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The Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson

By Martin Bond

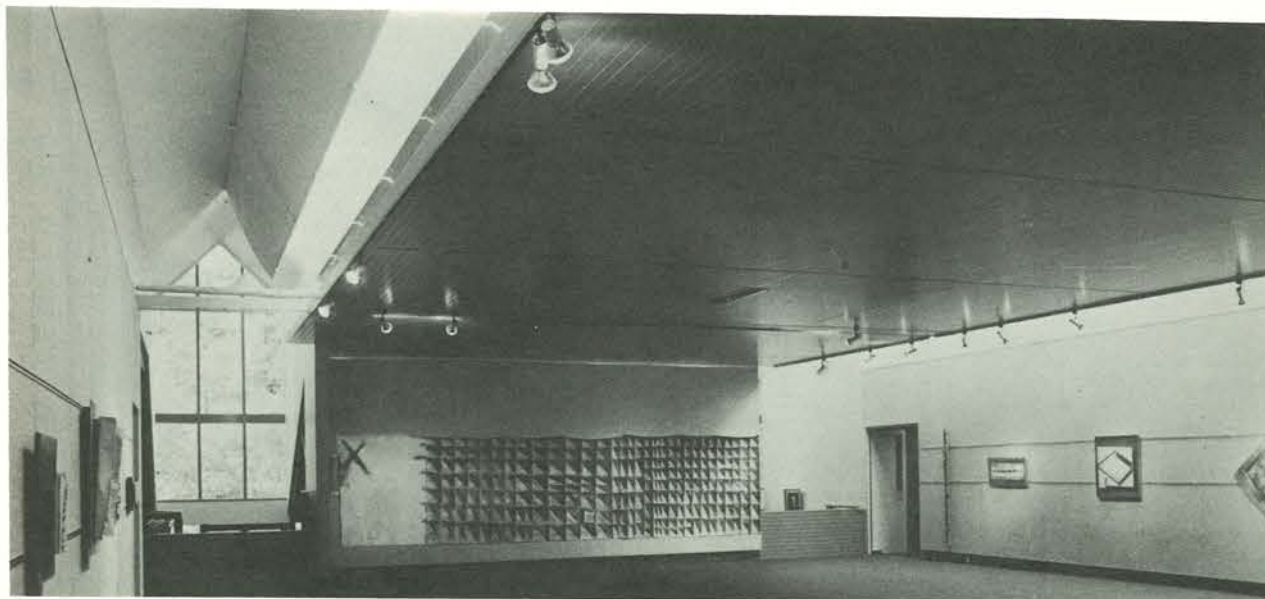
On Saturday, 9 June, the Suter Art Gallery in Nelson was re-opened by the Minister for the Arts, Mr Alan Highet, after a rebuilding and refurbishing project started ten months earlier. Since three-quarters of the total area of the building is entirely new, to describe the ceremony as a re-opening is to give something of a misleading impression. The original Bishop Suter Art Gallery was built in 1898 and that building remained, largely unaltered, until late 1978 when the greater part of it was demolished to make way for the new gallery. The main gallery has been preserved, however, and has been incorporated in the new building with great skill and inventiveness on the part of the architect Miles Warren of Christchurch. Through a clever use of strongly vertical lines and steeply raked roofs the half-timbered quality of the original building has been carried through into the new which is, however, wholly modern and pleasing. The new building reflects the views of the gallery director Austin Davies, on the role of a civic art gallery in 1979. For it is in its versatility that, arguably, the new Suter Gallery impresses most. An attractive brick-paved courtyard of irregular, curving design leads in to a quarry-tiled foyer of generous proportions with reception desk and sales

area stocking a wide range of locally produced pottery and weaving. The pottery is displayed on a set of white rectangular units of differing sizes which can be combined in a variety of configurations.

On the same level as the foyer is the kitchen and 60-seat restaurant which opens directly on to a spacious wooden sun-deck built around an 80-year-old oak, the pond and the trees of the neighbouring Queen Gardens. The restaurant serves coffee, lunch and afternoon tea every day, and evening meals, by special arrangement, for evening functions. The exhibition areas, three in number, are reached via a broad flight of stairs from the entrance foyer which leads directly into the Sargood Gallery (220 m²), financed by a grant from the Sargood Trust of Dunedin. This area is flanked by the Old Gallery (190 m²), the only remaining part of the old building, and the smaller Watercolour Gallery (78 m²). The Old Gallery has been relined and its wood floor sanded and sealed. Carpeting through the offices, restaurant, Sargood and Watercolour Galleries adds to a sense of quietness and well-being. In terms of events and activities, however, the new Suter Gallery is anything but quiet. The Sargood Gallery is adaptable for film showings,



Cover: Suter Art Gallery, Nelson



Sargood Gallery

for which purpose 200 people can be seated, with retractable screen and full projection facilities. The feeling here is of space and light, the gallery featuring two striking, thirty-foot gable-shaped windows framing tantalising and eye-catching views of the mature trees of the Queens Gardens. These vividly recall to mind Susan Skerman's 'Bush Walk' screens executed for an early Expo exhibition and are of sufficient interest to provide competitive viewing with items in the permanent collection. The Old Gallery is adaptable, by means of sophisticated lighting linked to a dimmer switchboard, for use as an intimate theatre or a concert/recital chamber. Full sound insulation between these two multi-purpose areas enables both to be used simultaneously without risk of disturbance. Both the Nelson Film Society and the Garrick Theatre are committed to using the facilities on a regular basis for all their events. A monthly Suter Night Club brings to Nelson good jazz, cabaret and folk. Regular recitals and chamber concerts provide an epicurean diet for the most fastidious tastes.

Overall the gallery is technically equipped to the highest level with full temperature and humidity control available in all display areas. Light levels are also maintained so as to be consistent with the preservation of the valuable works in the permanent collection. Light level in the Watercolour Gallery is maintained at 50 lux maximum, entirely by means of artificial lighting. All daylight has been excluded from this gallery. By means of a system of shutters over the skylights in the Sargood Gallery, natural light can be regulated, enabling a maximum light level of 150 lux to be maintained when appropriate. Special consideration has been given to light colour temperature in order to avoid uncomfortable light contrasts between different public areas. A

workshop and loading bay (50 m²) is located so as to give direct access to the two larger galleries. Full climatic control in the gallery storeroom and Watercolour Gallery minimises the risk of art works being subject to damaging changes in atmospheric conditions.

The gallery's busy schedule of classes and lectures will continue in the McKee Studio, built in 1971 and leased to the Nelson Art Society, which has direct access to the new gallery via a rear foyer.

The needs for disabled people have been taken into account with special lavatory facilities connected with the gallery areas by an inclined foyer area instead of stairs. All ancillary areas on the lower level are accessible by means of a level entrance from the street.

In order to introduce the gallery to those who might not normally visit an art gallery, policy will be to encourage groups to use the premises during evening hours for meetings, conferences or seminars.

To date, four months after opening, 1173 people have become 'patrons' of the gallery and an average of 170 daily visitors is being recorded. Patrons' tickets give free access at all times to the restaurant, sales and exhibition areas. The restaurant and sales area are seen as additional facilities for gallery goers and are not otherwise accessible without paying the gallery entrance fee of 50 cents.

Patrons also get discounted tickets to all events, receive a copy of the four-monthly newsletter and invitations to all private views. Patrons pay \$12 for a single ticket, \$15 double, or \$5 for students.

A considerable factor in the success of the gallery is that visitors now have three reasons for coming: to buy craft items, to look at the exhibitions and to dine. Frequently visitors come primarily for gastronomic diversion. Invariably curiosity draws



Converted old gallery showing theatre spot bars in ceiling

them through the exhibition area and through the display of craftwork. In this way many people who normally would not do so, are looking at the exhibitions.

A calculated by-product of non-cultural evening events is an increase in daytime patronage by those whose first introduction to the gallery was for reasons other than those related to art. Gallery phobia, though less recognised than gallery fatigue, is a factor to be considered when devising a programme of events.

Now that Nelson is equipped with this splendid new cultural amenity, the only major question remaining is a source of income with which to run it. The director and a secretary comprise the permanent staff though the gallery does at present employ four other people under the Government's Temporary Employment Programme. It remains dependent upon voluntary help with a rota system involving seven people for door custodian duties.

An initial Nelson City Council grant of \$100,000 which secured a reciprocal grant of \$100,000 from the Department of Internal Affairs through the AGMANZ scheme for the modernisation of art galleries and museums, contributed substantially to the total building cost of \$360,000. The \$160,000 balance was raised by public subscription. There is however, at the time of writing, no indication that the Council views its financial responsibility to the gallery as a continuing one. Unlike other civic art galleries the Suter has no regular income from rates, its sole source of revenue deriving from an unguaranteed Provincial Arts Council grant which is

insufficient, even to pay the director's salary. The situation has left the director no option but to adopt a somewhat mercenary approach to the running of the gallery. Standards have not been affected however, and insofar as this state of affairs has brought about an extension of the normally accepted role of an art gallery to include a multiplicity of events, can be seen as a good thing. The gallery shop too, can only be said to be in every sense an asset, such is the quality of pottery and weaving stocked, and this applies as well to the restaurant. More than eighty people per day are patronising this highly successful venture for lunch alone, and enjoying the very high standard of cuisine available.

