

# Phanzine

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## Editorial

The proposed changes to the National Library have proved to be hugely controversial and, understandably, of intense interest to our members. Many of you have sent us your thoughts on the implications for researchers. The committee is very grateful for your input.

PHANZA has now had the opportunity to discuss the redevelopment proposal with the National Librarian and her staff and has been promised more meetings if needed. Top of the agenda in those discussions is PHANZA's determination to represent members' concerns about access to collections, in the short term as well as the long term.

During the course of a meeting held on 21 April with both the National Librarian and the Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library, it became clear that, whatever the extent of the redevelopment, some sort of work on the building is definitely going to take place. As a result, the building will have to be vacated for a considerable period – up to two and a half years.

It is important to make clear that PHANZA remains opposed to the redevelopment as currently planned. While there are a host of reasons for this, the main one is that it does not want the library's collections off-limits, even temporarily, to members who rely on them for their livelihoods. Inevitably, there will be a considerable disruption to normal services and some collections, as already advised, will not be accessible for the whole period the building is vacated.

Two main benefits have been cited as trade-offs for all the inconvenience that library users will suffer – first, a massive digitisation project; and second, the arrangement and description of collections that have hitherto been neglected.

The first benefit is an outcome that would have been achieved eventually anyway; the National Library is already in the middle of a digitisation programme that will now just be accelerated. Nor should the second benefit necessitate such a major upheaval. Further, the emphasis on the new possibilities that will be opened up by digitisation distracts attention from the need for historians to have ongoing access to original, source documents. PHANZA remains seriously concerned about the possible impact of the project on members' work programmes over the next two to three years. We have been told that more information about what will be accessible and where should become available by early May.

Downstream, the good news for members is that there should be a more clearly defined Alexander Turnbull Library. There is also the hope of better finding aids for some material. Alongside that, the National Library promises that digitisation will allow curatorial staff more time to provide specialist assistance to serious researchers. We certainly hope so.

MICHAEL KELLY

## Inside

Putting the West Coast on the web	2
What's happening at the Waitangi Tribunal?	4
Who do we think we are?	4
The lonely historian and acc.co.nz	5
Heritage	6
Exhibitions: <i>Welcome Sweet Peace</i> at the National Library	7
Great moments in public history #1: the launch of NZhistory.net.nz	9
Website news	10
That's entertainment	11

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## Putting the West Coast on the web

Simon Nathan, Science Editor for Te Ara from 2003 to 2007, discusses Te Ara's latest regional entry.



Simon Nathan speaks at the launch. Photograph courtesy of NZ Live.

The West Coast regional entry of Te Ara, the encyclopedia of New Zealand, was launched on 23 February at functions at Tai Poutini Polytechnic in Westport and Greymouth. Local MP Chris Auchinvole represented the Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage, Chris Finlayson. Other speakers included Tony Kokshoorn (the mayor of Greymouth) and Malcolm McKinnon and Jock Phillips from Te Ara.

Many people from the region had helped with research and illustrations, and most were able to attend one of the functions. The entry was prepared by Simon Nathan, a member of PHANZA. There are more than 150 illustrations, compiled and prepared by Janine Faulknor and her team at Te Ara.

In my opinion, there are only two really distinctive regions in New Zealand: the Chatham Islands and the West Coast – both owing their character to isolation and the reputation of a bleak climate that discourages visitors.

Many people do not appreciate the size of the West Coast, the longest region in New Zealand. If Auckland was placed near Karamea, Wellington would be down in the south around Jackson Bay. It takes many hours to travel from one end to the other, and the local MP has a daunting job, especially as the West Coast-Tasman electorate extends even further north, to the outskirts of Nelson.

Much of my career has been spent working on the West Coast. To a geologist, it is a fascinating place with almost every rock type as well as a long history of mining. At different times I have been involved in work on uranium, coal, gold, oil, and ilmenite sand, as well as the search for more prosaic resources such as limestone and rock for river protection. The variety of minerals encourages the local feeling that it is only a matter of time until a big mineral bonanza is discovered, and mining remains a major contributor to the local community.

A decade ago, when conservation was a controversial topic, many locals had bumper stickers saying, 'I'm a West Coaster – endangered species'. This tended to reinforce an outsider's perception that the West Coast was a close-knit region on the western side of the Southern Alps. In reality, however, the West Coast is a set of distinct communities, held together by a common heritage but separated by parochial attitudes and distance.

