



**Auckland  
War Memorial  
Museum**

# NEWS

Auckland Institute and Museum  
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## Nelson Letters

The Museum Library has been delighted recently to receive several items from the estate of the late Mrs J.C. Wasey. Included are two letters written by Horatio Lord Nelson to his daughter in 1803 and 1805. Horatia was born in 1801 to Emma Lady Hamilton. Nelson and Lady Hamilton went to considerable pains to conceal from the public and from the girl herself the facts of her parentage. Although Horatia knew Lord Nelson was her father, Lady Hamilton denied being her mother all her life, not even relenting on her deathbed. The letters are two of very few from Nelson to Horatia (who was, after all, only four years old when he died). That written in 1805 was penned just before the great victory of Trafalgar, in which Nelson met his own death, and was delivered by Captain Hardy of the Victory. The text of the letters is as follows, with idiosyncrasies of spelling and abbreviation made more understandable:

Victory off Toulon, October 21st 1803  
My dear Child,  
Receive this first letter from your most affectionate father. If I live, it will be my pride to see you Virtuously brought up; but if it pleases God to call me to himself, in that case I have left dear Lady Hamilton your guardian. I therefore charge you, my dear child, on the Value of your Father's blessing, to be obedient

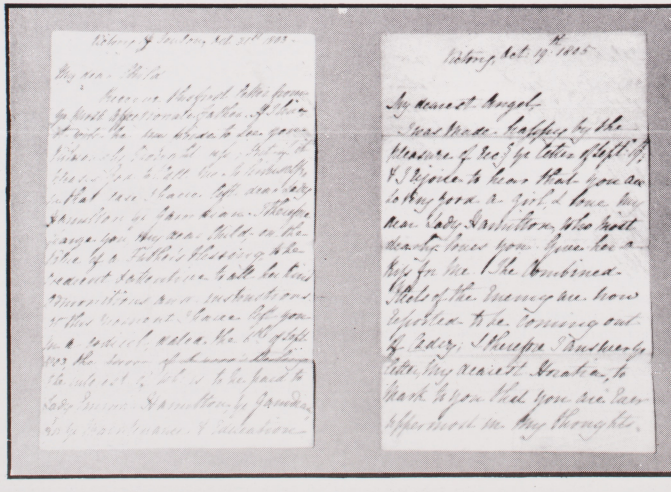
and attentive to all her kind admonitions and instructions. At this moment I have left you in a codicil, dated 6th of September 1803, the sum of £4,000 sterling, the interest of which is to be paid to Lady Emma Hamilton, your guardian, for your Maintenance and Education. I shall only say, My dear Child, May God Almighty bless you and make you an ornament to yourself, which I am sure you will be, if you attend to all dear Lady Hamilton's kind instructions; and be assured that I am my dear Horatia, your Most Affectionate Father.  
Nelson & Bronte

Victory, October 19th 1805  
My dearest Angel,  
I was made happy by the pleasure of receiving your letter of September 19th, and I rejoice to hear that you are so very good a girl, and do love my dear Lady Hamilton, who most dearly loves you. Give her a kiss from me. The Combined Fleets of the Enemy are now reported to be coming out of Cadiz, and therefore I answer your letter, my dearest Horatia, to mark to you that you are ever uppermost in my thoughts. I shall be sure of your prayers for my safety, conquest, and speedy return to dear Weston, and our dearest good Lady Hamilton. Be a good girl, mind what Miss Connor says to you. Receive, My dearest Horatia, the Affectionate Paternal blessings of your father.

Miss Connor was Horatia's governess. Nelson was killed at the Battle of Trafalgar two days after he wrote this letter.



From a coloured drawing of Horatia Nelson as a child. Lord Nelson had this with him at sea at the time he wrote the two letters which are the subject of this article. Drawing: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



The content of these letters is well recorded historically: they were first published in the seven volumes of Nelson's letters published in 1845. Not currently quite clear is how these letters came to be in New Zealand and whether they are in fact copies, though they certainly appear to be in Nelson's hand. Enquiries are under way with the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and in New Zealand to clarify the position.

To ensure their preservation, these letters will not be placed permanently on display in the Museum, where the effects of light would be harmful. They will however be on temporary display in the Notable Accessions Case, off the Museum entrance foyer, for several weeks to allow members and Museum visitors in general an opportunity to inspect them.

Displayed with the Nelson letters is a letter from another famous maritime man, Captain James Cook. Presented to the Museum a few years ago by Mr John Seabrook, this letter is kept away from the effects of light much of the time, but is displayed periodically on occasions like the present.

## Museum Staff

There have been several staff changes at the Museum recently, affecting a number of departments.

