would hope, Easter Island). Until then, we’ll keep going back, of course and maybe one day we’ll be able to say we’ve seen it all.

Much more satisfying is the newly opened “Enlightenment” gallery in the former British Museum library, just off the Great Court. Sub-titled “Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century”, the gallery houses parts of the collection of physician Hans Sloane, who founded the British Museum in 1753. And it really feels as if you are seeing the first vestiges of museum as you walk among the seven display sections, whose contents represent “Arts and Civilization”, “The Birth of Archaeology”, and “The Natural World”, among others.

One of the sections, which caught my attention immediately, is entitled “Trade and Discovery: The Pacific” and it is here that these venerated Easter Island artifacts are displayed: two wood moai kava kava; both about 18 inches [46 cm] tall, and both have Makemake carvings on top of the head; a moai pa’a pa’a (also about 18 inches [46 cm] tall); a badly-worn tangata manu (probably no more than a foot [30 cm] long); a rapa (with simple line carvings and no eyes; it’s about 3 feet [1 m] long; two rei miro carvings (with bearded heads; one is about 18 inches [46 cm] wide, the other is 2 feet [61 cm] wide; and that famous carved hand taken by Cook in 1774.

Needless to say, it was a real treat to see these original artefacts — and they are another in a long series of reasons to visit the British Museum!

Shawn McLaughlin

WHAT’S NEW IN THE PACIFIC

NEW ZEALAND

ABOUT 10,000 MAORI protested in Wellington, marching against government plans to nationalize the seabed offshore. Many Maori believe they have special rights over such areas. The bill, which would place the coastal areas into state ownership, is under debate.

Pacific New Bulletin 19: 5-6, 2004

HAWAI‘I

HAWAI‘ILOA IS IN DRY-DOCK at the Marine Education Training Center to repair some cracks in her hulls; repairs are expected to take a year. The original sailing canoe, Hōkūle‘a, sailed 5500 miles within the Hawaiian islands in 2004 while training new captains to meet the growing demand for voyaging education programs in the schools. The Hōkūalaka‘i sailed with the Hōkūle‘a on sea trials. A special trip was made to the island of Kaho‘olawe for a reunion and dedication of the star platform at Kealaikahiki, which may be the most important traditional astronomical site in the Hawaiian Islands. Master navigator, Mau Piailug, participated in the ceremony.

Polynesian Voyaging Society, December 2004

PACIFIC

TUNA ARE A CRITICAL RESOURCE for many Pacific Island countries, but the widespread collapse of fisheries is feared unless urgent action is taken. Unregulated fishing undermines the attempts to determine sustainable levels of catches. Tough rules are needed, according to studies conducted by Greenpeace.


TUVALU

ON FEBRUARY 16th, A LANDMARK U.N. pact to curb global warming came into force. Under the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries are supposed to cut emissions of carbon dioxide, largely from burning fossil fuels such as coal and oil in power plants, factories and cars, by an average 5.2 percent below 1990 levels during 2008-12. But the world's biggest greenhouse polluter, the United States, has refused to join Kyoto, and some Kyoto signatories, such as Spain and Portugal, have increased greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent over 1990 levels. Earlier in that same week, Tuvaluans in the capital Funafuti watched extreme high tides and strong winds send waves crashing across the island's main road, littering it with rocks and debris. The seawalls that were constructed to provide barriers from the waves stood no chance; today they are only tatters of wire amongst other debris along the shores. People watched helplessly as their homes were flooded.

Michael Perry, Reuters, 12 February

WHAT’S NEW IN HANGA RoA

ELECTIONS TOOK PLACE on Rapa Nui on October 31. The position of mayor was hotly contested, as well as those for city council. The results: for mayor, Pedro Edmunds: 58.57%, Julio Araki: 41.42%. The councilors who won include: Alberto Hotus, 13.7%, Eliana Oivares, 12.9%, Marcelo Pont, 9.2%, Marcelo Icka, 9.1%, Hipolito Juan Icka, 7.0% and Nicolas Haoa Cardinalli, 6.6%. Eleven other contenders for city council lost.

