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Tairāwhiti
MUSEUM
Te Whare Taonga o te Tairāwhiti

Tui! Tui!

Tuituia!

Quarterly newsletter of the Tairāwhiti Museum & Art Gallery
Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairāwhiti



The museum's new Tairāwhiti history exhibition, *Watersheds: Ngā Waipupū*, opened on Saturday 28 March. This is the largest exhibition project the museum has undertaken for many years. Planning, development and installation of the exhibition were carried out over an eighteen-month period. In the two months since its opening, response to the exhibition from local people and visitors to the region has been very positive.

The exhibition displays cultural treasures from all parts of the museum and art gallery collections – taonga Māori, treasures from the regional history collection, art works, photographs and archives. The inclusion of contemporary art works in the exhibition provides an interesting dialogue between the past and the present.

NGĀ WAIPUPŪ

WATERSHEDS



Contemporary artists draw inspiration from history; their art works also remind us that our histories are part of us and have helped to shape the way we see the world in which we live.

The taonga displayed in *Watersheds: Ngā Waipupū* represent many hundreds of years of Tairāwhiti history. The earliest taonga Māori in the exhibition are the fourteenth century bone and shell fishhooks from the archaeological excavation at Cooks Cove, near Uawa

(Tolaga Bay), and the stone toki (adzes) that were found at Uawa (Tolaga Bay), Tokomaru and Muriwai. These taonga tuku iho, treasures handed down through many generations, remind us of the importance of archaeological sites and the need to respect and protect them for future generations.

Of more recent provenance are the 12 sports representative caps from the period 1891 to 1936. While visitors appreciate the colour and the intricate embroidery of the caps, the personal significance of these caps to their owners was demonstrated during the recent Gisborne Boys High School centennial celebrations when a number of former students were seen wearing their own sports representative caps to special events.





MA09 attendees visit Whangara Marae

MA09: Museums Aotearoa National Conference, Gisborne, 15-17 April

The opportunity to combine professional development, autumn sun and a visit to Whangara Marae drew 120 museum and art gallery people from around the country to the Museums Aotearoa Annual Conference hosted by Tairāwhiti Museum. Consistent with the broad theme – culture, access, innovation – the conference dealt with a wide range of topics including bi-cultural initiatives, visitor studies and new technologies. Michael Muir, museum trustee, welcomed the delegates to Tairāwhiti Museum on the first day of the conference. He spoke about the special nature of the Tairāwhiti region and recent developments at the museum, including the opening of the Watersheds: Ngā Waipupū exhibition.

Most conference participants said that the highlight of the conference for them was the day spent at Whangara Marae. Whangara kaumātua Hone Taumanu welcomed the conference delegates to the marae, emphasising both the historical and contemporary developments in the region including the establishment of Te Tapuae o Rongokako Marine Reserve and the filming of the motion picture Whale Rider.

Dr. Apirana Mahuika, speaking inside the whareniui Whitireia, talked about the history of Tairāwhiti Museum and in particular the museum's innovative bi-cultural governance structure. He emphasised the breadth of the museum's art and history programmes and the importance of providing a professional service for the whole community. Derek Lardelli gave a wonderful presentation using whakapapa to connect the peoples of Tairāwhiti, with reference to the carvings within Whitireia.

After lunch the keynote speaker, Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, from Waikato University, spoke about the history of Māori advocacy for change in museum practice. She reminded us of the significance of the Te Maori exhibition in the 1980s and the expectations for change in museums that this generated. Professor Te Awekotuku traced her own involvement with museums from the Nga Tama Toa protest at Auckland Museum, her time as a curator at Waikato Museum and her involvement with the Cultural Conservation Advisory Council and the development of Te Papa Tongarewa The Museum of New Zealand.

