

Phanzine

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Groundhog Day at Archives New Zealand

The announcement last month that Archives New Zealand and the National Library are to be merged with the Department of Internal Affairs strikes dismay into the hearts of those historians who were around in the 1990s. It is a baffling reliving – like Bill Murray's wonderful comedy *Groundhog Day* – of an issue we thought had been settled ten years ago. This article deals with Archives New Zealand, rather than the National Library, simply because I have had more involvement with Archives, not because the National Library is less important. Also there are very significant constitutional issues about the Archives.

Throughout the 1990s the archives and records community, spearheaded by people like Brad Patterson of ARANZ, the former Turnbull Librarian, Jim Traue and a former Chief Historian, the late Ian Wards, campaigned for the then National Archives to be separated from the Department of Internal Affairs and established as a separate government department. This was achieved on 1 October 2000 under the Archives, Culture, and Heritage Reform Act 2000. This brought it into line with national archives in other western democratic jurisdictions. On a quick, once-over search through their websites I found that in the United Kingdom, Scotland, Ireland, Australia and the United States, all were set up many years ago as independent agencies under their own Acts. Why does our Minister of Internal Affairs think he knows better than his peers in similar countries?

The Public Records Act 2005, which had also taken many years to come to fruition, gave the Chief Archivist

the legislative authority and independence to require a wide range of government and local government bodies to create and retain records to a proper modern standard. (This included born-digital records.)

There is a compelling reason for the independence of this role. The 'public record memory of government' is crucial to the integrity of a democracy. It is the way by which government action may be scrutinised and held to account, sometimes, as with the treaty claims, many years after the event. It must be placed beyond either meddling or neglect by either politicians or bureaucrats. Within the DIA the Chief Archivist would be a second or third-tier divisional head, with no separate budget and no defence against having his or her budget raided for other departmental purposes. Previous National Archivists have told how demoralising it was pre-2000 to try to carry out their statutory obligations where the Secretary of Internal Affairs was indifferent or hostile. As historians, of course, our vital interests are tied up with an efficient, open and respected Archives.

The reasons for this decision are opaque. Even the publicly claimed savings are pitiful and do not justify the upheaval or public ructions. They also do not withstand scrutiny. The assurance of the Minister of Internal Affairs that the independence of the Chief Archivist will be preserved deserves a horse laugh. It is a contradiction in terms for a subordinate to be independent.

It is unlikely that these changes will go to a select committee but there are several things you can do:

- bombard the Minister's office with requests under the Official Information Act for the Cabinet papers and official advice he has sought and received;
- protest through the newspapers and other media;
- contact Jim McAloon of Victoria University, who is convening a group to press for the reversal of this decision (Jim.McAloon@vuw.ac.nz). The preferred status is for the Chief Archivist to be an officer of parliament, like the Auditor-General or the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment;
- read the paper on the PHANZA website from retired Professor of Accountancy, Dr Don Gilling, which demolishes the economic case for the merger.

SUSAN BUTTERWORTH

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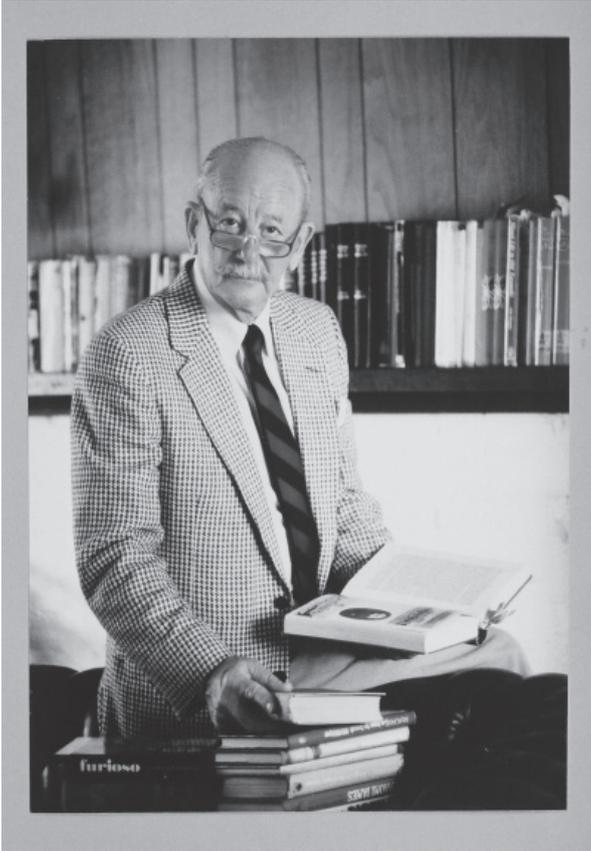


PO Box 1904, THORNDON, WELLINGTON

Donald Murray Stafford (1927–2010)

Ann Somerville, Public Programmes Officer at Rotorua Museum, remembers a man of mana.

PHANZA member Don Stafford died in Rotorua on 5 April 2010 after a long life during which he made a major contribution to the rich melding of cultures in the city.