Mention was made in the last **News** of the recommendations of the report on the Museum Library prepared by Mr Roy Carroll, Manukau City Librarian. Council's adoption of these recommendations has resulted in the appointment of two additional staff. Edmond Sun takes up a position as Assistant Librarian, with special responsibilities in cataloguing incoming material. He was formerly Head of Circulation for the New Plymouth City Library, and has also worked in the Cataloguing Department of the University of Auckland Library and as Deputy Librarian in Charge at the Auckland Secondary Teachers College Library. Victoria Bell is the new clerical assistant in the Library, where her duties will include shelving, the pursuit of overdue books (yes, even Institute members have books overdue from time to time), as well as general clerical duties. She will also occasionally relieve on the telephone switchboard, during the absence of our Receptionist-Telephonist, Maureen Taylor.

Another new face among the Library staff is Mrs Mary Fitzgibbon, who recently replaced Diane Calder as Library Assistant. Diane resigned to take up a position in the Reference Department of the University Library.

Geoff Logan has joined the Display staff, filling the place left by the departure of Gillian Chaplin, who is now Education Officer at the Auckland City Art Gallery. Geoff has worked for several years as Manager of an Auckland crafts gallery, and was previously a tutor in ceramics at the Otago Polytechnic. He has wide interests in the arts, especially in the arts of Japan. His own recent art work has been an exhibition of bamboo and paper



From left: Mary Fitzgibbon, Geoff Logan, Victoria Bell, Edmond Sun and Esther Duncan.

lamps, of Japanese inspiration. Another staff member seeking Japanese inspiration is our Director Stuart Park. Stuart has been awarded a Short Term Visitor's Grant by the Japan Foundation and will visit Japan for a fortnight in November. He will be visiting Japanese museums and other places of historical and scenic interest, since one of his concerns is to discover how Auckland Museum can better serve its increasing numbers of Japanese visitors. Stuart has also just been appointed to the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

Mrs Esther Smith retired recently, after several years as working as a cleaner in the Museum, and her place has been filled by another Esther, Mrs Duncan. Another cleaner, David Brierly, has also left and his

place has been filled by the return to the staff of a former attendant and cleaner, Mr Noel Chapman.

Finally, in a section devoted mostly to comings and goings, mention must be made of the appointment of a Senior Conservator to the Museum. Mr Karel Peters has been appointed to this position, created following the reorganisation of conservation responsibilities at the Museum. Karel has had considerable experience working as a conservator in New Zealand. Whilst he has specialised in the treatment of waterlogged wood, he is skilled in many areas of ethnographic conservation. Karel has been working in the Anthropology Department of the University of Auckland for many years. He takes up his position in mid-October.



## ANZAAS 1984

The 54th Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science will be held in Canberra from May 14-18 1983.

The Congress theme is 'The Horizons of Science', though the section meetings and mini-symposia planned will not necessarily adopt this theme. Members interested in attending should write for Congress circulars from the 54th ANZAAS Congress Secretariat, Dulcie Stretton Associates, 70 Glenmore Road, Paddington, NSW 2021, Australia.

## Beaton Photographs

The Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum at Waiouru is currently holding an exhibition 'Cecil Beaton: War Photographs 1939-1945'. Beaton was, during the 1930s, a noted photographer of the rich and famous, the royal and fashionable. At first he saw the outbreak of war as a personal disaster, as he considered his photographic style inappropriate to the new situation. However, he realised that he could use his talents to good effect, and spent the war years working for the Ministry of Information, photographing all aspects of the fighting, on the Home Front in 1940 and 1941, in North Africa and the Middle East in 1942, and in India, Burma and China in 1944 especially. The publication of these photographs played an important role in documenting the fighting in sometimes 'forgotten' theatres of war, and today they exist as a telling and vital collection of documentary photography. The Exhibition is on display at Waiouru until the end of March 1984, so if you are travelling through the Desert Road over the summer, do stop to see this remarkable exhibition.

## Election of Council

At the Annual General Meeting of the Institute and Museum on September 20, the results of the recent election for representatives of the members on the Institute and Museum Council were announced. Our congratulations are offered to Mrs Clark, Dr Coop, Mr Print and Miss Robb on their re-election to Council.

The Auckland Institute and Museum Council comprises representatives of both the members of the Institute and Museum, elected as mentioned above, and also representatives of the local authorities in the Auckland region, who contribute financially to the maintenance and development of the Museum. The local authority representatives are elected or appointed, as provided in the Museum's empowering Act, following each three-yearly General Election of local authority members. These elections and appointments will therefore occur after the election on October 8 this year. We will have word of the results of these changes in a later **News**.