Mayor Meng Foon spoke about the role of the Tairāwhiti Museum in the region. He spoke about the importance of maintaining the museum as a repository for the arts and heritage collections for present and future generations and described the range of exhibitions and other services the museum delivers to the peoples of the region. The Mayor emphasised the close relationship that has developed over many years between the museum and the district council. Sean Brosnahan then gave a presentation about the development of an exhibition about Dunedin's Chinese heritage. Sean outlined the process of developing relationships with members of the Chinese community in Dunedin over many



Director's Comments

During recent months, museum staff have been involved in a range of activities that emphasise the diversity and significance of the museum and art gallery's collections. These collections have been developing since the museum and art gallery was established in the 1950s as a result of many gifts and loans and a small number of purchases. The ways in which these collections can be exhibited and used in education programmes is only limited by our own imaginations. Each generation sees the collections afresh and seeks to understand and interpret them in ways that connect us with the past and inform our understanding of the present.

The museum and art gallery's art collection (paintings, sculpture, works on paper, ceramics, photographs) contains about 450 works. It is interesting to look at the pattern of acquisition year by year. In the early years, paintings and works on paper dominated the acquisitions lists and there were more landscapes and portraits than other subjects. In more recent decades, the range of subjects has broadened as has the range of media. For example, the first ceramic art work acquired by the museum was a bottle made by Doreen Blumhardt, acquired in 1973. Doreen Blumhardt is now recognised as one of the key figures in the history of studio ceramics in New Zealand. There are now about 80 works in the ceramic collection. The first weaving to enter the fine arts collection was a work by renowned fibre artist Aromea Te Hiwi (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Whakaeu) that was purchased in 1983. Only a small number of such works have entered the art collection since that time, the most recent being the weaving *Te Aho Mutunga Kore* (The Eternal Thread) by Toi Houkura graduate and Ruanuku Award winner Fiona Collis (Aitanga-a-Hauiti). Fiona's weaving is currently on display in the *Samples: Recent Acquisitions* exhibition.



Te Aho Mutunga Kore - Fiona Collis

years and the ways in which the museum worked with the community to develop their new exhibition. He also traced the history of the Chinese garden that has been created in Dunedin as a sister city project. The museum and the garden are on the same site.

Anne McGuire, museum trustee, concluded the day at Whangara Marae by speaking to conference delegates inside the whareni Waho Te Rangi about the history of the house and the significance of the art works that adorn the interior. This concluded a wonderful day of presentations, discussions, walks on the beach and warm hospitality from the tangata whenua.

The final day of the conference was held at the Emerald Hotel in Gisborne and included an interesting range of presentations beginning with the key note presentation by Australian scholar Dr. Kylie Message about the Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. Appropriately - looking to the future - the conference concluded with a presentation by Hera Ngata Gibson, Mark Kopua and Anne McGuire about the Aitanga-a-Hauiti Digital Heritage Project.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the good work being done by the Tolaga Bay Save the Wharf campaign. Their commitment to the preservation of the wharf and the advocacy of the Regional Committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust has led to the recognition of the wharf as a Category One Historic Place. Below you will see a wonderful photograph of the wharf taken circa 1930, attributed to R. P. Moore. This photograph is in the museum's photography collection. Many of you will have noticed the inclusion of photographs of historic places in Tairāwhiti from the museum's collection included in the articles written by Damian Skinner that have been recently published in *The Gisborne Herald*.



Collecting at the Library

H.B. Williams Memorial Library

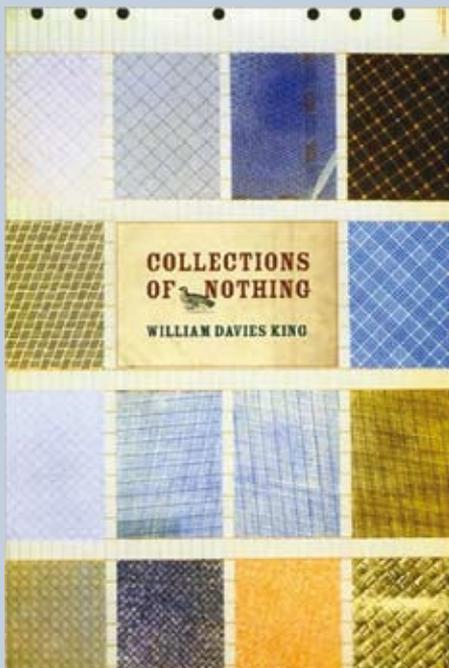
Acquisition Addiction

Bakelite radios, birdcages, bottles, buttons, beer labels, snow domes, mermaids, shells, stickers that don't stick, coins, debts, frogs – you name it, people collect it.