Don Stafford – Paul Wilson, Photographic Collection, Rotorua Museum of Art and History

Don's gifts included empathy, a keen and meticulous mind, and, perhaps greatest of all, an ability to recognise stories of the old Māori world as taonga. As a boy helping out in his father's menswear shop in Tutaneke Street, he came into contact with Te Arawa kuia and kaumatua. Drawn by the warmth of the store's stove, the old people told stories to the youngster, who imbibed the language and began to record their history.

His definitive work, *Te Arawa: A History of the Arawa People*, published by Reed in 1967, was awarded an Elsdon Best Memorial Medal by the Polynesian Society in 1970. This authoritative book, which has sold more than 40,000 copies, was followed by 22 more books on the history of the Rotorua area. His achievements were recognised in 1982 with an MBE, and in 1993 with a CBE and an honorary doctorate from the University of Waikato. His last book, *Wild Wind from the North*, published by Reed in 2007, addressed the controversial story of Hongi Hika's invasion of Te Arawa's lands.

As Rotorua's official historian, Don Stafford wrote a much-read two-volume history of the city, *The Founding Years in Rotorua* (1986) and *The New Century in Rotorua* (1988). Rotorua District Library's research room, which holds his research and archival material, has been named the Don Stafford Room.

Don helped ensure the restoration and protection of several historic Rotorua buildings including St Faith's Church, Ōhinemutu; St Peter's Church, Ōwhata; and Te Runanga Tea House in the Government Gardens, which reopened in 1993.

Don Stafford's fluency in te reo Māori gave him mana in the Māori world, in which he was accorded the status of rangatira. As a mark of respect, Ngāti Whakaue welcomed his body onto Te Papaïouru Marae, where it lay in state prior to a service in his beloved St Faith's Church and burial at Kauae Cemetery.

His flair with the English language earned him an authority that was recognised locally, nationally and internationally. A regular broadcaster, speaker, artist, and in latter years documentary film-maker, this charismatic man never tired of sharing his rich lode of stories with generations of Rotorua people.

Rotorua Museum owes much to Don Stafford. He was the first curator of the Rotorua City Museum (1968–70). His legacy is seen in, among other things, a nationally important photographic collection he initiated. The Bath House building's south wing, left incomplete for a century, will be named the Don Stafford Wing when it opens in 2011.

Archives Reading Room launch

On 24 March Marguerite Hill was pleased to attend the launch of Archives New Zealand's new reading room.

The Hon. Nathan Guy, Minister responsible for the National Library and Archives New Zealand, also opened the Gateway, the new information area for people beginning archival research. The Gateway includes a revamped audio-visual area in which National Film Unit video can be viewed. A readers' lounge is another new feature on the ground floor. This was also an opportunity to welcome the National Library and Alexander Turnbull Library staff who are based at Archives New Zealand while the National Library building is closed for refurbishment.

As the announcement of the merger between Archives New Zealand, the National Library and the Alexander Turnbull Library came the day after the launch of the reading room, it is interesting to reflect on Mr Guy's comments. He acknowledged the role of the three institutions and spoke about the importance of the accessibility of the nation's cultural heritage. He also acknowledged the role of the Chief Archivist,

and discussed where this role sits in other countries: in Australia, within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio; in Sweden, in the Ministry of Culture; in the United Kingdom, in the Ministry of Justice. He assured the audience that the role of Chief Archivist is recognised as an important position that requires integrity and independence.

Other speakers included Greg Goulding, Acting Chief Executive of Archives New Zealand and Chief Archivist, who welcomed the National Library and Alexander Turnbull Library staff to Archives New Zealand. Chris Szekely, Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library, thanked Archives New Zealand for their welcome but made it clear that he was looking forward to returning his collection and staff to the new National Library when the reconstruction work was completed. Both men looked forward to improving the quality of service delivery, thanks to their closer working relationship.

The Film Archive

During May, the Film Archive should finish moving its collections to its new site in Plimmerton, north of Wellington. Previously spread over seven vaults in three different locations (including a couple of munitions magazines), the collections will be shifted to a new state-of-the-art storage facility. The collection, which includes 120,000 films, videos and television programmes stored on 300,000 cans of film and reels of tape, has outgrown the storage available at its Taranaki St and Buckle St sites. It has grown by 45,000 items in the last five years alone.

The new storage in Plimmerton is fully climate-controlled (unlike much of the previous storage) and has plenty of room to grow – in fact, there's enough space for another building should this eventually be required. It will also feature secure storage for reels of explosive nitrate film, which previously have been stored at the former Shelly Bay air force base.

The Film Archive remains open during the move, with little disruption to services. The Jonathan Dennis Library, cinemas and galleries will remain at the Taranaki St site.

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in Phanzine are not necessarily those of the editors.

Digitisation of the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*

Eileen Barrett-Whitehead reports on this exciting new project.

