

Abel Tasman / Discovery Miscellany--April 2020

This miscellany happens to be going out at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting almost every country; a new and different sort of "discovery" for 7+ billion people.

1 Important new research on portraits of Abel Tasman

For the first time Rudiger Mack brings together an important and detailed discussion of three portraits associated with Abel Tasman.

The images are all held in Australia: in the collections of the National Library of Australia (*below left*); the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (*centre*); and the State Library of New South Wales (Dixson Collection, *right*)--not to scale. Even though the two best known of these have often been depicted on stamps, book covers, and websites, questions have been raised previously about the validity and attributions of artist and subject matter.

Rudiger has been able to unearth valuable new documentary evidence and carefully works through that to reach conclusions about each portrait. You'll have to read his fascinating detective work to find out! He is also happy to receive queries about his research; contact him by email at: hoymack@xtra.co.nz

The article appears in *The Great Circle*, a peer-reviewed journal published twice-yearly by the Australian Association for Maritime History. It's in the latest issue (vol 42 no. 2, December 2019), but at present it's not entirely clear (what is?) where copies of the article itself can be obtained from. (Usually from JSTOR: <https://www.jstor.org/>) Copies of the whole issue may be available from AAMH itself; contact info@aamh.asn.au



2 10th anniversary of waka Te Hono ki Aotearoa celebrated

Te Hono ki Aotearoa ("the link to Aotearoa New Zealand") is a 14-metre waka taua (carved ceremonial canoe) specially constructed for and gifted on permanent loan to the Museum Volkenkunde (ethnology museum) in Leiden. A unique symbol of the special relationship between New Zealand and the Netherlands, it is the only waka taua located outside New Zealand, and is based on a special commitment by both peoples.

In February 2020 the Netherlands Embassy marked the 10th anniversary of *Te Hono ki Aotearoa* with community events at Waitangi, Wellington and finally Takaka in Golden Bay/Mohua.



At each occasion a screening of the 82-minute documentary about the creation and handover of the waka was followed by a panel discussion and concluded with refreshments. These warm and well-attended occasions were hosted by Ambassador Mira Woldberg in consultation with manawhenua. Young paddlers from Leiden were also there.

The documentary, which offers a moving insight into te ao Maori (Maori world view) is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emP4gktPFck>

3 Funding for Waka Hourua expert group

In early February New Zealand Prime Minister Ardern announced a \$1.75 million grant to set up a national body of waka hourua (voyaging canoe) experts. They will carry forward the legacy of the late Sir Hekenukumai Busby and Tuia 250 in promoting understanding of the navigational and voyaging prowess of Maori and Pacific voyagers.

4 Blaeu World Map (1648)--a special treasure

The Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin (USA), is home to the "map as big as Texas" (actually approx 3m x 2m). In 2019 embarked on a major fundraising campaign (recently concluded) to preserve and display this spectacular cartographic treasure.

As well as being the earliest map to record New Zealand (*see detail, below*), various blogs have increased awareness of the Blaeu World Map's special significance--most recently for the history of astronomy. Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/uv69c5y>



5 Other information

- *Map Matters* 37 (Winter 2019)--the latest newsletter of the Australia on the Map group (of the Australasian Hydrographic Society)--is available at <https://www.australiaonthemap.org.au/news/>
- *The Russians are coming*: A New Zealand-made 52-minute documentary on the 1820 Russian voyage of discovery led by Bellingshausen can be watched here: <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/the-russians-are-coming-2011>
- *Latitude*: Anton Howes presents short blogs on the Age of Invention in England. On 20 February his blog was "Finding the Latitude", which outlines information English mariners had in 1553 when they set out to find the northeast passage. Find it by subscribing (free) at: antonhowes.substack.com/about
- *Abel Tasman Medal of Honour*. For the record (and as previously mentioned in a special emailout), on Saturday 15 February 2020 Mayor Ard van der Tuuk awarded the very first Abel Tasman Medal of Honour of the municipality of Westerkwartier to Richard Kempthorne, former mayor of Tasman District Council in New Zealand.
YouTube links to coverage are here: <https://youtu.be/Zww25abJDOs> (Mayor van der Tuuk announces the award) and here: <https://youtu.be/DkSGcJAKUfY> (Tim King, current mayor of Tasman District, sends a message to both Richard and Westerkwartier).

6 Last words

- **Tuia 250**: The Ministry of Culture and Heritage website <https://mch.govt.nz/tuia250> is a useful retrospective of the achievements of last year's commemoration, though it's disappointing to see 1769 again being referred to as the year of first encounters ...
- **Street names**: Nelson City already had streets with a Tasman connection for a long time, with Tasman Street and van Diemen Street in the metropolitan area. A few years ago streets Heemskerck and Zeehaen, and a Abel Tasman Walkway were added in the Tasman Heights subdivision on the hills overlooking Tasman Bay.
- And without wanting to diminish the seriousness of COVID-19, the Tasman statue in Nelson was seen wearing a protective mask, which caught the attention of the *Nelson Mail*:

