



AGMANZ NEWS

THE ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

August 1971



Captain Cook Bicentennial Memorial Museum, Russell, Bay of Islands

Conclusion

Finally, we would inject a word of theoretical caution. Do not confuse the issue of your own institution's immediate file problems, which we assume to be limited, with the general problem of access to picture resources. The use of pictures is in active transition. Total access is impossible except on some specific basis such as the geographical approach to mapping or the tile-page approach to published books. The world of pictures is now almost as large as the world of words, and rather more diffuse. The only thing easy to find is an item or a unit already assembled, packaged and keyed in precisely the same terms as the inquiry. If you aim at a limited and local perfection, you run the risk, perhaps calculated, of completing a great labour in

terms of demand standards just as those standards are being changed through evolutions in publication.

The important thing, therefore, is that existing and historically valuable photographs and negatives be collected, preserved, identified and so arranged that they can be used, now and in the future, to add a greater dimension to our understanding of the past. The procedures recommended in this article can help, we believe, to achieve this objective.

(Mr. Vanderbilt is Curator of the Iconographic Collections for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, U.S.A. Part I of this article was published in AGMANZ NEWS, Vol ii, No. 8 February, 1971).

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have seen storage places that are like junk shops and galleries with pictures lying on the floor.

There have been encouraging moments — in particular where museum and gallery have been united, each giving a lift to its counterpart; this amalgamation, I am sure, is the economic answer in the future.

Throughout all this the people working under these conditions are a dedicated group and their national pride is apparent. This must be if the artifacts and paintings are to be preserved for the annals of New Zealand history. In the meantime, excelsior!

Wendy Carnegie
Secretary"

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

WHO YOU SHOULD KNOW — I

Compiled by Wendy Carnegie and Brenda Gamble

J.S.B. MUNRO

*Director of
Hawke's Bay
Art Gallery
and Museum,
Napier*



Jim Munro, born on Anzac Day 1915, spent his early life in Tain, Ross-shire, Scotland, where his sister still runs a small museum. He received his art training at Tain Royal Academy.

After some years in Persia which were brought to an end by Dr. Moussadegh's purge in 1951, Jim Munro came to New Zealand and worked as an engineer for the Ministry of Works in Napier. His spare time was spent assisting the late Leo Bestall and after a visit to the United Kingdom he was officially appointed as Assistant Director, becoming Director after Mr. Bestall's untimely death.

The pursuit of the arts is inherited because Jim Munro's mother is a practicing artist. He says he would like to see directors enjoy a higher professional status, and envies librarians in this direction. His work precludes him from doing very much gardening or reading — his favourite spare time occupations.

He is President of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand; a member of the ICOM National Committee; Committee member of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Napier branch; Patron of Napier Art Club; Committee member of Hawke's Bay branch, United Nations

Association and member of the Hawke's Bay Regional Committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

DR. R.K. DELL,
*Director of
Dominion
Museum,
Wellington.*



Dr. R.K. Dell, B.A. Auckland; B.Sc., M.Sc., D.Sc. Wellington, was born in Auckland in 1920 and developed an interest in shell collecting as a child. Under the influence of Dr. A.W.S. Powell (Conchologist at the Auckland War Memorial Museum for many years) and the shell club the hobby eventually became a career. He attended Auckland Teachers Training College and obtained his B.A. just as the Second War began so spent the next four and half years in the army in the Pacific theatre. In 1947 Dr. Dell took up a post as conchologist at the Dominion Museum where he has remained, becoming Director in 1966.

Broadly speaking Dr. Dell feels that the only future for museums is to establish a museum service, but he emphasises that there will have to be government backing for this work.

Dr. Dell's leisure activities are gardening, in particular the cultivation of native plants, and trout fishing, but pressure of work does not allow very much time for either interest.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and a vice-president; Fellow of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand; member of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust; member of the Ross Dependency Research Committee and co-ordinator of all research activity in the Antarctic.

CHARLTON EDGAR
*Director of Dunedin
Public Art Gallery*



Born in Toronto, Canada, in May 1903, Charlton Edgar left for Edinburgh University in 1920 where he gained his Master of Arts (First Class) with Honours in History in 1928. Later (1939) he became a

One of the conclusions reached by Dr. Carnegie after her tour of inspection of the Association's member institutions is that the smaller museums very much appreciate the help given by their colleagues in the larger centres. Uncertainty in the techniques of mounting, labelling, displaying and also policy making, at least as far as what should or should not be collected, seem to be some of the problems which became apparent during the secretary's discussions with staff members.

A matter for concern which emerged is the obvious lack of young staff members coming forward in the profession.

But it is heartening to record the opening of a new art gallery and a new museum: the Dowse Art Gallery in Lower Hutt, and the Chatham Islands Museum. We wish them well.

B.G.

AGMANZ NEWS VOL 11 No. 10

August, 1971

The Art Galleries & Museums Association of New Zealand Inc.

To promote and improve public galleries and museums.

