



NEWS

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The Firth Dinosaurs



Auckland Museum's major international exhibition of dinosaurs is proving to be a remarkable success, with huge crowds of people coming from many parts of New Zealand to see the exhibition. In the 46 days the exhibition had been open to the end of November, 87,056 people had paid to see the exhibition, a daily average of 1892. This figure does not include the large numbers of pre-school children who are fascinated by these creatures, since under fives are admitted free. These attendance numbers far exceed those for any previous charge exhibition at Auckland Museum, and in fact have exceeded the figures for

attendances at the exhibition in Melbourne. A great deal of effort was put into the preparations for the exhibition by many members of the Museum staff, and the work of the attendant, cleaning, shop and administrative staff and our volunteer helpers in running the exhibition continues at a hectic pace. It is all made worthwhile by the wonderful response from Museum visitors. We are sure our sponsors Firth Concrete Products, Oceanbridge and QANTAS are gratified by this strong public reaction to the exhibition they helped to make possible. A new innovation was Firth Dinosaur Day, a free family fun day in the

Auckland Domain held on November 29th. Over 15,000 people attended this remarkably successful day. Many children, and some adults too, brought along model dinosaurs they had made, for a competition with only one rule - "Minimum height one metre". Some also dressed as dinosaurs, for another competition, where the rules read "None". Muzza from 91FM gave away the many donated prizes, and a highly enjoyable day was had by all. We also arranged a free Members' Evening with the dinosaurs in mid December, when over seven hundred members took the opportunity for a social evening and a look at the exhibition.



The Firth Dinosaurs



Museum President Mrs Sheila Weight welcomed visitors to the opening of the Firth Dinosaurs with the following speech:

It is my pleasure as President of the Auckland Museum Council to welcome you here this evening to the opening of "The Firth Dinosaurs" exhibition. Auckland Museum is very proud to be able to present this, the first ever exhibition of Dinosaurs in New Zealand, and certainly Auckland Museum's largest ever international exhibition.

An exhibition like this is a huge undertaking (I'm tempted to say mammoth undertaking, but I know that's zoologically incorrect), and it is an enterprise that has required the cooperation and collaboration of many organisations and individuals.

Firstly, since this is "The Firth Dinosaurs", I must acknowledge the substantial help we have received from Firth Concrete Products. Some people I fear imagine that exhibition sponsors are some sort of benevolent grandfathers who write a large cheque, and then bask in the reflected glory. Nothing could be further from the truth. All successful cultural and scientific sponsorships are a partnership, involving all the parties very fully in every aspect of the enterprise. Certainly we are very grateful to Firth Concrete Products for their financial backing, without which the exhibition would not have been possible.

But Firths have been involved in many other ways, lending their skills and expertise, and making available their public relations consultants John Quinn and Suzanne Murrell, and their advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi. David Walker and his team have been responsible for the intriguing television campaign. Tom Smith, Peter McDonald and all the Firth staff team have been closely involved in many aspects of the exhibition, and they will continue their involvement right through the exhibition to help us ensure that it is the great success we are confident of.

While Firth Concrete Products are the principal sponsors for the dinosaurs, we have been pleased to receive significant support from two other companies. Oceanbridge managed the complex exercise of importing two containers of dinosaurs, probably the most unusual cargo they have ever imported. They safely shepherded this precious consignment through the



rigours of New Zealand Customs, even avoiding the snare of GST!

QANTAS Airways yesterday flew their oldest passengers ever (and I am not referring to John Chessells), by bringing to Auckland direct from Melbourne the large and fragile head of *Tsintaosaurus* you see over there, and the splendid ichthyosaur specimen. Most significantly, from a scientific point of view, though rather less spectacular visually, QANTAS also couriered the very rare specimen of *Nanosaurus*, the ancestral form from Wyoming of the Southern Hemisphere dinosaurs being found by the Museum of Victoria in Australia. QANTAS have provided passage for the several Museum of Victoria staff involved in coming to set up, and later to dismantle the exhibition.

I should also note that Gray Bartlett Enterprises were helpful in stimulating the exhibition idea at an early stage, and we are grateful for their assistance. The Regent of Auckland have assisted us with accommodation for Mr Chessells.

Before I proceed to introduce John Chessells, may I also acknowledge the work of the Auckland Museum staff who have put the exhibition together, with help from two preparators from Melbourne. Richard Wolfe and his display team have been responsible for the physical display of the exhibition, and I think you will agree they have done a splendid job. Dr Brian Gill has curated the New Zealand component of the exhibition, with support from Anthony Wright and Walter Cernohorsky, and Dr Gill wrote the revised text for the New Zealand

edition of the Australian catalogue. Struan Ensor prepared the Education and Activity kit, again modified from the Melbourne original, and Struan and his team, together with the Museum attendants, are bracing themselves for the considerable influx of visitors over the next few weeks. Isabelle O'Connor and Aloma Munce have undertaken the supervision of the Dinosaur Shop. Director Stuart Park and Assistant Director Sherry Reynolds have been closely involved in many organisational and promotional aspects of the exhibition. To all the Museum staff, including those I have not specifically mentioned by name, may I express the Council's appreciation.

My last expression of appreciation is to the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne, represented here tonight by its Deputy Director John Chessells. Right from our first contacts with Victoria, you John, Bob Edwards the Director and all your staff have been unfailingly helpful. The Museum of Victoria made the large casts displayed here from the Chinese originals, as part of a major scientific exchange with China. You have augmented these with other casts and originals from your own collection and that of the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston. The whole exhibition, as it was displayed in Melbourne, was made available to us, including catalogue, educational material, labels, graphics and all, and for that we are indeed very grateful. Please take back to your Council, and to Dr Edwards and the other Museum staff, our deep appreciation of the contribution you have all made to the wonderful success of "The Firth Dinosaurs" in Auckland.



Book Review Brian Gill

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Are They Real?

One of the most frequently asked questions in **The Firth Dinosaurs** is "Are they real?" A superior ten year old has often been overheard whispering to his Mum "Of course, they're not real!" Well, in his addresses at corporate evenings with the dinosaurs, Museum Director Stuart Park has been tackling this question head on, with the following emphatic answers:

"Of course they're real! Nobody just invented these weird and wonderful shapes. Of course they're real. But what I think people mean when they ask "Are they real?" is "Are they made of bone?" And the answer to that must be "Of course not! There's no bone anywhere in the world that is 65 million, or 140 million or 225 million years old. As an organic material, bone simply will not survive over that length of time.

"When we look at fossil bone, we are actually looking at a cast of the original bone which is now made of stone. Through the processes of fossilisation, the original bone has been replaced by stone. So we are looking at a stone replica of the original bone. "The Firth Dinosaurs" certainly has several "real" bones in that sense, "bones" that are made of stone. Perhaps the most fascinating is the 140 million year old Apatasaurus thigh "bone" that is placed where visitors can touch it - Pat an Apatasaurus, if you'll pardon the pun.

"But the exhibition's major exhibits are not made of stone. If the 22 metre long **Mamenchisaurus** had been made of stone, we would have had to reinforce the floor to be able to show him, and the QANTAS aircraft that carried Tsintaosaurus' head would have had difficulty taking off. In addition, the original stone "bones" are very precious scientifically, and they are safely stored in the Museum in China near where they were discovered. What we see are plastic casts of the stone casts of the original bones. In every respect except their weight, they are identical with the original fossils. What you are seeing is absolutely authentic. Of course they're real!"

Archaeological Excavations at Raupa January — February 1988

Museum archaeologist Nigel Prickett is returning to Raupa near Paeroa for a second season of archaeological excavations this summer. Again the work will be largely funded by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust with support from the Museum and the Auckland University Department of Anthropology.

As last year the excavators will all be volunteers; many of them are coming back for a second season's work. There is still room for a few more volunteers: Please contact Nigel Prickett at the museum.

Through the kindness of the local Ngati Tamatera people we will again be staying at Te Pai-o-Hauraki marae, Paeroa.

The 'dig' will take place over four weeks from 18 January to 13 February. The aim is to do more work in a part of the old riverbank settlement where the first season's excavation revealed at least one large house and related buildings. There will also be one or more new areas opened up to look at a previously unexplored part of the site just within the main defences.

Following last year's work Nigel Prickett worked with Dunedin artist Chris Gaskin to produce an historical reconstruction of the site. This depicts Raupa in the late afternoon of 17 June 1820 when the Rev. Samuel Marsden visited in company with other Pakehas



Maori Plant Names

One of the Museum guides, Jim Beaver, is the author of a recently published book entitled "A Dictionary of Maori Plant Names". In 74 pages of A5 format Jim lists more than 500 botanical names of native and introduced plants with their Maori names and well over 1000 Maori plant names with their botanical equivalents. The lists were compiled from 15 published works and over a dozen manuscripts held by the Botany Section of the Auckland Institute and Museum. The Dictionary is published by Auckland Botanical Society in an edition which, because it is hand made, is limited to 300 copies. The recently appointed Museum botany technician, Jack Mackinder, is also the editor for Auckland Botanical Society and has spent many hours of his time as typesetter, printer and binder to produce this little volume, obtainable from the Museum Herbarium or by sending \$3.80 to the Botanical Society Secretary, Mrs S Jones, 14 Park Road, Titirangi, Auckland, 7.

from the ship "Coromandel" and about fifty Maoris from further down the Waihou River.

Chris Gaskin's picture is based on archaeological results, on Marsden's journal entry and on general historical knowledge. Pig and dog bone was found in the 1987 excavation and a large house of about 10 x 7 m was located in approximately the position shown in the picture.

Members of the Bar

Thirty-five Members of the Bar are looking at some of the historic sites of the area. An archaeologist guide while AS Reynolds made smoothly.

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Members Trip to the Bay of Islands

Thirty-five Members recently enjoyed a very wet weekend in the Bay of Islands looking at some of the marvellous historic sites of the district. Museum archaeologist Nigel Prickett served as guide while Assistant Director Sherry Reynolds made sure things ran smoothly.

Although heavy rain was experienced there was only minimal disruption to the programme. Standing on the great pa Okuratope at Te Waimate, with rain pouring down through the trees, was a useful reminder the Maori people who lived there also had to contend with bad weather as well as good.

The rain ceased on Saturday afternoon for a memorable walk to the summit of the volcanic cone pa, Pouerua, at Pakaraka. And on Sunday morning we were again lucky with the weather at the Marsden Cross Reserve looking at the site of the 1814 Oihi mission station and the neighbouring pa Rangihoua. To get to Marsden Cross and Oihi the more determined of us had to wade the stream which was flooded by combination of high tide and heavy rain.

On the way home we called in at Ruapekepeka high above the main road south of Kawakawa. This pa was built to withstand bombardment by heavy guns and proved an interesting contrast to the much older sites we had looked at earlier in the weekend.

Despite the weather the Museum has had very positive feedback from our first weekend-long fieldtrip for members. It will not be the last.



Well Made, Richard

Curator of Display Richard Wolfe has recently had published a book he has been working on for several years.

Well Made New Zealand — a century of New Zealand trademarks is a fascinating collection of trademarks used in New Zealand over the last 100 years, which Richard has assembled from a wide range of sources. The book explores the many

used in trademarks, and through them illustrates some of the changes in New Zealand society, especially our developing sense of nationhood and the gradual cutting of ties with Mother Britain.

Well Made New Zealand is profusely illustrated, and will have a strong appeal to all those interested in the graphic arts in New Zealand. It will also interest many of you who will remember with nostalgia some of these brand names and trade marks from earlier days.

Antiques for Love or Money?

Members will recall that a couple of series of the popular TV show **Antiques for Love or Money** were filmed in the Museum last year. Well, Auckland Museum's association with the programme has been continued, with the selection of Justine Olsen, Assistant Curator of Applied Arts, as a panelist for the programme. Justine spent a gruelling week in Dunedin recording two series, the first of which has been screening recently, at an unusual Sunday morning hour. Justine acquitted herself well, by all appearances, though the strong personalities of the other team members at times made it hard for her to get a word in edgeways.





The Firth Dinosaurs



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Book Review by Brian Gill

The Dinosaur Heresies. A Revolutionary View of Dinosaurs.
By Robert Bakker. Longman. 481 pp, casebound. \$48. Distributed by Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd. (Copy available in Museum Library)
Dinosaur fever, which has raged overseas in one form or another for 150 years, at last hit Auckland - as no Institute member will have failed to notice - thanks to "The Firth Dinosaurs" exhibition. Looking at those magnificent fossils (or casts thereof) several aspects of dinosaur biology are immediately apparent. The incredible size that some dinosaurs reached is beyond doubt. A quick glance at teeth leaves little question as to which ones were predatory, and the fossilised eggs are proof of the mode of reproduction of at least some species. But anything much more than that - the finer details of how dinosaurs stood and moved, their metabolism, behaviour and social habits - is largely into the realm of deduction and speculation. The realm of orthodoxy and heterodoxy; dogma and heresy. This intriguing and controversial area is the subject of Bakker's book. Chapter by chapter Bakker picks off speculative aspects of dinosaur

biology, shows how certain opinions developed, how those views became entrenched and how they have affected our attitude to dinosaurs. He then shows that careful re-evaluation of the facts, and consideration of new evidence, often leads to radically different conclusions - the "dinosaur heresies". Throughout the book Bakker champions the idea that far from being sluggish, dim-witted, aberrations in the evolutionary progression, dinosaurs were efficient and spectacularly successful. "As long as there were dinosaurs, a full 130 million years, remember, the warm-blooded league of furry mammals produced no species bigger than a cat." In a few places the story has a direct relevance for New Zealand. The presence of Cretaceous dinosaurs in southern Australia (and dare I add, Hawkes Bay!) at what was then 70 degrees South latitude, and where lakes froze over in winter, argues against the orthodox view that dinosaurs were cold-blooded like modern reptiles. In looking at Mamenchisaurus did you ever wonder how that insignificant row of pencil-sized teeth in that tiny head could process enough vegetation to nourish such an enormous body? The dogma is that sauro pods must have had a low metabolic rate. But Bakker describes how apparent gizzard stones have been found amongst

some brontosaur remains and suggests that these animals had a vast gastric mill to grind their vegetable food. In support he cites the moas - big vegetarian beasts with tiny heads, no chewing ability, a high metabolic rate and a gastric mill. So Dinornis, the "terrible bird", and dinosaurs, the "terrible lizards", have quite a bit in common.
Chapter 21 on extinction of the dinosaurs is especially interesting. As if to show that he isn't simply a troublemaker, Bakker rejects the currently popular heresy that a celestial collision caused the dinosaur's demise, and opts for an orthodox explanation. In the few million years just before the dinosaurs died out there was a loss of diversity. Bakker believes that this was caused by lowered sea levels. For various reasons this explains the marine extinctions. The effect on land was to allow sudden mixing of faunas previously separated by shallow seas (eg. Bering Strait). This caused mass extinction by upsetting host-parasite and predator-prey balances (much as man's introduction of animals to New Zealand caused havoc). An extraterrestrial event may have mopped up the last of the dinosaurs but down-to-earth factors had already had a greater influence.
"The Dinosaur Heresies" is to be recommended for anyone with a keen interest in dinosaurs. A recent review in New Scientist by a dinosaur expert had several technical criticisms, but most of us can simply sit back and enjoy this lively book at a slightly more superficial level. It is illustrated throughout with the author's own clever and evocative line drawings. Bakker has an easy style which makes the book highly readable. Consider his description of our own ancestors as "opportunists waiting around for the dinosaurs to die: small, furry, insect-eating, berry-chewing mammals scurrying around the underbrush, fidgeting about, grooming their whiskers." Or consider Stegosaurus, traditionally depicted as plodding along on all fours. Bakker has it rearing up on its hind legs to reach choice foliage using its tail to form a tripod. It was "a grand performer under attack - a five-ton ballet dancer with an armour-plated tutu of flipping bony triangles and a swinging war club." The most lamentable aspect of Bakker's book is its price. At 10 cents for each side of a page few will allow themselves the luxury of actually buying this book, which is a shame.