## Skink Home

The Museum has from the British Museum, London, a small specimen of the Bay of Islands Antarctic Expedition in 1841. This specimen was examined by J.E. British Museum, species — **Moc...** we know this ant — the common Zealand. It is a body length (ex never found far extends in distrib west right around the east and on islands. Most in grey-brown and are black. They bask in the sun, tastes they eat can overpower. after Lieutenant collected some

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## Science Awards

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## Skink Comes Home

The Museum has just received on exchange from the British Museum (Natural History), London, a small skink that was collected in the Bay of Islands by the Royal Naval Antarctic Expedition of Sir James Clark Ross in 1841. This specimen, and 38 others, were examined by J.E. Gray, herpetologist at the British Museum, and described as a new species — *Mocca smithii* — in 1845. Today we know this animal as *Leiopisma smithii* — the common shore skink of northern New Zealand. It is a medium-sized lizard with a body length (excluding tail) of up to 7 cm. It is never found far from the seashore and extends in distribution from Muriwai in the west right around the coast to Gisborne in the east and on many northern offshore islands. Most individuals are pale grey-brown and highly speckled but some are black. They are active by day and often bask in the sun. As predators with catholic tastes they eat any moving prey that they can overpower. The species was named after Lieutenant Alexander Smith, RN, who collected some of the original specimens.



Whenever a new species is described the specimens cited in the description become the type specimens. Museums treat these with exceptional care since they are reference points and considered to be the property of international science. We are very happy to acquire one of the types of Smith's skink and it is fitting that such a specimen should return to Auckland province after 142 years in the spirit rooms of the British Museum. It is the oldest specimen of a reptile, and perhaps the oldest zoological specimen, in our collection.

SMITH'S MOCO. *Mocca Smithii*, Gray, *Zool. Erebus and Terror, Rept. 1.*

Pale brown, with 3 indistinct series of black spots and a pale streak on each side; sides black-varied, beneath whitish; limbs black-spotted; nasal and frontonasal nearly contiguous, fronto-parietal and parietal nearly equal; ears open, simple-edged; pre-aural plates nearly equal, larger; disk of the lower eyelid very large, oblong.

♂. In spirits. New Zealand. Presented by Lieut. Alexander Smith, R.N.

♀. In spirits. N. Zealand. Presented by the Admiralty, from the Antarctic Expedition.

Original description of *Mocca smithii* from Gray's 1845 Catalogue of the Lizards in the British Museum.

## World of Science

The National Programme of Radio New Zealand broadcasts a science programme 'World of Science' at 10.10 pm on the first Thursday of every month, except January. This 20-minute programme has in the past made frequent use of scientists who have spoken to meetings of branches of the Royal Society of New Zealand, like the Auckland Institute and Museum. Producer Hugh Young thinks there may be many more Institute members whose special field would be of interest to the general public, and could make a contribution to the programme that would help to bridge what he sees as a widening gap between scientific and lay views of the world, in a down-to-earth but not sensational way. He would be particularly interested to hear from scientists doing research outside the universities. His address is: Hugh Young, Producer Special Projects, Radio New Zealand, P.O. Box 2092, Wellington, or phone (04) 721-777, extension 511.

## Forthcoming Special Exhibitions

16-25 October, **Auckland Studio Potters 19th Annual Exhibition.**  
5-13 November, **Bonsai.**  
20 November - 4 December, **Auckland Photographic Society.**

## Science Awards

During the visit to New Zealand earlier this year of the Prince and Princess of Wales, it was announced that the Prince and Princess of Wales Science Awards were being initiated with Their Highnesses' consent by the Royal Society of New Zealand. The Awards are prestige awards, with the objective of advancing New Zealand science. They will be offered to individual scientists with the objective of equipping them intellectually and technologically for their role in the development of New Zealand.

It is envisaged that most awards will be made to New Zealand based scientists, technologists and technicians, to enable them to travel to carry out studies relevant to New Zealand science, to learn techniques or develop expertise, to use equipment, collections or facilities not available here, to gain in-service training or to promote New Zealand developments. There will be no restrictions based on age, formal qualifications or field of science, but successful applicants will have shown excellence in their chosen field.

Member Bodies of the Royal Society of New Zealand are being asked to provide financial assistance for the establishment and continuation of the scheme, and many Institute members who are members of professionally based member bodies will be contributing through an additional levy on their subscriptions. For this reason, and because the Institute and Museum is not a professionally based member body, the Council of the Institute and Museum resolved not to vary its subscriptions to include a contribution to the scheme, but

instead to draw the existence of the scheme to members' attention through the **News**. Any members who wish may make their contribution directly to the Royal Society of New Zealand, either on a lump-sum or continuing contribution basis. Intending supporters of the scheme should write to the Executive Officer of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Private Bag, Wellington, from whom information can also be obtained concerning applications for grants under the scheme.