(In view of the value of this type of facility in art galleries, and its recognition overseas, it is worth commenting that in some recent major art gallery rebuilding programmes no consideration whatsoever has been given to any kind of restaurant service. In others, where it has been, the planning layout and the equipment provided allows for hardly more than marginal snack bar usage on an irregular basis.) The necessary levying of a 50 cents charge on all facilities at all times is less fortunate and would be thought by many to be quite antithetical to the spirit of a civic art gallery. Until a reluctant City Council is persuaded to bring the Suter into line with all other civic art galleries in New Zealand, the Trust Board, which is an independent body, has little choice in the matter. Pressures from many quarters, not least of which is the enormous popularity of the new complex, is being mobilised, however, and full council funding is seen as an eventual inevitability.

The Restitution and Return of Cultural Property — a New Zealand Viewpoint

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This is a revised and updated text of a background paper prepared on invitation for a conference on 'Anthropology in Australian Museums', held in Melbourne, 11-14 February 1979, with the financial support of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council.

The question of restitution and return of cultural properties to the peoples and countries of origin has frequently been raised at recent international meetings. Of most direct concern to museums, is the discussion of this question at UNESCO and ICOM. In this paper I am dealing only with ethnographic cultural property, particularly New Zealand Maori and Pacific Islands artefacts. According to current international definition, the term 'restitution' is restricted to cases of illicit appropriation. However, the term 'restitution' is still commonly used in the broader sense also of 'return' of material obtained by any means whether legal or otherwise. This return can take place by exchange, loan, deposit, sale, donation or any other means of transfer.

All parties to these discussions have long since recognised the right of all people to develop and assert their own cultural identities, and the consequent right of peoples to recover their cultural assets which help to constitute this identity. However, the search for acceptable general principles regarding restitution and return has proved complex and difficult. I suggest two possible explanations for some of this difficulty. Firstly, difficulties with gaining acceptance for the 1970 UNESCO *Convention on Measures against Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Objects* have been carried over to the restitution problem. Secondly, international debate has often been restricted specifically to material lost as a result of colonial or foreign occupation. Mention of 'illicit import and export', 'colonial and foreign occupation' immediately raises emotive issues, sets the developed nations over against the Third World, and forces the former colonial powers into a defensive, guilt-ridden attitude. I believe that in the Pacific region with our traditions of co-operation between states and between museums, we can overcome many of these difficulties by simply focussing on the question in hand, and dealing with each case as it arises. But much remains to be done. As the Director-General of UNESCO said in his June 1978 appeal, 'The return of cultural assets to their countries of origin continues to pose particular problems which cannot be solved simply by negotiated agreements and spontaneous acts.' It is therefore necessary to consider the recent progress of international agreement on this question

along with general movements of opinion throughout the world.

Current state of international agreements

In accordance with several earlier resolutions, the nineteenth General Conference of UNESCO in 1976 decided to establish an intergovernmental committee 'entrusted with the task of seeking ways and means of facilitating bilateral negotiations for the restitution or return of cultural property to the countries having lost them as a result of colonial or foreign occupation'.

Thirteen experts and an observer from the International Council of Museums (ICOM) met in Dakar in March 1978 to define the terms of reference, means of action and working methods of the intergovernmental committee. They agreed that the guiding principles for the return or restitution of cultural property hinged on a twofold notion:

(1) that of the reconstitution of a dispersed national heritage — the aim being to ensure the return to the country of origin of cultural property that constitutes a vital element both in terms of spiritual values and for the cultural heritage of the people concerned — and (2) the primacy of the object itself — implying certain requirements for protection and conservation and that the objects returned be used for cultural purposes and be made available to the greatest number of people in the country of origin.

The participants then discussed the various difficulties to be faced — gaps in knowledge, psychological difficulties and legal obstacles — as well as the means of surmounting them. The chief psychological difficulty identified was that a contemplated 'act of restitution may seem incriminating by implying that the possession of the object was until then illegitimate. Most countries and private owners would accept with difficulty the position of the accused, since the objects in question may have been added to their collections by means that were legal and legitimate at that time.'²

In view of these difficulties and the need to create favourable public opinion toward restitution, the Dakar meeting strongly emphasized the urgent need for full documentation both of material remaining in the country of origin and of material already in foreign hands. Further, as a corollary of the principle of the primacy of the object, international technical assistance might be necessary to establish certain satisfactory conditions of protection and conservation in the requesting country. Until this documentation and creation of satisfactory conditions are achieved, there will continue to be strong general reluctance to proceed with large-scale restitution.

The final report of the Dakar meeting and the discussion of this in Document 20 C/86 is the most comprehensive survey of the restitution problem available to date.

At the 20th UNESCO General Conference in Paris in October-November 1978, this intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin, or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was formed. The Committee has twenty member states with half of them being replaced every two years. Its main role is to provide a framework for negotiations, to create a climate of mutual confidence in order to dissipate current misunderstandings, and to encourage research and documentation aimed at establishing coherent programmes of return and restitution.³ A particular problem facing Pacific Island states with respect to this Committee is the fact that none of them, with the exception of Papua New Guinea, is a member of UNESCO. The Dakar meeting recommended that consideration be given as to how the problems of such non-member states might be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee and it would seem that this is an area where Australia and New Zealand might take an initiative. Neither New Zealand nor Australia is at present represented on the Committee.

The proposals for UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee were based on a study prepared by ICOM at the request of UNESCO. ICOM has had a long-standing interest in the technical and professional aspects of the restitution question. At an ICOM Regional Symposium on Museums and Cultural and Scientific Exchanges, South and South-East Asia held at Calcutta in December 1975, a full session was devoted to Exchange of Museum Objects.⁴ Speakers here emphasized that exchanges should be mutually beneficial to the participating countries, should encourage rationalization of collections, and pointed out the compensating value of short-term loans, travelling exhibitions, use of casts, replicas and rubbings. The symposium recommended joint exhibitions, exchange of replicas, exchange of museum objects where possible, preparation of catalogues on a global basis, joint expeditions, and information sharing.

In her review of the ICOM Regional Agency in Asia⁵, Dr Grace Morley summarized Asian attitudes to restitution that 'except when the object exhibited abroad is unique, or irreplaceable by any item still in national collections, or to be excavated for them, it represents the best possible "cultural ambassador".' Asian leaders have also expressed appreciation for the care and preservation of some objects of their cultural heritage held by foreign museums. Sri Lanka is the only Asian country to have a *Catalogue of Antiquities and other Cultural Objects from Sri Lanka Abroad*, compiled by the Director of Museums, Colombo, during several trips overseas. The ICOM International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME) has a working group (WG 8) devoted to Restitution of Cultural Properties to the Peoples and Lands of Origin. At the Leningrad-Moscow General Conference of ICOM, held in May 1977, this working group considered reports from Africa giving opinions from the point of view of museums requesting the return of objects. Also two written papers were presented to the working group, one detailing the viewpoint of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO⁶ and the other

dealing with restitution in relation to international law? The Swedish paper is a very useful summary of the main points of the restitution debate and the problem as it affects a developed country. Reflecting a common attitude held by developed nations, this Swedish paper advocated a waiting policy in view of the complicated legal and technical consequences which need further investigation. It recommended as a fundamental principle of Swedish policy that, in the meantime, matters relating to restitution of cultural objects should be judged from case to case and be regulated by bilateral agreements. Professor Hinz's paper suggested that in addition to the morality and ethics approach to restitution, there may be support in existing international law for the postulate of restitution. His argument was based on international legal acceptance of all nations' right of cultural identity.

As a result of these discussions, ICME agreed to further consider four aspects of the restitution problem:

What conditions on conservation treatment should be mandatory before objects or collections are returned?

What security measures should be taken to guarantee the safekeeping of the returned objects? All available documentation on the objects transferred back to their country of origin should accompany the objects; and in return documentation on objects remaining in countries where they are now located should be given from countries of origin.

A small group of experts in international law, history and ethnology should study the relationship of cultural property to cultural identity in the context of international law.

As a supporting move, ICOM was to appeal to UNESCO to provide more funds for founding and equipping museums in the third world, for training museum personnel, for mounting publicity campaigns on restitution, for buying objects in the international art market, for collecting and documenting material still in the countries of origin, and to explore ways to ensure that returned objects do not reappear in the art market. These deliberations prepared the ground for the Dakar meeting and will continue to guide the resulting UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee.

