

agmanz news

quarterly of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand

CONTENTS

Dunedin Conservation Unit
Cambridge 1980 — International Conference
Report
Jeavons Baillie Interview
Cultural Conservation; Disaster Preparedness
Workshop
The Protection of Works of Art During Transit
Valerie Carson Interview
Building Design and Its Role in the Conservation
of Collections of Cultural Material
Auckland City Art Gallery Conservation
Laboratory
Conservation at the Anthropology Department,
University of Auckland
Christchurch — Establishment of the Conservation
Laboratory
Letters to the Editor

123

September 1981

Editorial

In the light of the Stolow Report I thought I would do a follow up on Conservation in New Zealand providing a who's who, what's what guide for those who are interested but are unfamiliar with the personalities. I purposely included nothing on photographic conservation as the three day seminar is being held at the National Museum at the end of August and reports from this will be published in the next issue.

As almost the entire magazine has been devoted to this subject it has meant there was little other news and I hope this is acceptable to all the readers.

Please keep contributions coming in as I find I am largely soliciting material.

Editor

Errata

Last issue (12/2) The Organisation and Administration of Small Museums by Ken Gorbey

Readers please insert the word 'not' between 'should' and 'be' in the third paragraph, column two, page four. Also emphasis (box) should have been placed around the Statement of Purpose on page one and not on page two. My apologies. — Editor.

Dunedin Conservation Unit

*Titus Chan and Cathy Beagley
Conservators, Dunedin Public Art Gallery*

The Dunedin Conservation Unit is a rather strange animal. It is attached to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, which has a management council formed from members of the Art Gallery Society and City Council representative, in a building maintained by the Dunedin City Council constructed for the 1925/26 N.Z. and South Seas Exhibition, and holding a collection of works of Art vested in the citizens of Dunedin.

There is a gallery operating grant from the City Council but this excludes salaries for the conservation department. The department was established by Mr L.C.H. Lloyd when he became director in 1971, and continued under his direction until August 31 1980 when he resigned. The unit has always worked on a self-supporting basis which from time to time has drawn comment about its "commercialism".

However, with the end of government support for the department as our three third year students complete their last term, and the City Council declining to pick up the tab, once more we find ourselves in a catch 22 situation.

We have formulated a policy with the Art Gallery Council that we work in a co-operative manner rather than a purely commercial one.

This requires the department to run at a break-even situation and not enter into the profit-making field. This equates fairly well with any unit within a large institution which has to be responsible for its own budget.

The understanding reached with council allows for a change of ground with regard to accepting work from private owners. This will occur as more work from public collections comes to hand. Of course the conservation of the D.P.A.G. collection continues and a survey to assess treatment to be done is now in hand. Naturally, like any other gallery, the D.P.A.G. has to budget for works to be conserved by the unit. Students do not work on paintings brought in by the public but may, with the permission and knowledge of the owners, work on items from Public Collections if they present an interesting problem. At the moment this is about as far as we can go in cutting our commercial practice and establishing a more co-operative service with other institutions. Recently the salaries for the Conservator and Assistant Conservator were increased to the AGMANZ recommended scale and our charges had to rise to cover these.

Changes made in the unit include improved record-keeping and different photographic procedures. Naturally, as techniques change in the treatment of works, this is reflected in procedure.



Lesley Cobb and Titus Chan, Dunedin Public Art Gallery-in-painting in the oils studio.

At the present time there are seven people working in the unit. Two are permanent staff members. Titus Chan, who is the Conservator, and Cathy Beagley, the Assistant Conservator. Titus has been a conservator at the gallery for five years after completing a Diploma of Fine and Applied Arts at Otago Polytechnic and a four year apprenticeship training. Negotiations for overseas training are under way at the moment. Cathy Beagley joined the staff after completing a six months attachment with the Victoria & Albert Museum last year. She entered the D.P.A.G. training scheme with an odd mixture of fine art and aeronautical training. After completing the three-year course her V. & A. attachment was to study textile conservation methods and techniques.

Students in their final year are

- (1) Lesley Cobb
- (2) Prue Miller
- (3) Gill Watt

Lesley came to Dunedin from Auckland with a special interest in Art History and photography and considerable talent in both. She has decided to specialise in works on paper and is hoping to serve an internship at the Robert McDougall Gallery next year.

Prue Miller has a secondary school fine art and music teaching background with additional skills in photography. At the moment she too awaits the outcome of her application for an internship at the Hocken Library, specialising in photographic conservation.

Gill Watt came from Canterbury University with Art History and music units and has an enviable colour-matching ability. She is interested in several aspects of conservation and has applied to serve her internship at the National Art Gallery.



Cathy Beagley — Mounting a Sandby on Mulberry Tissue

Of course next year presents a large question mark for these students. They have worked hard and with dedication to fulfill the tasks set them. At mid-year each of them had produced a bound copy (each student binding her own copy) of a project which entailed an assessment of a public collection for conservation, condition reports and recommended treatment and costings.

In obtaining data, bibliographies from some rather obscure sources, Ed Kulka has been most helpful and he has made some useful comments on the work done so far. Titus and Cathy were glad of his support. They felt that they had been pitchforked into the teaching area from necessity rather than design. The overall structure of the year was ambitious but a great deal has been achieved, especially in establishing good working relationships with the Otago Early Settlers Museum, the Hocken, the Otago Museum and the University of Otago.

We are very fortunate to have two people working as volunteers with the unit. Julia Ayres, who came at the beginning of the year with a background in photographic filing and records, was welcomed with open arms. Her work on our photographic files has paid dividends as we move towards the publishing of a catalogue of works held by D.P.A.G.

Our latest addition to the band is Julien Pettit, who has 13 years background as a laboratory technician in England, the last four of which were spent in charge of the emergency biochemistry laboratory at Hammersmith Hospital. Julien also attended

the Institute for Art at Hampstead. Her laboratory skills are of immense use to us in assessing the suitability of additional items of equipment.

One of the most important aspects of working in a conservation unit attached to a lively institution, either as a student or conservator, is that one is in touch with people skilled in other aspects of caring for objects. Curatorial comment and advice when faced with conservation problems is exceedingly important in our situation. Additions to the curatorial staff at the gallery have led to a greater awareness of curatorial concerns.

Cambridge 1980

Rosemary Collier, Records Management and Archives Consultant, Dunedin

International Conference on the Conservation of Library and Archives Materials and the Graphic Arts, Cambridge, England, 22-26 September, 1980.

This conference was a major event in the paper conservation world. It was co-sponsored by the Institute of Paper Conservation and the Society of Archivists — both British organisations — and was the first-ever international conference solely dealing with paper conservation topics.

An attendance of nearly 400 (which included four New Zealanders) surpassed the expectations of the organisers; the university city of Cambridge provided a magnificent setting in splendid weather for stimulating meetings and discussion, both within and without the lecture theatre.

While one could not agree with every theory presented nor every practice described, generally the speakers were first-class. The availability of well-produced, illustrated pre-prints meant that most speakers did not read a formal paper, but gave additional information and comments to their printed paper, frequently accompanied by slides. Several speakers showed films, and a few had samples of the results of the conservation methods they were describing.

The topics covered represented much careful scientific and practical conservation work going on in various parts of the world. The sessions covered: Use of Enzymes in Paper Conservation; Increase in Paper Permanence by Treatment with Ammonia; Training (courses in the United Kingdom, Spain, U.S.A., India and Denmark); Repair of Vellum and Parchment; Preservation of Leather; Treatment of Modern Records; Binding, Handling and Display of

Vellum; Deacidification and Alkaline Buffering of Paper; Mounting and Storage of Works of Art on Paper; Priorities in Book Conservation; Conservation of Illuminated Indian and Islamic Manuscript Leaves; Cleaning of Works of Art on Paper; and finally, Leaf-Casting (or machine-assisted repair of lacunae with paper pulp). It is to be hoped that the published full conference proceedings (to include the more informal concurrent sessions on specialised topics and also all discussion), originally promised for early this year, will be out soon. They should provide a useful reference source on a variety of techniques, and the inclusion of discussion should indicate those topics to be treated with a measure of caution.

As with all such conferences, much of the value is in meeting people with similar concerns, and in discussing things with famous names who turn out to be pleasant, approachable people. Limited opportunity to visit institutions in the Cambridge vicinity was also worthwhile, as was the trade display provided by firms supplying conservation products, including a few from out of Britain. The cost of the conference was reasonable; participation was, however, mainly from Northern, English-speaking countries.

Controversy flourished in the climate offered by some subjects, notably deacidification. Some conservators have turned against it on account of 'shock to the paper' or have decided it is unnecessary where a neutral or slightly alkaline water supply is available. Others, particularly those dealing with archives and books, think it is still necessary, and the risks small compared with the deterioration likely in the poor quality papers they have in their care. At the other end of this scale were the papers and discussions on mass-deacidification methods being developed. I subsequently visited the Public Archives of Canada, where one of the two systems discussed at Cambridge is being tried out. Although the staff are not yet attempting to mass-deacidify archives and manuscripts, they are hopeful of doing so before long. Although the costs of these methods seem very high, they were alleged to be lower per item than the cost of microfilming as a preservation measure.

A rewarding post-conference visit for a number of participants was to Barcham Green's Hayle Paper Mill in Kent. Here, hand-made papers specifically for document repair, bookbinding and printmakers are produced. It was worthwhile both to see the papers being made, and their watermarks, and also to 'have a go'.

The conference programme struck a good balance between general topics and specific practical applications. Dissatisfactions are always expressed

by some after such events, yet as a 'first' it was impressive. It informed participants of new developments, even if everyone did not agree with all of them. The aims outlined in advanced publicity, of providing an international forum for the exchange of ideas and information, and of introducing the followers of one discipline to the principles and techniques of the others appeared to have been in large measure fulfilled. In discussion at the conclusion of the conference, some of the matters of importance raised were: the need for greater vigilance over equipment used (e.g. trolleys, photocopying machines) and staff handling of documents in archives institutions to prevent damage occurring; the need to raise money for conservation by sales of microfilm copies of documents, paintings etc.; the importance of aesthetics and quality of materials as well as of techniques in conservation; the need for publicity to make the public aware of the consequences of misuse of books and documents.

There was much in this conference to stimulate those participating, and, one hopes, readers of the *proceedings*, towards more, and better, paper conservation. The organisers deserve to be congratulated.

Interview with Jeavons Baillie, Conservation Officer with the Alexander Turnbull Library

Jan Bieringa, Editor

Jeavons Baillie returned to New Zealand in 1970 to join the Alexander Turnbull Library after extensive training and working overseas for three years.

Jan

Attitudes to conservation were really on the move at that stage.

JB

Yes on my way home I spent a month in the States looking at libraries and conservation and the new scientific methods for working on archives that just hadn't been available before. The techniques had developed out of the Florentine flood exercise. I spent several years with the Turnbull Library and it was in 1973 that they appointed a technician to work alongside me in the laboratory. Since then we have made slow progress in developing staffing of the unit but we have made enormous strides within the library and improving the attitudes of staff towards the materials and actually carrying out restoration.

In terms of the technical facilities available, things are fairly static although a lot has happened within the Library. However my interests have always extended beyond the library and I get a lot of satisfaction from consulting with organisations like the Historic Places Trust who draw upon some of the knowledge that I gained at the Institute of Archaeology in London.

I am very interested in display and conservation principles as they are applied within that and I get an opportunity to impart some of this knowledge again within the Historic Places Trust as a consultant working on properties and chattels and also within the Presentation and Interpretation Committee chaired by Ken Gorbey. Then, in recent times I have been called out to a number of emergencies and that's another example of how the library has got itself involved with a national conservation role and not just a library one.

Jan

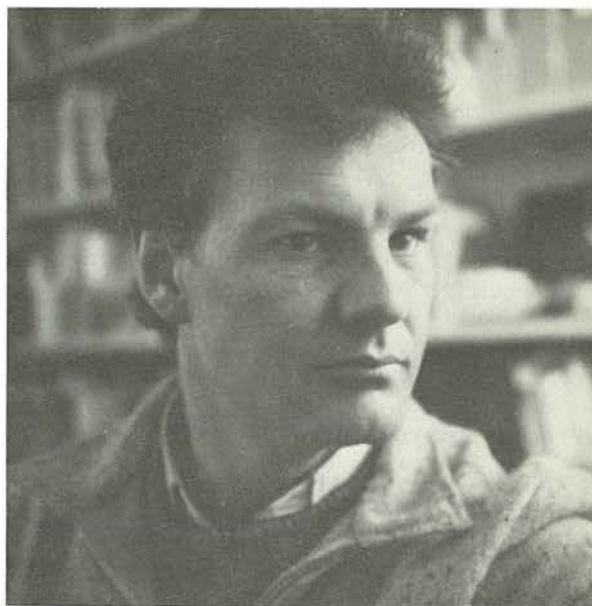
It is in fact the areas of consultancy that I would like to look at in more depth. You have recently been called to a number of emergencies. May we look at these individually and start with Kemp House which underwent severe flooding in March of this year.

JB

The height of the flood was on the Thursday night/Friday morning and by the same evening Mina McKenzie, Director of the Manawatu Museum and I arrived at Kemp House to be greeted by Peter O'Hagen, the former curator and the relief curators from Kerikeri, Faith Hunter and Ngaia Bayliss who had already done a marvellous job of moving out much of the mud. Debris lay around the garden and some furniture had actually been swept out of the house at the height of the flood.

It was suggested the house be hosed out but we really felt more damage would ensue with maybe water splashing on the ceilings which at this stage had not suffered at all. We really had to decide at that point how best to use volunteers because without encouragement or a specific job they tend to drift away. Once a disaster has abated it is then necessary to assess what requires instant attention and what can wait.

We got the furniture out. People don't realise how delicate furniture is after it is wet, furniture that has been glued can become very soft and simply fall to pieces when any strain is applied to it. Initially we moved the furniture to a hall with the aid of the firemen and the local carrier and it was here that volunteers worked on the furniture under supervision.



Jeavons Baillie, Conservation Officer, Alexander Turnbull Library.

Because the hall in fact proved to be a fire risk we found accommodation with a small workshop in which we installed a security system. Although the cleaning had been done any restoration and polishing of the furniture occurred here as well as storage until completion of Kemp House.

Jan

This would have left the house free for further cleaning and eventual restoration.

JB

Yes, in fact, we did get the firemen to come back the next day and hose down the lower part of the wall which they did superbly. However one needed to be available all the time for decisions and supervision. Retrospectively I think that is perhaps the mistake we made — not having an administrator there. In a disaster situation there is even more need for people to coordinate and therefore a person with those specialised skills would have been wonderful.

Jan

This in a sense is understandable as it was the first disaster of its kind you had been called to.

JB

Yes I would agree entirely. The other thing that applies is that in a disaster situation people feel redundant unless they have the technical expertise to be helpful. However we now know otherwise and certainly next time an administrator would be on my list of priorities.

Jan

What happened to all the books and such like from Kemp House?

JB

Well, in fact by the time I arrived the Ministry of Works had already frozen them.

