

# The Marsden exhibition travels to Auckland

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Otago alumni in the Auckland area attended the travelling version of the Hocken Library's exhibition *Whakapono: Faith and Foundations* in December 2015.

The event was supported by Foundation North (formerly the ASB Community Trust), which sponsored the travelling exhibition at several venues in Northland in the past year.

Anna Blackman, Hocken Library Curator of Archives and Manuscripts, says the exhibition was designed "almost exclusively around the words [early Christian missionary Samuel] Marsden and others used to describe their experiences in New Zealand and with the Māori that they encountered."

It featured panels highlighting the texts, images of the main characters, and archaeological objects excavated from the site at Rangihoua in a University of Otago research dig.

The original exhibition was one of three projects marking the 200th anniversary of Reverend Marsden's establishment of Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands, which was the first organised European settlement in New Zealand. Marsden is also remembered for delivering the first Christian sermon on New Zealand soil, on Christmas Day, 1814.

The other two projects were a seminar at the Hocken Collections and the [Marsden Online website](#), Blackman says.

Much of the exhibition content was too fragile to transport, so the travelling version used pop-up panels to display images of objects from the collection.

At the event, Professor Tony Ballantyne spoke about the critical importance of archives as primary sources for historical analysis. The letters, diaries and written remnants of the early missionaries held in the University's Hocken Collection provide vital insights for researchers, he says.

Professor Ballantyne recalled how he felt when, immersing himself in the Alexander Turnbull Library, he came across an early archival source, a diary of missionary William Hall, detailing an account of a violent altercation between the diary writer and founding missionary leader Thomas Kendall.

"Reading these accounts of open violence was electrifying, and armed with new enthusiasm, I had a new set of starting points for thinking about the early part of the mission's history."

The event's success could provide a blueprint for further Hocken exhibitions and lectures in Auckland and other Northland centres, Hocken staff say.

Our sincere thanks go to the Trustees and staff from Foundation North for supporting this historically significant exhibition.