When I showed a draft of my Te Ara article to local historian Brian Wood, he was encouraging but said that I had ignored one essential feature – the tribalism of the West Coast. To cite one example: rugby union is the main sport around Westport, but Greymouth is a stronghold of league. In his recent play, *The Gods of Warm Beer*, set in Westport about 1950, Peter Hawes tells the story of two local rugby players seduced to league by the chance to play football professionally, but shunned in their local community. It is a real story. Peter Hawes' father was a leading Buller rugby player who took his young family off to England where he could earn a living playing league.

The contrast between the region as a whole and the attitude of local communities was a constant source of tension. The separate 'Places' entry, with a page about each town, was a way to work round this.

### Changes in the 21st century

The West Coast has changed greatly since I lived there in the 1960s and 1970s. Traditionally the local economy depended on the export of raw materials – timber, coal and gold. A decline in jobs in this sector from 1960 to 2000, combined with a ban on the milling of native timber, seemed disastrous. But this has been more than offset by rapid growth in tourism and dairy production, with scope for further expansion.

In the past those seeking post-secondary education had to travel to Christchurch or further afield, often never to return. The development of Tai Poutini Polytechnic – based in Greymouth and with campuses at Westport, Reefton and Hokitika – has enabled the growth of vocational education on the West Coast. Students come from outside the region for courses in outdoor education and ecotourism. Tai Poutini also offers a unique course in jade and hard-rock carving.

## That's entertainment

Emma Dewson goes to the movies.

When I headed to the movies last month, all I'd heard about the recent film *The Reader* was that the cast featured two of my favourite actors, Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes. And that it told a story about post-war Germany. Based on the 1995 novel of the same name by Bernhard Schlink, the film adaptation certainly delivered for me. In 1958, teenager Michael Berg becomes ill and is helped home by Hanna, a stranger twice his age. Michael recovers from scarlet fever and seeks out Hanna to thank her. The two begin a secretive, passionate affair. Michael discovers that Hanna loves being read to, but she eventually disappears and he is left heartbroken.

Eight years later, Michael is a law student observing Nazi war crime trials. He is shocked to see Hanna as a defendant in the courtroom. The scenes from Hanna's trial are some of the most gripping. In this film, we're not being asked to condone the appalling things we do to each other, but we are being asked to put ourselves in another's shoes, and at least try to understand. Go see it. The movie is showing now at cinemas around the country, and the DVD will be available soon.

Venice, 1596. Melancholy Antonio loves youthful Bassanio, so when Bassanio asks for 3000 ducats, Antonio says yes before knowing the money is to be used to win the hand of Portia. You know the story. The recent film adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* features a wonderful Al Pacino as Shylock, Jeremy Irons as Antonio and Joseph Fiennes as a suitably shaggy-haired Bassanio. A thoroughly enjoyable production, filmed on location in Venice and well worth hiring from your local video store.

And if you haven't seen Oscar-winning film *Slumdog Millionaire*, you should. Another in the list of movies that have made me want to book plane tickets to exotic locations is the beautifully-filmed *Before the Rains*, set in 1930s southern India against the backdrop of the growing nationalist movement.

Staying in, I recently re-watched *Želary*, a Czech-Slovak co-production set in Prague and rural Czechoslovakia during the Second World War. When young medical student and nurse Eliška is found to be in danger, she is sent to the country with one of the patients she has been taking care of in hospital. She must hide and assimilate, which means marrying a man she barely knows. I love this movie.

And playing now at the theatre – Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* at Bats, Wellington, until 2 May. The twist is that one of the most charismatic yet volatile women in literature is thrown into the mosh-pit that is twenty-first century Courtenay Place. How will she get on? Continuing with the literary theme, Goldsmith's eighteenth-century comedy of manners, *She Stoops to Conquer*, will be playing at the Maidment Theatre, Auckland, from 30 April to 23 May. And the religious, political, sexual and sporting tensions in a small West Coast community are all heightened by the 1951 waterfront strike in *The Gods of Warm Beer*, playing at the Court Theatre in Christchurch from 28 March to 2 May.

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## Website news

Marguerite Hill describes two useful new online resources.

### Manuscripts and Pictorial website

When the Sir Donald McLean Papers digitisation project was launched at the National Library in December last year, few researchers knew that this new website would also be a repository for all of the Alexander Turnbull Library's digitised collections.

