

ARCHIFACTS  
OCTOBER 2014

# ARCHI FACTS

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**Journal of the Archives  
and Records Association  
of New Zealand**

October 2014

*Archifacts*

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*Editorial Committee: Susan Skudder,  
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*Archifacts is published twice-yearly,  
in April and October. Articles and  
correspondence should be addressed  
to the editor at:*

*PO Box 11553  
Wellington 6142*

*Or submitted electronically to the  
Archifacts editor, via the Archives and  
Records Association of New Zealand  
(ARANZ) home page: [www.aranz.org.nz](http://www.aranz.org.nz)*

*Intending contributors can obtain style  
guidelines at the above site.*

*Printed by Uniprint, Dunedin*

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ISSN 0303-7940

## Objects of the Association

The objects of the Association shall be:

- i To foster the care, preservation and proper use of archives and records, both public and private, and their effective administration.
- ii To arouse public awareness of the importance of records and archives and in all matters affecting their preservation and use, and to co-operate or affiliate with any other bodies in New Zealand or elsewhere with like objects.
- iii To promote the training of archivists, records keepers, curators, librarians and others by the dissemination of specialised knowledge and by encouraging the provision of adequate training in the administration and conservation of archives and records.
- iv To encourage research into problems connected with the use, administration and conservation of archives and records and to promote the publication of the results of this research.
- v To promote the standing of archives institutions.
- vi To advise and support the establishment of archives services throughout New Zealand.
- vii To publish a journal at least once a year and other publications in furtherance of these objects.

### Membership

Membership of the Association is open to any individual or institution interested in fostering the objects of the Association. Subscription rates are:

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**Overseas:** NZ\$85 (personal), NZ\$65 (student), NZ\$130 (institutions)

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# Introduction

Gillian Oliver

The range of contributions in this issue really highlight the diversity of what we do and the things we are concerned with. Following on from the opinions expressed about Archives New Zealand in *Archifacts* April 2014, we have another perspective in this issue: the view from inside the organisation. The Chief Archivist, Marilyn Little, provides insight into the issues and challenges faced by our national archival authority and the outlook for the future.

The next two articles are both situated in the context of local government. The first is provided by Natalie Dewson, and describes a very practical and useful real life approach to working with born digital records, in the context of local government. For those of you who were at the ARANZ/ASA conference in Christchurch, the broader case study was the basis for discussion at the closing workshop. If you were not present at the workshop and you're tackling the problem of establishing a digital archives, it's well worth reading Natalie's paper and then following up by reading Anne Picot's summary of the Christchurch discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Then for a complete change of pace, Wayne Nelson provides a very readable and entertaining account of the parks and gardens of Lower Hutt, showcasing the resources of the Hutt City Council Archives. Records of this type will be familiar to many working in local government, and this paper demonstrates how they can be used to provide the narrative detail that brings local history to life.

The final paper included in this issue of *Archifacts* is peer reviewed. It takes us offshore for a fascinating account of a very different type of archive – an emerging archive of Australian Aboriginal languages and literature.

The book reviews are the usual eclectic mix, very well written and eminently readable. We conclude with the second instalment of the getting-to-know-you feature introduced last time. In this issue, please meet Christopher Meech, Curator of Archives at Waitaki District Libraries and Archive.

This final *Archifacts* for 2014 marks the end of an often tumultuous year for New Zealand's archives and archivists. It remains to be seen what 2015 has in store, from an *Archifacts* perspective I hope we will

be able to publish some of the fascinating papers presented at the Christchurch ARANZ/ASA conference.

**Endnotes**

1. Picot, A. Report back from the Recordkeeping Roundtable workshop at #ARANZASA in Christchurch, NZ <http://rkroundtable.org/2014/10/14/digital-archives-heres-the-problem-how-would-you-address-it/>

# Archives New Zealand

## – Well Placed for 2015

Marilyn Little

Technological change and financial pressures are impacting archival organisations everywhere. These pressures have created many challenges for Archives New Zealand, not only to preserve the record of government but to maintain access for generations to come. As the demand for, and cost of digital storage increases exponentially, Archives New Zealand is building capabilities and expertise through a series of priority projects and longer-term initiatives to better position Archives to meet these challenges.

There were acknowledged difficulties in Archives New Zealand in 2013, culminating in the failure of two projects and resulting budget pressures. A number of senior staff also departed in late 2013 and early 2014.

As we come to the end of 2014 I wanted to provide a snapshot of where Archives is currently positioned. Since coming on board as Chief Archivist and General Manager in February this year, I have overseen a shift in momentum that is revitalising Archives New Zealand. There has been progress in many areas. I have put a lot of emphasis on refreshing the organisation's Vision to reinvigorate Archives, on building a more open and inclusive culture, getting staff's views about how to strengthen what we do and how we do it and involving them in decision making. I was also determined to introduce more robust project management disciplines into Archives to ensure no repeat of the difficulties faced in 2013.

One of the first steps I took as Chief Archivist was to ask staff about their concerns, then address those concerns systematically. Priorities that staff identified included a clearer vision and direction, stronger leadership and better communication.

The Archives Leadership Team worked with staff to renew the organisation's Vision. This has helped to restore focus and direction. The Vision states "We are the guardian of the record of government – its security, integrity and accessibility is paramount." It challenges Archives to improve continually in every area of operation, while keeping

its role as protector of the public record central to all its activities.

In terms of leadership, one of my early decisions was to include a Regional Archivist in Archives Leadership Team meetings. This ensured that decision making was informed by both archival and institutional knowledge. Also I have made permanent appointments to the Archives Leadership Team. Antony Moss and Jan Clark were appointed as Directors Client Capability and Holdings and Discovery, respectively in September. The team has now been completed with the appointment, in November 2014, of Jeremy Cauchi as Manager of the Strategy and Operational Services Group.

The Archives Leadership Team has worked together to lift staff morale and create a positive culture. In my first week, I introduced a daily half-hour drop-in time, for anyone to talk with me directly about concerns and issues. I also began a weekly update to all staff providing interesting and relevant information. Monthly staff meetings have become more informal and collaborative, with staff invited to have a say on how Archives' functions should be delivered. A rearrangement of teams and functions was instituted on the 1st of December, which will remove silos and promote collaboration between units. Small things, like starting a waiata group, and adopting a further Archives' waiata written and arranged by staff have also made a difference. Together these initiatives are building an Archives-wide sense of purpose and optimism. I know this because of feedback I receive from staff.

Tackling some of the core issues and providing stable and experienced management, and insisting on effective project management disciplines, has enabled Archives to build the strong platform necessary to tackle a number of significant projects. Perhaps the largest project delivered in 2014 was the digitisation and conversion of 141,000 World War One personnel records. This, combined with the digitising of World War One diaries by the Alexander Turnbull Library, highlights the role of Archives and the Department as one of the major contributors to the government's World War One commemoration activities. Combining the resources and collections of both the National Library and Archives New Zealand ensures the public enjoy the very best of both institutions.

An exciting priority project is the creation of the Film Preservation Laboratory in Wellington. At the time of writing, the laboratory build is complete and commissioning of equipment is well underway. The lab is housed in a purpose-built facility and will be able to preserve historically significant nitrate and acetate films held by Archives New Zealand by copying them to polyester. In their original formats, these films will

continue to deteriorate, so this is seen as a landmark project that will preserve and protect these films for at least another two to three hundred years. This will be the only laboratory in Australasia capable of copying colour and black and white nitrate and acetate stock to polyester.

We also remain fully involved in implementing the government's decision to move the Treaty of Waitangi, the Women's Suffrage Petition and the 1835 Declaration of Independence. Colin MacDonald, in his recent address opening the ARANZ/ASA conference, highlighted DIA's commitment to preserving the Treaty by calling it a "... living document which continues to influence work in government and our daily lives." While the documents will be housed in the Molesworth Street building, they will remain in the care and custody of the Chief Archivist and Archives New Zealand staff will be responsible for their ongoing preservation.

I have also put a lot of effort into ensuring that Archives develops a sustainable business model and remains fit for purpose. This is vital, as Archives is facing rapidly rising digital storage costs at a time when public service budgets are not growing. As well as managing internal finances prudently, Archives is reviewing its fees and charges (unchanged since 2006), and looking at commercial partnerships to undertake work that would otherwise not be possible to do.

With the ongoing health of our national archive at the forefront of my mind, I am also very focused on addressing network and physical infrastructure needs. The challenges for both staff and customers in the earthquake-damaged building in Christchurch are well-documented. The Christchurch rebuild is therefore a very high priority for me. In addition I've prioritised resolution of longstanding maintenance in Auckland and Wellington, and the Department is now looking at our future storage needs too as some of our repositories are close to capacity. Network infrastructure matters too. Long-overdue work to scope a future Archway has begun.

The Leadership Team is also focused on optimising Archives' regulatory role. For example, the new Records Management Standard was released, replacing and improving on four previous key standards, earlier in 2014. In the near future, a new Records Toolkit will be released. Expect to see more streamlined and simplified guidance and advice on sound recordkeeping practice in the future. In carrying out our statutory responsibilities, we have the advantage of being within a department which has a number of regulatory and All of Government responsibilities. This enables us to lever off the experiences and work of others with sector leadership responsibilities.

Promoting and managing access to holdings is another priority area for Archives. Changes in technology have increased user expectations around the availability of records electronically. This creates an enormous challenge for an institution whose holdings are primarily paper-based. One of Archives' priorities therefore is to develop an access strategy that segments customers and considers their different needs. This will include identifying how to best meet these needs through different channels in a cost-effective way. Preservation is at the heart of our work; without sound preservation practices, there is no public record to be accessed.

Looking forward, Archives continues to face a number of important challenges. Rather than shy away from these, we continue to work with our peers on solutions to the unprecedented issues facing archival organisations everywhere. Archives New Zealand is in a much stronger position to meet these challenges as the end of 2014 approaches than it was twelve months ago. Staff turnover has dropped to be in line with the public sector overall, we have a strong and committed leadership team with the drive and energy to take the organisation forward and we have had a sound record of achievements this year. I am confident that we will build on progress and 2015 will be a year of considerable success.

# You Can't Manage What You Don't Understand: The role of a digital systems stock take in protecting future local government born-digital archives

Natalie Dewson

## Digital information at risk

'Born-digital' refers to information originally created in digital format. Born digital information is inherently fragile, which makes it a real challenge to manage. Unlike paper records that can sit untouched for decades and remain accessible and usable; records stored on digital media can become inaccessible in only a few short years through obsolescence or media degradation.

There are three types of obsolescence:

### **The physical carrier of the record becomes obsolete or damaged**

For example, standard media of the 1980s such as floppy discs are no longer commercially available. Current media such as USB sticks, CDs and DVDs will also become obsolete. They can also degrade or become damaged.

### **The hardware needed to access the record becomes obsolete**

Both the drives needed to read the media and the computers required to operate them have become obsolete due to rapid technology changes. For example, it is hard to obtain working disk drives. Most new computers have a usable life of only three to five years and are not fitted with floppy disk drives.

### **The software needed to access the record becomes obsolete**

This includes both the software to read and write the record and the operating system on which the software ran. For example in the 1980s WordStar was widely used, but is no longer available. The fact that WordStar used a closed data format makes continuing accessibility even more problematic.<sup>1</sup>

The last Government Recordkeeping Survey held in 2010 found that 49

per cent of local authorities held digital information they can no longer access:<sup>2</sup> this is information that is no longer available for business or historic purposes.

### **MW LASS Ltd and the Archives Central Project**

MW LASS Ltd is a Council-Controlled Organisation established in 2008 by local authorities in the Manawatu-Wanganui region. The eight member councils collaborate on projects with the goal to improve services and reduce costs. Councils can choose their level of involvement based on their business needs.

All councils are responsible for making sure certain types (or classes) of information remain permanently available to their staff and the community as archives. These information types are identified in the Archives New Zealand List of Protected Records for Local Authorities.<sup>3</sup> Councils may have additional business value information they also wish to keep long term.

This responsibility created an opportunity for MW LASS councils to join forces on a project to safeguard their permanent-value information. A database was launched in 2010<sup>4</sup> followed by a Feilding-based, shared archives storage and research facility for physical records in 2012. Councils can choose their level of involvement (storage and database; or database alone). Councils outside the region are also able to opt in.

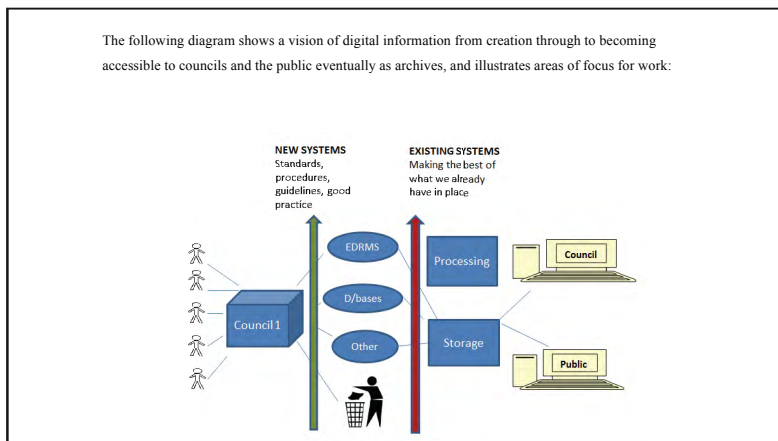
With the paper record now secure, attention turned to the archives of the future – the ‘born digital’.

### **Born-digital programme**

Initial investigations at participating MW LASS councils corroborated the results of the 2010 Government Recordkeeping Survey. In 2011, a report commissioned by MW LASS Directors advised them on the archival implications of ‘born digital’ records maintained in each council. Referring to interviews with a selection of staff responsible for the creation of valuable born-digital records, the report concludes there is a very real risk that born-digital information won’t be available in the short term, let alone permanently.

MW LASS member councils decided to turn this challenge into an opportunity to collaborate on a programme that would safeguard born-digital records, and in 2012 I was engaged to co-ordinate work in this area. My brief was to source or create good practice standards for the creation and management of born-digital information; and to identify what a digital archiving future would look like for MW LASS councils.

The following diagram shows a vision of digital information from creation through to becoming accessible to councils and the public eventually as archives, and illustrates areas of focus for work:



The two arrows show intervention points where good practice can be applied to records – the first is when new systems are launched; the second is to those that already exist.

Managing digital records is a big challenge. So, where to start? As a first step I sought advice from the Digital Continuity Team at Archives New Zealand. A crucial point they made was that *we couldn't manage what we didn't understand*. Before we did anything we had to understand what born-digital information councils had and its technological dependencies through a preliminary systems stock take exercise.

### Benefits of a stock take

A digital stock take has clear benefits. For instance, any future business case for a digital archive approach will have to be supported by strong business drivers and an understanding of the risks to digital records. Also, once key risks are known, appropriate standards and good practice can be identified to target them.

A stock take also informs work priorities. It is not achievable for participating councils to change how they handle all their digital information. The greatest chance of success is to deal with obsolescence one small chunk at a time dealing with the areas of greatest risk, first.

It is also an excellent opportunity to educate. Information

management has its own language that is not well understood by non-practitioners: stories cut through barriers and demonstrate through real world examples that obsolescence affects business activities now.

### **Getting started**

I began by familiarising myself with the big picture of digital continuity, and understanding how digital information is broadly managed at each participating council.

I attended an Archives NZ training course to learn more about digital continuity issues. International archives institutions have also published useful background information; for example The National Archives of the United Kingdom have issued step-by-step guidance for managing digital continuity.<sup>5</sup> I also examined New Zealand and international case studies of how other organisations manage and preserve their born-digital information to identify common themes.

Following this I undertook an environmental scan in consultation with council's Information Technology (IT) leaders. Because a number of councils within the MW LASS are small, IT leaders frequently have dual responsibility for born-digital information and the technologies that enable their access and use. Starting a dialogue with these people gave me the opportunity to win support for data collection, and it also enabled them to identify opportunities for their work. These include:

MW LASS Councils work together increasingly, and use open standards  
Knowing what information we have, what it is stored on and how it  
enables the business, opens up opportunities for data sharing  
A collective voice holds vendors accountable for making systems easy  
to exit.

### **Methodology**

Due to time and resource constraints (no dedicated budget and data collection had to be juggled with competing work priorities) it was not possible to do an in-depth analysis of all business functions producing permanent-value information. I decided instead to take an in-depth look at the selection of functions that had been briefly looked at during the initial investigation in 2011. These were:

- Building consents
- Resource consents
- Cemetery management

- Infrastructure (water, storm water, roads)
- District plan.

Core digital systems, their accompanying paper records (where these existed) and information held on portable storage media were looked at. File formats were out of the scope of this study.

### **Questionnaire development**

A reference group set up to act as an advice touchstone for the duration of the programme was consulted with to get agreement on the desired outcomes. These were:

**What is our 'day one' for accessible digital information?** I.e. when was our earliest recoverable information created? – this required identifying current line-of-business systems and the software needed to access and manipulate the information in them, querying whether there was still accessible information in them. I did the same for their predecessor systems and working backwards until records were created solely in paper format.

