

Large print information



Please do not remove
from this display

Sustaining each other New Zealand (Aotearoa)

The British
Museum



Large panel in centre of display:

Sustaining each other

New Zealand (Aotearoa)

In Aotearoa (the Māori name for New Zealand) relationships within the Māori community are greatly valued. The focus of each community is the *marae*, an open space where important gatherings and meetings are held.

Each marae belongs to a different tribal group and there is often a meeting house at its centre. When visitors come to the marae, the host group demonstrates its authority and prestige through the quality of their oratory, observance of tribal protocol, their hospitality and, most importantly, the meeting house (**wharenui**) itself.



Hannah Swale, Paula Dixon, Gina Coatsworth, Alana Watson and Renee Kitto, of the London Māori Club Ngāti Rānana, at the meeting house Hinemihi (Clandon Park, Surrey), 2008.

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Sustaining each other

Gathering together

Gatherings held on the marae are an opportunity for people to support each other and reaffirm family ties.

Weddings, funerals, birthdays, political meetings and less formal gatherings take place on the marae. They often begin with a welcoming ceremony, or **pōwhiri**. A woman from the host group will start with a continuous call that invites visitors onto the marae. Her call creates a rope pulling visitors towards the most sacred space, the **marae ātea**, directly in front of the meeting house.

Haere mai ra

Come forward

Nga manuhiri tūārangi e

Visitors from afar

Haere mai, haere mai.

Welcome, welcome.

Mauria mai ō koutou tini mate

Bring with you the spirits of your dead

Kia mihia

That they may be greeted

Kia tangihia.

That they may be mourned.

Piki mai, kake mai

Ascend, ascend

Whakaekea mai te marae tapu

Ascend the sacred marae

O te iwi e.

Of our people.

Haere mai, haere mai, haere mai.

Welcome, welcome, welcome.



Female elders of the Ngāti Te Roroaterangi tribe lead the welcome of dignitaries on to Owhata Marae, Rotorua, 2006.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Objects displayed here

- 1 Fighting staffs, *taiaha***

Distinguished visitors to marae are often greeted with a challenge, or **wero**, from a male member of the host group. He approaches them slowly, swinging a **taiaha**. Before the visitors can move forward, they must pick up the small dart or twig laid before them to indicate they accept the challenge and come in peace.

Oc.7362 kākā feather, 1800s; Oc.6020 **pāua** shell, possibly Taranaki, 1860s; Oc1902, Loan 01.24 textile collar, possibly Arawa tribe, 1880s; Oc1854,1229.74 & Oc1921,1014.3 trumpets, probably North Auckland, late 1700s

2 Neck ornaments, *hei-tiki*

Personal ornaments have always been significant in Māori culture. They are sometimes passed from one generation to the next as heirlooms. At funerals hei-tiki (neck pendants) and other treasures may be brought out and placed on or near the coffin. Giving an ornament or weapon a personal name increases its spiritual power. The acrylic tiki, 'Te Aonehe', was made by contemporary Māori artist George Nuku and shares a name with his son.

2008,2029.1 acrylic, by George Nuku, 2008; Oc.1727 possibly Northland, mid-1800s and Oc1922,0606.1 possibly Rotorua, 1700s, both nephrite

3 Cloaks

Cloaks are used in various ways. Some may be reserved for ceremonial occasions. They are cultural treasures that are usually kept by the family of the maker and worn by them or lent to others, each time enhancing the prestige of the wearer. Feather cloaks with colourful geometric patterns became popular at the end of the 1800s. Today many native birds are protected and their feathers are only used in small quantities.

Oc1994,04.87 pukeko and pheasant feathers by Diggeress Te Kanawa 1993–1994; Oc1982,Q.718, goat hair, early 1800s



The **wero** is performed for a group of visitors waiting to come onto the marae. Ngāti Te Rorooterangi tribe, Rotorua, 2007.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer



Mourners at the coffin of the late Maori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu. Tūrangawaewae Marae, Ngaruawahia, 2006.

Photo: Peter Drury

Sustaining each other

The ancestral house

About 900 years ago, the first people sailed to Aotearoa (New Zealand) in canoes from east Polynesia. Today Māori society is organised around tribes that trace their origins back to these founding canoes and their navigators.

There are around 80 tribes in Aotearoa. To renew their bonds of kinship and shared **whakapapa** (genealogy), they meet on the marae. Some marae include a large meeting house or **wharenui**. The wharenui is the embodiment of an important ancestor and must be treated with great respect. It has its own spiritual identity and is **tapu** (divine or sacred). The wharenui is often decorated with carved, painted and woven designs that tell stories of a tribe's past.



