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Museum Quarterly is the official magazine of the Auckland War Memorial Museum



David Weatherley working on one of the albatrosses

Revamping the last of the 'old-timers'

Two feathered old-timers at the Auckland Museum are currently getting a "wash and set".

The two albatrosses, which are displayed at the end of the *Origins Gallery*, have been removed for delicate cleaning and conservation work by the Museum Preparator, David Weatherley. They are one of the few old displays still remaining in the new Natural History Galleries.

They were first mounted in the mid-1930s for display in the old Museum's Bird Hall and were moved to their current position in 1972.

"The birds were in desperate need of attention," said Weatherley. "One had suffered severe insect damage over the years, with most of its feathers being eaten away."

Conservation work will include a wet washing, where Weatherley sprays detergent

on the birds, rinses them and then dries them quickly.

"These specimens are very fragile, so the cleaning process is extremely delicate,"

he said. "Once the birds are washed, their beaks and legs are painted and then the feathers preened."

The display is also in for a

spruce up with Weatherley collecting new vegetation to replace the old, cleaning the background painting and reconstructing the ground work.

The Museum shines once again

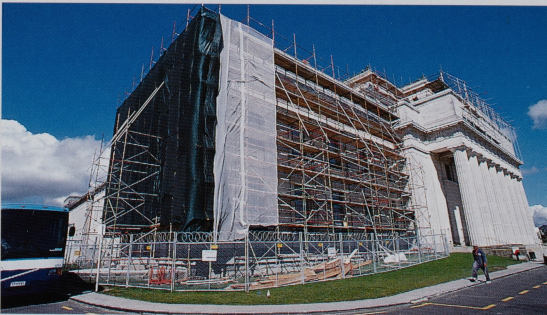
The Auckland War Memorial Museum is once again standing tall over Auckland City as conservation work on its exterior nears completion.

Bert Denée, project manager

for the exterior refurbishment, said that the team is currently working on the final stage of the original 1929 building and is well underway with work to the 1960 addition.

"The scaffolding is now up on the eastern side of the Museum, ready to complete work to the last of the Portland stone facades. The balance of the 1960 building is on target for completion prior to the APEC leaders' meeting in September."

The work has involved conservation mortar repair to the stone work and some stone replacement, including the carving of two new lions heads on the flag parapet.



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The Museum geologists 1929–1955



Arnold Lillie

With the recent deaths of Arnold Lillie (1909–1999) and Hugh Battey (1922–1996) there passed away the only permanent full-time geologists to be employed by the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

From the opening of the Museum building in 1929, Cyril Firth looked after the Geology

Halls on a part-time and unpaid basis. In 1946 Arnold Lillie was appointed as the first full-time geologist.

A graduate from Cambridge and the University of Geneva, Lillie began work at the Museum where his “well-ventilated office” was a trestle table in the corridor near the loading bay. An early assignment was to investigate the cause of weathering on the English Portland limestone used in the Museum building, which turned out to be the salt air. Lillie’s short Museum tenure did not allow him to implement his innovative idea of changing the Geology Hall from a display of specimens to a series of themed displays.

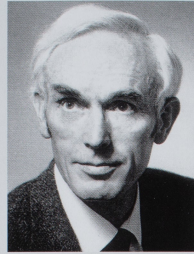
Lillie moved to Wellington in February 1947 to become Senior Lecturer in Geology at Victoria

University, returning to Auckland in 1951 as Chair of Geology at the University of Auckland.

With the appointment of Auckland graduate, Hugh Battey, Auckland Museum Geology entered its most productive years. In those days there were no display staff at the Museum, so Battey a competent draughtsman, both designed and constructed his own displays.

Battey regarded fieldwork as an essential part of the Museum’s function. Resulting from his extensive field trips, the collections expanded to include a range of Mesozoic fossils.

In August 1951 Battey took extended leave for post-graduate study at Cambridge University and the Museum work was carried on part-time



Hugh Battey

by Alan Mason. Battey returned in April 1954 and began an overhaul of the geology displays.

In October 1955 Hugh Battey resigned to take up a lectureship at Durham University in England and the position of Museum geologist was disestablished.