**To what extent are these accompanied by paper records?** I had an initial assumption that many early digital records would have paper equivalents, but this needed to be tested.

**What are the major risk areas?**

**Can we tell which systems are obsolete or degraded?** What is the feasibility of recovery, and what will it cost?

These desired outcomes informed the questionnaire design which covered areas such as the physical condition and age of the system and software, whether it is active or inactive, accessibility of the information inside it, existence of backups etc.

### **Data collection approach**

In terms of how to locate, survey and priorities digital holdings, the resource I found the most helpful was an OCLC publication detailing the first steps for managing born-digital content received on physical media.<sup>6</sup> Written for a non-expert audience, the methodology is designed for people and organizations with limited resources. I didn't follow it to the letter, but adapted it for my own needs.

This is the data collection approach:

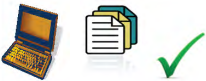
- a) All current official line-of-business systems were identified and broadly described, and their dates of commission recorded on a spread sheet. For each current system, their electronic predecessors were traced backward until recordkeeping systems became paper-based.
- b) Of the systems listed at each Council, at least two were selected for closer analysis, including descriptions of their supporting hardware and software.
- c) Discussions were held with Records Managers to find out more about the records stored in these systems: particularly whether they were accompanied by physical records.
- d) Staff who produced these records were then interviewed to get further contextual information, and to identify any records they were aware of that were stored on portable storage media.

## Limitations

The findings apply only to the subset of council functions that were examined: an analysis of other functions may identify further issues we are not aware of. A small amount of born-digital information on portable storage media (e.g. VHS video, CD Rom, reel-to-reel film) was found; but note that a complete search of work spaces, paper files, storage areas etc. to find more was not undertaken.

## Findings

Through the investigations we learnt the following:

| Pre 2000's                                                                          | Post 2000's                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |       |
| Digital information is gone, but there are paper equivalents.                       | Information is created increasingly digitally only. Once it has gone, it's gone forever. |

*Some information is lost or nearly gone*

For example, there is a lot of CCTV footage used to manage infrastructure assets that is degrading or can't be played.

*Councils keep everything but you can't find what you need*

Systems are locked-down by vendors meaning the information they hold is inaccessible. This has happened where software licenses used to manipulate data have expired or information has been saved on unusual file formats and can only be read on the old system. Also metadata is inconsistently applied to some types of information.

*Not all information is coming across when data is moved**Information is lost*

Information is routinely moved from old to new systems, but not always successfully or completely. Consequences experienced by councils include: partial transfer of information, or complete loss of subsets of information.

**Lessons learned**

I underestimated the time required for data collection. Initially timetabling two weeks for each of the five participating councils (two months overall), the process took nine months in total. To a great extent this can be attributed to the 'locked shed' analogy. Where physical records are stored in a locked shed, access is a minor hurdle – you simply call a locksmith. In the digital world, people's heads are the 'locked sheds'. They have work of their own to do and can pose a greater challenge to extract information from than a physical storage environment. Patience, communication and persistence help.

Staff interviews didn't reveal as much about the systems as I hoped. Along with the inevitable staff turnover and resulting loss of institutional knowledge over the years, people's recollections tended to focus on the information itself rather than the systems they were stored in. Corporate paper files held at Archives Central did help fill in some gaps, although few records of this type had been retained.

I wanted to identify a 'burning platform' that would spur councils into action as councils are not subjected to the information audits that might highlight these. While councils have a legal obligation to care for the information on the Protected Records List, it would have been useful to compare this with what the councils themselves identify as business-critical; using the findings to highlight opportunities for cost savings and work efficiencies in a more meaningful way.

## Outcomes

We learned that you don't need to invest a lot of money or have a team of experts on hand to get meaningful results from a stock take; but you do need someone who can dedicate time to see it through.

Now that MW LASS councils have a good sense of where the key recordkeeping systems reside and the main risks posed to the quality of the business information in them (metadata, migration and vendor lock-in), they are using this knowledge to make improvements to ensure it remains usable and accessible long term.

To begin this first stage, national and international good practice in migration and metadata has been identified and signed off by councils as recommended standards, and they are currently looking at ways to embed their consideration into system procurement projects. Metadata gap analysis tools for Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) and business systems have been developed, and the Archives Central team is supporting councils in its use. The team is also advocating the development of exit strategies from systems and software: this is about getting information out of old systems with the minimum of stress and cost.

This work will be an incredibly useful basis on which councils can prepare for a digital archiving future. An important first step towards this ultimate goal will be to build interest in digital continuity among the local government sector. MW LASS looks forward to its part in this step in the journey.

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## **Parks and Gardens in Lower Hutt: A Thematic Overview of Recreation Facilities at the Hutt Recorded in the Documents of a Recently Archived File Series**

Wayne Nelson

In the autumn of 2013 I was contracted to cull non-essential documents from a recently closed record series of Lower Hutt's Parks and Gardens files. This is the PL12-3 Parks and Gardens file series. The time period covered by the records is 1980 to 2010, with about one-third (consisting of thirty parks and eighty-two volumes) being processed and subsequently archived at Hutt City Council Archives. Culling the files was my job, but it quickly became apparent that the material that did comply with the Local Government Schedule consisted of a gold mine of information that would be of interest to a number of people, including students of local history, local and regional government and engineering. Most of us normally associate parks and gardens primarily with sport. Sporting events and clubs are of course one of the major themes found in the files which I reviewed. However as the files document the management of Hutt City Parks and Gardens, the historical material found in them covers a number of other themes which are not necessarily connected with sport at all. It is these other themes which I talk about in this article.

Of the thirty parks that I reviewed, the Hutt Recreation Ground was one of the most interesting, not least because it is one of Lower Hutt's oldest sports fields. The northern part of it was established in 1904 and the ground was officially opened in 1905. A pavilion and a band rotunda were erected in 1907 and a grandstand in 1934. The "Hutt Rec.", as it is commonly called, had floodlights installed in 1939 which were regarded at the time as the most efficient in the Southern Hemisphere. Although the PL series Hutt Recreation Ground files do not go back beyond 1980, the material in them relates directly to earlier historical records of the Park, and introduces two themes which are applicable to other parks – the theme of memorials and the theme of fire and its destructive potential.

Although it is one of the best known of the recreation grounds in Lower Hutt because of its age, it is probably fair to say that while most people know that the Hutt Recreation Ground is a memorial park not many people,



Figure 1: The avenue of commemorative oaks (Photo by author).

apart from local historians, know that the memorial status refers to a number of commemorative oak trees which can be found in the park today. Originally there were nineteen trees which were planted seventy-seven years ago in 1937, on the day of the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) on May 12th 1937. All the trees are oaks of the same variety, *Quercus palustris*.<sup>2</sup>

Ten of the trees which are in the park today form a commemorative avenue located south of the Grandstand beside a path which extends along the western side of the Recreation Ground from the Myrtle Street entrance in the north, to the Woburn Road entrance in the south. The trees have a commemorative status partly because they were planted on Coronation Day 1937 by the past Mayors of Lower Hutt.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the plantings bronze plaques were placed on plinths at the base of each tree. These trees showed the date of the coronation, but also, of local historical interest, the name of the Mayor, or his representative who planted the tree, the dates of his mayoralty, and the population of Lower Hutt.<sup>4</sup> Although there are ten trees there today, the files state that in 1937 eleven trees were planted in this location with a reference to additional trees, making up a total of nineteen, being planted by representatives of local organisations along the Woburn Road frontage of the park.<sup>5</sup> The plaques for the additional trees are missing, stolen apparently in 2009.<sup>6</sup>

The missing eleventh tree in the commemorative avenue was located at the Woburn Road end of the avenue, and appears to have been removed by council contractors sometime before 2010. The tree was originally planted by Mayor J. W. Andrews, who was in office from 1933 to 1947. Although the files show that it once had a plaque, the position of the tree today is marked by a stone boulder for reasons which I will now explain.<sup>7</sup>

The story behind the boulder marking the position of the missing mayoral tree came about because by 2007 it was clear that the original mayoral plaques, set on low plinths, had become overgrown by the increasing girth of the trees with the wording becoming gradually obscured by the roots.<sup>7</sup> It was at this stage that the Sports Ground Assets Manager for the Hutt City Council came up with a brilliant and highly innovative solution that will be of great interest to anyone interested in the cultural aspect of parks management; he decided to replace all of the original eleven bronze plaques with thirteen stone boulders. The boulders would be engraved with the same historical details that appeared on the bronze plaques. Because two of the Mayors, E.P. Bunny and W.T. Strand, had served two terms each, two additional boulders would record the separate dates of their mayoralty whereas originally the dates were recorded on single plaques. The plan was that each boulder would be anchored to a concrete base and then placed beside each tree. This was a practical, economical, and aesthetic solution. Being stone and not metal, the boulders were also unlikely to attract thieves. The boulder stones, appropriately enough, were to come from the Hutt River.

Early in 2009 Downer Works Facilities Maintenance was contracted to do the job.<sup>9</sup> The old plaques were carefully cut out from the base of each tree, although on two of the trees this was obviously going to be fatal so that two original bronze plaques for Mayors W.G. Foster, 1898-1900, and E.P. Rishworth, 1918-1921, are still in place today.<sup>10</sup> The remaining bronze plaques that were removed from the trees went into storage but in the ten months after they were removed they went missing! Downer Facilities said that one of their temporary labourers must have thrown the plaques out of the shed where they were stored.<sup>11</sup> One may speculate on this as non-ferrous metals are worth quite a lot of money. Be that as it may, an excellent and very professional stone engraving job was carried out by Glover Memorials in Naenae, who also handpicked the replacement boulder stones.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly this was a case where the historical details needed for this work could not have been obtained from the original plaques. The



Figure 2: Tree planted by Mayor W.T. Strand (photo by author).



Figure 3 Bronze plaque for Mayor Foster (photo by author).

Hutt City Council Archives confirm that thankfully the information was located, after considerable research, in the original Lower Hutt Borough Council Town Clerk's correspondence files. The project was completed by the end of April 2010.

Because of its partial timber construction the original Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand posed a potential fire risk, a theme which, as we shall see, has always been present in the minds of Hutt City parks managers. In the case of the grandstand, opened in 1934,<sup>13</sup> the fire risk proved to be fatal to the old building.

An engineer's report in 1991 noted that "The Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand is a well-built structure of approximately sixty years of age. It is essentially a timber framed structure with a number of concrete walls at ground floor level."<sup>14</sup> Disaster struck on the afternoon of 30th September 1998 when the upper two timber stories of the structure were completely destroyed by fire, leaving the concrete ground floor as the sole survivor. Ironically this proved to be a fortuitous outcome as the architects of the new replacement grandstand, Peddle Thorpe and Montgomery, were able to replicate the old building using the original ground floor and foundations as the footprint for the new building. An extract from the minutes of a special council meeting dated 19th November 1998, show that the decision to replicate was a popular choice arrived at by consultation with Cricket New Zealand and the Hutt District Cricket Club.<sup>15</sup>

The minutes state that the cause of the fire was an electrical fault but there are no further details. Perhaps the most interesting documents attached to the minutes are copies of the plans and elevations by the architects. These show that although the grandstand was reconstructed in the same style as the original 1930s design, it was built with modernised facilities inside.<sup>16</sup>

A full set of the plans can be viewed in the Hutt Recreation Ground



Figure 4: The smoking ruins of the old grandstand (Hutt City Council Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).

Grandstand contract documents.<sup>17</sup> Equally interesting are the spectacular minute by minute photographs of the fire found in the files.<sup>18</sup> They show just how devastating it was with people looking on helplessly as the fire tenders tried to put the fire out.

The new Hutt Recreation Ground grandstand was officially opened by Mayor John Terris on 12th December 1999.<sup>19</sup> Anyone looking at the Grandstand from the outside today who didn't know there had been a devastating fire in 1998, would think they were looking at the original building. According to the groundsman, people returning to the Hutt after an absence of many years have thought the same thing.<sup>20</sup> It is a credit to the architects that the rebuild was done so sensitively and so well.

The near total loss of the Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand by fire was not forgotten by Parks and Gardens managers when, two years later in April 2000, it was discovered that a club leasing the hall in the Petone Recreation Ground Grandstand had been using fire for one of its indoor game activities. The HCC Divisional Manager of Leisure Services sought legal advice because of his concern that if the activity got out of hand the Council would have a repeat of the Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand fire on its hands. The advice he received was that Council could not be held liable for any accident because there was no clause in



Figure 5: The Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand fire, shortly after the peak of the fire on the afternoon of 30 September, 1998. The date shown by the camera is incorrect. (Hutt City Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).



Figure 6: The new Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand. Photo probably taken before the official opening on 12 December 1999. (Hutt City Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).

the lease that prohibited the club from using the grandstand hall for its activities. The only solution was to obtain an indemnity from the club as a form of insurance against accidents occurring.

The Parks and Gardens files show that there were many knotty legal issues like this concerning leasehold arrangements with sporting clubs. Some of the issues lasted for years but it is worth noting that recreation grounds in the Hutt were also places of advanced scientific engineering in playing field technology.

In this regard the Petone Recreation Ground appears to have been the first sports facility in the Hutt Valley to install a scientifically engineered playing surface ready for the Shell Series cricket match between Wellington and Otago in January 1992.<sup>21</sup>

In his press release about the new playing surface, Mayor Glen Evans described the surface as a “revolutionary” wicket block. The block, he said, was constructed at Petone, and was “based on a system commonly used for golf greens in North America, whereby the golf green, or in this case the wicket strip is entirely isolated by a plastic membrane from the surrounding earth. The Petone wicket block contains six such wickets, each filled with specially prepared materials, with underground watering systems and drainage as well as overhead watering. The new wicket was designed by Keith McAuliffe of the New Zealand Turf Culture Institute and Alex Benton of the Recreation Division of Council.”<sup>22</sup> For engineers who are interested in the subject the specifications for the new turf are on file, and the design was called the “Pickering” system. It set off a turf improvement development in the Hutt Valley which had long term benefits for other parks.

Six months later, in the winter of 1992 for instance, the hockey players at Fraser Park came forward with a proposal to install an artificial playing field surface along with a hockey stadium to replace their old club house at the park.<sup>23</sup> An artificial hockey field surface, according to the specifications on file drawn up by consulting engineers Ian Macallan & Co Ltd, would consist of a high performance “top of the line” sand filled synthetic turf known as Astrograss.<sup>24</sup> From a planning point of view the proposal would cost Council \$556,000 which the Council was able to budget for in the Annual Plan. However the proposal became a political rather than a technical issue, the problem being that two cricket blocks would have to be relocated to the western side of the Hutt River stop bank in order to accommodate the new hockey field proposal. This was land subject to flooding from the river. Feelings ran high with the Taita District Cricket Club being split in half, some supporting the Hockey

proposal and some against. After two years of intense meetings between Parks managers and the Cricket Club, enlivened by people walking out of meetings in a huff, a solution was arrived at with the Hockey Club being relocated to the south-western end of Fraser Park on a piece of ground adjacent to the Avalon TV studios, well away from the cricket pitches at the north western end. The artificial Hockey surface was approved when council publicly notified its intention in November 1994, to "lease the TV Ground for a synthetic hockey field."<sup>25</sup>

Returning to our previous theme of fire risk, it is clear from the Parks and Gardens files that it relates directly to another theme which emerges quite strongly in the files – the risk of fire and other forms of damage caused by vandals. Anyone interested in the management of vandalism in public parks will be interested in the techniques used by parks managers in the Hutt to deal with the problem. There is no doubt that vandalism is an expensive problem for local authorities, since it involves damage done to sports changing sheds, club houses, toilets, showers and the actual playing fields themselves. However it is also apparent that where there is accidental damage to park facilities the consequences and the solutions are somewhat different.

Looking at the theme of vandalism first, the Parks and Gardens files show that it basically takes several forms. A common form is (or was) driving vehicles after hours, usually at night, over turf that has been carefully and lovingly maintained by council contractors for sports club use. Another form is the common one of spray painting surfaces with graffiti, as happened to the toilets of the new grandstand at the Hutt Recreation Ground in February 2007. Trashing a building is also another activity and yet another form, the most dangerous and certainly the most expensive, is setting fire to it. An example of this was the William Jones Park toilets in Wainuiomata which were set on fire in the early hours of 25 September 2002. The toilets adjoined the Wainuiomata Squash Club. The fire destroyed the toilets and damaged the squash club changing rooms, upstairs seating area, and electrical wiring. The cost of repairing the damage and replacing the toilets was estimated to be \$35,000.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the files contain both reports and photographs of vandalism. One file in particular illustrates the shocking damage done to the changing shed and toilets at Strand Park on the eastern bank of the Hutt River. The photographs, shown here, were taken by Council staff in 2007. Fortunately for Council the financial cost of repairing the facility at Strand Park was a non-issue as the changing shed was demolished when the Hutt River stop banks were realigned by the Greater Wellington



Figure 7: Changing Shed, Strand Park, 2007 (H.C. Archives).



