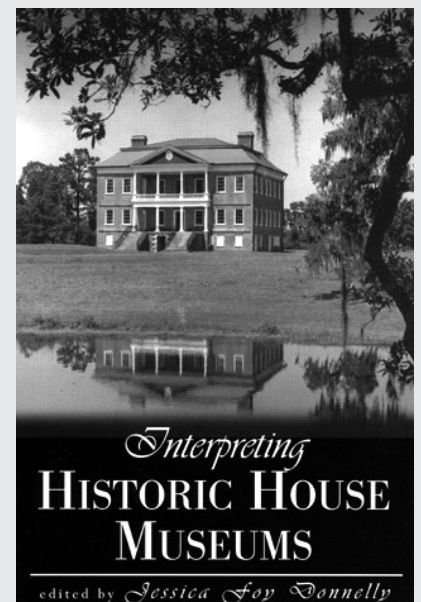
### Interpretive challenges

Interpretation issues explored include addressing minority histories, and linking academic research with public accessibility. While discussing integrating diversity of life and activity into the story to expand its truth and meaning, the authors caution against not using sound reasoning and careful analysis of accurate history and responsible research to understand and present both fact and conjecture. They emphasise new, popular and sometimes controversial ways to look at the past and stress the responsibility to convey a fuller, more inclusive history. This is all relevant to us in New Zealand. For instance, as an American publication,

the example of slavery is inevitably cited: our house museum experiences in the Bay of Islands relative to the Treaty of Waitangi story can be equally challenging.

The advice presented in these essays is less prescriptive than eminently practical, and clearly understands the realities likely to be met by those working with house museums. The Introduction opens with the admission that house museum interpretation "...can be exciting and invigorating or lacklustre and just plain boring." How familiar! This book challenges those responsible for historic houses to embrace change, broaden perspectives and never accept mediocrity in presenting the past – a timely reminder to us in New Zealand as the Historic Places Trust celebrates its first half century.

Kate Martin has worked with a range of museums and is currently manager of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust property, Pompallier Mission in the Bay of Islands.



# Te Tari Tohu Taonga National Preservation Office

*Initiative of the National Library of New Zealand and Archives New Zealand*

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