Many of these topics became incorporated into the ICOM Programme for 1978 to 1980. More recently, the ethical aspects of restitution and return especially as they affect museum ethnologists were considered at an ICME Symposium in New Delhi in December 1978. This meeting concluded that since it is the aim of ethnographic museums to demonstrate the special value which cultural property possesses for the relevant society, then logically this cultural property should be at the disposal of that society. Consequently, the Symposium recommended that the ethical aspects of return of cultural property should be taken into consideration by museum ethnologists especially with respect to a nation's cultural identity, the world's cultural heritage and the aims of museums of ethnography⁷.

Now that ICOM is contemplating a Pacific Museums

Regional Grouping, some greater concerted efforts towards restitution of Pacific materials can be expected from this grouping. Already, the Committee of the UNESCO Project for the Study of Oceanic Cultures has re-affirmed at every meeting so far the recommendation adopted at the Suva conference that:

'In view of the present impoverishment of many Oceanic communities in holdings of local cultural material, the desirability of the repatriation or provision of a representative set of artefacts, documentary records and other cultural material, was recommended in terms of the Cultural Centre proposals in particular. Wherever possible direct negotiation was recommended between the applicant institution or authority and the extra-territorial authority or institution concerned, on the basis of gift, loan, or exchange as might be mutually negotiated.'⁹

Most recently, the Solomon Islands Museum has issued a general appeal for the return or at least documentation of Solomon Islands material at present in overseas collections, along the lines suggested above!¹⁰ Similar requests can be expected as soon as the proposed Western Samoa Cultural Centre becomes a reality.

Following the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Return and Restitution of Cultural Property, held in Paris in May 1979, ICME was commissioned by ICOM to carry out three pilot studies on Bangladesh, Mali and Western Samoa. These were supposed to be ready by September 1979, but results are not yet available.

The New Zealand situation

For New Zealand, the question of return concerns us in both directions: return of Maori material to New Zealand; return of Pacific Islands material from New Zealand to Pacific states. And furthermore, these two directions are closely related in that precedents established in one will partially determine international attitudes toward New Zealand in the other. It is probably fair to generalise that within New Zealand, by far the greater proportion of discussion and energy expended in the return and restitution problems has been directed at the retrieval of Maori artefacts for New Zealand. Consideration of the return of Pacific material has only just begun with AGMANZ;¹¹ and it has not yet received any systematic attention.

The return of Maori material to New Zealand

As a result of continued effort, this aspect of the question is now under good control in New Zealand. After the notorious case of a Maori *hei-tiki* presented to a visiting Head of State, public opinion is now strongly aligned against the dispersal of antique Maori artefacts for political purposes. The Antiquities Act 1975 and The Historic Plates Act 1954 (especially the 1975 Amendments) provide the legal framework for control of ownership of all Maori artefacts and their full documentation. Predictably, there are indications of deliberate smuggling and illicit dealing, as well as contraventions carried out in ignorance, but nevertheless the system is working.

New Zealand museum ethnologists have made it a tradition to visit European museums to record their Maori artefacts collections, and over the years a

fairly detailed coverage has been assembled, albeit in a rather haphazard manner. With the recent completion of two, more systematic, museum surveys in North America and Europe, David Simmons of Auckland Museum now estimates that he has recorded more than 90% of all Maori artefacts in existence. His full records and photographs will soon be available for general use. The experience of the New Zealand Government in retrieving Maori artefacts from overseas has recently been summarized by Thomson!¹² He calculated that in the first five years' operation of the Special Government Grant for the purchase of Maori artefacts by the National Museum, 95% of the money was spent within New Zealand and the rest in Australia, England and the United States. However, it should be noted that quite a high proportion of the 95% was actually disguised repatriation in that it involved purchase of items recently brought back to New Zealand by artefact dealers and other individuals. At that stage they could realise higher prices in New Zealand for certain Maori items.

Then in 1977 and 1978, the extreme high cost of Maori purchases from the Hooper and Ortiz Collections¹³ prompted some public concern that these inflated prices were beyond the country's resources. At the same time, awareness of the inadequacy of New Zealand's artefact conservation facilities suggested that our limited funds would be better channelled into conservation and restoration of Maori material already held here.

A concrete result of these two concerns was the interim approval of an AGMANZ Overseas Purchase Policy!¹⁴ I have certain personal reservations about this policy. Firstly, Simmons' surveys show that the first statement ('collectively the museums of New Zealand contain the richest treasure of Maori ethnographic material in the world') is very doubtful. Secondly, so long as artefacts in private hands within New Zealand are adequately recorded under the Antiquities Act they are much less at risk than material in private ownership abroad. Thirdly, the type of material retrieved from abroad will not add greatly to existing conservation problems in New Zealand. Finally, interpretation of 'major historical significance to the nation as a whole' invites disagreement and leaves unresolved the question of ethnographic, scientific, sentimental or religious significance.

AGMANZ now has an Emergency Action Committee set up to handle urgent cases for Maori artefact retrieval from overseas, but in the present climate it is doubtful that large-scale purchases would be condoned. At present, an international legal battle is in progress over seven Taranaki carved panels from the Ortiz Collection, believed to have been smuggled out of New Zealand recently. Submissions by the New Zealand Government forced their withdrawal from the 1978 auction at Sotheby's.

Official New Zealand attitudes that material safely held in overseas museums is best left where it can be appreciated by others, are also supported by at least some important sections of the Maori people themselves, as evidenced by the Maori Queen's recent refusal to support restitution of some of the

Andreas Reischek Collection from Vienna (*Evening Post* 22/9/76).

A domestic aspect of the Maori artefact restitution question is the request often made to New Zealand museums by Maori tribal groups, families or individuals for return of their heirlooms. Some have been returned for religious, sentimental and even medical reasons (in cases of breach of *tapu*). Often deposition in a neutral museum has been a convenient solution to potential family disagreements. Renewed demands for return of such pieces can involve the museum in complex genealogical investigations requiring tact and circumspection. When return to rightful owners or inheritors has proved impossible, transfer of the object to a closer local museum has helped. Tribal groups seeking restitution face similar problems of achieving satisfactory conservation and security conditions. One solution has been to encourage tribal bodies to put support into their local district museum as a logical repository.

Return of Pacific Islands material to Pacific States

For the reason already noted, that is lack of systematic consideration given to this direction of restitution, New Zealand's activity so far in returning Pacific Islands material has been very piecemeal and often politically motivated. Acting in concert in the 1960s, several New Zealand museums transferred a total of 30 early period Cook Island artefacts for display on indefinite loan to the Cook Islands Museum. An historically important piece of Niuean tapa was released by Canterbury Museum to be presented to the people of Niue by the New Zealand Minister of Island Affairs to mark the opening of the Niue International Airport. A Fijian club from the National Museum was presented to the Fijian Senate for use as a mace, on the occasion of Fijian Independence. In 1974, the Canterbury Museum Trust Board transferred to the permanent custody of the Fiji Museum a large wooden sculptured temple god-image. At the request of the New Zealand Prime Minister, this image was returned to Fiji to mark the hundredth anniversary of the cession of sovereignty to Britain by the Fijian chiefs. In return, the New Zealand Government made a special grant to Canterbury Museum for the purchase of Maori artefacts overseas. Most recently, agreement has been reached with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust that the bulk of the Solomon Islands artefacts in the Melanesian Mission Museum, Auckland, will be transferred to the Honiara Museum.

On the other hand, about four years ago the National Museum Council resisted repeated requests at Prime Ministerial level for the return of three large Pacific Island artefacts, on the grounds of fragility for transport and display, and virtually unique scientific importance.

Much important Pacific material was retrieved for New Zealand in 1948 by the Government purchase in London of the W. O. Oldman Collection. The purchase price was never officially disclosed, but a credible figure of £44,000 was published by O'Reilly.¹⁵ The eligibility of this Pacific Oldman material for possible repatriation to museums in the

Pacific is still a moot point. Some lessons for the future should also be learnt from the lottery-like dispersal of the Oldman Collection around New Zealand museums, making its proper management unnecessarily complicated and reducing its scientific value.

Several difficulties and fears about restitution are frequently mentioned or are at least implicit in informal New Zealand discussion of restitution and return questions. These fears and difficulties need to be identified, honestly and openly debated, and judged for validity. A preliminary listing would include:

The feeling that supplying lists of artefacts in New Zealand museums is simply a prelude to receiving requests for returns.

The fear that Pacific nations may want to claim back all their cultural materials, or at least the best best pieces.

The fear of establishing precedents with one nation that others may then take advantage of in argument. There is still a strong desire to consider each case separately.

The fear that if too much is returned, the donor institution may lose justification for expansion. Some institutions definitely feel threatened.

A fear of implicit admission of illegal, immoral or unethical ownership.

Possible adverse reactions of original donors of restituted material and possible adverse effect on potential donors.

The possible exposure of legal ownership problems of some collections.

The inadequacy of present documentation methods. A possible hindrance of research by breaking up representative ranges of artefact types (since each ethnographic object is essentially unique, there are no duplicates).

A lack of adequate conservation and security facilities and trained staff in some requesting states. A feeling that developing nations, including those of the Pacific, regard artefacts as symbols of cultural identity, at the expense and threat of their importance as objects of scientific research.

