

**FRIENDS OF THE HOCKEN COLLECTIONS  
WEDNESDAY TALK SERIES  
2017**

**Refreshments and a chat from 5.15pm; talks start at 5.30pm.**

**15 March**

Judy Bennett and Angela Wanhalla on their book *Mothers' Darlings of the South Pacific: The children of indigenous women and U.S. servicemen, World War II.*

**17 May**

Nicky Page, Director of Dunedin's City of Literature programme.

**19 July**

Aaron Fox  
On his work in progress, a biography of Brigadier James Hargest.

**2 September (Annual Dinner)**

Malcolm McKinnon, author of *The Broken Decade 1928-1939*, will offer a reflection on a life in history. This talk is part of the Friends' Annual Dinner. Venue to be advised.

**25 October (AGM)**

Jenny Burchell  
On her 150th anniversary official history of the City Choir Dunedin.  
AGM begins at 5.30pm, followed by talk.

All talks at the Hocken Seminar Room, 90 Anzac Avenue, Dunedin. Parking is also available in Parry Street.

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**WORLD WAR 1 TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT**

This project is well under way, with the excellent guidance and support of Debbie Gale, Assistant Archivist at the Hocken. Hocken's reprographics staff continue to digitise further diaries, keeping the supply of work flowing to the 12 or so active volunteer transcribers. 58

diaries have been located that are considered worth digitising, and, as well, there is a large collection of letters digitised and ready for transcription – running to 282 pages.

The enthusiasm of the transcribers for their work is contagious. There is now a small budget available to meet contingencies associated with this ongoing work. It is expected that in April there will be sufficient completed material for there to be a presentation to the media

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**UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD**

**NEW ZEALAND DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE REGISTER**

UNESCO recognition draws attention to the significance of this country's documentary heritage and to the institutions that care for it. The Memory of the World New Zealand Trust Chair, Dianne Macaskill, reported recently that the Memory of the World Trust is delighted to now have 20 inscriptions of significant documentary heritage items on the register. "All greatly contribute to the story of our nation's history and heritage, and are significant to the identity of New Zealanders today."

The Hocken's Marsden papers were the first to be included in the Register. Last November the unique collection of field notes, photographs, negatives, motion picture film, and research papers, put together by Lance Richdale, were included. His meticulous attention to detail is a striking feature of his internationally recognized research into the lives of New Zealand seabirds - in particular the Northern Royal Albatross at Taiaroa Heads, the Yellow-Eyed Penguin on the Otago Peninsula and the petrels and prions of Whero Island. His use of motion picture film to record the behaviour of these birds is probably a New Zealand first.

Anyone can make a suggestion to the Hocken Librarian regarding a future potential nomination to the Memory of the World New Zealand Register.

## THE BATTLE OF MANNERS STREET - 1943

The writer, with the help of his older brother's better recall, remembers the evening when an uncle, a shop-owner in Willis St., Wellington, remarked that there had been a brawl involving U.S. servicemen up the street that day. Nothing more was said, and nothing was to be found in the *Dominion* or the *Evening Post* next day. News of the riot was strictly censored, hence the mythology that grew around the event. It was twenty years before the findings of the Court of Inquiry, held at the time, were released.

In 1942–44 there were at any time between 15,000 and 45,000 American servicemen stationed in New Zealand. Most of them were camped around major urban centres of the country. In the Wellington area they were mostly encamped just north of Paekakariki, at Mackay's Crossing.

Their arrival in 1942 – at a time when large numbers of New Zealand armed forces were serving in Europe as Japan entered the war – was to change the cultural landscape. Amid the fear of a Japanese invasion, many Kiwis were pleased to see the GIs, but the cultural clash sometimes proved too much to absorb. The easy-going warmth and charm of the Americans – in New Zealand for training on their way to war or taking in rest and relaxation – seemed to captivate women and irritate men – "overpaid, oversexed and over here" was the disparaging phrase.

The war historian Jock Phillips is one of several who have written of the cultural confrontation between American and New Zealand troops: 'The Americans were a bit more sophisticated and had more money to spend ... They were charming, they gave the women flowers, they were sometimes referred to as the "bedroom commandos" – it was a bit of a challenge for the more repressed New Zealand men.'