The meeting house named Tama te Kapua at Ohinemutu, Rotorua. Originally built in 1878 and reopened in 1943.

Photo: Robin Morrison. Auckland Museum

Objects displayed here

4 **Carved ancestral figures, *tekoteko* and *poutokomanawa***

The wharenui is named after an important ancestor or event. The house is likened to the ancestor's body, with the head at the gable and arms outstretched to welcome kin and visitors. Carved figures represent other ancestors. The eyes are inlaid with **pāua** shell, deliberately creating an intensely powerful gaze.

Oc1927,1119.4 gable figure, probably East Coast, 1860s; Oc1901,-.39 interior central post figure, probably East Coast, 1880s; 2009,2008.3 central pole, acrylic, by George Nuku, 2009

5 **House bargeboards, *maihi***

Before the mid-1800s, the war canoe and the village storehouse were the main focus of tribal pride and prestige. The large, carved meeting houses that replaced them provided new opportunities for carvers to experiment with methods and design. They were places for tribes to discuss how to deal with the new European settlers and their tribal lands. The artist George Nuku, who made the acrylic house panels here, innovatively uses materials available today. Nuku considers these materials of equal value to traditional timbers.

2009, 2008.1 and 2009,2008.2, bargeboards, acrylic and **pāua** shell and feathers, by George Nuku, 2009

6 Front side posts, *amo*

The pair of wooden posts (above left and right) here are each carved with two male ancestors, probably of the Rongowhakaata tribe. They are decorated with **rauponga** patterns, named after the native New Zealand curling fern frond. The bold and confident carving style exemplifies the dynamism of the period in which they were made.

Oc1894,0716.1 & Oc1894,0716.3
bargeboard supports, Poverty Bay, East Coast, 1830s–50s; Oc1904,1206.1 model meeting house, made by Piwiki Horohau of the Ngāti Raukawa tribe, early 1900s