A fear that returned items may reappear on the artefacts market.

These are all important questions which need careful consideration. Opponents of return often point to the increasing proportion of Pacific Islanders now living in New Zealand with access to museums here. It is also claimed to be more convenient for researchers to study fuller artefact ranges and comparative inter-island series gathered in one place. Such comments as these are usually based on the mistaken assumption that the Pacific countries would want to claim back everything.

Specific example of restitution by National Museum of New Zealand

More by chance than design, the National Museum of New Zealand became involved in the return of cultural material to Papua New Guinea!¹⁶ Despite certain unusual features, this case turned out well for all concerned and taught us many lessons. It illustrates several of the difficulties mentioned above.

During 1972-1973 a forestry officer working mainly

in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea made a well-documented collection of artefacts which included a basketwork fertility figure, hair-wig, four stone mortars, pestles, spirit stones, axe blades, shell ornaments and plaited materials. This person had previously collected other artefacts and had presented these to the National Museum so he was aware of our strong interest in Papua New Guinea cultures. He was also informed of the need to consult the Papua New Guinea Museum on any further projected export of collections, but in his enthusiasm he neglected to do this.

After his term in Papua New Guinea he transported his Southern Highlands collection to New Zealand and offered it to the National Museum at a price sufficient to cover his transport costs. On viewing this collection the ethnologists of the National Museum immediately realised that several of the items were prohibited exports from Papua New Guinea. However, in view of the ethnological value of the collection it was decided to purchase it to prevent impending dispersal amongst private collectors. The National Museum then informed the Papua New Guinea Museum about the collection. On a later visit to New Zealand, the then Director of the Papua New Guinea Museum selected ten items, including the fertility figure and the stone objects, which he felt should be returned. He offered several modern Papua New Guinea artefacts in appreciation of the National Museum's gesture.

This was agreed to by the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery and Museum and the items were returned to Papua New Guinea on 20 August 1974. An ethnologist from the National Museum was present in Port Moresby to formally hand over the items and he also assisted in the selection of modern items for the return gift. The Papua New Guinea Museum immediately put the returned items on display, with labels stating that they had been returned by New Zealand. They also arranged suitable newspaper publicity in co-operation with the National Museum's ethnologist.

All available documentation was returned with the items. No conditions were attached to their return, nor was any financial compensation required. The National Museum paid for their transport back to Papua New Guinea. Since the National Museum was aware of the high standard of the Papua New Guinea Museum no staff or conservation requirements were necessary.

This whole transaction was very much an informal co-operative arrangement directly between the two museums. No formal agreement or legal instrument was necessary, and the future alienability of the collection is assured. Amicable agreement was also reached to protect the collector's legal position. Even so, detailed explanation and justification was needed to placate the collector who felt initially that we had betrayed his trust and broken our promise to maintain his material as an integral collection. We were made much more aware of the dangers of encouraging private field collectors, however well one knows them personally.

Further action

I would hope to see the following points discussed and put into effect in the near future:

New Zealand should develop a clear policy on

restitution and return of cultural material, in full consultation with the Pacific states.

This policy will need to determine what balance should be aimed for (a) between restitution and rationalization of collections, (b) between restitution of great bulks of undocumented material and selected highly important historical items, (c) between institutional and governmental control of restitution.

New Zealand museums should take a lead in returning Pacific cultural property wherever possible. Museum ethnologists will need to decide on their ethical obligation to make their own institutions and governing boards more aware of current international trends towards return, and then to reassure them about the fears and difficulties mentioned above.

New Zealand should explore ways to assist Pacific nations retrieve their cultural property on a wider world scale.

New Zealand should aid Pacific museums with inventories and documentation of material worldwide, so that they can better determine the situation and priority of culturally significant material. To help them define what is culturally significant for them.

New Zealand museums should help Pacific museums obtain replicas of important items abroad where restitution is not possible.

New Zealand museums should be prepared to act as repositories for Pacific nations' collections until such time as that nation is equipped to assume custody. And to accept material donated on that basis.

New Zealand should ensure that restitution proposals become part of a wider co-operative effort to improve facilities and staff training in the Pacific.

A survey of Pacific Islands cultural material in New Zealand museums

As a first step towards rational consideration of the whole return question, and in accordance with recommendations of the UNESCO Oceanic Cultures Project, several countries have commenced surveys of Oceanic cultural material in their museums. This is also a preliminary to 'encouraging the necessary research and studies for the establishment of coherent programmes for the constitution of representative collections in countries whose cultural heritage has been dispersed' called for by ICOM and the Intergovernmental Committee.

The United Kingdom has almost completed their survey, and the Australian one is now well advanced. In New Zealand, approval and financial support has been provided by AGMANZ and the NZ National Commission for UNESCO for a survey modelled closely on the Australian experience.

Mr M. Pendergrast, formerly a teacher in the Solomon Islands and with wide experience of Pacific artefacts, has been employed at the National Museum under the TEP scheme to carry out the survey. Over a three-month period, Mr Pendergrast will visit approximately fifty museums throughout the country making notes on their collections of Pacific artefacts and historical photographs relating to the Pacific. Apart from the return and restitution aspect, this survey will be of great benefit as a research tool for New Zealand and overseas scholars.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Recently an advertisement has appeared for a position of Head of Department of the Auckland City Art Gallery. I am concerned with the ramifications of the philosophy expressed in this advertisement, for, although inviting applications from both 'professional art gallery and other management personnel' the script of the advertisement is couched in managerial jargon to the point where I at least can see only a trained manager, rather than an academically qualified museologist, meeting all the stated requirements. While believing that the right and proper administration of an institution is a matter between a board of control and the staff I feel I must make some comment at a professional level for such developments could possibly be observed and acted upon by other boards of control without a proper understanding of some of the principles involved. As any institution such as a museum grows it becomes a more complex administrative unit and the means of achieving stated objectives become more complex. Extra personnel are introduced to the staff structure to do work that tends to become more and more specialist. To achieve the objectives of the institution these staff must be directed. Their work must be planned so as to utilise and bring

together the specialist skills.

All too often it seems to those in the directing role, both director and board of control, that the managerial aspects of the work come to dominate their whole job. The primary objective of the institution seems to be sound administration and the other professional aims so dearly held in times gone by become less and less important.

But is this really so? The answer must be *no*. To administer efficiently making the best possible use of resources, is of course most important. However I believe that the primary responsibility of a gallery or museum is about other things — cultural and scientific property, the collection and use thereof. It is my very strong belief that the objectives formulated from this primary concern of museums are best achieved by a staff structure headed by an executive officer with training and ability in the area expressed by his institution's main purpose be it art, history, sciences, etc: This director should have administrative assistance but in the main his task is to oversee the professional development of his institution.

The institution headed by the administrator is in danger of being administratively perfect while falling behind both in achieving its aesthetic or scientific objectives and more importantly setting new ones. Words only? Perhaps, but being concerned, I did take the time to write to a friend. He is not an academic but is an administrator, an Assistant Director for Administration in a large museum in the United States of America. In his reply he had a lot of good points to make. Let me quote but one: 'The Executive Director or Director of Administration with a strictly administrative or business management background should *never* be the top staff person. Over and over this has proven to be correct in the United States and Europe.'

I would therefore warn against too ready an acceptance of administrators as the senior executive officer in institutions such as ours. Our service is to the public via cultural and scientific property. We are bound to administer well but the main thrust of our task requires that our direction be in the hands of professionals with vision.

Ken Gorbey, Director, Waikato Art Museum

A NEW SOUND RECORDING

From Scratch perform rhythm works. A limited edition stereo LP recording by From Scratch (Philip Dadson, Wayne Caird, Geoff Chapple, Don McGlashan and Gary Wain) — of 'OUT-IN' parts 1 and 2 and 'Drumwheel' parts 1 and 2. Two of the original works performed by this group at the recent 3rd Sydney Biennale. Both pieces involve a variety of pitched percussion and drone instruments; some quite unique to the group.

Available for \$8 by mail order to From Scratch, PO Box 6298, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1.

Viewed in comfort; a photographic display at the Gisborne Museum

By Warner Haldane, Director

The Gisborne Museum has a collection of approximately 10,000 photographs of which it was thought desirable to display a representative selection giving a comprehensive guide to local history. As the result of experience gained over the years by the staff through both viewing and constructing photograph displays, it was decided that the display should present as many photographs as possible, arranged in coherent groups with plenty of explanation and that other requirements for the display should be that it be available to as many people as possible at one time while being as compact as possible; usable by all age groups; easy to see, so that any group of photographs could be found with the minimum of manipulation; helpful towards concentration; robust and easily maintained; simple and inexpensive to construct; readily altered, partly by better illustrations, partly by amendment of both photographs and captions, in the light of new information.