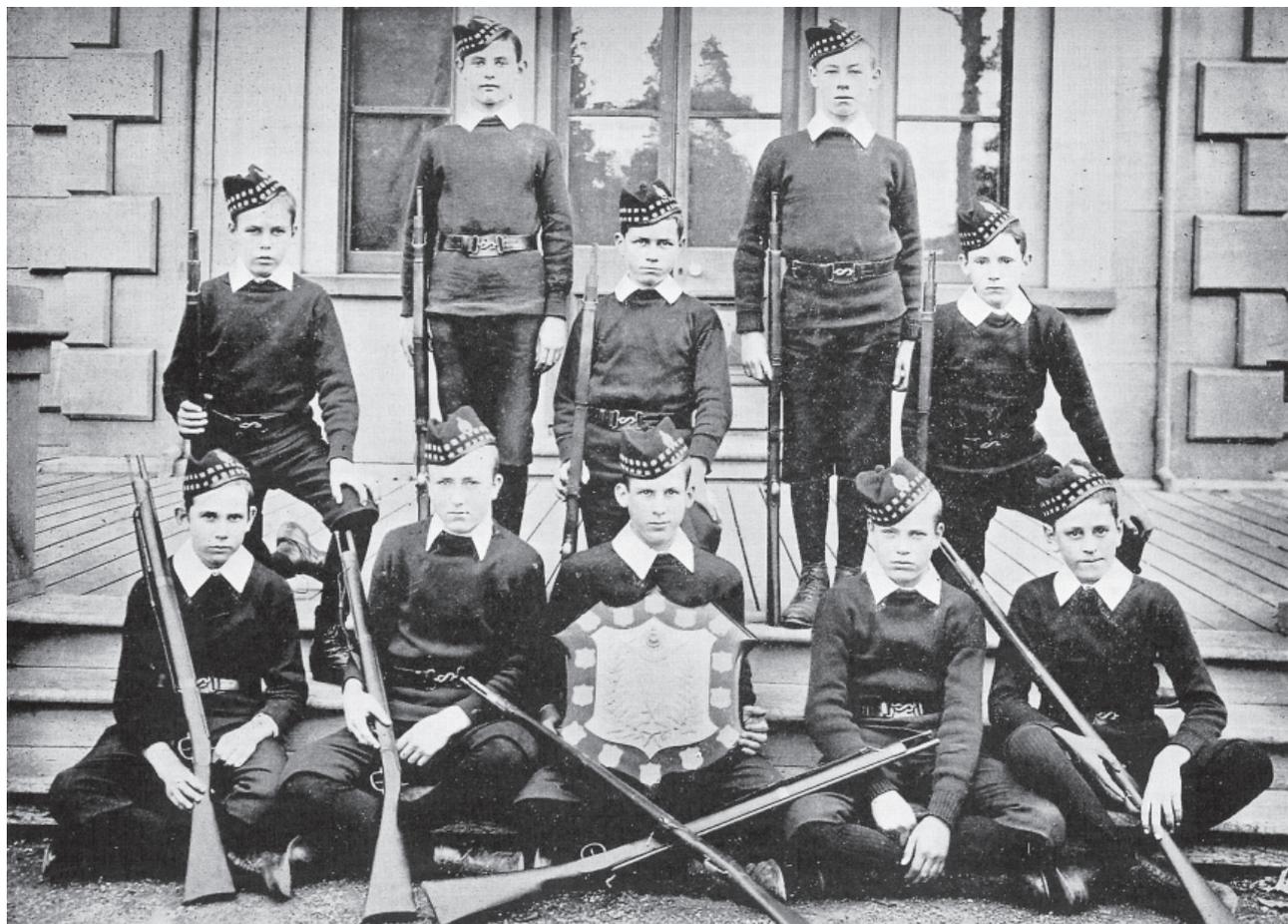
Do you know which of our ports had the highest consumption of New Zealand-distilled liquor in 1872? Or what sort of recreational activity was provided in early 'lunatic asylums'? Are you researching the names of early settlers who drowned in New Zealand's rivers? How about needing to find out what Henare Tomoana said to Native Minister Ballance when they met in 1886? The Appendices, also known as the 'AJHRs' or 'A-to-Js', are a wonderful mine of information on a whole range of economic, social and political issues, both Māori and non-Māori. The National Library's project to digitise them and make them freely available online is therefore an important and exciting initiative.

To help scope the parameters of the project, two reference groups have been set up: an Experts Group to provide advice on likely user needs, and a Technical Group to advise on the digitisation itself. The former includes representatives from a wide range of user groups, including public libraries, law libraries, museums, Parliament, the Alexander Turnbull Library, the New Zealand Historical Association, Te Pouhere Kōrero, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Treaty sector researchers, and the National Library's family history services.

A first meeting of the Experts Group was held on 2 February, and I attended on behalf of PHANZA. Everyone present stressed the importance of the service being available free of charge, and of the digitised documents being word-searchable – the latter topic generating considerable discussion about the level and nature of searching needed. Other discussion centred on the trade-off between range and depth. Views were mixed, but most thought thorough coverage of a shorter time period would be preferable to patchy coverage of a longer one.

The initial funding is coming from the National Library and Digital New Zealand, but digitising the full run of AJHRs will be a lengthy programme requiring contributions from other stakeholders. In the short term, the aim is to digitise a selection of early AJHRs, to encourage interest and generate further support. The target completion date for this first phase is June 2010.