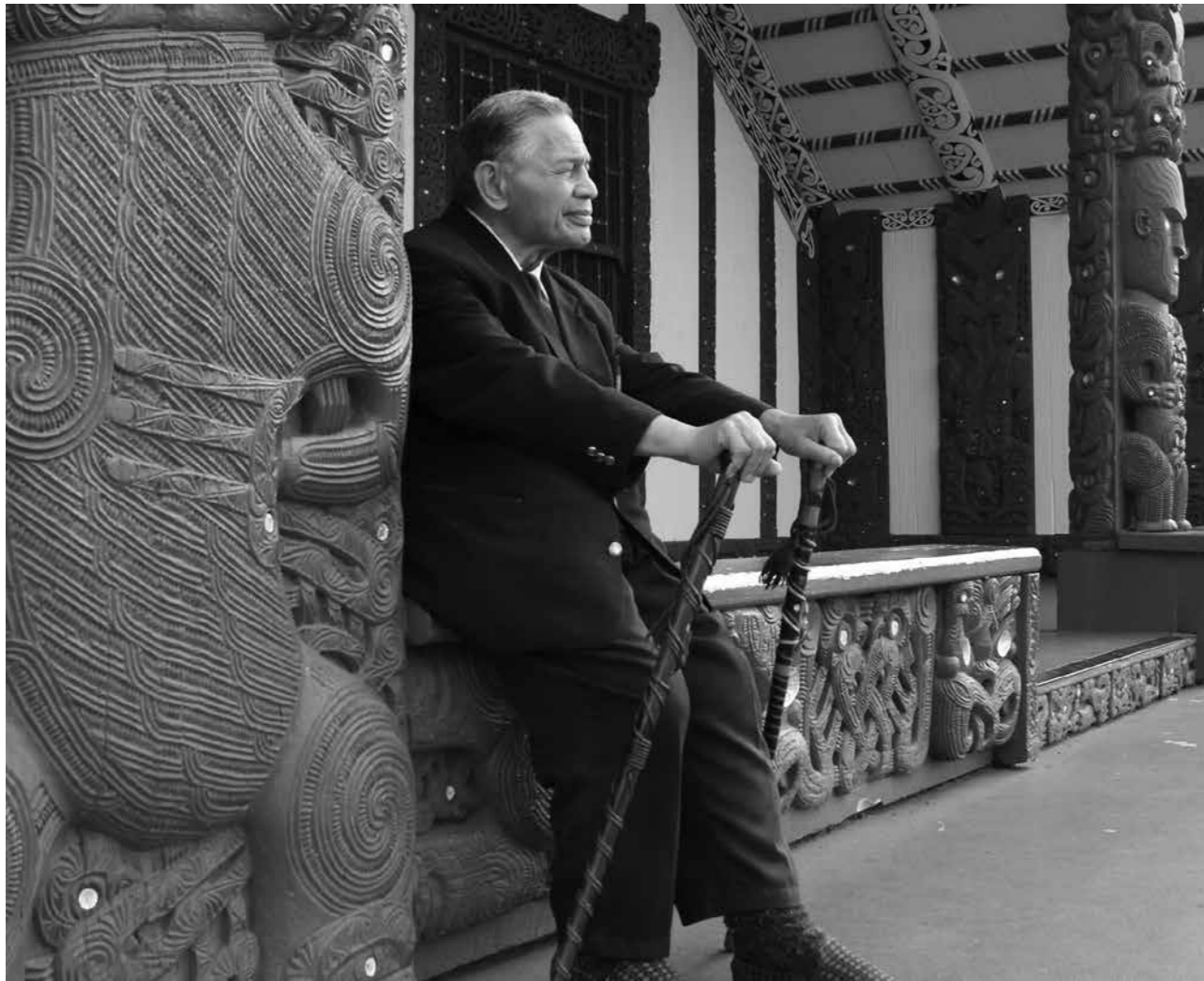


‘Maoris plaiting flax baskets’, by Gottfried Lindauer, 1903. This house provided the inspiration for the acrylic house panels created by George Nuku.

©Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Carving in display case, top of pole





The late Wihapi Te Amohau Winiata of the Ngāti Whakaue tribe at his home marae, Te Papa-i-Ouru, at Ohinemutu, Rotorua, 2004.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Sustaining each other

Objects in focus

Welcoming visitors

- 7 **Orators' staffs (*tokotoko*) are used to great effect by speakers on the marae. Men brandish them to emphasise the words of a chant that often begins:**

Tihei mauri ora!

I breathe life!

Having claimed his right to speak, the orator acknowledges the spirits of the dead before turning his attention to the living, the present moment and the purpose of the gathering.

Te hunga mate ki te hunga mate

The dead to the dead

Te hunga ora ki te hunga ora

The living to the living

When visitors come to a marae and participate in the welcoming ceremony they become **tapu** (divine or sacred). Visitors can only enter the wharehau once the tapu (divine power) is removed by physical contact: **hariru** (shaking hands) and **hongiri** (pressing noses and so sharing the breath of life).

Oc.7221 & Oc.7003



Che Wilson at Raketapauma Marae using his great-grandfather's staff, 2006.

Photo: Gail Imhoff

Objects displayed here

8 Door and window lintels, *pare*

The lintel above the door of a meeting house removes any lingering **tapu** (divine or sacred power) visitors bring with them as they enter the house. It protects both hosts and visitors from spiritual danger. Female figures refer to the ability of women to neutralize tapu, and may be flanked by spiritual guardians such as the bird-like maniaia figures seen here on the lintel to the right.

Left: Oc1927,1119.3 lintel, probably Bay of Plenty, 1860s–80s; Oc1894,0716.4 & Oc1894,0716.5 door jambs, Poverty Bay/Rongowhakaata tribe, 1820s–40s

Right: Oc1927,1119.2 lintel, probably Hawke's Bay, 1860s; Oc1944,02.803.a & Oc1944,02.803.b door jambs, possibly East Coast, 1800s

9 Clubs,
patu ōnewa, mere pounamu, wahaika
Clubs or cleavers were effective close-combat weapons, kept in warriors' belts. The history of named weapons and their role in battles and peace agreements are remembered and retold by the tribes they belong to. This whalebone club (**wahaika**) is named Hine Te Ao after an important woman of the Ngāti Raukawa tribe who seized the club when her brother was almost killed with it. Today clubs are used on important occasions and in cultural performances on marae or at other venues.

Oc1854,1229.5 nephrite, Waikato, 1700s;
Oc1854,1229.7 whalebone, Waikato/Hauraki, early 1800s; Oc.1698 basalt, possibly Northland, 1700s

10 Food bowls, *kumete*

Beautifully carved bowls like these were used in the past for serving food to guests. The sharing of food brings the welcoming ceremony to a conclusion. Food is offered in generous quantities as a demonstration of hospitality. This is as important to tribal pride as the speeches made on the marae ātea.

Oc,LMS.152 probably East Coast,
1840s–50s; Oc1944,02.799 probably
Poverty Bay, 1820s



Deedee Nielson
performing with a
patu at Auckland
Museum, 2008.

Photo: Krzysztof
Pfeiffer



Makereti (Maggie) Papakura was a famous
tourist guide from Whakarewarewa in the
1890s, before she moved to England. She is
shown here outside her carved house, Te Rauru.