Jan

Jeavons please can you describe the freeze drying process?

JB

Freeze drying allows you to buy time as well as being a marvellous preservation process. The ice sublimates away to a vapour so in fact there is no further deterioration.

Jan

Is this applicable to all art works, books, textiles, etc?

JB

Yes other than oil paintings, and most suitable for archival material which can almost go straight back on the shelf if the stains are not important. The mud is dusted off afterwards, in fact much less damage is done this way and infinitely preferable to further hosing and spraying when all is still wet.

Jan

Was there a lot of material that required freezing?

JB

We filled one and a half chest freezers which were then moved to Wellington where they will be attended to by technicians under our supervision. On completion of the restoration of Kemp House this material will be returned.

Jan

Tell me about the restoration of Kemp House.

JB

The Historic Places Trust is restoring the house back to its early mission period appearance. The presentation will be quite different from the time the Kemps were living in it and the public really is very lucky to be seeing the house as it should be.

Jan

The next area I would like to look at was a fire at the rear of the Public Trust building in Wellington which is used as a storage area and at the time housed a superb collection of paintings, furniture, old carpets, china, etc. Had this fire been burning long?

JB

Yes about four hours as there was no alerting

system, the partial saving grace was the fact that the doors were kept shut which contained the heat and thus much was saved.

Jan

How long was it before you were called in?

JB

Well in fact I had heard about it and volunteered my services. The person in charge was very grateful because she didn't really know where to begin. The disaster situation is rather like a bereavement in a sense, one is subjected to terrific shock but one is nevertheless expected to perform at peak level. After inspection it was the vault we concentrated on as all the rest outside the vault appeared too far gone. However as the vault itself had a cracked ceiling there had been a large seepage of water so everything had to be gotten out. For drying and distributing articles we used the local vegetable markets which have large, temperature controlled spaces for ripening bananas. This is available at each port in New Zealand and is a wonderful resource should you have a disaster in your area.

The lessons to be learned from this disaster are:

1. A ready inventory should be available;
2. Nothing should sit on the top shelf unless there is a covering canopy which protrudes beyond the shelf and deflects the water away;
3. Nothing should sit on a shelf which is larger than the shelf;
4. Anything on the floor should be at least two inches, preferably four inches off — in fact the paintings were saved because the frames protected them but all the gesso itself was completely ruined.

Jan

Jeavons, I believe you were also involved in the Thames/Paeroa flood, how did it occur that you were called up there?

NB

Well concern came from National Archives that the documents in the School of Mines, a Historic Places Trust building, were in jeopardy.

Jan

Did you go by yourself?

JB

No, after consultation with National Archives and the Historic Places Trust a team was decided on. Tony Clarke, myself and Robert Kerr-Hislop (National Archives Conservator) and then a further two people from Waikato Art Museum plus a photographer. We took a four wheel drive vehicle and on arrival in Thames we contacted the Ministry of

Works man in charge. The School of Mines was not in fact subject to major flooding. However we were asked to go to the hospital basement where the pharmacy, laboratory and medical records are housed. The lowest shelf on medical records was very wet and a drying area was set up in the corridor.

Jan

Are you the labour force or do you just show people how to proceed?

JB

No we really guide the way and I identify the major problem areas, both immediate and longterm. An example here were the cardiographs which had been glued on to another sheet of paper. The excess glue used in many instances would have caused them to stick together on drying so they all needed to be separated.

Jan

What was required of you in Paeroa?

JB

By the time we reached there it had been ascertained there were no government records which had suffered. However the Catchment Board's draughting Office had been badly flooded and instant attention was needed. The furniture at this stage was so wet you couldn't open the draws and the plans of the area were of course enormously important being very heavily annotated. With the use of a trailer the cabinets were taken into town to the mortuary which became the drying depot. Disasters have their humourous side as well — we discovered we had been driving around on a flat tyre and because it was under water nobody had noticed. However the humour diminished a little when we discovered none of the air pumps were working due to the floods.

Jan

Again you acted in an advisory capacity?

JB

Yes my feeling is that if we hadn't been there people would have said we don't know what to do with that so lets get on with what we do know — in which case a lot of material is then lost permanently.

JAN

How do you see one being able to increase people's awareness other than through workshops?

JB

Once one has experienced a disaster, a workshop then becomes of prime importance. Having an emergency action plan is vital — knowing which decisions to make instantly.

Jan

So in fact it is in every community's interest to have a person attend a workshop at some stage.

JB

Yes indeed.

Suggested reading material for disaster preparedness:

"Procedures for Salvage of Water-Damaged Library Materials" by Peter Waters — Library of Congress, Washington, 1979

"Disaster Prevention and Disaster Preparedness" by Hilda Bohem — University of California, Berkeley, California, April 1978

"Disaster Planning and Emergency Treatments in Museums, Art Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Allied Institutions" by M.S. Upton and C. Pearson — the Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Incorporated, Canberra, 1978



Kemp House, Kerikeri.

Cultural Conservation Disaster Preparedness Workshop

Tony Clarke

Document Restorer, National Library

Report on the A.G.M.A.N.Z. museum diploma course in disaster preparedness for art galleries and museums held at the National Museum Conservation Unit in Wellington from 6-8 March 1981.

A workshop of this kind is very difficult to prepare because we have no way of knowing the type of disaster we are likely to be dealing with, should we be unfortunate enough to be put in that position. Therefore the only way to gain some elementary

experience is to seek advice from any individual or organisation trained to handle emergency situations. The obvious authorities to begin with would be Civil Defence, Police, Ambulance Service and Red Cross but in most cases their primary concern is for the safety of people.

The Fire Service have a greater interest in property and its salvage but from the point of view of some museums and art galleries the service they offer namely the extinguishing of fire can sometimes create more damage than the fire itself.

The important thing as far as disaster preparedness is concerned is that these organisations have training and experience in dealing with emergencies of almost every kind and knowledge of the sort of problems a disaster action team in a museum or art gallery is likely to be faced with.

As Emergency Conservation Unit (ECU) co-ordinator I was given the responsibility of organising the workshop, a task made much easier because of the assistance and support given by the Civil Defence in Dunedin and Wellington, the Fire Service Training College, Wellington and the members of the Wellington Cultural Conservators (WCC).

Friday 6 March

The workshop was opened by Jack Fry W.C.C. co-ordinator who began by welcoming all participants to the workshop and introducing members of the W.C.C. individually.

He went on to say:

"Conservation is the "in" thing these days with a great deal of thought being given by our government in increasing the number of conservators and facilities in the country. Our group realised that all this effort could be wasted with one single major disaster and therefore we have made planning for disaster preparedness one of our major objectives."

This was followed by the key-note speaker Mr Ken Frazer, Civil Defence Officer, Dunedin Combined Area. His talk entitled "When Disaster Strikes" was very much an eye opener for most people as Mr Frazer's experience was very wide ranging covering the salvage of museum objects in Asia where he served as a police officer, to his supervision of the Abbotsford disaster and salvage of property after the sudden destruction of homes following a land slip.

One of the points he raised during his talk was who would be ultimately responsible for making decisions on the hire of special equipment and purchase of materials and who would carry the financial liability afterwards? It may just be the

person who signed the order form. This was a problem he was sometimes faced with and might easily be a situation any one of us could be confronted with when emergency action needed to be taken.

During his talk Mr Frazer also covered such points as the effects of a major disaster on public utilities including art galleries and museums, the extent of assistance we might expect from Civil Defence authorities and the need for basic pre-planning.

The evening closed with two excellent films on the dangers created by fire, these were *INCENDIO* and *HOSPITALS DON'T BURN DOWN*.

Saturday 7th March

Although most of us will probably only be involved with salvage and mopping-up after a disaster it can be very helpful to experience under controlled conditions, some of the dangers a disaster presents. For this reason a whole day was spent at the Wellington Fire Training College under the supervision of Assistant Fire Commander Bob Anderson.

The morning was given over to a lecture and slides on the chemistry of fire and how to avoid fires. After lunch students were given practical experience in fire fighting and how to evacuate a smoke filled room. Different types of fire were extinguished by the students using a variety of common extinguishers available in most institutions, there were a few surprises when it was found that many of the extinguishers were useless unless used properly by experienced people.

Finally everyone received a good soaking while learning to handle salvage sheets when protecting property from water. This was achieved by hosing water into a specially constructed tower, where students were required to carry the salvage sheets up three floors and erect them in such a way as to direct water away from one area into another. Although everyone had a lot of fun the conditions simulated in the water tower could easily be experienced after a fire or flooding.

Our original intention was to leave Saturday evening free but many people wanted to see other films on recent disasters that were borrowed for the workshop, these included films of Hurricane Agnes and the damage it caused to Northern Australia, and a hotel fire in South America where many lives were lost through lack of forethought.

Sunday 8th March

The third day of the workshop was again meant to be as practical as possible, therefore, after I had

delivered a short paper entitled *The Need For Disaster Preparedness* which is reproduced at the end of this report, talks were also given under the general heading of *The Salvage of Water Damaged Cultural Materials*. These talks were well illustrated with slides and art work and were given as follows:

Jeavons Baillie	:	Paper
Valerie Carson	:	Textiles
Don Murchison	:	Easel Painting and Fine Arts
Jack Fry	:	Artifacts

As one of the most common problems we are likely to be faced with is water damage a library was created in a room at the National Museum Conservation Unit and hosed down with water for three days. To add a little realism a quantity of garden soil and refuse was spread around the floor and some lower shelves.

Working in three teams under conditions that would be typical of a flood situation i.e. no lighting or heat, the books had to be marked for future identification, packed into crates and moved to either cleaning areas, drying areas or packed for transport to a freezing unit.

All work surfaces and drying lines had to be made from any materials available (which would be the case in any emergency) so it soon became obvious to everyone that without any preparation, salvage of any kind is very difficult, if not impossible in some cases.

The Need for Disaster Preparedness

*Paper Presented by
Tony Clarke at the Workshop*

I hope that by the end of this weekend the need for disaster preparedness will be all too obvious and each one of you will leave here with enough encouragement to form disaster action teams within your own institutions.

To begin my talk this morning I think it is important to consider the meaning of disaster, which is defined as "a sudden unforeseen, and extraordinary misfortune, an unlucky chance or occurrence".

A disaster can come at any time, happen to anybody and need not be large in scale. A disaster could be the loss of an entire museum collection through fire, or one very rare manuscript or painting through misuse or vandalism. The important thing is to be prepared for the worst that can hap-



Disaster Preparedness Workshop Participants

pen and you will be able to cope with almost any other minor disaster.

Perhaps I should add at this point that a disaster need not be caused by sudden dangers such as fire or flood which can destroy in minutes. Many disasters are being created at a much slower rate. I'm talking now of the destruction of valuable cultural property through exposure to high levels of light, atmospheric pollution and poor storage conditions. This is another subject though, and a problem to be dealt with by your conservation officer and not within the scope of this workshop.

The sort of disasters we are concerned with are created by such things as fire, smoke, water, hurricane, volcanic activity, earthquake, land slip, faulty plumbing, faulty wiring, and faulty building maintenance to name just a few.

Some examples of these are:

The Florence flood 1966

The Corning Museum of Glass flood 1972

National Personnel Records Center fire St. Louis 1973

Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro fire 1978
Stamford University Meyer Library flood 1978
Taylor Institution Library at Oxford University 1979

It was my original intention to describe these disasters in more detail but it's all too easy to quote things that happen overseas, so I thought I would concentrate on New Zealand only. Unfortunately our small country has the potential for disasters of similar proportions. In its report to the Commission in 1979 the New Zealand Fire Service reported answering calls to 3 art galleries, 11 libraries and 3 museums over a three year period from 1976-78. If we also consider the value of our collections in monetary terms, which is increasing daily due to inflation and the present high monetary prices being paid for art works on the world markets, and the fact that the cultural property in our care could never be replaced even if we had all the money in the world, I wonder why we have waited so long to do something about disaster preparedness.

We are all aware of the Abbotsford Disaster and the experiences of the people in Dunedin. Imagine the problems that could have been created if a museum, library or art gallery were built on that land.

These have all occurred within the past five years, and in nearly every case could not be foreseen as the danger did not come from within but from an outside source.

There is also the occasion, not illustrated here, of the damage by water in the Dental College Library, Wellington. This was caused when a dental chair being installed on the floor above was not correctly plumbed. During the night water drained through the ceiling and down the walls of the library. All the books were on shelving against these walls, therefore 85% of them were water damaged. To add to this most were out of print and could not be replaced. They were also nearly all printed on a heavily coated paper which blocks very quickly when wet.

As these books were in constant use by the staff and students you can imagine the feeling of loss and helplessness that the principal felt when she arrived at work that morning. Fortunately with advice from myself and the assistance of 40 first and second year students they were able to save every book, though some were a little distorted when dry.

I have used these two illustrations to show that although the cause of the second disaster was less dramatic than the first, the damage was just as extensive.

How does all this effect you or your institutions?

I think disaster preparedness begins with disaster "awareness".

Try to imagine potential disaster areas for example, is your building close to a river? Does that river flood during heavy rain? The next time it floods may be the first time flood water has reached your building.



Disaster Preparedness Workshop Participants.

Are books and paintings stacked on the floor or raised off the floor?

They need only be raised about 7cm to be clear of water that may seep along the floor.

Do you share a building with other tenants? They may be your biggest source of danger if they use dangerous chemicals or have no fire protection.

Don't let rubbish accumulate where it can become a fire hazard.

When you are aware of possible dangers to your collections you are half way to preventing a disaster. Remember the definition I quoted earlier it began "A Disaster is sudden and unforeseen".

Now we come to the formation of a disaster action team.

I think it would be easier for me to tell you about our own emergency conservation unit and how we came into being, then from this you may like to consider how best to form a group from your own staff.

When the Wellington Cultural Conservations was formed almost two years ago the members were concerned that although most of their colleagues were aware of the possible danger of a disaster, none were able or prepared to take the initiative in forming a disaster action team. This was understandable to a certain extent because although there are publications by the score on the subject

few of the recommendations had gone past the theory stage.

We therefore decided to form an emergency conservation unit from our own members which meant that in the event of a disaster help could be summoned from the other twenty members, which is a comfort for some of our members who work on their own for most of their day.

Of course this need not apply to you if members are formed from the staff of your institution.

I began by preparing a manual which contained:

- 1) A list of members together with their home and business telephone numbers.
- 2) Important phone numbers such as Police, Traffic Department, etc.
- 3) Telephone numbers of suppliers of equipment we are likely to require in an emergency.
- 4) List of contents for an emergency pack.
- 5) list of additional equipment.
- 6) Telephone assistance forms.
- 7) Disaster prevention checklist.

This was followed by preparing a stock of materials most likely to be required in an emergency such as waste paper for wrapping, terry towels, buckets, polythene sheeting.

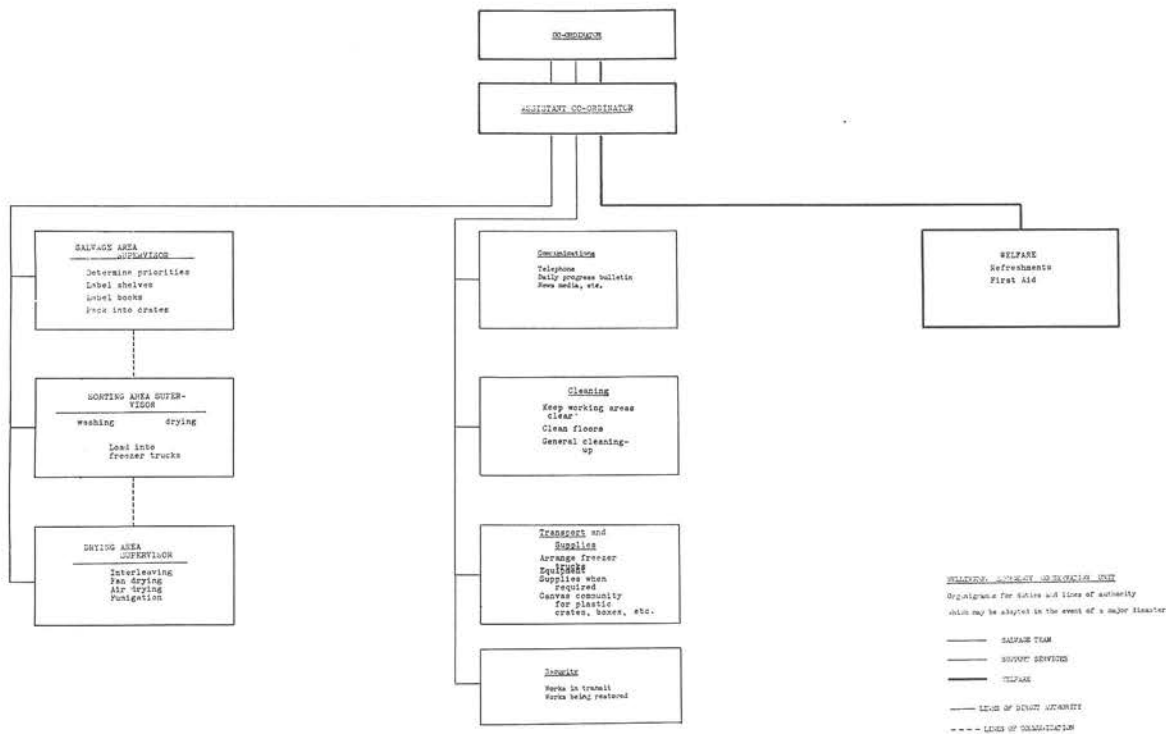
Then came training, this is not quite so easy to do as it requires the assistance and co-operation of anyone involved in the job of protecting property and people. In this area we have had invaluable assistance from the Wellington Fire Service and Civil Defence. You could also consider insurance companies, loss assessors or Red Cross in fact take every opportunity you can to pick their brains, as it is also in their interest that you show concern to protect the material you are responsible for.

The protection of property however takes second place to your own protection. Our members have come to realise through our own training sessions the need for protective clothing such as hard hats, overalls, gloves and safety shoes.

I have seen well meaning volunteers taking their shoes off when assisting with salvage operations in a recent flood. If they had trodden on unseen broken glass or jagged metal covered by dirty water or dropped something on their feet, they would not only have rendered themselves useless to the salvage team, they would have become a burden. As it would then require another member of the workforce to help them.

Remember salvage operations are dangerous and not for the inexperienced.

A first aid box should also be available and your



members trained in basic first aid with revision courses at least annually.

I would like to remind you once again to prepare for the obvious but expect the unexpected.

Remember we had time to prepare and we knew the disaster we would be dealing with. How well will you cope if you arrive at work tomorrow morning to find your office flooded and untold damage to your collections?

When considering emergency preparedness plans a very useful leaflet to have is the "*American Association for State and Local History, Technical Leaflet No 114*", an annotated bibliography which provides useful references on the topic.

Another very useful booklet is "*Disaster Prevention and Disaster Preparedness*" by Hilda Bohem published by the University of California.

We must now look at organising the people that are available in a way that everyone understands their duties and how they relate to others in the salvage operation. To assist with this I have drawn up an organigramme which could be modified to suit individual needs.

Finally if you are unable to form a disaster action team and are forced to request assistance from outside your area remember you would have to provide local knowledge of equipment and material suppliers, so pre-planning is still essential.

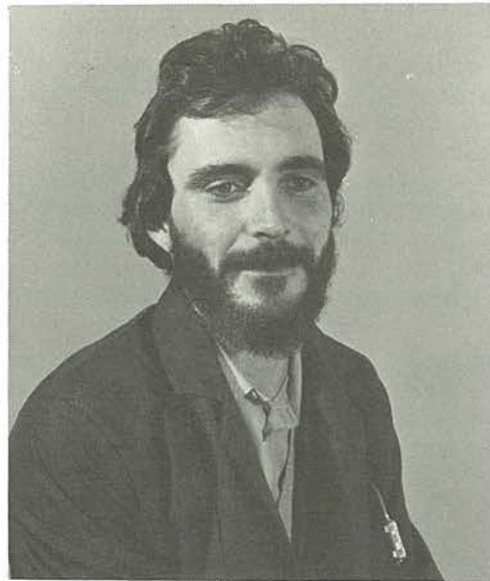
The Protection of Works of Art During Transit

*Don Murchison,
Conservator, National Art Gallery*

As Conservator at the National Art Gallery in Wellington, I am concerned about the preservation of works of art during transport.

The increase in the number of travelling¹ exhibitions in this country requires from gallery personnel adequate provision for the safety of works of art — entrusted to their care. The purpose of this report is to indicate briefly standard procedures that have been used successfully overseas for the transport of works of art.

Attention must be paid to conditions of temperature and relative humidity in transit. Variance from safe norms can lead to cleavage, flaking and peeling of paint. Above 70% RH, mould growth may develop on a painting's surface. Optimum conditions are a RH of 50 to 55% and temperature of 20°C.



Don Murchison, Conservator, National Art Gallery

Although strict environmental conditions are not obtainable in most New Zealand galleries, the building itself offers substantial protection against rapid temperature changes. On the other hand, a work of art in transit is more susceptible to external environmental conditions. Sudden temperature drops may cause condensation on the surface of a painting. In addition, the painting will be exposed to vibration and shock.

A brief guide to ensure the safety of works of art during transit involves the following procedures:

Preparation of Painting

1. Prior to packing, the works should be examined, documented, and photographed.
2. Ensure the painting is in a sound condition. The fitting of the paintings in their frames should be checked to ensure against slippage. The frame should have a protective backing board. If the work is glazed, the glass should be taped with masking tape.
3. The canvas supports of easel paintings should be slackened slightly before adjusting the keys to reduce shock and vibration. Remember to tape the keys into their new position to prevent them from becoming dislodged and damage the art work.
4. Paintings should be wrapped in a couple of layers of archival or acid-free tissue then a layer of mylar or polyethelene is wrapped around the painting as a barrier against moisture. Finally, bubble pack is wrapped around the painting as an additional barrier and insulation against extreme environmental conditions.

Construction of Cases

5. All construction materials for the cases should be preconditioned (seasoned) to the same condition as the works of art.
6. Cases should be constructed of new material such as plywood, measuring ¼" to ¾" thick. Pine should be used at the joints. The wood should be painted outside with a light coloured waterproof paint.
7. The cases should be lined with a layer of polyethelene sheeting and two layers of compressed fibre-board to act as a thermally-insulating and moisture retentive envelope to surround the art works.
8. Consideration should be given to the size of openings of trucks, train cars, and aircraft and cases packed as airtight as possible.

Placing Pictures in Cases

9. It is assumed that pictures are placed vertically and can be supported on foam rubber as a protection against shock and vibration.

Lids

10. Lids should be suitably hinged with positive locking devices that permit tight sealing, or lids may be screwed down. However, nailed-down lids are not advisable.

Labels

11. Identification labels should be applied by an adhesive or stencil.
12. Internal temperatures of trucks, trains, warehouses, planes, etc., should be 20- 50°C.

On Arrival

14. Paintings should not be opened for 24 hours prior to unpacking.
15. When paintings are unpacked, a second condition report should be made and packing cases and materials stored under the same conditions.

If these recommendations are adhered to, works of art in transit should survive New Zealand's very variable maritime climate.

Bibliography

Stolow, Nathan "Standards for the Care of Works of Art in Transit" Paper read at IIC London Conference on Museum Climatology; London, England, September 19, 1967.

Toishi, Kenzo. "Humidity Control in a Closed Package" Studies in Conservation, IIC, Vol. 4, No. 3, August 1959, pp.81-87.

Interview with Valerie Carson, Textile Consultant at the National Museum

Jan Bieringa, Editor

JB

Valerie you were already working at the National Museum prior to your training.

VC

Yes, I worked as a volunteer with the Embroiderers Guild and all the time we were very aware of the limits of our expertise and fortunately we knew when to stop, we didn't ever go too far. I also reviewed books for the National Library, one being by Karen Finch who is the Director of the Textile Conservation Centre in London and in the back I read of the training programme which she runs. Encouragement from Dr John Yaldwyn and my family led me to apply for the course which was to cost me fifteen hundred pounds. Money very generously came from the Interim Conservation Council, the Historic Places Trust, the Federation of University Women and the Mobil Environmental Scheme — the first time they had given to cultural conservation. I was accepted for the course.

JB

Is it widely sought after?

VC

About two hundred apply each year and only twelve are accepted so I was extremely lucky — I'm sure Karen Finch sees the need for the choice to be as international as possible. I was the first person from New Zealand and currently there is someone there from Australia. Karen Finch ran the Textile Conservation Department at the Victoria and Albert for a number of years and then she decided to have a family. Being totally inundated with work at home led her to begin a training programme and in April 1975 she was granted an apartment at Hampton Court where the Textile Conservation Centre is

situated. It is the only course available in the world although there are other laboratories which train purely along scientific lines.

JB

From there you came back to New Zealand where you are now firmly established as a consultant in the conservation unit of the National Art Gallery and Museum.

VC

The museum has completely set me up which then leaves me free also to do outside work, for example, for the Historic Places Trust or for that matter anyone who requires my services.

JB

How do you divide your time?

VC

My initial obligation is to the museum as they have established me so well. Additionally there is a superb team feeling working alongside Jack Fry and Don Murchison and the other conservators in Wellington.

JB

Can we talk about the museum collection and what you are working on at the moment?

VC

At present I am working entirely towards the opening of the revamped Colonial history gallery which is due to open in the spring. I have done the carpets (conserved them), some upholstery on the furniture and now I am working on the costumes and uniforms which we hope to be able to change on a six monthly basis. In this way we create a changing situation and at the same time the garments are rested.

JB

Is there adequate storage for these garments?

VC

At the moment we don't have any but we will require some space, for there is no point in conserving articles if storage conditions are poor. For example, the wonderful crenolin dresses must hang on padded hangers with dust covers as opposed to being folded and stored in boxes.

JB

By decent storage you presumably mean the same temperature and light requirements as for paintings and works on paper.

VC

Exactly.

JB

With the extension of the museum is that a possibility?



Valerie Carson, Textile Consultant, National Museum

VC

Yes. I think getting through to curators the importance of this is something conservators have got to do a lot of homework on. Don Murchison is making great strides in that direction.

JB

When you finish on the Colonial history costumes presumably there are a lot of things in the collection you can work on, what are those other areas?

VC

I'm concerned about the Maori collection and plans are afoot next year to begin and assess what needs doing. I feel a real sense of responsibility for those textiles.

JB

Are they really in bad repair?

VC

I haven't really seen very many of them except what is on display but having seen them in museums in the USA and Britain and if the New Zealand ones are anything like them, they would certainly be in need of cleaning.

JB

How would you go about cleaning a feather cloak for example?

VC

Firstly, all that material is grubby and dusty so the general rule is to vacuum all textiles with a hand-held nozzle through a very fine screen so in fact you aren't lifting off the actual feathers.

JB
Presumably using a light pressure cleaner.

VC
Yes, very light. Once the dust is removed we do PH and dye tests which indicate the colour fastness and the type of cleaning required. Basically Maori textiles can be washed but still it is essential to test first. I was involved with the cleaning of a cloak in England. This was a dog's hair cloak — the hair having been shaved was tied into little bundles using New Zealand flax and gathered together to form tassels which were then attached to the cloak. The garment was submerged into de-ionised water containing Lissopoln (conservation detergent) and washed very gently with a sponge. It was washed on a table with a slight incline so if there was any danger of dye running it wouldn't run back into the cloak. Each tassel had to be treated individually and dried with a hand-held dryer on cold — never heat of any sort. All washing and dry cleaning is done with the textile or garment supported on screening so there is no additional strain on the fabric. Actually most cloaks will stand up to washing better than people realise.

JB
Because they are natural fibres?

VC
Yes but only ever under the guidance of a trained conservator. Cleaning makes them lose a lot of the brittleness and thus handling becomes less dangerous.

JB
Feathers would pose a whole new problem I suppose?

VC
In a way but they can be washed, brushed and combed to get all the barbs back together again. Then it depends whether it is a flight bird or a ground bird as the feather types are quite different, e.g. compare the feathers of an ostrich and a seagull.

JB
So a textile conservator requires an enormously wide field of knowledge.

VC
Yes indeed, when you consider upholstery you require a knowledge of woods and fabrics, fans require you to know about ivory, parasols and umbrellas many and varying materials and the list goes on.

I am concerned about what fibre artists are using and when I give talks I usually discuss this. I think it important that people realise the implications of the

short life of any of these materials e.g. jute and hessian have a limited life, maybe twenty years or so.

JB
So increasing the problems of conservators.

VC
Yes and for the people who purchase these works. If they contain wood and metal and are not kept in ideal conditions rust and deterioration occur — a lot to think about for the future and not only the past.

JB
Your supplies of material must come from many different sources?

VC
Yes, from Lyon in France comes pure silk crepolene which is used as a support fabric and then from Zürich comes polyester crepolene which is substantially stronger and will be used for flags and larger pieces. The crepolene is so wonderful because it dyes so successfully and yet is so fine and sheer it becomes invisible. Additionally threads can be removed for stitching but as they are so fine a magnifying glass is used for threading. Otherwise threads are a problem and quite difficult to locate, silk fabrics come from a local supplier and so on. On the whole I have established sources of supply for most things.

JB
Tell me about the documentation that goes with your work.

VC
Everything is documented. It is photographed before, after and maybe during if the item is of particular interest. So a complete report on what you do and maybe recommendations are available with each piece of work, that is for everybody, private or museum. Also drawings and measurements are kept so should students wish to study some aspect of the work it is preferable to use the written material rather than further handling of the garments.

Another area I would like to see developed in the future is a file of textiles for study purposes. I collect scraps as examples of weave, design, type, etc.

JB
I guess this is important for future reference as we progress more and more into synthetics.

