

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
Travelling Fellowship

Report

Multicultural Relations in Museums
in New Zealand

Leslie Jessop
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The Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi holds a central place in the formal relations between Maori communities and the New Zealand Government and, through them, to the non-Maori population of New Zealand.

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Maori representatives (although a few iwi did not sign up to it), and remains in force today. As far as museums are concerned, a key element is within Article 2:

“Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession.”

There were instances, particularly in the 19th century, where Maori land or property was confiscated by the Government, and there is an active program of redress whereby iwi are seeking settlement of claims. There is no redress for things that were sold or given away.

In the Maori language version of the treaty (which has precedence in law over the English version), the “other properties” is expressed in a way that includes *taonga*. Many *taonga* are now held by museums, and most museum authorities now recognise that Maori people have a continuing right of ownership in a broad sense.

In recent decades there has been a program of settlement of claims to redress instances where the crown has in the past wrongfully seized land or *taonga*. No Museum is, of itself, obliged to redress claims under the Treaty of Waitangi unless the museum is by coincidence on Crown land that is subject to part of a claim.

The Treaty of Waitangi recognises people as either *tangata whenua* (‘people of the land’) or *tangata tiriti* (‘people of the treaty’). All subsequent immigrants to New Zealand are, in law, *tangata tiriti*.

The spirit of the Treaty is currently promoted as being embodied in the ‘three Ps’

- Partnership
- Participation
- Protection

Some Maori terms explained

Through the course of the report, Maori terms are given in italics unless they are part of a proper name (thus for instance the *taonga* belonging to Tamate, a *kaitiaka* of the Ngai Tahu). The custom is not to pluralise Maori terms by adding 's' – the plural of Maori is 'Maori', not 'Maoris'.

<i>hui</i>	A meeting or gathering
<i>iwi</i>	The term is roughly equivalent to 'tribe', the largest grouping in Maori traditional society. Maori social structures consisted of <i>whanau</i> (extended family), grouped as a <i>hapu</i> (sub-tribe) within an <i>iwi</i> .
<i>karakia</i>	Chants
<i>kaitiaka</i>	A Maori curator or custodian
<i>kaihautu</i>	In traditional Maori canoes, the <i>kaihautu</i> was responsible for guiding or steering the course. By analogy, the <i>kaihautu</i> in Te Papa Museum provide a guiding or steering role.
<i>kaumatua</i>	A senior person of responsibility and authority, traditionally a patriarchal head of household or elder.
<i>koiwi tangata</i>	Any form of human remains
<i>mana</i>	Power and authority
<i>Murihiku</i>	The southern part of New Zealand's South Island
<i>Ngati...</i>	Maori <i>iwi</i> names are usually prefixed by Ngai (as Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Porou), or Ngai (Ngai Tahu – also called Kai Tahu).
<i>taonga</i>	A treasured possession, such as a weapon, cloak, personal ornament. Relations are cemented by giving taonga as presents and they develop long, remembered, histories. Many important taonga are now in museums.
<i>tapu</i>	A state of separation.
<i>tikanga</i>	Protocols of correctness; customary practices
<i>tupuna</i>	Ancestors
<i>wahi tapu</i>	A shrine, or space set apart because of its sacred nature
<i>whanau</i>	A person's extended family
<i>whenua</i>	The land

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on a visit to Museums in New Zealand in September 2007, on a Fellowship funded by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. The aim of the project was to learn about the ways in which museums in New Zealand are encouraging people of different and diverse cultures, and especially Maori communities, to become actively involved both as staff, as visitors and as users of museums.

Many museums in Britain are actively looking at ways of encouraging people other than their traditional audiences to become involved. Probably the largest group of people still not fully taking part in museums are the immigrant communities: there are communities of immigrants who have lived in Britain for decades and yet rarely visit museums, join Friends organisations, serve on governing bodies or work as curators.

New Zealand presents the reverse situation. It was the immigrant (i.e. non-Maori) people who developed museums, and the indigenous, Maori population in the past were rarely actively involved in them. Some organisations, and particularly the National Museum Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, have built an international reputation in recent years for the way in which they are addressing this situation. I wanted to see first-hand what the museums in New Zealand want to do and how they are doing it. The way I would achieve this would be by going into museums and talking to various people including curators, education staff, administrators and attendants, talking informally to users of museums and walking around the galleries to see the physical results of the curatorial endeavour. I also wanted to see the situation 'behind the scenes', how people are accessing and making use of the important collections held in stores.