The digitisation of the Sir Donald McLean papers is in itself ground-breaking work. It involved scanning 100,000 pages of McLean's papers, including letters, diaries and maps. Some of these have been fully transcribed and are keyword searchable.

Yet probably of even more interest to many researchers is the 'Pictorial' side of the Manuscripts and Pictorial website. All 60,000 images found on Timeframes can be accessed from this new website. And the Manuscripts & Pictorial website (MS & Pictorial) has a few new features not previously seen on Timeframes or Matapihi. It gives researchers greater flexibility in searching, including the ability to search according to specific collection and to filter searches. It also allows you to print results more easily. After many issues with Timeframes' slowness and crashability, the MS & Pictorial site is a revelation.

Firstly, it is fast and reliable. Unlike Timeframes, it does not load the images up at high-resolution 'zoomable' quality, and consequently the pages load quickly and without difficulty. This does mean that if you want to magnify an image, you will have to return to Timeframes to do so. However, each MS & Pictorial record has a link back to its mate in Timeframes, its full record on Tapuhi and its record in the National Digital Archive.

Ease of use was clearly a concern for the developers of the website. The display is clear and intuitive, with a prominent search box. The site behaves more like a commercial website in the way you search and access information. There is no advanced search page – instead, filters are used to narrow down your search terms. More about that later.

Searchability has been improved considerably. Researchers can choose to search all collections, all pictorial collections, or by specific collection (e.g., cartographic, ephemera). As usual, you can search with wildcards and use Booleans. But what is special about the MS & Pictorial website is the introduction of faceted searches. Think of internet shopping or searching on TradeMe, and how you can narrow your searches by selecting categories. The MS & Pictorial website allows you to filter your keyword searches by decade, by year, by genre (e.g., ephemera, cartographic, group portrait), by people and places, by subject, by collection and by other names.

If you begin with a large search term, you can quickly prune back your results by selecting the decade that you are interested in. You can then filter down to a particular year, and are informed of how many images are associated with that year. You can do the same thing with places or people and with types of material. If you are after a poster from the 1940s related to agriculture, you can keyword the term 'agriculture' and then select 'poster' as genre and '1940s' as the decade. You then pull up your two results without having to wade through the other 490+ results for 'agriculture'. If you change your mind, you can unselect the 'poster' filter, and select, for example, 'cartoon' instead, and pull up the two cartoon results. While this was always an option when using advanced searching on Timeframes, the MS & Pictorial faceted searches are more intuitive and easier to use. One tip – always remember to unclick your filters before changing your search terms (this wasn't that obvious to me when I first started using the site).

Another useful touch is having clickable search terms within each image record. If you have found a particularly useful image, you can check out what search terms are attached and explore what other images are keyworded in the same way. While this isn't a new idea (Auckland City Libraries, for example, have been doing it for some time), it is something that is not available on Timeframes.

The new MS & Pictorial website also has improved print settings. Unlike Timeframes, where you must hit the print button twice to print both the image and information about it, the MS & Pictorial website integrates this process, presenting all the required information on one page.

So where can you find this new website? It is buried deep in the National Library website. Either type in <http://mp.natlib.govt.nz> or get there through the 'For researchers' tab on the front page of [www.natlib.govt.nz](http://www.natlib.govt.nz).

### Picture Wairarapa launched

Wairarapa Archive launched its new Picture Wairarapa catalogue on 13 March. This new image repository contains over 2000 images from Wairarapa Archive's collections.

Previously, researchers could find images on the Wairarapa Archive catalogue, but this new repository includes only digitised images, allowing you to view thumbnails and large images. You can also browse through photo sets to find inspiration.

The Picture Wairarapa website can be found at: [http://mail.library.mstn.govt.nz:81/picture\\_wairarapa/index.html](http://mail.library.mstn.govt.nz:81/picture_wairarapa/index.html).



### Supplementing Te Ara

One of the frustrations of working for Te Ara is the space limitation. So many interesting or quirky events can only be mentioned in passing, without telling the whole story. Perhaps this doesn't matter too much when they are already recorded elsewhere, but there were a number of cases where there was no existing source, or I wanted to update a legend. This inspired me to write a number of web articles for the NZHistory.net and Scoop websites. I am grateful to Neill Atkinson, Jamie Mackay and Jeremy Rose for their encouragement and help. You can see these articles at:

#### The 1947 Greymouth beer boycott

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/greymouth-beer-boycott>

#### Five books about Blackball

<http://books.scoop.co.nz/2008/08/05/five-books-about-blackball/>

#### Waiuta – through the eyes of a miner

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/waiuta>

#### Seddonville – a forgotten coal town

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/seddonville>

*Top: Brought up in Runanga, John Crawford came under the influence of Yvonne Rust at Greymouth High School. In 1974 John and his wife Anne set up Hector Pottery, one of the pioneering craft workshops on the West Coast. Photographer: Simon Nathan*

*Centre: West Coast historian Brian Wood grew up in Westport but has gradually moved southwards and now lives in Hokitika. As well as having a long-term interest in heritage issues, he has written books on the 1896 Brunner mine disaster and the 1908 Blackball strike. Photographer: Simon Nathan*

*Bottom: Blackball Workingmen's Club, one of several set up in 1947–48 following the Greymouth beer boycott. Photographer: Janine Faulkner*

You can see the West Coast entry on the web at: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/places/westcoast>

Perhaps the most fascinating story is the saga of the 1947 Greymouth beer boycott. Although it was a victory for the union movement, no historian has ever written about it – in contrast to the endless retelling of the 1912–13 and 1951 disputes. Perhaps it is simply part of our British heritage to only celebrate defeats.

The boycott started in September 1947, when local publicans acted together to raise the price of a ten-ounce beer from 6d to 7d – the same price as in the rest of New Zealand. Local opinion was outraged, and the Greymouth Trades' Council called for a boycott of what were derisively called the sevenpenny pubs. To start with the boycott was good-natured, but things took an ugly turn when men who had drunk at sevenpenny pubs were blacklisted at the mines, and several were forced to leave.

The beer boycott would have remained a local issue, but the death of local MP James O'Brien caused a by-election. Visiting cabinet ministers were harangued by locals about the price of beer (and rising prices generally). Prime Minister Peter Fraser, forced to intervene, expedited the opening of local workingmen's clubs. The exodus of drinkers made the position of the local pubs even more precarious, and after almost five months – the duration of the 1951 dispute – they were forced to reduce the price back to sixpence.

The beer boycott forms the backdrop to Bill Pearson's semi-autobiographical novel, *Coal Flat* (a pseudonym for Blackball), which gives an evocative account of life in West Coast mining towns.

## What's happening at the Waitangi Tribunal?

Eileen Barrett-Whitehead updates members on events at the Tribunal.

Historians at the Waitangi Tribunal Unit, together with contract researchers, are involved in a wide range of projects. On the research side, a number are contributing to the large research programme for the Te Rohe Potae (King Country) inquiry. Projects are also under way for the East Coast and Te Paparahi o Te Raki (Northland) inquiries. Others are involved in facilitating the Te Paparahi o Te Raki regional inquiry as it prepares for its first hearings in late 2009, as well as the Taihape ki Kapiti region now starting up and the Whanganui inquiry nearing the end of its hearings. On the report writing side, historians are assisting Tribunal panels to write up reports on their findings from five inquiries that have completed hearings: Wairarapa ki Tararua, Urewera, Tauranga Moana (Stage Two), National Park, and Wai 262 (Flora, Fauna, and Maori Intellectual Property).

## Who do we think we are?

David Green casts an eye over PHANZA's membership.

In late April 2009, PHANZA had 153 members. Four are based overseas; 121 (81%) of the rest live in the North Island, a higher proportion than for the general population (76%). But whereas New Zealand's 'median centre of population' is near Kawhia harbour, PHANZA's is probably on The Terrace in Wellington: 54% of PHANZA members (82) are Wellingtonians, and 17 work at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, which appears to be the largest single employer of members. As can be seen from the map, Canterbury and Auckland are the only other regions to reach double figures. Women outnumber men 83–70.

Members' self-identified interests are diverse but most fall within fairly clear categories. Heritage/museums and local/regional history are the largest single groupings, with 25 members apiece interested in these fields. Treaty/Maori and social/cultural history each attract 18 members. A dozen focus on either labour or business history (no one admits to doing both); 11 are interested in women's history, and 10 in biography. Another 10 are interested in political history, 9 in health and/or welfare, and there are 7 military buffs. There are also 5 sports historians and 3 oral historians.



## Great moments in public history #1: the launch of NZhistory.net.nz

David Green feels a twinge of nostalgia.