Valerie, just one last area I would like to look at briefly with you is the fire at Downstage Theatre on 18 June of this year. As you are the only full time trained textile conservator in New Zealand and also a member of the Wellington Cultural Conservators

Emergency Disaster team it would seem you were the obvious person to assist.

VC

In fact I rang Downstage Theatre and offered my services, it was thought that all costumes were destroyed. However, after inspection my belief was that some costumes were salvageable. We organised a working bee made up of six National Museum members of the Wellington Cultural Conservators Emergency Unit and volunteers from Downstage who were designated jobs and the cooperation was excellent. Quite a lot was saved. I feel I was valuable to the Theatre as "an outsider" to make necessary decisions when the theatre staff were still in a state of shock?

JB

I found the subsequent report on the salvage operations most informative and I'm sure it would be useful to any organisation who has similar holdings to Downstage Theatre, would it be possible for people wanting a copy to write to you.

VC

Most certainly.

Building Design and its Role in the Conservation of Collections of Cultural Material

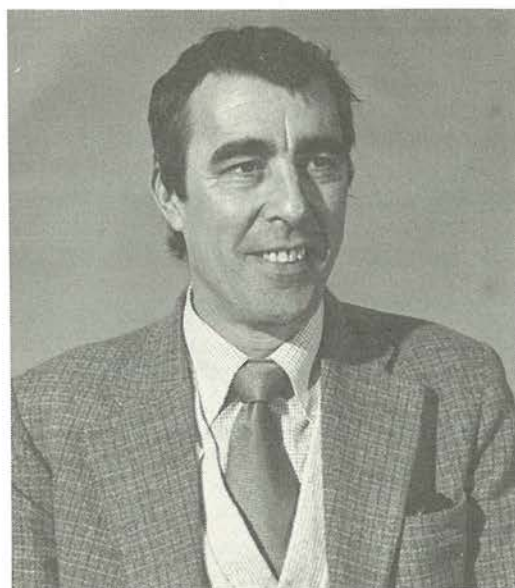
*J. Fry,
Conservation Officer,
National Museum.*

Conservation is a relatively new science. In the past artists have restored paintings only to place them back into the environment that caused the damage in the first place.

It is only during the last fifty or so years that it has been realized the major part the environment plays in the rate of deterioration of cultural material.

In many respects the environment in our institutions is controlled by the structure of the building. This article attempts to describe the problems of deterioration that can be reduced with proper basic building design principles that are specific to the requirements of the functions of our institutions.

Many of the problems of deterioration encountered with items in our collection are due to the building in which they are housed. The conditions that exist within these buildings are often far worse than we would tolerate in our own homes. Yet we who are



Jack Fry, Conservator, National Museum

employed to safeguard our cultural heritage allow these conditions to persist. A commercial organization run on similar lines would have become bankrupt or we would have been asked to seek alternative employment.

An excuse for these problems is that we have inherited a building which is in the wrong location, poorly designed, badly built or insufficiently maintained. But some of us have moved into new buildings or extensions or buildings modified to suit our needs.

My remarks don't only apply to New Zealand as these problems exist throughout the world. The only difference is that the majority of us in New Zealand have realised the full implication of the problems after they were realized in some countries overseas. These overseas countries are still making mistakes but that should not make us complacent. As attendants, board members, conservators, curators, directors, display artists etc., we have taken on the responsibility of safeguarding the collections in our institutes.

One of the excuses put forward relates to the building being a "monument to the architect." But this should not be so as the architect is our servant. He should design the building we want, not what he thinks we want. This is providing that he knows what we want and we know what we want. This is really the major part of the problem, the architect hasn't the experience in the specialised design required and we do not provide a sufficient brief for him.

Our institutions are specialized buildings, they perform several functions — display, storage and research — which are often in opposition to one

another to the extent that physical separation of the different functions, with separate buildings, would solve many problems.

Our display areas are our shop windows; please don't take me literally — logically they should be where the people are. But where people are there is always atmospheric pollution if even only from the internal combustion engine. Most of our cities are by the sea or a river, hence salt-contaminated air and flooding is of concern. There are possibly constraints on the building design, i.e., it is in close proximity to other buildings with the risk of fire and in the event of a war or civil disturbance, it is the cities where damage is most likely to occur.

The storage area is the resting place for the objects after a period of stress whilst on display. After all, we spend a third of our life in bed and we are only expected to last approximately seventy years.

The building should be built like a fortress, away from areas of a likely natural disaster, away from the cities and all their problems. The objects should be secure and out of sight and light — just like being in bed.

The research aspect introduces the third problem area and that is the needs of the staff. We need light, a variable climate, many building services, moderately low security and to be in close proximity to our homes and traffic.

To lump all these functions into one building creates problems for an architect and means that compromises have to be made, generally to the detriment of the object rather than the human being.

We either have a security system where objects walk out faster than the visitors or such a complicated procedure that we look for short cuts and put the object under greater risk.

Separate buildings, in different locations, create logistic problems but it has been done successfully. For example, the War Memorial Museum in Canberra has a storage area and conservation unit in a light industrial estate. It's built like a fort but it is functional and who objects about its appearance when it is amid a group of small factories and warehouses.

Talking of warehouses reminds me that commercial enterprises often separate their functions into separate buildings. For security, hygiene, safety and comfort they don't let you wander around in the freezer with the butcher choosing the week-end roast. Have you ever competed in the cross-country rally with a shopping trolley in a combined supermarket and warehouse?

Because of the special functional requirements architects should be chosen who have a good track record in this field. But this could prove almost impossible in New Zealand as very few of our type of buildings are being constructed. An overseas architect could be employed at possibly great expense and probably at a disadvantage as building regulations, climatic conditions and building materials are different here.

If a local architect is chosen then provision must be made in the brief to attend the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation of Cultural Property (ICCROM) course on museum building or at least visit successful and unsuccessful buildings overseas. Discussion with the overseas architects, engineers and institution staff should assist the architect to make the right decisions in design. The architect is more likely to listen to comments from other architects and overseas experts and could learn a lot about new building materials and recent developments in design for our specialized buildings.

However this only partially answers the questions as methods and materials that have performed satisfactorily overseas have failed rapidly in New Zealand. The architect must seek advice from the various organisations in this country such as Building Research, D.S.I.R., N.Z. Concrete Research, N.Z. Meteorological Service, etc.

Finally, at an early stage, the architect must discuss with the staff of the institution their requirements. Discussion with all the staff should be limited to the very early design process as most of us would like the sunniest offices, the best view, the shortest distance from office to workroom and compromises must be made. But discussion with the staff is an important step as many of us have worked in our specialized institutions for a long time and know the problems of manoeuvring large canoes or 3 m × 4 m paintings through a single door about 2 m high.

Throughout the period of the design and the construction, discussions will be held between the architect, engineers, contractors etc., as problems arise which may mean modifications to the original design. A member of the staff should always be present as part of the building team to ensure that these minor changes do not radically alter the functions of the institution. Selection of that staff member is difficult, a good working knowledge of the institution is essential without a bias towards one particular operation. Problems will arise which call for discussion between different departments and compromises may have to be made to reach a solution.

There are many articles written about art gallery and museum design covering topics such as environment, lighting and security. I wonder how many are read? In fact I wonder how many people have given up before this page?

These articles contain a great deal of information far too detailed for our thoughts on a basic concept of a building. Also of course they generally deal with building in a different climate from New Zealand's.

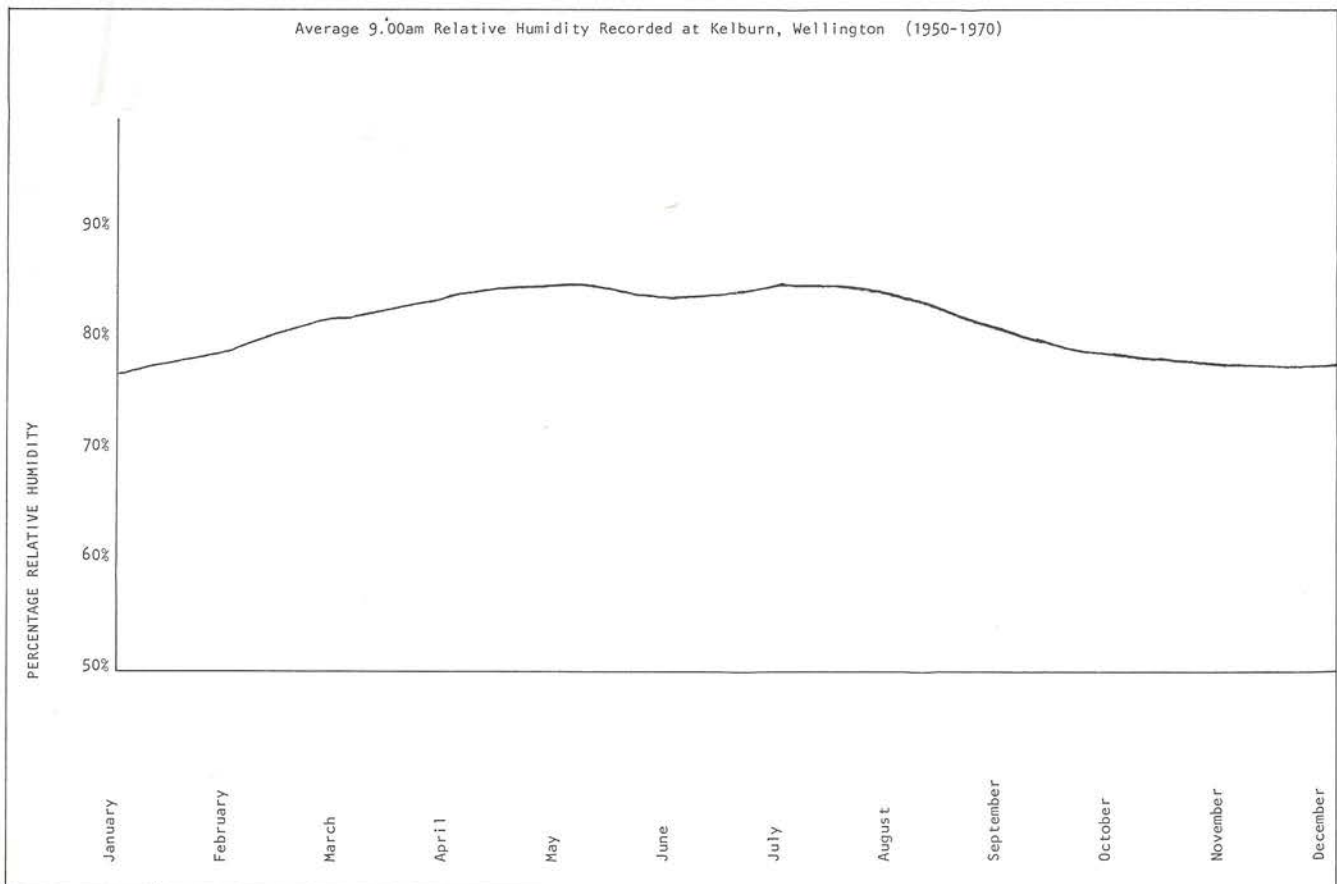
New Zealand has a maritime climate and without a large land mass our temperatures and humidities often go from one extreme to another in the matter of hours. We are exposed to prevailing westerly winds which once they hit the mountain ranges find gaps and come at us in many directions. It is difficult to generalise about our climate because of the topography and our coast line which stretches between 34°S and 40°S latitude. This is a similar distance to that between Casablanca in Morocco and Nantes in France in the northern hemisphere.

Because of our variability of climate my comments will be restricted to the Wellington area. If you believe that your climate is different consult the N.Z. Meteorological Service records for your area. One word of warning though. We are concerned with the changes and rate of change of tempera-

ture and relative humidity. Some computer data print-outs supplied by the N.Z. Meteorological Service only record the temperature and relative humidity at 9 a.m. This gives a picture of the seasonal change, fig. 1, which is useful, but doesn't show the rapid changes that do occur hourly. To obtain these figures it is necessary to obtain thermohygrograph recordings from the N.Z. Meteorological Station, if available. Typical relative humidity records from Kelburn, Wellington, are shown in fig. 1 to illustrate this point.

The relative humidity in Wellington averages out at 80% with a seasonal variation of 8%. This is based on the 9 a.m. recordings. But daily or hourly variations are far more dramatic as shown in a typical summer and winter reading, figs. 2 and 3. These readings are of the external climate but the climate within the building can be considerably different depending upon the structure and services of the building.

Many building materials are capable of absorbing moisture in highly humid conditions and losing moisture when the humidity is low. This action smooths out rapid changes in relative humidity of the surroundings atmosphere. Wood, fibre-board, brick and concrete have this capacity.



The National Art Gallery and National Museum building is constructed of thick concrete floors, walls and in the National Museum concrete ceilings. This massive construction acts as a very good relative humidity regulator, as shown in fig. 4.

Heat is the major driving force for relative humidity change and cold winter air entering a building shows an immediate decrease in humidity as its temperature rises.

We rarely heat our buildings continually throughout the twenty-four hour period, tending to turn the heat on during the early morning and off in the afternoon, giving a cyclic effect of both temperature and humidity.

Unfortunately the external climate generally does the same thing in Wellington as the temperature rises during the morning the humidity falls and the reverse happens during the afternoon.

By combining this external effect with the heating cycle in the building the results can be disastrous with exceptionally low humidities occurring early afternoon and high humidities in the early hours of the morning, see fig. 5. Once again the structure of

the building can come to the rescue, if it is of a massive construction, i.e., brick and concrete walls, it will accept and store heat, releasing it when the surrounding air is colder and vice versa.

Windows, by losing heat during the winter and gaining heat by solar radiation in the summer, will also upset the thermal balance of the building and the relative humidity even in a building where the structure is massive.

Full air-conditioning of the building will solve these problems provided that the equipment is capable of accommodating all the variations of the climate and other external requirements such as a large influx of visitors. But air-conditioning is expensive to install and expensive to run, especially in these days of increasing costs of energy.

Many building materials that are capable of acting as moisture and heat stores are a far cheaper alternative in the long run and will not fail in the event of a power cut.

However, to function properly, they should be protected from the external environment because they will lose their moisture and heat store capabilities if they get wet.