Background: on New Zealand Museums

To a British curator, museums in New Zealand feel familiar, and yet different. The design of the galleries involves the same type of display cases and graphic design. The store rooms have the same systems of shelving, mesh screens and roller-racks, tables with acid-free boxes and white linen gloves. They also have the same familiar smell of dust and naphthalene. And yet they are different: outside the store there will probably be a sink, not to wash the dust from your hands but to remove the *tapu* that you have acquired by being in close proximity to *taonga* with powerful *mana*.

As in Britain, museums range in size, and also in the scope of their ambitions. The two largest are Te Papa Tongarewa (the name is usually shortened to Te Papa) and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. These are about the same in size as the largest British provincial museums, such as those in Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow or the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh. They have hundreds of staff, including curators, educators, conservators, designers and others, and are active academically. The next step in size are institutions in

Christchurch (the Canterbury Museum) and Dunedin (the Otago Museum) and New Plymouth (Puke Ariki) that have dozens of staff – including several specialist curators – and equate in size to museums in Brighton, Bristol, Leeds or York. Smaller again are the scores of museums, including two visited (Southland and Tairāwhiti Museums) that have few paid staff, down to small local visitor centres operated by volunteers.

The historic development of museums in New Zealand is similar to those in Britain. However, because New Zealand was only affected by British immigration to a large degree from the mid-19th century onwards some phases of collection-building were missed. The great age of natural history collecting, in the mid- to late 1800s contributed the many cabinets of birds' eggs, mollusc shells, butterflies, moths and preserved animals to the stores of most British museums yet largely passed New Zealand by: it was a surprise to see how few stuffed birds are in New Zealand museums. They have fine and decorative art and local history in abundance, but generally lack the African and Asian material acquired by their British counterparts during the 19th and 20th centuries.

New Zealand museums often hold large collections of historic photographs, because in the 19th and early 20th centuries people wanted to capture images of a rapidly changing country. The greatest strength, and characteristic, of New Zealand museum collections is their holdings of Maori artefacts. The Maori people encountered by Captain Cook were highly proficient in a variety of crafts especially carving and weaving, and Maori costume, weapons, woodcarvings, domestic items and personal ornaments became “collectable”. Many Maori artefacts left New Zealand, mainly in the early-mid 19th century, and became prized items in museums in Britain as well as in New Zealand. Some of the world's leading students of Pacific material culture worked in New Zealand's museums. From the Maori point of view many of these items were *taonga*: heirlooms of the *whanau* or *iwi* that had known histories, and associations with the ancestors. Through these associations the *taonga* came to have *mana* and because of that *mana* there were protocols concerning the ways in which they could be handled and used. In the 19th and early 20th century some Maori people were active in giving or selling their *taonga* to collectors or museums – as one Maori explained to me, some of the older people were frightened about the *mana* of the *taonga* and wanted to have them removed; in other cases there was nobody suitable left in a dwindling society that could claim a right to own them; in other cases again, people simply needed the money.

The strong, continuing, presence of Maori communities in New Zealand and the importance placed today on recognising obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi are the imperatives for including Maori people in museums: it is no longer acceptable for labels in museum displays to talk about Maori culture as dead, a thing of the past, an “other”. The relations being built with Maori people, founded on the Three Ps of the Treaty of Waitangi (Partnership, Participation, Protection) are being extended to other communities. The historic communities of English, Irish, Scottish and others, and recent immigrants from East Asia, South Africa, Australia and elsewhere are being accorded the Three Ps approach.

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THE PLACES VISITED

The Auckland War Memorial Museum (3rd-7th September)

Auckland is one of the two major cities in New Zealand. Whereas Wellington has a long-standing role as an administrative centre, Auckland is the major port and commercial metropolis.

One of two very major museums in New Zealand (the other being Te Papa Tongarewa), Auckland Museum is funded by the several Councils of Auckland city, as well as by entrance fees (it is the only museum I visited that charges for entry). Established as a small museum in 1852 the present major building, set in the city's park, was erected in 1929. There are large galleries of Natural History and European decorative arts, and large displays of Maori and Pacific artefacts. The building also houses Auckland's War Memorial and associated displays on the history of New Zealand's contribution to the

work of the Anzac forces, as well as a reference library.



Auckland Museum

Auckland Museum has long-standing international reputation for its academic work, and there are currently four curatorial staff working with Pacific. Other departments include Natural History, Social History and Military specialists, conservators, a large department of education and outreach, and a supporting administration.

Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne (10th-12th September)

The town of Gisborne is the centre of a large rural region that has a significant Maori population (about 50% of the people of Gisborne are Maori). Gisborne's Tairawhiti Museum is a relatively recent development, founded in 1959 and funded by the local Council. Housed in a small park, the museum is one part of the Tairawhiti complex that includes a tea room, shop and several outbuildings that include a historic house and part of a stranded ship. There is an education

room and galleries that cover Gisborne's history and archaeology, Maori *taonga*, the war record of C Battalion (a Maori battalion) and maritime history. There are two Art Galleries. Some of the galleries are now outdated, and there are plans to redevelop the whole museum and incorporate it into a new cultural centre for Gisborne.



Entrance to Tairawhiti

The small level of staffing reflects the size of the museum. There are specialist curators for the photographic collection (which includes a large number of historic photographs of Gisborne) as well as a Curator Maori and a Collections Manager.

Puke Ariki, New Plymouth (13th-14th September)

New Plymouth was a relatively early British settlement, and is now the centre of the rich farming region of Taranaki. Puke Ariki is a large and historic town museum that was founded in 1847. The museum was extensively redeveloped in the 1990s, and renamed as *Puke Ariki* (which means 'Hill of the Chiefs', the historic name of the hill on which the Museum stands). Following extensive public consultation about the proposed nature of Puke Ariki, construction began in February 2001 and the development opened in June 2003.

Golden Needle" (featuring textiles from Yunnan). The building is physically linked to the town's library, which incorporates a study centre that has extensive reference collections on open access



Entrance to Puke Ariki

The ground floor of the museum houses a gallery on the history of New Plymouth and Taranaki, and on the 1st floor are Natural History, Geology and *taonga* Maori galleries as well as a space for community use. The basement has a large temporary exhibition gallery, when I visited it was showing "The

The staff of Puke Ariki includes specialists in the library, in archives, history, education and outreach as well as a supporting administration. The current senior curator is an archaeologist and historian. There is a specialist Curator Maori.

Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand, Wellington (17th-19th September)

Situated on the southern tip of North Island, Wellington is in the geographic centre of New Zealand, and has a long-established role as its administrative centre. Te Papa is the country's National Museum. Founded as The Colonial Museum in 1865, it developed greatly in the early part of the 20th century and a grand new building was erected for the (by then) Dominion Museum in 1936. At that time it was similar to The Auckland Museum both in the architecture of the building and in the style of the displays. The institution was reformed in the 1990s with biculturalism as its core value. The current building was erected in 1998, and the displays are all modern, covering natural history, social history and

art. The building also houses a large reference library that is open for public use.



Entrance to Te Papa

Being the National Museum, and a branch of the New Zealand government, Te Papa has national and international responsibilities. This is reflected in the large staffing (of about 300). Te Papa is home to the National Services Team (see the section on Museum Standards) and a Maori Policy Unit that facilitates political relationships nationally between museums and *iwi*. Te Papa also has an active international program of seeking human remains (particularly, preserved Maori heads) in foreign museums and making requests for repatriation. The remains are housed in a special store that is governed jointly by *iwi* representatives and by museum curators.

Formerly, the National Museum of New Zealand took a traditionally Western approach to scholarship. When it was re-founded as Te Papa Tongarewa in the 1990s, one of the key elements of its reformation was to place biculturalism, and the underlying mandate of the Treaty of Waitangi, as the core value of the institution. The new features included:

- Power within the institution is exercised in a bicultural manner, in that there is a Maori *kaitiaka* at a very senior level as well as non-Maori directorial staff.
- The management practices and the way in which staff are recruited and treated are bicultural.

- The focus of Te Papa's activities, and its relationships with the wider community, must act biculturally.
- All staff members are made aware of the importance of biculturalism, and, for instance, Maori language training is available to all staff.

The principles of participation and consultation that are embraced within the values of bicultural working are extended to other cultures among the *Tangata Tiriti*.

Southland Museum, Invercargill (21st & 24th September)

Invercargill is the southernmost large town in New Zealand, and is the regional centre for the extensive rural Murihiku (Southland) region. The Southland Museum (possibly the World's most southerly Town Museum) was founded in 1872 as a Scotch Pie Shop and Theatre of Wonders, later going through several incarnations before the town council took responsibility for it in 1940. A building erected in the 1940s was remodelled in 1990 when a large pyramidal metal-clad structure was built over it. It is located in the town's major park (which also has Winter Gardens, play areas etc.), and houses a café and an Information Centre. The bulk of the ground floor is taken up by Art Gallery space, and there is also a large vivarium for an important breeding colony of Tuatara. The ground floor also houses a Maori gallery. The first floor houses a Natural History gallery, a large display about the subantarctic islands¹, a display of Victoriana and a temporary exhibition gallery. The curators are looking towards a redevelopment program.



