



NEWS

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MAU MAHARA: *our stories in craft*

"Over time an object becomes invested with interesting talk".
Sidney Moko Mead

These words express the concept behind **Mau Mahara**, the Craft Council of New Zealand's 1990 exhibition.

Established as a 1990 project, the Craft Council intended that a bicultural exhibition celebrating 150 years of craft be created for the people of New Zealand. The exhibition was to focus on craft which not only represented New Zealand's historical and cultural values but told the visitor stories about the individual works. Reminiscences from the craftspeople, owners and collectors contribute to create an assemblage of links with our past and present.

Included in the exhibition are historical and contemporary works from the collections at Auckland Museum. Exhibited is John Halliday's finely carved wheelbarrow, pick and shovel which were made for a specific historical occasion, and described in a contemporary account of 1869:

"Mr Halliday, of Shortland Street, has just completed a beautiful set of implements to be used on the opening of the Thames tramway. There is a wheelbarrow, the body and

wheel of which are made from the best mottled kauri, while the carriage part consists of rimu beautifully worked up. They are of the highest order of workmanship, and display a great deal of

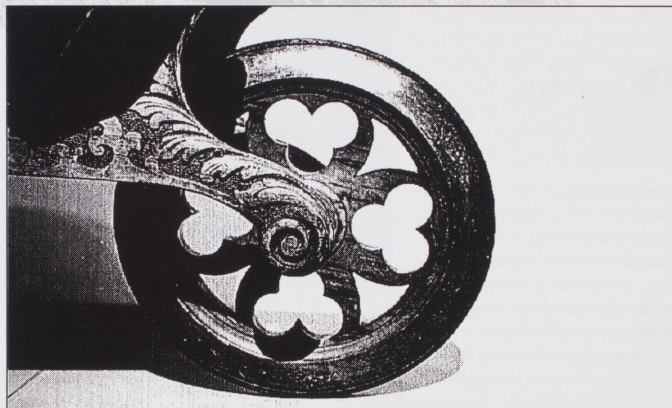
taste and skill on the part of the makers".

Time has placed even greater value on the work.

J. Olsen

Curator Applied Arts

Detail of wheel on wheel barrow made by John Halliday around 1869. From the Applied Arts collection. Auckland Museum.



The exhibition is open from 10-4.30pm. An admission charge is made. The book "Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft", published in association with the exhibition is available at the Museum Shop at a cost of \$29.95.

MAU MAHARA SUPPORT PROGRAMME

During the exhibition demonstrations will be given by craftspeople.

Saturday 2nd March	2-4pm Doll and Teddy Bear making.
Saturday 2nd March	1-4pm Spinners, embroiderers, knitters, model makers.
Sunday 3rd March	1-4pm Spinners, embroiderers, knitters, model makers.
Sunday 10th March	2-4pm Teddy Bear making.

Members Evening: Saturday March 9th 1991, 7.30pm. Main Entrance.

Eleanor Gee, Warwick Freeman, Malcolm Harrison, Len Castle, and Humphrey Ikin will be present during the evening to explain their work and that of others to the Members.

Institute Lecture: Thursday March 21st 1991, 1pm, **Mau Mahara -So What!**
Presented by John Parker.

Change to Museum Telephone Numbers

The Museum telephone number will change, from 5th April 1991. The number for the Museum will be Auckland (09) 309-0443. The direct line to the Museum shop will be 309-2580.

The facsimile number 799-956 and the information answerphone 773-932 number will remain unchanged.

The Moa exhibits

The moa exhibits in our Bird Gallery - four articulated skeletons and a reconstruction of the feathered bird - seem to be the most popular attraction for visitors to Auckland Museum, after the Maori Gallery.

One day in 1988, **The New Zealand Herald** momentarily tired of war, catastrophe and political intrigue, and, rather surprisingly, carried a lead story on page 1 with the headline: "Expert Sets Moa Record Straight". The expert was quoted as saying that "the ostrich-type pose of moa exhibits at the Auckland Museum ... was wrong and should be changed".

Well, we haven't changed them, and in this article I explain why. There are potential technical problems in reshaping the moa reconstruction, which was built at the museum in 1914 using emu feathers, but there are also theoretical reasons for leaving the exhibits as they are.

