



## NZ Remembers

The New Zealand Experience, Le Quesnoy

Newsletter of the New Zealand Memorial Museum Trust - Le Quesnoy

SEPT 2023

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are one month away from the official opening. Formal planning for the project began twelve years ago and now the NZ Liberation Museum - Te Arawhata is nearly ready to open its doors. There are countless people to thank; people who have been on this journey from the beginning and people who have joined along the way. So many of you have given your time and expertise, and the NZMMT-LQ Board Trustees and I are extremely grateful to you and proud of what we all have achieved.

This month's newsletter has some special inclusions. We have some images from the installation of exhibition by the Wētā Workshop team - a sneak peek! And, on a completely different note, a story from a New Zealander who recently visited Le Quesnoy, and the reception she received. If anyone was in any doubt about the special connection we have with this village, please read Gloria Thompson's account.

We also have a message of support from Willie Apiata VC.

As always, I extend my thanks to all our friends and supporters, and we will continue to keep you updated. We raise awareness of the museum wherever we can and fundraising continues.



Freedom, Friendship, Future

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

## THE OPENING

It is fair to say every person involved with the museum is running right now.

Many people are travelling to be with us at this truly special time. If you are not able to be there - don't worry! We will report back on the opening with video and images and stories from the official events.

Don't forget to visit the museum website for more information, more news, and some behind-the-scenes stories. You can sign up to be part of the journey with us.

<https://nzliberationmuseum.com>

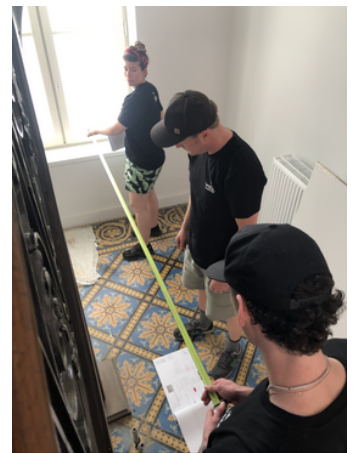
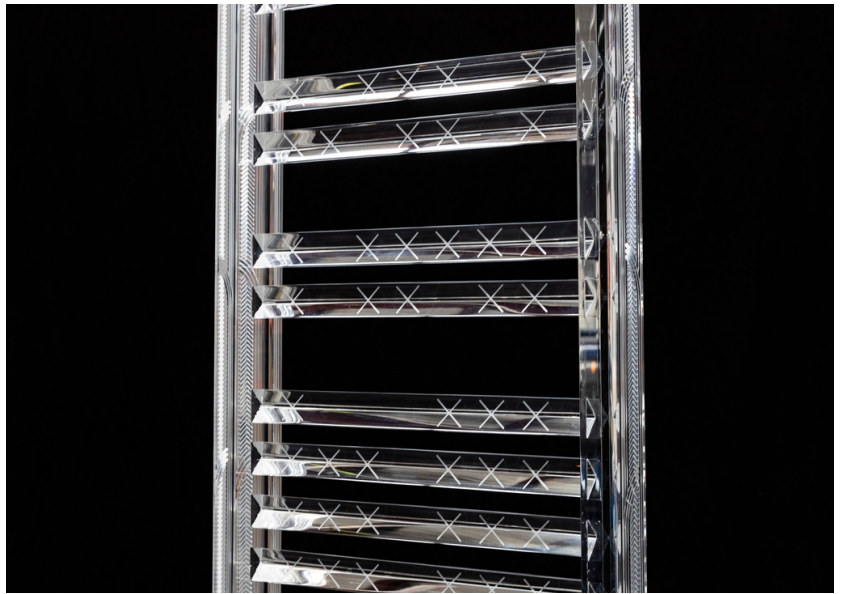


## WĒTĀ WORKSHOP - A SNEAK PEEK

Thanks to our friends at Wētā Workshop we can show you some images from Le Quesnoy.

The design for Te Arawhata - the ladder (right) - has played such an important part in the story of the Liberation of Le Quesnoy, it is no wonder it has inspired the creative realisation of Wētā Workshop's visitor experience.