Figure 8: Interior of the shed (H.C. Archives, PL12-3-ST-1, PL12-3-ST-1).

Regional Council in 2008.<sup>27</sup>

Other parks were not so fortunate, requiring ratepayer money to be spent on security chain fences and steel gates, with locks, to stop individuals getting in after hours and causing damage in vehicles. In 2003 the maintenance contractors at Leonard Wood Park in Wainuiomata, reported that hoons had cut the padlock off the gate. This must have required the use of bolt-cutters. The contractors didn't know about it until they came to mow the lawns ten days later.<sup>28</sup>

It is apparent from the files that the vandals at Leonard Wood Park had a long standing interest in committing a particular form of vandalism by driving off-road motor bikes over the park after hours. In 1997 the HCC Parks Technical Officer adopted the tactic of sending out a circular letter to residents living next to the park, asking them to write down the registration number of offending vehicles and to contact the Police if they saw people riding trail bikes.

The Parks and Gardens files also show that motorbikes were not the only problem. Four wheel drive vehicles were also a problem. In 2006 a resident living next to Trafalgar Park at Waiwhetu wrote to council that one driver of a four wheel drive vehicle regularly turned up at midnight to perform "donuts" in the park. What is interesting about this resident's correspondence is that after noting down the vehicle registration number (which could not have been easy in the dark) and reporting the matter to the Police, he went back to the park grounds on Sunday morning and took photographs of the damage which he attached to his letter, and which we can see on file.

Accidental damage to park facilities however, invited different solutions. At Sladden Park, located on Gear Island opposite Strand Park on the Western side of the Hutt River, vehicle barriers with bollards had to be erected in 2007 to prevent spectators at the park from tearing up the grass by parking their cars on the turf and turning it into a quagmire.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the most extraordinary case of accidental damage to be found in the files is the story of a mother and her four children who, in November 1996, was trapped in the Hutt Recreation Ground female toilets which had a faulty lock. Her husband spent over an hour trying to get help and finally tried to kick down the door in a desperate attempt to rescue his family. The door finally succumbed with the assistance of the recreation ground security guard who arrived late, but who also put his boot into the door along with the husband. In a lengthy letter to the Mayor, John Terris, the husband explained what happened and asked for an apology, which he duly received along with the information that the toilet locks had been changed to Cabin Locks to ensure that small children could not close toilet doors accidentally – which is what had actually happened.<sup>30</sup>

Stories of vandalism of one form or another can be depressing reading but there is at least a humorous side to the theme as well. A member of the Hutt Multisport Club emailed the HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager in March 2007 supporting the council policy of opening the gates to Sladden Park at 6am so that kayakers could gain access to the river in the morning. He went on to say “Paddlers feel we assist Hutt City by intervening when we see vandalism occurring. One young gentleman of about 8-9 years who was writing over the playfort in wide tipped ink pen told me, after I asked him to stop, that he would trash my car when I was out of sight and then get his dad to bash me!”<sup>31</sup>

Being bashed by a little boy’s father was an unlikely thing to happen to anyone legitimately using Lower Hutt’s parks and gardens in daylight. But the risk of being mugged, or worse raped, after hours was obviously a legitimate fear (as it must always be) in the minds of responsible citizens. The subject of assault, or the risk of it, is referred to only once in the Parks and Gardens files. It concerned an incident at the Hutt Recreation Ground which turned out to be a management issue, not without its humour, and fortunately not an actual case of assault. It is worth relating as it revealed that managers sometimes needed to have the patience of a saint in exercising their judgement before things got out of hand.

In this particular incident, the HCC Divisional Manager of Leisure Services was on duty during the Christmas/New Year break of 1995-1996. In a lengthy handwritten file note, obviously written in real-time when all the other staff were on leave, he wrote that the Bellevue Hotel, located adjacent to the Hutt Recreation Ground on Woburn Road, was staging a huge new year’s party and that the organiser of the New Year’s

party, a person identified as “Steve”, wanted the recreation ground floodlights left on between midnight and 2pm, “so patrons leaving the party will not be assaulted or raped by anyone lurking in the shadows.”<sup>33</sup> The HCC Leisure Services Manager, aware that residents living next to the Recreation Ground complained if the lights were left on after 10pm, was abused and threatened when he declined the request from the New Year’s party organiser. The following day it was discovered that under the new district scheme one tower light could be left on between midnight and 1am. The Police, who had offered to increase their presence if the floodlights were not turned on, were advised and said they thought midnight to 1pm was a good compromise.<sup>33</sup> The hotel party organiser for his part did not offer any apology but instead offered free tickets to the party. The offer of course was declined.

If the Parks and Gardens files sometimes demonstrate that exercising the patience of a saint is a skill not uncommon among council officers, a related theme is that under certain circumstances local government may be seen to be exercising the Wisdom of Solomon. Local government in action figures prominently in the Parks and Gardens files and there are several outstanding stories which illustrate this theme and constitute the remainder of this essay. One of them, the regional stadium debate was, and still is, quite significant, but it is worth noting how the local government process works at the Hutt. Briefly, local government in the Hutt works through various boards and committees. In the case of Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata, because these were originally Borough Councils before amalgamation with Lower Hutt in 1989, representation is through elected Community Boards. Other wards in the Hutt maintain Community Committees with appointed membership. Boards and committees consider local issues, and if they have city-wide implications may refer their recommendations to full council through various council sub-committees.<sup>34</sup> An interesting example of this process at work may be found in the files of the H.W. Shortt Recreation Ground, otherwise known as Shortt Park, in Eastbourne. Here the Hutt City Leisure Services Division demonstrated the kind of leadership role council business units have in processing the decisions of community groups and organisations through to council committee level.

The Shortt Recreation Ground is relatively old, being previously known as the Eastbourne Recreation Ground when it was established in the days of the old Eastbourne Borough Council in the early 1900s.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately for the sports clubs that use the ground, particularly cricket, the area is relatively short of flat land. In 2001 the Eastbourne

Cricket Club proposed to council to extend Shortt Park onto the beach in order to increase the playing area for senior grade cricket.<sup>36</sup> There are a number of pohutukawa trees on the site which were, and are, a great favourite with the residents of Eastbourne but unfortunately they were at risk because they mark the boundary between the western edge of the park and the top of the beach at Days Bay.

At the time the proposal was made, Hutt City Council Leisure Services Division recommended that before it could give approval to the proposal, the club would have to undertake extensive consultation with local residents in the community before the matter could be considered by the council. Leisure Services recommended consultation with the East Harbour Environmental Association, the Department of Conservation, The Wellington Regional Council and the Wellington Tenth Trust.<sup>37</sup>

For the next four years consultation was carried out with particular attention being paid to the environmental impact of the proposal. As mentioned, the western boundary of Shortt Park extends along the top of the beach at Days Bay with Pohutukawa trees marking the boundary. Beyond the boundary the beach contains unique sand dunes that are regularly maintained through weeding and planting by a community Trees and Dunes Protection Group. As part of its proposal the cricket club had employed engineers, Truebridge Callender Beach, to prepare a development proposal, a copy of which is on file. The proposal involved felling the pohutukawa trees, creating an extension of the cricket ground by twenty five metres over the dunes, filling in the area over the dunes and creating a rock wall to mark the new seaward boundary. The area reclaimed would cover 1900 square metres of which 600 square metres had native dune cover.<sup>38</sup> By September 2003, after meetings with the Council, the East Harbour Association, and the Dunes group, the latter organisation publicly stated that they “were totally opposed to the ground expansion on principle,” and were not prepared to work with the Cricket Club to make its proposal a reality.<sup>39</sup>

With matters at a stalemate, another two years of discussions and reports flowed backwards and forwards between the affected groups. Finally, on 9 May 2005, Leisure Services Division recommended to the Council Operations and Compliance Committee that the Committee “declines the Eastbourne Cricket Club’s request for approval to expand HW Shortt Recreation Reserve on the basis that the benefits generated by expanding the ground are outweighed by the likely adverse effects on informal coastal recreation opportunities, the coastal environment, natural character and visual amenity values of HW Shortt and its adjoining

coastline.”<sup>40</sup> The final outcome of this recommendation is recorded in the minutes of the Operations and Compliance Committee which met to consider the issue on 19 July 2005. The committee noted that although the proposal had been fully assessed by consultants, “two coastal experts have considered the proposal and one considers that the proposed extension will further degrade coastal values in this area, while the other believes that it is premature to determine whether the accretion along this piece of coastline is a long-term trend.”<sup>41</sup> The committee therefore resolved to decline the Eastbourne Cricket Club’s request for approval to extend HW Shortt Park. The decision of the Council Operations and Compliance Committee appears to have been final as there is no record of any further decision regarding the Eastbourne Cricket Club proposal in the full Council minutes for the period August-September 2005.

The Shortt Park saga illustrates how amalgamation in the Hutt brought with it new management responsibilities for Parks and Gardens managers since, with amalgamation, they inherited the parks previously managed by the borough councils. In the case of Memorial Park, Petone, amalgamation presented Hutt City with an unexpected problem concerning lease arrears.

Memorial Park, which includes Sladden Park, is situated on Gear Island at the mouth of the Hutt River. Gear Island is so named because it was originally the site of a Gear Meat Works facility.<sup>42</sup> The lease for Memorial Park was an issue which apparently no one in the Hutt City Council had thought about until 1995, when it was discovered that the Council was six years in arrears for its rates payments to the owners of the land, the Wellington Regional Council.<sup>43</sup> The Petone Borough Council had had a prior lease arrangement for Memorial Park going back to the days when the Hutt River Board owned the park. The Borough Council also had a sub-lease arrangement with the Petone Football Club who, since 1960, claimed Memorial Park as their home and who, since 1976, wanted to make substantial improvements to the park including new changing rooms and a new grandstand.<sup>44</sup>

Since it had managed Memorial Park for six years the Hutt City Council needed to update its rent payments for the park before it could advance any development proposals. Accordingly the first step had been to ask the Regional Council for a renewal of the lease in 1995.<sup>45</sup> The Regional Council for its part however, apparently forgot about the request for several years. This was an untypical response but it was probably due to the fact that there was a long-term issue about stop bank management which had traditionally been divided up between the Hutt River Board,

which had ceased to exist in 1973, the Petone Borough Council, and Lower Hutt.<sup>46</sup> The Hutt City Council's property advisers wrote to Council in February 1998 that "The Wellington Regional Council has not yet made any decision as to the future of its land holding at Memorial Park ... the Regional Council is commencing a review ... we suspect that the process could take a long time ..."<sup>47</sup> Eventually the Regional Council did renew the lease, but only for four years.<sup>48</sup>

In 2005 Memorial Park was gazetted by Land Information New Zealand as vested in the Hutt City Council.<sup>49</sup> The change of ownership enabled the council to settle the outstanding sub-lease issue with the Petone Football Club; it also allowed council to deal directly with the recommendations of the Petone Community Board with regard to a new proposal from Capital Soccer which, on behalf of the Petone Soccer Club, wished to upgrade the Memorial Park grandstand.<sup>50</sup>

Memorial Park is a recreation ground that has a direct reference in its title to being an actual memorial. Of interest to social historians is the fact that the memorial status refers to a preference adopted by New Zealand communities after the Second World War to create memorials to the war that had a community use, rather than create more stone memorials of the type that were preferred after World War One. The Petone Borough Council settled for a Memorial Park on Gear Island, and as part of that created a Garden of Remembrance in one corner of the park which was opened in 1960.<sup>51</sup> The files show that the Garden of Remembrance had become run down by 1994 and that there was no memorial plaque to Petone servicemen who had served in World War Two. It was left to a former mayor of Petone, Hutt City Councillor Ted Woolf, to see to it that a bronze memorial plaque was mounted in the garden in 1999.<sup>52</sup> There is a lot of detailed research on file into the names of the servicemen which are recorded on the plaque. The plaque itself was made by a local Taita man (unnamed) who paid for it himself.<sup>53</sup> As part of the Garden of Remembrance upgrade in 1995 a new sundial cast in gun metal and mounted on Kairuru marble, was erected in the middle of the garden to replace one destroyed by vandals; around its base is inscribed a poem, *The Soldier*, by Rupert Brooke. The original hand-drawn plans for the sundial are included in the file.<sup>54</sup>

Although the story of Memorial Park is an illustration of the theme of local government in action at both the local and regional level, the theme is perhaps best illustrated in the Parks and Gardens files with regard to the famous Regional Stadium debate. This took place between 1990 and 1994 and was a debate in which Lower Hutt became heavily

involved. During this time Fraser Park at Taita was a serious contender for the Wellington Regional Stadium.

This development came about partly through the Hockey Foundation proposal for an artificial playing field at Fraser Park which, as we have seen, took over two years to resolve during the same period. It was a proposed development that prompted Mayor Glen Evans to say, after listening to the Taita Cricket Club concerns over the hockey proposal, that a conflict between hockey and cricket illustrated the need for having a "proper development plan for Fraser Park generally."<sup>55</sup> In this uncertain situation the main impetus for a development plan catering for a multi-use stadium, was to come from a much bigger player.

The Parks and Gardens files tell the story of how Downer Developments Ltd was the first organization to approach the Hutt Development Board late in 1990 with a proposal to build a multi-sport stadium at Fraser Park. Downers had the support of the Wellington Rugby Union, the Wellington Rugby League, the Hutt Valley Softball Association, the Wellington Cricket Association and the Avalon Sports Association.<sup>56</sup> The proposal came as no surprise since the Wellington Rugby Union had publicly stated that it had experienced difficulty in negotiating an acceptable rental for Athletic Park, which needed upgrading, in order to host international test matches for the Winfield Cup.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of Downer's proposal, the Hutt Development Board had received a report in December 1990 from the acting chairman of the Board in which he outlined a three stage feasibility study for the redevelopment of Fraser Park. Stage One identified a requirement for a more up-to-date outdoor sports venue in the Wellington Region. About 400,000 spectators a year would be needed to support the venture. Stage Two would involve a detailed stadium design and site assessment for Fraser Park. Stage Three would assess the financial viability of the stadium proposal and recommend financial options.<sup>58</sup>

The Development Board immediately commissioned an organisation called the International Facility Corporation Pty Ltd, to produce a "Feasibility Study for Fraser Park as a Regional Stadium". The study, dated 31 May 1991, can be read on file.<sup>59</sup> It consists of a detailed market assessment based on the proposal to include rugby league at Fraser Park specifically for Winfield Cup matches. On the basis of this market study, the executive summary recommended a multi-purpose stadium be developed with a seating capacity between 30,000 and 35,000 to accommodate international events and, "to be the home for a Winfield Cup rugby league franchise." The cost of the proposal was estimated to

be in the order of fifty million dollars.<sup>60</sup>

In September 1991 events took a new turn with the appearance at a special meeting of the Hutt City Council of John Morrison, part owner at the time of the Wellington Dolphins Rugby League Limited. Morrison stated that the Dolphins had the support of the rugby league parent body in Australia (the New South Wales Rugby League) to enter the Winfield Cup Rugby League competition.<sup>61</sup> At a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee in April 1992 he again appeared, and stated that the Dolphins were desirous of using Fraser Park as their home venue but that the park would have to be up to the Winfield Cup standard.<sup>62</sup>

To achieve their objective the Dolphins had come up with their own development proposal which was to build a multi-use stadium at the cost of five million dollars. This would be a stadium not just for Rugby League but for most other sports users of Fraser Park. On 13 March 1992 the Dolphins made a formal proposal to the Hutt City Council in which the club proposed to borrow five million dollars from the National Bank with Council acting as guarantor for the loan.<sup>63</sup> This could be done, so the proposal went, by creating a joint Venture company to be called "Newco", 'joint' meaning the Dolphins and Hutt City Council acting in partnership but with the Dolphins having pre-emptive rights for twenty years over the use of a major part of Fraser Park.<sup>64</sup> This was a tricky proposal. It would effectively remove control of Field Number One, the principal field in the park, from the Council. Council for its part would contract not Downer Developments, but Fletcher Construction Ltd to develop and upgrade the park. The Hutt City Council would guarantee the loan by taking the revenue from gate sales and paying that money back into the joint venture company to repay the bank loan.