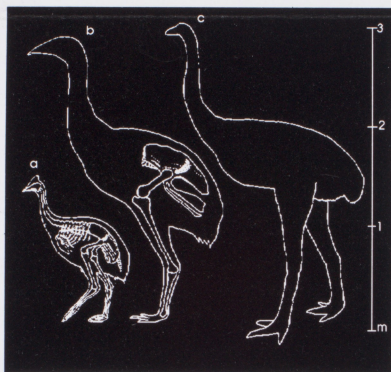
The **Herald** story was but the latest of a long line of newspaper articles in which a journalist hangs a story on the supposition that there has been a recent breakthrough in research on moas which allows us to arrive at new truth on the posture of moas. Recent popular books on moas have also intimated that many museum reconstructions exaggerate the height of moas to increase the spectacle. Authors have made sweeping references to "modern research" - never actually cited - that suggests that moas walked about like emus and cassowaries with their neck looped close to the body.

In fact nobody (to my knowledge) has published any modern research into the stance of moas that supports the looped-neck hypothesis. I have seen nothing that improves on Sir Richard Owen's careful analysis of moa height published in 1844 in the **Transactions of the Zoological Society of London**. (I have repeated the details of his analysis in an article in the **AGMANZ Journal** 20(1): 30-32, 1989.)

Owen concluded that the largest moa "in the ordinary upright posture" reached 3.1m tall. Later he examined more specimens which led him to

conclude that some birds "in an easy standing position" stood 3.4m tall. Owen's work put paid to earlier claims that moas stood 5m tall. Our moa reconstruction - which is based on Owen's work - stands a trifle over 3m to the top of the head, so it is a valid representation of the largest moa in an upright standing position. At 3m tall, Giant Moas are the tallest birds known, but not the heaviest - they were exceeded in weight by some of the extinct Giant Runners (dromornithids) of Australia and Elephant Birds (aepyornithids) of Madagascar.

When alert or agitated or reaching high for food, Giant Moas were surely capable of standing 3 m tall or slightly more. Equally they must have often



(a) Cassowary. (b),(c) Giant Moa. (a) & (b) are traced from a plate accompanying Owen's publication of 1844. (c) is Auckland Museum's moa reconstruction, traced from a photograph and shown on the same scale as the other diagrams. The size of the head in (b) was guesswork as the skull was not known in 1844.

foraged with their head to the ground and at every intermediate position. The issue is really how moas held their head and neck as they walked. Moas were the only completely wingless birds known, and they were unique among ratite birds (emu, ostrich, rhea, etc.) in that the pelvis widens out rather than narrows at the back. Thus they were anatomically different in two ways likely to have a major bearing on posture, and we cannot simply assume that moas walked like certain living birds.

New evidence - if it is ever obtained and presented - may show that moas walked like emus, and I would be happy to accept it. In the meantime we do not know precisely how moas stood or walked, and the Auckland Museum reconstruction is as good a guess as any.

B J Gill
Curator of Birds

Disruption to Displays

There's a great deal going on at the Museum at present, and not all of it makes life easy for staff and visitors. If you've visited the Museum recently, you will perhaps have noticed the closure of a number of galleries. We regret the disruption, but it is essential to allow a number of significant developments to take place.

There are closures on the First Floor in several of the natural history galleries. The natural history and administration sections of the Museum are undergoing major renovation and refurbishing at present. In order to allow our contractors to work, we have had to remove the contents of these spaces from the rear part of the building, especially the stored collections of birds, reptiles, mammals, insects and shells, into temporary storage in three of the natural history display galleries, causing partial closure of some and complete closure of others. Most of these spaces will revert to their former use, once the collections are moved back into the renovated spaces.

However, these galleries are likely to undergo continuing disruption for some time yet. The natural history galleries are to be the next major refurbishment to be undertaken. We will try to ensure that some natural history displays remain available throughout this work, but there will inevitably be a lot of disruption to the existing, largely outdated displays.

In addition, the Museum is currently suffering from a considerable lack of space for collection storage, for public access to the collections and for staff office and work spaces. The Museum Council is in the process of examining the options available to address the problem, but in the meantime we are having to make do in far from ideal conditions. This disruption of displays and closure of existing galleries is likely to continue for some time to come.

The Museum tries to minimise the disruption to its public displays as much as possible, but in a building as short of space as this one, we sometimes have no alternative. We would ask our members and other visitors to be patient - we know the outcome will be worth the difficulties in the meantime.

New Museum Initiatives

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New Curator of Marine Invertebrates

Dr Bruce Hayward, the new Curator of Marine Invertebrates, began work at the Museum in March. Bruce, formerly a member of staff of the Geological Survey, takes up the position vacated by the retirement of Malacologist Walter Cernohorsky. Dr Hayward has wide scientific and historical interests, and has an extensive range of both scientific and popular publications to his credit. He will be responsible at the Museum for the collections of shells, as well as other marine invertebrates, working closely with Marine Biologist Brett Stephenson on some of the more neglected groups of marine animals. Dr Hayward will present an Institute Lecture on April 23rd.

200,000th Specimen added to Herbarium

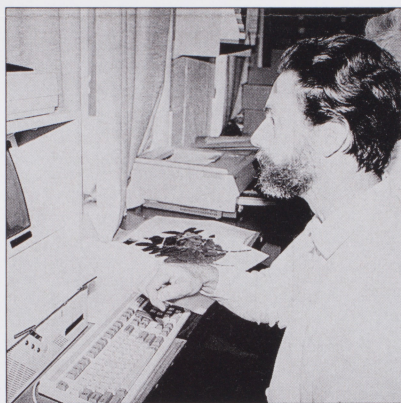
On the 12th December 1990, the 200,000th specimen was formally accessioned into the Auckland Institute and Museum Herbarium. The herbarium (a systematic series of pressed, dried and labelled plant specimens) is the largest departmental collection within the Museum, holding perhaps a quarter of the estimated 1 million objects in the Museum.

Jack Mackinder, Botany Technician, produced the specimen's label using the AKILLES computerised herbarium management system he developed for the Museum. The specimen itself is an example of the native titoki, *Alectryon excelsus*, collected near Lake Whangape in the Waikato by the Department of Conservation's Rare Plant Botanist, Peter de Lange.

Museum staff were invited to the brief accessioning ceremony before a special morning tea catered for by the Botany Department. The Botany staff, however, avoided the jam in the staffroom and enjoyed a celebratory "artillery morning tea" on the Mu-

seum roof. A Royal Artillery tradition dating back to the British campaigns in India, "artillery morning teas" are characterised by white linen; fine china, crystal and silverware; madeira wine and fruitcake; and strong filtered coffee. Roll on the quarter-millionth specimen!

AKILLES was the first major application of computer technology to collection management in the Museum. With the help of substantial grants from the NZ Lottery Board, a major effort to computerise the backlog of herbarium records is underway. This will be reported on in a subsequent issue of the News.



Jack Mackinder, using the AKILLES system.

A Wright
Curator of Botany

International exchange programme

Auckland Museum and the Heard Museum of Arizona, USA, have been accepted into the **International Partnership Among Museums Programme**, the programme provides for staff exchange between institutions. We welcome to the Auckland Museum, Patrick Neary Exhibit Designer from the Heard and congratulate Geoff Logan from the Museum's Display Department on his success at selection.

The Heard Museum is an internationally recognized institution interpret-

ing American Indian Cultures and Art. Its collections include 30,000 artifacts and works of art, as well as 40,000 library and archival items.

In recent years, the Heard Museum has initiated a number of exhibits, conferences and publications exploring elements of cross cultural understanding. The common link has been the status and future development of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, especially in the American Southwest. In looking to its interpretive challenges over the next decade, the Heard Museum intends to deepen and broaden the use of Native American advisors in helping to shape ex-

hibits and programmes. As Director of Design, Patrick Neary plays a pivotal role in translating this cross cultural dialogue into a three dimensional environment that can educate and challenge visitors of all backgrounds. The opportunity for him to participate in the programme of International Partnerships Among Museums will enable him to assist exhibit design collaborations in another country, and, in turn, will enable the Heard Museum to take advantage of the insights of a colleague with comparable

skills from an institution with similar interests in cross cultural interpretation.

Visiting Arizona in April is Geoff Logan who, since joining the staff at Auckland Museum, has been involved with the many aspects of mounting exhibitions, both permanent and temporary. His work involves all the participation in exhibition development projects and practical skills for case designs, labelling and signage, mounting, installation, lighting, graphics and photography. This includes liaison with various people, not only the education and conservation staff and curators within the Museum, but other outside groups who use our special temporary exhibition gallery.

Mr Logan has not visited the United States previously and this exchange internship will offer him the opportunity to further develop his skills and experience in exhibition work.

Marsden's Re-enactment

Museum archaeologist Nigel Prickett enjoyed an interesting experience recently when he took part in a re-enactment of the Rev. Samuel Marsden's 1820 visit to the Hauraki settlement of Raupa, organised by the Ngati Tamatera people of Te Pai-o-Hauraki marae.

In early 1987 and 1988 Raupa was the scene of a major archaeological excavation directed by Dr Prickett. A detailed report of the first season's work was published in the museum Records at the end of last year.

The museum commissioned Dunedin artist Chris Gaskin to prepare an historical reconstruction. The picture shows Marsden and his party being welcomed at Raupa in the late afternoon of 17 June 1820. It has been published a number of times, notably in colour in issue number 27 (December 1989) of Historic Places in New Zealand.

A copy of the picture now hangs in the meeting house at Te Pai-o-Hauraki and was an inspiration for the re-enactment. A Paeroa minister took the role of Marsden. Dr Prickett played the part of Mr Hume, surgeon of the Coromandel, who accompanied Marsden up the Waihou River to Raupa.

The party travelled on the Ngati Paoa canoe Kotuiti from the main road bridge up the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers to Raupa. After stopping for a short service at the site of the populous Ngati Tamatera village of 1820. The party then went on up the river to Te Pai-o-Hauraki where they were received on the marae with many speeches and enjoyed a fund-raising fair organised for the day.



INSTITUTE LECTURE SERIES AND MUSEUM PROGRAMMES

Archaeology Field Trip

A day field trip will be held on Sunday 14th April to see something of the archaeological landscape of south Auckland.

We will visit the volcanic cone fortifications of Mt Wellington (Maungarei), Mt Richmond (Otahuhu), and Mangere Mountain. This is an opportunity to see some of the less well known volcanic cone pa of our region.

It is planned also to see over the archaeological remains on Hamlin's Hill, and to visit a surviving area of stone-walled kumara gardens such as once covered large parts of the isthmus and south Auckland. The field trip will be led by Museum archaeologist Nigel Prickett.

The bus will depart from the back entrance of the Museum at 9.30am prompt and return to the Museum at 5.00pm. The cost of the trip is \$25.00, cheques should be made out to Auckland Museum and sent to the Community Education Officer, Auckland Museum, Private Bag, Auckland. As usual, places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Mau Mahara-So What!

John Parker, Potter and Designer.

Thursday 21 March 1pm.

Schoolroom.

John Parker along with Justine Olsen and Cliff Whiting curated the exhibition **Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft**. In this lecture he will give a personal response to the exhibition.

Stone Buildings: An Insight to New Zealand's Geological Past.

Dr Bruce Hayward Curator of Marine Invertebrates.

Tuesday 23 April 1pm. Schoolroom. Dr Hayward will present an illustrated address which will highlight our heritage of stone buildings and how they reflect regional geology.

Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award Lecture.

Tuesday 28 May 1pm. Schoolroom.

The judge for the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award who is a potter of international repute, will present a lecture. The name of the judge cannot be revealed until after selection has taken place.

Become a Museum Volunteer

Volunteers are involved in a wide range of museum work which is greatly appreciated. Please contact us if you are keen to help. Full training will be given.

Volunteer Guides. Members interested in this challenging and rewarding role please contact the Community Education Officer Extn 826.

Volunteer Administration Assistant. A range of assistance is required within the Community Education Office and help would be appreciated. Please contact the Community Education Officer Extn 826 for further details.

Volunteers for housekeeping duties in the Disney Hall of Furniture. Please contact the Curator of Applied Arts Extn 830.

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 the 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 to the Museum. **Auckland Institute and Museum, Private Bag, Auckland, Phone (09) 390-443.**