

WELCOME TO THE HOCKEN

FRIENDS OF THE HOCKEN COLLECTIONS : BULLETIN NUMBER 2 : MARCH 1992

Yes, but where are all the books?

The Hocken Library, the second-largest historical research library in New Zealand, offers a unique service. Although part of the Otago University library system that is designed primarily for staff and students on campus, the Hocken is a fully public library to which all New Zealanders have access by deed of trust. That was one of the legacies of Dr T.M.Hocken's generous gift of his outstanding private collection to the nation in 1910.

The library has changed greatly since then, of course. Currently it runs to about 170,000 books and pamphlets, 110,000 photographs, 12,000 maps, 13,000 plans and posters, 9,000 musical recordings, 7,000 works of art, 6 km of shelved archives and manuscripts, 500 metres of shelved newspapers, and 8,000 microforms. In all, a huge treasury of knowledge about New Zealand, the South Pacific, the Antarctic, and even about Australia.

Originally housed in a part of a special wing added to the Otago Museum, it eventually ran out of space there, and in 1979 the library was moved to the specially-built premises it now occupies.

Over 10,000 people visit and use the library each year. Two-thirds of them are staff and students, usually studying or researching the historical perspective in their various subjects: mainly history, music, English, geography and business studies. The general public make up the other third; and of the public inquiries, the overwhelming majority (about 80%) are concerned with genealogy. Local history, though also a significant field of interest, is a distant second. Other regular inquiries involve school projects, TV productions and book publishing.

Getting in touch

For telephone inquiries, ring the reference desk (main building) on 479-8873; or the archives section on 479-8875; or photographs, 479 8870.

Postal inquiries should be addressed to:
The Secretary, Hocken Library, P.O. Box 56,
Dunedin.

How to make a start

The Hocken collections, particularly the large quantities of official archives, are stored in different buildings around Dunedin, but only two are staffed — the main library, housed at the south end of the Hocken Building on campus, and the archives and photographs collections in the former vehicle testing station

*Hocken Library wing of the Hocken Building,
viewed from the east above the Leith.*

at 137 Leith Street.

If you know it is archives, manuscripts or photographs you want, you can head for the Leith Street section right away (remembering, though, that it is closed on Wednesdays). Some parking space is available there.

But if your main concern lies in books, music or art, or you are uncertain where to start, go first to the main Hocken Library. Parking, unfortunately, is often difficult when the University is in session: be prepared to park some distance away.

Take the lift to the 5th floor, and consult one of the

reference librarians on duty there. If you are undertaking research for the first time, it is important that you seek their guidance. Ask the secretary in the ground-floor office to help with directions if you have any difficulty.

It may seem strange to find the 'public entry', as it were, as high as the 5th floor, but the public reading room and most of the staff are strategically placed there because the most heavily used collections are housed on the floors immediately above and below.

Hours of attendance

READING ROOM, MAIN BUILDING:

Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.00pm

Saturdays, 9.00am to 12.00 noon

If you wish to use the library on a Saturday, or between noon and 1.00pm during the week, please ensure that your requests are placed with the librarians beforehand.

EXHIBITION GALLERIES, MAIN BUILDING:

Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 5.00pm

Saturdays, 9.00am to 12.00 noon

LEITH STREET COLLECTIONS:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday only,
9.30am to 5.00pm

Readers wishing to have access to material during lunchtimes, noon to 1.00pm, should request it beforehand.

The limitations on opening hours are not due to any unwillingness to serve the public. Far from it! But the library is a very complex place to run with a relatively small staff — only 15 full-timers all told, with responsibility for maintaining security, as well as cataloguing, accessioning, answering written inquiries and shelving. Inevitably, some time has to be set aside to allow this behind-the-scenes work to be done without undue interruption.

Where are the books?

Unlike public lending libraries, which keep most of their stock on open shelves, research libraries almost invariably keep their books in 'closed stacks'. Security is the main reason, of course, because their material is far rarer and far more valuable. But the classifications are more complex, too.

Card catalogues and computer listings may seem a poor substitute if you are using them for the first time. They are, however, really quite simple to handle; and, once you are familiar with them, you'll find it just as easy to browse through the catalogue as to run your eye along the spines of the books.

Until 1985, all cataloguing was done by hand on index cards, and this basic catalogue — which deals solely with Hocken Library holdings — can be consulted on the 5th floor. It runs in a single sequence, combining entries for authors, titles and subjects, and covers books, periodicals, newspapers, some sound

recordings and some manuscripts for the whole period up to 1985. If you know the author or title of any work you wish to consult, you can go straight to it. If not, a quick browse through one or two subject headings will probably suggest material suitable to your needs. But if you have any difficulty, don't hesitate to ask a reference librarian for help.

Items accessioned from May 1985 have been catalogued directly on to computer, and this 'on-line catalogue', as it is called, not only covers the Hocken's own holdings, but provides access to all titles held in the New Zealand library system. It is mainly confined to books and periodicals.

Even if you have never used a computer screen before, you will find the Hocken system very 'user friendly'. A librarian will quickly explain how it works, but the screen itself carries a flow of simple directions on how to find the books or periodicals you want. If you don't have the exact names of the author or the title, the computer will magically offer you an astonishing range of possible entries with approximately similar names and titles. It will also allow you to browse through the holdings in various subjects so that you can select the ones that interest you.

No borrowing

Research libraries do not normally allow borrowing, and all books at the Hocken have to be consulted in the reading room. This system has two important advantages to users: losses are kept to a minimum and books are always on hand unless another reader is actually using them in the reading room.

When you have worked out from the card index or the on-line catalogue which titles you want, fill in one of the slips provided — a separate slip for each title — and take your requests to the reference desk. The items will be brought to you in the reading room, normally within five minutes. If you need to continue using the same material over more than one visit, it will be kept out for you at the reference desk (within reasonable limits) and you will be able to pick it up immediately.

