



Auckland War Memorial Museum

NEWS

Auckland Institute and Museum
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The Sparrow Photograph Collection

In 1982 the extensive negative collection produced by the Auckland photographic firm Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd was donated to the Museum by Commercial Photographers Ltd, the successor to the firm of Barry McKay Industrial Photography. Sparrow Industrial Pictures (S.I.P.) had merged with McKay Industrial Photography when the former company's founder, A.G.W. Sparrow, sold his business and retired in 1966.

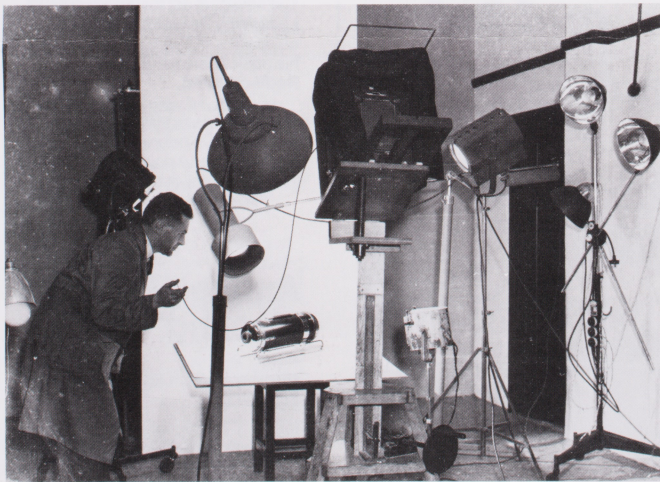
The collection now held by the Museum represents the work of over twenty years of what was one of the largest commercial and industrial photographic firms in New Zealand. The negative collection covers the period 1945 to 1966 and is estimated to be about 50,000 negatives. A large number of the negatives are still in good condition while others show signs of various stages of deterioration.

The Museum recognises the importance of the collection and has

commenced work directed towards its preservation and in making the collection available for research through the construction of an indexing system. The librarian, Ian Thwaites, and I supervised two students, Melanie Mills and Peter Roache, who were employed through a P.E.P. scheme, one appraising and indexing, the other printing off the negatives. More recently another worker, Michael Findlay, was employed to continue the work of appraisal and indexing. To date, a subject index and a client index have been compiled covering the period 1945-1960 and a sample range of photographs have been printed from the vast collection. As funds become available this work will continue, parallel with efforts to stabilize or duplicate the unstable negative stock to ensure the long-term preservation of the images.

After working on the collection for four months Michael Findlay developed an appreciation of the collection's range and scope and the significance of the

Guy Kelsey gives a domestic vacuum cleaner the full S.I.P. treatment



Bill Sparrow 1967

images for historical research: "Any person concerned with research into architecture, interior design, the history of manufacturing processes, patterns of retailing, packaging, graphics, shop window display and most other imaginable facets of consumer society could find much worthwhile in Sparrow's work. More importantly, the collection traces through the postwar years in New Zealand's emerging confidence in its abilities as a designer and maker of indigenous products, be they as small as a plastic egg cup or the scale of a major civic project".

The significance of the collection as an archive of visual documents lies in the mundane everyday nature of much of the subject matter and in its breadth of interest which encompasses the construction of a hydroelectric dam and a watchmaker's workshop, the operation of a harbour crane and the equipment in a hospital operating theatre, the height of women's fashion displayed or the label on a food can. The photographs record the working conditions and methods prevalent in the factories, shops and offices; the streets and the vehicles; the buildings, their construction and demolition. It is a record of the economic life of Auckland documenting the growth of industry and commerce, urban and suburban development and changes in working conditions and the general pattern of society.

Sparrow Industrial Pictures (S.I.P.) was a busy commercial firm attracting a wide range of clients and a broad scope of work. Although the advertising agencies formed a large part of the firm's clientele they were not relied upon for S.I.P.'s "bread and butter". It was accepted that the agencies gave their "rats and mice" jobs to S.I.P. and sent their good work to other photographic studios. Engineering and architectural firms, large department stores, manufacturing firms, contractors and the oil companies were important regular clients. Regular and constant photographic assignments were the monthly progress pictures on building construction sites, the photographic documentation of licence applications for service stations and the recording of window displays for Milne and Choyce and Smith and Caughey.