British Museum AOA Oc,B9.20

Sustaining each other

New Zealand (Aotearoa)

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Left: Weavers of the Ngāti Whakaue tribe at their meeting house Tama te Kapua, at Ohinemutu, Rotorua, North Island, 2007

Right: Visitors waiting to go on to Otakou Marae, Otago Peninsula, South Island, 1984.



Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer



Photo: Robin Morrison. Auckland Museum

Sustaining each other

Continuing traditions

To construct a fully decorated whareniui (carved meeting house) a community must sustain skills in weaving and carving. Both art forms were revived by dedicated organisations in the 1900s.

For Māori practitioners, the creation of an artwork is just as important as the end product. They consider natural materials to have a life essence of their own. The entire production process is controlled by ritual to ensure the safety of the makers and the health of the resources. The finished work not only carries the power and prestige (**mana**) of the maker but honours the ancestors who passed these skills down.



Lyonel Grant, an internationally renowned carver of the Ngati Pikiao tribe.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Objects displayed here

11 **Plaited baskets, *kete***

In the past kete were made for specific purposes, such as gathering sweet potato. Today, baskets are still made to carry food. The baskets here were made as accessories. They are plaited from strips of flax using a technique known as **raranga**. The small basket decorated with feathers is made from the strong inner fibres of the flax leaf, twined together in the same way cloaks are constructed.

Clockwise from bottom: Oc1993,03.72 by Christina Hurihia Wirihana from Rotoiti, 1993; Oc1994,04.71 by Mana Rangi from Tikitiki, 1975-1994; Oc1995,05.1 by Katarina Monica Kepa Konui, 1995; Oc1993,03.75 by Donna Campbell of the Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Raukawa tribes, 1975-1993; Oc1994,04.72 by Kimihia Doel from Tokomaru Bay, 1975-1994; Oc1994,04.98 by Erenora Puketapu Hetet of the Te Āti Awa tribe, 1994

12 **Mat, *whāriki***

Finely plaited mats are associated with kinship and hospitality. They are mainly used for important community events. A bridal party may stand on a mat during a wedding. Mats may be placed on meeting house porches and floors when guests are expected. They are skillfully constructed using the **raranga** plaiting technique. Bands of plaiting must be joined together to create the desired width of mat.

Oc1994,04.110 by Katarina Monica Kepa Konui, 1994



Taurioterangi Pouwhare, Hikitia Ranga, Yvonne Rewi, Titihuia Grace, Parehuia Tamepo, Minnie Pouwhare, of Painoaiho Marae, Murupara, Bay of Plenty, 2005.

Photo: Poia Rewi



Weavers of the Ngāti Whakaeu tribe plaiting a **whāriki**, at Ohinemutu, Rotorua, 2007.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Sustaining each other

