

DEBTOR'S PRISON

In late 1862 a Wellington paper reported that the Maori troupe had "broken-up" and Dr M'Gauran was "undergoing a white washing process in a debtor's prison". But, by mid-1863, the Warrior Chiefs had re-formed under the management of a group of Melbourne residents led by a Mr Hegartz. They sailed to England and opened to a packed house at the Alhambra in London's Leicester Square on 5 July.

In the audience that day was Francis Buckland, zoologist, authority on fishes and connoisseur of the unusual. He invited the Warrior Chiefs to his home and hosted them to a fourteen-pound joint of meat, numerous side dishes, wine, cigars and cigarettes. He records that one of his appreciative guests offered: "Me moko you. Moko you beautiful like Rangatira."

WEIRD SPECIMENS

Being a zoologist and collector of the curious, Buckland had a house full of weird specimens, both live and preserved. Like other visitors the Warrior Chiefs were fascinated with these objects. Their kind host decided they would be interested in his latest live acquisition — *Anguis fragilis*, a harmless reptile, commonly called a Slow-worm.

Unaware of the Maori fear of reptiles he placed one of these creatures on the floor. With horrified cries his guests hastily departed the house with Mr Hegartz and Buckland in hot pursuit shouting re-assurances!

Two Warrior Chiefs raced for refuge to an open window in a house nearby where, unfortunately, a woman sat at her sewing. "The poor old lady, looking up suddenly, saw a couple of gigantic savages with tattooed faces, screaming and yelling as they charged down on her: the good old thing was frightened out of her senses — and upon my word I do not wonder at it!" records Buckland.

Eventually calm was restored, the old lady revived and the zoologist re cemented his friendship with the Warrior Chiefs after much apology, wine and cigars.

He then took them on a tour of London Zoo where they enjoyed an elephant ride and gazed in wonder at the various animals. They declared the zebra was tattooed and that the hippopotamus, the biggest "poaka" they had ever seen, would make a grand feast.



G.F. Angas painted this view of Tu Kaitote, Te Whero Whero's pa on the Waikato. Taupiri looms in the background. The pa featured in the "authentic scenery" of one of the plays the Warrior Chiefs performed in Sydney.

After a successful London season the Warrior Chiefs toured the music halls of the English midlands performing "the wild, half-naked haka" to appreciative audiences as they had done in Australia.

CAME TO GRIEF

The party came to grief in late 1864 due to a variety of circumstances. These included financial mis-management by Hegartz, illness due to the harsh English winter, and the liking some members acquired for what was then termed "the cheapest, quickest way out of town"!

But the main reason the Maori Warrior Chiefs quit the stage was pressure from the Aborigines Protection Society and other philanthropic organisations who believed Hegartz was an unscrupulous exploiter of gullible natives.

These worthies also considered the performances of "heathen chants and dances" as "sinful and degrading" and, in some instances, obscene.

Some of the Warrior Chiefs died of illness in English hospitals, others on the voyage home, their fares paid by public donations. But some survived to return to their native soil. Their story is one of triumph and tragedy. Whether they were victims of the fast-buck Pakeha, or the venture was supposed to be a mutually beneficial European-Maori enterprise, is arguable.

What is certain is that Australian and English audiences thrilled to the performances of this unique troupe, the very first of a new artistic genre that is now a vibrant, living part of this nation's multi-cultural heritage.

New Zealand Maori Council releases its early records

The New Zealand Maori Council has received many requests from students, social historians and the public as to the events surrounding its formation in 1962. Because of this, the council has released for publication some of its early records.

The first extracts are speeches delivered at the council's inaugural meeting by the Secretary of Maori Affairs, Mr J.K. Hunn, in accordance with the enabling legislation and the Minister of Maori Affairs, the Hon. H.R. Hanan.

The second extract will be minutes of the inaugural meeting from which will appear the names H.K. Ngata and J.M. Bennett, the only members who have given unbroken service to the council since.