



Auckland  
War Memorial  
Museum

# NEWS

Auckland Institute and Museum  
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## Conservation: Before and After



November 12 saw the departure from the staff of Assistant Conservator, Georgina Christensen. Contracted to Auckland Museum for one year, Georgina has moved to Wellington to take up the position of National Co-ordinator for the Conservation of Cultural Property with the Department of Internal Affairs. This role is to involve liaison work with Museums throughout the country in order to establish a national conservation institute, and Auckland Museum wishes her well for this new venture. During her employment here Georgina and the other Assistant Conservator, Gerry Barton, have achieved the first stages of an impressively equipped conservation laboratory. In addition to the normal maintenance of needy material within the display and storage collections, Georgina's largest single project has

undoubtedly been conservation work on the river canoe in the Maori Court. This object needed to be totally stripped of its coat of red and black paint in order that anti-insect and consolidation measures could be effected.

Another recent development in the Conservation Department's laboratory promises to have far-reaching effects on both the appearance of the Maori Court being replanned at present, and, more broadly, the general public's concept of the traditional use of colour by the Maori. The average museum visitor could well be excused for assuming that Maori carving has always been liberally coated with red paint. But Museum Ethnologist, Dave Simmons, has long realised that this was indeed not the case. In fact meticulous paint stripping has revealed that this ubiquitous red often obscured earlier

## A Further Flag

News No 8 carried a complete list ('Flying the Flag') of all Museum flag days but October 17 1982 saw the inauguration of yet another. This was the flag of the Independent Tribes (also known as the united tribes) of Ko Huirau, which was first presented in the summer of 1834 and granted by H R H King William. The flags were to be raised on nine occasions, one of which was October 17 — the date in 1863 of a covenant with H R H Queen Victoria. The first flag consisted of four — pointed white stars on a blue background in one corner of a red cross. A second flag, with a white fringe replacing black (a change agreed to by Queen Victoria in 1837), was the version flown here. Permission to fly this flag was granted to Shaw Savill and Albion Company, and also to the Auckland War Memorial Museum, by Te Ariki Nui Taiparu Ko Te Riria V in 1980.

## NEW LIBRARY HOURS

The Museum Library was closed to all readers from November 8-22 to allow a backlog of cataloguing and related work to be undertaken. Members are advised that when it re-opened the following new hours were observed:

Monday — Friday	1 — 5 pm
Saturday	10 am — 12 noon
Sunday	Closed

extensive use of coloured pigments. Shown here is a 'before and after' view of a section of the Pukeroa Pa Gateway figure which has been in Auckland Museum since 1877. Exploratory stripping indicates that the carved surfaces were painted white and green in addition to red, and that black pigment was used to provide a further contrast. Although necessarily a time-consuming task, it is with considerable interest that the Museum awaits the conservators' eventual treatment of the meeting house, Hotunui, which Dave Simmons claims was originally decorated in red, white and black.

Although halved by Georgina's departure, the Conservation Department will soon gain a Conservator (Head of Department) — applications for this position closed on December 1.

## Special Exhibitions for 1983

19th Century carved wooden boar from Black Forest, Germany, to be included in **Animals A-Z**.



Included with this issue of the **News** is next year's Special Exhibitions Calendar. While it contains a number of regular annual fixtures such as the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Awards, Photo Forum, Mathex and the School Science Exhibition, 1983 offers some new ventures for the Museum which promise to be of considerable interest. It is anticipated that **Studio Glass '83** will be the first in a series of annual showings of blown and architectural glass from all over New Zealand, and **Newmarket — the Smallest Borough** could well constitute the most thorough photographic record that the Museum's neighbourhood has ever been subjected to. Of a botanical nature are the exhibition of native New Zealand plants to commemorate the death of Thomas Frederic Cheeseman

(Auckland Museum Curator, 1874-1923) and the week-long Bonsai display in early November. The latter will be the third such exhibition hosted by the Museum in recent years and 1983's presentation will celebrate the Auckland Bonsai Society's 15th year.

Not included in the 1982 Calendar distributed to members is the Museum's final exhibition for the year which will occupy the Hall over the Christmas holiday period. Entitled **Animals A-Z** it is to be a comprehensive and colourful alphabetical presentation of many of the animal images and specimens housed in the Museum's extensive storage collections and not normally available to the public.