Southland is a small museum with limited staffing. There is no Curator Maori post, but a curator who has an archaeological and anthropological background acts as a point of reference for Maori issues.

¹ The remote Macquarie Islands, Auckland Islands, Antipodes Islands, Bounty Islands and Snares Island, lying between New Zealand and Antarctica

Canterbury Museum, Christchurch (26th-28th September)

With a population of over 200,000, Christchurch is the largest city of the South Island of New Zealand. The Canterbury museum was opened in 1870, and is the largest museum in South Island. It has major role in displaying and studying archaeology, natural history and human history. Like many regionally important museums it houses significant collections, including some of international importance (for instance, the New Zealand government chose Christchurch to house a major recent donation of ceramics by Sir Christopher Cockerell because it holds an important Decorative Art collection). The Natural History collections include a large number of Moa skeletal remains. The Maori collections are particularly strong in artefacts of archaeological origin, especially from New Zealand's earliest settlement period – the so-

called Moa Hunter period.



Christchurch mixes its display commitments to a strong academic tradition. The staff includes several specialist curators as well as education staff, support and educators. There is a long-established University in Christchurch (Lord Rutherford was an early student), that has strong links with the museum.

GOVERNANCE

Consultative Committees And Maori representation in Museum Governance

This section looks at the ways in which Maori people are involved in the governance of museums, rather than as employees or visitors.

A Maori presence on the boards of Trustees of certain museums is governed by national law. Acts of the New Zealand Parliament have provided for single Maori appointees to Trust boards for the Otago museum (1996), Canterbury museum (1993) and Auckland museum (1996). The National Museum (Te Papa) is a special case in that, being a Government department, its board is appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

From the Maori side, there is no pan-Maori organisation that has a mandate to nominate trustees. It is therefore up to museums to find the appropriate

representatives. This representation can be at a level of an advisory body rather than (- or in addition to -) a Trust Board. In all of the museums I visited I found that there are formal arrangements in place for consultation with representatives of *iwi*: for the smaller museums this usually involved the *iwi* of the region in which the museum was sited.

Auckland Museum Taumata-a-Iwi

The Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996 provides for a Maori Committee known as Taumata-a-Iwi, which was founded on the principle of *mana whenua*, or customary authority over ancestral land. Taumata-a-Iwi provides advice and assistance to the museum's Trust Board in a number of matters set out in the Act. It acts in the role of trusteeship by representing the interests of Maori and advising the Trust Board on matters of custodial policy and guardianship of *taonga* and any indigenous human remains held by the Museum. Members also advise the Trust Board on all Maori cultural aspects concerning the Museum's *wahi tapu*, and its staffing, display, visitor, marketing and development policies

Taumata-a-Iwi acts as an authoritative reference for issues and queries arising in matters of cultural sensitivity. Curators commented on the way in which the committee acts as protection for them: the burden of dealing with contentious issues does not fall on curators but on Taumata-a-Iwi, who give curators their backing and support. There are already plans to extend the concept further, with a Pacific Islanders' Council being formed along similar lines: this will represent the Polynesian islands most closely connected with New Zealand.

Puke Ariki

Puke Ariki is committed to establishing and developing relationships within the region of Taranaki, throughout New Zealand and internationally. Puke Ariki was founded on the basis of a partnership between several disparate groups including *iwi*, Government (both Local and Regional Authorities), corporate partners and local businesses, and museum-sector organisations.

Between 1960 and 1989, formal Maori involvement with the museum was limited to one or two representatives from the Taranaki Maori Trust Board. When New Plymouth Council decided in 1995 to develop a new museum on the Puke Ariki site a "Puke Ariki Sub-Committee" (including community representatives) and a Komiti Maori were established. They developed the Puke Ariki concept, in which the library and museum facilities were redeveloped and combined.

The Komiti Maori contains representatives from the eight *iwi* of the Taranaki region. In addition to advising on the re-formation of the old Museum into Puke Ariki, it also advises on issues relating to biculturalism, on *matauranga Maori* (Maori knowledge), on intellectual and cultural property issues, and the care of *taonga*.

Gisborne Museum

Gisborne Museum is governed by a Museum Trust that has five members representing *iwi*, four members drawn from the museum's Friends organisation and two from Gisborne District Council plus the Director (currently, Dr Monty Soutar). This provides for a high degree of Maori involvement at a Governing, rather than an Advisory level. I do not know of a parallel situation in Britain where a Local Authority that funds a museum would have its Council members in a minority on the museum's governing board.