March 1999 – it was the best of times, it was the worst of times: Gavin McLean was PHANZA's president; the fifth and so far final hard copy volume of *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* was nearing completion; the New Zealand Wars had recently been refought on prime-time television by a burly Dalmatian with a peculiar martial arts technique; PMT stood for pre-millennial tension; Jenny Shipley was Prime Minister; the Highlanders were one of the best teams in the Super 12; sometime Mouseketeer Britney Spears topped the charts with 'Baby One More Time' ... and craggy young Scot Jamie Mackay was the brains behind the launch of a new Department of Internal Affairs website, NZhistory.net.nz.

As the braided river began to wiggle across the screen at the command of Internal Affairs minister Jack Elder – just like for Galileo, the wonder was that 'It moves!' – Heritage Group General Manager Jock Phillips waxed enthusiastic about the exciting possibilities of digital

communication. Cyberspace guru Paul Reynolds praised the site as 'a lovely combination of the playful and the serious' which even 'makes you believe the Web is a useful place'. He was particularly taken with the opportunity to fly one of Richard Pearse's planes using something called a Cosmo VRML player.

A decade on, the Heritage Group is buried in the dustbin of history; the dustbin lid has been lifted on the CD-ROM, Britney and the Highlanders; and we haven't heard from Jenny or Jack in a while. But NZHistory.net.nz has gone from strength to strength, and its founding guru now works with a supporting cast of, well, several: PHANZA members Steve Watters and Imelda Bargas. Perennial favourites Today in History and The Classroom are increasingly backed up by well-written and cleverly resourced pages on all manner of things Kiwi, from baby farming to the Cook Strait ferries. Happy tenth birthday, NZHistory.net.nz.



Image courtesy of NZHistory.net

Seconded from his job in the Turnbull's Printed Collections to curate *Welcome Sweet Peace*, Andrew took three days a week for six months to see the project from beginning to end (at the same time lecturing at Victoria University and completing his PhD). *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War*, edited by John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (2007), was a useful source, as were a number of unpublished theses. Andrew also made use of background research for his doctorate on attitudes towards 'alien enemies' during the First World War.

The exhibition had both a chronological and a thematic structure. Following a very economical handling of the declaration of the Armistice, the substantive part was given over to immediate post-war events, including the influenza epidemic, the Peace celebrations, the journey home, and the Prince of Wales' 'thank you' tour in 1920 (also the subject of a lively recent talk by the Turnbull's Curator of Manuscripts, David Colquhoun).

I was impressed by the tight selection of exhibition material: many items displayed seemed to speak for themselves and required no explanatory text beyond the main 'thematic' labels of about 350 words. To make his initial selection, Andrew liaised with collection curators, who have decades of in-depth collection knowledge between them to draw upon. One way to make the final cut was to justify his choices to exhibition designer Chris Cane, who has an eye for the visual impact of objects in the gallery space.

*Welcome Sweet Peace* made good use of graphic material, including a large-scale reproduction of New Zealand soldiers in Cologne looking towards the Hohenzollern Bridge across

the Rhine in early 1919. Another arresting image, showing troops on a vessel looking out to sea, was enlarged from an album of photographs taken by Frederic Kingsford of the Auckland Infantry Regiment, in 1919. The album is a record of Kingsford's tours around Britain and Ireland before he embarked on the *Tainui* for his return journey to New Zealand. Andrew pointed out that the album neatly encapsulated the theme of coming home. However, for a while he was uncertain whether this pivotal – and light-sensitive – item could actually be shown. But with lighting set at acceptable lux levels by a conservator, the album was assured pride of place in the exhibition.

When I asked Andrew to identify the rewards from presenting history in the form of an exhibition, he named several. It provides an opportunity to reach a broad audience and, in this instance, to showcase the Turnbull's collections, including the interviews with veterans he selected for visitors to listen to. Also satisfying was having the chance to show previously unseen or recently acquired material, such as an illuminated manuscript signed by passengers on the *Ayrshire* which arrived in the library just a few days before the exhibition opened.

Overall, *Welcome Sweet Peace* exemplified the notable shift in how public historians are 'doing' war history. As one of the last three exhibitions to be shown before the closure of the National Library's gallery and the building's controversial redevelopment, it also signalled the end of an era. Apparently a five-storey-high atrium will showcase the nation's heritage collections in the new library. I trust that the same standards displayed in this and previous National Library exhibitions will be sustained in these high-rise gallery spaces.



New Zealand soldiers looking towards the Hohenzollern Bridge, Cologne, January 1919. Photographic Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library, Reference: 1/11-002098-G

## The lonely historian and acc.co.nz

Susan Butterworth gets to grips with the vagaries of ACC classification.