## THE 'BATTLE' OF NISSAN ISLAND

New Zealand troops have taken part in three sea-borne landings. The first was at Gallipoli. The second and third were in the Solomon Islands, where first the Treasury Islands (Stirling and Mono Islands) were taken. Plans were then laid to invade the Green Islands of which the largest is Nissan Island. To aid planning, large scale relief models of Nissan were prepared by New Zealand engineers under Lt Col A Murray. These models were later presented to Auckland Museum by Maj Gen H E Barrowclough, who was the commanding officer of the 3rd Division.

Recently renovated, these models are displayed on the wall by the Zero. The first shows the island as it was under Japanese occupation and as used to plan the landings. The positions for the landing barges are shown. The second shows the proposed development of an airfield, roads and supply dumps. The landings were very successfully carried out on February 1944. More than 5,000 men landed on the first day and, although they fought stubbornly, the small Japanese garrison of about 120 men was

wiped out. It would appear only two prisoners were taken. Allied losses were 13 killed and 24 wounded. The Green Islands were declared secure on February 27.

The mammoth task of cutting an airfield out of jungle and jumbled coral in high humidity and rain was started soon after the landing. By March 3 (16 days), a mile long runway had been formed and it was in operational use on March 6, when 20 RNZAF aircraft from Bougainville refuelled before going on to attack Rabaul. Aircraft from Bougainville moved permanently to Nissan, including RNZAF squadrons and, after the bomber runways were formed, continual US airstrikes left for Rabaul, Truk and the Carolines. By the end of April — a mere two months — the war had moved north across the equator, and the island no longer in the front line, became another staging point in the Pacific. It did, however, remain an operational airbase for local missions until the end of the war.

Although the 'Battle' of Nissan was probably one of the smallest, and the great numerical superiority (50 to 1 on the first day and four times that in the next four days) made it a very one-sided fight, almost a non-event when considered against the scale of Pacific operations. We should remember that, for those who were about to become casualties, it was an occasion of the greatest significance and that, behind the impersonal statistics, there were people. Displayed below the map models are some personal items relating to the Solomon Islands campaign.

## Display Developments

While the most visible aspect of the Museum's display activities during 1982 has been its busy programme of 17 temporary exhibitions, increasing attention has been given to the Maori Court redevelopment plans. Nevertheless, work still proceeds in a number of the permanent galleries, and thus the Maritime and Botany Halls are both experiencing modest improvements at present. Of a much more substantial nature is the current refurbishing of the Pacific Canoe Hall. Recent visitors to the Museum may have observed an expanse of bright blue on the south wall of this gallery. Here the existing map of the Pacific is being substantially renovated with the addition of flanking illustrative panels by three persons employed by Artwork. This, a division of the Labour Department, has been responsible for commissioning a number of murals throughout the city. The artists involved are Deborah Savage, Lance Black and Julian Hansen, whose backgrounds include study at the University of Massachusetts, Auckland Technical Institute and Elam School of Fine Arts respectively. The map and murals are seen as the first stages of an overall scheme that includes improved presentation of the canoes, informative labels and panels and the display of some of the Museum's large collection of tapa cloth on the unoccupied west wall.



Another temporary Museum staff member, Kathryn Rountree, has completed a six-month Labour Department scheme researching Pacific canoes and aspects of Polynesian navigation. Primarily intended for use by the Education Department this information will also form the basis for the improved labels necessary in this hall. In addition, Kathryn has utilised the resources of the Museum Library to produce a book 'Polynesian Explorers' for use in primary schools. As the first of a new social studies entitled **Adventure Readers** by Longman Paul, this extensively illustrated volume is due for publication in March 1983.



## A PRISONER OF THE JAPANESE

Miss Leila Bridgman, in the YWCA in New Zealand. In the course of her experience, she was held by the Japanese at

With a number of other refugees on a ship, which was a British battleship. Her inexperience with the sea was only able to manage escaping several boats got out of range of the Japanese. She was ordered to abandon ship, apparently sunk.