Southland Museum

Southland Museum has a working relationship with the regional Maori authority *Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu* through a Maori Liaison Committee. There are four members of the Committee, drawn from the relevant *iwi* (Ngai Tahu, Ngati Mamoe and Waitaha) of the Southland region. This committee meets six times a year. One member of the Committee also serves on the Trust Board of the Museum.

Canterbury Museum

Canterbury Museum is governed by a Trust Board, which is an *ad hoc* authority established under the Canterbury Museum Trust Board Act 1993. Five local authorities are levied contributions to fund the ongoing activities of the Museum Trust Board. The *iwi* Ngai Tahu has, therefore, a formal representative among the twelve members of the Trust Board, the remainder being a mixture of representatives of local authority and academic bodies.

Canterbury Museum also has an Iwi Liaison Committee, *Ohaki o nga Tipuna*, founded in 1996 and comprising three Trust Board members, two representatives each from Ngai Tahu, Nga Maata Waka, the Curatorial staff (one of whom is the Director) and a Secretary. The Committee reviews policies, and advises the Trust Board in matters relating to the following:

- Guardianship of Maori *taonga*.
- Staffing policies, including taking affirmative action that will encourage Maori people to enter the museum profession
- Exhibition policies, including the display of *taonga* in a culturally appropriate and informative manner
- Development policies.

The Committee advises the museum on all matters relating to Maori protocol, both within the museum and between the museum and Maori people.

EXHIBITIONS

Historically, museum displays often portrayed Maori people as being of the past, and as seen from the point of view of an outside observer. This was part of a wider phenomenon in museums whereby people were seen as representing certain stages of development with, for instance, Australian Aborigines and South African Bushmen frozen in time as hunter-gatherers of the Stone Age. In that scheme, Maori people would be seen as Neolithic subsistence farmers. A very small number of galleries in New Zealand that still have echoes of this old approach, but many have been redeveloped in recent years in a way that is more sympathetic to a Maori approach.

Examples of recent practice to encourage participation

Barriers to participation can be removed in a number of ways. Some may appear very minor, for instance involving the design of a doorway or the background of a display case or the arrangement of things in a room. Some may involve major community participation. However, they are all important to somebody: many people may not know why labels in Auckland are bilingual, but by placing Maori first and English second it makes the gallery considerably more welcoming to the descendants of the people who first made and used the objects displayed.

The examples below are of some of the ways museums are working to encourage participation.

Wide Community Involvement

The Price of Citizenship in Tairāwhiti Museum (Gisborne) is a tribute to the men of C Company of the Maori (28th) Battalion who gave and risked their lives for the World War Two Allied war effort. A major component of the display is a wall of photographs of C Company soldiers. Around 90% of the named soldiers have accompanying photographs and the museum hopes that one day this wall may be complete. When producing and developing the exhibition, Tairāwhiti Museum worked in partnership with the C Company Trust *Nga Taonga a Nga Tama Toa Trust*.

The name of the display 'The Price of Citizenship' is a quote from the writings of leading Maori politician Sir Apirana Ngata. Whereas other people thought about war service as the price of freedom, Sir Apirana Ngata argued that fighting was the price that Maori communities would pay to become – or to remain – citizens of New Zealand. The title therefore alludes to the broader political circumstances of Maori involvement in British Empire armed forces. The photographic portraits of the servicemen were obtained from the men or their families, through a process of negotiation and partnership. This created a sense of common ownership of the gallery, which is also reflected in the fact that the museum has been able to borrow for display all of the major medals awarded to members of C Company, including the Victoria Cross awarded to Lt Ngarimu. One of the museum's governors commented to me that the Maori sense of community rather than personal endeavour meant that the VC was seen as an achievement of Lt Ngarimu's *iwi*, not a personal achievement.

Examples of Consultation with advisory committee

Auckland Museum's Taumata-a-iwi advised on the display of 'bone chests' *waka tupapaku*. These wooden boxes, of which only a small number are known, were used to house the bones of high-ranking individuals. They are carved with powerful, and disturbing, images of the dead. The original users stored *waka tupapaku* in caves, and all known examples have been taken out of caves and are now in museums. Some Maori hold the opinion that *waka tupapaku* should be re-interred; others that there is no problem holding them in museums but that they should not be placed on open display; others again have no problem with openly displaying *waka tupapaku* (for instance, one example toured U.S.A. with the *Te Maori* exhibition). Until recently, Auckland Museum had all of their *waka tupapaku* on display, but following advice from Taumata-a-iwi they have been removed to the stores.