George Nuku

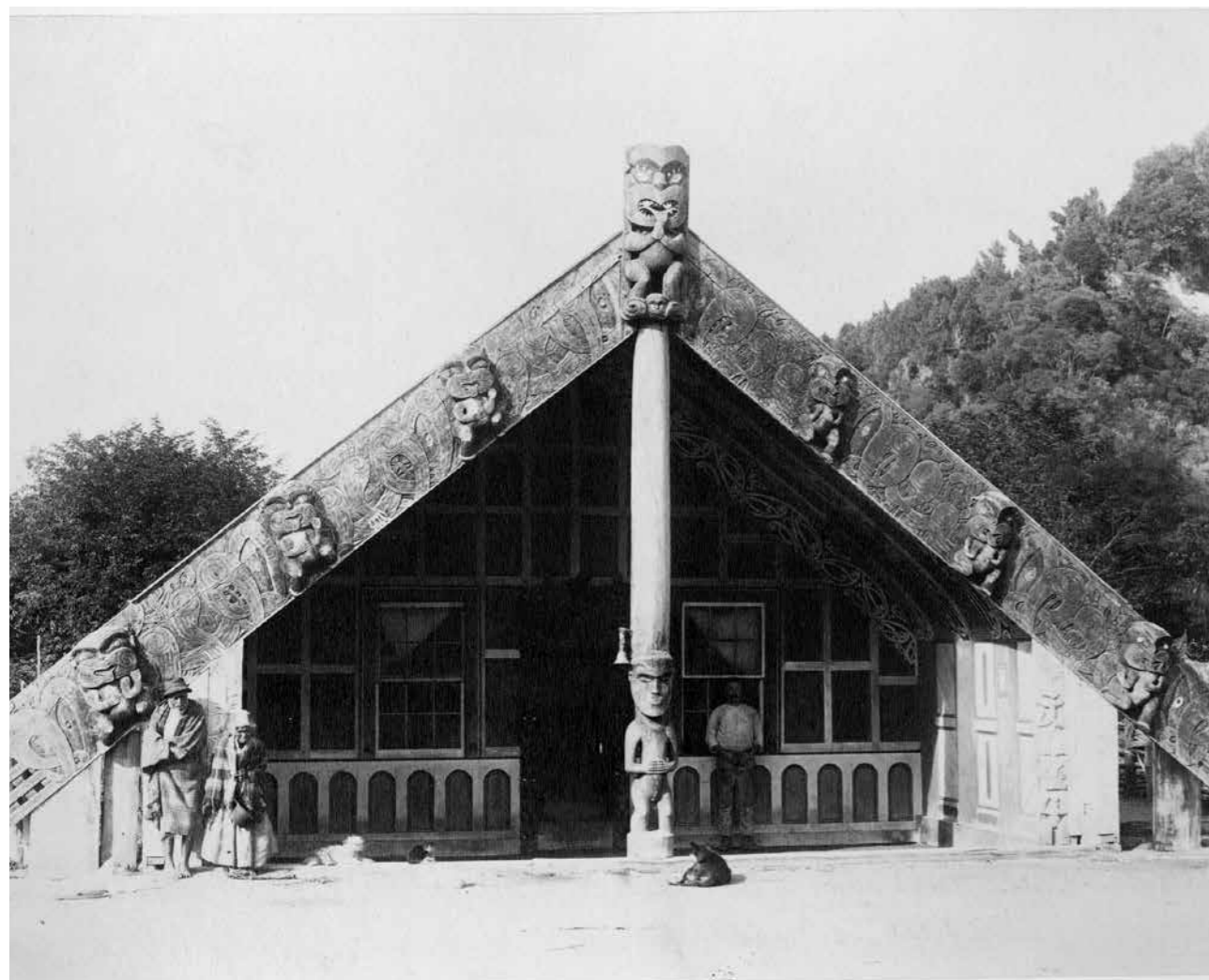
These acrylic carvings and painted rafters complete the roof of this meeting house. They were made by George Nuku, a Māori artist and carver.

Nuku has created these works in dialogue with the wooden carvings here. The dynamic style of the wooden, upright posts (**amo**) have influenced his design of the acrylic house panels. Expert practitioners have always been important in upholding Māori traditions. Exuding power and dynamism, Nuku's work sends a clear message about the state of Māori art today – living, evolving and conversant with modern technology. Nuku is from the Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Tūwharetoa tribes. He is also of Scottish and German descent.



George Nuku and a meeting house he carved from polystyrene at the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 2006.

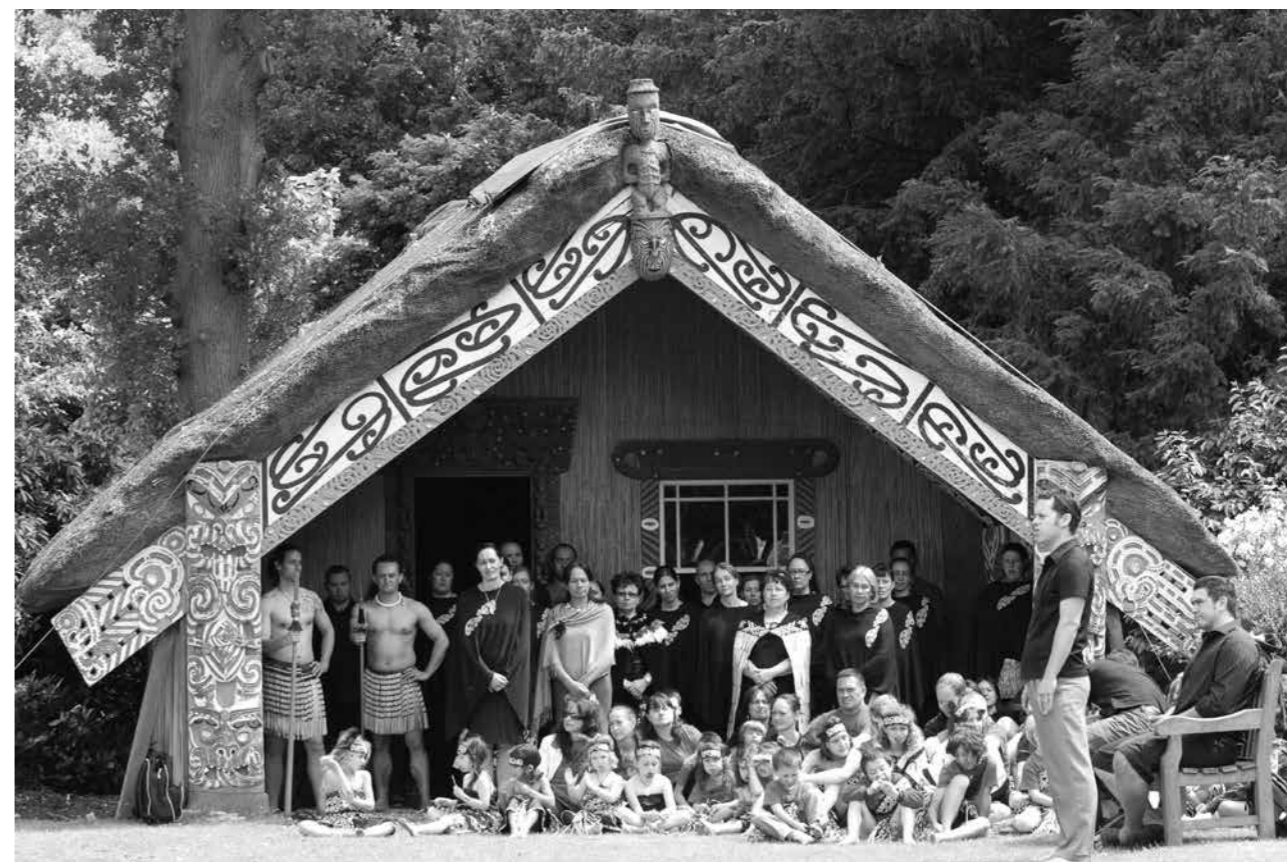
Photo: Kerry Brown



Māori in Britain

Hinemihi o te Ao Tawhito (Hinemihi of the Old World) is the name of the only meeting house in Britain, at Clandon Park in Surrey. The house was built in 1881 in Te Wairoa in New Zealand's North Island. The fourth Earl of Onslow purchased the house and transported it to Surrey in 1892. Today the Ngāti Hinemihi tribe are working with the National Trust to ensure it is correctly preserved.

British Museum AOA Oc,B12.11



There are several thousand Māori living in Britain today. One Māori organisation in London, Ngāti Rānana, has an annual gathering at Hinemihi in Surrey (see photo). Other groups include Te Kōhanga Reo O Rānana, a children's group, and Maramara Tōtara, who practise the art of weaponry. Members of Ngāti Rānana have advised the Museum on this display.