There followed a voyage on boats which took them to Singapore. They arrived the day after the Japanese. There followed freedom, but as they became organised for arrest and finally to last three years.

At the end of the war, she escaped from Singapore. After six months rest, her work with the YWCA after a period of ill-health.

A detailed account of her experience of escaping from Singapore, internment camp, in the Library, and moments of years of internment and armed services. She hoped that people would find "Tenko" will find this

## Big Deal!

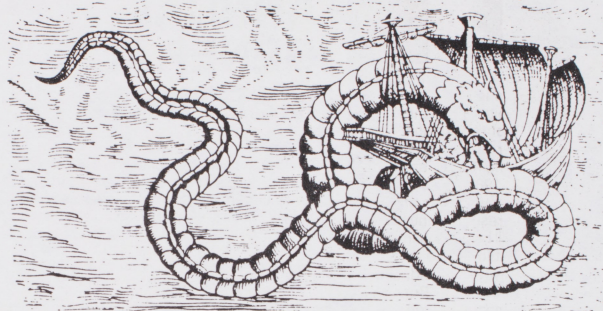


A specimen of the rarely captured deal-fish **Trachipterus sp.**, shown above, was received recently through Fisheries Management Division, M.A.F. at Tauranga. It had come from a catch by trawlerman, John McGrath, while fishing off Cape Runaway; an area which because of its closeness to the Kermadec Trench, one of the Pacific Ocean deep spots, occasionally yields weird and bizarre fishes.

This fish has a ribbon-like body, just under two metres in length and its feeble, vertically held, tail indicates it is a poor swimmer. Typical of a fish living in low-light (twilight zone) the eyes are very large. Feeding is assisted by a tubular, telescopic mouth which by rapid protrusion and suction can catch nearby prey, usually small midwater prawns, squids and fishes. Despite its size, this is a delicate fish and much of its fin structure and silvery colouration was lost during capture. This type

of damage is sustained by specimens held in other museums and makes identification particularly difficult. Lack of specimens also means that little is known about their biology

and distribution. Much of the mystery and unusual shape of these fishes, often distorted after death, has contributed to the origin of sea-serpent myths.



## Notable Accessions



An important pu tatarā conch shell trumpet has been acquired from auction by the Specimen Purchase Fund donated by members. The trumpet is made from a Pacific conch shell traded from the islands about 1840. A carved mouth-piece has been added to the shell. The trumpet was picked up by William Newland of the Patea Rangers, who were sent to Opotiki at the time of the Kereopa and the Hauhau incidents. The mouth-piece is finely carved in the South Taranaki manner. Kereopa was a Hauhau who had come from Taranaki to recruit the Whakatohea of Opotiki. He or one of his followers could have brought the trumpet with them. It is rather curious that it was souvenired by a man from Patea, the area in which it was made originally. South Taranaki or Ngati Ruānui carving is quite rare and this trumpet is a fine addition to the collection. Because of the Opotiki association it will be lent to Whakatane Museum to display for a period.

Opposite the 15th century wooden Lohan at the entrance to the Museum's Hall of Asian Art is a display case designed to highlight interesting and/or recent additions to the collections. Over the past few months displays here have consisted of fossil mosasaur bones, applied arts material reflecting the style of the recent television adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's 'Brideshead Revisited', and a carved greenstone Koha to be presented to Prince William. To coincide with the Christmas period this case will be housing some 50 seasonal greeting cards dating from 1868-1960 drawn from the Museum Library's extensive ephemera collection.





View of the Pukeroa Pa Gateway figure (features on page 1 of this issue of the News) prior to its removal from Rotorua to Auckland Museum in 1877.



Georgina Christensen who was, until November 12, Assistant Conservator at Auckland Museum.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Apologies must be extended to members for the late despatch of the Annual Report and News eleven, which contained notice of the Annual General Meeting held on September 20. In accordance with the Rules, a notice of the AGM had been placed with the New Zealand Herald ten days prior to the meeting. However, at a recent meeting of the Council of

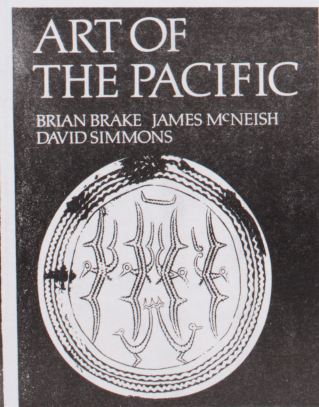
the Auckland Institute and Museum, it was resolved that in future members will be notified of the AGM by separate notice and in good time prior to the meeting.