A couple of years ago PHANZA conducted a survey of the categories under which members registered for purposes of ACC. At that point members were registering under three or four different categories, including 'writer, own account' and 'research, field'. I intended to investigate which was the most advantageous category for the self-employed researcher and advise members accordingly. This proved to be very frustrating and my original plan was overtaken by changes in the ACC system itself. The exercise was revealing, however, and suggests our members may be paying much more than they need to. It also suggests that ACC needs more detailed reform than even the government supposes.

Dealing with ACC was initially difficult. The website was enormous and hard to navigate; much of the information was impenetrable to the non-taxation specialist; requests for hard copy of the tables of current rates went unanswered. I gave up defeated for about a year. When I came back to it in the second half of 2008, this time with the help of Rebecca O'Brien, we found that the website had been radically overhauled and improved, but also that the number of categories had been reduced by lumping more classes under one heading. This is simpler but not, in our view, more fair.

If you go to the ACC website under the heading 'Self-employed' you can download the booklet ACC 4898, *ACC Levy Rates 2008/09*, and see for yourself the astonishingly wide range of rates applied to occupations that look to the layperson to carry similar levels of risk. For ease of comparison the figures that follow are in each case the basic levy 'ACC Workplace Cover', expressed as dollars per \$100 of liable earnings. Substantially higher rates apply for the greater cover products 'ACC Cover Plus' and 'ACC Cover Plus Extra'. Categories are described as 'CUs' (Category Units). In addition the self-employed pay a levy, currently \$1.26 with no change recommended for the coming financial year.

The variations in one category will illustrate the discrepancies. CU 24232 'Internet publishing and broadcasting' attracts a rate of \$0.11, while CU 71240 'Internet service providers and web search portals' attracts \$0.23. 'Computer systems design' CU 78340 attracts only \$0.05. What possible difference in risk could there be among these closely related occupations, whose members may well be working side by side in the same room? What could justify one being charged more than four times as much as another, probably amounting to hundreds of dollars on the year's income?

Medical services (CU 86210 and 86220), and legal and accounting services (78410 and 78420) all attract only \$0.05. Financial and insurance services (CU 73100–73300) attract \$0.06. Pardon our cynicism, but we cannot help thinking this reflects the ability of powerful professional bodies to lobby in their members' interests rather than especially low occupational risk.

We wrote to ACC describing the work members did and asking what would be the most appropriate category, since the 'writer, own account' category had disappeared. We received the following reply:

*There would appear to be two ways in which individual members might be classified. Those who are involved primarily in research would come under the classification of Scientific research services (history being regarded as a social science), while those who are primarily writers would come under the Creative artists, musicians, writers and performers classification. Both of these classifications carry relatively low levy rates, reflecting the low risk of injury associated with these activities.*

Yes, but scientific research services (CU 78100) attracts only \$0.20, while creative artist, etc., (CU 92420) is \$0.33, 65% higher. Go figure, as they say. For some members, CU 92200 'Museum operation' (\$0.24) or one of the website CUs will be options. If in doubt, take the advice of a tax specialist or contact ACC's Business Service Centre (0800 222 776).

The distinction between primarily researchers and primarily writers is, of course, nonsense, as we all know. Writers are disadvantaged under the 'creative' category because they are bracketed with musicians and performers, who have a significant rate of OOS. Actors and dancers must have a much higher rate of muscle and joint injuries than we ever sustain. This category and many others need reviewing in the light of common sense and some real understanding of what people actually do, not just conventional written descriptions.

We discovered that there was a biennial consultation round of ACC users but that we had just missed the current one. We have, however, registered our interest in being included in the forthcoming round. It is beyond PHANZA's limited resources to take on this fight on the broad front that appears to be necessary. We hope that other organisations, such as other professional bodies and the Consumers' Institute, will take it up, particularly in view of the concerns the government is currently expressing.

# Heritage

Michael Kelly looks for the silver lining in recession-hit New Zealand and explains why the National Library is an important heritage building.

## Heritage and recessions

Downturn, depression, credit crunch, recession – call it what you will, we are in it. Since the country developed some sort of consciousness about heritage, there really has only been one other substantial economic event that has had a negative impact on development: the stock-market crash of 1987. The parallels with today's situation are not as obvious as they might seem.