Discussions are also underway with Taumata-a-iwi about the positioning of objects in Auckland's Maori Gallery, to take into account the *mana* relations of the important items on display, so that they can be arranged most appropriately.

Protocols for day-to-day working

Auckland Museum has put protocols in place for removal of blood, hair, etc from galleries. Previously this was done by mopping, but Maori attitudes about the *mana* of blood - especially when spilt in close proximity to *taonga* meant that a different approach was needed for this gallery. The removal of blood spills and other human effluvia is now accompanied by appropriate Maori *tikanga*.

Use of language

It may not be immediately obvious, but the use of A language (not just THE use of language) can be important in engaging visitors to a museum. Maori staff in Auckland commented that Maori people are more likely to give credence to information written in the Maori language than when the same information is presented in English: labels in the Maori Gallery are therefore presented with Maori language first and English second.

Access to objects (in galleries and stores)

Museum curators often restrict handling of objects except under very controlled conditions. However, to many Maori people physical contact with the objects is often a crucial way in which they interact and for them it is not enough to see things through glass. On special occasions, the curators at Auckland do remove objects from the display cases for handling.

Christchurch museum recognizes that many people, not exclusively Maori, feel uncomfortable in the sterile environment of a museum store. They therefore created areas near to the stores that are designed to be more welcoming. These areas act as study rooms, but are also places in which people can be alone with *taonga*. Thus, they are less of a sterile, store-like environment.

Southland Museum was the first museum in New Zealand to arrange with *iwi* the protocols surrounding management and use of human remains, and the museum has a written policy. Human remains are kept in a special area of the museum, under Maori (Ngai Tahu) control and managed by Museum staff. Joint approval of both Ngai Tahu and curators is needed for studying remains and copies of all reports are required as a prerequisite for approval. Human remains are used for some training sessions in tertiary education and to police.

Involvement of specialists

Several Maori weavers were actively involved in a recent exhibition in Puke Ariki. The exhibition, called *Eternal Threads* had been a showcase for recent cloaks made by Taranaki weavers. In contrast to a traditional exhibition, where the choice of objects, text, graphics and display techniques are in the hands of museum curators, in *Eternal Threads* the living weavers were actively involved at all stages. When the exhibition toured to America contacts were made with Native American groups in the regions where the exhibition was shown: a group of Maori representatives went to America not only to open the exhibition but to give a mandate for the exhibition to take place. The delegation was welcomed by the corresponding Native American groups who accompanied the exhibition when it returned to New Zealand, again with appropriate ceremonial.

During the course of the exhibition in its several venues, weavers were on hand to talk to visitors and to give demonstrations of traditional hand-weaving techniques. The weavers I spoke to said they saw this as an important part of their work and of the exhibition. Some Maori specialists are concerned about the transmission of traditional skills: in the past, this was often controlled because of the risk that people might abuse their knowledge, for instance by commercially exploiting or possibly copyrighting traditional techniques. However, other specialists are worried about the risk of continuity of knowledge in a field where there are so few active teachers. The decision to participate in in-gallery demonstrations was, therefore, not taken lightly.

Iwi participation, and guidance

One of the galleries in Te Papa is devoted to a series of longer-term exhibitions that focus on a particular *iwi*. Each of the *iwi* programs runs for about two years. From the commencement, there is a high level of consultation and joint working with the *iwi*, and representatives are involved at every stage: this can involve considerable expense but is seen as a key feature of the programs. During the period of the exhibition there is a *kaumatua* from the *iwi* attached and working within the Te Papa organisation.

This approach of involvement has been extended to non-Maori communities, and there is a parallel program of two-year exhibitions: the current one concerns Scottish immigrants, previous ones have been on Chinese, Dutch, Indian and Italian communities. The aim is to have processes of partnership and working together to produce an exhibition that reflects the communities views of itself rather than what a curator might present. Scots people nationwide were consulted, not just those in the Wellington area. The in-house design team took a holistic approach to laying out the exhibition, with coordinated carpets, wall designs, case designs, motifs etc. To assist in the program, there is a full-time Community Relationship Manager.

Involvement is also cornerstone of exhibition policy in the Canterbury Museum. They recently mounted an exhibition called “Cosmopolitan Canterbury”, aimed at bringing together and involving as many people as possible. It was left up to individual communities to define themselves: thus, as well as obvious groups such as “Scottish”, “Irish”, “Chinese”, the local Manx immigrant organization was involved. The exhibition achieved a very high profile, and brought some groups of people, such as Chileans and Argentinians, into the museum who would not otherwise have visited or participated in the organisation.