### Results of Election of Members

No election took place at the AGM as the nominations received did not exceed the vacancies on Council. Accordingly, we welcome back to Council Dr P J Brook, Mr W A Laxon, Dr D B Robertson and Dr J Rogers. In addition, we congratulate the two new members: Mr J F Y Schischka and Mrs S M Weight. Mrs Weight is not entirely new to Council business as she previously served as a local authority representative.

## BOOK BARGAIN

Members with an eye for a bargain will be interested to know that 'Art of the Pacific' (Oxford University Press) with text by Dave Simmons and James McNeish and photographs by Brian Brake, has been drastically reduced to \$16.00 in the Museum Shop while stocks last!



## Recent changes in the Museum Foyer

The Museum's main entrance foyer has recently gained a ramp to allow easy wheelchair access to the display galleries. Centrally located and designed in sympathy with the style of building, the construction of this facility was made possible by funds from the Auckland Savings Bank, Telethon and the B.G. Winstone Trust.

Directly above the new ramp is another, more colourful, recent addition in the form of a banner. In line with overseas institutions Auckland Museum intends to utilise this periodically to advertise features of its temporary exhibitions programme. For its initial use it presents a colourful collage of some of the items to be included in the forthcoming holiday period exhibition, "Animals A-Z".

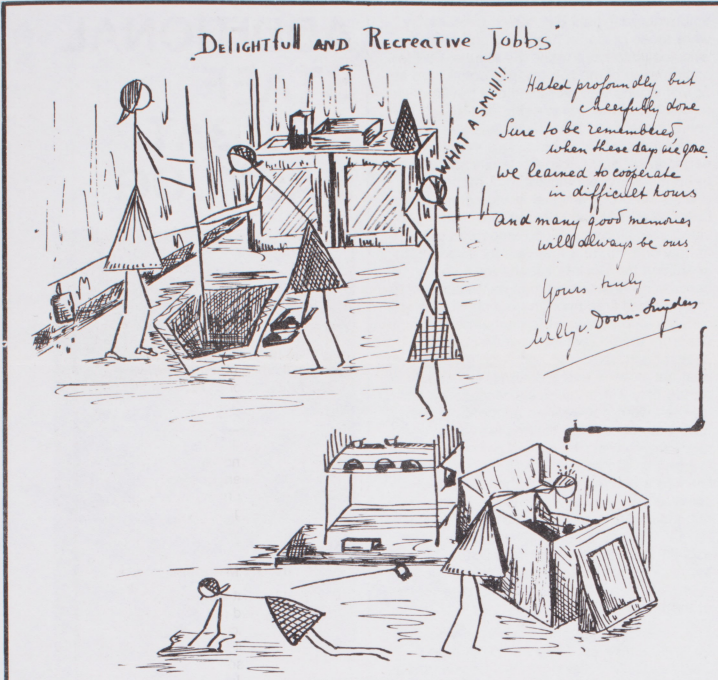


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of the Museum's has been its vrary exhibitions, re given to the plans. eds in a number nd thus the re both ements at stantial nature is e Pacific Canoe eum may have ht blue on the re the existing substantially of flanking persons employed of the Labour nsible for urals throughout are Deborah lian Hansen, study at the Auckland School of Fine nd murals are n overall scheme ntation of the d panels and the um's large unoccupied west



n staff member, eleted a six-month e researching of Polynesian ed for use by the information will improved labels ition, Kathryn has Museum Library to Explorers' for use rst of a new social Readers by ively illustrated on in March 1983.



## A PRISONER OF THE JAPANESE

Miss Leila Bridgman was a prominent worker in the YWCA in New Zealand in the 1920-1930 period. In the course of gaining overseas experience, she was in Singapore at the time of the Japanese attack.