The collection's main areas

Traditionally, the library has generally developed along Dr Hocken's original lines of interest:

- New Zealand history, with particular reference to Otago and Southland;
- Early Pacific voyaging and exploration;
- General Pacific history, culture and ethnology, particularly Polynesian;
- Missions and missionaries;
- Early Australian history;
- Antarctica.

Although himself a medical man, Dr Hocken laid no emphasis in his collecting on medicine, and the Hocken Library still does not acquire medical, legal or physical scientific works very intensively. There are other specialist libraries within the University

Library system covering those fields.

To Dr Hocken, the verse of his day was very much less significant than his historical documentation, and was only an appendage to his main collection. In the past 50 years, however, the library has acquired one of the finest collections of New Zealand creative literature in existence, along with the original papers of many New Zealand writers.

It has substantial holdings in Maori material, sociology, education, economics and politics.

Genealogical research

For the genealogical researcher, who now represents the majority public use of the library, the importance of the Hocken's holdings lies in other fields:

- school records;
- ships' passenger lists;
- burial and cemetery records;
- street directories;
- a wide range of city and small-town newspapers;
- church records (including marriages);
- land records;
- Goldfield records (unfortunately, though, they are very difficult to use);
- electoral lists;
- police records — and many more ...

Special Collections

Many of the above useful lists are held in the Archives section, one of several special collections within the Hocken Library, each of which has its own specialist staff, with separate procedures, catalogues and finding aids.

Fuller coverage of these is planned for later Bulletins, but here is a brief summary of what the Hocken has to offer.

Hocken Building, University Campus

Pictures. Approximately 7,000 items. Dr Hocken's main interest in collecting art was for its documentary and topographical information; but with the bequest of the Mona Edgar Collection 30 years ago the character of the art holdings was considerably transformed, and Dr Charles Brasch further broadened and improved the collection both as advisor and patron. Now it comprises both historical and modern New Zealand art, and is one of the finest collections in the country, with a particularly large and important holding of Colin McCahon. The collection is fully catalogued.

Sound recordings. Almost 9,000 discs and tapes all told, covering all kinds of New Zealand and Pacific music from classical to rock. The collection is partly catalogued.

Maps. The Hocken has a particularly strong collection of archives maps relating to Otago and Southland. There are, altogether, more than 11,000 items, including substantially complete sets of topographical and cadastral maps. These latter maps — cadastral comes from a Greek word meaning register — show

property boundaries (in olden times for valuation and taxation purposes), and can help genealogical inquiries into rural land-holdings.

Leith Street Building

Photographs. In many ways this is the most fascinating of all the Hocken Library material, and the huge holding of more than 100,000 images provides a fine choice for would-be users. Although naturally strongest in Otago material, it has excellent coverage of New Zealand as a whole, and some fine individual collections in specialist fields. In more recent years it, too, has changed character to include more portraiture and artistic photographs, and the Library has been fortunate to obtain the complete negative collections of several leading professional and amateur photographers.

Archives and manuscripts. Dr Hocken's own interest in this field became greatly expanded after the Hocken Library became the official nominated repository for all public records south of the Waitaki River — in effect, the southern branch of National Archives. The collection was already sizeable in the 1980s, placing heavy demands on space and finance. The restructuring of government departments in the late 1980s transformed a steady flow of documents into an outright deluge, and the Hocken had suddenly to take responsibility for the voluminous regional records of the Education Department, Post Office, Railways, Forest Service, Lands and Survey, etc. etc. Many of these records are still boxed and stored, awaiting a chance in the future to deal with them. Even so there are thousands of metres of important archives already shelved and catalogued. The full range includes the archives of local government, the University of Otago, churches, business firms, trade unions, voluntary organisations, courts, harbour and hospital boards. There are also the literary papers of such noted writers as Charles Brasch, James K. Baxter and R.A.K. Mason.

Hocken Lectures

An annual public lecture, inaugurated in 1969, has involved some noted New Zealanders and overseas visitors, presenting work in such fields as art, cartography, literature, photography, geology, ethnography and history.

A number of these lectures were subsequently published as booklets, and the following can be obtained at the Hocken Library office at a modest charge:

Anderson, Atholl. *Race Against Time* (1990); on inter-racial marriage in southern N.Z.

Bertram, James. *Towards a New Zealand Literature* (1971).

Drummond, John D. *Choirs and Clogs, Mr Ballads and Mr Bones* (1989); musical life in pioneer Dunedin.

Hoare, Michael. *In the Steps of Beaglehole* (1977).

Hocken, A.G. *Dr T.M. Hocken 1836-1910, A Gentleman of his Time* (1986).

Lochore, R.A. *Culture-Historical Aspects of the Malayo-Polynesian Settlement in Ancient South-east Asia* (1973).
Oliver, W.H. *Towards a New History?* (1969).
Parsonson, G.S. *The Conversion of Polynesia* (1984).
Sinclair, Sir Keith. *Towards 1990: Nation and Identity* (1988).
Also available are several of the *Victorian New*

Zealand reprint series, edited by R.P.Hargreaves and T.J.Hearn:
The Canterbury Colony.
The Maori Population.
Letters from Otago.
A Digger's Diary at the Thames.
New Zealand in the 1830s.
Women and the Vote.

Plan of North Dunedin showing sites of the Hocken Library, Castle Street, and the Hocken Leith Street.

To join the Friends

Write for information to:
Friends of the Hocken Collections
PO Box 6336
Dunedin North

Edited for the *Friends of the Hocken Collections* by George Griffiths. Designed by Gary Blackman. March 1992