Apparently, one in four people in Aotearoa collect stuff that is formally displayed, archived in a box under the bed or scattered about the house. Why do we love collecting? Some may call this propensity to gather things with a theme hoarding, perhaps even an addiction. Some insight may be picked up by readers of this book that is inspiring collectors and curators all over the world.

Collections of nothing

written by William Davies King

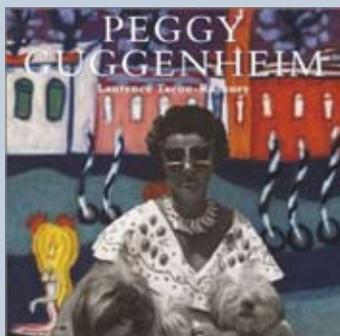


The author collects ephemera, or more specifically, tonnes of items that we might call rubbish, including empty cereal boxes, masking tape off a gym floor, bottle caps, 18,000 food labels, business cards of business card printers and junk mail, to note but a few. "I love it all", King says, "I love you for your lack of love for what I love". This is getting weird, but this part memoir, possibly part therapy, was written so King could explore his reasons for collecting through the story of his urge to acquire empty water bottles. By the end, readers might just recognize themselves in some of what he does.

Collectors like King are certainly eccentric and whilst he might be regarded as unusual, there are those who have made a lasting impression on the wider world through their obsessive collecting. One such collector is the self-proclaimed art addict, Peggy Guggenheim.

Peggy Guggenheim : a collector's album

Laurence Tacou-Rumney



"Mrs Guggenheim, how many husbands have you had?" she was once asked. "Do you mean my own or other people's?" Ok, she might not have technically been collecting husbands, but this millionaire mistress of modernism certainly collected a lot of art and built galleries to keep it in. This book contains photographs that depict aspects of Penny Guggenheim's life throughout much of the twentieth century and in particular focuses on the modern art she exhibited in her homes.

The library holds books concerning many usual and unusual collectible objects including, price guides for antiques, collectibles, coins and stamps. I once made a pilgrimage to Tender Buttons, a shop devoted to buttons in New York, after reading Buttons by Diana Epstein and Millicent Safro. Even the authors' names evoked the strange miniature world of buttons. I spent a small fortune but was not allowed to take a single photograph inside the shop just in case I stole their ideas. Yet, I must confess to not having used a single button purchased on this occasion.

A Pound of Paper is an easy to read, slightly humorous book about collecting books.



Protestant sampler
Peter Ireland. 1999
Oil on paper

ART FOR ARTS SAKE

HB Williams Memorial Library has an extensive collection of local artworks and photographs available to borrow.

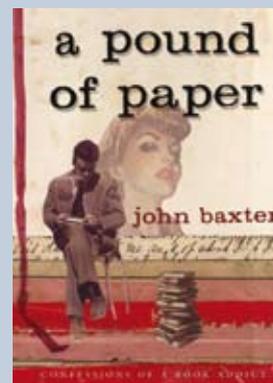
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artworks | Library

A pound of paper: confessions of a book addict

John Baxter



This book about books is the story of Australian John Baxter's pursuit of first editions, signed copies and rare books from around the world. His personal library, housed in his apartment in Paris, is worth millions but the self-confessed bibliophile can never quite claim his collection is ever complete. The appendix includes some lists of important books and an 'if your house was on fire...' selection that various people would save. This is interesting as I suspect a New Zealander's list would be completely different and we could probably still pick up our favourite books at a fraction of the price our European counterparts might pay. Collecting here can still be about the hunt and not the cash – keep a look out for the library's annual book sale at the end of October to find your own treasure.

Pene Walsh