

has been reproduced online, although an up-to-date version of Flash is useful for those wishing to view the website. There are three different ways to navigate the digital version of the exhibition. Visitors can select material by format, in three 'galleries' of images, videos and soundclips; they can look at material in five thematic sections; or they can interact with the exhibits chronologically using a timeline running along the bottom of the website. Uncluttered with extraneous data, the 'galleries' are the easiest and most rewarding to use. The five thematic sections recycle text from the physical gallery and are accompanied by images of exhibits. The timeline is an interesting response to chronology. Exhibits appear on it according to their production date but do not refer to any key dates in the conflict or on the home front. Unfortunately, this approach robs the objects of historical significance or meaning, and defeats the purpose of a timeline.

Until recently some voices have not been allowed to speak for themselves in New Zealand's war histories. There has also been an impressive silence in official war histories on matters such as the ongoing emotional and physical impact of war on citizens. Archives New Zealand's contribution to 'Coming Home' has consciously avoided an official voice. In doing so it has inadvertently let too many others speak at once. In spite of this excess *An Impressive Silence* reinforces the diversifying field of war history as public history and suggests voices that historians might listen out for in the future.

KIRSTIE ROSS

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

NOTES

1 Roberto Rabel, 'War History as Public History: Past and Future', in Bronwyn Dalley and Jock Phillips, eds, *Going Public: The Changing Face of New Zealand History*, Auckland, 2001, p.66.

2 <http://remix.digitalnz.org/> accessed 23 February 2009.

Te Ara o Nga Tupuna Maori Heritage Trail. Wellington City Council, the Wellington Tenth Trust and Ngati Toa. Visited 7 March 2009. [<http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/heritage/pdfs/teara.pdf>]

Te Aro Pa, 39 Taranaki St, Wellington. Wellington City Council in partnership with the Wellington Tenth Trust and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Visited 22 February and 6 March 2009.

HERITAGE IS HISTORY'S POOR COUSIN. Despite the growth in the professional heritage sector and the attendant university courses in heritage studies, most people still think of heritage as 'Distory' (Disney history), some sort of popular expression of historical nostalgia. But the gap between academic history and public history is closing. The critical view of 'heritage sceptics' like historian David Lowenthal (who claimed heritage is history with the pain edited out) has matured into an understanding of heritage as a contemporary mode of cultural production that draws on the past. A growing corpus of international scholarship and local writing now critically analyses the history, theory and practice of historic heritage in its own right. Taking heritage seriously allows us to critically examine the ubiquitous heritage trail, which, like other forms of public history, looks old but is new, something constructed in the present with recourse to the past.

In the hustle and bustle of downtown Wellington's Courtenay Place, it is very easy to overlook the pou (post) that marks a stop on the Maori heritage trail. The small carved post sits on the traffic island in front of the Embassy Theatre, competing for attention with the plaques, public art and urban design features that clutter this part of the capital.

On closer inspection we see the carved face and white feathers of Taranaki, which speak of a Maori history that predates European settlement. This indigenous heritage may be discovered by following the other red-painted carvings around the trail, *Te Ara o Nga Tupuna*, the pathways of the ancestors who explored, named and lived on the land called Te Upoko o Te Ika (the head of Maui's fish).

This driving trail, which starts at the modern Pipitea marae near the Railway Station and ends at Owhiro Bay on Wellington's wild south coast, takes about four hours and includes ancient pa, cultivations and other sites, buildings and cultural landscapes. Established by the Wellington City Council in 1996 in partnership with the Wellington Tenth's Trust and Ngati Toa, the trail was expanded in 2006 to include the Maori presence in Waitangi Park on the waterfront and the newly discovered remnants of Te Aro pa in Taranaki Street. Making Wellingtonians aware of local Maori history is a laudable aim, not least because a knowledge of this history provides a context for understanding the current settlement of Treaty claims and the complex relationship between the Crown and Taranaki whanui, in particular Te Ati Awa as well as other iwi.

However, despite the interesting circumstances of the trail's development as an artifact of our bicultural present, overall it is quite disappointing. It was difficult to find out about the trail; the Information Centre had no brochures so I had to print one off the website. I doubt most visitors would go to this trouble. Following the trail and finding the sites was not easy, and for most people walking or driving past the pou or other markers there is very little to indicate what they are. In the absence of any consistent design or branding, information panels or indeed any interpretation at all, the sites fall a long way short of what should be expected from a stand-alone experience. Though they do not have artifacts or a captive audience as with a museum exhibit, the outdoor setting of historic places — standing in the very spot where history happened — has much to offer audiences hungry for a sense of place and identity.