Design

In the light of the above criteria, the following

principal types of display did not meet our requirements:

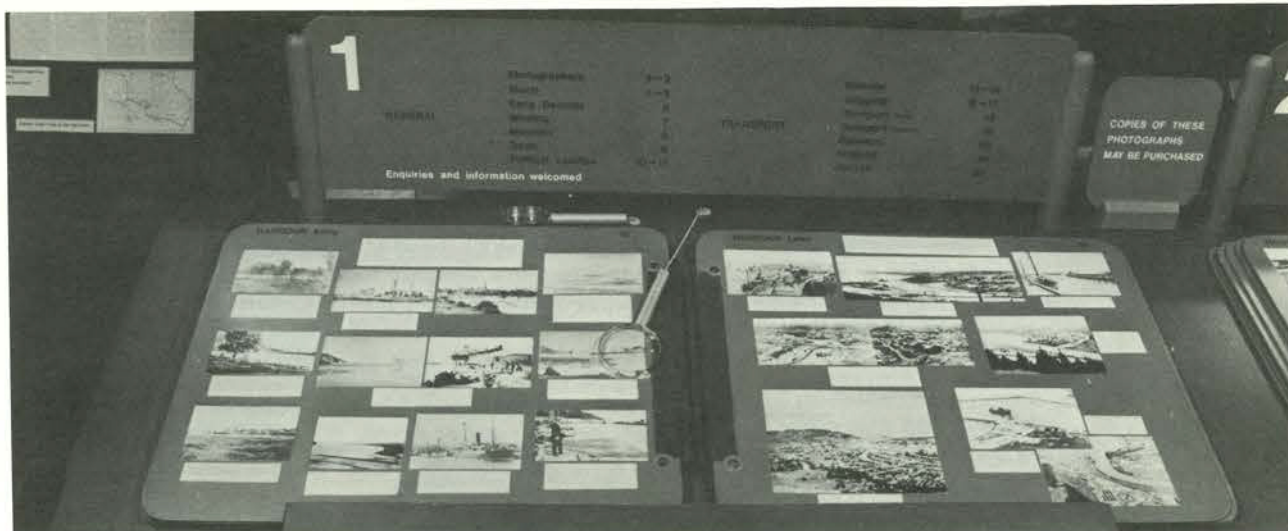
Carousel (leaves hinged to a central vertical pole) since it requires the user to stand and thereby reduces concentration, and even with modifications does not allow use by more than a few people at one time. Also, it is very vulnerable to misuse and, in some forms, is expensive.

Linear vertical display boards for one of the above reasons, the need to stand, but mainly because of the amount of space needed to display a large number of photographs.

Back projection using automatic slide projectors since it allows the user little or no choice; and for the practical reasons of initial expense, difficulty and cost in maintenance, and unreliability.

The design that was finally evolved was based on that of a family photograph album, placed on a sloping reading desk at a height convenient for viewers both sitting and standing. To accommodate more users the display was divided into four albums, each covering a logical section of the matter to be presented.





Construction

Each album consists of about 10 to 12 sheets of painted hardboard 600 x 500 mm, a size large enough to accommodate standard print sizes with extensive captions, but small enough to be handled by children. The leaves have a double layer of material glued to the inside edge, forming flaps which are passed down through a slot in the reading desk under which they are bolted between wooden battens. This means that the albums are looseleaf and the leaves can be readily removed for correction or repair. The photographs are all fresh prints made from negatives in the collection or specially made copy negatives. They are stuck with standard photograph rubber adhesive direct to the hardboard, as are the captions, typed on thin card, rather lighter than the photographic paper. Headings are done in Letraset. The leaves are coated with polyurethane varnish to prevent damage to corners and to allow the leaves to be wiped down when they become dirty.

To assist users to discern fine detail, magnifying glasses on retractable chains have been supplied, retraction being achieved by passing the fine chain through telephone exchange weighted pulleys which are housed in 'wells' within the reading desk structure. To help the users locate their area of interest, index boards face each volume in the centre line of the double-sided reading desk.

The reading desk itself slopes at an angle of 20° with the lowest edge at a height of 720mm from the floor. It was found that a lip was necessary on the lower edge, to prevent the pages from sagging. Lighting is from four 150-watt spot/floods shining at 45° (two from each end) down on to the albums in a direction parallel to the principal axis of the reading desk. This eliminates glare.

Advantages of the system

The principal advantage of the system is that the visitor can use it sitting down. This allows good concentration. (Some visitors spend well over an hour on the display.)

The system is robust. After a year of use damage has been minor, mostly confined to the hand lenses.

The display is compact. Seven hundred or so photographs are displayed in an area of seven square metres including seating. Construction was relatively inexpensive (about \$1200 in 1978), the principal cost being the printing of the photographs and the preparation of special copy negatives. Costs are being partly offset by the steady demand by the public for copies.

The album arrangement with its short distance from eye to subject allows for the use of many small photographs. The magnifying lenses can be used to discern detail. The use of copy prints save the originals from damage and allows the reference files to remain intact.

Disadvantages

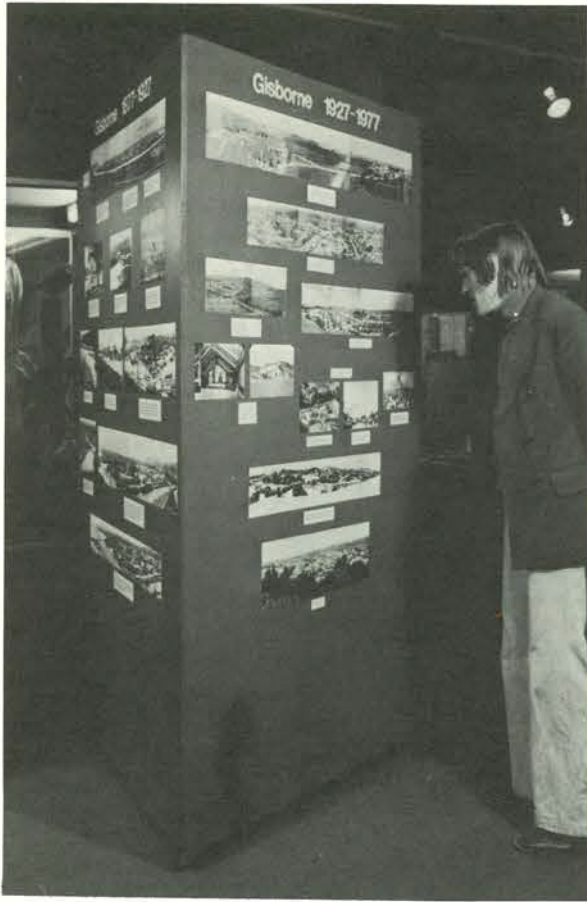
There is a theoretical disadvantage of the system in the limit to the number of users. In practice eight people can sit down and look at the four albums and others can look over their shoulders. It has been found, however, that except at occasional peak times the limitation is not serious, even when people become heavily engrossed. It could be overcome by the division of the display into further albums on another stand. The display also has limitations when groups, such as school parties are involved. To meet this need the main display has been augmented by two prism-shaped stands covering specialised aspects of the photographic record most useful for teaching purposes.

Constructional problems

The principal constructional problem was the binding of the leaves. The original intention was large ring binders, with plated steel hoops made of quarter-inch rod mounted on the reading desk and passing through brass eyelets set in the hardboard leaves. Trials showed that the leaves jammed causing undue stress particularly near the holes. This method was abandoned in favour of that described above. However, both methods allowed the leaves to sag slightly. This fault was corrected by a deep lip on the bottom edge of the reading desk.

Execution

Though the basic design conception was that of the



author, who also did much of the photographic work, the display was very much a team effort. There would have been no hope of fruition had it not been for previously completing of over four years' work in sorting, cataloguing and research on the collection carried out by Sir Robert Hall, latterly with the help of volunteers, Edna Milligan and Val Gretton. This made possible the rapid retrieval of the necessary information.

There followed the photographic selection, preparation of dummy lay-out and wording of captions. On the constructional side Jack Kerkin spent a great deal of time experimenting to find the most 'idiot-proof' binding system before building the display and Phyllis McKay had the unenviable job of sticking down over 700 photographs with the right captions, which had previously had to be typed to the correct size and shape by Barbara Martin and proof-read by others.

Though this must have been the most labour-intensive and time-consuming display ever mounted by the Gisborne Museum, it has also been one of the most rewarding. The obvious interest and enjoyment that the public derive from this display is a source of continual pleasure to the staff. It has also resulted in the unearthing of a vast amount of new items of information and photographs, some of which have been incorporated into the system, thereby making it an area of change and continuing interaction between the public and the museum.

AGMANZ Diploma in Museology

The following paper outlines a possible structure for a diploma which could be administered for AGMANZ by an Education Committee or Board established for this purpose.

AGMANZ sub-committee on proposed Diploma in Museology: L. H. Bieringa, L. C. Lloyd, G. S. Park, J. C. Yaldwyn, K. W. Thomson (convener), Department of Geography, Massey University, Palmerston North.

The Diploma would be composed of four parts, which need not necessarily be taken in their order of listing.

I. Academic Requirement. Each diplomate will be required to have passed the equivalent of seven papers of a university degree (at least two at the advanced level). This equates with one year's full-time study.