In the 1960's S.I.P. employed about twelve staff at its premises in Courthouse Lane (one year it expanded to twenty-six people). Mrs Sparrow worked in the office. The firm retained the faithful service of some excellent staff. Guy Douglas Kelsey (ex-Auckland Star), extremely competent and meticulous, was the principal photographer who was employed by S.I.P. most of his working life. Geoff Harcourt, who left the firm to work for the film-maker Rudolph Hayward for a period, returned and became production manager and portrait photographer. He remained with the firm for about twenty years. Doug Vahry worked as sales manager for many years before leaving to establish his own photographic firm in Parnell. Kelsey did a great deal of the fieldwork - while Bill Sparrow usually covered the out-of-town jobs, although in later years he did little actual photography.

Arthur George William Sparrow, or "Bill" as he was known to most photographers and clients, was a friendly, heavily-built man. He was born in Dunedin in 1896. He trained as a commercial artist at

Canterbury College School of Art and was indentured to the advertising firm of Chandler and Company in 1913 to learn commercial art. After serving as an artilleryman and later as a camouflage expert during the First World War, Bill worked as a commercial artist and advertising adviser for agencies and newspapers in Australia. Returning to New Zealand in 1930 he worked as a sales executive for New Zealand Newspapers.

In 1940, after becoming increasingly involved with photography, Bill Sparrow set up business as a commercial photographer. He was initially involved in the production of educational film strips for the Education Board. Betty Brookes, (who later became a display artist at this Museum) was employed to produce the art work for the film strips. Sparrow became an official civilian photographer for the Defence Department and by the end of the Second World War the company was firmly established.

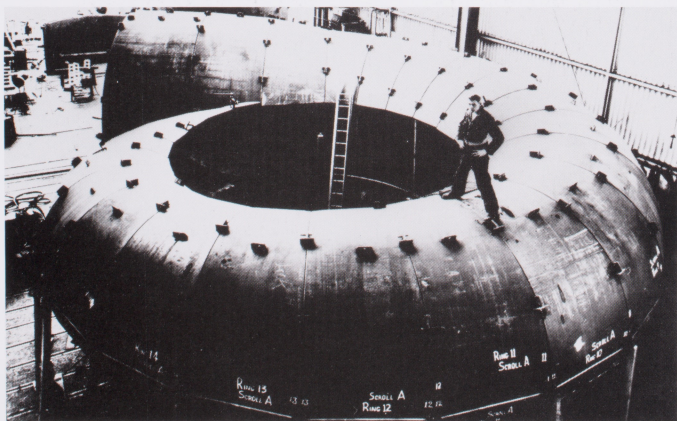
Bill Sparrow's efforts on behalf of the photographic industry as a whole was equal to his approach to his own business. He was founder of the Institute of Commercial Photographers and was President of the New Zealand Professional Photographers Association. During his career he consistently sought to improve the status of commercial photography in New Zealand.

Bill Sparrow died suddenly at his home in Alberon Street, Parnell on July 29, 1967, almost a year after his retirement.

I am indebted to Mr Douglas Vahry, Mr Geoffrey Harcourt and Mr Ken Niven for their help with information regarding A.G.W. Sparrow and his firm S.I.P. I would welcome any further information or recollections from readers.

Gordon Maitland

Construction of a hydro-electric turbine at Mason Bros. engineering firm



Institute Lecture

Monday 18 September 1 p.m.

'Tipua' Goblins from the Sea
or otherwise
**An Ethnography of Cook's First
Voyage to New Zealand**

Dr Salmond currently holds the Cook Fellowship, a prestigious award funded by the New Zealand Government and administered by the Royal Society. The award, which draws applications from throughout the world, supports research projects covering six broad areas of scientific study within the South Pacific.

Dr Salmond's significant work, which focuses on the environmental and social system that existed at the time of Cook's first visit, will form the basis of the lecture.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Members are asked to note three important changes to the Institute Lecture Series.