According to the minutes of the Community Services Group, the Hutt City Council supported the Dolphin's proposal in principle but there was a flaw regarding the pre-emptive rights issue. No sports club can act as a developer on public reserve land. In later years this was to become an issue with other parks. As we have seen Capital Soccer faced this problem at Memorial Park in 2005, and the Eastbourne Cricket Club had also faced the same potential problem by proposing to extend Shortt Park in 2001.<sup>65</sup>

The interesting thing about the March 1992 Newco proposal is that it proposed an attractive development for Fraser Park that was forty-five million dollars less than the cost estimated by the Facilities Development Corporation study of nearly a year before. There is nothing on file that explains this huge difference in cost, unless it was assumed by the parties

concerned that additional development costs would be met by regional ratepayers, the lotteries, or Winfield, or all of these. Even so Hutt City Council Community Services had doubts about servicing the five million dollar loan in spite of the apparent advantages of the proposal. They thought that although the stadium debt could be repaid well before the proposed lease term with the Dolphins of 20 years expired, this might not happen if gate sales went down for any reason, or if the Dolphins folded up, leaving the Hutt City Council liable for five million dollars.<sup>66</sup> A month later, in an internal memo, Mayor Glen Evans wrote "We need to sight the documents detailing the nature of the arrangements with the New South Wales Rugby League, to ensure that there is confirmation of a long-term commitment ... What guarantees or assurances are available to the venture company from the Dolphins and its promoters?"<sup>67</sup>

By 1994 the Fraser Park files show that some council officers had obviously become aware that the Dolphins proposal, apart from causing dislocation to other sports users of the park by having pre-emptive rights over Field Number One, would cost a lot more than five million dollars. The Divisional Manager of Recreation and Leisure Services wrote to the Hutt Development Board in May 1994 that although the 1991 Facility Development Corporation Feasibility Study for an international stadium at Fraser Park recommended the park as the best site in the region, a critical issue was whether a stadium seating 35,000 people was needed at all. From a financial point of view he asked, how was a stadium to be paid for? The proposal, he thought, would cost up to sixty million dollars requiring three million dollars a year for over twenty years to service the loan.<sup>68</sup> In a report written the same year for the Community Services Group on the Astrograss artificial hockey field surface, he again reiterated his concern: "In 1991 Facility Development Corporation carried out a feasibility study on a major multiuse stadium seating 35,000 spectators on Fraser Park. This would dislocate at least 50% of all existing use on the park. In the officers' opinion this project is both unviable and undesirable!"<sup>69</sup>

Not all of the planning officers at council supported this view. Some maintained that there was a general agreement on re-siting other park users to accommodate a multi-use stadium.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless the comments of the HCC Divisional Manager of Recreation and Leisure Services came during a period when the other competitors for a regional stadium, Wellington and Porirua, were coming forward with their proposals and felt the need for an arbitrator to settle the issue. Initially this was to be the Wellington Regional Council. In a letter from the Regional Council,

dated 6th September 1993, addressed to the HCC Group Manager City Environment, the Regional Council's Planning and Environment Manager stated that the Regional Council intended to undertake an in-house study of five stadium options, Athletic Park, Aotea Stadium, the Basin Reserve, Fraser Park, and the Railyards site at Thorndon. The study would be, quote, a "quick and dirty stadium study," with the objective of providing, "an objective regional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the options."<sup>71</sup>

The Hutt City Council understood from this that the Wellington City Council was considering *all* the options as was the Regional Council. The HCC Divisional Manager of Special Projects reported to the Hutt Policy and Finance Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1994, that the Wellington City Council had considered a "feasibility study on a multi-purpose stadium in Wellington."<sup>72</sup> The study, he said, considered Athletic Park, the Basin Reserve, and the Railyard site. He went on to say that two other options had been "mentioned" these being Fraser Park, Lower Hutt, and the Aotea Centre, Porirua.<sup>73</sup> This may have been a reference to other discussions being held in Wellington at the time, but neither of these two latter stadium options is actually mentioned in the copies of two Wellington City Council reports on file.

To clarify this point, two documents are attached to the Special Projects Manager's report which are copies of a "Feasibility study on a multi-purpose stadium in Wellington" and a "Report on a multi-purpose Stadium in Wellington presented to Wellington City Councillors at a special meeting of the WCC Culture and Recreation Committee on Friday 4 February 1994."<sup>74</sup> The Feasibility study is obviously the one referred to in the HCC Project Manager's report. It was written by Ernst & Young and was commissioned by the Wellington City Council in 1993, but it is a disappointing document as far as consideration of regional options were concerned in that it considers only the Basin Reserve site option; the study estimated that a stadium built there would cost fifty-one million dollars. The second document, a report written by the Wellington City Council General Manager Culture & Recreation, refers to the Ernst & Young study and, not surprisingly, considers only several options - development of Athletic Park, the Basin Reserve, and the Railyards site. Fraser Park and the proposed Aotea Centre are not in fact mentioned at all in this second document.<sup>75</sup>

In fairness to the Wellington City Council, an obvious determination to have a stadium located in Wellington City was in itself a legitimate ambition although from another perspective the situation had become

something of a Catch 22 scenario. The HCC Special Projects Manager states in his report that the Regional Council had no power under the Local Government Act to assist with the development of a regional stadium; "However," he went on to say "it has been reported that the mayor of Wellington has had discussions with the Prime Minister on this issue. The content and outcome of those discussions is unknown at present."<sup>76</sup>

The Wellington City Council may also have been aware that notwithstanding media hype about "jealousy" existing between Lower Hutt and Wellington over the stadium issue, and that the local authorities were at "loggerheads" over the three different site options,<sup>77</sup> Lower Hutt was in fact prepared to accede to public opinion if a Wellington venue is what people wanted.<sup>78</sup> Two letters to the Chief Executive Officer of the Hillary Commission written by the Manager of Hutt City Environment, on 28th July and 1st August 1994, show that Hutt City was anything but at "loggerheads" with Wellington regarding the stadium debate.<sup>79</sup> It was simply a case where the rules of the game appeared to be going against Lower Hutt and that Lower Hutt accepted the situation although, perhaps, reluctantly and with some regret.

Essentially, according to the City Environment Manager, the Hutt City Council's position was that if a Wellington site, the Railyard site, or the Aotea Centre site located in Porirua City, was not selected, Fraser Park merited consideration as "an excellent sporting facility with sufficient development room to realise its enormous potential."<sup>80</sup> This potential, he went on to say, "Is however seen as a second level facility if a main stadium is located outside of Lower Hutt City."<sup>81</sup> The Hutt City Council had been contemplating a 35,000 seat stadium which would cater for the Winfield Cup, but that "its recent thinking had been influenced by promotions by the Wellington City Council and the Porirua City Council to provide a stadium within those cities."<sup>82</sup> Consequently proposals for Fraser Park in connection with the Winfield Cup had not been resolved.<sup>83</sup>

The Hutt City Environment Manager's letters to the Hillary Commission show that by the second half of 1994, after a year of intense media attention in the Dominion and Hutt News newspapers – all which can be read in the clippings on file – the politics of the situation had now shifted from the Regional Council to the Hillary Commission to act as arbitrator in the stadium debate.<sup>84</sup> At the request of a meeting of stakeholders in June 1994, Sir Wilson Whineray, Chairman of the Hillary Commission, was asked to prepare a report for Wyatt Creech, Deputy Minister of Finance, investigating the proposed sites for the regional stadium.<sup>85</sup>

In this context Wilson Whineray's report to Wyatt Creech, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1994, just one day after the HCC Environment Manager's last letter to the Hillary Commission, is significant for an understanding of the stadium debate and its final outcome. A copy of Whineray's report can be read on file and amounts to ten pages,<sup>86</sup> but in fact only one page, page one, has a summary of the Hutt's position which is not referred to again. Whineray wrote, "Although at the outset it was thought that there were three proposals for review, advice from the Hutt City Council re. Fraser Park has been that only if a decision was made to move out of Wellington City would they want Fraser Park considered as a serious alternative to Aotea. In order to proceed to a decision I decided to consider the Aotea and Railyards proposals first, and depending on the outcome review Fraser Park if necessary."<sup>87</sup>

Wyatt Creech wrote to Mayor Glen Evans two days later on 4th August, attaching Whineray's report. Creech wrote "As you can see his Report recommends that the stadium proceed on the railyard site."<sup>88</sup> A month before he had received Whineray's report Mayor Glen Evans, with some prescience, was quoted in the Hutt News as saying "It is clear at the moment that the major sporting codes and corporates prefer the proposed Wellington railway site. This is a fact of life."<sup>89</sup>

In an extraordinary turn of events, at the time of writing this article the Wellington Phoenix Football Club made a surprise announcement that they had asked one of Hutt City's council controlled organisations, the Hutt City Community Facilities Trust, to back a proposal to build a supplementary regional stadium at the south end of the Petone Recreation Ground because, it is claimed, the current venue for football A-League matches, the Westpac Stadium, is not ideal.<sup>90</sup> Who says that history doesn't repeat itself?

### Bibliography

- Millar, David P: *Once Upon A Village: A History of Lower Hutt, 1819-1965*. New Zealand University Press for the Lower Hutt City Corporation, 1972.
- McGill, David: *Lower Hutt. The First Garden City*. The Lower Hutt City Council, 1991.
- Butterworth, Susan: *Petone: A History*. Petone Borough Council, 1988.
- Beaglehole, Ann with Carew, Alison: *Eastbourne: A History of the Eastern Bays of Wellington Harbour*. The Historical Society of Eastbourne Inc., 2001.
- Kaye, George: *Bygone Days in Lower Hutt*. Lower Hutt City Council, 1987.
- Lower Hutt Borough Council: *Lower Hutt Past and Present: A Centennial and Jubilee Publication Published by the Lower Hutt Borough Council to Commemorate the Jubilee of the Foundation of the Borough on the 1st February, 1891, and its Elevation to City Status on the 1st February, 1941*. Hutt News Printing & Publishing Company Ltd, 1941.

## Hutt City Council Archives

### Primary Sources

NOTE: The following list includes Council registered and unregistered files.

**PL12-3.** Hutt City Council-Property and Land Management-Leisure Facilities/Park & Recreation Grounds-Sports Parks.

**AD16-2768.** Hutt City Council-Administration-Contract files. Peddle Thorp Montgomery contract and drawings.

**[No File Reference] (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH71209).** Lower Hutt City Council-Miscellaneous Records [Lower Hutt]. Fraser Park (Taita Reserve), 1948-1980.

**41-3-1 to 41-3-5. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH17851-17854, 17856).** Petone Borough Council-Central Filing System [Petone]-Parks and Reserves. Memorial Park.

**CM80-12-4-DOC/11/84464.** Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. Governance in The Wellington Region.

**CM80-12-4-DOC/10/21541.** Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. Lower Hutt Mayors & Hutt City Council 1891-2010.

**CPP70-13-DOC/11/13827.** Hutt City Council-Policy and Planning-Council Performance-Community Boards and Community Committees. Functions and Delegations: Terms of Reference, November 2010.

**CM80-12-4-DOC/12/525.** Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. The Origins of the Wellington Regional Council.

**15775. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH28711).** Lower Hutt City Council-Town Clerk's Department Correspondence. Coronation Celebrations Commemorative Oak Trees and Plaques, 1937-1941.

**319-20-1, Vol. 1. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH54776).** Lower Hutt City Council-Town Clerk Chief Executive's Filing System. Hutt Recreation Ground-General, 1952-1965.

**[No File Reference] (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH71209).** Lower Hutt City Council-Miscellaneous Records [Lower Hutt]. Hutt Recreation Ground, 1950-1980.

**[No File Reference] Hutt City Council Historic Aerials.** Hutt Recreation Ground-1941, 2013.

**CM80-12-4 ENQ 2009-497.** Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. The Dominion Post, 24/2/2010, A13 News. "Inscriptions from old Hutt plaques to be set in stone."

Anyone who is interested in seeing the Parks and Gardens files described in the above article should contact Hutt City Council Archives, 487 Hutt Road Lower Hutt, Tel. 04 589-0460, and/or Hutt City Council website at [www.huttcity.govt.nz](http://www.huttcity.govt.nz). An historical and pictorial survey by the author of the commemorative oak trees at the Hutt Recreation Ground, is also available for reference on compact disc.

## Endnotes

1. *Lower Hutt Past and Present*, p.91. Cf. File PL12-3-HR-1/4, Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
2. 15775-ARCH28711. Correspondence, Town Clerk to Minister of Internal Affairs, 11/3/1938. Cf. Town Clerk to the Superintendent of Reserves, Cornwall Park, Hastings, NZ, 27/2/1940. Cf. *Order of Service Borough of Lower Hutt, Coronation of Their Majesties King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth. Citizens' Service, Recreation Ground, Lower Hutt*, 12 May 1937. Cf. *Internal Affairs correspondence*, 7/2/1938, 11/3/1938, 8/6/1939.
3. The term "commemorative avenue" is first used, as far as I can tell, by David Millar in his 1972 history *Once Upon a Village*, where he says, p.152, "Then all living ex-Mayors, the current mayor, J.W. Andrews, descendants of deceased mayors and representatives of Lower Hutt organizations planted an avenue of scarlet oaks from the grandstand to the Woburn Road entrance of the Recreation ground, each tree being marked with a bronze plaque." Cf. file 15775-ARCH28711, *Order of Service, Ibid.*
4. 15775-ARCH28711. The file contains, on undated foolscap sheets, type-written mock-ups of each of the eleven plaques showing all the historical details as they appeared on the original bronze plaques, and as they appear today on stone boulders.
5. 15775-ARCH28711. Correspondence, *Ibid*, Town Clerk to Minister of Internal Affairs, 11/3/1938. Cf. Town Clerk to former Mayor, W.T. Strand, 26/4/1937. The full list of 11 Mayors and 8 organizations who planted trees is printed in the *Order of Service*. The Mayors, some of whom were represented by relatives, cover a period in the history of the Borough of Lower Hutt from the first Mayor of 1891 (W.A Fitzherbert) to the eleventh Mayor (J.W. Andrews) in office from 1933 to 1947. Lower Hutt became a city on 1st February, 1941.
6. CM80-12-4 ENQ2009-497. *The Dominion Post*, 24/2/2010, A13 News. "Inscriptions from old Hutt plaques to be set in stone." With regard to the Woburn Road oak trees, as can be seen today the concrete plinths for the plaques stand out well forward of the tree trunks which, evidentially, was not the case with the commemorative avenue trees.
7. 15775-ARCH28711. Type-written mock-up of the original bronze plaque, *Ibid*, and present day stone boulder.
8. File PL12-3-HR-1/7. Correspondence, Dr. M. Rudge to T. Stallinger, CEO HCC, 13/9/2007, and Stallinger to Rudge, 20/9/2007.
9. File PL12-3-HR-1/8. Correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager and Downer Works Facilities Maintenance, 19/3/2009-13/4/2010.
10. PL12-3-HR-1/8. Downer Maintenance advised on 19th March 2009 about the technique they had used to carefully cut the "old plaques" out from the roots of the trees, as they were afraid that vandals "would wrench the plaques out causing damage to the tree roots."
11. File PL12-3-HR-1/8. *Ibid*, Correspondence, Area Operations Manager for Downer Works Facilities Maintenance, to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 8/12/2009.
12. CM80-12-4 ENQ2009-497. *The Dominion Post*, 24/2/2010, A13 News, *Ibid*.
13. George Kaye, *Bygone Days in Lower Hutt*. Ch.11, p.51. Cf. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
14. File PL12-3-HR-1/1. Survey report, Ian Macallan & Co, 31/7/1991.
15. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. HCC City Services Group, Extract from the minutes of the special Council meeting on 19th November 1998, and attached report from the HCC City Development Group, 15 November 1998, *Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand, Report No. C98/11/4(2)*.
16. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. *Ibid*.
17. File AD16-2768. Peddle Thorp Montgomery contract and drawings.
18. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. The fire started at 12.40 pm. The digital camera photos of the fire are incorrect insofar as they show a date of 1st October 1998. The City Development Group minutes of 15/11/1998 state the fire took place on 30 September 1998. (Refer endnote 15). Mayor Terris' speech notes on the opening of the grandstand also state the fire took place on 30 September, *Ibid*, PL12-3-HR1/4. The photo sequence includes the rebuilding of the new grandstand which took fifteen months.
19. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. *Ibid*. Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
20. File PL12-3-HR-1/6. News clipping on file, *Hutt News, Sport page*, 1/6/2004. Comments by groundsman Dave Black on his retirement after 34 years at the Hutt Rec. Dave described the day of the fire in 1998 as the worst day of his career.
21. File PL12-3-PR-1/1. Mayoral press release, January 1992: *Revolutionary Wicket Block, on the occasion of the Wellington versus Otago Shell Series Cricket Match at Petone Recreation Ground*.
22. File PL12-3-PR-1/1. Mayoral press release, *Ibid*.
23. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Correspondence, HCC Divisional Manager Recreation and the Hockey Foundation Artificial Hockey Surface Steering Committee, 11/5/1992-1/11/1993.
24. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. *Ibid*. The consulting engineers Ian Macallan & Co Ltd provided budget estimates for locating an artificial hockey surface to three different locations at Fraser Park.
25. File PL12-3-FR-1/5. Administration Officer for Chief Executive, HCC, to the Chairman of the National Hockey Stadium Trust, 4/11/1994.
26. File PL12-3-WJ-1/2. HCC Operations and Compliance Committee report: Fire Damaged toilets - William Jones Park, 25 September 2002.
27. File PL12-3-ST-1. Correspondence between the HCC and the Greater Wellington Regional Council, 1998-2004; correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager and GWRC, 19/3/2007-30/9/2008.
28. File PL12-3-LW-1. Correspondence, Excell Contractors to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 30/9/2003.
29. File PL12-3-SL-1. Correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager to a retired gentleman from Upper Hutt.
30. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. Correspondence with Mayor