Applicants may seek credits from qualifications already completed. In certain cases such qualifications may meet all of the requirements of the academic component. Before enrolling for academic courses at tertiary institutions students are advised to seek approval (for diploma purposes) from the administering body, the AGMANZ Education Committee. Each course would earn the equivalent of FOUR credit points. Total 28 points. Although a broad range of subjects would be acceptable there are certain disciplines which are obviously likely to be more useful in a museum career, for example, Anthropology, Art History, Basic Sciences, especially Chemistry, Education, Geography, History, especially New Zealand History, Management, Maori Studies, including Language.

II. Museum Theory Course. A seminar course, offered by senior museum professionals and administered by AGMANZ, would have the value of EIGHT credit points. Enrolment for this course must be preceded by at least one year's full-time employment in an approved museum position. A form of examination and/or assessment thesis-type work would be required.

III. Practical Requirement. Satisfactory completion of the work required in a sufficient number of workshop courses offered by approved museums, or other institutions, to total EIGHT credit points. Such workshops or practical courses may be of variable duration and would therefore be of variable credit point value. The 'points' value of each structured inservice course would be designated by the Education Committee. Examples of museum topics thought to be appropriate are: Museum Display, Audio-Visual Presentation, The Handling and Packaging of Art Works, The Archaeological Dig, Registration Methods, Museum Security, Education, Documentation, Curation, Public Relations (and the media), Museum Design.

IV. Work Experience. Prior to the award of the diploma, three years' full-time employment in an approved museum position must be completed. *The sub-committee invites comments on the Draft Scheme from AGMANZ members. Please forward these to the Convener.*

Manawatu Museum Oral History Pilot Programme

By David J. Butts, Deputy Director

There are people in every community who form a valuable resource for historical research; their records are not the traditional forms of historical narrative, but a store of memories; their personal acquaintance with the past that will soon no longer be so tangible for historians. The Manawatu Oral History programme was conceived by Mina McKenzie during the summer of 1978-9, when a number of university students were employed by the Manawatu Museum under the SCSP scheme. Two of these were chosen to undertake the pilot programme.

Preparation. The pilot programme was designed to record the memories of a selection of Palmerston North residents. A deliberate attempt was made to draw up a list of residents whose memories of the Manawatu would reach back as far as any alive. Two major prerequisites needed to be satisfied before interviews could proceed. A general acquaintance with the history of the region was the first. Second the objectives of the exercise had to be explicitly formulated. It was decided to take a broad spectrum approach. The interviews would not be restricted to a narrow topic (for example, religion or transport). The questions were designed to cover these topics and many others (education, agriculture, amusements, family history, domestic tasks, trades, professions, race relations). The structure of the programme was guided by the museum staff.

Interviewing. Interviews were undertaken in the home of the informant with the dialogue being recorded on a tape recorder. The time taken for each interview varied considerably. Factors influencing the success or otherwise of the interviews are discussed below. Eighteen interviews were recorded.

Transcription. The tapes are now in the process of being transcribed. A typist employed by the museum under the TEP scheme has transcribed nine of the interviews to date. This is a long task and one which requires considerable concentration. Transcription is best relieved with periods of completely different work if a high standard of transcription is to be maintained. The practicalities of transcribing the tapes without remote control earphone equipment have caused some difficulties. One solution is for the typist to write out the script in long hand and then to type from the written script. The impermanence of TEP employees has caused some frustrations and meant a rather slow rate of transcription.

The way in which interviews were conducted initially led to the recognition of certain problems. One technique which was experimented with, was to give the informant a written list of questions and general subject areas which the interview would cover. One reaction to this was for the informant to prepare a written statement. Once this had been read onto the tape, the informant thought the job

was done. Had our interviewer been more experienced this need not have been a problem, in fact it could have been a useful platform from which to launch a quite useful interview. Experience, however, is only gained 'in the field' and some of the earlier interviews suffer as a consequence. Three lessons were learnt from the initial interviews: A written statement prepared by the informant on the basis of a list of questions is seldom satisfactory. A better result is achieved by the interviewer asking the questions and pursuing a line of questioning to its logical conclusion.

An explicit list of questions must be prepared and taken to the interview. These must form a logical pattern. The object of this is both to assist the informant to think a subject through logically and so that information retrieved from transcripts is more efficient. NB: The sign of a good interviewer is to maintain a degree of flexibility within such a tightly structured framework so as not to stifle connections made by the informant between information given in answer to a particular question, and matters which came to mind in association.

A good working knowledge of the tape-recorder is essential if sections of the interview are not to be lost.

By the time a number of the tapes had been transcribed, it was obvious that there were faults with the way in which interviews had been conducted. Photographs were a problem. Periods of tape which are little more than a series of 'that's my brother Jack and there's the dog Blue' are of only limited use. Certainly descriptions of clothing and buildings for example, can be prompted and enhanced by reference to family photographs. Our programme relied on only one interview with the informant. Interview taping time could be more effective if preliminary interviews were conducted at which suitable photographs could be sorted out for use in the interview proper if need be. Preliminary interviews could be useful in developing a rapport and stimulating the informant's memory. Another fault with our organisation was that transcription did not begin until very nearly the end of the programme. If interviews were transcribed within a week of the interview, a further appointment could be arranged and additions made while the informant was still stimulated by the initial interview.

The Museum's role. Why should a provincial museum be involved in an oral history programme? There are many reasons. Provincial museums should be very close to the immediate communities they serve. The preservation of local history is certainly part of a museum's objective. Museums can make considerable use of an oral history archive. Background information on subjects which are seldom discussed in books could be derived from tapes made by an oral history programme. Tapes could be used as part of an exhibition.

Imagine an exhibition of 1900-1920 farm equipment with a farmer talking about its use and his memory of working with it, or an exhibition of clothing from the same period or later, with men and women creating a sound picture giving one the feeling for the excitement of the changing fashions. Accurate and colourful description from a participant observer in either sound or print could stimulate the museum visitor by adding a fourth dimension to the exhibition. Imagine school children sitting in period desks in an old school house from the early decades of the century or late last century, with the room looking as it would have in its prime. What an extra to be able to listen to someone who had experienced it, describe the atmosphere, the routine, the fun, and fears of schooling in just such a room.

The information content has an equally important function in contributing to the more formal research. Social history is gaining in popularity. There are faults with the data gained in this manner, but if analysed in full recognition of its limitations it can be of considerable value.

Radio and television use oral history in their documentary programmes about the past. Art galleries and museums are used by these media as resource centres for their artefacts. Why not their oral history archives? This could provide a valuable asset especially on a local or regional level. People like to feel they have something to contribute, especially some older people whose active participation in the community is restricted. Museums can utilise memories and experiences to create pictures of the past. Sound booths, mobile individual recorded guides or general gallery systems can utilise oral history. Academics, local historians, the media and schools can also tap this source of information for data, impressions, and emotions of the past.

The Manawatu Museum Oral History Programme will be a long-term one. It is intended to continue the programme this summer on the same basis. Literature on the subject of oral history is readily available. W. H. Oliver (1978) has warned that historians need be no less critical in their assessment of data derived by oral research than from any other source. William G. Tyrrell, in a technical leaflet of the American Association for state and local history entitled *Tape Recording Local History* outlines the important considerations in the planning and execution of an oral history programme. Reference is also made to other sources of information regarding oral history. This technical leaflet 35 was first published as a detachable pamphlet in *History News*, Vol. 21, No. 5, May 1966. The pamphlet was revised in 1978. This and other pamphlets on a wide range of subjects relevant to museums are available from the American Association for state and local history, 1400 Eight Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203, USA.

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

The 1979 meeting of the Executive Council was held in September in Leicester, UK, immediately preceding the ICOM Symposium on the role of universities in training for museum personnel. Appropriately this symposium was held in the University of Leicester, which has the oldest and most developed Department of Museum Studies in Britain, and in the Leicester Museum. The sessions provided much information useful to the AGMANZ Committee on training currently preparing proposals for a Diploma Course.

As the first president of the Commonwealth Association, Dr W. D. L. Ride, had recently resigned, the Council elected a vice-president, Dr Frank Greenaway, of the Science Museum, London, to hold the office until the next conference. This has been scheduled for October 1980 and is to be held in Calgary prior to the ICOM Congress in Mexico City.

A report on aid given by the Association to museum personnel over the last year included a reference to the study tour in Britain of Waikato Art Museum's Rose Young who apparently created a good impression with those she met.

The Council also expressed its regret at the death of Dr Duff and that of the leading figure in Zambian museum circles, Mr K. Mubitana.

ICOM GENERAL CONFERENCE October 1980

A number of ICOM members expressed interest in the group travel scheme to attend the 12th General Conference in Mexico. The present price of the tour is:

Air fare	\$1,047
plus Travel Tax	25
	<hr/>
	\$1,072
3 nights San Francisco accommodation only	60
3 nights Los Angeles accommodation only	60
	<hr/>
Mexico City return only	\$1,192

Suggested programme: Leave New Zealand, Saturday 18th; 12-hour stopover Honolulu; arrive Mexico City 2 days before Conference; Conference — 11 days; leave Mexico 4 days after Conference; 3 days at Los Angeles. Away 25 days.

