



The Squeaky Wheel



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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

It's that time of year again and everyone is flat out finalising work commitments before the holiday season kicks in. Hopefully it will be a nice dry holiday season versus what we experienced country-wide last summer. This issue of the Squeaky Wheel is jam-packed with heritage-related articles. Keep an eye out for the excursion advertising, we're ramping up our excursions and events in 2024, most of which are free for our members to attend.

2024 is MOTAT's 60th Anniversary and we'll be celebrating in style all year long starting with our T-Shirt design competition. Create your own design and submit it for voting by the membership. The winner will have their design printed onto T-shirts for purchase from the Society. Check out our website for more details - www.motatsociety.org.nz.

And finally, we'd like to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year!! Enjoy the holiday period with your family and friends and take time to recharge your batteries for the year ahead.

*Merry Christmas from
The MOTAT Society Committee*



PRINTING IN THE MOTAT PRINT SHOP : TRAM TICKETS

Previously outsourced, these ubiquitous bits of paper on the MOTAT tram line, are now being letterpress printed in our very own print shop. Stephen Penney and Denis Wadsworth are now into their second printing of the tram tickets. The first time round there were 8000 sheets printed. Each sheet goes through the press six times! And that's repeated for each ticket colour, green for adults, yellow for children, and blue for the zoo. Each full print run prints a total of 120,000 tickets. After this second print run (of another 120,000 tickets), they are printing the special Christmas edition.

The plates are made by Inline Graphics. These are photopolymer plates which are created using a photography method where the parts of the polymer plate hit by light hardens and the rest washes away leaving just the relief image to print from. A separate plate is used for each layer; that's three for the front and one for the back. The fifth and sixth time through the press are for perforation and numbering. This is the biggest project the Print Shop has undertaken in decades and it has both the Heidelberg Platen and the Heidelberg Cylinder cranking loudly every Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Words by Makyla Curtis
Photographs by Scott Pilkington



COLLECTION INVENTORY AT MOTAT

Working furiously behind the scenes at MOTAT is the Registry Team. Based at our offsite storage facility, Registry is responsible for many things including maintaining the database system, object storage and location management. We often have many projects running at a time, including inventory.

But what is an inventory exactly? A museum inventory is defined by Mark Tabberas as “the process of systematically assigning a unique number to every object, locating the object within the building and matching the object with its historical or legal documentation. Inventorying organises and establishes what the collection is”.

In 2013, MOTAT received a series of Lottery Environment and Heritage grants from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board which allowed the formation of the Collection Inventory and Digitisation Project 2013-18. The purpose of the project was to provide a comprehensive inventory, accessioning and digitisation program of the MOTAT Collection and associated documentation.

Over the course of the project, 12,353 temporary records were created in Vernon (our collection database) 11,862 objects were inventoried, and 12,020 images were linked to temporary records. It essentially created better tracking of objects, the matching of parts to objects, better collection care, and better access for curators to

research and resolve object statuses.

A temporary record is an object that cannot yet be matched to an accessioned object in the database. This is because it was not labelled or recorded accurately. Instead of giving the object an accession number, it is assigned a temporary number (or T number), until further research can be undertaken into the object.

The Inventory process is still ongoing. In 2023 we started to tackle some of the spaces where objects have been stored in the Victorian Village. In early MOTAT days, the Village Volunteers recorded objects in the Victorian Village Catalogue. The catalogue consisted of both typed and hand-written records and multiple copies existed. In 2023 a master copy of the catalogue was created and digitised, allowing the entire catalogue to be found in one place, and it is now searchable. This means the whole team can use this new document to identify, match and resolve inventoried objects.



THE INVENTORY PROCESS:

Recently the Registry Team has been working on objects that were found in the attic of Quinlan Cottage. These objects were stored poorly, with no accession numbers in sight. The team carefully packed and transported the objects to offsite storage so they could be processed.

Once they arrived at offsite storage, they were placed in a quarantine space, removed from the larger collection to help contain any pests (borer and silverfish for example) until we could process and treat these issues.

We then started to work through the boxes and pallets of objects, trying to sort through them based on where they came from. Many of the objects we inventory do not have any form of identification, and as they are often quite old objects, it can be difficult to determine what the object actually is. Each object has its own history, and therefore its own set of challenges. Let's look at a few case-by-case examples to highlight the different things we have to consider.



