

4. AKAROA MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

4.1 VISITORS

Visitor numbers

Although visitor numbers are still below target for this time of year, the cruise ships are delivering us an extra 40-60 visitors each day they're in the harbour. Time will tell whether domestic visitor numbers will come up a bit closer to normal levels during the summer months.

4.2 EXHIBITIONS

Current

Every year we refresh the costume case, bringing clothing and textile objects out from the stores to have their time on public view. This year it is the turn of two lovely patchwork quilts, one French and one English, to take their place on display. Both are unfinished, but in this state have provided us with more information about their age and origin than they might have if finished. This is due to the stiffening papers which back each fabric piece, usually removed once the quilt is completed. The maker of the French quilt has used old playing cards as stiffening papers while the English quilt has cut up newspapers and old documents

Upcoming – Akaroa on Holiday

We are working hard on our summer exhibition, *Akaroa on Holiday*, which will focus on Akaroa as a holiday destination. It will feature images of camping grounds, holiday makers and holiday activities, as well as promotional material from previous decades and souvenir-ware produced for the tourist market.

4.3 COLLECTIONS

Pest Control

We have found the need recently to make arrangements to treat collection items for pests before bringing them into the Museum. The safest method for eradicating pests from museum collection is freezing to below 20 degree celcius, so during November we will be making use of a freezer container for this purpose.

Jessie Mould's Banksia Cottage

This year we have had the rare opportunity to collect objects which have a clear and certain association with a place, in this case Banksia Cottage, 18 rue Balguerie. The house was until early this year the home of Akaroa identity (and patron of the Friends) Jessie Mould, but before that it had belonged to the Parsons family. Much of the furniture in the house had been there since mid-late 19th century, and other items are associated with Jessie's own family. We are grateful to the family for giving us the opportunity to select objects for our collection and we hope that the very special house will find a sympathetic new owner.

4.4 RESEARCH PROJECT

Initial enquiries have been made of the University of Canterbury about internships, with research on the town's seawalls and street features as a topic. It seems that there could be opportunities to use interns for such projects and the Museum could provide a base from which the student could work. With our existing commitments to Museum Studies students however, we are not in a position to be able to manage the project.

4.5 POLICY REVIEW

(a) Acquisitions and Disposals Policy

A draft Acquisitions and Disposals Policy was considered by the Committee at its September meeting and comments made were incorporated in the final version as attached. (**Attachment 1**).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approve the amended Akaroa Museum Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, as reviewed at 28 November 2011.

(b) Research and Access Policy

Staff have been developing a new Research and Access Policy and a draft, with associated Guidelines for Researchers, is attached for members' consideration and comment (**Attachment 2**).

4.6 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

During the general discussion around policy, it became clear that any change to the Akaroa Museum's Statement of Purpose should be approved by the Advisory Committee.

Background

As discussed at the September meeting of the Museum Advisory Committee, the review of our collection policy, and its evolution into an expanded Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, has drawn our attention to the Museum's current statement of purpose, or mission statement. The existing statement omits to mention two very important aspects of the Museum's activity, research and interpretation.

Existing: The purpose of the Akaroa Museum is to collect, preserve, display and otherwise make available to the public, material and information relating to the natural and cultural heritage of Banks Peninsula.

Explanation

Researching the collections and their contexts is central to collections management. For museum staff the process begins with due diligence prior to acquisition of an object, through ongoing documentation and to updating historic records. Display and exhibitions development could not occur without research. Research on the collections is also conducted by visiting researchers who are supported by staff. Interpretation, the act of summarising or reading data and making it intelligible, is a core part of research and fed through to the public in displays and exhibitions (and other formats such as talks). Research and interpretation are elements of museum work that require training, experience and expertise, and are one of the reasons that skilled and experienced staff are employed.

Proposal

Staff propose two minor, but important, amendments to the existing statement: the inclusion of references to the activities of research and interpretation. The statement is no longer than before, but has been re-written as a more active version.

Proposed: Akaroa Museum collects, preserves, researches, interprets, displays and otherwise makes available to the public, material and information relating to the natural and cultural heritage of Banks Peninsula.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approve the Akaroa Museum Statement of Purpose as at 28 November 2011 , as follows:

Akaroa Museum collects, preserves, researches, interprets, displays and otherwise makes available to the public, material and information relating to the natural and cultural heritage of Banks Peninsula.

4.7 EVENTS

Friends of the Museum Christmas party Saturday 10 December 2011

Antiques Fair, School gymnasium Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 January 2012

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Museum Director's update be received.