With a number of other people, she boarded a refugee ship, which struggled out of Singapore harbour manned mainly by survivors of sunk British battleships. Because of the stoker's inexperience with hand-stoked boilers the ship was only able to make slow speed, but after escaping several bombing attacks they finally got out of range of the aircraft, only to be confronted by Japanese cruisers. They were ordered to abandon the ship which was apparently sunk.

There followed a voyage in over-loaded life boats which took them eventually to Java. They arrived the day Java surrendered to the Japanese. There followed a period of freedom, but as the Japanese occupation became organised this turned into 'house arrest' and finally to an internment which lasted three years.

At the end of the war Miss Bridgman was flown to Singapore and then back to New Zealand. After six months recuperation she returned to her work with the Y.M.C.A. She died in 1974 after a period of ill-health.

A detailed account of her adventures in escaping from Singapore, and of her life in the internment camp, is held in the Museum Library, and mementoes of her grim three years of internment will be on display in the armed services section for about a year. It is hoped that people who enjoyed the TV series "Tenko" will find this display interesting.

## OVERSEAS STUDY TOURS

During 1982 two staff members were able to undertake extensive study tours of overseas museums. Curator of Display, Richard Wolfe, completed a visit to the United States and Europe in early July and the Director, Stuart Park, undertook a similar itinerary commencing in late September.

The need to familiarise Auckland Museum's display department with overseas equivalents was prompted by our own ambitious redevelopment programme. Mindful of the potential of the Maori Court, Richard Wolfe

paid particular attention to certain major museums with galleries whose scale and contents resemble our own. Thus, the new Rockefeller wing of Art of Africa, the Americas and the Pacific in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the British Museum's recent Egyptian Sculpture Gallery were of considerable interest. But of all the ethnographic installations viewed the most impressive was the brand new 'Maritime Peoples of the Arctic and Northwest Coast' gallery at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The personal appeal of this extensive display was the sensitive use of natural materials, the comfort and human scale of the environment and, most significantly, the vitality and colour imparted to the objects themselves.

Sufficient aspects of exhibition presentation were observed to provide our Display Department with incentive and direction. While many of the institutions visited were of an exceptionally high standard — such as West Berlin's Dahlem Museum — it was reassuring to witness recurring problems that one suspects are endemic to certain types of museums. After noticing with surprise the particularly low standards exhibited by certain major museums in Paris and Vienna one feels that their Auckland equivalent acquires itself reasonably well. An extensive illustrated review of visits to 76 museums, with emphasis on display developments, has been produced by Richard Wolfe and is available in the Library.

The Director's two-month overseas tour encompassed some twenty major centres throughout the United States, Canada, England and Australia. Among the specific aims of this extensive trip were the study of the operation of docent programmes in museums of natural history and anthropology, and the involvement of indigenous peoples in museum interpretations of their own culture. The latter activity suggested certain institutions which involved the native American community in aspects of display and research, and this could well influence Auckland Museum's own ethnographic development. Planetaria were also high on the Director's list, with a view to assess the operation and future developments of small units within large institutions. Not unexpectedly Stuart Park ensured that this trip provided opportunities to further a considerable personal interest — that of ceramics. Thus Stoke-on-Trent City Museum was incorporated on the itinerary for reasons of the close links of personnel, design and materials between the potteries of Staffordshire and this part of the world.



Northwest Coast masks on display in Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History

## Two Flags!

While we were carrying out conservation treatment of the von Luckner ensign from the Naval Museum (News eleven) we compared it with photographs taken at the time of von Luckner's recapture. To our surprise it differed from the photograph in many minor ways and was obviously not the ensign in the photograph. Was it a fake? If it was a fake, where was the original?

A careful systematic search of the flag collection revealed another German naval ensign painted on a bed sheet, and identified as the von Luckner ensign. It had been folded inside a tattered Belgian flag and sealed in a plastic bag. None of the literature that we had available mentioned two ensigns being made on Motiue, but examination showed that the painter had made the same mistake in the top left corner of both flags and had corrected it in the same way by over painting in a different colour.