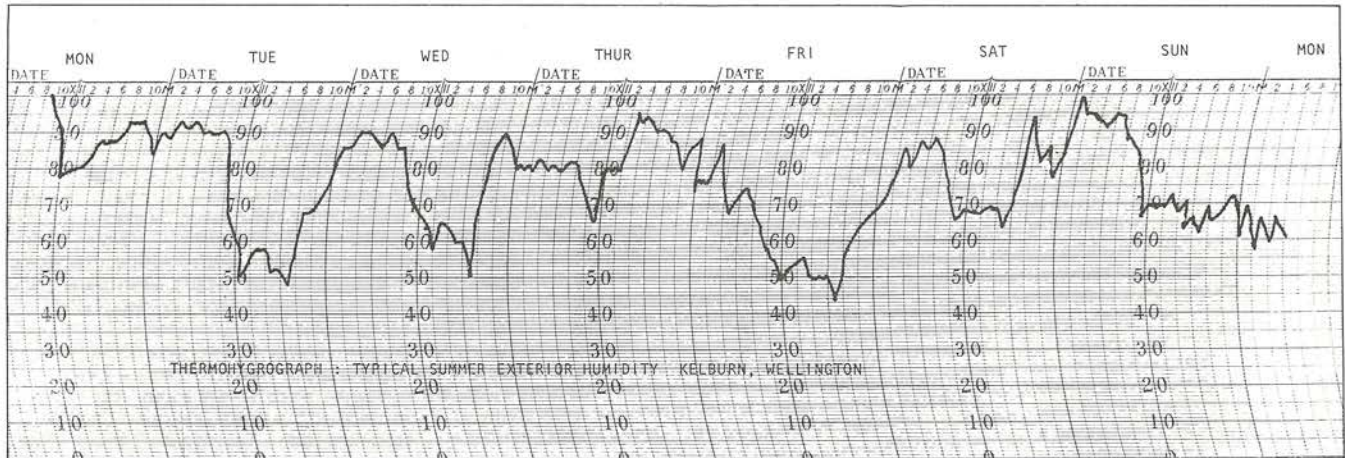


Fig. 2

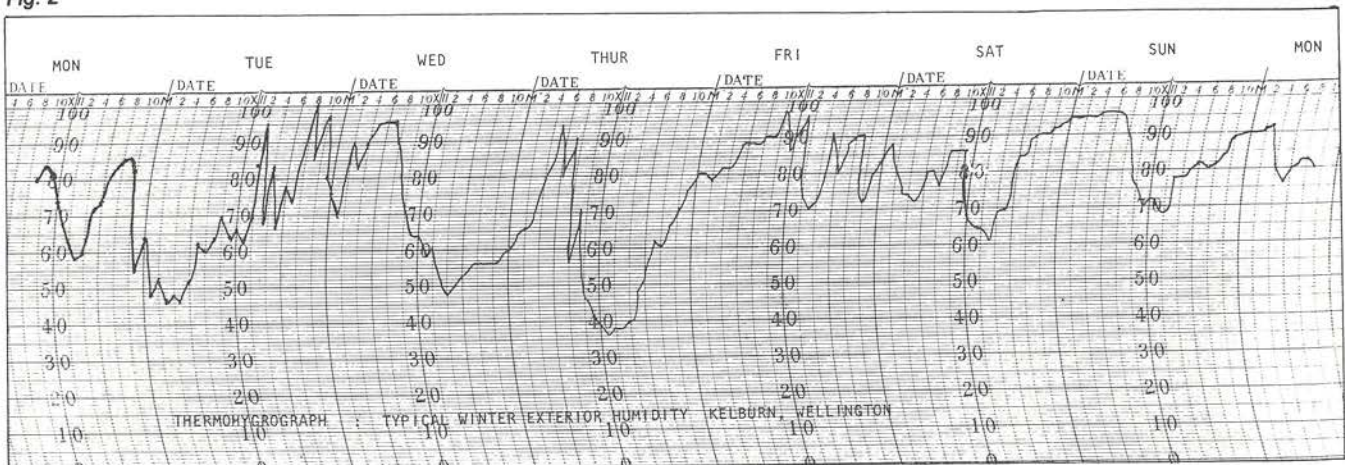


Fig. 3

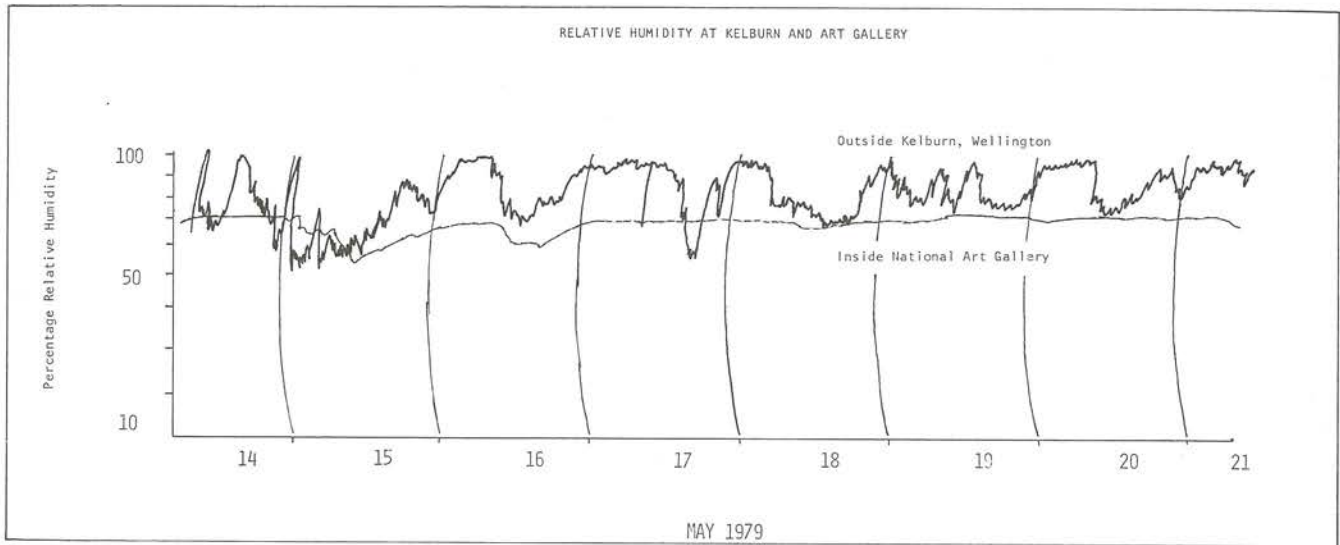


Fig. 4

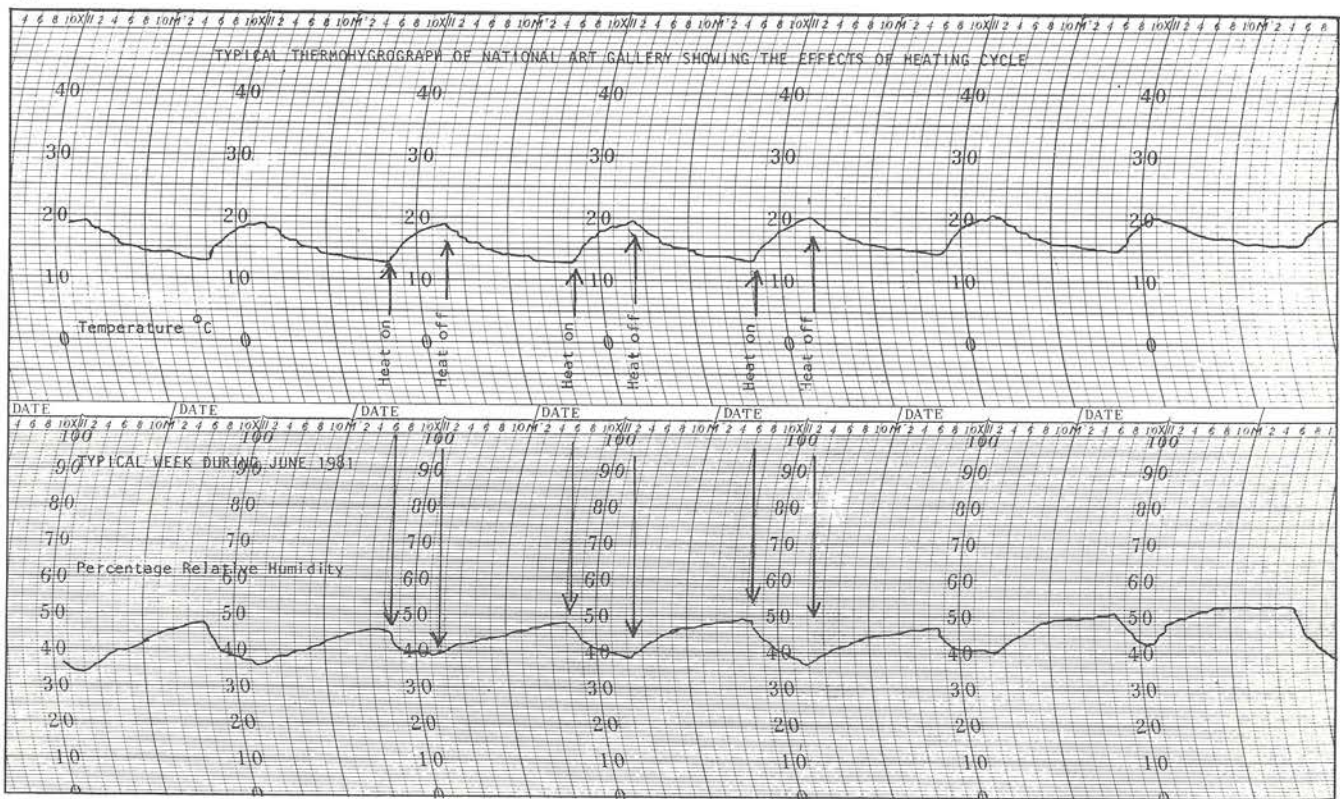


Fig. 5

One method of protecting them from the external climate is to insulate and waterproof on the outside but this is a very tricky operation needing great care in design and construction. One small leak in the waterproofing layer turns the insulating layer into a wet sponge and then the problems really begin.

A far better method is to use offices, corridors, workshops and laboratories as the insulating layer. Then only the outer layer has to be watertight. This method overcomes many other problems. It gives the staff pleasant working conditions where the climate is more variable, very few people like to work in a room with a constant temperature as the

temperature contrast between a room and the external climate is too great in the height of the summer and winter. With the staff areas situated between the external climate and the constant climate a far more agreeable condition is reached. This also allows the storage and display areas to be windowless and the staff areas to have all the natural daylight they require. Thick concrete or brick walls of the store, without windows and with few doors provide security against theft, vandalism and most of all, fire. A rough sketch of an ideal design is shown in fig. 6.

As staff areas require services such as telephones, electricity, gas, water and waste, these can be installed around the perimeter of the building. This reduces both the risk of fire and flood and the need for tradesmen to enter the central storage areas.

Natural disaster will often present less of a problem than the greater possibility of flooding from rain penetrating the building. Architects seem to be fascinated with flat roofs. Maybe they are easier to design or cheaper to build, I don't know. What I have learnt from bitter experience is that they will inevitably leak at some time in their life. And trying to trace the source of the leak is a difficult job. Water lies on a flat roof forming ponds and seeking out weak places in the waterproofing for it to percolate through the structure.

Pitched or sloping roofs can have holes in them big enough to see through and yet if the pitch is steep enough the water will run off faster than it runs through the hole. If water does enter then it often runs down the inside to the eave, causing little damage.

A single pitched roof will shed the water to the perimeter of the building, away from harm. Where pitched roofs fail is when they intersect one another. (Then water may collect within the core of the building) or, if for the sake of aesthetics, rain water pipes are set within the structure of the

building. The water should be removed to the outside of the building as soon as possible, if external pipes block they cause the minimum amount of damage and the problem can be easily seen and rectified.

If at all possible the building should be of a uniform height. If we add turrets and towers like a fairy castle then roofs have to join the walls of higher parts of the building. Where there is a joint there is a potential leak, either through settlement, thermal, moisture or seismic movement. Most of the materials used to seal joints between building sections are made from organic materials. Many will oxidise and become brittle. All of them are attacked by sunlight. Some of these seals are claimed to last fifteen to twenty-five years, but they will fail eventually.

Sunlight or lighting in our institutions is probably one of the most controversial conservation topics in building design that has yet to be resolved. We know that all three forms of light — ultra-violet, visible and infra-red — cause damage to organic materials — our collections. Because of its longer wave length, infra-red causes the least amount of damage. Yet the heat generated will affect the humidity and speed up chemical attack, either by atmospheric pollution or the inherent chemical instability in the objects. On the other hand, ultra-violet radiation causes serious and often rapid

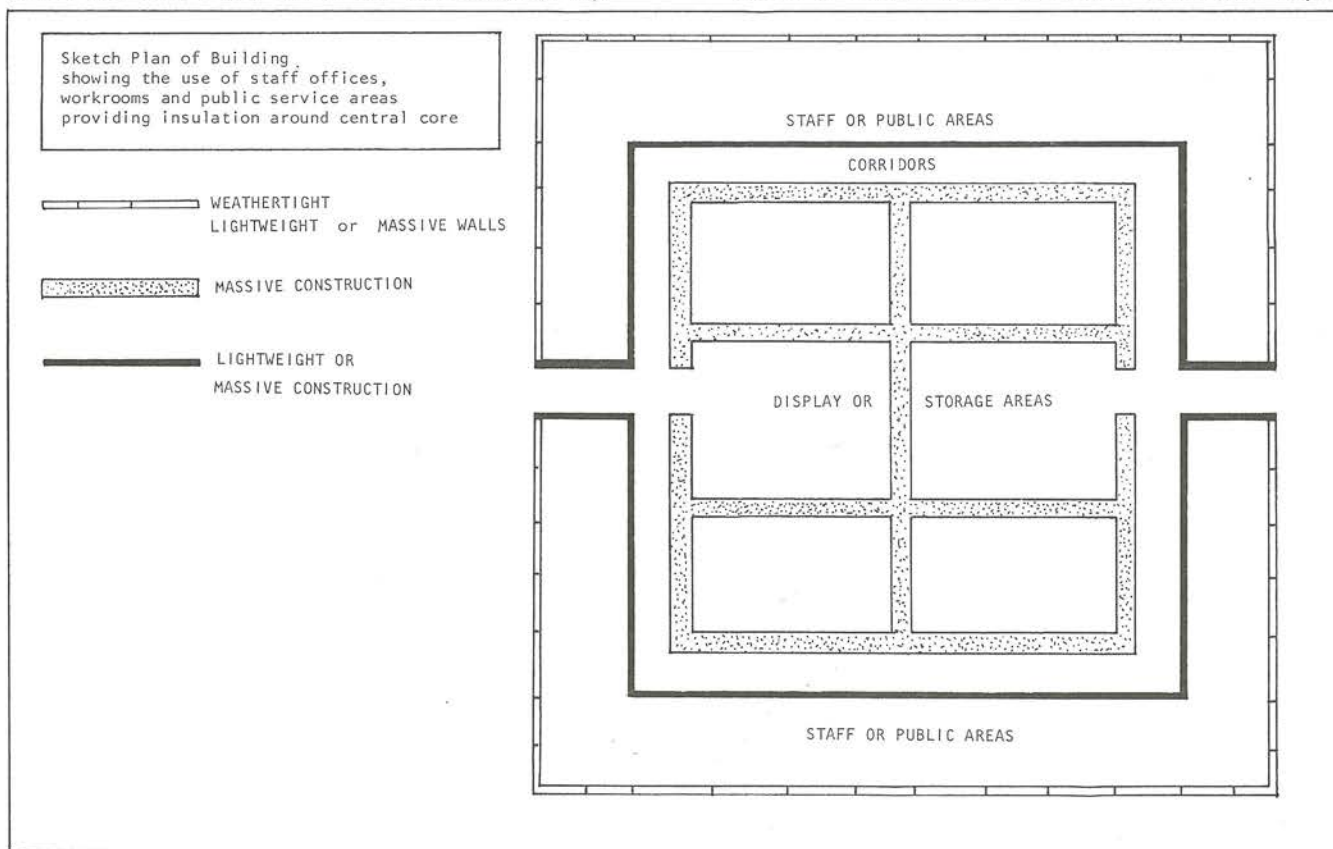


Fig. 6

damage to pigments, dyes, textiles, feathers, paper etc.