*Secretary, Wendy Carnegie,
Hon. Editor, Brenda Gamble,
Auckland City Art Gallery,
P.O. Box 6842,
Auckland, 1. New Zealand.*

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Grant

A submission placed before the Arts Council with proposals for the 1971/72 programme has resulted in the following grant of \$4,500 being made:

Small Museums Purchases Fund	\$1,000
Conservation grant-in-aid	750
In-Training Service Scheme	500
Secretarial	1,250
AGMANZ NEWS subsidy (four issues)	1,000
	\$4,500

The grant is subject to the same conditions as published in AGMANZ NEWS, Vol II, No. 6, October 1970, p. 2.

The Association is very grateful to the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council for making the grant.

Licence 1971/72

Original prints are the only item now subject to an import licence. The Minister of Customs has granted a licence for a total amount of \$10,000 for this purpose for the year ending on 30 June 1972. Applications for a portion of the licence should be made to the secretary in the usual way.

New Members

The following members have been enrolled:

Mr. B.R. Nunn, Dunedin

Mr. A.G. Manson, director of the Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru

Mr. Ray Thorburn, Palmerston North

Mr. T.L.R. Wilson, Christchurch

Capital subsidies — tour by the secretary

It was decided by the Executive Committee that the only practical way to make a report for Government on the present situation relating to museums and art gallery buildings, and their future requirements (see AGMANZ NEWS, May 1971, pgs. 10-11) was for the Secretary to visit all the institutions having viable plans. A tour of the South Island was made in May, followed by two tours covering the North Island. However, Dr. Carnegie reports that her original tour plans had to be considerably enlarged because once it was known she was visiting a museum or gallery she received enquiries and requests for visits from other institutions in the area. She reports below.

"In thirty-four days of travel I visited forty-six art galleries or museums. My overall impression is that the smaller museums and galleries are in dire need of help. Display areas, in the main, are inadequate and generally the storage facilities are appalling.

There is the difficulty in small museums of knowing when to stop accepting gifts or bequests. The arrival of an ancient organ or pianola — family heirlooms though they might be — poses a storage problem even to a reasonably sized museum, but to a small provincial one it becomes a nightmare. Local pride is sometimes hurt if a gift is refused and, of course, could well terminate the presentation of other and perhaps more valuable *objets d'art* in the future.

The larger museums and galleries also have their expansion problems and in all cases staffing is almost at calamity level. Lack of finance to attract overseas or professional personnel being one of the main causes.

I visited galleries with water dripping through the roof, the damp being fended off with inadequate heating gadgets. I have also been so cold that I could not continue my tour of inspection. And I

building. A tender submitted by Colin Harrison Ltd., of Kaikohe, for \$13,480 was accepted by the Russell Centennial Trust Board and work commenced in mid-1970.

The new building was designed by Mr. B. Curlett, DIP.ARCH., ARIB, ANZA. The area is eleven hundred square feet, with concrete block walls and a tile roof. Interior block walls and fibrous plaster ceiling are finished in off white. The floor is concrete, covered with *Vynatred* to match walls and ceiling. A complete set of showcases was made locally and finished in natural rimu. A generous number of power plugs were built into the floor, walls and ceiling to allow for future individual case lighting. Eight twin five foot fluorescent fittings, suitably shielded, supply normal lighting. The museum was finished and opened to the public on 26 October, 1970.

The old Russell Centennial Museum was closed down and the exhibits were incorporated in the new building with the title *Captain Cook Memorial Museum*. The final price was \$13,644. This figure does not include showcases.

In November the scale replica of *H.M.S. Endeavour*, which was used in the Cook celebrations in New Zealand and Australia, was offered to the Board by the sponsors, the South British Insurance Company, with a view to housing it in the new museum. This presented a problem as the model is about twenty-five feet long and the same from keel to masthead. After several conferences it was decided to erect an annex at the rear of the new building. Plans were drawn up by the sponsor's architects with Mr. Curlett as associate. Fletcher Construction built the annex in the amazing time of just over four weeks, completing it on 21 December, 1970. The rear wall of the new museum was then demolished, thus making the annex part of the main building. The view from the front door, looking through the museum to the annex, where the *Endeavour* sits rully rigged, is quite dramatic. The Board is much indebted to the sponsors for the donation of the model and the annex.

The complete project was opened to the public on 23 December and in the following four weeks over ten thousand people visited the museum.

The Museum is administered by the Russell Centennial Trust Board of which the Museum Committee is a sub-committee and is financed by donations with help from the Trust Board.

The collection contains many relics of the early European settlement of Russell town and district, as well as specimens of Maori culture. Artifacts, whaling gear, bushmen's tools, scrimshaw, household articles and Maori war relics are among the articles of local, general and historical interest. A collection of old photographs, literature and publications is also being built up.

(Mr. Rattray is Secretary of the Russell Centennial Trust Board).

See cover photograph

DOWSE ART GALLERY, Lower Hutt

David P. Millar

The new Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt, was opened on the 31st May by the Governor General, Sir Arthur Porritt, in the presence of nearly four hundred people from all parts of the Province of Wellington, including representatives from industry, business houses, local bodies, administration, education, the arts and the churches. After the opening, the gallery was open to inspection by the guests, who were then served light refreshments in the Town Hall. A week of activities, every lunchtime, afternoon and evening then followed.

