

MUSEUM QUARTERLY

August 1998 Issue 75

Cast and engraved silver spice box from "The Precious Legacy" Exhibition

Names in Stone Launched

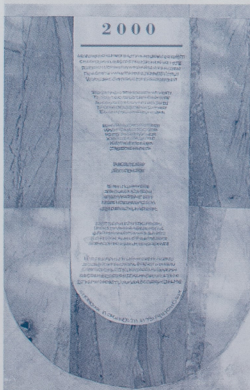
The Auckland Museum Circle has recently launched its fundraising campaign, "Names in Stone", aimed at raising the final one million dollars for the Museum's refurbishment. This campaign seeks donations at the following levels: \$50,000 \$20,000 \$10,000 \$5000

"Names in Stone" seeks support from private individuals and families, and the names of donors will be recorded on a marble sculptural plaque designed by Denis O'Connor, to be located in the main entry foyer of the Museum. The funds will be applied to the completion of the current restoration and renewal work.

Persons interested in knowing more about "Names in Stone" are asked to contact either

Lyndy Sainsbury, Museum Circle Convenor 520 1087

Rodney Wilson, Executive Director 309 0443



The Precious Legacy

"The Precious Legacy", an exhibition of Jewish treasures that were confiscated by the Nazis during World War II, is a magnificent yet poignant collection of glass, silver and porcelain, oil paintings, textiles, iron works and old texts, many of them beautifully and painstakingly handcrafted.

Most of the objects have passed through generations of families dating as far back as the early 16th century, but this process of legacy stopped abruptly with the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia.

For the first time, the Auckland Museum is hosting the exhibition in partnership with the **Office of the Race Relations Conciliator**. The Director, Dr Rajen Prasad, said his office

saw "The Precious Legacy" as a significant opportunity to promote the importance of culture to New Zealanders.

"The underlying message of the exhibition is that all people must do everything they can to protect and enhance their cultural heritage. If any culture is ever under threat again, we must not stand by and let that happen," said Dr Prasad.

During the war, Jewish families in over 150 villages and towns in the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia had their belongings systematically confiscated by the Nazis and sent to Prague for 'storage'. Centuries-old books and artworks, ceremonial and folk crafts, and synagogue implements were removed along with ordinary household

items and clothing. Most of their owners disappeared into the camps.

The Nazis planned to establish a museum collection of Judaica in Prague that recorded an exterminated race. With the fall of Germany, the collection eventually came under the control of the state. Today, the Jewish Museum in Prague houses one of the largest and most significant collections of Judaica in the world.

Auckland's Jewish community, which includes concentration camp survivors, has also assisted with funding for the exhibition to be brought to the city.

"The Precious Legacy" continues until 26 October 1998.

Progress on New Natural History Galleries

Rare Marine Fossil for Origins Gallery

A 65 million-year-old marine reptile has travelled its last journey from the rugged Kaikoura coast to reside in the new Natural History Galleries. The rare fossil is that of a plesiosaur, which prehistorically lived in what is now the Pacific Ocean, up until the extinction of the dinosaurs.

The fossil was found at Amuri Bluff, south of Kaikoura. It is preserved in a huge concretion that fell from a weathered, unstable cliff and split into two on the boulder beach. Each of the two halves of the boulder with a combined weight of five tonnes - contained mirror images of the fossil inside. Because the plesiosaur is preserved in rock of the late Cretaceous period it is believed that it is amongst the last to have existed anywhere in the world.

Negotiations to recover the fossil began in 1996, when John Early and Mike Eagle, of the

Auckland Museum visited the relatively inaccessible, remote site. Both slabs were finally brought out at the beginning of July 1998 with the removal posing a major challenge. One of the largest helicopters in New Zealand, operated by **Heli Harvest Limited** and usually used for logging, was employed to recover the blocks from Amuri Bluff. One half was then trucked to Auckland while the other remains in Kaikoura.

The fossil's removal was made possible by the sponsorship of the **Portage Licensing Trust** of Auckland and **Timberlands West Coast Limited**.

Had it been left on the beach the fossil would have gradually disintegrated and a piece of New Zealand's natural heritage lost.

Specialists at **Tretheway Granite and Marble** of New Lynn are preparing the fossil for display in the Origins Gallery of the Museum's new Natural History galleries, due to open at the end of the year.



Hips and ribs of the Plesiosaur as found on the beach.

Oceans Gallery wins with Sky City Community Trust

A major grant of \$100,000 was recently received from the **Sky City Community Trust** towards the Museum's refurbishment project.

The funding is to be applied to the building of marine habitats and the provision of other specialised display elements for

the "Oceans" gallery, scheduled for completion December 1998.