Costing at group *minimum* 10 persons. If group is more than 15, sixteenth person goes free or the fare could be shared.

I have asked ATA to prepare a tour. AGMANZ members interested in joining the party are invited to get in touch with me.

S. C. Smith, Chairman, NZ National Committee, ICOM (Waikato Art Museum, Box 957, Hamilton)

The American Museum of Natural History, New York

By S. Waterman

Museum of Transport and Technology

This vast and awesome institution covers several city blocks. Enormous dioramas of great depth depict every facet of natural history. Instead of one elephant, there are herds. You come upon them massed in the centre of a great chamber. Animals include everything from fossil clams to the elephant. Since man is an animal he is there too.

I included this museum in my itinerary to find out how their education department catered for all age groups from the huge metropolis of New York. It was a delightful surprise. Dr Malcolm Arth, Chairman and Curator, Department of Education, is a complete extrovert — a witty and highly intelligent man. His approach to his work and his huge staff is casual but extremely thorough. He has a dynamic personality and it reflects in his department. He has almost instant rapport with people.

There are two areas used specifically for educational needs.

The first is the Natural Science Centre. This is a teaching exhibit room occupying an area of about 220 square metres. A 13-year-old starling gives public performances in this area. The Centre is designed to awaken children and adults in the city of New York to the natural world around them. It is supported by grants, funding and gifts from private individuals.

School groups may visit Tuesday–Friday mornings and the general public Tuesday–Friday afternoons. All the exhibits relate to the environment of the city of New York which include what is to be found on a vacant lot, salt and fresh water areas and their life, parks, water, gas and power supplies, life in cracks on the footpaths, city sounds, and city languages, etc.

Schools have to make advance bookings to visit this well-planned centre. Teachers receive a film strip and printed matter to prepare their classes. The filmstrip is returned the day the class comes to the centre. The printed matter includes a safari game sheet for each child to be played on the bus or subway on the way to the museum. This game sheet helps make children aware of their urban surroundings. A word list is also sent out to each child. These words are ones that will be used frequently when the children visit the centre, for example: habitat, borough, ecology, utility, geology, interrelationships, estuary, food chain, pollution, recycled paper.

Each word is accompanied by an appropriate sketch.

The teacher information sheet also includes how to get to the museum, parking facilities, what to bring and what not to bring (chewing gum) what is expected of the class as regards behaviour, luncheon arrangements, etc. When school parties leave the centre they are given a bag of follow-up materials.

In the centre, the groups can look at the small worlds that go to make up the city. There are areas for observation, listening, thinking, looking, doing, discovering, touching, discussing. For example, part of one wall is made up of an old timber-framed

house complete with door. Into this wall, circular holes have been cut complete with lids. You lift up the lid and see the various things found on a vacant lot in New York, rusting cans, rats, slaters, snails, spiders, etc.

In another wall there are dark holes. Children feel around inside these holes and try to guess what they are touching. There were a variety of things in these holes — a large round stone, part of a cow's jaw, a sponge, etc. Children are asked where they think these various objects may have come from. In the case of the round smooth stone, probably a river bed.

On another wall there is a bank of phones. When you lift up the phones you hear the different languages that are spoken on the streets of New York. From this follows a discussion later on at the end of the session, about the variety of ethnic groups in the city.

Maps abound everywhere. They are in drawers, on hinges and set in the wall. Some light up when you press a button and show you where the various parks and playing fields are in the city. This was very popular. Others show fresh and salt water areas in the waterways that surround the city.

In the corner of another wall is a cutaway showing underground water, sewerage, gas and power cables and how they are all arranged. This could be done at any museum.

A lot of the information relates to the environment. There is an explanation of why in midsummer the heat becomes almost unbearable in the Manhattan area because of the skyscrapers and their tendency to create an oven effect on the people below.

Off centre of the room there is a growing tree, a pin oak, a familiar sight in Central Park. On its branches are the birds and squirrels which make it their home. After about twenty minutes the children are directed to the carpeted end of the room and sit down.

The teacher answers questions from the children about what they have seen. She enlarges on various topics such as ethnic groups and their needs or the marine life that is starting to appear again in the Hudson River and why it is important that we look after our environment. There is never enough time to discuss everything the children have seen and want to talk about. This is due to the way the centre has been set up to create instant interest.

To end the session, the starling is taken out of its cage. It perches on the teacher's hand and she takes it back to the waiting group. The bird, which was found in the museum grounds as a chick, has lived in its cage in the room for thirteen years. 'Now what about saying something to the children,' the teacher asks.

There is silence.

'Now come on,' says the teacher. 'No goodies to eat unless you say something.'

There is a dramatic pause; then suddenly the bird speaks in a gravelly voice, 'Well, how about that, how about that.'

The reaction is as one would expect. The teacher tells the bird to go back to its cage. It flies back

immediately up on to its perch inside the door. The teacher feeds it some raw meat and the bird flies to the top of the cage and becomes completely indifferent to everyone now that its appetite is sated. There is prolonged applause.

The other larger educational area is called the People Centre. This centre has been designed to provide an intimate environment on a human scale and to encourage personal contact with performers or teachers. Initially the area was an 18 x 16 metres space that had functioned as an oversized and under-used classroom. Now it has been turned into an area of curved walls and partitions to create four distinct areas. Floors and walls are covered in carpet or fabric and there are three separate seating areas. The space was designed to serve multiple functions. On weekday mornings it is used for teaching programmes for school classes. On afternoons and especially on weekends it fulfils a teaching role for large groups of general visitors. In the evening it is used for teacher training courses and adult lecture series.

The largest seating area is a ramped theatre with eighty fixed seats and space at the back for wheelchairs. The stage is small, about six metres wide by three metres deep. Dance groups, puppeteers, several musicians or even a minidrama can perform on the stage. On each side of the stage are small dressing rooms; a fully equipped projection booth is behind the rear wall of the theatre and there is basic stage lighting.

The two smaller demonstration areas seat about thirty-five and are about six metres by four metres and seven metres by six metres respectively. These amphitheatres, or teaching pits, are semi-enclosed and reached by walking up a few steps. Each pit has carpeted terraced floors, a built-in beige blackboard and a rear-screen slide projection screen.

Behind the curved walls and entrance mural (see photo) are several storage centres.

There are no exhibit cases in the theatres or terraced pits, but in the open area inside the main entrance, one carved wall has a seven-metre exhibit case. This area relates the People Centre to the rest of the museum.

Visitors flow from one area to another and every attempt is made to encourage the public to participate wherever possible. This might mean trying your hand at weaving on a simple loom, donning a piece of clothing, playing a game, asking a question or doing a dance movement. The theatre lends itself best to dance, music, film or drama. The terraced pits are used generally for slide presentation, craft demonstrating or story telling. Here is a typical weekend programme: Japanese Kabuki Dance; Demonstration/Lecture on West African drumming; West African Folktales; Dances of the Philippines; Films (alternating with theatre performances).

It costs about \$600 to run the Centre at the weekend. This amount covers fees for three teacher/demonstrator/performers, a projectionist, an attendant guard and a supervisor. The size and

budget can be reduced.

The People Centre was designed to counteract the impersonal quality that can exist in any large institution. The learning experiences take place in a comfortable intimate environment and these experiences relate to exhibit areas in the museum itself. After visiting the centre, people move out into the museum proper.

The broad aim of the centre is to foster curiosity and increase understanding of the nature of human society.

Exhibits or activities in the People Centre juxtapose contemporary Western forms alongside those from other times and places. Music or dance from New York city and Thailand may occur simultaneously. Chamber music may alternate with drumming from Ghana.

The age spread of visitors to both areas require teacher/demonstrators with the flexibility to work comfortably with all ages simultaneously. It is a constant challenge to get an audience of mixed ages to work comfortably together. Parents are sometimes inhibited in the presence of their youngsters. Skilled teachers overcome this.

Under the direction of Dr Malcolm Arth the People Centre is a success. There is warmth, friendliness, sincerity and charm about the centre. It reflects Malcolm Arth's personality.

Unlike the Chicago Museum, the New York Museum of Natural History does not pay the guides and people who help in the education division.

There are 450 volunteer workers. Many of these volunteers are ex teachers and professional people, a lot of them very wealthy. They are called docents. They are on a roster system and work about two days at the museum. Most of them know exactly what area they want to work in the museum because of their lifelong interest in that sphere. In-service training sessions are run for these volunteers by the different heads of department in the education area. There is very little advertising done to get volunteers. Most is by word of mouth and there are always people on the waiting list.