CASE STUDY 1

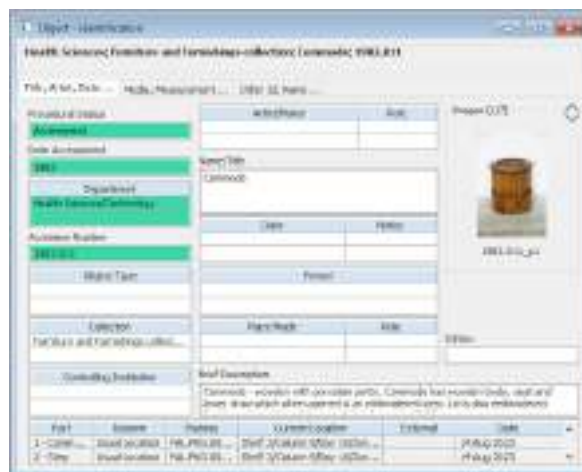
When the team sat down to inventory objects pulled out of Willow Cottage, we came across a commode. The first step during the inventory process is to search Vernon to see if we can find a match to an existing record.

Using an advanced search tool, we searched for key words such as “toilet”, “commode” and chamber pot”. You must think about what these objects may have been called fifty years ago, rather than what it might be called by today. So, using a broad range of keywords we enter that search, and exclude Library material, so we are only looking for objects.

Our search brought us to a small selection of objects. We can look at the image search to immediately disqualify objects. Selecting the ones that are of interest, we can look at these records closer to see if any of the descriptions match that of the commode we are looking at.

We found a record that appeared to match an existing record in our database. The unique embroidered details and the footstool feature make this object quite distinct and based on the details everything fell into place. We had

a match! And so, an object that could have been given a T number was reunited with its accession number.



CASE STUDY 2

Whilst working on inventory of the Victorian Village we have come across a large number of objects with C numbers. These are numbers given to objects from the Victorian Village Catalogue. As an example we found a Majolica dish. A member of our team came across this plate, which had "C246" written on the base. This immediately indicated to us that this object was in the Village Catalogue. Using the digitised catalogue we can search this number, which brings us to the object. The description in the catalogue matched the dish we were physically examining and we could confidently call this a match.



Because the Village Catalogue objects are considered part of the collection, we immediately give found C numbered objects accession numbers. This means that instead of giving the object a T number record we create an accession record. This requires slightly more detail than a T numbered record, as this will be published on Collections Online and made available to the public. So, success! We have now created a beautiful new accession record to showcase this object.



CASE STUDY 3

This next case study is a recent example where we really had to dig deep and trust the process to figure out the context of this object. We first came across part of an object, which we couldn't quite work out what it was.

The object was first found during photography, where a box was emptied, everything photographed and then laid out for inventory. It had a tag which implied that it was a "Spit" and found in the Household Accessories section of the Village catalogue. However, it wasn't until a week later that this object was researched. Our team didn't know much about spits, but we soon realised that we were missing parts.

We then came across another unidentified object in a different box, that also came from Willow Cottage. Upon further research we established that the two parts were a match, and that this object was a "bottlejack". We were very happy to reunite the two parts, especially when we then found the key in yet another box.

A bottlejack, for those who don't know, is a machine with a clockwork motor which rotates meat roasting on a spit. Success!



CASE STUDY 4

One of the great things about the inventory process, is that by creating a T-numbered record we have now created a digital record for the object, which means it is now searchable by our Curatorial Team. This allows for the objects to have further research undertaken, as well as be considered for potential display. This is happening more and more frequently, as we inventory more of the Collection.

Let's look at an example. This Polaroid camera was found during the inventory project and added to the Collection with a T-number in 2018. During the exhibition design stages of MOTAT's previous exhibition, Love/Science, the curators came across this object in the database, and decided it would be a great fit for display. Since it was being displayed this indicates that it fits MOTAT's Collection Policy, and so we converted it into an accessioned object.

The number was therefore changed from T1142 to 2021.28. This highlights how by inventorying the Collection, we can more easily see what the MOTAT Collection holds. It is also accessible to our teams to research objects further. In this case we had a great result, where upon further research, an object was deemed significant to the collection and therefore given the love and attention it deserves.



So, we have these happy endings. You've given an object a T number, you have matched an object to an existing record, or you've converted it to an accession number.

Then what? Why do we do this, what's the point?

The point is – we are improving the database for future MOTAT. Once we have created or found the correct records, we need to improve them. Our motto in Registry is leave everything better than how you found it. We need to be leaving records in a state that means you could look up an object and find it in the system without needing an image. We want to give future MOTAT the best chance possible by having all the information handy. Whilst we still write a physical Accession Register the world has moved online, and we can capture so much more information than was possible 60 years ago when MOTAT started out.

So how do we do this?

1) We start by updating the Vernon Record for the object. In the past records did not contain a lot of information as they were created from the original catalogue cards which were previously used. Our job is to add as much information as possible. We update the description of the object, including manufacturer details, and where and when the object was made. We update measurements, part numbers, the medium of the object, as well as the classifications this object would fall under. We also add any text that is present on the object which gives key clues into the object's history.