This is a very significant grant from Sky City and, fittingly, will be applied to a gallery that represents the diversity of marine environments that characterise New Zealand, and Auckland in particular.

Transit New Zealand re-routes trees to Land Gallery

The building of a road usually means that trees have to be cut down, but **Transit New Zealand** is keeping the number to an absolute minimum. While planned rerouting of the new Albany to Puhoi motorway has retained several stands of native trees, three trees in the path of the work are being donated to the Auckland Museum for exhibition.

Early in July, representatives from Auckland Museum and Transit New Zealand removed the three five-metre marble leaf trees (*Capodetus serratus*) from

the Silverdale site. Along with some ground cover plants and epiphytes, they will be placed in the Land Gallery, one of five new Natural History galleries which will feature native flora and fauna.

The selected trees will be air-dried for preservation with the leaves being freeze-dried separately and then reattached. When placed in the gallery, the trunks will have windows cut in them so visitors will be able to see insects 'living' inside.



Laurie Taylor (SERCO), Ewen Cameron (Auckland Museum) and Terry Brown (Transit New Zealand) with one of the three marble leaf trees removed

Discovery Centre in the News

Twenty-nine years after Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, **Weird & Wonderful** is playing host to a piece of moon rock collected during that momentous visit.

Avid space fan and Discovery Centre staff member Damon Keen phoned NASA on behalf of the Museum to see if a loan could be arranged. With an 'affirmative' and sponsorship from **Compaq Computer**, the Museum's information technology provider, Damon made the trip to the States to attend one of NASA's educator camps, visited Mission

Control and acted as personal courier for the rock.

Weird & Wonderful will take on a space theme during the three months the moon rock is here. Many activities are planned, including a visit by a NASA Space Camp representative, who will bring all sorts of space paraphernalia and information. A **Compaq** Presario will also be linked up to the NASA Internet site, where visitors can add their name to the list of names being taken on an expedition to a comet.



Katrina Stamp, Curator of Education and staff members accept the Educational Award from members of the Auckland Parents' Centre

Getty Foundation Grant helps restore Laylight

The laylight was built in 1929 for the opening of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. It's exquisite glass artistry in the foyer depicts the crests of Great Britain and its Dominions and Colonies involved in the First World War. This superb stained glass ceiling to the foyer has recently undergone seismic strengthening and a complete refurbishment.

Over a period of 36 days, hidden by cleverly designed scaffolding, the entire laylight was taken out piece by piece and cleaned. A new supporting framework was erected above for seismic

strengthening and the stained glass ceiling was reassembled.

The work was supported by a US\$90,000 grant from the Getty Architectural Conservation programme. The Los Angeles based Getty Foundation helps fund the preservation of the world's important heritage buildings and this is its first grant to New Zealand. The remainder of the total US\$250,000 will be used to support conservation and cleaning of the exterior building, work additional to the current refurbishment programme.

Discovery Centre wins Auckland Parents' Centre Award

An award made annually recognising organisations making a contribution to family life in Auckland has been presented to the Discovery Centre.

In June the **Auckland Central Parents' Centre**, a voluntary organisation that provides community support and education for parents, praised the Centre for being "educational, interactive and fun, something that kids and parents can do together".

The Discovery Centre, located on the first floor of the Museum, is split into two areas. **Weird & Wonderful**

concentrates on natural history and has been a favourite since it opened in May 1994. The human history area, **Treasures & Tales**, has been buzzing since it opened in December 1997.

By joining the **Compaq/Microsoft** Dinomites Club children gain free entry for a year, a regular newsletter, membership kit with poster, badge and stickers and get invitations to special club functions. There are also exciting programmes for school holidays. To arrange membership or to check out what is happening, phone 309 0443 ext 809

Lalique Glass

Visitors to the Museum have a wonderful opportunity to view more than twenty examples of leading French glass-maker Rene Lalique's best works exhibited in the Decorative Arts West gallery.

Rene Lalique (1860 - 1945) was a leading French jeweller and glassmaker who established a workshop in Paris to make jewellery. He began designing glass in 1902, attaining commercial success making perfume bottles for Coty.

Lalique established his own glasshouse near Paris around 1908 and began to make items of moulded, pressed and engraved glass. He became interested in surface treatments using acid etching and sandblasting. Sometimes using coloured glass, he depicted the exotic flora favoured by Art Nouveau designers, but used the motifs to explore his own fascination with the geometric. The exhibition continues to 21 February 1999.

Distinguished fellow

Mrs Brenda May, Institute member and long-time volunteer in the Botany and Entomology Departments, was recently elected as a Fellow of the Entomological Society of New Zealand. She shares this prestigious position with only three others.