The building, the first in New Zealand to be built as a complete art gallery for many years, covers 10,000 square feet, and has hanging space for over 1,000 lineal feet. Designed by R.C. Muston of Strutron Architects, the building has an austere outside quality which belies its intimate and varied interior. Interesting vistas from all viewing positions, and varied shaped galleries achieve an intriguing sense of space and discovery.

Natural lighting has been abolished in most galleries. Low ultra-violet emission tubes give plenty of light, the virtual absence of windows aids security, power driven fans keep the air fresh, and heated concrete floors are thermostatically controlled to sustain constant temperature. Spot-lighting and special floods are provided on a lavish scale. Pumice block construction ensures dry conditions.

The first exhibition had as its aim the introduction of the public to the main trends of New Zealand's art. Co-operation from many galleries, and lavish assistance from The Hocken Library, University of Otago, enabled the Director to hang an art history exhibition, entitled "Artists in the Wellington Province". Painters, photographers, potters, printers and sculptors were all represented.

The staff, at the moment of writing, consists of two full-time and one part-time. The gallery is managed by a Board of ten.

The genesis of the Art Gallery began in 1964, when a decision was taken in Council to erect a gallery in memory of the Mayoress, the late Mary Dowse, tragically killed in an accident. The building, subsequently opened in memory of both Percy and Mary Dowse, is to be completed by the addition of a two-storied oval-shaped building, the construction of which the Council has recently given its support in principle.

(Mr. Millar is Director of the Dowse Art Gallery)

Bachelor of Education at the same University. In 1929 he received a Diploma in painting from Edinburgh College of Art. He studied history of fine arts with Professor Baldwin Brown and painting with David Alison and D.M. Sutherland. After a year on the staff of the Edinburgh College of Art's evening school he was appointed in 1930 to the staff at Dunedin School of Art.

1938 was spent in Canada and the United States visiting art galleries and museums in the main centres, studying museum administration, conservation and child art education. A period of study with Professor Godfrey Thompson in 1939 earned Charlton Edgar first class honours in Bachelor of Education.

After two years war service with the New Zealand forces in a camouflage unit, he was appointed Head of the Art Department at the Auckland Teachers College in 1943.

While living in Dunedin in the 30's he was a member of the Council of the Dunedin Art Gallery, and in 1965 he returned as its Director.

Charlton Edgar's interest in the arts probably came through his mother who was Minnie Ott, a Canadian mural painter. Asked for his opinion on the position of New Zealand's art galleries and museums, he said he would like to see more machinery for training adequate staff and some real assistance in capital expenditure for housing collections. He considers there is a need for the development of temporary and travelling exhibition programmes. "A changing scene", says Charlton Edgar, "is the life-blood of culture institutions especially if they are pointed intelligently to topical and constant productions in the Arts".

In spite of devoting seven days a week to his work at the Gallery, Charlton Edgar finds time to pursue his hobbies of painting and graphics, golf, rugby football and research reading. He is a member of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society; Friends of the Otago Museum; Friends of Olveston; Museum of Visual Arts Panel; Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand; Council of the Otago Art Society and Dunedin Civic Arts Council Executive (City Corporation representative).

This is really hello and goodbye to Mr. Edgar who retires in October. Mr. H.V. Miller, in an appreciation of Charlton Edgar's work, published in the *Dunedin Star* on 9 July 1971, wrote "Mr. Edgar, with scant consideration for his own leisure or even his health, has become a legend in his own day for persistent personal work at his task". On behalf of all our members we wish Charlton Edgar a long and happy retirement.

ARTHUR MACKENZIE

*Director of
Southland
Museum,
Invercargill*



In 1959 the Southland Centennial Museum was actually closed for seven months because of lack of money and interest. Since then it has come a long way and latterly this has been due to Arthur MacKenzie's efforts. Ill-health dogged his childhood and made education spasmodic, although being an avid reader with a particular interest in history and having a school teacher sister, he did not fare too badly. Two years of military service during the War left him embittered and disillusioned but still an idealist.

For Invercargill Arthur Mackenzie visualises a museum, art gallery, concert hall, arts and crafts centre and pottery workshop. He believes that a museum, wherever it is, has a unique opportunity to bring together all sections of a community and thus broaden the outlook and break down the barriers which beset society.

For several years pottery has been Arthur Mackenzie's main hobby, but because of lack of time he now finds that pottering about dusting and polishing in the museum is his hobby.

CAPTAIN COOK BICENTENNIAL MEMORIAM MUSEUM, Russell

George E. Rattray

It was originally planned that a Centennial Museum should be established in Russell in 1940 during the celebrations commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Land had been given for the purpose in 1939 by the Baker family, one of the early pioneer families in the district. Another resident, Mrs. J.C. Martin, donated a sum of money towards the costs of the building and fund-raising was in progress at the outbreak of World War II. The building was not erected until after the war and the Museum was eventually opened in 1956. In 1964 a house was built for the curator.