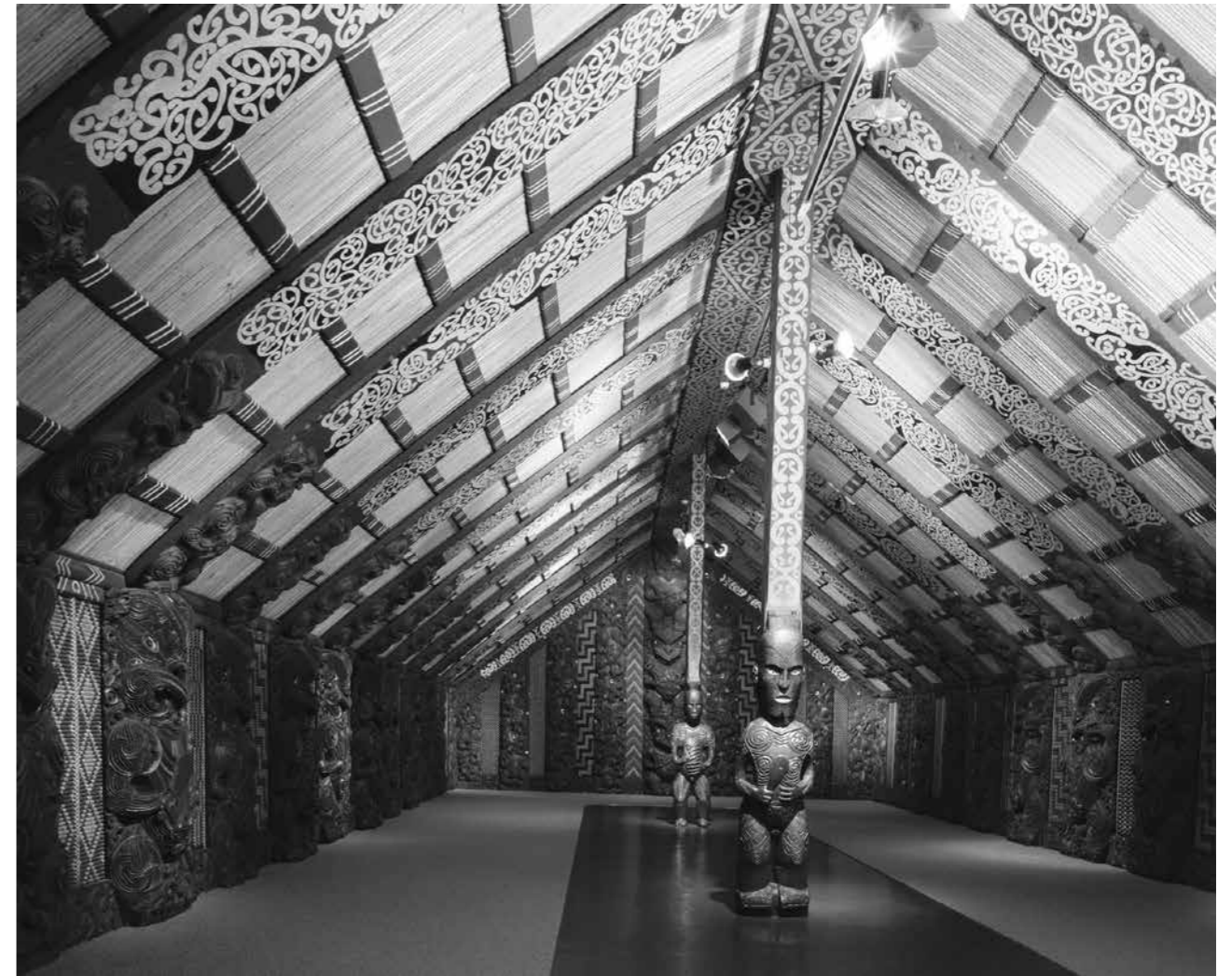
© 2009 Scott Boswell

Objects displayed here

13 *Kōwhaiwhai* rafters, *heke*

The rafters of a meeting house are painted with red, black and white *kōwhaiwhai* patterns. These are made up of curved lines with circular bulbs and double spirals. Each pattern embodies the life essence of an animal, fish or plant. The rafter patterns represent branching family lines, which flourish as plants do when a tribe has power and prestige. The ridgepole is the backbone of the founding ancestor to whom the meeting house is dedicated. The rafters are the ribs.

2009,2008.4, 2009,2008.5, 2009,2008.6,
and 2009,2008.7 rafters, 2009;
2009,2008.8, ridgepole. All made by
George Nuku, 2009.



Interior of house Te Hau-ki-Tūranga of the Rongowhakaata tribe, East Cape. Originally carved by Raharuhi Rukupō, 1840–2.

© Rongowhakaata tribe and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Sustaining each other

Safeguarding knowledge

Māori oral tradition tells of three baskets of knowledge being brought down to humans from the twelfth heaven by the god Tāne.

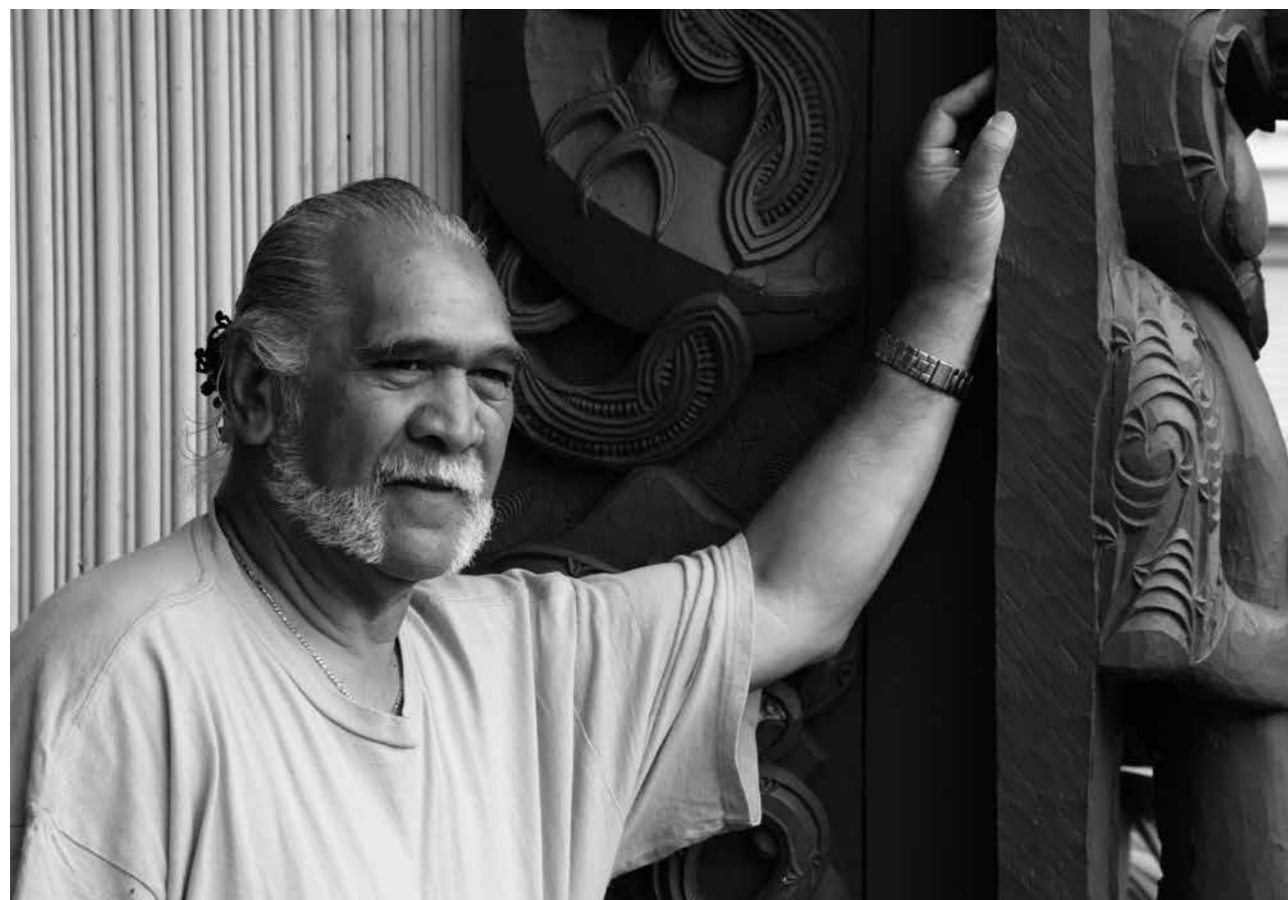
Some knowledge is considered tapu (divine or sacred) so access to it is restricted and it must be handed down in the correct setting. Elders must balance these restrictions to ensure that cultural traditions are preserved for future generations.

