

Exhibition

Over the Christmas period the Library mounted an exhibition of 40 prints from the negatives of William James Harding.

Harding, whose negatives form an important part of the Library's photograph collection, practised as a commercial photographer in Wanganui from 1856 until 1889. His forte was landscape photography, both rural and urban, but he also turned his hand to portraiture. He achieved a reputation as a man who would not compromise his art for the sake of flattering a subject and his portraits have a simplicity and directness not normally associated with the Victorian period.

The exhibition was printed from the original negatives by Jean Stanton, a Wellington photographer.

Distinguished visitors

In recent months the Library has had three visitors with a particular interest in the Cook collections. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin, newly appointed British Chief of Defence Staff, was in New Zealand in the course of a world tour discussing Commonwealth defence requirements. A devoted admirer of Cook, the Admiral came to the Turnbull twice in one day, between official engagements, to inspect unique manuscripts and paintings. As he was being taken to Ship Cove the next day, Sir Terence was especially delighted with a passage which he read out to his aide. Written by Lieutenant James Burney of Cook's consort vessel *Adventure*, on the Second Voyage, the manuscript dealt with his investigation of the disappearance of a boat's crew at Grass Cove (now Whareunga Bay) in the Marlborough Sounds. The missing men had been killed by the Maoris, and Burney, rather against his wish, found incontrovertible proof of cannibalism.

Her Excellency Mrs Ann Martindell, the American Ambassador, came to see a rare book written by an ancestor of hers, John Ledyard. Published and sold by Nathaniel Patten at Hartford in 1783, the small volume is entitled *A Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, & in Quest of a North-West Passage, between Asia and Performed in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778 and 1779*. It is one of the lesser known subsidiary accounts of Cook's exploration, based largely on Rickman's account. Ledyard had a most adventurous life. Although American by birth, he managed to join the Royal Marines and was a corporal on board *Resolution*. Subsequently he deserted rather than fight his compatriots; attempted to walk across Siberia; and died at Cairo on his way to look for the sources of the Niger River.