To commemorate the bicentennial of the arrival of Captain James Cook in New Zealand (*Endeavour* anchored in the Bay of Islands) the Minister of Internal Affairs granted a dollar-for-dollar subsidy up to a maximum of \$5,000 for the erection of a new

A "Hokonui" whisky still has been placed on permanent loan by the Minister of Police. It is owned by the Police Department.

A grant from the J.R. McKenzie Trust has enabled the Museum to purchase stacking chairs, a settee, armchairs and a table for the Art Gallery.

(from Newsletter No. 14 May, 1971)

INVERCARGILL ART GALLERY SOCIETY INCORPORATED

The talents of Council members have been allocated to five sub-committees: Finance, Cataloguing, Art, Hanging and Entertainment. The Cataloguing Committee has completed the task of bringing the catalogue up to date. The Invercargill City Council has increased its grant from \$400 to \$900. A total of \$1000 has been received in donations.

(from the President's Annual Report 1970/1971)

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW ZEALAND

An enthusiastic and efficient collector of early Otago photographs, Mrs. Daphne Lemon, has organised a scheme to preserve early pictures of buildings, street scenes and landscapes of New Zealand and hopes to enlist the help of members of the public in seeking out photographs and paintings in their own areas. Mrs. Lemon would like to hear from people in other parts of the country who are willing to act as convenors. They would be responsible for the collection and sifting of material and would be asked to make notes of where such material may be found in private collections. When the project is fully under way the convenors will be asked to assemble their material for selection and copying by the Hocken Library. A special time for each area will be allotted for this so that historically valuable material will not be out of the owner's possession for long. The best originals or copies will be included in the Hocken Library collection.

Later it is hoped that booklets of photographs and a concise history of the area concerned will be published to aid the continuance of the project and the enlargement of the Hocken Library, or a similar project.

Selected libraries throughout New Zealand are being approached to act in the same way for their regions as the Hocken Library is for Otago-Southland.

For further information please write to: Mrs. Daphne Lemon, 2 Cliffs Road, St. Clair, Dunedin.

WAITANGI PORTRAIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA

A reader, Mr. Paul Potter, reports that in a recent letter from Oliver Millar, Deputy Surveyor of the Queen's pictures, the portrait of Queen Victoria presented to the Treaty House at Waitangi by Queen Elizabeth last year is a copy of the Winterhalter portrait of 1843 probably painted by C.F. Bate.

TOKOROA PAINTING COMPETITION 1971

Organised by the Tokoroa Art Society and the Tokoroa Festival Society this competition carries a first prize of \$500 and a second prize of \$100. Subject: open; Medium: oils, gouache, or any other opaque medium. The last day for sending in entry forms is 11 September, 1971. The exhibition will be shown in the Tokoroa Memorial Hall from 26 September to 1 October. Entry forms from: The Secretary, Painting Competition, Tokoroa Art Society (Inc.), P.O. Box 280, Tokoroa.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION, INVERCARGILL ART GALLERY

Entries are invited for the Annual Exhibition of Art. Eligible works are paintings in any medium, drawings, sculpture, wood-carving, pottery, graphic art. Last receiving day is 8 October, 1971, opening day 16 October, 1971. Entry forms may be obtained from the Secretary, Invercargill Public Art Gallery Society Inc., Anderson Park, Invercargill.

MANAWATU PRIZE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

This year's Manawatu Prize for Contemporary Art will be for original prints. Entry forms may be obtained from the Secretary, Manawatu Art Gallery, P.O. Box 565, Palmerston North.

STAFF NEWS

Dr. R.C. Cooper, M.A. Ph.D., F.M.A.N.Z., botanist and assistant director at the Auckland Institute and Museum, resigned early this year to take up a teaching post in the far north. Dr. Cooper was appointed botanist in 1948 and became honorary secretary of this association in 1955 for a period of thirteen years. During this time he developed the association so that now a secretary and an editor are required to administer the work.

Mr. T.J. Bayliss, curator of Applied Arts at the Auckland Institute and Museum, has been appointed as assistant director.

Mr. L. Charles Lloyd, F.I.I.C., conservator at the Auckland City Art Gallery since 1953 has been appointed as director of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and takes up his duties later in the year. Mr. Lloyd was responsible for setting up the conservation department and the subsequent conservation service available to all museums and galleries.

Mrs. A. McBirney has been appointed to the post of recorder in the Colonial Section of the Auckland Institute and Museum.

Miss Alice Woodhouse, honorary librarian at Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum (Inc) since 1948, has retired but becomes honorary consulting librarian.

Mr. Luit Bieringa has been appointed director of the Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North.

MANAWATU MUSEUM, Palmerston North

On 18 April 1971, with the official opening of the Museum, the Manawatu Museum Society Incorporated achieved the goal for which it had been working for some years.