More information on the digitisation project is available at <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/about-us/current-initiatives/appendices-journals-house-representatives>. (For information on other quirky facts and figures available in the AJHRs, check out <http://positivelyparliament.wordpress.com/2009/05/14/hidden-gems/>)



Some departmental reports in the early twentieth century included photo sections. These Onehunga District High School Cadets were crack shots. AJHR, 1905, E-1D.

News from the North

Contributed by David Verran

Just before Christmas, half a dozen PHANZA members met for a social drink in central Auckland to celebrate the end of the working year. We last had an end-of-year get-together two years ago, and managed to turn out in the same numbers this time. Our previous venue, the London Bar, has now become a restaurant and we opted for the Brooklyn Bar instead.

We report on the new digital version of the New Zealand Card Index that is accessible via the Auckland City Libraries website. Researchers visiting Auckland City Libraries have long used the index cards, and the new keyword access greatly enhances access to bibliographic references. There is nevertheless still the matter of those typos!

Auckland, as well as Wellington, researchers are now also celebrating access to the French-language 'Letters received from Oceania 1836–1854', sets of which were recently presented to the University of Auckland and Auckland City Libraries by the Society of Mary. We are all brushing up on our French and eagerly awaiting the index volume.

It has been more than 20 years since the last round of local government reorganisation, and this time the restructuring is restricted to the greater Auckland area – at least for the moment. So far, we have seen public advertisements for third-tier positions, which include an overall manager of libraries and information. Once these positions are filled, the next tiers will be finalised. The use of the subjunctive is common when talking about the new Auckland council. Could council archives be included in this area of responsibility? May there be a separate heritage and research manager? We can but wait and see.

On 11 March 'Economy and the City', the fifth major release from Te Ara / The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, was launched by Hon. Steven Joyce in downtown Auckland, five days before a tandem function in Wellington. Te Ara's 'Places' entries on Auckland were launched at the War Memorial Museum in December 2007.

Auckland City Libraries digitises New Zealand Card Index

David Verran reports.

Auckland City Libraries has digitised the unique New Zealand Card Index that is housed in the Auckland Research Centre. This resource is now available online through the Libraries' website.

Librarians began compiling the New Zealand Card Index in the 1950s, and it contained 420,000 cards when work on it ceased in 1996. The new digital version provides keyword access to local history, biographical and family history references from sources including: Auckland scrapbooks from 1923 to 1994, New Zealand scrapbooks from 1916 to 1975, obituary scrapbooks from 1933 to 1941 and 1949 to 1979, and the *New Zealand Herald*, *Auckland Star* and Auckland-area suburban newspapers to November 1996. Music references were recorded on a separate card index which is also accessible online, on Index Auckland.

Material was selected for inclusion in the scrapbooks on the basis of its potential historical value. For the Auckland scrapbooks, the criteria included the history of buildings, such as their opening or demolition; the history or description of businesses; and information about suburbs,

such as new subdivisions and the origin of suburb or street names. The selection process was comprehensive but not exhaustive. The New Zealand scrapbooks contain material of general historical interest relating to the country as a whole. The obituary scrapbooks contain major obituaries from the *New Zealand Herald* and *Auckland Star*, as well as some death notices (which were not indexed).

The availability of microfilm reader-printers from the mid 1970s enabled direct reference to issues of the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Auckland Star* and the scrapbooks were no longer updated. The advent of Newsindex in 1979 and Index New Zealand in 1987 led to further refining of indexing criteria. Indexing of suburban newspapers outside Auckland City ceased in November 1989, as did indexing of the *Auckland Star* on 31 July 1991. *The New Zealand Herald* increasingly left local stories to the suburban newspapers. Comprehensive indexing of the *Herald* and Auckland City suburban newspapers continued until November 1996. Index Auckland and the digitised New Zealand Card Index are available through the Digital Library on www.aucklandcitylibraries.com.

PHANZA Committee

Three new members have been co-opted onto the executive committee of PHANZA.

David Green has been co-editing *Phanzine* since early 2009. He began working as an historian and editor in the early 1980s. David was employed by the New Zealand Police, the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography and National Archives before joining the Historical Publications Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs as copy-editor in 1987. He followed the History Group to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage in 2000. David has co-authored histories of the New Zealand artillery (*The Gunners*, Raupo, 2008) and the Audit Office (*The Watchdog*, Otago University Press, 2009). David's *Battlefields of the New Zealand Wars: A Visitor's Guide* will be published by Penguin later this year. He is currently working on the NZhistory.net website.

Margaret Pointer has a BA Honours degree in history from Victoria University and worked for many years as a secondary teacher. Her last position was HOD History at Onslow College in Wellington. She has also spent many years living overseas in the UK, France, New Caledonia, Niue and Japan. While in Niue for three years Margaret researched the history of the island's involvement in the First World War. She arranged an exhibition at the Niue museum and wrote up the story for publication.

More recently Margaret and her husband spent four years in Tokyo, where she wrote articles for newspapers and magazines on subjects of historical interest and researched the New Zealand connection

to the Hodogaya cemetery in Yokohama – the only Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Japan.