The converse of a recession is a boom and heritage suffers during those. To concentrate on one aspect of that – built heritage in our towns and cities – developers see opportunities in old buildings, as these are, in the main, low-rise and earthquake-prone. In times past, the very fact that a building was old was reason enough to dispose of it. Thankfully, those days have largely passed.

In the 1980s, buildings came down and were replaced. Prior to the 1987 crash, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust was floundering as it tried to stem the tide, particularly in our major cities. In the wake of the stock-market crash there was a short lag while some developments were completed, and then, very little happened. Building sites remained vacant for years while New Zealand lingered in an economic hole until well into the 1990s. This breather certainly took the pressure off the country's stock of heritage buildings and by the time the economy was up and running again, new district plans had been written under the Resource Management Act and greater protection was around the corner.

Despite that awareness of the value of heritage, recent development has had a more insidious impact on heritage buildings. In Wellington, and to a lesser extent Auckland, a number of buildings have had additional floors added to them – 'hatted', as some have described it. The original building is ostensibly still there, but the reality is that the roof has gone and the existing interior spaces have had to be badly altered to accommodate the bit plonked on top.



Photograph: Marguerite Hill

Most times, the building just looks silly. Sometimes a building will retain its original envelope but the changes inside are so dramatic that it has lost its internal character. So the essential difference between the 1980s and the 2000s is the level of destruction that has taken place. None of this is to say that any development is bad. The country would go nowhere if it stood still. But these economic downturns have their place in restraining the loss of heritage.

What will this latest recession bring? It will mean that some concepts never leave the drawing board, while others may be stalled for a lengthy period. This may spare some heritage buildings; it will certainly slow the pace of development and enable more recognition and protection to be given to 'at risk' heritage.

## National Library – forgotten heritage?

In a letter to the *Dominion Post* published on 20 February, historian and PHANZA member Ben Schrader pointed out one important thing that seems to have been forgotten amidst the fuss over the proposed changes to the National Library: the near obliteration of a significant heritage building.

In his letter Schrader noted that the 'refurbishment of the National Library confirms that ... post-1960 public buildings are held in low esteem.' He predicted 'that future generations will see these decades in more kaleidoscopic terms. We owe it to them to keep some of the public buildings erected over this time as a way of understanding the society that built them.'

The National Library was designed by the Ministry of Works in one of their last major enterprises before corporatisation. Design work was completed in the 1970s and it shows in the building's uncompromisingly Modernist – almost Brutalist – design. This seems to have been inspired by the library's core function as a repository of precious things. The concrete walls protect the treasures in the interior and only narrow recessed windows admit light at its upper levels.

While the building has been lauded by a number of commentators, it is clearly not to everyone's taste. However, that is not the point. The importance of this structure lies in the period of architecture it represents, the specific ways in which its design met (and meets) its intended purpose and the 20-plus years of use. The latter is significant because it's easy to forget how quickly the building has become part of the national scene.

It is long past time to start acknowledging the importance of our Modern buildings and where better to start than by leaving the National Library as it is.

# Exhibitions: *Welcome Sweet Peace* at the National Library

Kirstie Ross talks to curator Andrew Francis.

When several public heritage organisations launched war-related exhibitions and web initiatives last year, I was reminded once again of the strong link between public history and war history in New Zealand. These particular projects were presented under the banner of 'Coming Home / Te Hokinga Mai' and marked the 90th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the First World War. 'Coming Home' was the overarching theme suggested by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to guide the commemoration of this event. This theme was chosen to shift the focus of the anniversary away from military manoeuvres to the long-term social impact of the Great War.

One 'Coming Home' project that successfully followed this brief was the National Library's exhibition, *Welcome Sweet Peace: Returning Home After the Great War*. I met with curator Andrew Francis in the gallery recently to talk about his approach to exhibiting a moment in New Zealand's past that is overshadowed by the machinations and memories of war.

Andrew told me that his primary aim was to tell a 'good story' about events on the home front immediately after the war using visually stimulating materials drawn from across the collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library. He was especially interested in showing odd and quirky items, such as a metal memorial shield decorated with naive illustrations of soldiers. One individual's response to 'the Peace', this object came from the Gear meatworks in Petone and may have been fashioned from tin used for canning.

'Goodbye England'. Photograph taken by Frederic Kingsford, A Company 23rd Reinforcements, on board the SS Tainui as it leaves Plymouth Sound on its return to New Zealand, 6 August 1919. Photographic Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference: PA1-0-934-062-3