A sixty year old house in Amesbury Street, owned by the City Council and leased to the Society, has been remodelled to suit the purposes of a small museum. The removal of interior walls has provided three major display areas; windows and fireplaces have been covered and lighting is provided by strip and spot lights. Walls, doors and screens have been painted to provide suitable background for various types of displays. Security has not been overlooked and recommended measures have been taken. Storage space is provided in the former garage and two small rooms, and the dining room has been adapted as a committee room. The Rugby Museum has an exhibition room in the house but with a separate entrance.

In five years time the land on which the house stands will be required for use as a car park, so in the intervening period the Society has to raise funds to enable the Museum to be moved to a central, permanent building. A fund has been established to which the Mayor, Mr. D.B. Black, donated \$100 before declaring the Museum open.

The Museum Society has a small varied collection, carefully catalogued, as well as material on long-term loan from the Polynesian Society. The displays are to be changed every three months. The Committee's policy is to concentrate on building up membership rather than accumulating permanent accessions while the Museum is located in its present building. The Museum is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays between 2 p.m. and 4.30 p.m.

(From notes supplied by Mrs. Margaret J. Neilson, Secretary of the Manawatu Museum Society Inc.)

DUNEDIN PUBLIC ART GALLERY

T. Esplin

Like many other similar institutions throughout New Zealand, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery is finding its own popularity a problem.

The increasing attendances at the Gallery, the rapid growth of the permanent collection, and the need for display space for visiting exhibitions have forced the Council to launch a \$300,000 Gallery Extension Building Fund. A sale of donated antiques organised in a city saleroom recently gained \$8,300 bringing the total funds close to \$50,000.

The new storeroom with a caretaker's flat at first floor level are now nearing completion at the west end of the Gallery, but future plans are much more ambitious and fund-raising plans include a further auction next year and several evening functions in the Gallery to augment the steady flow of personal

and company donations. The most recent event found a ready co-operation from other artistic organisations when an evening of the performing arts drew a capacity crowd to the Gallery.

A printing of 20,000 new coloured brochures describing the permanent collections in the Gallery was distributed to travel and accommodation agents throughout New Zealand recently and a yearly 10,000 reprint is planned.

Exhibitions this year included at Festival time a Retrospective of Kathleen Salmond's work and a one-man show by Hubert Struyk. Rembrandt's etchings from the National collections visited the Gallery in April. The most recent permanent collection to be assembled is in the new Gallery of Religious Art. Here, the altar from St. Joseph's Cathedral takes pride of place. It is surrounded by some notable Old Master religious paintings, including the 15th century Florentine *Madonna and Child*.

(Mr. Esplin is a Council member of Dunedin Art Gallery).

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

Two major international exhibitions will be shown during the next three months. *Recent British Painting* is the largest exhibition ever to come to New Zealand and contains 90 works. It is a major survey of British painting assembled for the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation and includes works by Francis Bacon, David Hockney, Bridget Riley, Graham Sutherland and Ben Nicholson. The exhibition was opened by the British High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Galsworthy, KCMG, on 14 August and is on view for six weeks before touring under the sponsorship of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation.

In October an exhibition of *Paintings by Morris Louis* will be on view. There are eleven paintings but their total running feet amounts to 100. Louis, a major American 'post abstract expressionist' artist was born in 1912 and died in 1962. He has been described as "reaching one of the most extreme conclusions of contemporary painting: the calculated concept of uncompositional painting". The exhibition has been arranged by the Auckland City Art Gallery in conjunction with the Honolulu Academy of Arts, the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Arts, California.

SOUTHLAND MUSEUM, Invercargill

The Chairman, Mr. G.F. Blick, reports that the Building Fund now stands at approximately \$44,000 and that it is possible \$10,000 will be required to complete the building. The architect has been instructed to proceed with the completion of the specifications and to call tenders. The Board wishes to commence building at the earliest opportunity.

Southland Museum, Invercargill

22 August — **PAINTINGS** BY **DONALD**
5 September **MACKENZIE** followed by **TABLE**
TOP SCULPTURE

Wairarapa Arts Foundation, Masterton

1 — 21 **NINETEENTH CENTURY PHOTO-**
August **GRAPHS**

22 August — **JOHN WEEKS**
7 September

22 — 28 **MASTERTON ART CLUB**
September **EXHIBITION**

1 — 22 **HANSELLS PRIZE FOR**
October **CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE**
EXHIBITION

OVERSEAS NEWS

FILING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS: some basic procedures (part 2)

Paul Vanderbilt

But many questions of preservation of photographs are academic because the photographs themselves are more often than not impermanent because of hasty and incomplete original processing. We are sometimes asked about the restoration of faded and stained old photographs, but are not competent to answer; we prefer to retain the imperfect originals as is, if they seem historically valuable, out of respect and sentiment and to prove that we have an original. But we depend on new prints from good copy negatives for practical reproduction and display. Custom copying with filters and controlled exposure-development ratios, which most good laboratories can do, will perform wonders and produce copies much better than the originals. There is now some promise of relatively permanent photographic colour printing, the Cilchrome process (CIBA Corporation, Fairlawn, New Jersey), but heretofore colour photographs, even under the best storage conditions, have not been reliable as permanent records.