**The Annual General Meeting new
date Monday September 25th 8pm.**

**The Institute Lecture schedule for
Monday October 2 will now be given
by Dr. Ranginui Walker.**

**Dr Michael King will now give
address the Institute members on
Monday 13th November at 1.00pm.**

Following a request from the Museum, Professor Walker has kindly agreed to bring forward the date of his address **Maori Perspectives on Colonisation**. The new date set for the November Lecture by Dr Michael King will coincide with the Auckland release of his book, **Mori - A People Rediscovered**.

The Institute Lecture Series to date this year have been extremely well attended, and we are sure the above lectures will be of great interest.

Annual General Meeting

Monday 25 September 1989 8 p.m.
Schoolroom

Following the A.G.M. there will be a special film from the Museum Archives and a light supper.

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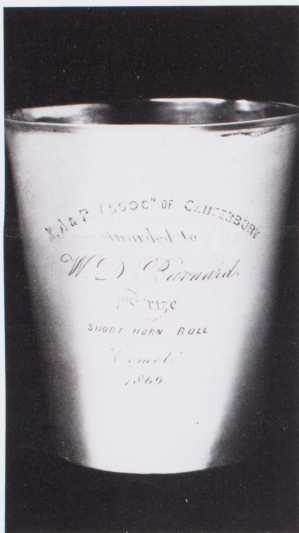
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New Zealand Silver

The existence of silver made in New Zealand during the 19th Century and early 20th century may not be well known to many people because of its rarity and the difficulty of identification. However, **Auckland Museum** has



recently acknowledged its importance by initiating a major collecting drive in this field. Recent acquisitions assist us to enlarge our understanding of silversmithing in this country and the historical events associated with them.

The oldest acquisition and now the earliest in the collection is the sterling silver beaker manufactured by Christchurch firm B. Petersen & Co. The beaker, as inscribed across the body, was awarded in 1869 by the Northern Agricultural and Pastoral Association of Canterbury to W. D. Barnard as 1st prize for the short horn bull 'Comet'. William D. Barnard is also known to have farmed Lincoln Road, Christchurch and purchased two short horn bulls from Norfolk in 1868. Both bulls, the other whose name was 'President' won prizes in the 1869 show. No doubt another silver beaker exists for 'President'.

Typical of New Zealand silver, the beaker is not stamped with assay marks like English silver. Identification occurs through the maker's mark 'B.P.' and a lion passant as an indication of its sterling silver quality. The jewellery firm B. Petersen & Co. established itself in Christchurch in the 1860s and

exhibited at two international exhibitions, Melbourne 1882 and London 1886.

Another 19th century Christchurch firm G. Coates & Co. was responsible for the salver now held in the collection. As the inscription indicates the salver was presented by the officers of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agencies Company Ltd to Mr and Mrs John Cooke in 1889 on the occasion of their departure to Melbourne. The salver with its classical beaded edge and leaf capped brackets is stamped G. Coates & Co., the firm being named after Giles Coates a clockmaker who arrived in New Zealand in 1851 and established the firm in Christchurch possibly during the 1860's.

The final major acquisition is again presentation silver, a set of tea equipage given to Lady Constance Knox on the occasion of her marriage in 1905. Lady Constance was the elder daughter of the 5th Earl of Ranfurly, Governor of New Zealand 1897-1904. The set of twelve teaspoons, butterknife, jam spoon and sugar sifter are of historical interest for their engravings of Auckland monuments and scenes including St. Matthews, Government House, North Shore and

Rangitoto. The spoons were made by the notable Auckland jewellery firm A. Kohn whose work was included in national and international exhibitions during the late 19th century and early 20th century.

The collection of New Zealand silver assists us in understanding a small but important part of history of applied arts in this country. If Members of the Institute and Museum hold any such silver the Curator of Applied Arts would welcome the opportunity to view it.

Justine Olsen

Disney Hall of Furniture

Housekeeping is an essential part of the overall care of this important gallery. The Curator would welcome further assistance. Please contact Justine Olsen ph. 390-443.