Fortunately the majority of our collections are indoors and ultra-violet radiation has to pass through glass to reach the object. Glass filters out the most destructive portion of the ultra-violet radiation, even so what remains will still cause serious damage. For example: the loss of colour of a greenstone mere held in the National Museum collection.

The damage done by visible light is not so severe, but it is accumulative damage. When exposed to continued illumination by visible light for a long period, objects will deteriorate. Unfortunately visible light is a necessary evil for display but not, and I hope that you will agree with me, for items in storage.

Recommended visible lighting levels for items in our collections vary from 50 lux for the most light sensitive to 300 lux for the most light resistant material. These figures are based on the total amount of illumination that will fall on an object throughout one year. With daylight this would be the light level x 12 hours approximately, x 365 days.

But daylight is very variable and difficult to control. Out of doors readings have shown a variability of 60,000 lux to 1,000 lux, 60:1. Inside our Maori Hall with its glass roof readings have varied from 48,600 lux to 400 lux, 121:1.

As a conservator I cannot see an easy answer to controlling natural light. If fixed filters are fitted to reduce 48,600 lux down to 50 lux on a sunny day, we'll have a "Black Hole of Calcutta" effect on a dull day. If movable filters are fitted, who moves them? If they are operated by photoelectric cells they will probably rattle backwards and forwards as the many clouds we have pass in front of the sun. Very

distracting and possibly very expensive to install and operate.

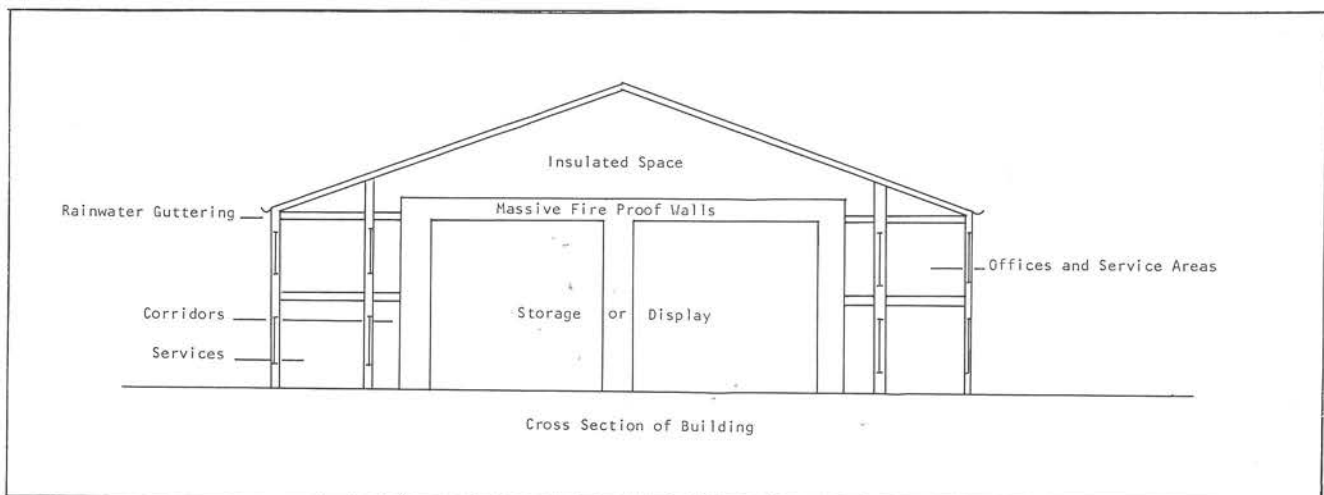
Personally, I believe that display areas should not have any windows and should be lit by controllable artificial light. I know that people will disagree with me on the grounds of energy costs but how will this compare with the cost of air-conditioning to compete with the heat losses and gains from windows? Some will say that visitors need windows in a building but we never find windows at cinemas or theatres where people go to see other displays.

Others will comment on the colour rendition of natural lighting but the "colour" of daylight varies throughout the day: at 50 lux, daylight looks cold and grey and needs red light for warmth.

Having stated my case and counteracted some of the arguments I will hurriedly leave this section and pass on to security.

The exterior of my ideal building will have plenty of windows and doors for the staff and visitors. These can create security problems. In order that the exterior of the building presents a deterrent to any would-be thief the building lines should be straight from corner to corner. No little nooks and crannies that cannot be illuminated at night or easily surveyed by the police or security guards as they drive past.

Finally, I must comment on the basement. If there has to be a basement then use it only for what it's intended for, building services and possibly the storage of empty boxes and broken office furniture, not as a storage place for valuable cultural material. If there ever is a flood from a storm or water from a fire or burst pipe this is where the water generally ends up and often has to be pumped out. The building I have described and sketched in cross-section fig. 7 is somewhat austere. But an



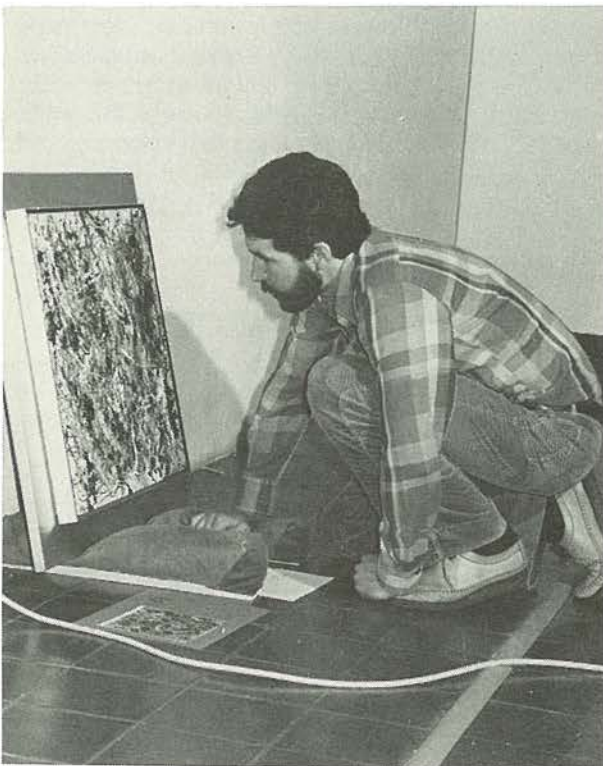
architect with artistic capabilities, and with the wide range of durable and colourful building materials that are available, could turn this functional sow's ear into a silk purse, making it sufficiently interesting to attract visitors.

I have only covered a few of the many points needed in an architect's brief. Further advice will have to be sought from the many experts in this field to produce a satisfactory brief.

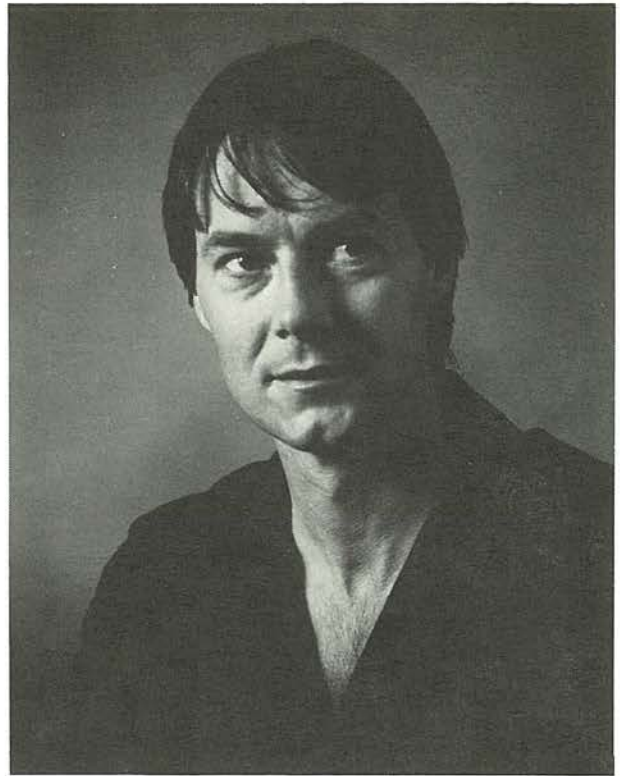
This article is mainly devoted to help people in the design stage of a new building but I hope it will also assist in part the readers who are contemplating alterations to an existing building. It is hoped that many of these topics will be covered during the planning stages for the alteration to an existing building. It is hoped that many of these topics will be covered during the planning stages for the alteration to the existing National Art Gallery and National Museum building complex to produce a building fit for its role in protecting our cultural heritage.

Auckland City Art Gallery Conservation Laboratory

*Ed Kulka,
Senior Conservator, Auckland City Art Gallery.*



Ed Kulka, National Conservator, Auckland City Art Gallery



Mervyn Hutchinson, Conservator, Auckland City Art Gallery

The first conservation laboratory in New Zealand was established in 1953 at Auckland City Art Gallery by C.L. Lloyd, to remedy a "situation which had grown desperate". Today, the laboratory is staffed by two senior conservators responsible for the conservation of the collection and an exhibitions conservator in charge of monitoring the environmental conditions in the galleries, storage, packing of exhibitions and condition reports.

At present the entire art gallery is undergoing renovations. The conservators are thus called on to consult with engineers and architects regarding air-conditioning, lighting and storage systems as well as contending with the usual string of interruptions, dust and dirty water.

The conservation laboratory is currently divided into two sections, one to handle paintings, the other, works of art on paper. These will be augmented by an examination area which will handle all documentation including X-rays. The space will also house a spraybooth, small dark room and storage racks.

At the moment the laboratory is staffed by senior conservators Ed Kulka and Mervyn Hutchinson.

Ed Kulka holds a B.A. and a Master of Museology degree from the University of Toronto. In 1975 after working for the Canadian Department of External Affairs as co-ordinator of touring exhibitions he

enrolled in the Master of Art Conservation programme at Queens University in Canada. He was employed by the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa until taking up his post as senior conservator at the Auckland City Art Gallery.

Mervyn F. Hutchinson holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of British Columbia and a Masters in Art Conservation from Queens University in Canada. Upon completion of his degree at Queens, he worked at both the Canadian Conservation Institute and at the National Gallery of Canada before opening a private practise which he operated in Vancouver, British Columbia until taking up his present duties at A.C.A.G. in November 1980.

One or two students completing their conservation training will also be on the staff as interns at various times of the year.

The paintings laboratory is presently equipped to undertake major and minor treatments of works of art. These may include surface cleaning, varnish removal, consolidation of flaking paint, lining, compensation of losses and reframing to conservation standards.

A major part of many treatments is the lining of a painting. This involves the adhesion of a new canvas backing to the original canvas which may have been torn or is too brittle and degraded to safely hold the paint layer. Traditionally this operation has been carried out with hand irons and later a vacuum hot table. However, it has been observed with contemporary paintings that certain colours and effects such as areas of bare canvas cannot be lined in the traditional manner. To this end the cold lining table has been developed. The A.C.A.G. laboratory hopes to build such a table to compliment its aging vacuum hot table and thus expand its repertoire of lining treatments.

In the next six to eight months while the A.C.A.G. "Artichoke" exhibition is in full swing the paintings conservation section will do a complete survey of the collection which will include condition reports and photographic documentation. This information will aid in the detection of any future deterioration or damage and will enable curators and conservators to better establish priorities for treatment. In addition technicians will put backings on all paintings and padding along the rabbet edges of the frames to prevent abrasion around the margins of the paintings.

When it is completed, the documentation section of the laboratory will allow a relatively complete analysis of most art works for both art historical and conservation purposes. At present it includes infra-red, ultra-violet and microscopic inspection of art works, as well as some limited physical and

chemical analysis of materials. In the near future this will be expanded to include an X-ray facility.

The A.C.A.G. paper laboratory, like the corresponding painting facility handles all conservation/restoration problems as they appear during the normal exhibition schedule. These cover the spectrum from minor dry cleaning and mending of tears to complex projects involving colour testing, removal of backings, wet cleaning, bleaching, deacidification, restoration of losses and retouching.

For the past two years the paper laboratory has also been involved in a long term "preservation project" on the gallery's collection of prints and drawings. The basic intention has been to work through the entire collection from A to Z doing only remedial preservation work. The goal is to stabilize the collection by removing or neutralizing all those elements of the work responsible for further deterioration as for example old adhesive residues. In this way we hope to "preserve" the collection in its present condition, leaving the major restoration projects as they will appear during the exhibition schedule.

The preservation programme begins with a condition report on each object which includes measurements, inscriptions, media and type of paper as well as a short report on present condition and a space for adding treatments which may be required. The image is then photographed. The next step is remedial conservation treatment. The extent of this work varies from print to print but most often involves the removal of degraded tape and adhesives, flyspots or other accretions, as well as acidic mats and backings. Tears are also mended to prevent them from catching and lengthening. If required, the work may also be dry cleaned with a soft eraser or vinyl powder.

The print is now re-photographed if the treatment has changed the image or revealed some area not visible prior to treatment. In addition to their use in conservation the photographs can be used as a visual record of the collection as well as for reproduction purposes.

All works of art are now returned to the print room and stored in wooden solander boxes lined with archival board. At the same time archival quality mats are cut and assembled corresponding to the four standard frame sizes and solander box sizes. The art works are then hinged to the mats with rice starch paste or cellofas B3500 paste and Japanese tissue of the appropriate weight and returned to the solander boxes. The prints and drawings are now in a stable condition. When it is their turn for exhibition they will be re-examined

Conservation at the Anthropology Department, University of Auckland,

and any major treatment necessary will be carried out prior to hanging of the show.

In addition to basic conservation the laboratory is also involved in a number of other areas including the testing of materials, for example accelerated aging of adhesives and tapes, pH determinations of acidic papers, and colour fading and varnish deterioration studies.

Each Tuesday is set aside for consultation and members of the public can bring in art works for an appraisal of their condition and suggestions for their preservation. A series of seminars and workshops covering environmental control and basic preservation techniques is also being conducted for museology students. These functions as well as gallery surveys are part of the national conservation aspect of the Auckland laboratory.

Within the next two years the Auckland laboratory will be expanded into a regional conservation center as part of the national conservation scheme. As such it will service the fine art conservation requirements of the smaller galleries in the North Island in conjunction with a similar laboratory in Wellington. This will require an expansion of the staff and existing facilities of the present Auckland laboratory — a procedure which we are currently engaged in. It is also anticipated that a second series of regional laboratories will eventually be established to service the conservation of museum material which is also in need of attention.