One important consideration involves mounting: whether to mount, how much and how. If pictures, especially loose, thin paper prints, are to stand on edge, they should be supported by a mount of some kind or they will become damaged. But if they lie flat the danger is much less and mounting, which costs time and money, is necessary only for the most fragile and valuable items. In an effort to be realistic and recognise that in some collections mounting just

isn't going to be done, we have suggested a partial protection by envelopes which will accommodate both mounted and unmounted material. But protection is not the only consideration. Identifying information is customarily written on the backs of pictures, and if the pictures are to be mounted, the information must first be transcribed. It may therefore be impossible to commit a collection to mounting for physical filing purposes without also assuming an editorial commitment; for if information is to be transcribed for caption or label purposes, it must be cast in some uniform pattern, and much information which is lacking will have to be "researched" and supplied. This is especially the case if the captions are used, with or without extra headings, to determine file positions.

There are several methods of mounting, the best of which require special equipment and all of which take time and skill. Professional wet mounting can be made virtually flat, but this operation is much more difficult than it sounds and amateur wet mounting is rarely successful. The best method is dry mounting with thermoplastic sheets such as Kodak dry mounting tissue applied with heat in a special press. This can also be done with an ordinary flat-iron but the results are not consistently satisfactory. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin dry-mounts large or valuable items which are to lie flat on 100 per cent rag paper backing (we use Drednought Ledger, 36lb. weight). Items to stand independently are mounted on Riegel (260 Madison Avenue, New York) jute tag, weight 444M 22½ ins. x 28½ ins. Sorex (manufactured by Sorg Paper Company, Middletown, Ohio, weight 150/500 24 x 36, a light stock, is used when items are to be bound in albums.

Dry mounting has its fine points of technique, depending on the nature of the material being mounted and the support. "Hard" supporting mounts, such as all-rag ledger stock, should be cooled under pressure after the mounting has been done. We use an old screw-down press in addition to the Seal hot press. Most mounts need to be manipulated by hand as they are removed from the hot press, bending each one against the tendency to curl as it cools. Obstinate cases of curling can be counteracted by mounting a blank sheet of paper on the reverse side of the mount. We suggest on-the-spot instruction from someone experienced in dry mounting. Ansel Adams's book *The Print* (Basic Photo series, published by Morgan & Lester, New York, 1948) gives detailed instructions, but with more perfectionism than most people need.

We also dry mount large prints on unbleached muslin, using a thermoplastic called Parafilm (manufactured by the Marathon Corporation, Rothschild, Wisconsin) instead of Kodak dry mounting tissue which does not seem to work well on cloth. Another thermoplastic, Scotch Weld bonding film no. 583, distributed by the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company is useful for mounting on wood or masonite panels and such surfaces.

Mr. T.L.R. Wilson, past director of the Wairarapa Arts Centre, and recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council award, has departed for The Netherlands where he will begin post graduate study in Art History at the University of Nijmegen.

Mr. O. Gordon Cox, curator at the Hocken Library, University of Otago, retired recently.

ENQUIRIES

Mr. A.N. Saddington, of San Diego, California, is seeking a position in the museum field as a registrar, researcher or librarian. Mr. Saddington holds a bachelor of arts degree, with a major in history and political science, and a minor in library science. At present working for the San Diego Aerospace Museum, his letter to the secretary contains his *curriculum vitae*.

OBITUARY

Mr. Cecil Watt, custodian at the Rotorua Museum until about two weeks before his death in May. Mr. Watt was a historian and authority on Maori archaeological sites.

PUBLICATIONS

The Works of John Weeks in the National Collection. The National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, 18 pp. illus.

This monograph contains a foreword, chronology, biographical notes, an explanation by Melvin Day of the composition and structure of the mathematical ratio known as the "Golden Section" which was much favoured by Weeks, an analysis of his works, catalogue details of the National Collection of Week's paintings, and notes.

The National Gallery has also produced a slide folder which has a portrait of Weeks on the front cover and a chronology on the back. Within the folder are eight slides, in colour, of representative examples of his work in the National Collection.

Prices for the publications are: monograph, 60 cents plus 5 cents postage; slide folder and slides, \$2.50 (postage included). They may be purchased separately, for the prices quoted, or together for \$3.50.

In preparation, and to be available shortly, are slide folders of the works of these artists:

Frances Hodgkins

Raymond McIntyre

Petrus van der Velden

Charles Goldie and others (the Maori, seen through European eyes)

Each folder will contain eight slides and will cost \$2.50. They may be ordered immediately.