Members Archaeology Field Trip

Museum Archaeologist Nigel Prickett will lead a day long field trip for members on Sunday 12 November to the Clevedon district.

Transport will be by bus, leaving the Museum at 9.30 a.m. and returning at approximately 5 p.m. Sites visited will include Pawhetau, a prominent headland on private land north of Kawakawa Bay, Galloway Redoubt (Clevedon) and Howick Stockade.

Other sites on the shores of the Hauraki Gulf will be visited as time allows.

The cost for the trip is \$15.00, based on a minimum of 35 participants. Those interested should complete the enclosed enrolment form and return to the Community Education Officer with the appropriate cheque. Bookings will be taken on a first come first served basis, the bus will seat 50. Be in early to reserve your seat.



Overseas Trip Lib Canada United States

Early this year, I visited the United States on an annual leave. An Auckland Museum Council member extend my leave to a beneficial contact study library and resulted in my being granted a study leave and expenses. It proved a worthwhile venture. I returned on April 25 and returned to the Museum. During this time I visited several libraries as a student and a museum and an interested tourist.



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Overseas Study Trip Libraries in Canada and the United States

Early this year, I began to plan a trip to the United States and Canada, using my annual leave. An application to the Museum Council for assistance to extend my leave to enable me to make beneficial contacts for our library and to study library and museum practices, resulted in my being given two weeks study leave and a grant towards expenses. It proved to be a most worthwhile venture. I left Auckland on April 25 and returned on June 9, 1989. During this time I visited sixteen libraries as a staff member of this museum and a number of others as an interested tourist. I also saw something

of the collections in the major museums and art galleries of the cities I visited.

The Auckland Institute and Museum is known to many institutions in the United States and Canada through its exchange of publications programme. When I arrived at such a library, the librarian usually had the exchange records on hand, often dating back many years. Even where we were not known through exchange, I was given a warm welcome and access to the collections and the expertise of the librarians. In the main, I asked to see their systems and practices in my chief areas of responsibility - serials, gifts and exchanges and inter-library lending, but often found myself being the recipient of most valuable advice on library automation, photograph collections and acquisition policies as well.

My first and one of my most memorable visits was to Stanford University, an

Californian Poppy



hour's journey by train from San Francisco. There I spent the day in the Cecil H. Green Library which holds Stanford's principal collections in most of the humanities, area studies and social sciences - two million volumes. In size, it was rather removed from our collection, but it gave me a most interesting introduction to a corner of a famous university. I spent time in four different areas of technical services and it was interesting to see the librarians using procedures and dealing with problems similar to our own.

One of the librarians - something of a naturalist - offered to show me the way to the cafeteria at lunchtime, but ended up giving me a three-quarter hour walking tour of the wild gardens and other plantings around the campus. At Stanford, a unified atmosphere of spacious and scholarly calm is created by the buildings all of sandstone with red-tiled roofs and arched walkways, set in extensive grounds against a backdrop of the California hills.

The MIT Libraries



I visited a number of other university libraries, each with aspects of interest to us. Professor Lincoln Bloomfield of

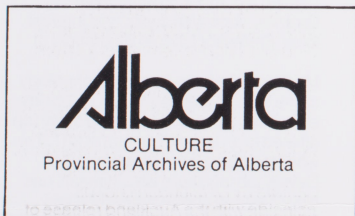
Massachusetts Institute of Technology came to the Auckland Museum Library early this year and, on hearing of my trip offered to arrange a contact at MIT. This was Mr Edgar Davy, Director of the Dewey Library there who, himself, has New Zealand connections. Mr Davy, working in an institution that pioneered computers, gave me valuable insights into the use of computers in libraries and what he expects of the new generation of computers, some years away yet.

Visits to the Boston Public Library and the Massachusetts Historical Society Library had been arranged for me by Mr Davy and I was most fortunate to see the riches and variety of these collections. He also directed me to the Harvard libraries which hold the rarest items. In the Widener Library, I saw that great breakthrough in technology, the Gutenberg bible, displayed just yards from where a dozen students were working at computer terminals. In special rooms in the Widener and Houghton Libraries, dimly-lit and temperature-controlled, with an attendant watching your every movement, you can view treasures of

literature displayed in glass cases. Ones of particular interest were the manuscripts of John Keats and letters and paintings of Dr Johnson and his circle.