- John Terris, 5/11/1996; Ground Maintenance Services to Divisional Manager Leisure Services, 15/11/1996; and John Terris's reply to the husband of the woman, 20/11/1996.
31. File PL12-3-SL-1. Correspondence, Kayaker to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 21/3/2007.
  32. File PL12-3-HR-1/2. Handwritten initialled file note, closely written on two sides of a sheet of paper dated Wednesday 28/12/1995.
  33. File PL12-3-HR-1/2. *Ibid.*
  34. File CPP70-13 DOC/11/13827. *Community Boards and Community Committees, Functions and Delegations.*
  35. Beaglehole, A. and Carew, A. *Eastbourne. A History of the Eastern bays of Wellington Harbour.* Pp.87, 92,275.
  36. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Correspondence, 2001, Eastbourne Cricket Club and HCC Leisure Services Division.
  37. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. *Ibid.*
  38. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. *Ibid.*
  39. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Quoted in the *Eastbourne Herald*, 26/9/2003, news clipping on file.
  40. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Report, HCC Leisure Services Division; Recommendation to HCC Operations and Compliance Committee, 9/5/2005.
  41. File PL12-3-HW-1/5. Extract from the minutes of the HCC Operations and Compliance Committee, 19/7/2005. The "accretion" that the committee referred to, was an assumption of the advocates of the extension proposal that the beach would recover from an extension by new dunes being formed over time.
  42. Butterworth, S. *Petone. A History.* Pp.81-82, 128, 170-71, 201, 219.
  43. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence; Hutt City Council, Council property consultants O'Brien Property Consultancy Limited, and the Wellington Regional Council, 1995-2000. The previous owner of Memorial Park up until 1980 was the Hutt River Board. When the Wellington Regional Council was established in 1980 it took over the assets of the River Board.
  44. File PL12-03-MP, *Memorial Park Miscellaneous Papers*, 26/4/1958-12/3/1980. This file contains historical records from the old Petone Borough Council going back to 1960. See, "Petone Borough Council Reserves Committee Report on use of Gear Island Playing Fields," April, 1960. Cf. correspondence, Wellington Football Association to the Petone Borough Council, 15/6/1960, and correspondence, 1976-78, regarding the development and upgrading of the Memorial Park grandstand changing rooms used by the Petone Association Football Club.
  45. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence, *ibid*, HCC, O'Brien Property Consultants and WRC, 1995-2000.
  46. File CM80-12-4 DOC/12/525. *The Origins of the Wellington Regional Council.* The Hutt River Board was established in 1899 and became part of the Wellington Regional Water Board in 1973. Seven years later, in 1980, the Regional Water Board was taken over by the Wellington Regional Council.
  47. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence, *ibid*, O'Brien Property Consultants to the HCC Administration Officer, 17/2/1998.
  48. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* The WRC leased Memorial Park to the HCC for four years from 1st July 2000. The lease expired on 30 June 2004. Cf. correspondence on File PL12-3-MP-1/3, between the HCC Administration Officer, and O'Brien Property Consultants.
  49. File PL12-3-MP-1/3. The New Zealand Gazette, No.161, 22 September 2005, copy on file.
  50. File PL12-3-MP-1/3. Petone Community Board minutes, Report, 7/10/2005 and Memo from Phillips Fox to HCC, 4/11/2005. The Petone Community Board recommended that as part of the new lease arrangement, office space above the changing rooms would take priority over a new grandstand and that Capital Soccer would need to pay for the development. From a legal point of view this was a problem as a public reserve did not entitle a sports club to be a developer, only a lease-hold tenant. The PL12 files do not say what happened about this issue.
  51. Butterworth, S. *Petone. A History.* P.219. David Millar, *ibid*. P.177, states that the Hutt Valley RSA wanted the Lower Hutt and Petone councils to lay out a joint memorial park on Gear Island. The Mayor of Lower Hutt, Percy Dowse, (1950-70) decided instead to make the Lower Hutt Library (opened 1956) a War Memorial.
  52. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence on file, 1994-1999. A complete list of servicemen had been compiled and a plaque made ready for mounting by 4th March 1999.
  53. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* Correspondence, 12th April 1995.
  54. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* Correspondence, HCC Parks Assets Manager, to Sundials, Auckland, 15/6/1995, and Sundials to Parks Assets Manager, 13/7/1995.
  55. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Mayor Glen Evans, internal memo, 18/8/1992.
  56. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Minutes of the HCC Community Development Committee, Public Excluded Business*, 23/10/1990: *Development Proposal for Fraser Park.* Downer's proposal was contained in a copy of the Hutt Development Board minutes which were being considered by the Community Development Committee. The Committee minutes make it clear that Downer Developments approached the Hutt Development Board in the first instance with a stadium proposal.
  57. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Ibid.* Winfield was a cigarette manufacturer which sponsored the New South Wales Rugby league Premiership Grand Final match from 1982 to 1994. The Winfield Cup Trophy was retired in 1995 following the prohibition of tobacco advertising in sport by the Australian Federal Government in 1992.
  58. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Ibid.* *Hutt Development Board Meeting*, 19/12/1990; copy of Minutes and Report from Acting Board Chairman on file. In March 1991 the HCC Policy and Finance Committee rejected a proposal from Downer Developments Ltd that Downer would have preferred position as project managers for the redevelopment of Fraser Park.
  59. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Feasibility Study for a New Fraser Park Sports Stadium*, by International Facility Corporation Pty Ltd, 31/5/1991.
  60. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
  61. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. *Minutes of a Special Meeting*

- of the Hutt City Council, 16/8/1991. *Development of Fraser Park.*
62. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. HCC Policy and Finance Committee Minutes, 6/4/1992.
  63. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. See formal proposal, with conditions, to the Hutt City Council by the Dolphins Rugby League limited dated 13 March 1992. Cf. file PL12-3-FR-1/3. HCC Community Services Group Report, 26 March 1992.
  64. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. *Ibid.*
  65. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. The Community Services Group Report of 26 March 1992 made a crucial observation as far as the development proposal was concerned; the Dolphins were, in effect, "unable to own the site as it is vested as a reserve with the council".
  66. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. *Ibid.*
  67. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Mayor Glen Evans in an internal memo to the HCC General Manager, 7/4/1992.
  68. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. HCC Divisional Manager Recreation correspondence, 25/5/1994.
  69. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Community Services Group Report prepared by HCC Divisional Manager Recreation, 22/4/1994.
  70. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. Documents of a Resource Management Act Hearing, November 1991, regarding an application by the Softball Stadium Trust to erect a stadium at Fraser Park. Other projects were discussed in the evidence, including the Dolphins Stadium proposal. The views on relocation expressed at that time were made by the HCC Divisional Manager Recreation, and the Senior Planner.
  71. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. Correspondence, Wellington Regional Council Planning and Environment Manager to HCC Group Manager City Environment, 6/9/1993.
  72. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. A report dated 28/3/1994, written by the HCC Divisional Manager Special Projects to the HCC Policy and Finance Committee, for its meeting held on 30/3/1994, "Regional Multi-purpose Stadium Proposals Current Situation."
  73. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
  74. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.* A second copy of the HCC Divisional Manager Special Projects report and attached documents is also found on PL12-3-FR-20/02; the Ernst and Young study is attached only to this second copy of the report.
  75. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
  76. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.* A *Dominion* article on file dated 23/3/1994, also states that in February 1994 Wellington Mayor Fran Wilde, on behalf of the Wellington City Council, had called for Regional Council support to get a stadium developed at the Wellington rail yard.
  77. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Many news clippings dealing with the jealousy issue can be found on this file, e.g. the *Evening Post*, 16/5/1994, and the *Dominion*, 27/6/1994. See also article by journalist Nicolas Boyack in the *Hutt News*, 16/8/1994. Boyack claimed that Hutt ratepayers were not keen on funding a project they would get little benefit from, a point of view that was supported by the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce in a *Hutt News* article published on ANZAC Day, 1995 (file PL12-3-FR-20/02).
  78. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Two letters to the CEO of the Hillary Commission, Wilson Whineray, dated 28/7/1994 and 1/8/1994, by the HCC Manager City Environment, set out the position of the HCC regarding the "Regional Stadium consideration."
  79. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
  80. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
  81. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
  82. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
  83. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
  84. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. The bulk of the comments by the media at this time are found in the copies of news clippings on this file. Cf. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Dominion*, 27/6/1994.
  85. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. The appointment of Wilson Whineray as Arbitrator was on 27/6/1994. See letter on file from Wyatt Creech to Mayor Glen Evans, 4th August 1994, enclosing an embargoed copy of Whineray's report.
  86. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. Ten page report to the Minister of Finance, Hon. Wyatt Creech M.P., from Wilson Whineray, C/o Hillary Commission, 2nd August 1994, *Wellington Stadium Proposals*. The report is attached to Wyatt Creech's letter to Mayor Glen Evans of 4th August 1994.
  87. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. *Ibid.*
  88. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. *Ibid.* Wyatt Creech to Mayor Glen Evans, 4th August 1994.
  89. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Mayor Glen Evans quoted in *Hutt News*, 12/7/1994. Five months earlier Mayor Evans had issued a media statement, 15/2/1994, in which he said that the 1991 International Facility study claimed Fraser Park was the best regional choice. As far as he was concerned it was still the cheapest option and would service the regional population, "at least as well as or somewhat better than the Aotea Stadium."
  90. Hutt City Community Facilities Trust circular distributed to the residents of Hutt City, February 2014.

# The Birth of the Living Archive: An emerging archive of Australian Aboriginal languages and literature

Michael Christie, Brian Devlin and Catherine Bow

*Peer Reviewed*

## Introduction

In 2012 an archive of texts in Aboriginal languages came to life in the Northern Territory of Australia attended by a host of midwives, friends, relations and well-wishers.<sup>1</sup> Its birth was much anticipated and well received. Based upon several thousand books which were made in Aboriginal languages between 1973 and 2000, it bears within it the promise of addressing some persistent concerns of diverse interest groups. The authors of this paper have backgrounds in linguistics, language education and science and technology studies, but it is through both longstanding and newly acquired relationship with Aboriginal language owners that the archive takes on its unique, often surprising form. Designed in part as academic research infrastructure, the Living Archive's overarching aim is the mobilisation of language work intergenerationally and interculturally.<sup>2</sup> To view its current form, visit <http://www.cdu.edu.au/laal/>.

Here, we tell of how the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages came to be, and what it may grow up to do. Taking three perspectives in turn to highlight the multidimensional potentiality of the resource that has been created, the authors reflect on what has been achieved to date: not to claim that the project has achieved all that it set out to, but to make explicit the complex interplay of considerations that have to be borne in mind as the work progresses. What has been presented is a non-Aboriginal perspective, albeit one which has been strongly influenced by decades of involvement with Aboriginal communities, and which encourages dialogue and input from those authorities.

The many different human actors involved in the development of the Living Archive include story tellers and illustrators (and their descendants), literacy workers, programmers, linguists and other

academics. While each of those who negotiated and pulled together the original application for government funding had a partial vision of what was to emerge (in both senses of the word), no one vision prevailed, so we have attended to its emergence carefully, constantly thinking about what it can and cannot do, what it might learn to do, and what trouble it could possibly cause. We began with a commitment to develop a digital archive which would support and enhance Australian Aboriginal knowledge practices. This would be an empirical problem directed towards 'postcolonial databasing'.<sup>3</sup> We see the archivist in this setting as undertaking a difficult and unpredictable balancing act, mediating between different knowledge practices so that the archive itself is developing in multiple ways.

### **Three Birth Stories**

#### ***The Archivists' View***

How to frame this story? We can start with a purely historical take. In a particularly famous era of Australian politics beginning in 1973, the federal government of Australia set up bilingual education programs for some of the Northern Territory (NT) communities where children spoke Aboriginal languages as their native tongue.<sup>4</sup> Bilingual schools had Literature Production Centres (LPC) which produced books in Aboriginal languages. LPCs had Aboriginal Literacy Workers who were fluent and literate in the local languages, a 'teacher-linguist' and a Literature Production Supervisor who usually operated an offset printer. As a team, the LPC workers would collect stories, often recorded on tape from community elders, transcribe, translate (sometimes), edit, illustrate, format, print and distribute them. They produced versions of old time children's stories, pre- and post- contact histories, books about the environment, hunting, bush medicines, ghost stories, creation stories, stories of memorable events (the bombing of the Milingimbi Island mission during the second world war for example, or of a massacre, or a momentous ceremony), life stories, conception stories, and cautionary tales. Teacher-linguists developed vernacular literacy programs, and with the Literacy Workers produced series of pedagogical readers and curriculum documents. The books were always very slight, only a few pages, with only 100 or 200 copies printed. Some communities made bilingual newspapers and magazines.

At the end of the 1990s, bilingual schooling in the Northern Territory was losing favour in government policy.<sup>5</sup> In fact it had a similar trajectory to bilingual education in the United States which had started in the early

1970s and lasted until the late 1990s when the Bilingual Education Act was terminated. The training and employment of local Aboriginal teachers and literacy workers was in decline, Literature Production Centres were closing, and in many areas the precious books which had been produced were being lost. While with the change in climate of educational policy a few people actively sought to destroy the Aboriginal language books they found in the formerly bilingual schools, there was generally widespread alarm at the loss of the thousands of books in dozens of languages. With the emergence of digital technologies in remote Aboriginal education, small projects sprang up around the NT trying to archive digital forms of threatened collections. By 2011 the pendulum had begun to swing back somewhat towards welcoming local languages and language owners in schools and the climate was right to secure significant funding from the Australian federal government through an Australian Research Council Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities grant. Linkage grants require significant cash seeding from partner organisations. The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, which retains the copyright of all the books created in LPCs (in Australian law if not Aboriginal law), and which had been disinvesting in bilingual schooling for some time, became a key contributor. The funding allowed Charles Darwin University in the NT, the Australian National University in Canberra, and the NT Department of Education and Training, to work together to develop the archive. Some smaller archives of its type which had been planned, started, and sometimes completed in the years before the birth of the Living Archive, were incorporated into it.

When the archive was launched, its records became available for public access. Anyone can access and download the stories and illustrations, study them, and make a connection with the community of origin to better understand the stories. All the resources were originally made for public use, and as they are digitised, permission for public use is gained before they are uploaded. Therefore, there are no resources with access restrictions, though some are still awaiting signed permission before being made public. Aboriginal communities have access to other archives with access restrictions for protecting sensitive material, such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.<sup>6</sup> Researchers will be able to collaborate with the authors and illustrators of the stories or with their descendants. Everyone should be satisfied: the NT Government now that it has made safe the literature which 'belongs' to them; the linguists and literature production workers who worked hard for many years, often in difficult conditions, to produce

the materials in the first place, and who were alarmed to see them disappear; and the language and story owners in remote communities who are delighted to see their old stories and pictures again, and who look forward to seeing them on screen in many different versions. And most importantly, from the point of view of the Australian Research Council, researchers around the world interested in Aboriginal languages and culture, history, the environment, etc, now have access through this new 'research infrastructure', to both a vast array of stories and pictures, and the opportunity for collaborative research with their owners.

Thus the Living Archive will be different from other archives focussing on Indigenous languages<sup>7</sup> in that it contains only works *in* the languages of concern, rather than works *about* those languages. They will be useful primarily to speakers of those languages, and other people who are willing to engage with the owners of those languages, thus bringing the community of speakers into an engagement with interested people from around the world, and thereby enhancing the "living" nature of the archive. For this reason, developing an interface useful for people who may not have advanced text- or computer- literacy skills is a high priority and makes this archive quite different from those designed specifically for researchers.

Bringing the archive to life has involved the complex work of locating books in small private and large public collections around Australia, taking them back to the communities of origin, and seeking permission from individual authors or their descendants to republish them publicly on line. Parallel work involved finding or creating metadata, starting with a download of around 3000 metadata records from the National Library of Australia's Trove website, and making the whole metadata set compliant with international linguistic standards, particularly the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)<sup>8</sup> (and vice versa, as applications are being made to the ISO to correct some errors in language names and classifications.) Then in various locations we set about digitising the books, and employing optical character recognition, preparing various formats, including PDFs and text files. We engaged software engineers to develop batch uploading processes, efficient search mechanisms, a map interface that worked seamlessly with a database of digital resources and an application programming interface to allow community-based users wider access to the archive. We had worked collaboratively with Aboriginal knowledge authorities and the interface designer on previous projects designed for 'collective memory making' in emerging digital environments.<sup>9</sup> In telling the archivists' story, it is easy to overlook the

hidden and often thankless work of the programmers, technicians and metadata specialists. Their work is particularly difficult, because only as the archive unfolds do we develop clearer ideas of how it may eventually be used by the communities of language owners, and by researchers and collaborators around the world. An iterative process is required as structures are put in place and subjected to evaluation and discussion until we have better understandings of the content and potential uses of the collection. Part of that iterative process<sup>10</sup> has involved Aboriginal people in Web prototype testing for the archive, as well as in translating, audio recording and e-book construction.