EXHIBITIONS

Auckland City Art Gallery

3 August – **CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN PRINTS**
5 September

18 August – **RECENT BRITISH PAINTING** The Peter Stuyvesant Collection of 98 paintings which is being toured with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand.
3 September

13 October – **PAINTINGS BY MORRIS LOUIS**
28 November

Dowse Art Gallery – Lower Hutt

September – **NEW ZEALAND YOUNG CONTEMPORARIES**
October

Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum, Napier

11 – 22 **ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION**
August

31 August – **DOMINION NEWSPAPER SCHOOL ART COMPETITION**
12 September

19 September – **INVITED POTTERS EXHIBITION**
3 October

12 – 25 **STUDENT PAINTERS & POTTERS EXHIBITION**
October

Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North

8-13 August **PRIVATE COLLECTIONS**

15 – 27 **NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITIES ARTS FESTIVAL**
August

29 August – **PHOTOGRAPHY 1971**
16 September

19 September – **MANAWATU SOCIETY OF ARTS ANNUAL EXHIBITION**
1 October

27 September – **PAHIATUA EXHIBITION**
1 October

National Art Gallery, Wellington

4 – 30 **CONTEMPORARY FRENCH TAPESTRIES** (Brought to New Zealand by the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand).
August

Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui

20 August – **CHILDREN'S ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION**
6 September

23 September – **EXHIBITION OF WORK BY ELSIE LINWOOD & JAMES ALP** (oils and acrylic painting, drawings & metal sculpture).
10 October

inflammable, there is no danger in nitrate film which is not deteriorated and is kept in separate jackets in a cool place. Inspect nitrate negatives individually at least every two years to weed out and destroy any which are deteriorating.

To identify nitrate film, cut a long thin sliver from a sample margin and touch a match to it. If it burns briskly with a yellow sparkling flame and leaves a crisp, black ash, it is nitrate; if it burns only slowly or goes out and leaves a whitish melted mass between the unburned part and the ash, it is acetate or safety film. Then examine the notching code and treat all films similarly notched accordingly. Safety film generally carries the imprinted word "safety" in the margin. Some films are not notched, and hard to identify and there is such a thing as a laminate of safety and nitrate bases. With experience, one learns to tell the difference, in most cases, by appearance.

The most efficient method of handling captions (the identifying information accompanying the negative), is to incorporate this information in the negative unit, so that it appears automatically on every print made. But this method is usually applied only to 8 inch by 10 inch or 5 inch by 7 inch cut film negatives. For small sizes, the information may be typewritten, or set in type and proofed, and then rephotographed on high contrast sheet film which is cut in strips. Each strip is joined to the edge of the corresponding sheet negative. A special printer is generally used to make one exposure for the picture and another for the caption, which is usually of a different density. An older practice was to hand-letter, with more or less formality, on the negative itself, but this method is rarely seen today.

If captions are not printed automatically from the negatives on outgoing prints, they are written or typewritten or printed from a hectograph or other duplicator directly on the back of the print or on a slip which is applied to the back, often as a hinge which will open into proper reading position. But there should be a formal caption and negative number for every picture. The negative, whether original or copy, is the best and most permanent form for any picture, and the identification is best maintained, in a simple system, on the negative jacket. In the case of pictures not accompanied by negatives, keep the caption on the picture itself, where it can be transcribed to the negative jacket if a copy negative is ever made.

Historical caption style is a subject beyond the scope of this article, but we suggest a formal style, limited to essentials and with references to further information. Avoid the present-tense news-caption style, and the "catchy" condensed-story style of popular publication. The formal, or "record" caption ought to be a starting point used by a writer who is going to add further data and rephrase his information to suit his particular purposes.

How much indexing?

Most of the popular literature on photograph files deals with the current productions of one organisation or one photographer and not, as in a typical historical society situation, with resources of varied origin gathered into a common repository. See, for instance "Step-by-step procedure in setting up system for preserving and filing negatives, transparencies" by Joseph Foldes in *U.S. Camera*, March, 1966.

Because of this variety of source and nature of material, simple sorting, overall identification and outwardly storage present problems enough. You will note that we have gone into considerable technical detail without mentioning card indexes or saying much about picture-by-picture subject analysis. We recall one of the premises: that there is little money and little time to be spent on the project. And if we are able to save you from the labour of card indexing and individual print classification, we think we may have done you a service.

Our suggestion is that if there is additional time, it be spent on more intensive gathering of resources, especially entire collections of consequence, genuinely useful research into the background and details of such collections, compiling for distribution some guide to the special and unique collections available in your organisation, and the editing of some end-products. We especially favour the making of finished bound albums of the best material, with excellent prints and complete record text, in the manner of an unpublished book or well-kept full set of manuscripts. In our view, operations of this sort, directed at the accessibility and exploitation of an institution's resources will contribute much more to historical research than the detailed indexing of miscellaneous items to anticipate miscellaneous inquiries. The theoretical problem is not unlike that which has long surrounded the treatment of newspaper clippings. Our model, in theory, is the professional practice which has come to be applied to manuscripts and archives; deal with the significant large masses, known by their position in the structure of accumulated record, and let the searcher deal with the individual details of information.