The friendliness of the group of people I found myself among, resulted in my being invited to see a number of smaller libraries which were of great interest. One of these was the Sawyer Library at Suffolk University, a liberal arts college in central Boston. Mr Ted Hamann, the librarian, had been in New Zealand for some time after graduating from the University of Michigan and worked in the library of Auckland University. In the Sawyer Library, a CD-ROM based catalogue of books was being demonstrated for a month and other CD-ROM products were already in place.

While in Chicago, I spent three hours in the library of a small theological college attached to the University of Chicago. The librarian demonstrated the most efficient working of this comparatively small (117,000 books, 30,000 periodicals), highly specialized library which is computerized to a considerable degree. Because of the specialist nature of the holdings and the importance of having them more widely available, the State of Illinois had given financial assistance to this library to put all its records onto the State library system. The library then has available for its students bibliographical records from most of the U.S.A. as well as from many overseas networks.



A visit to the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Canada, took me into the fields of local history holdings, museum literature and the use of appropriate subject headings in the description of materials relating to indigenous peoples. The staff were most welcoming and generous to me and were very interested in the work being done in New Zealand. I found that the staff I met in Canadian libraries and museums were particularly interested in New Zealand and in how we are dealing with different aspects of work not only in the library, but in the whole museum. This was especially so when I visited the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria. The very lively staff asked many questions showing their familiarity with work being done here. I

had a very rewarding time at this museum which certainly lives up to its reputation of being one of the finest in North America. A display of masks made by the peoples of the Pacific Coast combined with the telling of their legends particularly impressed me. I should also mention their collection of magnificent totem poles both originals and replicas.



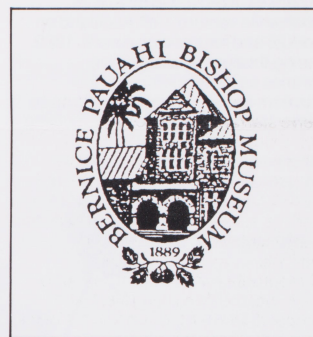
There are a number of natural history libraries in U.S.A. and Canada which have holdings similar to our natural history collection, especially as regards periodicals and with which we have exchanges. I spent a short time with one of the science librarians at the University of Alberta, and made a brief visit to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, but my main visit to a library in this field was to the library of the San Diego Natural History Museum. This library held much to interest me in its running and in its collection generally. It also has many treasures including a copy of the first general natural history of America published in 1635, written in Latin, but using a number of Aztec words as well. The picture of the Californian poppies now hanging in the library is a reproduction from one of their books and was given to me by the librarian.



In San Diego, I saw the best equipped photograph collection of all those I visited. This was at the San Diego Historical Society and the work of its curators, Larry and Jane Booth, is well known. I had not set out with the intention of seeing photograph collections, but everywhere I went I encountered magnificent exhibitions of historic photographs. These included A History of Photography from California Collections at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and an exhibition featuring the American Civil War in

photographs at the Chicago Public Library.

My final and one of my most significant visits was to the Bernice P. Bishop in Honolulu. Here I found great interest in the Auckland Museum and Library and a keenness to continue long-standing links. I saw the planetarium show which takes the viewer on an imaginary journey from Hawaii to Tahiti, revealing some of the techniques of Polynesian celestial navigation. The Bishop Museum has had a major boost to its funding in recent years and has many plans for future development.



My trip proved to be a most worthwhile and valuable experience. It required a lot of organisation and letter-writing both on my part and that of the librarian, Ian Thwaites. I am most grateful for the encouragement and support I received from him and from the Director and Council. I should like to record my special thanks to the library staff who had to undertake the extra workload in my absence.

Mary Fitzgibbon

Museum Shop

From the 24th August the Museum Shop will be undergoing major renovations, however, normal business will continue from the Supper Room. A full range of stock will be available for members wishing to make purchases.