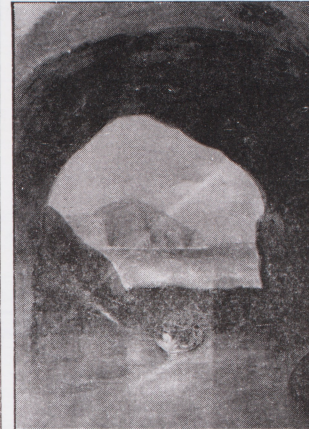
At about this time we received a sextant on loan from the National Museum. This sextant had been made on Motiue mainly out of pieces of a primus stove by von Zatorski, one of the interns. It had been used by von Luckner to navigate to the Kermadec Islands during his escape. With the sextant came a letter from von Zatorski giving his recollections of the escape and here for the first time we find ... the German war ensigns used in the capture of the scow Moa ... (small one on board the Pearl and large one hoisted on board the Moa) were painted on ... a handwoven bedsheet (belonging to) Cadet August Klonn'.

In one corner of the large ensign we found the

embroidered initials E.K. which presumably were those of Cadet Klonn's grandmother, who is said to have made the sheets. Further confirmation of the two ensigns come from Mr Stunzner who was on Motiue at the time. He remembered the two ensigns and added that von Luckner held the smaller ensign aloft during the capture of Moa. This seemingly heroic act of von Luckner's is difficult to believe. Today, we accept as a matter of course the brutal terrorist killings of innocent bystanders, but von Luckner had high standards: he had sunk 13 ships with the loss of only one life, and that was by accident; in searching the Society Islands for a ship to capture, he ordered his men on no account to shoot unless fired upon; he put off capturing a suitable ship because his men were not in uniform, and this would have amounted to piracy; he surrendered, although he had a boat full of arms and grenades, to one officer armed only with a revolver, because he and his men were not wearing uniforms, and to have acted in civilian clothes would have made them criminals; he had painted German ensigns on Motiue so that he would not be labelled a common pirate when he captured ships as he escaped; he had made cap ribbons on Motiue so the escapees would have a uniform of sorts to wear during their escape; and, finally, after the escape, he sailed at some risk outside the three-mile limit in order to swear the escapees into the service of the Imperial German Navy.

The assembled material relating to Von Luckner is now on display in the Armed Services Gallery. His ensigns fly again beside the white ensign of Iris, which captured him in the Kermadec Islands, the home-made sextant of von Zatorski gleams in its case and, in imagination, von Luckner shouts 'Ships may sink but Honour never'.

## ADDITIONAL STAFF COMBAT BACKLOG



Cave at Great Barrier Island sketched by Charles Heaphy

While the Pacific Canoe Hall is receiving some very visible improvements thanks to the Labour Department employment scheme, the Museum Library is also benefitting from the cataloguing and indexing of various of its important collections. Julie Benjamin has been working on both the Rev Richard Taylor collection of sketches of the East Coast, and the Charles Heaphy sketchbooks and loose drawings, and Peter Peryer has been indexing the Museum's photographic albums. These include views of 19th and 20th century New Zealand, World Wars I and II and the islands and peoples of the Pacific.

## Unpublished Bird Paintings

A late and brief addition to the Museum's special exhibition programme was a collection of 40 original watercolour paintings of New Zealand birds from October 6-11 inclusive. This collection of 89 paintings in all by British artist George Edward Lodge was commissioned by the New Zealand Government in the early 1900s with the intention that the plates would be published in a book. However, due to the outbreak of war in 1914 and a shortage of funds, the plates were never published and the paintings passed into the care of the National Museum of New Zealand. The artist himself died in 1954 at the age of 94 and was considered by many to be the finest British bird painter of the 20th century. However, the paintings have finally been published in a particularly impressive volume and this had prompted the circulation of the artist's originals to other museums throughout the country. Those museum goers who missed this exhibition and cannot afford the lavish book of plates (with introduction and

text by Sir Charles Fleming) will be pleased to learn that a copy is to be acquired by the Museum Library.



## SECURITY MEASURES

Recent visitors to the Administration section of the Museum may have observed the press-button locking system now installed on all doors to staff areas. Quite apart from the additional security the staff now appreciate not having to grapple with the pass keys required by the previous system. Some of the costs of these improvements and increased fire protection were met by a subsidy from the New Zealand Lottery Board. This source also provides a grant towards the salary of the Museums Liaison Officer, Sherry Reynolds.

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.