Today elders educate younger people in tribal lore on the marae. Certain individuals may be chosen to become specialists in tribal genealogies, traditions and ritual practice. This information is often committed to memory without the aid of writing. In the past specialists were trained in separate schools of learning.



Billy Bird with staff and students of Te Kura Kaupapa Motuhake o Tawhiuau. Painoaiho Marae, Murupara, Bay of Plenty, 2005.

Photo: Poia Rewi



Hone Sadler, academic and elder of the Ngāpuhi tribe, at Waipapa Marae, University of Auckland, 2007.

Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Objects displayed here

14 Woven house panels, *tukutuku*

Colourful, woven panels are placed between the wooden panels along the inside walls of a meeting house. Surrounded by depictions of illustrious ancestors, **tukutuku** and their patterns emphasise human pursuits. The pattern of concentric diamonds is named after the flounder, a delicious, flat fish found near beaches and estuaries.

Oc1994,04.105; Oc1994,04.106 made by Emily Rangitīria Schuster and the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, 1995

15 Kiwi feather cloak, *kahu kiwi*

A cloak like this would have taken over a year to make with each feather individually attached. The flax represent descent lines reaching into the ancestral past. Weaving knowledge passes down these lines to individual weavers, whose work reflects the accumulated prestige of the tribe. Today the native kiwi bird is protected, so cloaks made with large quantities of their feathers are no longer produced.

Oc1982,Q.736 kiwi feathers, including albino kiwi

16 Interior house post, *poupou*

This is an interior wall panel identified by New Zealand scholar Roger Neich as being from a meeting house carved for the chief Karaitiana Takamoana of Pakowhai, Hawke's Bay. Carved figures of tribal ancestors like this link presentday descendants with the past and are vehicles for the re-telling of tribal history and events. They were often made from tall forest trees such as **tōtara**. Tribal chiefs are likened to tōtara: they maintain the strength of the group, just as the posts support the structure of the meeting house. To say 'a tōtara has fallen' describes the death of an important leader.

Oc1922,0512.1 East Coast, Ngāti Porou tribe, 1870s



An early 20th century studio photograph of two women wearing feather cloaks.

British Museum AOA Oc,B4.11

Portraits above (left to right)

Essy Talbot

Elder of the Ngāti Whātua tribe
Reweti Marae, South Kaipapa 2008
Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Portrait of a Māori man

about 1860-1890
British Museum AOA Oc,B1.10
Photo: G.W. Bishop

Richard Niania

of the Ngāti Kahungunu tribe
Te Reinga Falls, near Wairoa 2004
Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

Portrait of a Māori woman

Early 20th century
British Museum Oc,A38.16
Photo: F. J. Denton

Nettie Norman

performing at Auckland Museum 2008
Photo: Krzysztof Pfeiffer