Did you spot the mistake?

Well done those who noticed that the July issue had been given the incorrect number. It should of course have been Number 38. To avoid any further confusion the latest **Museum News** has been numbered 39a.



*The Tunnellers' Bridge,
Canal du Nord*

Lest We Forget; Crevecoeur recalled, September 30- October 4, 1918

World War 1 battle honours inscribed in stone above the windows of the Auckland Museum, are not all household names like 'Gallipoli'. Those on the West side, facing the green of the Domain playing fields, have long passed from the public consciousness. 'Grevillers', 'Favreuil', 'Bapaume', 'Havrincourt', 'Trescault Ridge', 'Crevecoeur' . . . these were the stepping stones trodden by the New Zealand Division of the British Third Army as it fought its way across the hills and valleys of N.E. France towards, and through, the formidable Hindenburg Line.

The Hindenburg Line consisted of a series of defended villages and towns, road and rail cuttings, quarries, canals, rivers and streams, bridges and lockgates, woods and hilltops, all

integrated into a seemingly impregnable band of fortified positions between four and six miles deep. Two great canals systems, the Nord and the Scheldt (Escault), were included in the defences and precluded the use of tanks by the Allies: a section of canal between locks could be emptied to present a sheersided chasm which had to be either bridged or scaled with ladders. Most footbridges over lock-gates could only be negotiated by men in single file. The supreme importance of this line of defence drew all available German troops from other sectors of the Front when it was threatened by the Allied advance in the autumn of 1918.

The village of Crevecoeur, and the hills behind it, were the innermost support defences for that sector of the Line; positions from which to make a final stand. Crevecoeur lies on the east bank of a deep bend in the Scheldt River, and the great Scheldt Canal cuts across the base of this U-bend to form a marshy, featureless island in front of the village; this island is itself cut across by a tributary of the main river.

The story of Crevecoeur is a story of bridges. The retreating Germans had demolished all the bridges above and below Crevecoeur; only a small stone footbridge opposite the village remained intact, and it was mined. The first New Zealand attack on this bridge was repelled by a 'stream of lead' from 20 strategically placed machine guns. A water-cooled MG08 German machine-gun is on display in the West Gallery of the Military Collections in the Museum.

Following this first assault, a platoon of the 2nd (Auckland) Battalion of the Rifle Brigade became isolated on the island, and pinned down by withering fire. Although wounded in the foot, James Crichton volunteered to carry information back to Company HQ. Three times he swam the river, which was high after overnight rain, and sprinted the 100 yards across open ground to Headquarters, each time dodging the bullets which kicked up spurts of mud at his heels as he ran: the last time, he carried the fuses and detonators that he had 'leisurely' removed from the demolition charges beneath the stone bridge during a 'little adventure' of his own. For his 'outstanding gallantry and resourcefulness' James Crichton was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Two Military Crosses, four Military Medals and a Distinguished Conduct Medal were awarded to members of the 1st. and 2nd. Field Companies of the N.Z. Engineers who worked under 'unusually severe conditions' at Crevecoeur, to repair and rebuild damaged river and canal bridges. They also built pontoon bridges to carry heavy vehicles, and makeshift rafts to get the men across the watercourses under cover of darkness.

As the relentless Allied advanced continued, the N.Z. Division continued in action through Briastre and Beaudignes to their final action at Le Quesnoy on November 4, only one week before hostilities ceased. (See May 1989 Museum News).

Referring to the breaching of the Hindenburg Line in his dispatches afterwards, Sir Douglas Haig wrote, 'The enemy's defences in the last and strongest of his prepared positions has been shattered . . . the effect of this victory upon the subsequent course of the campaign was decisive.'

Sheila Gray

Auckland War Memorial Museum was erected in the Auckland Domain in 1929 and extended in 1960 as the Memorial to those from Auckland Province who died in two World Wars. It is administered by the Auckland Institute and Museum, whose origins go back to the first Auckland Museum of 1852. **Auckland Museum News** is issued free to members of the Institute and Museum, a group of friends and supporters of the Museum.