Canterbury Museum showed the “30 Lounges exhibition” during 2007. The idea behind the display is that the Lounge is the heart of the home, and is thus a way of leading into people’s domestic life. Thirty different ethnic groups contributed to the exhibition. The Museum team worked closely with each community on their respective lounges, and the community members provided furniture and decorations from their own homes. The designers even provided the mud walls featured in the Afghan , Zimbabwean, Ethiopian and Kurdistanian lounges!

Auckland Museum’s in-gallery Visitor centre - Te Kakano (“the seed”)

Museums in New Zealand, as in Britain, are actively developing ways of providing access to more information – or interpretation at a higher level – than can be put across by labels. This can be as simple as providing a few books at an attendant’s desk, or as time-consuming as having specialist curators standing in the galleries talking to visitors about objects provided from the stores.

Auckland Museum has in-gallery information centres that are staffed both by full-time and part-time staff and by volunteers. The three centres (in the Natural History, War Memorial and Maori galleries) are open seven days a week. Not only was a wide range of material provided, from the latest research monographs to introductory texts and children’s books, but the books were all in very good condition. There is no object-handling in these centres, since object handling is part of the Education department’s provision. Group bookings can be made, but they are mainly drop-in centres.

The information centre sited in the Maori gallery, named *Te Kakano* (the seed), is manned by one staff member, who is considered a key element in the centre. This person is a point of contact that facilitates more than attendant; intermediate in role between a librarian (who is often seen as a gateway to the literature rather than an expert) and a curator (a “master of knowledge”). Computers are also provided that link to on-line resources provided by Auckland Museum.

Beyond the desks is a quiet area with seating, used for reading the books. The layout of this area was designed with Maori input, to encourage a feeling of safety and security and an etiquette of silence.

Ways of Cataloguing

Some curators in New Zealand are making efforts at adapting displays and cataloguing systems to reflect a non-European view. In Auckland, there are two natural history galleries: one reflects a European view of classification (e.g., as bird, insect, fish; in habitats of sea, land, air etc), the other reflects a Maori view. That gallery interprets forests and the things in them as being the realm of the deity Tane.

In common with museums in the rest of the world, most museum curators in New Zealand have catalogued their collections. Most use a database called VERNON, and use catalogue categories based on Western systems: thus, things are catalogued as “weapon”, “domestic”, “clothing” etc. This does not reflect a Maori view of the world, in which an item that might be any of the three categories above might be thought of first and foremost as *taonga*. Curators at Te Papa have been looking more closely at how things are catalogued, and are developing a system of Maori classification. They use a database called KE EMU to hold their data.

Because things are stored according to a system, a museum store is a physical catalogue. In Christchurch the artefacts in the Maori store are arranged in a way that reflects their associated context. Thus, things related to the household are placed together, as are things related to death, to the sea, to the forest, etc.

Categories of ownership

Traditionally, museums accept things either as gifts or as loans, and usually a loaned object is borrowed by a museum only for specific purposes of display or research. Also, traditionally museums aim to hold things in perpetuity. In New Zealand I saw several instances where *iwi* had placed important *taonga* in museums on deposit, because a museum store was seen as a secure place to hold an item until its long term future could be decided. Also, museum curators seemed more willing to consider transferring objects, either to other institutions or to personal ownership, if there were questions about whether their museum was the most appropriate place to hold them.

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

With my background in curation, I was mainly interested in curation and exhibition work, but I also took the opportunity to talk to several Education Officers. I found that they operate in a broadly similar way to my colleagues in Britain. However, whereas my experience in British museums is that culturally-based Education Officers are often employed on temporary contracts through external funding, the few museums in New Zealand with large numbers of staff have these posts centrally funded.

As in Britain, most museums in New Zealand are actively involved in education, with dedicated Education Officers. Funding for these posts is supported by the New Zealand government through a scheme called LEOTC (Learning Outside The Classroom). The larger museums in New Zealand (including Auckland and Te Papa) employ specialist Education Officers that are dedicated to Maori education, either working schools, with family groups or more widely. (There are some bilingual schools in New Zealand, and some English-language schools have immersion classes in the

Maori language. However, up to the age of 18, many Maori children attend separate schools, where teaching is in the Maori language. The approach to teaching is different to non-Maori schools, being more holistic).

Te Papa is actively involved with Maori children's education. The educators told me that they are interested in exploring different knowledge systems and methods of teaching, for instance through traditional knowledge rather than evidential knowledge.