Logan Campbell Relics

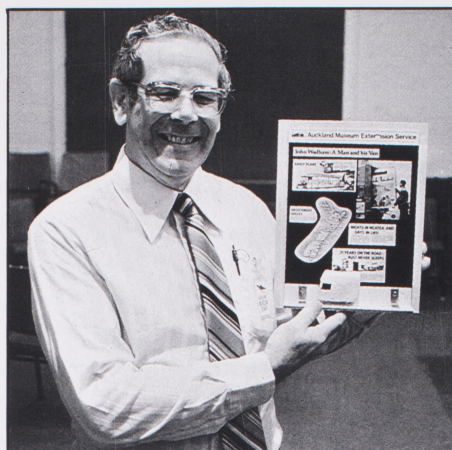
Auckland Museum is proud of its long association with Sir John Logan Campbell, as benefactor during his lifetime, and as founder of the Estate which still supports the Museum in many of its activities. We also hold in the Museum Library a rich archive of Logan Campbell papers, which Campbell's biographer Dr Stone has used extensively.

We were delighted therefore to receive recently copies of Campbell letters from the files of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, and thought Members might be interested to hear of them. The letters are from Logan Campbell to the United States Consul General in Auckland, Mr Dillingham, and from Dillingham to the Chamber of Commerce and the Memorial Museum in San Francisco

Dr Logan Campbell wrote on October 17th 1903:

"I was at San Francisco as long ago as 1851. During my stay I was witness to two great fires which eventually destroyed first one half of the business district of the city, and then the other... The day after that fire I strolled over the ruins and from the debris left on the site of a glazier's shop picked up relic no 1, from the site of a hardware shop relic no 2. These two relics with some others I had collected during a long journey in the East in 1848-9 I presented to the Museum many years after, when we got the length of having a museum. Lately order that I might be able to transmit them to their appropriate abiding place - the San Francisco Public Museum."

Dr Campbell also enclosed a letter from Thomas Cheeseman, containing some seeds for the Museum herbarium, and suggesting that San Francisco might reciprocate with a donation of American Indian artefacts. Whether this ever eventuated is not clear. There was however an interesting cultural exchange between these two museums many years later, since the "San Francisco Public Museum" is now the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco where so many of Auckland Museum's objects were displayed as part of the American tour of the exhibition **Te Maori**.



Extension Officer John Wadham holds the card presented to him by Museum staff to mark his retirement. It is a model of an Extension Service display about the Extension Officer.

Staff News

Extension Officer John Wadham retired at the end of November, after over twenty years' service to the Auckland Museum. In that time, John has driven the now aging Extension Service van, and its predecessor over 150,000 miles, by his reckoning. He has taken the Museum's Extension Service displays to some 80 display sites from Kaitaia to Taumarunui, changing the displays every three or four months or so. John's many other duties in the Museum have involved him in "extending" the Museum beyond its walls in a variety of ways. The Museum Council has undertaken a review of the Extension Officer's position, and has decided to use the position as the basis for the appointment of a Community Education Officer. This person will be responsible for many facets of education and extension activities at Auckland Museum, except for the educational work with organised school parties which is undertaken by the Museum's Education Officers. A lot of interest has been shown in this position - we hope to tell you in the next **News** who the appointee is.

John Wadham has also been in charge of the Museum's military history collection for the last nine years, where he has substantially improved the cataloguing and the storage of that collection, as well as its use in displays. John will continue in this role in a part time capacity, once he has had a good break after his retirement,

so although Museum staff have farewelled John and wished him well for his retirement, we are pleased to know that we will still be seeing him about the Museum. The Council will need to address the longer term future of the curation of the military history collections.

Another staff member to leave recently has been Curator of Applied Arts Brian Muir. Brian had a serious accident last Christmas, and he has been on leave recovering from that. He returned to work on a part time basis in September, but found that he was still not sufficiently recovered to manage the job. Accordingly, the Council regretfully accepted Brian's resignation in October.

Brian Muir was appointed to Auckland Museum as Curator of Applied Arts in 1978, following the retirement of Trevor Bayliss. Brian was the former Director of the McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch, and had also previously directed the Manawatu Art Gallery. His associations with Auckland Museum go back to his childhood however, and we are hopeful that Brian will continue to be involved with the Museum even though he will no longer be a member of staff.

The vacant post of Curator of Applied Arts has been widely advertised, and we will also keep you informed concerning an appointment to that position.

We have omitted to mention in the last several **News** the appointment at the beginning of April of Elizabeth Spence as Secretarial Assistant in the Museum Office. Sorry, Elizabeth, and welcome.

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.