— Alan Mason

Children look to a brighter future for Auckland

Auckland’s schoolchildren are heralding in the future through a joint programme between the Museum and the Auckland City Council.

The “Future Auckland” programme, launched in April, aims to involve young people in thinking about planning for the city. The programme ties in with the school social studies curriculum for children aged six to 14.

Sarah Ross, Auckland Museum educator, said that she had received some good feedback from teachers who were present at the launch.

“When participating schools visit the Museum, they’re given a tour of *Treasures & Tales*, which includes the Discovery Centre. The students then follow a trail through the

different galleries in the Museum,” said Ross. “This is to get them looking at the past and to encourage them to think about the future.

“Schools were asked to submit examples of students’ input into city planning at the end of May, which are going on display at the Museum.”

One of the questions posed to the students in the programme is “What do they want to see in Auckland’s future?” They are asked to submit their answer in the form of a letter to the city council. Ross says that there has been a huge response that includes such comments from children as, “I want the city to be safe for children to play in”, “I would like lots of trees”, “I think there should be less pollution

in the sea” and “I want different shaped Sky Towers”.

The “Future Auckland” programme was developed by the education staff at the

Museum in conjunction with Auckland City’s Strategic Development group and the Auckland Education Advisory Service.

Museum shines again

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An important part of the process has been the application of a long-term biocide to prevent the regrowth of the lichens, mosses and algae that have previously discoloured the stone. This will be reapplied every five years.

A grant of US\$250,000 was received from the Getty

Grant Programme in 1997 for the conservation of the Museum exterior and the heritage laylight above the main foyer. The Getty Grant Programme is based at the Getty Center in California and helps fund the preservation of the world’s important heritage buildings. The Auckland Museum was the first institution in New Zealand to receive such a grant.



Maori Treasures will be ready for APEC

The refurbishment of the *Maori Court* is on target to meet its August completion deadline.

The three sections of the *Maori Court*, including *Nga Mahi* and *Nga Tupuna*, are being merged into one gallery to be called *Maori Treasures — He Taonga Maori*.

The new central court will be ready by 22 August, in time for the APEC leaders’ retreat being held at the Museum on 13 September. The East and West wings will be completed by late November.

Charles Berryman, creative producer of the *Maori Treasures* project, said that

there has been a lot of pressure on staff to finish the job on time.

“The project has been huge. In the central court we removed the large exhibits, ripped out the floor and repainted the structure. We’re currently completing the layout for the display cases and locating the exact position for each artefact.”

A major challenge has been making the final selection for the objects to be displayed. Completing the object list involved examining each of the Museum’s 6000 plus Maori artefacts. A general selection was made first which was then

finalised a few weeks ago.

Another big task is writing the label text for each artefact on display.

“A large number of the labels have been written bilingually. They include an introduction in Maori followed by a description of the artefact in English and then any story behind the particular artefact also in English,” said Berryman.

He has almost completed the labelling for the central court — on schedule.

“Every project of this size has hiccups and we’ve had ours. Fortunately we implemented a

system early on for identifying these problems and remedying them, which so far has worked extremely well.”

The system that has enabled Berryman and his staff to avoid major delays is an ongoing series of weekly meetings that have been held since the beginning of the project.

“The meetings involve the project team, conservation staff, display technicians and curatorial staff. We have a checklist that we go through each session to identify any areas that need extra resourcing in order to meet our deadlines.”

MEMBERS

Auckland Museum Institute Events for June to August 1999

LECTURES:

The last lecture in the Te Papa "Awesome Forces" series. This is a FREE public lecture suitable for the whole family.

Tuesday 15 June, 6.30pm: "Wet 'n' Wild" Dr Jim Salinger talks up a storm on floods, cyclones, droughts, and weather-related disasters.

Where: Sky City Casino Theatre, Level 3. Parking \$5 after 6pm.

Saturday 12 June, 8pm: The 1999 Carter Memorial Lecture—"A Universe of Planets" Prof. Brian Warner (Head of the Dept of Astronomy, University of Cape Town) talking about fascinating recent discoveries of planets in orbit around other stars.

Where: McGhie Theatre, Auckland College of Education, Epsom Ave, Epsom. Bookings recommended. Adults \$6, Members of Astronomical Societies/ Student Card/15 years under \$4 (Cheques to Auckland Observatory).