The stepped poutama pattern on the tukutuku inspired walls is often used in wharehau (Māori meeting houses). In Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) this pattern relates to striving ever upwards for betterment - a symbolic interpretation that is also considered a stairway.



From concept to reality.

The ladder has been delivered to LQ and is ready to be unwrapped. The finishing touches are being put on the giant soldier - see the hand and imagine the scale. Then, to the work of installation and measuring, so much measuring.

The same precision applies to Mainfreight who delivered everything to Le Quesnoy. For a great story about the process of packing the exhibition, see the interview with Wētā Workshop's Manufacture Technical Director, Blair Ryan, on the museum website.

<https://nzliberationmuseum.com/handle-with-care/>





## A VISIT TO LE QUESNOY - WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE LOCALS!

Christine Barbour, our long time supporter and contributor to our Le Quesnoy research, sent through this story from Gloria Thompson. It is an account of Gloria's recent visit to Le Quesnoy with her husband Adrian.

### From Te Awamutu to Le Quesnoy

We boarded the Eurostar at St Pancras, London 27 July, 2023. Thanks to Christine Barbour, we knew to disembark at Lille and catch the next train to Le Quesnoy. Adrian's grandfather, John T. Thompson #13484, had written a diary during 1918 and on several pages is the account of his involvement at Le Quesnoy. We were eager to visit this place and soak up the atmosphere. We got off the train at Le Quesnoy at 2pm, it was drizzling and we had no idea where to start. We approached 3 council gardeners and asked, "Do you speak English?"

"No English" was the reply. Next question, "Taxi?". "No taxi" was the reply.

We walked across the road to a restaurant that had a canopy to shelter under. Proceeding to ask Google what to do next, we noticed one of the gardeners running across the road toward us with his phone held out. He gave us his phone to talk on. It was a taxi company who spoke English. We had a conversation about walking around Le Quesnoy and about how we would get a taxi to Cambrai (30 kms away and our next accommodation).

Handing the phone back to the gardener, he talked to the taxi company then hung up. Next thing, he beckoned us to go with him. He quickly told the other two gardeners to get in the back seat of his truck and pointed for us to get in. He had a big grin on his face as he began giving us a tour of NZ sites around his town, including the NZ Liberation Museum - Te Arawhata. Eventually we ended up at the tunnel that leads to the NZ Memorial. We jumped out and followed the gardener who seemed so excited to show and tell, but unfortunately, we couldn't understand. It's amazing how communication is still possible. .

Pointing at the wet bridge, we knew he was telling us to be careful not to slip on the wet boards. Then he was pointing to the Memorial he knew we had come to see.

Next, out of nowhere a lady and her two sons turned up where we were. She asked, "Could you do with an interpreter?" Oh man, the answer was a big "YES!" She joined our little tour and translated with the gardener for us. Once we arrived at the NZ garden, he told her all about it in French, then said a quick good-bye and he was gone. The next amazing thing that happened was the lady who is a French woman living in Auckland, said the gardener had told her we wanted to get to Cambrai by taxi. She said, "we are driving that way, we can take you".

If we could ever thank that gardener from Le Quesnoy we would, but we didn't get his name. He made our visit to Le Quesnoy the BEST experience.



Gloria and  
Adrian  
Thompson at  
Le Quesnoy



The kind,  
mysterious,  
gardener.

## A MESSAGE FROM WILLIE APIATA VC

Thank you to all those who have served and are serving.

As a person who has served and experienced conflict, I have seen first-hand the tragedies of war. I have also seen how the indigenous people of the countries involved in conflict have been affected. It is important to capture the history and share the reflections of those stories. The heroic actions and courage of our New Zealanders who liberated the township of Le Quesnoy, with the intention that there were to be no civilian casualties, is an important story in our history and one that needs to be remembered and celebrated.

For the whanau of those who served in France it is vitally important that their stories are told. The history of what happened is important to all New Zealanders and the people of Le Quesnoy who remember those who gave their lives.

The New Zealand Liberation Museum - Te Arawhata motto stands for Freedom, Future and Friendship. This is a place where the historic stories of our brave New Zealanders will be told, revisited and remembered as we build a united peaceful future together.

We will always remember those who gave their today for our tomorrow.

Leave no one behind

Willie Apiata VC



# 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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