



## NZ Remembers

The New Zealand Experience, Le Quesnoy

Newsletter of the New Zealand Memorial Museum Trust - Le Quesnoy

AUGUST 2023

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The exciting news this month is that our partners from Wētā Workshop are on site and soon the museum will begin to fill up with their remarkable work.

At this stage, our meetings are full of all the things you never think about when you enter a museum: furniture, finding a gardener, getting the lift signed off with the authorities, organising the eftpos machine for the front desk, and so on. Therefore, on that note I thank all of those who are working so hard to make visiting the museum a great experience.

As always, I extend my thanks to our friends and supporters, and we will continue to keep you updated. We raise awareness of the museum wherever we can, and fundraising continues, with about three million dollars still needed to achieve our goal. So, please spread the word!

I also hope you enjoy the very special feature in our newsletter this month from my old colleague Dr Nick Smith. With many strings to his talented bow he has given us a history of the amazing ramparts that surround Le Quesnoy.



*Sir Don McKinnon - Chair  
New Zealand Memorial Museum Trust - Le Quesnoy*

## WĒTĀ WORKSHOP

This is a big month for the team at Wētā Workshop. The music for the museum was recorded at Stella Maris Chapel in Seatoun. It includes a nine-minute-long piece for the Encounter Room. The work is by New Zealand composer Rhian Sheehan.

For the full story go to:

[nzliberationmuseum.com](https://nzliberationmuseum.com)

The Wētā Workshop manufacture team is now in Le Quesnoy to install the giant soldier, the tukutuku panels and the symbol for the museum - Te Arawhata - The Ladder.

Image courtesy of Wētā Workshop.



## THE HISTORY OF THE LE QUESNOY RAMPARTS

**A special feature on the History of the Le Quesnoy Ramparts by the Rt. Hon. Dr Nick Smith. Nick has a PhD in civil engineering, is a former Government Minister, a Fellow of Engineering New Zealand and currently, the Mayor of Nelson.**



The ramparts at Le Quesnoy are an engineering marvel and a striking feature of the mediaeval French town. Constructed in the 16th Century to defend what was then the Spanish Netherlands, the ramparts were reinforced after the region was captured by France in 1654. King Louis XIV ordered his military engineer, Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, to build forts to protect the new north-east borders.

As a result of this work by Vauban and subsequent reinforcements, Le Quesnoy ended up with a maze of ramparts, high walls, causeways, tunnels and moats. The fortified outer walls stand six and eight metres tall while the innermost wall is a whopping 13 metres high.

While the ramparts at Le Quesnoy were considered old-fashioned by the 19th century, the German forces made good use of their defensive capabilities during their occupation of the town in World War I. That was until, of course, New Zealand soldiers famously used a ladder on 4 November 1918 to scale the walls and liberate the town.

Visitors today can take a popular walk that follows the ramparts around Le Quesnoy for about 4km and marvel at these fortifications. Not only have the ramparts stood the test of time but they are solid reminder of the strong bond that has been forged between France and New Zealand.

These ramparts are also a reminder of the geotechnical engineering excellence of the French that continues to this day with their involvement in major New Zealand infrastructure projects.





## SCHOOL VISITS

### Spreading the Word

Sir Don and Jenni Giblin visited King's School in July to give a presentation about the museum and the story of Le Quesnoy and the New Zealand forces, which is part of the school's history curriculum. Pictured here: Jenni Giblin, Sir Don McKinnon, Thomas O'Brien and his father Chris O'Brien.



## THE WEBSITE

Don't forget to visit the museum website for more information, more news, and some behind-the-scenes stories. Your friends, family, and whānau can sign up to be part of the journey to the opening of the museum on 11 October 2023!

<https://nzliberationmuseum.com>

## TOP STORIES THIS MONTH

We have had some special stories shared with us this year. Two of the most recent stories have garnered huge interest, for their love of history, and determination to maintain the knowledge of those who have gone before us.

The first is from Andy Fox, the grandson of Leslie Averill. In, "Climbing in the footsteps of my Grandfather", Andy has given us a fantastic account of the role his grandfather played in the liberation of Le Quesnoy and the impact it has had on him throughout his life. It is a heartfelt exploration of why it is important to keep our historical links alive.

Along the same lines but a very different perspective, is the third column in our series from 23 year-old Felicity Wilson. This time she explores the keenness of youth to leave NZ and explore the world, and how she and her great-great uncle possessed the same excitement about seeing the world - but how very different the circumstances were.

Both of these stories can be found in the News and Updates section of the museum website at, <https://nzliberationmuseum.com>



Andy Fox at Le Quesnoy



Felicity Wilson

# WE ARE NEARLY THERE BUT NEED YOUR HELP TO GET OVER THE LINE



**Stage one** building refurbishment has been completed on time and on budget.



**Stage two** the visitor experience delivered by Sir Richard Taylor and his award-winning creative team at Wētā Workshop will be completed in September.



*Official opening on 11 October 2023.*

**Total project cost \$15m – we have raised \$12m and have \$3m left.**

All donors who donate over \$5k will have their names recognised in perpetuity in the Museum.

If you would like to make a donation the trust's bank account number is 03-1509-0097188-00. Donations are eligible for a tax rebate until 31 March 2025.

If you would like to meet with Sir Don to discuss the project further or if you know of others who may wish to donate please contact Jenni Giblin on [jenni@giblingroup.co.nz](mailto:jenni@giblingroup.co.nz) or 027 630 4392.

Payment can be made anytime between now and the opening 11 October 2023. Funds can be pledged now and paid later.



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