Te Papa has also developed a major education program in relation to *Makariki*. *Makariki* is the time of the heliacal rising of the Pleiades (i.e. when they are in the sky just before sunrise), which marks the start of the southern Winter. [The evening rising of the Pleiades marks the start of the Northern Winter]. A range of supporting materials including Activity Packs and web resources have been developed around the theme of *Makariki*, and a number of events and workshops use the *Makariki* festival in the wider context of the Maori year.

MUSEUMS STANDARDS SCHEME

The ways in which bicultural working are considered to be good practice in New Zealand can be seen in the Museums Standards Scheme.

The body **National Services Te Paerangi**, based in Te Papa operates the New Zealand Museums Standards Scheme. Operating nationally with 15-20 people (8 are based in Wellington) the Museums Standards scheme supports museums, art galleries, science centres as well as appropriate developments in *iwi* (such as local resource centres). In addition to the Museum Standards Scheme, National Services operates a training program for the profession, which includes on-the-job training and a Leadership program. National Services also organises workshops that bring together *iwi* and Museums, training curators in how to work with *iwi* and how to understand Maori customs (and *vice versa*), as well as promoting building of relationships between members of *iwi* and museum professionals.

There is a well-developed assessment process that involves addressing a range of criteria for good practice covering all aspects of museum work. The scheme is not compulsory, but individual museums that want to ensure they are up to standard need to work through the criteria in a process of self-assessment. The results are then peer-reviewed.

There are 66 objectives to be assessed, relating to collections storage, customer care display, loans, government, finance etc. There are several criteria by which a museum can judge whether it is reaching the required standard.

In the context of this Fellowship, the importance of the Museums Standards scheme is that it formalises a need to work with Maori communities and in ways required by modern interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi. There is nothing to prevent museums from working otherwise, but the implications are that if museums competed for official funding, the candidates that reached the standards of the scheme would be likely to

be more successful.

Several objectives of the Museums standard scheme relate to the Treaty of Waitangi, to formulating relations with Iwi, to the security of *taonga* and to cultural awareness training. For instance, some of the objectives are:

- *Tangata whenua*, *iwi* and *hapu* are confident that their concepts and concerns are reflected positively in policy, management decisions, public programmes and day to day operations.
- *Iwi*, *hapu* and *whanau* are confident that the *taonga* receive respectful care in accordance with *tikanga*.
- The museum knows and understands the diversity of its interest groups and has analysed its actual and potential communities of support and considers them in planning its direction and activities.
- The museum has established relationships with appropriate *tangata whenua*, *iwi*, *hapu* and *whanau* groups and individuals and carries out regular, structured communication that encourages involvement in, and enjoyment of, its work and activities.
- The museum operates an actual or *de facto* policy of equality of opportunity, creating opportunities and encouraging full participation, without discrimination, for all who wish to contribute to museum's governance and operation and to use and enjoy its services.

CONCLUSIONS

I saw a number of ways in which New Zealand museums are taking a positive role in encouraging people of diverse backgrounds to become active in museums. The obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi are being taken very seriously, and the *Three P's* concept (partnership, participation and protection) is being rolled out to non-Maori communities. The ways in which Museum curators are achieving their aims are:

1) Governance

Both through legislation and through organisational structures, Maori people are being enfranchised to have a role in the running of organisations, at the level of Governors or Trustees and as advisors.

2) Education

Education specialists, especially in the larger museums, are making positive efforts to develop programs that are aimed at Maori, and other, communities, and also to develop programs that educate non-Maori people about the Maori world in a way that is not superficial.

3) Display and exhibition

A lot of effort is going into developing permanent displays and temporary exhibitions that involve participation from Maori and other communities at a number of levels.

4) Employment

There is no process of positive discrimination in employing Maori people or people of other cultural backgrounds. However, the organisational structures (particularly in Te Papa) are set up in a way that minimises people being discouraged from going into the museum profession.

5) Collections

Museum curators realise that *taonga* have a deep importance to Maori people and they are developing ways in which people can access them both in galleries and in stores. The long-term security of museums is being used by communities for depositing *taonga* in a way that is not usual in Britain. New Zealand curators are less likely than their British counterparts to stress the concept of holding items in perpetuity: they are likely to transfer items to other ownership where appropriate.

6) Culture of biculturalism

One museum, Te Papa, has gone much further than any other in reforming itself as a cultural organisation, in that the *culture of biculturalism* is its fundamental philosophy. Bicultural working is also written into the set of official Standards that museums in New Zealand are asked to achieve.