Margaret is now working as a freelance researcher/writer in Wellington. Her current projects include writing for the NZhistory.net website on Pacific Islanders in the First World War and preparing a Gallipoli photo study for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also has a long-term research project on 200 years of contact between Niue and the outside world.

Redmer Yska is a Wellington writer and historian. A graduate of Victoria University, he began his career as a journalist on *NZ Truth*, worked on newspapers in England, and spent two years as a Beehive spin doctor.

His books on postwar youth culture are *NZ Green: The Story of Marijuana in New Zealand* (David Bateman, 1990), and *All Shook Up: The Flash Bodgie and the Rise of the NZ Teenager in the 1950s* (Penguin, 1993). Yska has also been exploring his identity as a Dutch New Zealander with *An Errand Of Mercy: Captain Jacob Eckhoff and the Loss of the Kakanui* (Banshee, 2001).

In 2006, Reed published his commissioned history of Wellington City, *Wellington: Biography of a City*. Awarded the National Library Research Fellowship in 2008, he is completing a book based on his project: a social and institutional history of the national tabloid newspaper *NZ Truth*. It will be published later this year by Craig Potton.

PHANZA Committee Members

Neill Atkinson (President), Ministry for Culture and Heritage

Imelda Bargas (Secretary), Ministry for Culture and Heritage, secretary@phanza.org.nz

Eileen Barrett-Whitehead, Waitangi Tribunal

Emma Dewson, Ministry for Culture and Heritage

David Green, Ministry for Culture and Heritage

Marguerite Hill, Ministry for Culture and Heritage

Bronwyn Labrum, Massey University, Wellington

Margaret Pointer, freelance historian

Kirstie Ross (Treasurer), Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, KirstieR@tepapa.govt.nz

Red Yska, writer and historian

Heritage

Goodbye to the branch committees

Michael Kelly examines the decision to jettison the Historic Places Trust's branch committees.

It was foreshadowed in a previous *Phanzine* (Volume 14, No. 2, August 2008) that the tension between the Historic Places Trust's voluntary branch committees and its head office would come to some sort of conclusion. And it has. They are to be disestablished.

The decision was announced by Chris Finlayson, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, in January. It did not come as a bolt from the blue. Undertaking a review of the HPT was National Party policy and the whispers were that this was one of the likely recommendations. The HPT and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage are currently touring the country explaining the reasons for the decision.

While the end of the branch committees means a finish to member representation on the HPT's board, which will become 100% government appointed, it does not mean the end of HPT membership. This has been a feature of the Trust since it was established in 1955. The members currently contribute 5% of the Trust's funding (it used to be much more) and a single member pays an annual subscription of \$75 per annum. The Trust wants that money, so presumably it has been calculated that most members will stay put despite the loss of their local representation. As many members join to enjoy the privilege of visiting historic buildings for free in a number of other countries, perhaps that's a fair conclusion to reach.

However, it does feel odd that the HPT will hang on to its members just as it is being pulled ever closer to the government. Notwithstanding the difficulties faced by the HPT in trying to keep its many stakeholders happy, the members have been the conscience of the organisation. They have been only too happy to remind the Trust when it was showing a lack of spine. Now that kind of message can be ignored. But does the loss of its active membership augur a further diminishing of the HPT's influence?

What has also gone is the annual grant to those committees, set aside for use by volunteers in their local communities. Apparently this money will still be spent on community activities – whatever that might mean – but the loss of the grants and representation will certainly be an issue for some members. However, most of the protests from the regions thus far have focused on the peremptory nature of the Minister's decision. The reason may lie in the text of the Minister's press release.

Separating the local advocacy interests of branch committees from the regulatory functions of the Trust ... means better outcomes for both. For example, local activists will not be constrained by having to work within the priority-setting framework of a Crown entity.

Mr Finlayson is probably right. With some branches having gone into recess and others closing in umbrage, there was no future in the existing model. The challenge lies in those heritage 'activists' getting organised and setting up a replacement. Let's see what ensues. What is certain is that the government will not be creating a new volunteer organisation to replace what has gone. However, the HPT is working to assist branch committees to set up alternative structures that will enable them to continue activities such as lectures, site visits and bus tours. Time will tell if they take up that offer.

What is most needed is an organisation, akin to Forest and Bird, that is not afraid to speak out when heritage is under threat. If that kind of organisation appears, then the Minister's decision to remove the branch committees will have been an inspired one.

The New Zealand Police Museum

Marguerite Hill visits one of our less well-known museums.

Recently, I was lucky enough to join a guided tour of the New Zealand Police Museum. Director Kamaya Yates enthusiastically showed us the collection and took us behind the scenes, describing the role the museum plays in highlighting the history of policing in New Zealand.

The year 1886 was an important one for the New Zealand Police. This was the year that the Police Force Act was passed, creating a national police force separate from the military. This date is highlighted in two displays: mug shots line one wall of the museum as you enter, and the Hastings Police Station, built in 1886, currently sits out the front of the museum.