Care must also be taken with Maori heritage not to replace old biases with new ones in the quest to provide an indigenous perspective. The content of the tour brochure, written by Matene Love, is a lumpy, not altogether digested mixture pulled together from tribal history, archaeological reports, maps and photographs, and the usual sources such as Elsdon Best and Leslie Adkins. This history is presented from an unashamedly iwi-centric perspective, and though the pre-1820s Ngai Tara and Ngati Ira do get a look in, it is clear that to the victor the spoils have gone, including the writing of history. Otherwise this Maori history of Wellington is mostly conventional, indeed old fashioned, and represents pre-European conflicts with little sense of late nineteenth-century interaction with encroaching Pakeha society, let alone the social history or material culture of the twentieth century. To an overseas tourist or a student, the impression is that Maori people lived in the distant past and do not play an important part in modern New Zealand life. There is little about Maori living in Wellington today, apart from the urban Pipitea marae dating from the 1980s (and the nearby monument to the Maori Battalion) and the extraordinary recycled marae built by Bruce Stewart in Island Bay in the 1970s. Both provide opportunities for interesting stories about cultural revival, art and literature, or protest and politics.

If the Maori heritage trail makes little impression on the cityscape, the same might be said for the latest addition to Wellington's Maori heritage sites — Te Aro pa. People walking up Taranaki Street might be forgiven for going right past the new interpretation centre, which looks like a shopfront and is announced only by a discreet sign. Opened in 2008, the display was a successful product of heritage management, which has unfortunately not been translated into the design.

The demolition of a Victorian building at 39 Taranaki Street, and the subsequent earthworks for a new apartment complex in 2005, led to the remarkable discovery of a portion of the old Te Aro pa. There was intense public interest in this fragment of the old

settlement. Security staff had to be hired to protect the dig while the Council scrambled to do a deal with the developers, allowing them to exceed the height restriction for the building in return for installing a public display.

The fortified village of Te Aro was established by recently arrived Taranaki tribes in the 1820s. It numbered some 2000 inhabitants by the 1850s, but was empty within a few decades and eventually disappeared under the growing capital. The preservation and in-situ conservation of the whare was made possible by careful negotiations between the developer, local government, the Historic Places Trust and tangata whenua. A little of this story makes its way into the display, but overall the results are once again underwhelming. On entering the space, the visitor is confronted by a very plain room decorated with carvings, a graphic treatment on the walls and large images and text panels which do little to provide context for the display. In the floor are recessed pits containing the remains of the ponga logs of three whare, along with other surviving material such as shells and pottery.

Though the space is very perfunctory and has little atmosphere, three interpretation panels provide some information. They tell us about the origins of Te Aro pa, the changing face of Wellington, and describe the remains as a 'Matapihi ki Te Ao Tawhito' (window on to the past). The information presented here avoids the look of a 'book on a wall' through a largely successful synthesis of tribal history and the archaeological record, with a good use of images and layering of the text. The most detailed information appears at the railing where visitors can look into the pit and identify features of the 'layers of the past'. Here the dense information and scientific framework of urban archaeology jarred somewhat when juxtaposed with the Maori spiritual values associated with this tangible link to the ancestral past, which the Tenth Trust describe as 'precious taonga' (cultural treasures). I was left with many questions, and thought opportunities had been lost to explore the everyday lives of Maori living in Wellington in the mid-nineteenth century. The remaining artifacts suggest a changing lifestyle, a syncretic mix of Western and customary goods, and a culture that is very different to the idealized view of 'traditional Maori life' that persists to this day in the popular media. I was fascinated by the newspaper photograph from the 1920s of the 'last Maori to live in the pah' [sic] and wanted to know more about what his descendents thought about this place and their ancestors who lived here.

One of the most interesting aspects of this joint project is way that these Maori values about the living past sit (not always easily) alongside Pakeha notions of history. Despite the dissonance of these contrasting views, more is made of this conflict in academia — the history wars — than here at the coalface of heritage practice, where overlapping approaches to our entwined past open up constructive engagement rather than contested discourses. Though they might both provide food for thought, in the end the Te Aro pa display and the Maori heritage trail both get a poor report card that reads 'could do better'. Working with Maori to empower them to reclaim and interpret their own cultural heritage is a challenge, but it seems that heritage professionals dealing with Maori topics tread gingerly with 'sensitive' cultural content and could explore more creative strategies for presenting the past. Despite their good intentions, the poor execution of these heritage initiatives means that Wellington's rich Maori history is still hidden from view, a failure in communication that is even less excusable given the urgent task in a post-settler society of understanding where we have come from and where we might be going.

As the pepeha (proverb) says:

He kokonga whare e kitea,
He kokonga ngakau e kore e kitea
(The corners of a house are visible
Not so the corners of the mind)

CONAL McCARTHY

Victoria University of Wellington