About the time of their first arrival the British Government offered the New Zealand Government some candid advice on how to avoid embarrassing encounters between white and black United States servicemen. It was important, it was stated, to remember that the American view on matters of race was very different, and troops should always be on guard against giving offence. A memo already circulated to senior officers in England was copied to the NZ Prime Minister's office. It concluded with several tips: "Be friendly and sympathetic towards the coloured American troops – but remember that they are not accustomed in their own country to close and intimate relationships with white people," and "if you find yourself in the company of white and coloured American

troops (as, for example, if white American troops come into a canteen or bar where you are in the company of coloured Americans) make it your business to avoid unpleasantness. It is much the best, however, to avoid such situations."



Alexander Turnbull Library reference 1/4-000374-F

US troops photographed by John Pascoe on the Wellington waterfront in 1943

The riot took place on the evening of Saturday, 3 April 1943. At that time, hotel bars closed at 6 pm, and the "six o'clock swill" was notorious for the sudden eruption, or ejection, of inebriated patrons on to the streets. The fighting began at the Allied Services' Club in Manners Street, later the Manners Street Post Office – towards the western end of the street. It then spilled over on to other inner-city streets, particularly the corner of Manners and Willis Streets where the St George and the Duke of Edinburgh hotels stood.

Conflicting reports exist as to what triggered the violent fighting, but Māori serviceman at the time said that "the Yanks" sought and received preferential treatment. It was also alleged that American servicemen from the southern states who frequented the Services Club objected to Māori soldiers also using the Club. On that day they began stopping Māori soldiers from entering. Many New Zealand soldiers were in the area, probably at the hotels just named. Both Pākehā and Māori combined in opposition.

The stand-off escalated when Americans took off their brass-buckled belts to attack those who wanted to let the Māori into the Services Club. When the New Zealand servicemen joined in the "battle" spread into the streets. American military police, who arrived to restore order, took sides and used their batons. The fracas was finally broken up by civil and military police about 8 pm, though some brawls lasted for perhaps another two hours. Dozens of people were injured.

"The civil and military police no sooner got one disturbance settled than it broke out in a fresh place," a military report submitted to the Court of Inquiry said. Another memorandum, called "Fracas in Wellington", told of how other US marines and local soldiers soon

joined the stoush, egged on by civilian loafers and a rough element who were "always trying to cause trouble". "Thereafter sporadic disturbances broke out near Royal Oak corner, up Cuba St and in the vicinity of the amusement ground in Courtenay Place."

The bloody, raucous brawl spread to the A.N.A. Club in Willis Street, a social centre, open to all military personnel, where belts and knives were used. It was estimated that over 1,000 American and New Zealand troops were involved, as well as several hundreds of civilians. At this place military police armed with batons defused the situation. The battle was finally halted by the combination of military police and fatigue. But there was also the worry for the American serviceman that they might miss the last train back to their barracks at Camp Mackay. As a matter of record only one New Zealand serviceman was subjected to military discipline.

It was not the only clash between American and New Zealand troops in New Zealand cities. About the same time there were two similar riots in Auckland., and a clash between a small party of American servicemen and Māori civilians at Otaki in October 1943.

By 1944, the exasperation felt by many New Zealand servicemen towards the US troops was obvious. The secretary of the Auckland Returned Services Association wrote to the defence minister appealing for intervention after several incidents of rampant "hooliganism" by the US servicemen.

"You have doubtless read reports of disturbances and actual cases of hooliganism committed in Auckland and other cities by American servicemen. At a dance recently held in Avondale, a number of these servicemen attended with bouquets of flowers which at a later stage they stripped and disclosed blackjacks [small clubs]. (It is notable that when attacks are made by these men, sometimes brutal attacks, they are made by a number of Americans against a single person.)" He requested that the US authorities be contacted and asked to adopt "stronger and greater measures" towards the troops and to prohibit them from carrying blackjacks and knives.

Perhaps the most violent, large-scale example of discontent between Māori soldiers and the Americans occurred during another little known confrontation, the racially motivated Cuba St "disturbance". This again took place in Wellington, in Cuba St., on May 12, 1945 – just four days after VE Day, As many as 150 Māori soldiers and an unknown number of US Navy personnel clashed.

Police concluded, after interviewing Māori servicemen involved in the fight, that the brawl began at the Mayfair cabaret after several Māori found their hats had been

stolen and suspected the Americans. One of the Māori servicemen, seeing they were outnumbered, ran to the Ngati-Poneke Club, in the Hotel Cecil in Lambton Quay, to raise the alarm. An unofficial Māori guard, apparently armed with bayonets, left the club and ran to help his comrades.

Batons and fists were the weapons of choice and at one point American soldiers in the cabaret above the street threw chairs on to the road which were used as improvised weapons. A US Jeep was damaged beyond repair and an American doctor was pelted with stones when he tried to help. An American was taken to hospital with facial wounds and a Māori soldier with his head bleeding was found in Lambton Quay.