Collecting for a museum began in 1908, when the Commissioner of Police, Walter Dinnie, decided to bring together weapons and other implements used in crimes as teaching resources for police recruits. Sited on the Police College campus at Porirua since 1981, the collection, which includes offensive weapons,

police uniforms, photographs and items of evidence, has grown over the years. The museum houses an active and ever-growing collection. It receives physical evidence from closed cases (including material from high-profile cases) and staff members collect objects relating to social history.

The Police Museum was relaunched in September 2009, after a complete rethink and refit. The relaunch signalled a new look and feel for the museum, which was originally opened to the public in 1996. Until then, the museum's purpose was to preserve police history and to act as a training tool for police and recruits. The museum has different roles. While many of the objects in the collection relate to crimes and criminals, they also tell the story of the changing roles of the police since 1886. This allows the museum to describe how police work, detection and procedures have evolved over time. Another important theme for the museum is the relationship between police and the communities they work with. The exhibitions in the noa gallery highlight work done by Maori wardens and by police officers in the community. This reflects the museum's mission to encourage positive engagement between the police and the public. Education is another focus of the museum.

The new museum is a light and open space, divided into two very different galleries – one is noa, the other tapu. The noa gallery highlights the social history of policing and the work of police officers in the community, while the tapu gallery reflects on crimes, violence and the dangers associated with police work. The relaunch has proven to be popular – visitor numbers have quadrupled since September 2009.

Current and retired police officers and their families are frequent visitors to the museum. Its location on the Police College campus makes it a valuable resource for recruits. The museum also has an outreach function, taking school groups into police stations to experience police work first-hand, and also working with local police stations to ensure collections of objects held at individual stations are displayed safely.

Visitors begin their journey in the noa gallery, which covers the social history of policing and the role of police in the community. This section includes objects like a flat iron (not a murder weapon, as I first thought, but used by many constables to press their uniforms)



Rhys the police dog - Michael Hope, New Zealand Police Museum

and medals issued to police officers for bravery or special service. There is also a tribute to police officers who have been killed in the line of duty. The evolution of uniforms and police equipment since the 1840s is cleverly displayed in glass-fronted lockers. For the kids there is a wardrobe of uniforms for dress-ups. The wardrobe contains tyvek overalls like those worn by forensic expert and the frumpy plastic hats worn by women police officers in the 1970s. This is just one example of the inter-activity which is encouraged throughout the museum. Another is Hot Pursuit, a detective trail aimed at children.

Visitors can choose to move on to the tapu gallery, which displays the more dangerous side of police work. One of the first displays here is Aramoana killer David Gray's cache of weapons, including his military-style semi-automatic rifle. The display is simple yet effective, allowing the physicality and sheer number of weapons to speak for themselves. This display enables discussion of how events like Aramoana led to changes in police tactics and procedures. Also on display is Constable Warren Smith's bloodied police uniform (he was shot whilst making a routine traffic stop) and a selection of objects related to illegal gambling and illicit alcohol manufacture. One fascinating display shows the risks involved in the work of under-cover women police officers investigating back-street abortionists, as well as objects seized in these investigations.

Next is a police motorbike that the kids can ride on, and Rhys, the stuffed police dog. Resisting giving him a pat is difficult, and the accompanying video shows police dogs and handlers going through their paces. Another fascinating object is the death mask of James Welsh, who was executed in Invercargill in 1879.

The final part of this gallery looks at the work of forensic photographers and the DSIR/IRMA. A wall of crime-scene photographs underscores the horrors police photographers witness every day, as well as the specialised technical nature of their work. This section also looks at the police role in keeping

the peace. Spectacular footage of the 1981 Springbok tour protests left our group fascinated. The footage, on display to the public for the first time, is unique because it is filmed from behind the police lines, which creates a completely different perspective (both physically and emotionally) to footage usually seen of the Springbok tour protests.

The back-of-house tour was equally fascinating. The collection stores house objects that are potentially too disturbing to be put on display (such as a suicide machine) as well as duplicate material – there are drawers of police batons and offensive weapons. The collection is vast and some of the objects are a bit unusual. One item (stored off-site) is the bunker built by John Burrett to house would-be kidnap victim Bill Trotter. This was dug up by police and used as evidence in the trial, then duly handed over to the museum. This is just one of the challenges faced by the curators and collection managers who interpret and care for this unique collection.

The New Zealand Police Museum is located at the New Zealand Police College campus in Porirua. The museum is suitable for children under adult supervision. Entry is free. You can also visit their first online exhibition, Suspicious Looking, which examines the history of mug shots in New Zealand since 1886. It includes a rogue's gallery of criminals, and lists the crimes they were convicted of and the sentences they served. This is a fascinating story in itself. Check out the Police Museum's new website: <http://sites.google.com/site/newzealandpolicemuseum/home>



Noa gallery - Michael Hope, New Zealand Police Museum

Michael Kelly

Michael Kelly is one of the founding members of PHANZA, possibly the longest serving PHANZA committee member, and the driving force behind the establishment of *Phanzine*. Having retired from editing *Phanzine* a couple of years ago, he has recently left the committee and so it seems like a good time to muse on his contributions over the years.



Michael Kelly, Heritage Consultant.