The archivists' story reveals the huge complexity of bringing together several thousand books, and producing from them a useful digital archive under the authority of their creators. It makes clear the amount of hard work and good will on the part of literally hundreds of people over nearly 40 years which made it possible.

### ***A Science and Technology Studies View***

Telling a purely historical story, as we have just done, makes it possible to see the archive's complexity, but maybe difficult to see its contingency, its uncertain emergence from an ongoing, often fraught flux of ideas, technical possibilities and constraints, interests and agendas. For an alternative history, let us take an approach aligned to Science, Technology and Society (STS), which as defined by Wikipedia (itself a vibrant and burgeoning archive) as 'the study of how social, political, and cultural values affect scientific research and technological innovation, and how these, in turn, affect society, politics and culture'.<sup>11</sup> Our STS approach identifies aspects of the archive's birth and growth which the archivists' history may miss.

First, the archivists' story does not address, in epistemological terms, the 'crisis of representation' in the human sciences.<sup>12</sup> Representation is the 'paradigmatic style' by which knowledge in Western conceptions is produced and preserved. Stuck 'in the modes of thought and practice distinctly rooted in nineteenth century positivism',<sup>13</sup> the archive in the archivists' story is a container of knowledge, its relationship to 'matters of power and authority',<sup>14</sup> and its social, cultural and political values remain hidden. The STS archivist is not a disinterested selector, collector and assembler of artefacts from a transparent reality. The STS perspective focusses upon the many different moment-by-moment decisions made by countless people who, little by little make it what it is: the occasional disagreement, the sudden insights of possibility, the technical hiccups,

and the lucky breaks, and therefore how it continues to grow uncertainly, and how it may become frustrated in its attempts to fulfil the somewhat ill-defined purposes which, in our original funding application, we claimed it would serve. Many of the decisions which have now materialised in the archive were made more than thirty years ago, and we can discern those differences across the collections within the archive: some communities focussed much more upon the development of pedagogical readers, some on stories of days gone by, others on contemporary activities of local significance. And determinative decisions continue to be made as, day by day, we prioritise one collection over another, one book over another, one task over another on the endless list of tasks, and each decision in turn reflects the prioritising of a particular social cultural or political value. We pay attention to these, because in the words of the anonymous Wikipedia author, these decisions may 'affect society, politics and culture'.

This is the second part of the STS story: the causality also happens 'both ways'. The technology itself exerts some agency in the worlds in which it participates. Any archive has embedded within it, a particular ontology,<sup>15</sup> a particular set of assumptions derived from the world 'out there' to which it relates. STS scholars<sup>16</sup> have demonstrated what they call the process of 'grooving', whereby the data infrastructures of databases gradually come to affect the way in which we understand the world. They point to the subsequent process of 'negative bootstrapping', whereby we start to make assumptions about the nature of the world on the basis of the structures of the data that we are accessing. In the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages, for example, there are represented only about 25 languages out of a total of more than 50 in Australia's Northern Territory. A few of these languages were large enough and vibrant enough to have been chosen (40 years ago by the Federal Government) as languages of instruction, alongside English, when bilingual programs were being developed. This decision, of course, led to high levels of vernacular literacy in some languages and not others, highly competent translators and interpreters in some languages but not others, the privileging of some languages over others in the colonising processes of church and state, and in one case, it led to one family of Aboriginal languages being taught internationally at the tertiary level.<sup>17</sup> The STS archivist is alert to ways in which the Living Archive naturally performs this negative bootstrapping, and seeks ways to mitigate, reverse or undermine it. We take seriously Star's call to study 'boring things'<sup>18</sup> and to 'attend ethnographically to the plugs, settings, sizes, and other profoundly mundane aspects of cyberspace'.<sup>19</sup>

### ***A View from Country***

There is a third story to be told, one which we, as non-Indigenous academics in a city university, are developing in negotiation with Aboriginal language owners 'on country' (i.e., on their ancestral land). This is the Aboriginal story, of those who originally told or wrote and illustrated the tiny editions of locally offset-printed books, and the stories of their families and descendants who may come to use the archive in their own way for their own purposes. Despite the funding application's focus on the needs of international research, the archive is most particularly designed for the Aboriginal owners. Living in very remote communities, often using languages entirely unrelated to those of neighbouring communities, with different experiences of bilingual education, literature production and digital technology, as well as specific local histories, cultures, and visions for the future, they work with us to design the configurations and pathways to and through their own sub-collections. It is a complex process: explaining the project, getting permission for the books to be digitised, doing the scanning, preparing text files, uploading digital resources, adjusting metadata in a provisional way – while preparing for local negotiations to develop interfaces for sub-collections at the local level. In the next section, we give examples of the preparations for those negotiations, but here we pause to think about the background to what could become the Aboriginal story of the Living Archive.

The Living Archive builds on previous collaborative research with Aboriginal knowledge authorities on the role of digital technologies in remote Aboriginal knowledge work. This work looked at both the concepts of archive and database as instruments for the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge,<sup>20</sup> and information-communication technologies for remote 'teaching from country'.<sup>21</sup> Both these major projects worked most intensively with the Yolŋu people of north east Arnhem Land. Like Aboriginal people throughout Australia, Yolŋu celebrate the autochthonous coming to life of the land and its species, including the particular interrelated clan groups of its people. The knowable forms of the land, its species, its people, songs and ceremonies all came into being as the ancestors moved across the land, talking, singing, crying, dancing, hunting, and performing every human activity. Everything, the Yolŋu say, is made out of language. Language in the Aboriginal worlds, while staying in place, belonging to people and their 'country', has a strongly constitutive power. While in a Western metaphysics language naturally assumes the functions of representation, in an Aboriginal

philosophy language is performative (and representation is just another form of performance). The textual objects in the archive are not seen to be representing a world 'out there' or 'back then' they are material *traces* of previous episodes of creative collective action which can now be reinvigorated in new contexts of collective creation. The archive does not *contain* knowledge, or at least it contains knowledge only in the same way that the particular trees in a particular place *contain* the knowledge of the ancestors who through love and care set them and kept them in place.<sup>22</sup>

We called our research program on the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge 'Making Collective Memory with Computers'. While we found our institutional co-researchers (the local Aboriginal Land Council, an Aboriginal cultural foundation, the local herbarium) very keen on developing databases of traditional knowledge, the Yolŋu co-researchers were themselves much more interested in actively using the project's cameras, recorders and computers for their own private or family-based knowledge work. Using Skype to teach undergraduate students in California from his own ancestral land, Yolŋu academic Yinŋiya Guyula explained how the environment itself has agency in teaching young Yolŋu children who they are.

Straight after the Wet Season when we sit down by the beach and look at the sea around the small islands of the hunting grounds of the reefs where we hunt turtles, and the certain signs in the skies tell the stories, of clouds sitting in the air after people have eaten; tells a metaphor of the shapes of clouds just sitting around the horizon which tells who we are, the Dhuwa people. Actually, it tells the story that we are the right people of that country.<sup>23</sup>

So it is unsurprising that, on another occasion at a public seminar at the university discussing the role of databases in Indigenous knowledge work, Yinŋiya, feeling maybe that he wasn't being understood, stamped on the carpet and, looking down, said with a flourish, "The land is my database. It has all my knowledge resources". So in our third story, the Aboriginal archive is perhaps not what we (the non-Aboriginal project team) thought it might be. The entities in the archive are not different in kind from the entities in the world around us, created, cared for, kin, belonging, potent, with an ancestral history. Commenting on her work reviewing and assessing old unpublished texts for the archive, one elder said to an interviewer from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation: "I love my language, it's part of me, part of the land, and everything in

it. Every one of the clan nations in this area has their clan language, and these clan languages are our identity for us. This search and rescue work is something I've hoped to happen, so we can save our languages, or culture, what we long for what we want to have as Yolngu people'.<sup>24</sup> The fragments of text and old school books mean nothing until they are taken up, carefully, collectively and in good faith, and put to a particular purpose whether it be recreational, educational or for other work. In truth, the original literature which now forms the basic corpus for the Living Archive was seldom taken up by Aboriginal school students or their teachers, as reference materials for the study of history, science, ancestral lore, etc. There was much activity and excitement around the preparation of the books, the recordings, the transcriptions, the illustrating, the checking, the dictionary making, printing, collating, distributing, but in the words of senior Yolngu educator and philosopher Dr Marika, the books on the shelves soon became 'coffins'. Yet digital technologies are increasingly seen to offer possibilities for the survival of endangered languages and cultures. In the words of Wulumdhuna Yunupingu (translated from Gumatj):

What I'm really worried about is the future of the children. Later the old people will all pass away finish up, and what? What of theirs will the children end up knowing? There are all sorts of documents now for them, like CDs and videos, documents which will be kept. About what? Ancestral groups, what is his family name, who gave him life, that young child, who are his elders, his knowledge which was there before he was born, and for whom was he born?<sup>25</sup>

How might we avoid the Living Archive becoming a mausoleum, of interest only to anthropologists and linguists and others of a Western knowledge tradition? How do we achieve the goal of developing an archive which is alive in ways that others may not be? In other words, how do we take Aboriginal epistemology seriously enough to develop an archive with a particular agency – what we have come to call a *Living Archive*? How do we build it in such a way that it comes to life and connects up its owners with its resources and with people of good will, who are interested in collaborative knowledge work and world building? And how do we ensure that each different group of language-story owners can design an infrastructure and interface for their own sub-collections which reflect their own particular histories, languages, cultures and aspirations?

These are not merely technical or epistemological questions. They are ethical questions. Australian Aboriginal knowledge is recognised,

universally as owned and located. It is not abstract or universal. Decisions over who has the right to agree for stories or artwork to be included in the archive must be made anew for each individual item. And as, increasingly, people want to add sound files or animations or produce talking books, these can only be included in the archive with the knowledge and consent of the original story owner. Making provisions for digital objects to be quickly removed (for example, if they contain images of a recently deceased person), is essential to ethical and culturally responsive technology.

### **Nurturing the Emerging Archive**

We visualise our archive as emerging in an uncertain space in the middle of a range of polarities. We are balancing, for example, perspectives such as the imagined insider (language community member) and outsider (interested researcher external to the community), the responsibility to create a public archive and the need to maintain traditional authority, the pressure for interoperability and the need for local usefulness, the technical exigencies and our vision of the potential users, while attempting to 'future-proof' and take account of the creative uses of highly provisional and contingent resources typical of Aboriginal knowledge work *in situ*.

Undaunted, we attend to the emergence of our archive while keeping the potential Aboriginal users firmly in mind, and involve them collectively imagining the potential work of the archive, and their potential contributions to it, from the initial discussions around permissions and possibilities. Who will want to use the archive? What will they want to do with it? How do we make those uses easy, obvious and fruitful? Forget for a moment about the academic users, the linguists, the historians, the anthropologists, even the STS-ers looking at the archive as a metaphysical entity. They will have their entry point to a standard digital archive. Our separate and more significant task is to privilege the Aboriginal owners in the design of the archive. What might *they* want to do? How do we do our collective 'guesswork', our 'faith that we are doing this right, that we are entrusting and layering things and meanings that will be interpretable and meaningful in times to come'?<sup>26</sup>

User evaluation of early versions of the archive has involved inviting Indigenous users to explore the site and give feedback, which has led to modifications at several points along the journey, and ongoing engagement with users in schools and community groups continues to refine the product.

It is most likely that Aboriginal users will be looking for books and stories in their own languages (or in other related languages which they can understand). Only outsiders would be looking for, say, all the books (in whatever language) about crocodiles or stars. Of course, and this is a simple task, we must retain that search possibility for everyone. Most owner-users will be looking at the collections of their own languages, or the sub-collection of those resources produced in their own communities. Many will have only limited literacy in their own languages. Most will be much more able to find their language group on a language map of the Northern Territory than in an alphabetical list of all the language names, so a map-based interface seems an obvious point of access for people who are more spatially oriented, who generally do not use much text literacy in their everyday life, and who are looking for a set of books which, like Yinija's database, is geo-spatially locatable. The map interface will also work against the unconscious effects of 'grooving'.<sup>27</sup> It is easy to overlook those languages which, never having been selected for bilingual education, have never had the benefit of significant government investment in producing a literature. Their absence can be made present; the map interface will silently enable that through the use of colours. Working against the 'bootstrapping', the map makes us remember the forgotten languages, and in fact leaves spaces which cry out for filling, for some work to be done developing further resources, for further government investment, for initiatives for academic researchers and their students, for further collective action.

How might a community user find a particular book? We might assume that, much of the time, the community users (unlike the outsiders), will actually know the book they are looking for. Users will be presented with thumbnail images of the books in the first instance. Recognising the book's cover by sight obviates the need for much text literacy. If there are, say, 500 books in a particular language sub-collection, how might they best be arranged? Conventional archives might order the 'found items' alphabetically by author or by title, or by date, but each of these reproduces and reinforces Western practices (and in fact Western metaphysics) by privileging particular ways into a collection. How might we order the found resources in a way which reproduces and reinforces a more pragmatic approach and which possibly reflects a more Aboriginal way of using resources? Working to preserve 'ontological flatness'<sup>28</sup> resources can be ordered simply according to frequency of use, rather like the other resources scattered around a writing table or workshop. As each book is selected and read, it is counted. As the archive comes

into general use, the most popular or the most referred to books float to the top, as it were. In the same way that the most useful elements in the material environment become the most obvious to the eye of the hunter, so we modestly try to reproduce a productive environment for the knowledge worker. The more obscure books may require a bit of digging. Our previous collaborative research with Aboriginal people around digital technologies and knowledge work<sup>29</sup> has provided us with the basic coding requirements for ontological flatness, a precondition for the tailoring of bespoke interfaces at the community level. Each of the 25 communities of ownership has its own languages, history and vision, and the subsequent stages of the project involve these on-country negotiations to develop good configurations of space, technologies and people for community use.

We are also, of course, building in a text-based search for people with basic skills in languages with often difficult and complex orthographies. The tried and tested fuzzy search and suggest devices developed for Yolŋu languages<sup>30</sup> will be reconfigured for other languages where necessary. Keywords may be developed for the genres of literature of particular language groups to reflect the particular categories of life at work in the various locations (for example those relevant to the central Australian deserts as distinct from the mangrove forests of the north).

All those software assistants aside, there is a further, deeper ontological issue at work. In a conventional database, and in ours, the metadata is divided into fields: title, author, language, date, and so on. The sequestering of metadata into fields may inhibit the very productive and creative ways in which words in Aboriginal languages relate and connect across categories. In the example of Yolŋu languages, a particular word may be a person's name, as well as a place name, a ceremonial act or object, or particular connections between people and totems, or land and wind – indeed, almost anything. These links, connecting people, place, events, are the inheritance and manifestations of ancestral connections and do important work. The way in which the metadata are traditionally sequestered into fields to facilitate searching actually prevents those flexible political connections between things and names from being real in the database, and gives priority to a Western objectivist ontology.<sup>31</sup> A simple search will scan all categories in both the metadata and the textual content in order to summon and activate these complex connections. While the initial input of metadata was limited to the information presented within the published books themselves – information which varied widely in both quality and quantity –

consultation within communities enables significant expansion as gaps are filled and connections are established.

Let us turn finally to the resource itself, the digital object, the book in the first instance. From the beginning (and importantly in our application for government funding), we determined to develop 'preservation' (high definition) and 'presentation' (easily downloadable) versions. We attach multiple downloadable resources to each record: such as an image PDF, a text file (for linguistic work, analysis, and creative reconfiguring of texts), occasionally a sound file (the story being read, the original recording from which the book was made, or a knowledgeable commentary about the origins and background to the book) and an e-book version. This is only the beginning of the effort to make the books active, generative of new relations, new ways of being in the world. While creating the possibilities for multiple interpretations and formats to be attached to each record, we are also working to generate connections between the digital resources, and a community of owners, exegetes, researchers and students, further transforming the archive into a living entity.

Aboriginal knowledge is different from Western knowledge in many distinctive ways, one being that it *belongs* to people. Already we have owners who, happy to let their stories and their languages be made public, at the same time want to know who is looking at their stories, and what they will be doing with them. With a signed permission form for every story that can be made public we are also inviting owners to agree to being contacted by interested students and researchers for further collaborative work. Attending to Aboriginal sensibilities around knowledge resources alerts us to the performative and the generative possibilities of this living archive.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

And so our archive comes to life. Roaming between the camps of the archivists and programmers, the philosophers whose interest is in the generative and constitutive powers of technology, and the Aboriginal storytellers and their descendants with whom we have worked for many years, we nurture a new life which will grow into something we can barely visualise. In her analysis of 'STS-ers as Analysts and Co-constructors of Databases and other Archival Forms', Waterton clarifies how 'individuals, research teams and institutions ... experimenting with digital and other material and political forms of archive ... implicitly project and perform ideas of the human subject, ideas about how we can and should live in the world'.<sup>33</sup> Our current work of preparing a framework for tailoring by

its owners – the many different language groups with their own land, ancestors, stories, languages and collections – requires that we juggle an almost unmanageable array of epistemological, ontological, political and technical balls. We build something robust and flexible, but just solid enough to go on with, and provisional enough for people to take up and form in their own ways.

