

PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE KARANGA REPATRIATION PROGRAMME OF TE PAPA TONGAREWA (THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND) AND THE PITT RIVERS MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

On Wednesday 17 May 2017, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford handed over to representatives of the Karanga Repatriation Programme of Te Papa Tongarewa (The National Museum of New Zealand) the Māori ancestral remains previously cared for at the University of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum. The remains comprise seven *toi moko* ('ancestral mummified heads'), and three *kōiwi tangata* (parts of a skull).

The handover ceremony was attended by Sir Jerry Mateparae, GNZM, QSO, KStJ, the High Commissioner of New Zealand to the United Kingdom, colleagues from Te Papa Tongarewa, and members of Ngāti Rānana (the London Māori Club). Also in attendance were senior officers and members of the University; representatives from the British Museum, the Natural History Museum (London), and the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; and members of the Museum's staff.

Speeches were given by: the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson; the Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Dr Laura Van Broekhoven; the Dean of Christ Church, The Very Reverend Professor Martyn Percy; the Kaihautū / Co-leader of Te Papa, Dr Arapata Hakiwai; the New Zealand High Commissioner to the UK, Sir Jerry Mateparae; and the Manager Repatriation at Te Papa, Te Herekiele Herewini. The speeches were supported by *waiata*, traditional Māori songs. The speakers reflected on the long-standing relationships between the University and New Zealand and between the Museum and the Māori people, and stressed the importance of the handover for the University and the Museum, and for Te Papa Tongarewa and the Māori people.

It was particularly fitting that the ceremony was also attended by representatives from the institutions that have cared for the remains since their removal from New Zealand in the nineteenth century. These included representatives from the Army Medical Services, the

Royal Army Medical Corps, Christ Church, Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum, and Oxford University Museum.

Discussions between colleagues of the Karanga Repatriation Programme and the Pitt Rivers Museum about the care and management of the remains began in 1999. Arrangements were put in place to manage access to the remains appropriately and a programme of collaborative research was begun in order to establish as accurately as possible the history of the individual remains. This research established, for example, that two of the *toi moko* were previously held at the Museum of the Army Medical Department at Chatham, the Royal Victoria Military Hospital at Southampton, and the Royal Army Medical College at Millbank in London, before they entered the University's collections.

A formal request for the repatriation of the remains was made in June 2015. Following a period of consultation, the request was approved by the Council of the University on 11 July 2016. The repatriation of the Māori ancestral remains held at the Pitt Rivers Museum follows the repatriation in 2008 of remains held at Oxford University Museum.

Notes for Editors

- The Pitt Rivers Museum is one of Oxford's most popular attractions, famous for its period atmosphere and outstanding collections from many cultures around the world, past and present. Admission, exhibitions and events are FREE.
- The Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in 1884 when General Pitt Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, gave his personal collection of some 30,000 items to the University on condition that a museum was built to house the material, and that a post was created to lecture in anthropology. Today the collection numbers some 600,000 items, and the Museum remains an active department of Oxford University, doing and supporting research and teaching in archaeology and anthropology.

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