A view of Auckland Museum's recent special Exhibition "New Zealand's Native Plants" (September 8-21)

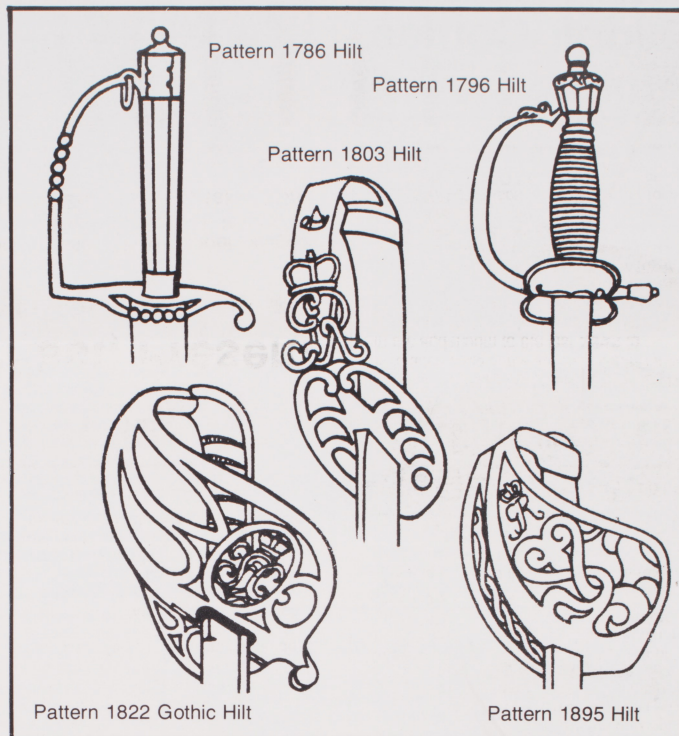
## British Infantry Officers' Swords

A display, showing the range of infantry officers' swords in our collection, has been set up. It covers 100 years of sword design, the earliest being the pattern introduced in 1796 and the latest the pattern of 1895, which is still in use today. The case of the lack of innovation since 1895 is that, after that date, swords rapidly ceased to be weapons and were relegated to the role of decorations and symbols of rank. The design therefore became traditional and was not subjected to the trials of war.

The history of sword design in the infantry is rather a sorry one, as unsuitable designs were replaced by others almost as bad and the decorative aspects of the swords received as much or more consideration than the serviceability as a weapon.

In 1786 Infantry Officers were told henceforth to arm themselves with a sword. The blade was weak and the decorative hilt was so small as to offer little protection. A new hilt was introduced in 1796 and one of these is on display. Again, the hilt was small and easily broken off. A general once said of them 'nothing could be more useless or more ridiculous than the old infantry regulation sword; it was good for neither cut nor thrust, and was a perfect encumbrance'.

In 1803, a new sword was introduced; with a strongly curved blade (much favoured because one could sit down at tea-parties without the point digging into the floor) and a stronger, but still inadequate, decorative guard. This was replaced in 1822 by a sword with a slightly curved blade, which was reinforced with a pipe of metal along the back. This helped to prevent the blade bending when in use. The new hilt at least offered reasonable protection to the user's hand. The guard was lined on the inside with



leather. This type of hilt persisted until the 1895 pattern was introduced.

The blade, however, underwent several changes. In 1892, a stronger blade, intended for thrusting only, was introduced. The top half was rounded on both edges and had a single deep fuller. This fuller, a wide deep groove, was often called a 'blood gutter', though in fact it was to reduce the weight of the blade hopefully without reducing its strength. Only the last 17 inches were sharpened. This blade was never superseded but, in 1895, a pierced sheet-metal guard replaced the Gothic hilt.

At last there was a strong functional weapon, but it was a weapon that was already obsolete as the introduction of magazine rifles at about this time had brought an end to formal hand-to-hand combat in the open. Hand-to-hand fighting was to appear again in 1914-18, but in the restricted space of trenches, swords were of no use. Again, in 1939-45 sub-machine guns were quicker and had a longer reach.

The age of sword fighting, which started in the Bronze Age, had ended.

## Institute Lecture

### "Crop Plants: Past, Present and Future"

The next Institute lecture will be given by Professor R.H.M. Langer of Lincoln University College at 8 p.m. on October 31. Professor Langer, this year's Cockayne lecturer of the Royal Society of New Zealand, will speak on "Crop Plants: Past, Present and Future".

## Journal Offer

Several members were pleased to be able to take advantage of the special offer included in the addendum to the last **News** to subscribe to Journals published by the DSIR. Butterworths of New Zealand have advised that they can offer the **New Zealand Agricultural Science Journal** to Institute members at the same special rate of \$20 per annum. Members wishing to avail themselves of this offer should write directly to Mr W.R. Morrison, Sales Manager for Butterworths, CPO Box 472, Wellington.

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.

