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# News from Okains Bay Māori & Colonial Museum



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**Come and view the many, many changes to the look of our museum**



Working on museum displays often throws up surprises that pose more questions than the answers provided. When cleaning items in the Whare Taonga recently, we found this freestanding figure wearing a woven kilt. The figure was fully carved and had been labelled as a 'Tiki Kumara'. However; in Maori art a freestanding is known as a 'tekoteko'; and if the figure was intended to be used among the kumara crops it would depict Rongo, the god of gardens.



- :Changes:**
- The museum frontage
  - Whare taonga display restoration
  - The Colonial Hall – 6 new displays
  - Harpoon gun canon gifted by Port Chalmers museum
  - Whaling display

Clearly the label was incorrect. Moreover, the carving on the figure is incongruous with that expected from a Maori artist. The figure probably dates from the early 1900s, a time when middle-class New Zealand was exploring Maori art. The kilt, however, is very old and very finely woven. The question is: was the kilt made for the figure? If not, how did they come to be together?



*Judy Woodward and Judy Thacker at Port Chalmers with the harpoon gun canon*



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