Art Galleries and Museums Subsidies

A total of \$164,800 has been allocated to 32 institutions under the art galleries and museums scheme, announced the Minister for the Arts, Mr D. A. Highet. Of this total, \$138,800 was for subsidies for capital works and \$26,000 went to four major institutions as grants for non-capital schemes. Kaikohe and District Historical and Mechanical Society, \$2,000 to help establish its pioneer village, including restoration of the Alexander's Mill. Warkworth and District Museum Society, \$5,000 towards the first of the three stages (or modules) of the new museum.

Museum of Transport and Technology, Auckland, \$2,000 to help in the refurbishing of its transport exhibition pavilion.

Howick Museum Society, \$1,000 for the underground reticulation of the electric power and water supply, to the society's colonial village.

Paeroa and District Historical and Arts Society, \$3,000 towards the costs of furnishing the museum building, which was opened on 22 April 1979, and for developing its photographic collection.

Waiuku Museum Society, \$1,550 towards restoration of the historic Hartman House which was moved to the Estuary Reserve close to the Waiuku museum.

Firth Tower Historical Reserve Committee of Matamata, \$10,000 towards the completion of a further stage of its development of the reserve on which is the Firth Tower and Homestead.

Waikato Art Museum at Hamilton, \$1,000 to help buy audio equipment to nearly complete the museum's sound laboratory, and to buy a single screen linked-slide and tape unit.

Auckland Institute and Museum, a \$6,000 grant for non-capital assistance towards the salary of an assistant preparator of displays.

Canterbury Museum, a \$7,000 grant towards the salaries of staff assisting district museums in the region.

Robert McDougall Art Gallery of Christchurch, \$2,500 to buy equipment for producing exhibition labels, and a projector and master-recorder as audio-visual teaching aids.

Cheviot Historical Records Society, \$1,000 to help provide display cabinets, fixtures and shelving for its museum building which was opened in September 1978.

Ferrymead Trust, \$10,000 to help provide a display and storage building for use by the 18 societies and groups at Ferrymead.

Oxford Historical Records Society, \$500 towards the costs of the furnishing and fittings for its new museum building.

Plains Museum at Ashburton, \$400 towards the costs of building a carriage shelter to house the museum's three wooden railway carriages.

MacKenzie Country and Western Carnival Society of Fairlie, \$1,000 subsidy for stage II of its development project of building a steel truss museum building.

North Otago Museum at Oamaru, \$4,000 for building display cases, and upgrading facilities as part of the second stage of building development, expected to be completed by February, 1980.

Otago Early Settlers' Association Museum at Dunedin, \$3,000 towards the costs of improving storage facilities, and developing a steam and printing display, and photograph gallery.

Dunedin Public Art Gallery, \$4,000 grant towards the salary of a lecturer/driver of the mobile exhibition van.

Otago Museum, a \$9,000 grant towards the salary and expenses of the museum's Extension Officer.

Tokomairiro Historical Society, a \$1,000 subsidy to purchase show cases and display materials, and to help provide storage facilities for its new museum building in Milton.

Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Invercargill, a \$3,000 subsidy to build display cases and a special display area for the three tonne Waipapa light in the new History and Technology Gallery building.

Bishop Suter Art Gallery at Nelson, \$30,000 to help complete the modernisation costs of the gallery. (\$20,000 had been given for each of the last two years to match the grant from the Nelson City Council, but this has been increased this year because of concern over the conservation of the Gallery's collection).

Marlborough Vintage Farm Machinery Museum Society, \$500 subsidy towards the costs of a further building for vintage machinery.

Coal Town Trust of Westport, a \$2,000 subsidy for its Coal Town Museum, towards establishing a historical mining section, and to complete the brake-drum room at the museum.

Porirua City Council, \$40,000 towards the cost of building the Porirua Historical Museum.

Wellington City Council, \$5,000 for the Wellington Civic Art Gallery. The subsidy was to help in the costs of the final stage of converting the buildings at 65 and 67 Victoria Street for use as an art gallery.

Wellington Tramway Museum, Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki, \$1,000 subsidy towards stage II development of the museum buildings and facilities.

Patea Historical Society Museum, \$300 for its first stage of a building to house vintage machinery, vehicles and implements.

Taranaki Museum at New Plymouth, \$5,300 towards completion of its workshop and display building.

Manawatu Museum of Palmerston North, \$2,250 towards the purchase and installation of three mobile storage units for use in the 'Reserve and Study' collection area of the museum.

WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIENCE MUSEUMS

India, 11-20 February 1980

An invitation has been extended to members of ICOM New Zealand to attend this workshop. The programme extends over three cities: Calcutta, New Delhi and Bangalore, and includes visits to museums.

The Indian National Committee for ICOM has already approached the National Commission for UNESCO in New Zealand for the nomination of a representative, preferably from a Science Museum. In case there being no Science Museum, a nominee of the Government Agency dealing with Science Museums or Science Education would be welcome. Also in view of the variety of topics for the workshop, architects, exhibition designers and educationalists would be welcome.

Limited funds for partial financing of international travel are available for one participant from each country.

ICOM New Zealand is requested to get in touch with the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO to assist with the nomination of a delegate. Name, designation and brief bio-data is to be received by the organisers before 20 November 1970.

ARCHIVAL AND RESTORATION MATERIALS

Jeavons Baillie reported (Vol. 10, No. 3) on Archival and Restoration Materials available from Process Materials Corporation of New Jersey, USA. The Managing Director of their NZ agents, Ransons Packaging & Display Ltd, Mr W. F. Dowrick, answers some of the other requests that are being received which could be of interest to members of AGMANZ.

One of the most constant requests is for a **neutral reversible tape** preferably in paper. We have been fortunate that Process have heeded our request and while they previously did not make a tape, have conducted laboratory trials of gumming their acid-free Archival Quality Lining paper, reference LS-143-PA, for use as a wettable paper tape to cope with this demand. Samples received have been sent by us to several galleries and conservators for trial and when their findings are received they will be forwarded to Process and hopefully a further aid to efficient conservation will become available. It could well serve as a lining in widths wider than those associated with tape.

Top hinging is constantly being spoken of and for this we have several Japanese hand-made papers which work very successfully with the Methyl Cellulose Paste of Process, reference No. LS-115-SU; stocks of both are available.

Mounting Boards (mentioned in *AGMANZ News*). To Conservation Board, reference LS-120-BD, another colour has been issued named Light Grey. The Museum Board, reference LS-121-BD, is 32" x 40" 2 and 4 ply has several new shades added, including some soft pastels as well as black so the range is now 10 in number. Samples are being sent and should your gallery not have received them, a full range will be forwarded on request. White is now made in pure white, warm white and off white, the subtle differences being so advantageous when mounting works on rag papers. The tints Ashtone, Graytone, French Blue will also serve a need, and being true 100% cotton fibre neutral boards will eliminate any barrier requirement previously used with coloured boards.

Process will also manufacture **Archival envelopes or holders** with or without flaps to a given size or specification in small runs of 5000 which is less than most manufacturers would entertain. We have some samples including one with flap especially for photographic quarter plates.

Process catalogues of their full range together with technical sheets will soon be permanently housed in each of the main cities for reference and it is our hope that the Promatco range will materially assist New Zealand's conservationists.

Address enquiries to Ransons Packaging and Display Ltd, PO Box 8745, Auckland.

CONSERVATION SLIDE TAPES

Utilising a grant from the Minister of Internal Affairs AGMANZ purchased eight linked slide/tapes illustrating aspects of museum conservation. These have been put together by the Office of Museum Programmes, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC and are aimed basically at curatorial and technical staff levels.

The titles are:

S-1 *The Wet Cleaning of Antique Cotton, Linen and Wool* (30 min, 126 slides)

S-2 *The Protective Lining of a Wooden Storage Drawer for Textiles and Costumes* (17 min, 69 slides)

S-3 *Mounting of Flat Textiles for Exhibitions* (30 min, 107 slides)

S-4 *The Cleaning of Prints, Drawings and Manuscripts on Paper: Dry Methods* (21 min, 48 slides)

S-6 *Proper Hinging and Mounting of Paper Objects* (36 min, 158 slides)

S-7 *The Cleaning, Mending and Reconstruction of Pottery* (30 min, 151 slides)

S-8 *The Hygrothermograph* (16 min, 80 slides)

S-9 *Current Status of the Treatment of Corroded Metal Artifacts* (90 min, 129 slides)

Each comes in a folder with a typed script, cassette tape and slides.

These slide/tapes are now available on loan for staff training from: Waikato Art Museum, PO Box 937, Hamilton, Phone (071) 84-119.

A charge will be made to cover cartage costs. It has been found to date that late requests for loans result in heavy cartage costs via courier firms. It is very much cheaper to send via registered mail or airfreight though this requires more time.

Great care should be exercised with these slide tapes. They should be checked at dispatch to make sure nothing is missing. Keep slides in order. Do not handle the face of the slides. Do not sub-loan the slide/tapes as this is the easiest way for them to go astray. All will be issued on Waikato Art Museum Loans Forms.

The Slide/tapes will be available for loans of up to one month, renewable if necessary.

Ken Gorbey

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