

were not clear. Sid Mead says one was to heal the breach of the tatau pounamu between Ngati Awa and Tuhoe because it had been broken during the Te Kooti Campaign.

Another, was that it was to be the Queen's house showing that Ngati Awa would not be involved in other wars with the Crown.

It could also have been built to show that, although in the wars of 1865 Ngati Awa's lands were confiscated, the spirit of Ngati Awa was still strong.

Yet another reason could have been to tie various sections of the Mataatua area together.

Mataatua which stood on the highway between Whakatane and Taneatua, was opened in 1875 by Minister of Native Affairs, Sir Donald Maclean (Te Makarini).

Sir Donald accused Ngati Awa of building the house as a way of raising an army to fight his Government and he levelled his accusation at the opening.

Mataatua was gifted to the Queen that same year but this was not communicated to the Queen or her representatives.

In Maori terms the gift was a present that would be looked after by Ngati Awa and would not be taken away.

Carving of Mataatua started in 1872 and finished in 1874.

The idea to build the house was credited to Hohaia Matatehokia, chief of the Ngati Pukeko. It was designed by Wepiha Apanui and built and super-

vised by Paniora of Te Whanau a Apanui.

The original band of carvers included Tiopira and Tutere of Rangitaiki, Tikitiki of Te Whakatohea, Mohetei of Tuhoe and Te Wikirihotu of Patuwai.

At the time of Mataatua's erection, the house was considered unique in possessing three special features.

The paepaekaiawha was elaborately carved to represent the Tai o Ruamano, there were twin figures on each amo representing Tarakiuta and Tarakitai with the other amo representing Waha-mama and Taitimuroa, and the pou-tokomanawa had a figure at the head (probably Te Ngarara) and at its base, being Te Maitarunui.

Mataatua was finished by a Whanau a Apanui team as Wepiha was not pleased with the original carvers work. He dismissed them and invited his relations from Te Kaha to carry on the work.

The new team comprised Paniora, Matenga Peraro, Haha Mauhara, Here-mia, Wi Taokuku, Wairua, Mihaere, Rura and Teira.

After the completion of Mataatua, the carvers, with the exception of Matenga, went under the leadership of Wi Taokuku to Thames to carry on the carving of Hotunui.

In 1879 the government asked permission of Ngati Awa to send the house to the Sydney exhibition, to be seen by the world. Ngati Awa agreed with reluctance, for which it received £300.

The house was taken to Sydney and displayed in 1880 with the poupou and tukutuku panels on the outside of the house, so people could see.

With meetings about the house, Ngati Awa decided that since the "gift" was sent to Australia, it was better that the Government buy the house outright. Wepiha Apanui applied to the Government for the sum of £3000 but was refused by the Crown. Thus the house remained a "gift" and did not at any time become a purchased item that could be disposed of at will.

Mataatua was then sent to Britain, where it lay in the cellars of the Victoria and Albert Museum for 40 years until it was re-erected and displayed for the British Empire Exhibition in 1924.

At the end of this exhibition Mataatua was sent home to New Zealand for the International South Seas Exhibition at Dunedin in 1925.

While in Dunedin, Mataatua was given to the University Museum on a "permanent loan".

Ngati Awa was not consulted about this transaction, which pakeha officials and the Minister of Internal Affairs conducted in secret and Mataatua has stood in Dunedin since 1925.

Sid Mead says the Ngati Awa want the "gift" to be returned to the people who made it, where the house will be under the control of the Runanga o Ngati Awa.