"It is apparent that Māori soldiers bear a deep resentment of US servicemen, the chief cause of which is the disparaging and humiliating treatment of the Māori by US personnel," Brigadier A.E. Conway, the Adjutant-General, wrote at the time. "It is apparent that US personnel do not appreciate the standing that the Māori has in our community and are inclined to treat him as they treat the American negro."

Military reports stated that the police opinion on the root cause of the problem lay in the treatment of Māori by the Americans. "Māoris from whom statements were taken allege they have been insulted by the Americans and have been told by Americans not to ride in the same tramcars and that they should walk via back streets etc, that the Americans call them black curs etc and have generally insulted the Māori race."

Brigadier Conway, spoke to a senior US lieutenant commander about the fray. "I ... suggested that the US authorities should make it clear to all US personnel touching these shores that the Māoris receive different treatment in this country from what the negroes receive in the United States."

But the war was over, and Camp Mackay became a great place for kids to explore.

## FRIENDS OF THE HOCKEN COLLECTIONS AWARD

The recipients of the Award, Lawrence Fearnley and Paul Hersey have been busy in the Hocken engaged in research for their work. It is hoped there will be a six-month report available to the Committee in April.

The Committee is already considering the implications of this initiative, and what might be done in the future.

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## THE GLASS ARCHIVE

The *Glass Archive* is a major exhibition by Wayne Barrar, drawing from his ongoing project tracing and photographing historic microscopic slides and archives. He is an Associate Professor at the School of Art at Massey University, and his photography has been widely exhibited and published internationally since the 1980s.

The exhibition is primarily concerned with diatoms (microscopic algae) and with the 'Oamaru diatomite' deposit, whose spectacularly diverse and arresting microfossils are famous among scientists and microscope enthusiasts world-wide. It draws on the overlapping histories of the collection, trade, study and sheer enjoyment of diatoms and their companion microfossils. The images are beautiful and captivating, and depict fascinating links between art and science, history and the imagination.

The exhibition will be on display in the Hocken Gallery from Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, and will run through to April 22<sup>nd</sup>. There will be an exhibition talk given by Professor Barrar on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

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## STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Friends will be delighted with the news that major funding has been made available to strengthen the staffing at the Library.

Lynn Benson has been appointed Research Services Manager and will take up her work on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Lynn is currently the Manager, National Digital Heritage Archive, for the National Library, a position she has held with one short break since 2007. Her responsibilities included the acquisition, management, preservation, and provision of access to the digital collections of NLNZ. Lynn is very familiar with our environment; with delivering services from our national documentary heritage collections; and with our challenge to present more of our collections online.

Robyn Notman becomes the new Head Curator, Pictorial Collections, at the Library. She has been a part of the

Dunedin Public Art Gallery team since the days when it was housed at Logan Park. Since 2006 she has been their Public Programmes Manager and Collection Manager, and has curated many successful and interesting exhibitions. Her academic research was centred on the contributions of Dora and Esmond de Beer, major benefactors to Dunedin's cultural life.

Other appointments and promotions within the staff include Andrea Bell as Curator within the Art, Pictorial Collections – also a former intern on the DPAG staff; Victoria France (Library Assistant) becomes Registrar, Pictorial Collections; David Murray (Assistant Archivist) now Archivist; Mark Quarrie Library Assistant (Administration), now Collections Assistant; Anna Petersen now a full-time Curator - Photographs; Megan Vaughan also now a full-time Collections Assistant; and Chris Youngson, now a full-time General Assistant. Altogether four new Assistant positions have been created, and two vacancies remained to be filled.

Friends will see in this a considerable vote of confidence in the role and the future of the Hocken Collections. Sharon Dell, as the Hocken Librarian, is to be congratulated on the achievement of such a positive result.

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## ALTERATIONS and EXTENSIONS

Friends are reminded that alterations are being made to parts of the foyer and to the public lunch room. These began at the end of February and will be completed within a week or two.

Extended new opening hours, including Saturday, took effect from the beginning of November. The public reaction has been slow. Friends and associates are reminded of these opportunities to visit the Collections, and to use the augmented facilities now available to them.

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## FOHC MEMBERSHIP

*Subscriptions: Individual: \$25 per annum; Life Member \$250 Joint: \$30 per annum; Joint Life Member \$300*

*Cheques to: Friends of the Hocken Collections, PO Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059. Online payment: Westpac 030903 0393175 000, including "Subscription" in Particulars field, surname/initials in Code and Reference fields.*

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