We, like the Aboriginal storytellers, are working with what Haraway has called ‘partial, locatable, critical knowledges’.<sup>34</sup> As Lucy Suchmann made clear in her search for the location of design in software, ‘the fact that our knowing is relative to and limited by our locations, does not in any sense relieve us of responsibility for it. On the contrary, it is precisely the fact that our vision of the world is a vision from somewhere that it is inextricably based in an embodied and therefore partial perspective which makes us personally responsible for it’.<sup>35</sup>

Aboriginal and western knowledge traditions have been proven to work together productively, though partially, locally and critically. Information technologies are not politically innocent; they are a product of social political and cultural values and in turn affect them. And so, developing an infrastructure which is solid enough to work and not so solid that it pre-empts the possible uses and configurations to which it may be enlisted, one which works ‘well enough within both traditions’<sup>36</sup> with potential for extension, is our current task.

#### Endnotes

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3. See for example, Michael Christie and Helen Verran (2013) ‘Digital Lives in Postcolonial Aboriginal Australia’, Helen Verran and Michael Christie, (2014) ‘Postcolonial databasing? Subverting old appropriations, developing new associations’.
4. Devlin, Brian (2009). ‘Bilingual education in the Northern Territory and the continuing debate over its effectiveness and value’.
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6. <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>
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8. Language codes – ISO 639 [http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/language\\_codes.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/language_codes.htm)
9. Michael Christie, (2006) ‘Aboriginal knowledge traditions in digital environments’, 61-66. See also <http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/>
10. Steven Dow et al (2009). ‘The efficacy of prototyping under time constraints’.
11. See ‘Science, technology and society’, accessed June 12, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science\\_and\\_technology\\_studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_and_technology_studies)
12. As elaborated, by among many others George Marcus and Michael Fischer, ‘Anthropology as cultural critique’.
13. *Ibid*: 210.
14. Elizabeth Kaplan, (2002) ‘Many paths to partial truths: Archives, anthropology and the power of representation’, 209.
15. Michael Christie, (2005) ‘Words, Ontologies and Aboriginal Databases’.
16. For example Geoffrey Bowker, (2000) ‘Biodiversity, datadiversity’ and Geoffrey Bowker and Susan L. Star (1999), ‘Sorting things out’.
17. Michael Christie, ‘Engaging with Australian Indigenous knowledge systems’.
18. Susan L. Star (1999) ‘The ethnography of infrastructure’.
19. *Ibid*: 379.
20. Full details of this project, its products and publications can be found at ‘Indigenous

- Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia', accessed June 13, 2014, [www.cdu.edu.au/ik](http://www.cdu.edu.au/ik). See also Michael Christie, 'Words, Ontologies', 'Aboriginal Knowledge Traditions' and Michael Christie, 'Digital tools and the management of Australian desert Aboriginal knowledge'.
21. Full details of this project, can be found at 'Teaching from County', accessed June 13, 2014, [www.cdu.edu.au/tfc](http://www.cdu.edu.au/tfc). An edited version of papers emerging from this work can be found at [http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/spill/journal/LC\\_Journal\\_Issue2\\_2010.pdf](http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/spill/journal/LC_Journal_Issue2_2010.pdf). See also Michael Christie and Helen Verran, (2010) 'Reflections on the teaching from country programme as a situated learning community: Media, place, pedagogy' and Michael Christie et al 'Teaching From Country, Learning From Country'.
  22. Helen Verran and Michael Christie, (2014) 'Postcolonial databasing?'
  23. Yinjiya Guyula, (2010) 'The story comes along and the children are taught'.
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  25. Helen Verran et al. (2006) 'Designing digital knowledge management tools with Aboriginal Australians': 130.
  26. Claire Waterton, (2010) 'Experimenting with the archive: STS-ers as analysts and co-constructors of databases and other archival forms'.
  27. Bowker, (2000) 'Biodiversity, Datadiversity' and Bowker & Star, (1999) 'Sorting Things Out'.
  28. Michael Christie 'Words, Ontologies': 60.
  29. Michael Christie 'Words, Ontologies', 'Aboriginal Knowledge Traditions', 'Digital tools and the management of Australian desert Aboriginal knowledge' and Helen Verran and Michael Christie, 'Using/designing' Verran et al 'Designing', and Helen Verran and Michael Christie, 'Postcolonial databasing?'
  30. Michael Christie, 'Words, Ontologies': 56-59.
  31. *Ibid*: 56-57.
  32. Claire Waterton, (2010) 'Experimenting with the archive: STS-ers as analysts and co-constructors of databases and other archival forms': 650.
  33. *Ibid*: 648.
  34. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1991: 191.
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## Getting to know you ...

Regular feature profiling New Zealand's  
Archive community



### Who are you and where are you based?

Christopher Meech, Curator of Archives at Waitaki District Libraries and Archive, based in the North Otago Museum, Oamaru.

### What services do you provide?

- Research services in person and remotely
- Photocopying and digital reproduction services
- Free wifi
- Access to Ancestry.com library edition
- A reference collection of publications and indexes
- High quality digital photographs for purchase
- Occasional events and programmes

### What do you hold?

We hold community and local authority records for Waitaki District from the earliest days of colonial settlement. Local authority records include those of the Palmerston Borough Council, Oamaru Borough Council,

Waihemo County Council, Waitaki County Council, and the Waitaki District Council.

The community records, which include the history of many local organisations, business, families and people, complement the local authority records well. Together they build a well-rounded picture of life in North Otago. We have a remarkable photograph collection of over 500,000 images. See the North Otago Museum Facebook page for the discussion and interaction generated around local images from the 1970s. These images are an incredible and popular resource. The Archive has a special relationship with the Oamaru Mail and houses its newspaper and photographic archives. We also have maps and plans from throughout North Otago.

### **Biggest challenge for your Archive?**

Despite having a purpose built facility less than 20 years old the single largest issue we face is one of collection storage space. The archive has been unable to receive local authority records for a number of years now due to lack of storage space. Large community archives also pose storage challenges. The community and the Archive want the history of their district to be accessible locally.

### **Biggest opportunity for your Archive?**

Waitaki District Council's focus is collaborative. See the combined website for our cultural institutions - Forrester Gallery, North Otago Museum, Oamaru Opera House and Waitaki District Libraries and Archive – [www.culturewaitaki.org.nz](http://www.culturewaitaki.org.nz). Through this collaboration the Archive can promote collections and services and develop new combined services. We can also participate in and benefit from successful outreach programmes that are collectively developed and delivered. The new website aims to be the collaborative home for each partner and opens exciting possibilities for future digital initiatives.

### **What is your favourite or most important collection or series and why?**

My favourite records are from the Oamaru Woollen Mills and came to the Archive when the mill closed recently. There are about 25 linear metres in total and they date from the 1880s. They are a complete series of business records from a prominent company with deep roots in North Otago. I'm looking forward to fully arranging and describing them and better understanding the history and organizational structure of this remarkable business.

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**Do you have a recent notable acquisition that you'd like to highlight to ARANZ members?**

Recently, while looking through material awaiting accessioning, I discovered a document titled 'Form of passenger list'. The list is on 6 pages (3 leaves) and appears to have been torn from a larger book. It documents the voyage of the William Davie from Graves End, England to Bluff in 1874. It includes names and descriptions of passengers and those who died on the voyage and is an exciting historical find.

**Archivist and contact details:**

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## Book Reviews

### ***Patched: the History of Gangs in New Zealand***

JARROD GILBERT

Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013  
332p. | ISBN 978 1 86940 729 2 | \$49.99

### ***Wanted, A Beautiful Barmaid:***

***Women Behind the Bar in New Zealand, 1830–1976***

SUSAN UPTON

Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2013  
239p. | ISBN 978 0 86473 894 3 | \$50

Jarrold Gilbert prefaces *Patched*, his history of gangs in New Zealand, with the frank admission that during ten years of ethnographic research he was beaten up, ‘involved’ in a brawl, and accosted at knifepoint. Rarely does a historian get so close to their work. Despite this alarming introduction, the result is a measured account that seeks to balance forty years of sensationalist reporting and populist politics depicting gangs as ‘inherently criminal and illegitimate’ and, reflecting his background as a sociologist, to ‘assist better-targeted public policies’ [viii, 237].

*Patched* opens with ‘milk bar cowboys’ – motorcycle-riding teenage rock n’ roll aficionados – congregating outside Auckland’s Majestic Theatre in the 1950s. Framed around four ‘pivot points’, Gilbert delineates the evolution of New Zealand’s gang scene through to the emergence of ‘LA-style’ street gangs in the 2000s, influenced by another strand of American popular culture – gangsta rap. The initial transformation came with the establishment of a Hells Angels chapter in Auckland, the first outside California, in 1961. Within a decade, motorcycle club culture – patched jackets, distinct emblems, and formalised organisational hierarchy – became pervasive among the country’s nascent street gangs, the most enduring of which are Black Power and the Mongrel Mob. Alongside the predominantly Pakeha bikies, street gangs proliferated in ‘multiply marginalised’ Maori and Pasifika communities in the 1970s, intensifying territorial conflict [45]. As internecine violence spilled into the public arena, police and politicians alike fuelled a moral panic, passing and implementing targeted anti-gang legislation. Confrontational police tactics, Gilbert believes, culminated with the infamous 1979 Moerewa riot, where rampaging gang members first attacked officers. Initially, the

incident hardened public attitudes, but ultimately induced a retreat from hard-line policing with the realisation that gangs constituted a complex 'social problem requiring social redress' [109].

The delicate 'gang-community balance' looms large in Gilbert's history [166]. Gangs are warily tolerated when they confine anti-social behaviour within the underworld. If gang violence endangers 'civilian' safety, authorities quickly resort to extreme measures. Thus, the Muldoonist employment of gangs as publicly funded community labour did not last long, swept away by the neo-liberal broom and a wave of outrage provoked by a highly publicised rape trial in 1985. Heightened state hostility and members' diminished job prospects in a depressed economy stimulated gang maturation. Whereas rebellious youths had floated between work and patched life in the prosperous 1970s, gangs became the preserve of older men in the 1980s and 1990s. Without work, elements within street gangs and motorcycle clubs turned to profit-driven crime, primarily in the drug trade, yet Gilbert stresses such activities are typically perpetrated by individuals and seldom orchestrated by entire organisations.

In the years since 1976, when Robert Muldoon socialised at a Black Power pad, gangs have become an evermore toxic political issue. Unbalanced reportage and political demagoguery have produced, in Gilbert's estimation, a counterproductive bi-partisan consensus on the need to suppress gangs, and a consequent reinforcement in the legal arsenal against organised crime. Yet, as he concludes, the methamphetamine 'epidemic' of the 2000s and patched gangs' waning cultural congruence among contemporary teenagers may undermine gangs more effectively than poorly targeted punitive legislation.

Unlike a conventional organisational history, Gilbert has little in the way of archived minutes, published reports, or financial records to guide his study. Instead, his arguments are buttressed by fifty years of government-funded reports on the 'gang problem', newspaper coverage, and crucially, fifty-two formal interviews (and countless informal exchanges) conducted with gang members, social workers, lawyers, and police. 'Embedded' in the gang scene for a decade, Gilbert fluently explicates overseas theory on group formation and identity with vivid and deeply researched examples from across the country. *Patched* is accompanied by a judicious selection of photographs from newspaper archives and members' personal collections, which complement the rich reminiscences proffered by current and former gang members stretching back to the 1950s.

Gilbert's reticence about his immersion in gang life and the implications for his research may trouble some readers. Despite the precautions he took to protect his sources – including the destruction of interview transcripts – it is unclear whether participants in recent feuds or criminal activity fully recounted their history to an outside observer. Alive to the conundrum, Gilbert usefully 'triangulates' colourful anecdotes with empirical data, showing, for instance, that gang affiliates constitute a tiny portion of drug-related arrests [x]. The book is at its weakest on gangs and family life, and toward the end, when he describes the challenge posed to patched gangs by 'incipient' LA-style street gangs formed in South Auckland over the past decade. Having conducted few interviews with women, or members of these new groups, Gilbert's writing lacks insights comparable to those offered on motorcycle clubs or street gangs, which are now fifty-year-old institutions. These concerns are minor, and do not detract from an important and engaging contribution to New Zealand's small indigenous literature on gangs, which has wider appeal as a late twentieth-century history of domestic and international migration, policing, social policy, and political discourse.

Presumably researched in more congenial circumstances, Susan Upton's *Wanted, a Beautiful Barmaid*, uses similar techniques to recover the history of another marginalised social group. Beginning with the Maori wives who worked alongside Pakeha traders and publicans in the 1830s, Upton details the lively history of New Zealand women in the liquor trade until 1976, when parliament expunged the last gender-specific provisions concerning the barroom from the statute book. Loose and intermittently enforced, early licensing regulations allowed a small group of women – usually publicans' widows – to own and operate pubs. Alongside alcohol and the consequent spectre of drunkenness, the settlers carried another form of cultural baggage to New Zealand in the 1830s – temperance. Over the following 150 years, the two forces existed in dialectic opposition, a conflict frequently played out over the bitterly contested figure of the barmaid.

From the debauched Bay of Islands grog shops, Upton shifts her focus to the South Island goldfields, where barmaids were first employed in the 1860s. In the male dominated gold towns, barmaids 'were treated as a spectacle' to entice patrons in a competitive market [52]. The work was arduous and dangerous, yet many women found it preferable to the loneliness, drudgery, and poor remuneration that awaited those who entered domestic service. As frontier towns grew, and an influx of single

female migrants corrected the colony's gender imbalance, tolerance for drunkenness and 'immoral' behaviour diminished amid a new clamour for public decorum. Changing attitudes to alcohol, driven by increasingly powerful prohibitionist forces, foreshadowed the development of a comprehensive colony-wide liquor licensing architecture over the next forty years.

Though prohibitionists had challenged women's place in the bar since the 1860s, it only became a 'national' political issue as a result of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's (WCTU) late-century anti-barmaid campaign. As befitted an American cultural export, the New Zealand WCTU's concern with the barmaid mirrored similar campaigns across the English-speaking world. Yet, while Upton situates her research within an international historiography, particularly as a companion to Diane Kirkby's work on Australian barmaids, she rarely delves into the intricate layers of cross-border exchange, both personal and by print, that bound New Zealand prohibitionists of all stripes into a self-consciously transnational temperance campaign.<sup>1</sup> At home, demands for the abolition of the 'barmaid system' formed part of an expansive temperance agenda that reached a crescendo in the 1900s, forcing the closure of hundreds of pubs through local option polls and their control of district licensing committees. Alarmed by the threat to their livelihood, the federated brewers sacrificed barmaids, hoping to avoid being swept away by 'the rising tide of prohibition'.<sup>2</sup> With their assent, parliament amended the Licensing Act in 1910 to proscribe employment of any new barmaids and gradually transform the pub into an exclusively male domain.

However, as Upton clearly shows, restrictions were never absolute. The law exempted licensees' female relatives and the shrinking pool of barmaids who had registered with the Department of Labour by 1912. Though previous amendments reduced the number of female hoteliers, wartime labour shortages in the 1910s and the 1940s reversed the slide. Changes in New Zealanders' drinking habits, precipitated by the introduction of six-o'clock closing in 1917, and 'mixed' or 'civilised' drinking after World War Two challenged the creaking register system, which proved increasingly burdensome for short-staffed hotels. Trade unions, however, vigorously defended abolition as a means of safeguarding the male breadwinner wage. As Upton elicits from the Hotel Association of New Zealand's records, even after legal restrictions ended in 1961, a 'gentlemen's agreement' between management and labour restricted women's employment opportunities until the 1970s. In a testament to the power of the temperance movement, echoes of the anti-barmaid

campaign reverberated over fifty years later. In particular, the image of the barmaid as a corrupted siren – morally compromised by barroom vice, and a dangerous temptation for younger male drinkers – that pervaded the nineteenth-century press recurred in the labour negotiations of the 1960s.

An archivist by training, Upton's long career at the Alexander Turnbull Library shines through in the book's many enlightening illustrations, including scores of cartoons, documents, and photographs from repositories across the country. However, mirroring Jarrod Gilbert's admission that his fieldwork often entailed 'partying for days at a time' (a modern incarnation of the goldfields 'spree') [x], she glibly remarks that attending 'a party was often more productive than a day at National Archives' [17]. Although anecdotes from interviewees who began bar work in the 1960s enliven *Wanted, a Beautiful Barmaid*, the book's early chapters offer little personal information about their nineteenth-century predecessors. Stories of female publicans, like Rebecca Bond who attempted to frame an influential Invercargill teetotaler as a sly-grogger in 1896, feature more prominently, but the text contains few personal traces of the colonial barmaid. The absence of these earlier voices, however, does not speak to Upton's failings as a historian. Rather it testifies to the immense challenges that confront scholars attempting to recover women's stories – particularly those of Maori and working-class women – and reinscribe them into an overwhelmingly masculine historical canon. In this endeavour, Upton's book is a success, providing a welcome corrective to a national historiography enthralled by prohibitionists and a challenge to the hoary trope of the pub as 'an unrelenting bastion of frontier male culture.'<sup>3</sup>

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#### Endnotes

1. Diane Kirkby, *Barmaids: A History of Women's Work in Pubs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See, for example, Edmund Rogers, 'Better than an Ironclad: Leonard Isitt, Temperance and Greater Britain', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 4 (2012): 579–600.
2. 'Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Sale of Liquor in New Zealand', Appendices to the *Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1975, H-5, 21.
3. Greg Ryan, 'Drink and the Historians: Sober Reflections on Alcohol in New Zealand 1840–1914', *New Zealand Journal of History* 44, no. 1 (2010): 47.