2) We ensure we flag that this object was inventoried, who inventoried it, and when. We add where this object has been inventoried from and we then give it a current location, for example the new box is it going to be stored in or a location such as the Quarantine Room.

3) We update the condition notes to give a clear indication of what state the object is in at time of inventory. Importantly, we flag any HAZMAT issues, the object might have, which is information that was not previously recorded before in the Vernon database.

4) We capture updated and good quality images of the object, including all its parts such as the box it came in, the text on the side, and close ups.

5) We label the object with a swing tag. If the object is accessioned, we use paroloid or pencil to place a label directly onto the object, following Conservation practices.

One of the more significant updates is the change in storage quality. For example, we have recently been working on objects that were stored in Quinlan Cottage's attic. These were dumped in piles in disintegrating cardboard boxes with no labels, covered in dirt, dust, accretion, rat faeces and goodness knows what else. Once an object has been inventoried, we wrap the object in tissue or foam, and it is either strapped to a pallet or stored in approved tubs, which are packed out to avoid any jostling during transport. These are then stored at M3 where the Conservation Team can monitor the environmental conditions, and the Registry Team locates each item to a specific shelf. This way the object is far more likely to survive for our future visitors.

So, in conclusion, the inventory project will continue over the next few years, as we focus on the MOTAT Great North Road Site. You may see us moving around, hiding in dark corners and carrying strange objects. We are simply continuing our inventory project, moving things to M3 so we can work to the best of our abilities and get these objects into the database. Our long-term goals are to complete the Victorian Village Catalogue and finish the inventory of MOTAT Great North Road.

Whilst this work is progressing, T numbered objects will continue to be researched by the Collections Team, and as these case studies show us, this allows for more objects to be available digitally and physically for our internal teams as we continue to tidy up the cataloguing of the Collection.

By Emily Hames and Christen McAlpine





DC3 FLIGHT

Saturday, 13 April 2024



Join the MOTAT Society for a spectacular scenic DC3 flight viewing the city and harbour from 1000ft, accompanied by a professional crew and pilot. Expect some 'yesteryear' aviation touches, and enjoy a relaxed small airport departure and the chance to view the DC-3 cockpit.



The MOTAT Society will arrange free coach transport between MOTAT and Ardmore and the flight is \$100 per person.



There are limited seats available and seats must be secured by contacting the administrator on admin@motatsociety.org.nz and depositing the \$100 into the MOTAT Society ASB bank account 12-3011-0755920-00 (fully refunded if the excursion cannot proceed).

Booking Deadline is 16 February 2024.



FORT STONY BATTER TOUR

- WAIHEKE ISLAND -
Saturday, 16 May 2024



We're revisiting one of our previous excursions - a trip to the Fort Stony Batter tunnels on Waiheke Island. Tour, ferry and Waiheke transport is free to members with lunch at Man'o'War winery at your cost. This is one for those with a good level of fitness as there is a long walk to the tunnels.



Contact admin@motatsociety.org.nz to book your spot.



MOTAT SOCIETY & TRAMWAY SOCIAL CLUB BBQ 2024



The annual Tramway Social Club and MOTAT Society BBQ is on again. Book a place at the picnic table by contacting the MOTAT Society Administrator at admin@motatsociety.org.nz

Saturday, 9 March 2024 4.30pm

TRASH TO TREASURE

The heading says it all:- the marvelous restoration projects of the MOTAT volunteers in the early days. This article was originally prepared as a PowerPoint presentation for the Pakuranga Probus Club at the request of Don Fleming, a senior RNZAF engineer who was the backbone of the MOTAT Centenary of Flight 2003 Pearse Project with Geoff Rodliffe.

Pearse Project Slides

The images show the MOTAT team at Timaru/Waitohi. Richard Pearse was an inventor/farmer living at Waitohi, near Temuka, who was experimenting with flying machines and built an aircraft that was reputed to make a short flight in March 1903, nine months before the American Wright brothers flew in the US in December 1903 recognised historically as the first flight.

MOTAT had acquired a number of artefacts from Pearse's attempts and was internationally recognised for their involvement. Geoff Rodliffe, an aviation historian, wrote a book about Richard Pearse and his activities focusing on this early flight. The question of who flew first was debated internationally, and for the Centenary of Flight celebrations in 2003.

Geoff Rodliffe in conjunction with MOTAT and the MOTAT Society under the auspices of Don Fleming, a retired senior RNZAF engineer, and built an operating replica. The machine was based on Pearse's designs and was intended to fly albeit, with a modern microlight engine.

An operating replica of Pearse's engine was also built as a companion exercise.

A major national Centenary of Flight celebration was held in Timaru in March 2003. A key feature was the attempt to fly the replica, registered as ZK-RWP, on the Civil Aviation Register, at the Pearse farm at Waitohi. It was piloted by an experienced microlight pilot, Jack Melhopt who went through a significant number of test runs.