There are, of course, alternatives. If you have time, money, staff, space and confidence that the project can be continued through a period of growth, you can set up a more finished basic file on reference principles. Mount most pictures on standard 8½ inch by 11 inch cards, with full edited identifying captions on typed labels; interfile mounts and envelopes of loose pictures under alphabetical "dictionary" headings, combining personal and corporate names, place-names, and subject according to one of the standard library lists of subject headings. Provide a card index for cross reference to both details and general terminology. This will lock your collection in a temporary clarity of sorts, but make alteration, up-dating and alteration to changing needs difficult and expensive.

Unmounted photographs which are curled may be made to lie flat if they are of a type which can be wetted without loosening the emulsion. The photographs should be resoaked thoroughly (fifteen minutes) and then dried in an interleaving of prints and sheets of *photographic supply* white blotting paper (do not use ordinary commercial blotting paper) under low pressure, changing the blotters frequently during the first stages to prevent adhesion (five minutes, then ten minutes, then fifteen minutes, then thirty minutes, then three hours.) Then, when almost but not bone dry, the prints should be rolled face out, without blotters, between a section of heavy, mailing tube or other cylinder (about 4" diameter) and a long strip of heavy paper for twenty-four hours. Or the photographs may be sent to a laboratory which has flattening equipment. We have not found commercial "flattening solutions" dependable. There is no real solution to curling except use of double weight photoprint paper or mounting. But beware of wetting certain types of paper in use about 1900-1920; moisten a corner well and try to rub the emulsion off with your fingers. If it powders and dissolves, dry-mount the prints as is.

Never use rubber cement or any rubber compound as an adhesive for anything valuable or intended to be permanent; in several years a prominent yellow stain appears on the face of whatever has been so mounted. Avoid also all gummed or plastic tape and similar easy-to-use pressure adhesives, which leave stains as they dry out. And do not leave rubber bands in contact with valuable pictures for the same reason. Gummed photo-album "corners" and sheets slit diagonally so that pictures can be inserted by the corners are strictly non-professional. Our advice, in other words, is to mount properly or not at all. A very considerable part of our own project time is spent in remounting and undoing damage done before we received the material in question. If you write on the backs of photographs, lay a single print at a time face down on a sheet of glass and write on the back with a soft pencil, so as not to ruin the print surface.

The Negative File

In a busy agency or active commercial establishment, negatives are ordinarily kept in drawers in metal filing cabinets. But we are now thinking of typical historical society uses where negatives are drawn upon only occasionally, and there are probably several different series and sizes. The facts are that large collections of negatives are sometimes, even often, acquired without corresponding prints and are retained and consulted as negatives. If the negatives are kept in captioned jackets, they can be used in this way, though it is of course preferable to have a filed reference print of every negative. Assuming the physical set-up we have been discussing, it is quite practical to keep negatives in the type of file boxes ordinarily used for card files and to shelve them in

the regular sequence of containers, each box with a location shelf number. These boxes usually have built-in follow blocks and are like small file drawers which can be removed to a table and consulted at leisure.

Always retain the original numbers assigned to the negatives by the source from which you got them, and keep each numbered collection of negatives distinct and intact. Do not renumber all negatives in one general sequence. The negative number, impersonal and objective as it is, is the most reliable identifying designation of any photograph. One reliable and convenient practice is to differentiate each series of negatives by name, usually the name of the originator or photographer, and assign to it a "Cutter Code" (B4 for Bemis, B5 for Billings, B58 for Bittinger, W5 for Wing 4 x 5's, W51 for Wing 5 x 7's, etc.) Ask any librarian to explain this method to you. When the code numbers are arranged in decimal order, the names for which they stand will be in alphabetical order with proper subdivisions. Then apply individual numbers to each negative in the series (for the Benis collection: B4-1, B4-2, B4-3 etc.) If there are no original numbers, numbers have to be assigned. It is wise, before numbering a complete collection, to arrange the negatives in some logical order. There are also advantages to keeping nitrate base films in series separate from safety base films and glass plates (they may require separate storage and periodic inspection) and to keeping original negatives in series separate from copy negatives (different conditions or use may be split, according to sizes and the above considerations, into as many as ten or twelve series, but this is a refinement which some may not care to adopt. Negatives of 35 mm. and smaller sizes are best kept in strips, usually of 6 frames, each in a plastic sleeve and each group in a long narrow manilla jacket on which identifying data is typed and numbers stamped. Individual numbers can be written on each negative on the emulsion side, with pen and India ink or a sharp-pointed nylon tip pen, using the space between sprocket holes of 35 mm. film or the blank margins of cut film sheets.

Keep negatives in the standard manilla jackets made for this purpose, which are of chemically suitable paper and sealed with harmless adhesive down the edge rather than down the centre. Do not use cheap paper or ordinary envelopes or your negatives will in time deteriorate and develop streaks. Keep each sheet of film in a separate jacket.

Negatives of the period 1890-1930 are very likely to be on nitrate base film which is less stable than the "safety" or acetate base film now almost universally used. Deteriorated nitrate film negatives, kept in a warm place and packed together, as when a quantity of sheets are together in the same envelope or as in the case of motion picture film rolled up in a can, present a serious fire hazard because of the possibility of spontaneous combustion. But while it is highly