Former PHANZA committee member Rebecca O'Brien, NZHPT employee, recalls meeting and working with Michael.

I first met Michael in person during a university class tour of the Old Government Buildings. I had heard of him long before I met him and he stood out in my mind as *the* independent authority on heritage in Wellington. In brown corduroy trousers, towering over our class, he enthused about the renovation and introduced us to the mysteries of the polystyrene chimneys.

That meeting made me realise I could be like him (well no, not quite like him). I didn't have to be the teacher that I wasn't cut out to be and could do something else – in heritage – instead. A whole new world opened up. He took me under his wing and gave me my first job as a contractor – ferreting out Wellington's hidden heritage. I developed a passion for heritage – along with a strong determination to get a

steady job. Contracting is not for the freshly graduated, poverty-stricken student. In the meantime, he fostered a whole new batch of graduates into the heritage world.

Michael's powerful persuasive skills next got me involved in *Phanzine* and PHANZA – first as secretary and then as *Phanzine* editor. I took over as secretary from Tony Nightingale, who was on the committee with Ben Schrader – both were instrumental in setting up PHANZA. I left the committee before he did and his retirement was a bit of a shock – but also an opportunity to finally say thank you!

Ben Schrader, now at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, served on PHANZA's executive committee with Michael in the early 2000s.

Michael was the strongest advocate for heritage issues on the committee. Each month he'd come along with a portfolio of new outrages proposed for, or done to, historic buildings by philistine and rapacious developers. This was usually accompanied by a denunciation of the heritage practitioner (it was usually the same one) who had sanctioned the proposal, followed by disparagement of the Historic Places Trust and relevant council for caving into cultural vandalism, again. Despite the often sobering subject matter, his raconteur style and sardonic wit made for entertaining performances.

Michael was also pivotal in the social life of the executive, often organising meals at the local 'Malaysian' in Willis Street, and coming along to post-exec drinks at an appropriate heritage (or faux-heritage) pub in town. While Gavin McLean always stuck to his prized sauvignon blanc, Michael introduced me to some new wines, helping me to tell the good from the bad. We would then continue our heritage debates – if somewhat more raucously – until the wine bottle(s) ran dry. Michael's expertise, drive and enthusiasm made him an invaluable member of PHANZA's executive, and I know he'll be a hard act to follow.

Tony Nightingale, now a senior analyst at DOC working in the Treaty negotiations/policy area, recalls the same period.

With Michael as editor, *Phanzine* committed itself to advocacy on public history issues. His special interest and work area is historic heritage, and his enthusiasm is infectious. PHANZA got attitude under Michael –

why simply write an article when you can issue a press release, and while you are at it, yes, we would like to be interviewed about that press release. Unsuspecting committee members ended up as spokespeople and were quoted in the media.

We got responses – dramatically in the case of Michael’s article about the imminent demolition of much of the National War Memorial. Largely as a result of Michael’s organisational skills, a group was formed to stop the demolition. The group’s status was recognised by the High Court, which overturned the council’s consent. The National War Memorial remains intact and one day there might even be a park in front of it so that public ceremonies can actually be held there.

Michael reported on heritage throughout the country, from lighthouses to colonial cottages to huts built for ‘Wild Animal Control’. His focus was always on advocacy and not surprisingly he started looking at public history on the internet long before most of us had advanced past word-processing.

Michael gets things done, is passionate in his interactions with others, and has a fixation on old buildings. Not a bad school report for our former and treasured *Phanzine* editor!

Karen Astwood, a contract historian specialising in built heritage assessment projects, reflects on Michael’s role as a lecturer at Victoria and his influence on her career.

I first came across Michael through the readings we had to do as part of the Victoria University Museum and Heritage Studies programme that I took a few years ago. I got to know him personally in his teaching capacity in the built heritage paper of that course. I was drawn to the subject matter, but the fact that this turned out to be my favourite paper was in no small part due to Michael’s input and his collegially generous giving of his time, expertise, and – refreshingly – his opinions.

Michael put some work my way doing primary research for one of his contracts, which provided me in my ‘poor student’ guise with some extra spending money. Perhaps more importantly, this was an extended learning experience with Michael pointing me towards (and showing me how to use) sources which I now find invaluable and a first port of call in my work for the NZHPT, and I’m sure, into the future.

Ann McEwan reminisces about her friendship with Michael.

I have known Michael since the summer of 1988/89, when we were both working for the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, me in Christchurch and Michael in Wellington. I made a visit to Trust HQ and don’t so much remember meeting Michael as the question I was asked by him: ‘Are you related to Paul McEwan?’, a well-known cricketer of the day. So that’s how it started, a friendship based on historic heritage and an awareness of his sporting interests, which I categorically do not share!

Over the years Michael introduced me to PHANZA, came to talk to my students about heritage research when I was a lecturer at the University of Waikato, and more recently has been both a colleague and a point of contact for finding capital city research assistants. As much as he likes watching ‘fish programmes and sport’ on Sky and sitting in his tiny home office compiling heritage trails and building assessments, I think he is happier getting outside to play golf, guide a walking tour around the city or tramp to a high country hut for DoC. He takes the enthusiasms of military defence fans in his stride and on a good day will forgive jibes about his one-eyed support for all things Wellington. (Just don’t call it the ‘cake tin’!)