Unfortunately, on the actual day, the weather was very poor with much of the flying display cancelled. ZK-RWP was restricted to ground runs only although the potential for lift-off was very real.

ZK-RWP was then taken to London with Geoff Rodliffe and Don Fleming and displayed at the official Royal Aeronautical Society's official Centenary of Flight celebrations in December 2003.

It is a major MOTAT story and the debate of who flew first still continues.



Above: Project Team – Geoff Rodliffe, Rose, Don Fleming, and Phillip Heath. Photo by Phillip Heath.



Above: Jack Melhopt on the ground runs at Waitohi. Photo by Phillip Heath



Above: The replica Pearse engine.

Wanganui Baldwin Tram

The Wanganui tram restored by the Tramways volunteers in three stages of its restoration. I understand the tram was purchased and brought to MOTAT by the Stewarts.



Wellington Tram 47 - Derelict to final state.



Mosquito

The Mosquito was purchased from a farmer in Marton in 1967 in a completely derelict state and was one of several aircraft restored by the MOTAT Aviation volunteers under the direction of Norm McKelvie, a senior Air NZ engineer, who also worked with Mosquitos in the Territorial RNZAF.

The airframe is basically wooden with the exception of the wing section and the blending of the two components was a particularly delicate operation.



FAI Award

MOTAT Aviation was awarded the Diplome d'Honneur of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) of Paris in recognition of the excellence of the heritage aircraft restoration work carried out at MOTAT, and the contribution to the preservation of aviation heritage internationally.

Norm McKelvie was later also awarded the QSM for services to heritage aviation at MOTAT



Above: Section Head Norm McKelvie and Mr Adams with the award



Above: Aviation Section volunteers besides the Sunderland with the award.

Flying Boats

The two flying boats the RNZAF Sunderland, and the ex-TEAL Short Solent especially, are key MOTAT Aviation artefacts. The Solent was basically restored by a team of ex-TEAL/Air New Zealand engineers, air and cabin crew who flew and maintained the aircraft during the 1950s and built an in-depth Air New Zealand heritage display including oral histories of that era.

The aircraft were floated across the harbour, pulled out at Meola creek and hauled across Meola Rd to MOTAT 2 which was then a closed rubbish tip. It sat there for many years before the first display hangar was built by the Bomber Command and Fleet Air Arm veterans group assisted by the Air NZ team.



RNZAF WWII 1945 Rabaul Incident Brian Cox

The RNZAF's major loss in World War II was in an attack on the Japanese base at Rabaul in PNG from their base on Green Island in the Solomon Islands in January 1945. F/L F O'Keefe was shot down and parachuted into Rabaul Harbour.

In subsequent attempts to rescue him, seven pilots from No 14 and No 16 Squadrons got lost in a tropical thunderstorm and didn't return to base. Brian Cox, a 14 Squadron pilot, landed safely.

A US Navy veteran Marvin Birk who was at Green Island at the time, and the NZ Fighter Pilots Association with Brain Cox as President, initiated a memorial to the lost pilots at MOTAT alongside the Sir Keith Park Memorial Hurricane, supported by the MOTAT Society who donated the rock base. The Society placed flowers on the memorial on ANZAC Day for many years.



Left to right: Painting of the Rabaul incident with Brian Cox's Corsair featured. Memorial with the rock the Society paid for. Brian Cox speaking at the dedication.

Newcomen Replica Steam Engine

Thomas Newcomen built the first operational steam engine in 1712, and to recognise the 200 anniversary Ken Poynton and the Steam section volunteers and their Auckland Steam Engine Society built a working replica of Newcomen's engine to be part of a MOTAT display. This unfortunately did not come to pass, but the engine is now based at the Steam Society's Whangaparoa centre.

TEAL Volunteers Catalina Outing

The Society often supports other heritage groups by organising events with them at full commercial rates to help their finances. This has included chartering the tug boat W.C.Daldy for a harbour cruise for members and other events.

This occasion features the chartering of a flight in the Catalina flying boat based at Ardmore for the old TEAL volunteers at MOTAT and included engineers, aircrew and cabin crew. A wonderful flight over Auckland, including over MOTAT and a special clearance to fly right over Auckland Airport back to Ardmore. The CAA people were very keen to see the vintage aircraft up close as well.



by Bill Rayner



**60TH ANNIVERSARY
T-SHIRT DESIGN
COMPETITION**

TO CELEBRATE 60 YEARS OF MOTAT AND
THE MOTAT SOCIETY WE ARE HAVING A
T-SHIRT DESIGN COMPETITION.

- DESIGN A T-SHIRT
- VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGN
- WEAR THE T-SHIRT



Details available at
www.motatsociety.org.nz/competition

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