Rapa Nui Journal 69 Vol. 19 (1) May 2005
The new firehouse (above), built next door to Hanga Roa’s post office on Te Pito te Henua street, is sporting a non-traditional modern statue (right), carved from red scoria, the statue seems to be a look-alike of Michelangelo’s “Dying Slave” combined with a disgruntled troll.

The island’s new high school, still under construction. It is located north of the village where the old leper station used to be located. The design is very modern and upscale.

A new clock “tower” stands at the entry to Aeropuerto Mataveri. The clocks give the time for various locations around the world.

The new entry porch at the ‘Otai Hotel, on Te Pito te Henua street. Renovations at the ‘Otai range from paint jobs to truly elegant features, making it the primo place to stay on the island.

A building boom is going on in the village and many islanders have discovered two-story buildings. Unfortunately, they seem not to have the right concept for such structures, as can be seen in this aberration being built on Te Pito te Henua street. One can only hope for a huge windstorm to carry it away.
Anakena is being buried in wind-blown sand. Sand now comes up to the back sea wall of Ahu Nau Nau, has totally covered over the many paenga with petroglyphs, and is encroaching on the grass and trees.

One of the many new restaurants in Hangaroa, Te Moana is one of the best, and has an upscale wine cellar. The restaurant, on Atamu Tekena, is managed by Carolina Edwards Rapu.

Another aberration to appear recently in the village is the new office of tourism, located across the road from Playa Pea and next to the soccer field. Plans were drawn by someone on the continent who clearly had never been to the island. The building faces the afternoon sun, with no overhang for shade. It stands out like an ugly sore thumb. Government buildings are all planned on the mainland without local input, so islanders have no say about what is built.

A former gift shop on Atamu Tekena has been converted into another two story building, this one a restaurant called Tupuna.

The Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert de Isla de Pascua celebrated its 31st anniversary with a special event held at the museum on October 5th, 2004. The museum has a very well-appointed gift shop with many things for sale, including books. They also sell silver jewelry that is designed around Rapanui motifs. The main display item at the museum is the famous eye found at Anakena, beautifully exhibited. Congratulations to the Museum on its anniversary!

A newly discovered petroglyph was shown to us by Edmund Edwards. This small (13 x 19.5 cm) incised motif depicts a crab-claw sail atop a boat-shaped hull. This is the first crab claw sail to be found in the petrographic art of the island. The site is on the edge of Hanga Roa in a boulder cluster that overlooks the southern end of the village. The petroglyph is tucked back into a dark corner of a boulder cluster and is associated with an “early” birdman design (see G. Lee; The Rock Art of Easter Island, 1992:3.7, no. 1-2). The incising shows no evidence of any recent activity and we are convinced of its antiquity. We lacked the normal documentation equipment for doing a scientific recording, but we did get photos, measurements and a sketch. Our thanks to Edwards for leading us to this most interesting discovery.

In an effort to stop erosion at the entrance to Ovahe’s beach, CONAF has placed a series of wood barriers to catch soil run-off. Palm trees originally were planted to help stabilize the soil but, shortly after being planted, they were appropriated by islanders for their gardens. CONAF will try again, this time with a more mundane type of tree, probably acacia.

A new “ecological” hotel will be built at Vaihu, on the south coast. It will be a luxury “Explora” hotel, similar to those at Torres del Paine and San Pedro de Atacama on the Chilean mainland. Rooms will be limited (around 20), exclusive, and very expensive, around US$600 per night. It will be called Posada Mike Rapu (after the property owner). Cost is estimated at US$7 million. The hotel will be administered by Explora; after fifteen years, the establishment will revert to Rapu. Some see this as the “camel’s nose under the tent”—that is, once tourist hotels start moving out of the village, more are apt to follow. Easter Island was carefully chosen for this grand resort, said Felipe Cruz, the general manager of the hotel chain. “It was an option we were considering for at least two years.” The hotel will be built on 5.2 hectares of land, located 8 km from the town of Hanga Roa. “The hotel will belong to Rapu. We’re going to give him a loan, so that we’ll build the hotel and we’ll pay him rent to operate it,” Cruz said. Construction will begin in the second quarter of this year, and the inn is expected to open by 2006. The structure will be built of stone and wood, typical elements of the island. “Without a doubt we’re targeting an educated segment,
such as tourists who have traveled a lot and who appreciate interactions with other cultures," Cruz said. The company has budgeted USS2 million for marketing over the next five years. It will focus on tourists from the United States and Europe.