He’s enormously supportive of his wife Helen McCracken’s own heritage research career and is a big softie around his children Caitlin (6) and Conal (3). He gets very cross when good heritage buildings have bad things happen to them, but still seems to believe that positive outcomes are possible, despite lots of evidence to the contrary. Part of that optimism may lie in his commitment to helping aspiring public historians, through the auspices of PHANZA and the Museum and Heritage Studies programme at Victoria University.

No, I’m not related to Paul McEwan, and Michael has never managed to get me interested in a single sporting code or event. But his contribution to PHANZA over these many years is laudable and proof that he believes in the vital role history must play in civil society. With that sentiment I am entirely in agreement.

Walking into history

Emma Dewson goes tramping in the South Island.

In a country well-stocked with tramping and walking tracks, those with a bit of history thrown in give us the best of both worlds. I offer here a selection in the Nelson–Marlborough region that I've tried in the past year.

The Linkwater–Cullen Creek walkway in Marlborough follows an old goldminers' trail across the range between the Wairau Valley and Linkwater. I started on the Cullen Creek side, but you can avoid a steep climb by starting on the Waikakaho or Wairau Valley side of the range. Both sides provide historically interesting half-day return trips if you don't want to take a full day going right over. Access to the start of the track at the northern end is at Cullen Creek Valley from Linkwater. The track entrance is through private land. In the south, the track begins at the end of Waikakaho Road. This road leaves the Kaituna–Tuamarina Road along the northern side of the lower Wairau River, midway between State Highway 1 at Tuamarina and State Highway 6 at Kaituna.

Goldminers built the track in 1888 when they discovered gold in Cullen Creek. Within two weeks, over 200 diggers had arrived; at the height of the rush there were nearly 1000 men on the diggings. The diggers established a township called Cullensville, of which no visible evidence remains. Signs mark the sites of many of the old buildings. Gold-bearing quartz reefs were also discovered in 1888 in the ranges above, bringing more gold-hungry men. Within a short time over 40 claims were licensed – on both sides of the range – and numerous shafts, tunnels, and trenches dug. Most proved unsuccessful. In 1891 the Ravenscliffe Gold Mining Company of London took over the claims and began processing the quartz, a venture which also failed. Miners returned during the 1930s depression but were equally unsuccessful.

Heading south-west, on your way to Murchison, you'll eventually hit Kawatiri Junction at the intersection of State Highway 6 and 63. The 40-minute Kawatiri Historic Walk follows a short section of the line of the former railway track that ran from Nelson towards Murchison. The walk commences from a carpark where information panels detail the history of the area. After about 200 metres, the track crosses an old rail bridge before passing through a train tunnel built in 1923. The track returns via beech forest above the Hope River, closing the loop at the entrance to the tunnel. Wear insect repellent in the summer.

The walkway is the culmination of a tumultuous history of Nelson railways. Nelsonians had long wanted a railway link to the rest of the South Island. Frustration grew over the time taken to build the railway. Construction was constantly suspended and the outbreak of war in 1914 brought a further halt. The extension to Kawatiri began in 1920 and the Pikomanu railway camp was established the following year. The tunnel was cut, two bridges were built across the Hope River and the Kawatiri section was opened in June 1926. The gap between the completed section of line and Inangahua Junction, where it could connect with the rest of the South Island network, was less than 70 km. From 1931 the line was under constant threat of closure, and the government fully suspended Nelson rail services in 1954. Ruth Page called a women's protest meeting when she heard that work would start on pulling up railway lines at Kiwi on 20 September 1955. Sonja Davies and a group of women held a week-long sit-in on the line at Kiwi, with nine of them arrested and convicted when they refused to move. The protest failed and the line was eventually dismantled.

Once you've savoured the delights of Murchison (white-water kayaking and a couple of good second-hand stores; the fish and chips at the pub aren't bad either), head south on the Matakita Road. The Six Mile Walk (1 hour 30 mins return) starts and finishes at the old Six Mile hydro power station by the Six Mile Creek Bridge. The track zigzags uphill beside the old penstock to the intake and water storage reservoir. From here the track initially follows the water race before continuing in the forest on a higher terrace. The track then leads to a viewing platform above the old weir which diverts some of the Six Mile Creek down the water race.

If you're heading to the West Coast, stop off at Lyell on State Highway 6 just through the Buller Gorge. The 3-km Lyell Historic Walkway leads you past the remaining features of the once-booming township of Lyell: the cemetery, stamping battery and gold mining sites. There are information panels on-site and a campground nearby. The largest gold nugget found in New Zealand was picked up in the Lyell Creek in the 1860s. In its heyday, the town supported a population of over 2000 with five hotels, two banks, two churches and a post office. It also had its own newspaper, police station, courthouse, brewery and school.

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YOU CAN CONTACT US BY MAIL: THE EDITOR, PHANZINE, PO Box 1904, THORNDON, WELLINGTON OR AT EDITOR@PHANZA.ORG.NZ

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