Karel Peters, Technical Officer, Anthropology Dept.,
University of Auckland.

Karel Peters, Technical Officer.

In the Auckland University's Anthropology Department conservation has been carried out over the last 16 years. It has established experience in the treatments of wet-wood and ethnographic conservation.

It began some 16 years ago with the treatment of approximately 300 part or complete Maori wooden combs excavated from a site near Katikati, Bay of Plenty, and since then it has undertaken many projects for museums and institutions throughout New Zealand and even the Pacific.

At the present a rare intricately carved *Pare*, found in Hamilton is undergoing treatment with artefacts excavated by Waikato Museum and Anthropology Department's archaeologists. Some 1500 wooden artefacts from Kohika, Bay of Plenty were discovered during rescue excavations by staff members.

A freeze-drying machine is in its final stages of construction and it is hoped to have it operational before the end of the year.

Ethnographic conservation is also carried out and projects undertaken include the important collections from the Melanesian Mission House in Auckland and various objects for Museums. One of the most important items which required treatment, and was treated by the Department's laboratory was, in my mind, the beautiful wooden sculpture from Nukuoro, now a centrepiece of the Pacific Hall at the Auckland Museum.

Conservation of Maori Meeting Houses and Monuments is carried out on behalf of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and only this month a big conservation project came to its successful conclusion with the re-dedication of a Maori Meeting House at Te Puke. Here the carvings were completely restored and consolidated as well as the painted *kowhaiwhai* surfaces in the porch.

The following described ethnographic projects were carried out at the laboratory with Ms Lindsay Knowles, and were part of a training project in ethnographic conservation undertaken by Ms Knowles before embarking on an overseas conservation course. The artefacts were obtained from the Auckland Institute and Museum and the work was written up by both Ms Lindsay Knowles and myself.

"The conservation of a Cook Island dancing mask and a Maori gourd" by Lindsay Knowles and Karel Peters, University of Auckland

The Cook Island dancing mask.

This conical mask was worn by the men of Mangaia Island in the Cook Island group during ceremonial dances. It consists of a bamboo frame covered with tapa cloth. The mask covered the whole face and had elliptical eye-holes cut in the tapa covering. The shape of the mask is such that when worn the apex is pointed forwards. The tapa cloth sits loosely over the frame and was easily removed. The frame is constructed from strips of split bamboo, with two hoops and seven strips of bamboo placed around the hoops.

The hoops are 105mm apart. The circumference of the bottom hoop is 200mm and the strip is 20mm wide and covered by a tapa strip. The top hoop was made of 5mm wide strip of bamboo with a circumference of 150mm. Seven 5mm bamboo strips are bound with hibiscus bast around these hoops, forming an apex. Two strips carry on above the apex for 380mm and are bound together with tapa cloth strips of 20mm width; for 140mm of its length they protrude through the top of the tapa cloth cover.

Two half-round extensions had been made from the bottom hoop. One was of bamboo 190mm deep and had one of the seven bamboo strips extended down its centre. The other was made of iron wire which was partially rusted. When the mask was worn these two loops would have been on either side of the face. It could not be established when the iron wire replaced the bamboo, but it is thought to have been after collection as indigenous people would have had natural materials available for the repair. Whatever the case may be, the wire was treated as being part of the artefact.

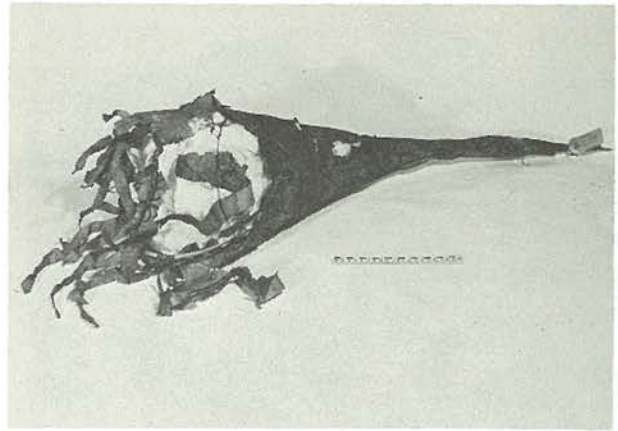
The tapa cloth cover consisted of two pieces of cloth, a lower and an upper piece, which were both shaped to fit the conical shape of the frame. The two pieces were sewn at the back in a vertical line with hibiscus bast which was also used to sew the two pieces together. The lower front edge was folded back in itself and decorated with stands of black wiry hair. Only remnants of the hair remained. Around the remainder of the lower edge the tapa had been cut vertically at 25mm intervals to form a fringe. Decorations had been painted on the cloth in at least two colours after the pieces had been sewn together. The tapa cloth was very dirty and brittle and large areas were missing.

The mask was badly crushed and mishappen due to broken or missing pieces of framework. The entire mask was in a very poor state of repair.

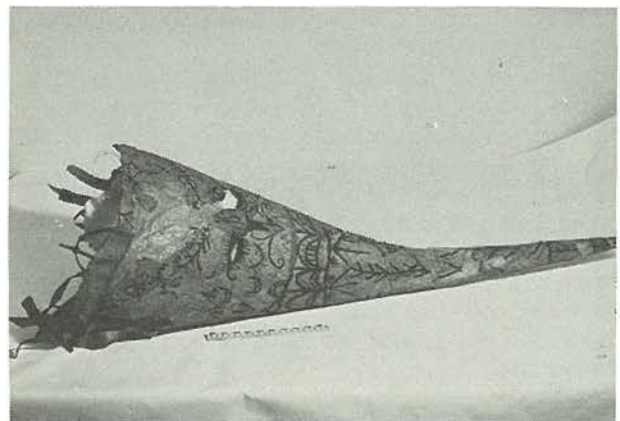
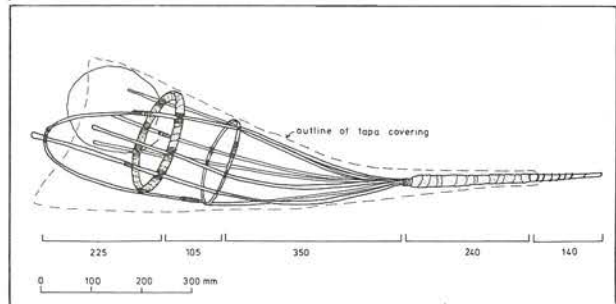
Treatment and repair

The frame was cleaned and repaired first after the tapa cover was removed. Also the iron wire was removed after its position had been noted. It was mechanically cleaned of the rust and lacquered with Inralac.

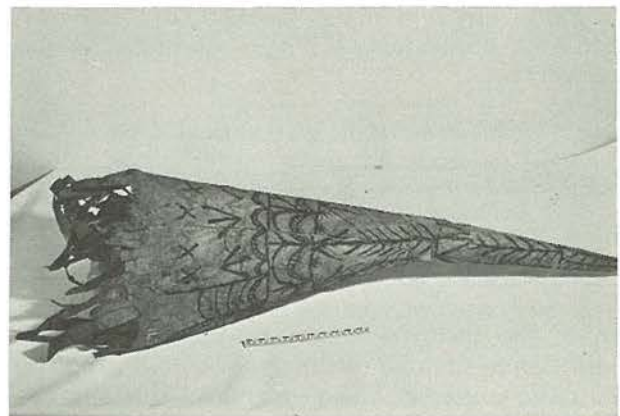
HEADRESS



1. Dancing mask before restoration
1a. The bamboo frame



2. The same mask after conservation, front view. Note the side hoop on the base of the mask.
3. Back view of the restored mask, showing the seam of the lower portion of the tapa cloth.





4. Detail of the front of the mask, showing remnants of the attached hair on the front fringe, and the Japanese mulberry backing paper.

The bamboo was cleaned with deionised water and cottonwool swabs. Missing and broken pieces of bamboo were replaced and tied into place with hibiscus bast where necessary. The whole frame was reconstructed to form a stable structure. The iron wire was also put into place again.

The tapa cover was tested for colourfastness and how to clean its surface. All colours proved to be colourfast and the cleaning tests with deionised water proved to have no effect at all; after the addition of 5% Lissapol, a neutral detergent or wetting agent, the dirt and surface grime quickly came loose and was easily removed. A rolling action with a cottonwool swab proved to be the best method. Care was taken not to make the swab too moist, but just damp, as too much moisture could loosen the tapa fibres. After the tapa had been cleaned the cover was cleaned again to remove the residues of the cleaning solution, using just deionised water and the same rolling action with the swabs.

It became apparent during the cleaning that it would be impossible to clean the tapa effectively or to consolidate and flatten the crushed areas without undoing the bark stitching. It was impossible to undo the very brittle bast fibre without breaking it and as a consequence it was sacrificed for the overall result.

Due to the weak state of the tapa cloth it was decided to back its entire surface with a fine Japanese mulberry paper using Cellofas, a carboxymethyl cellulose paste. We did not have any tapa cloth available to do tests so the smaller and stronger of the two pieces was backed first. The mulberry paper was placed on Melinex, a polyester sheet, and the Cellofas paste brushed on. The tapa was then positioned on the paper and was relaxed with a very fine deionised water mist. The tapa was pressed down on to the paper and airbubbles were

forced out carefully to the sides. After drying the Melinex was removed from the back and more paste applied to the back and gently tamped with a wide brush. This manoeuvre ensured good adhesion between paper and tapa, the tapa remained flexible with greatly improved strength. The tapa did not look too flat and the paste had no effect on the surface appearance.

It is debatable whether this procedure is truly reversible as both paper and tapa become extremely fragile when wet and it is doubtful whether the two could be separated without damaging the back surface of the tapa. After careful deliberation it was decided to proceed with the larger piece of tapa in the same manner. The deciding factor was that the state of the mask before treatment was such that this treatment would only lengthen its life and give it an appearance close to its original state. Where possible broken pieces were positioned in their original positions and on completion it was interesting to note that there were far fewer areas missing than had been first estimated.

Given that tapa is a type of paper it is not inconceivable that its dry brittle appearance is caused by the same degrading processes found in Western papers and that high levels of acidity might be found. Because of the fragile nature of tapa when wet non-aqueous deacidification processes would have to be used. During this conservation treatment no attempt was made to deacidify the tapa.

The treated pieces of tapa were sewn together using hibiscus bast and a no. 15 round body, half circle surgical needle and forceps. The original stitching holes were used where possible. After the restitching the tapa cover was slid over the bamboo frame and filled with loosely-packed acid-free tissue paper.

The conservation of a decorated Maori gourd.

An important pre-European decorated gourd was consolidated and restored using a plastic dough for gapfilling.

When received the gourd was in a fragile and dirty condition. Repairs had been carried out using strips of brown paper and an unspecified glue. No records of these repairs were available. The glue lines were excessive and as a consequence the joints of the broken pieces had moved when setting and very unsatisfactory joints resulted, and splashes of bird-droppings were noticed on the surface of the gourd. The gourd had at one time been badly infested by borer which made the walls very weak. A nearly perfectly round hole had been cut in the gourd by the Maori. A big piece was broken off its edge, as was a big hole on the op-

posite side; both the broken off pieces were missing. The gourd was decorated with a pattern in black pigment.

The consolidation and restoration

Tests on the solubility of the pigment used for the decoration were carried out and proved to be positive. The glue was also tested and it was established to be animal glue. Brown paper strips had been glued on the inside of the gourd over the joints, presumably to add strength or to hold the broken pieces in place when the glue was setting.

The glue was softened, by using steam, to such an extent that the broken pieces came apart. The brown paper strips were removed next and all the glue remnants on the break line removed with steam and dental tools, taking care not to damage the weak gourd walls.

The broken pieces were then cleaned with a 5% v/v solution of Synperonic NBD detergent in deionized water, using cotton swabs.

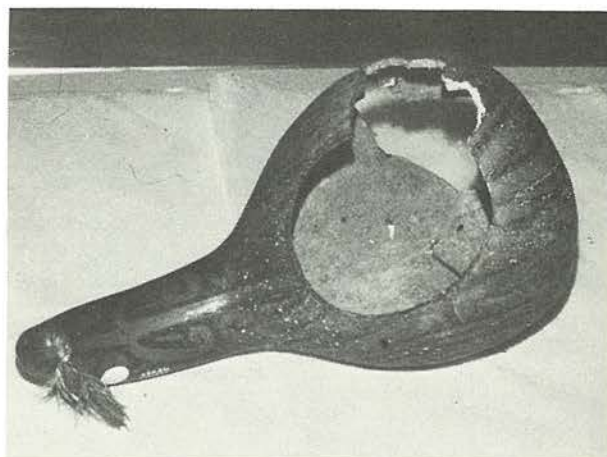
The curved shape of the gourd made it easier to use brushes, rather than swabs, on the inside. All grime and bird-dropping splashes were successfully removed using these methods. After the final cleaning the pieces were cleaned with deionized water to remove the remnants of the neutral detergent Synperonic NBD.

After drying the borer holes were impregnated, by using a hyperdermic syringe, with a solution of 5% w/v Paraloid in toluene. This gave the gourd a lot more strength and it could now be handled more easily. The consolidated pieces were then glued together using Vinamul 6525, a polyvinyl acetate emulsion. The breaks were strengthened inside the gourd by glueing strips of nylon gossamer across the joints using the same glue.

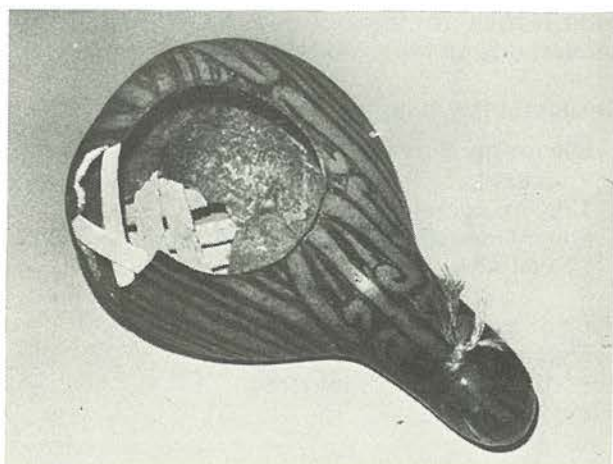
The missing parts of the gourd were then made up with a plastic dough made up from paper dust, kaolin, Butvar 98 (polyvinyl butyral) and solvents. This dough is an excellent gapfiller and is fully reversible. It is lighter and stronger than the traditional fillers such as plaster of Paris. It can be used on pottery and ceramics as well as organic materials, it is easier to manipulate when soft and there is virtually no waste. Work can be interrupted at any time and continued later.