For further information tel 09 624 1246.

Thursday 8 July, 7.30pm: "Technology and the America's Cup—an engineer goes

sailing" Prof. Peter Jackson, Auckland University.

Where: Maths Lecture Theatre 1 (MLT1), Auckland University (adjacent to the Student Union Building). Parking—visitors car park, Wynyard Street or behind the Engineering Building. (NB: safest to use the underpass below the entrance to Engineering to cross Symonds Street)

Sunday 11 July, 7.30pm: Royal Society of New Zealand, 1999 Fleming Award Lecture—"Can technology save the world" David Thom.

Where: Engineering School Lecture Room 1.401, Auckland University. Entry via Symonds Street entrance. Parking—as suggested above.

Tuesday 20 July, 7.30pm: Geological Society of New Zealand, 1999 Hochstetter Lecture—"Growth and development of the Mainland Continental Crust (with some references to the offshore islands)" Assoc. Prof. Steve Weaver, Canterbury University.

Where: Maths Lecture Theatre 1 (MLT1), Auckland University (adjacent to the Student Union Building). Parking—as suggested above.

Monday 26 July, 1-2pm: "The forensic uses of DNA" Prof. Bruce Weir (Hon.FRSNZ)

Where: Design Theatre, School of Architecture, Auckland University (adjacent to the Student Union Building). Parking—as suggested above.

Tuesday 10 August, 10am

Wednesday 11 August, 7.30pm: "The Golden Age of Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960" Ian Thwaites.

NB Ian is very kindly repeating his lecture at two different times to suit all and to give as many as possible the opportunity to experience the wonder of bookplates. **Where:** Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, entry via the rear (administration) entrance. Those attending the evening lecture please be on time, as the door will only be manned for a short time.

GUIDED TOURS & FIELD TRIPS:

Sunday 20 June, 9.30am-1pm: "Stories of Central and South Auckland". An archaeological and mythological field trip led by Dave Simmons. Bookings are essential.

Wednesday 18 August, 7pm: "The Museum after Dark". An informal guided tour of the new Natural History Galleries by the curators.

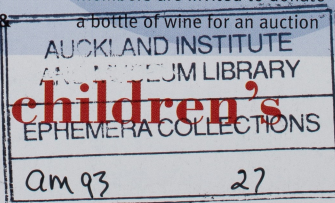
Where: The Natural History Galleries—entry via the front entrance to the Museum.

Members' e-mail addresses:

Do you have e-mail? Would you like to get information and notification of events at short notice? If so, please contact Institute Administrator Daniel Malone. For your benefit we would like to use this very effective communication tool.

Institute Wine Auction:

Members are invited to donate a bottle of wine for an auction



Piano needed for children's Discovery Centre

A piano is needed at the Auckland Museum to restore the Discovery Centre to a full complement of musical instruments.

The piano previously held was recently retrieved by its owners, so the Museum is looking for a replacement to be

gifted to the Discovery Centre.

Katrina Stamp, curator of education at Auckland Museum, commented that music is an important part of what is offered in the Discovery Centre and *Treasures & Tales*.

"Children have the opportunity

to experiment and discover the joys of instruments from many parts of the world."

Any member who has a piano that they wish to gift to the Auckland Museum, should contact Katrina Stamp, tel 09 306 7078.

to be held later in the year at the Museum. Bottles could be suitably inscribed and all proceeds will go to the new Research fund. We will collect bottles if necessary.

Auckland Jewellery Month:

Look out for exciting events all over Auckland, coinciding with Turangawaewae the 3rd National Jewellery Biennial exhibition at the Museum in November. Includes workshops, talks and city walks. More details in the next *MQ!*

The Castle Collection of Musical Instruments:

A fantastic collection of Baroque and early musical instruments. But what do they sound like? Find out and learn much more in a series of recitals and lectures to complement the opening of this new exhibition. Details to be announced.

Remember, if booking for events and for more information please contact Daniel Malone, phone 09 309 0443.

For your information

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Director Dr TL Rodney Wilson

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Open every day except Good Friday and Christmas Day

For information on Membership ring 09 309 0443 x883

For information on exhibitions, public programmes or events ring the InfoLine: 09 306 7067