The award is made in recognition of a long career and outstanding contribution to entomology in New Zealand. Brenda's work is of international importance as she

is a world authority on the immature stages of weevils, the biggest family of beetles and one that carries a large number of economically important species.

Brenda worked at the Entomology Division of the DSIR (now Landcare Research) until her retirement. The Museum is very fortunate to have her services identifying and curating the weevils in the Entomology collections and offers its congratulations.

Professor John Morton, well known for his active environmentalism, presents **Seashores in Jeopardy**, a lecture discussing the depletion of marine life due to the pressures of an increasing population. This will be held at the Waitakere City Council Chambers, Waipareira Avenue, off Lincoln Rd., Henderson on 31 August 1998, at 7pm. This will be a popular event, so please be on time to ensure a seat!

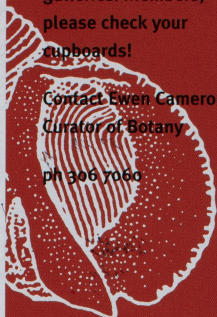
To coincide with The Precious Legacy exhibition, members have the opportunity to learn more about Jewish life and culture. Rabbi Lawrence, from the Auckland Jewish Community Centre, will conduct a tour, on 20 October 1998 at 2pm, and speak about the works on display and about Jewish culture. Please contact the Membership Office for more information and to reserve a space.

Members interested in Art Deco and Art Nouveau design might like to join Rodney Robertson, owner of Art and Industry Antiques, for a stroll and discussion around the Lalique Glass exhibition. Rodney will be speaking on the 31 October 1998 at 1pm. As space is limited, please contact the Membership Office to make a reservation.

With the opening of the Mackelvie Collection, members are invited to join Mary Kisler (curator of the Mackelvie Collection at the Auckland City Art Gallery) who will speak about James Tannock Mackelvie. Mary will be speaking on the 11 November 1998, at 10.30am. As **space is limited**, please contact Membership Officer, Fiona Amundsen, to make a reservation. Phone 306 7044.

A Toheroa soup can is required for the new Natural History galleries. Members, please check your cupboards!

Contact Ewen Cameron,
Curator of Botany
ph 306 7060



New Index published

A comprehensive index to the scholarly periodical *Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum* has just been published. Begun in 1930, the *Records* contain the results of research by staff members, and by outside researchers working on the museum's collections. By 1996 there had been 57 issues containing some 440 articles by a total of 140 authors. Most papers deal with zoology, archaeology/ethnology, botany and geology/palaeontology.

Records are sent to libraries around the world, for which the Museum Library receives valuable periodicals in exchange. The index, compiled by Louise Furey, is made possible by a grant from the Lotteries Grants Board. It can be purchased from the Museum Store or viewed, along with past issues of the *Records* in the Museum Library.

Institute Council News

Appointments to the Museum Trust Board

The Institute Council is empowered to make four appointments to the Trust Board. Each year two of those appointed stand down but shall be eligible for re-appointment from time to time. Section 14.5 of the Auckland War Memorial Museum Act directs the Institute Council to call for nominations of suitable persons for consideration by the Council for appointment. Nominations should include a short statement of the qualifications of the nominee who shall give written agreement to their nomination.

Closing date for nominations is 11 September 1998. Please address to:

The Secretary, Institute Council
Auckland War Memorial Museum
Private Bag 92018
Auckland

There are no printed nomination forms.

Elections to the Institute Council

Nominations are called to fill seven vacancies on the Institute Council. Persons nominated must have been financial members of the Institute for a full year prior to nomination. Each nomination must be signed by the proposer and seconder, both of whom must have been financial members of the Institute for a full year. Candidates shall give written agreement to nominations. Candidates for election should forward with their nomination the following information to be sent out with the voting papers.

- Name.
- Occupation.
- Posts held.
- Other relevant qualifications.
- A personal statement of not more than 100 words.

Nominations close on the 2 October 1998 at 4pm. Voting papers will be posted to all members at least 16 days before the **Annual General Meeting of the Auckland Museum Institute** to be held on 23 November 1998. **Votes must be received by 20 November 1998.**

For your information

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Private Bag 92018
Auckland
New Zealand

Telephone 09 309 0443
InfoLine 09 306 7067
Facsimile 09 379 9956

Director Dr TL Rodney Wilson

Hours 10am to 5pm daily

Open every day except Good Friday and Christmas Day

Admission is free
Charges for Special exhibitions may apply

Donations welcome.

Free guided tours are available for groups on most days.

For information about Membership ring 306 7044

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



MEMBERS