To fill in large areas one uses a framework of horizontally and vertically glue 'pre-shrunk' strips. These can be made by rolling out the dough to a thickness of about 1-2mm. on a sheet of Melinex. The dough is then left to dry by the evaporation of the solvents. The strips can then be formed into the required shape by placing them on a hot plate, they become pliable and soft and can be held against the shape of the vessel or a template. On cooling

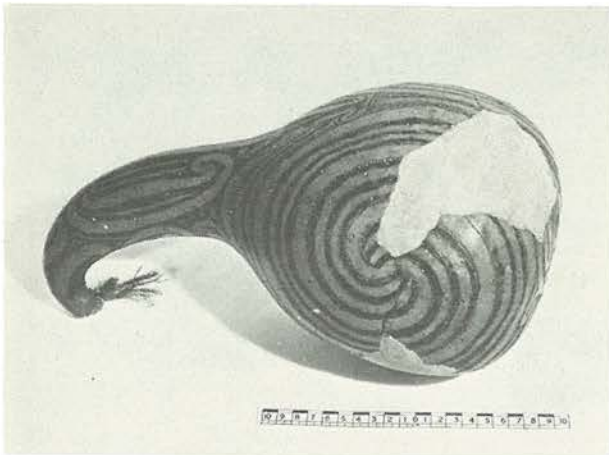
GOURD



1. Gourd before conservation, showing missing pieces, borer holes and the dirty surface.
2. The gourd taken apart by softening the animal glue, and partially cleaned surface.



3. Re-glued gourd and 'lattice' structure of the pre-shrunk strips of the plastic dough.



4. Restored gourd before the final toning was applied.

they hold their shape and can be glued into place. The gaps between the horizontally and vertically glued strips can then be filled in using the soft dough. Thick walls need to be made up of layers of dough, allowing for shrinking between layers. To achieve a smooth final surface the dough can be made into a very smooth consistency by adding industrial methylated spirits and applying it with a spatula. After setting, it can be carefully sanded off using a fine sandpaper, making sure that the original surface is not touched and scratched. The fine smooth surface can be toned in with the original colours.

In the case of the gourd dry pigment in a 1-2% Paraloid solution in toluene was used. This technique of gapfilling was used on the gourd with very good results. No attempt was made to fill in the decorations on the restored areas.

Recipe for the dough:

800 grams Butvar 98 or Alvar 770 (Polyvinyl acetal)
1260 ml acetone
504 ml industrial methylated spirits
370 ml Amyl Acetate

Mix, stir and leave for 24 hours in closed container.

Add: 928 ml Xylene or toluene

Stir well and add:

680 ml water

Stir until well emulsified, then stir in, with a wooden spoon, paper dust and dry kaolin in the proportion of two dry measures to one of kaolin, until too stiff to stir. Turn out in large tray (an old photographic tray is ideal) and knead in more paper dust and kaolin in the same proportion until the mixture does not stick to the hands any more. Good kneading is essential. Put in airtight container. Hard set dough can be softened by

adding I.M.S. or alcohol to it. The same applies to reverse it on restored objects: place pads of cottonwool soaked in I.M.S. or alcohol. This process can be speeded up by placing vessel and pads inside a closed polythene bag.

Christchurch — Establishment of the Conservation Laboratory

Mary Wood Lee

In April of 1980, a survey of conservation services and training in New Zealand was conducted by Dr Nathan Stolow at the request of the Interim Advisory Committee for Conservation of Cultural Property. The resultant report included recommendations for the establishment or expansion of existing laboratories into Regional Centres throughout the country, each specialising in various aspects of conservation treatment (i.e. paintings, works of art on paper, ethnographic and archaeological materials, decorative arts and library and archival collections). These centres would provide consultation and treatment in their areas of expertise to museums and galleries within their geographic region.

In keeping with these recommendations, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch has undertaken the expansion of its existing facilities to accommodate a conservation laboratory specializing in the treatment of works of art on paper.

A space is being excavated beneath the south wing of the gallery which will provide approximately 200 square metres for the laboratory, with a similar amount to be used in expanded storage facilities for paintings and works of art on paper. The Christchurch City Council, with a substantial grant from the Interim Advisory Committee, has funded the excavation and physical modifications, which are expected to be complete in late September or early October. Funds have also been provided for the purchase of major equipment, including a Wilde M8 microscope, laboratory fume cabinet and special storage for works of art undergoing treatment. It is anticipated that the laboratory will be functional and the services of a permanent conservator retained by the end of the year.

The laboratory will initially be concerned with the care of the McDougall collection with limited treatment made available to other institutions. The development of the laboratory to full regional capability will depend on the acquisition of additional staff, both professional conservators and technicians. It is to be hoped that the conservation

planning on a national level will include recognition of the importance of both levels and that funding will be made available not only for the training abroad of professional conservators, but for the in-house training of technicians. There is an urgent need to add to the core of skilled personnel working in the field if long term commitment to the care of collections in New Zealand museums and galleries is to develop.

One of the particularly exciting prospects for the McDougall's laboratory is the possibility of close co-operation with the adjacent Canterbury Museum. The space and facility will be adequate for joint use in the care of certain types of ethnographic materials, notably flax, fibre and textiles and it is hoped that some arrangement can be reached concerning the utilization of the laboratory. Such an effort might well be the first in New Zealand, where the disparity between museums and galleries in terms of conservation facilities is extreme. Certainly it is the pattern for fine art collections to have more developed conservation programmes. Conservation of paintings and sculpture has long been recognized as an essential gallery function, with works of art on paper receiving somewhat less attention. Ethnographic materials, on the other hand, have been viewed primarily as objects for study and research by academics, occasionally as items for display, in the manner of Victorian "artificial curiosities", with their physical and chemical stability a matter of concern only to those directly entrusted with their keeping. It is only within the last few years that these items seem to have come into their own in the United States and Canada and there is a growing effort to train conservators who specialize in their treatment. It would seem, admittedly from the perspective of a relative newcomer, that New Zealand's greatest need in terms of conservation is in the care of the unique and irreplaceable Maori materials. The joint utilization of facilities and equipment where appropriate would do much to reduce the high cost of establishing and maintaining adequate, professional conservation facilities.

Despite the increasing economic difficulties museums and galleries are facing world wide, it is most encouraging to note the changes that have come about in the two year interval since my first visit to New Zealand. The growing numbers of conservation professionals now working in the galleries and museums, the increased commitment of both institutions and government agencies to the development of conservation facilities and the existence of a national co-ordinating and funding body all indicate improved prospects for the care of collections within New Zealand.

Mary Wood Lee, who wrote this article is Senior Paper Conservator at the Pacific Regional Conservation Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii. She is presently acting as a consultant with the Robert

McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, advising on the design and establishment of its paper conservation laboratory.

Notices

Does your Gallery/Museum want A Director; Assistant Director or staff member?

*My name is Jason Strevens, I am 30, have a degree in Anthropology — post grad Social Anthropology. I have had experience in photographic archives, taught in photography as well as documentary film production — Interested? then contact me at:
7 Red Cross Lane, Cambridge. Cambs CB2 2PQ, England.*

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY CENTENARY

The University of Auckland will celebrate its centenary in May 1983. The year as a whole will be marked as a centennial year, but many events will take place during the 'focus' weekend 6-9 May 1983. Some will be formal, like the Honorary Degrees ceremony, others less so. Highlights for past students will be the reunions planned by departments and faculties and also by halls of residence. Those seeking further information should write to the Registrar.

For Sale

*Camera for sale. Professional Mamiya M645 6 x 4.5cm format camera with grid focussing screen, Pd (LED equipped) prism finder, F4/80mm macro lens, U.V. yellow and Polarizing filters. Near new and in new condition. Little used. This camera is ideal for the documentation of ethnological and fine arts material with a lens specially designed for detailed copy work as well as normal photography. \$1,300 (new price wholesale \$1,870, retail \$2,610) Rodney Wilson, Auckland City Art Gallery (09) 792-020
40 Palmerston Road, Brikenhead, Auckland 10 (09) 482000*

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mrs Bieringa,

Perhaps the story below would be of interest and an additional warning to your readers.

Yours faithfully

Kelly Tarlton

Director, Museum of Shipwrecks, Waitangi

ANOTHER MUSEUM BURGLARY

After reading details of the Manawatu Museum burglary in the June 81 issue of AGMANZ NEWS I was struck by the similarity to the attack on our museum.

On Sunday morning 24th May, 1981 the staff on opening the museum found a hole cut in the side of the main cabin of the museum ship TUI. The hole had been made using a brace and bit to cut a section some 18 inches square for men and oxy acetylene cutting equipment to pass through. In cutting this hole they had bypassed the alarm systems on the windows and doors.

The main display safe in which there are some 300 pieces of gold jewellery and 100 gold coins had been attacked with the oxy acetylene cutting gear. The door and sides of the safe were badly damaged, however the safe had not been opened and the contents were not harmed.

Three glass display cabinets had had the glass tops carefully removed and all the silver coins were missing. The intruders had then replaced the glass tops but had mixed the glasses and put the wrong glass on each case.

Silver coins had been taken from the museum souvenir shop display shelves but nothing else was touched. On these same shelves were replica victorian dress rings in 18 carat gold with diamonds rubies, sapphires, etc with price tags of \$500 to \$600. In addition there were silver dress rings, greenstone jewellery etc. The cash register was also untouched.

The majority of the missing silver coins were found dumped on the side of the road outside of the museum. From the position they were in it seems that they had been taken away, the best coins sorted out and the rest brought back and dumped where the museum staff would find them.

No finger prints were found and a surgical rubber glove found near the museum was probably used in the robbery.

My personal summing up of this burglary is — I think the burglars were working to a specific order for a collector or an overseas market. They had carefully checked the alarm systems, contents of the display safe and display cases during normal hours. They brought materials with them to black out the windows so that they would not be observed working. They had plenty of time and were not disturbed, they took their heavy cutting gear away with them.

In retrospect the \$8000. Chubb, Torch and Drill Resistant safe was worthwhile investment, a lesser safe may not have resisted the attack. The museum alarm system has now been replaced and includes infrared beams, passive infrared body heat detectors, 24 hour a day, alarms on main cases and a panic alarm button at the desk. Bandit resistant glass, now made in NZ, will be used on all display cases in future.

Dear Sir,

In the hope that you might be able to help me with some inquiries, I take the liberty to write you this letter.

I am looking for a job as a paperconservator in New Zealand.

In the spring 1982 I will have completed a 3 year training course at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Conservation, specialising in the field "art on paper".

My background for starting this education is as follows:

Four years training in the graphic arts at the School of Applied Arts, Copenhagen. ("Skolen for Brugskunst"). A six month training course in painting at The Art Students League and The National School of Arts, New York. A year as an apprentice at the workshop of a national archive, (Aabenraa Landsarkiv).

Further more I have my own private workshop working for local museums.

I hope you can provide me with some good information and look forward to your answer.

Yours faithfully

Eskild Beck
Vestergrade 9
6200 Aabenraa
Denmark

"Andrew S. Grove. M.A. University of Portland, 1980. European History. Seeking position in historic conservation. Experience includes assisting curator at Mission Mill Museum, Salem, Oregon; administrative, supervisory and fire-prevention work for Oregon Forestry Department; assisting professor in European history class, George Fox College, Newberg, Oregon; and broad spectrum of other experiences which contribute to creative application of teaching, communication and problem-solving skills. Respond to: 420 Jefferson N.E., Salem, Oregon 97303. USA."

Yours sincerely

Andrew S. Grove
420 Jefferson N.E.
Salem, Oregon 97303
USA

OUT NOW!

A Manual for the Handling and Packaging of Museum Objects

An absolute must for every museum worker and museums and galleries should have copies available to all staff members involved with the handling, maintenance and storage of museum objects.

Made available at a below cost price to museums with the assistance of AGMANZ, Q.E.II. Arts Council and Archival Quality Products.

Fully illustrated manual for easy insertion into a 5, 4 or 3 ring binder:

\$5.50 per single copy (incl. postage)

\$4.50 for four or more copies (incl. postage)

Order now from:
AGMANZ Publications
C/- National Art Gallery
Private Bag
WELLINGTON.

Cheque, Money Order accompanying the order to be made out to: AGMANZ

Textiles

Permanent Storage

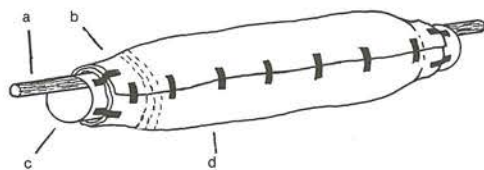
In the case of storing fragile costumes — it is often safer to store in acid free boxes rather than in a hanging position.

Any folds which occur must be softened by rolls of tissue paper to avoid any fabric fatigue. Sleeves can have some tissue paper rolls inserted to also avoid creases.

Do not attempt to store more than one garment in a box — any crushing must be avoided.

If garments are in good strong condition, they may be hung in wardrobes on padded coathangers to simulate shoulders and so spread the weight beyond the shoulder seam. These may have unsealed polythene dry cleaning shields to protect them from any dust.

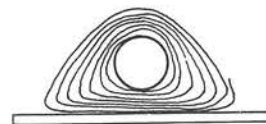
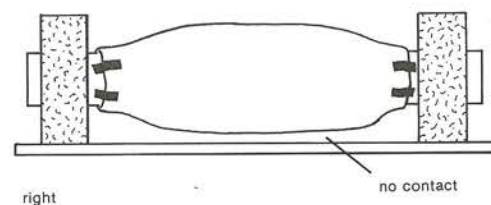
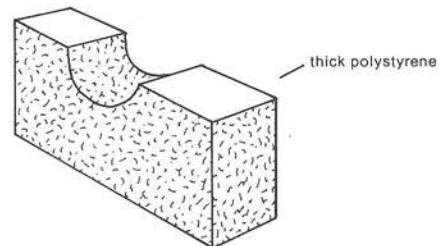
The length of roll should allow at least 150 mm to be exposed at each end when the textile is in place. Tape the outer barrier layer which has sandwiched all the others between it — being of the largest dimension.



- a. carrying or hanging storage rod. Thick dowel or metal pipe
- b. wrapping layers of tissue and barrier paper or acid free material, e.g. cotton
- c. core of p.v.c. or cardboard
- d. textile inside wraps

This method should also be used when packing unstretched canvas/paintings — also for crating with the polystyrene 'forma' cut to fit the crate ends.

Prepare beforehand two shapes which will hold the rolled textile off the horizontal surface, i.e. suspend it — not crush.



**THE ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND**

ADMINISTRATION

President
Mr K. Gorbey
Waikato Art Museum
PO Box 937
Hamilton
Telephone 392-118

Secretary
Capt John Malcolm
PO Box 57-016
Owairaka
Auckland
Telephone 699 072

Treasurer
Mrs Pam Malcolm
c/- 7 Bracken Avenue
Epsom
Auckland
Telephones 605 223 evening, 795 780 ext 738 day

Editor
Mrs J. Bieringa
13 Hataitai Rd
Wellington
Telephone 861-722

COPY FOR THE NEWS

Manuscripts may be submitted to the Editor at any time. Copy should be typed double spaced and ideally on A4 paper. The Editor cannot undertake to extract copy from newsclips supplied by contributors. Photographs for publication should be unglazed and free of blemishes. Photographs are reproduced by a reduction process and therefore small prints are difficult to publish.

This number is published with the assistance of a grant from the Todd Foundation.