## **Working Lives c.1900 – A Photographic Essay**

ERIK OLSEN

Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2014

176p. | ISBN 978 1 877578 51 9 | \$50

This is an attractive, soft-covered book from Professor Erik Olsen of Otago University. Combining a lively essay with numerous images, it is presented in a style, without dense academic citation, that makes it accessible to the general reader, but still has a useful Select Bibliography for those wanting more. Overall this works well, although at times the book may seem to bear too much, wavering between Olsen's desire to produce an attractive but informative photographic essay, and his determination to provide as much detailed information as possible.

Some may be misled by the general sounding 'Working Lives' of the title. In fact, this is a local historical study centred on industrial south Dunedin around 1900. Olsen makes the link to the more general with his contention that the working lives he is concerned with were a major influence in New Zealand's developing vision of itself as a new, modern and more progressive state built on greater equality and fairness. This is one of many interesting arguments in the book. However, it is probably asking too much of the essay to fully sustain the general implications of its title.

Instead, as Olsen makes clear, this essay and its core images come directly out of his leading work on what is known as the Caversham project – a thirty-year detailed academic study of industrial south Dunedin. This area, known locally as 'the Flat', incorporated the suburbs of Caversham, South Dunedin and Kensington, and later St Kilda and St Clair. Making easily comprehensible his much more detailed work from this study is where this book really shines. Whether or not you agree with all he asserts, Olsen's considerable knowledge and his obvious affection for 'the Flat' is contagious. His frequent use of such terms as 'lads' and 'lasses', and his mastery of the various sectarian and 'ethnic' divisions in the different United Kingdom tribes, adds to the interest and sense of place.

Olsen is especially concerned with particular kinds of working lives in the older and more industrialised part of 'the Flat' during its rapid growth. His key themes are the importance of imported craft and trade skills and knowledge required to transform 'wild landscape' to farms and then industrial heartland. His choice means, however, that the focus is mainly on skilled men, United Kingdom immigrants, and those living in

close proximity to the older industrial part of 'the Flat'. Other kinds of workers, even on the 'the Flat', or in the rest of Dunedin, receive much less attention. Olssen notes, for example, that young, unmarried women were leaving skilled trades, such as tailoring, and domestic service in droves, for growing opportunities in factories and shops. The experience of tangata whenua (inconsistently Kai Tahu and Ngai Tahu) is barely mentioned.

However, this is also a photographic essay, and Olssen's choice of images is a major strength. Anyone who has attempted to research illustrations for working lives knows how difficult it can be to find fresh and compelling ones. Olssen has made good use of the fact that in his period photographs were taken to document pride in industrial progress. This includes, for example, capturing the impressive but now sadly closed Dunedin Hillside railway workshops and those in the Dunedin Drainage Board album. As might be expected with a photographic essay, Olssen provides interesting (but too brief) information on some of these photographers and their work.

Olssen has also followed a generally successful approach of including not only images of workers and workplaces, but also of other aspects of their lives. These range from streetscapes to industrial buildings, to scenes of family life, to leisure pursuits and political involvement. Some even show business and entrepreneurial activities, including a photo of members of the Dunedin Stock Exchange. This also benefits from Olssen's looking well to each side of 'around 1900', as early as the 1850s through to the 1930s. In context, this works and doesn't need his not entirely convincing link between his central time period and Queen Victoria.

The result is more than 120 black and white photographs in a variety of sizes up to full-page and double-page spreads supplemented by a variety of other images. These include paintings (two reproduced in colour), newspaper advertisements, cartoons, leaflets, and other ephemera. There are also two very useful, although untitled, location maps of south Dunedin. Most of these images are fresh and evocative. Most are of Dunedin, and from Dunedin sources, including the Hocken Library, Dunedin City Council, Toitu Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin Public Library, Kings High School and private companies, such as McKinlays Footwear. Additional images are sourced from major national institutions, including the Alexander Turnbull Library, Archives NZ and Te Papa. Occasionally, Olssen has looked further afield for images of themes or activities he wants to highlight. This is reasonable but works less well for me. Many, such as of the fight outside the Petone railway workshops,

and of women shopping in a Wellington department store (both from ATL) are already well-known, easily available on websites and published.

The accompanying descriptions, or legends, contain much of the really new information in this book; and some are so lengthy and detailed they almost constitute a secondary text. Though sometimes over-long, they also contain much of interest. The description for one photograph, for example, points out how headwear could instantly reveal a person's social standing at the time. However, this format is more difficult to read and distracting to the layout of the main text and text boxes. On the plus side, it emphasises this is no slight coffee table work and the determined reader gets plenty of bonus information.

Overall, this book is a well-illustrated and thought-provoking discussion about early industrial Dunedin and even its implications for wider New Zealand. It is timely, as well, given that 'around' a century later, studies are consistently telling us that, not only is our manufacturing sector rapidly disappearing, so is our vision of a more fair and egalitarian society.

*Cathy Marr  
Wellington*

**Perspectives on Women's Archives**

TANYA ZANISH-BELCHER with ANKE VOSS

Chicago: Society of American Archivists Press, 2013

502p. | ISBN 978-1-931666-47-3

\$49.95 (members) / \$69.95 (non-members)

Despite the many roles women have played in shaping culture, politics, and society throughout history, the work of actively documenting and preserving records of women's lives is a relatively recent undertaking. The historic lack of visibility of women's collections became a vicious cycle: because many archivists assumed primary source materials on women didn't exist, they made no effort to collect them.

In the 1930s, a few historians began to critique the holdings of mainstream archival and manuscript repositories in the United States, questioning their default approach of collecting and documenting almost exclusively male lives and experiences (and generally white, upper-class males at that). Some began to advocate for separate women's repositories in order to create a space where women's lives and stories could be documented and preserved. These early efforts resulted in the establishment of archives and libraries devoted solely to women, most notably the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College in Northampton Massachusetts, and the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe College, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (now part of Harvard University). These early repositories of primary source materials laid the foundations for the development of academic study of women's history, and helped demonstrate women's roles in shaping American politics, society, and culture. They also signalled to mainstream repositories that sources and papers on women did in fact exist, and could be collected.

Of course, women's archives weren't the only places where women's collections existed. Yet many resources on women held by mainstream repositories in the United States continued to be unknown and under-utilised well into the 1970s. Inadequate archival description was often an issue. Sometimes women's materials were buried within the papers of male relatives, or had received only scant description in finding aids. Other women's collections sat within institutional backlogs, without any description at all.

*Perspectives on Women's Archives* provides an overview of archival literature on women's collections in the United States, past and present. The volume contains 18 chapters, including eight essays previously

published in academic journals between 1975 and 2010, which provide historical context. The remaining ten chapters are new additions to the archival literature on women and women's collections, which provide contemporary analysis and reflection. The volume adds to the growing body of literature on women and archives, with the aim of evaluating the state of women's collections and women-focused archival repositories in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. While the volume focuses solely on the American experience, many essays offer commentary that is relevant to libraries and archives in New Zealand (and beyond).

Three major themes appear throughout the volume. The first is the importance of women's sources for the development of women's studies and collaboration between archivists and historians of women's history. The second theme is the need to address the historic and contemporary challenges regarding access to women's collections, both physically (their location) and intellectually (their description). The final theme that runs throughout the book is the challenge to create a truly inclusive historical record of women's experience, and the contributions of citizen archivists, oral historians, and community archives in this work.

The first section, *Reclaiming our Past*, contains mostly older essays and begins with an essay written in 1975 by historian Gerda Lerner. Lerner questions the emphasis on collecting (and studying) only the papers of "notable women", explaining that "the history of notable women is the history of exceptional, even deviant, women, and does not describe the experience and history of the mass of women."<sup>1</sup> Additional essays in this section describe the history and status of women's collections generally, as well as the groundbreaking work in the 1980s to locate "forgotten" black women's collections in American repositories. In the only contemporary essay from this section of the book, Kären M. Mason looks back on the work of a 1975 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop an inventory of women's history sources in the United States. *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Manuscripts and Archival Collections*, also known as the Hinding Guide, was published in 1979 and comprised over 1000 pages of collection descriptions and repository listings, plus a nearly 400 page index as a separate volume. Not only did it open up a wealth of previously unknown collections to potential new researchers across the United States, but as Mason argues, the publication of the guide – and the initial survey sent to repositories asking them to assess their holdings pertaining to women – forced them to take notice of gaps in their own holdings, and inspired archivists across the country to take a more active role in collecting materials

about women.

In the second section, *Locating Women in the Archives*, Kären M. Mason and Tanya Zanish-Belcher provide an overview of women's collecting institutions, noting that during the second- and third-wave feminist movements in the United States of the 1970s and 1990s, the number of women's archival repositories continued to grow, with no less than 15 established in the 1990s and 2000s. However, the establishment of separate repositories for women's collections generated some ambivalence, even among those working with women's collections. Margaret Storrs Grierson, archivist and founder of the Sophia Smith Collection, questioned the practice of keeping women's materials physically separate from men's, noting that "much of what is purely feminist loses its significance in segregation ... it is artificial to consider one sex as a world apart".<sup>2</sup> And in a 1973 issue of *The American Archivist* devoted to the theme of women in archives, Eva Mosely Brown, curator of manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library, emphasised the need for and importance of women's archives, while cautioning that they are not sufficient on their own. "Libraries like the Schlesinger and the Sophia Smith Collection are fine for those who are working specifically in women's history ... But there are many more people who will never appear at a women's library, so it is important that other libraries and archives make known their holdings on women."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, without dedicated spaces, it's all too easy for women's collections to be overlooked, particularly collections containing subject matter once considered taboo. And several authors argue that there is something special about having a separate space, often citing Virginia Woolf's concept of the "room of one's own". Mary Caldera discusses the significance of lesbian and gay community archives in the United States, which began to collect and preserve their own materials at a time when mainstream institutions would not. While Caldera praises the work of community archives, she acknowledges the many difficulties they face, such as limited funding, dependency upon volunteers, often with little or no archival training, and issues of access. Caldera advocates for partnership between community archives and mainstream institutions while emphasizing that it requires trust and commitment on both sides. Similarly, Tanya Zanish-Belcher uncovers documentation of human sexuality and reproduction, and addresses the "culture of concealment" surrounding sex, sexuality, and reproductive health. Both chapters discuss the sometimes problematic application of subject headings and labels regarding sex and sexuality, and subjectivity or even "squeamishness"

about describing reproductive health and women's experiences of sex and sexuality in finding aids and records.

The third section, *Documenting Women's Experiences*, addresses contemporary issues regarding collection development, advocacy and outreach, current descriptive practice, and documentation strategies for women's collections outside the mainstream. Janice E. Ruth details the Library of Congress's recent strategies for documenting the lives of women, including improved description and finding aids, research guides, digitisation projects, online exhibitions, and in person events such as symposia and lectures. Danielle Moon discusses regional collections and emphasises the importance of oral history in order to fill gaps in documenting women's experience. Several chapters throughout the volume detail the benefits, as well as the pitfalls, of working outside the mainstream.

The book is designed as a reader to offer an array of past and contemporary perspectives on women's archives and collections. However, this ideal is somewhat undermined by the inclusion of multiple chapters by the same authors, with some writers contributing up to three chapters each. While the volume covered a range of topics relating to women's collections, I would have liked to have seen more about indigenous women and their experience. Only one chapter – Fernanda Perrone's discussion of religious archives – even mentioned Native American women, and only in passing, rather than in relation to their own records and archives.

Overall, the volume is well-written and well-edited, and while some of the historical pieces may not be as relevant today as when they were first published, there are definite insights and takeaways to be gained from each essay. Reading through the explorations of women's materials in the US, I did wonder if similar work to excavate women's collections had been undertaken here in New Zealand as well. Most of the publications on women's collections in New Zealand I was able to find were collection listings created for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage, over twenty years ago in 1993. Obviously, published volumes of collection listings – which become instantly obsolete – are no longer required for institutions with online finding aids and catalogues. And resources like the Community Archive, Digital New Zealand, and others make it easier to search for collection materials across New Zealand institutions. Still, it would be good to see more detailed and reflective analysis of women's collections in Aotearoa produced.

*Perspectives on Women's Archives* is perhaps most successful in

reminding us that as archivists, we must understand our responsibility to ensure that collections provide an inclusive and representative historical record for all women across a spectrum of identities and experiences. As our society is ever evolving, our collections and collection development strategies must be as well. And we must ensure that women's collections are accessible and well-described in all institutions, whether women's materials are their focus or not.

Valerie Love  
*Alexander Turnbull Library*

**Endnotes**

1. Lerner, chapter 1, page 15.
2. 'No Documents No History – Mary Ritter Beard and the early history of women's archives', page 44, see footnote 52, chapter 2.
3. 'Women in Archives: Documenting the History of Women in America'. *American Archivist* 36:2 (April 1973).

## Notes on Contributors

**Catherine Bow** is a linguist with research experience in both descriptive and applied linguistics. She has described the sound system of an African language, investigated language development in children with impaired hearing, explored endangered language documentation, and researched the language and communication needs of international medical graduates. She has worked as a trainer and coach for language learners, and currently works as project manager for the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages.

**Michael Christie**, originally from New Zealand, moved to Arnhem Land in northern Australia in 1972 where he became a teacher linguist in bilingual education programs. He is currently Professor of Education at the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University in Darwin, NT, and his research interests include the uses of digital technologies in the inter-generational transmission of traditional Indigenous Knowledge.

**Natalie Dewson** is the Senior Electronic Archives Advisor for Archives Central (MW LASS Ltd), a local government archive based in Feilding. Natalie's career has included roles at Archives New Zealand, the former Environmental Risk Management Authority, Ministry of Justice and most recently an Associate of SWIM Ltd. She is the Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Ambassador for the National Digital Forum, and is a member of the New Zealand International Review Group for ISO/TC 46 SC 11.

**Brian Devlin** is an author, bilingual policy researcher, teacher and language specialist. His work roles include Guest Professor, Australian and Indigenous Studies, at the University of Köln, Germany; Foreign Expert at Qinghua University, China; Dean of the Faculty of Education at Northern Territory University; Principal Education Officer in the NT Department of Education; teacher-linguist and principal of a bilingual school in Arnhem Land; and teacher in Papua New Guinea. Designated an 'expert of inter-national standing' by the ARC College of Experts in 2007, Dr Brian Devlin is currently Associate Professor of Bilingual Education and Applied Linguistics at Charles Darwin University.

**James Keating** is a doctoral research candidate in the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He obtained a Master's degree in History (Victoria University of Wellington, 2011) and worked as a historian for the Office of Treaty Settlements. His research considers the individual connections and organisational networks that linked Australasian women's rights activists with their counterparts across the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Marilyn Little** has been Chief Archivist/General Manager Archives NZ since Feb 2014, when she took up an internal secondment within the Department of Internal Affairs. Marilyn's substantive role is General Manager Policy in the Department, a role she has held since 2011. Marilyn was previously Director Local Government and Community Policy, also in Internal Affairs, 2006-2011. She has also worked in senior roles in the Office of the Auditor General, the Department of Labour and the State Services Commission.

**Valerie Love** is Research Librarian for Digital Materials on the Arrangement and Description Team at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa. Before moving to New Zealand in 2011, Valerie worked as Curator for Human Rights Collections at the Thomas J Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, and as Project Archivist at the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, University of Memphis. She is a contributor to the volume, *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion*, published in 2014 by the Society of American Archivists Press.

**Cathy Marr** is an historian working in public history. Her experience in the area of histories of working people includes oral history research for the Trade Union History project, pictorial research for Steven Eldred-Grigg's 1990 book 'New Zealand Working People 1890-1990', the compilation of a Guide to the Records of the Federation of Labour, and work for Ken Douglas on his personal papers.

**Wayne Nelson** started as an Archivist at National Archives and later became Senior Historic Buildings Officer for the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. He privately initiated the project for the restoration of the Wellington Krupp Gun, a captured WW1 war trophy now located in the Botanical Gardens, Wellington. He has a Masters Degree with Distinction in

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history from Victoria University, the Diploma in Information Management/ Archives Administration from the University of New South Wales, and a PhD from the Robert Sorbon University, France. He is currently writing a book on the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Wellington.