Marcelo Cid, El Mercurio, 21 January 2005

THE DEATH OF A CHILEAN MARINE, stationed on Rapa Nui, was being investigated by island authorities. Apparently, First Corporal Harry Yuri Mautz Llanos and a friend went to the Tokoko disco in Hangaroa where he picked up a local girl. Later they went to the house where she lived with her girlfriend. When he tried to sexually abuse the girl [which one, or both, it doesn’t say nor does it say anything about what kind of abuse], she said that she was going to report him to the authorities. The next day he showed up at work, grabbed a pistol from another marine and shot himself.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 14 December 2004

A new and very startling sight has appeared on the east side of Orito, on private property. The owner is erecting his own memorial: a large ahu with four statues (with pukao). This apparition is clearly visible from the road as one heads out of the village, just before the turn-off to the south coast road. Is this to be an Easter Island Disneyland? Why replica moai when there are 1000 real ones? Another mystery of Easter Island.

FIELD REPORT FROM RAPA NUI
BY CHRISTOPHER M. STEVENSON

THE 2004 EASTER ISLAND EARTHWATCH SITE SURVEY project was a great success. We accomplished all that we had hoped for, despite some nasty weather that made us pretty miserable during the final weeks of the project. The project area is near Vaitea, in the center of the island, near Maunga Pui. To recap some of our accomplishments, Team I began the survey and this was the main focus for the first two-week period. To have a nice representative section, we needed to finish off a rectangular area that had several hundred sites to be relocated and described.

Thegn Ladefoged joined us briefly while conducting a soil survey project to examine soil fertility as a function of lava flow age and rainfall leaching and collected about 15 samples. And a valuable lesson was learned: never carry a box of soil onto an airplane. I was searched three times and the soil was inspected (and suspected) at every stop. Getting it through customs was easy in comparison to all the other hassles. Despite all this, the samples now are at the lab in Santa Barbara undergoing chemical analysis.

The HOBO temperature/moisture sensors were buried in a lithic mulch garden during Team I. One set of sensors was set under the lithic mulch and the other placed outside the garden. Just before leaving, we downloaded the daily data from the six weeks we were on the island, with very interesting results. The graphs show that the temperature under the lithic mulch is always cooler than at the same 20 cm depth beneath open ground. That was a surprise. The temperature in the open area was not only higher, but the amplitude of the temperature range was also greater. Some hypothesized that the soil under the lithic mulch would be warmer because the stones would trap the heat, but not so! We won’t know the final picture for another ten months but we intend to pursue this topic along with Thegn’s soil fertility hypothesis.

With Team II we continued the survey and toward the end of the two weeks, we began the excavation of a small circular house (18-473G). It was a well-preserved structure that proved to be rich in artifacts and earthen features. A large trash pit was found directly in front of the house; it was not deep but it was full of obsidian flakes and tools. About four hundred pieces of obsidian were found in all. At this point Team II departed and Team III took over the discovery process.

A bit removed from the house entrance we located a hearth and beyond that we encroached on the edge of a garden with numerous planting pit features. To the rear of the house was a dense layer of lithic mulch. It was so thick that at first I thought it was a pavement. While incredibly difficult to dig through, after much effort we discovered that it capped a very deep planting pit, about 70 cm in depth. It likely held a very large taro or yam plant.

About four days into work with Team III, the rains came and they did not leave for about 5-6 days. This effectively put an end to the excavation so we concentrated on surveying as best we could. The clouds rolled in over Terevaka and it was as thick as pea soup. At times we could not see more than 30 meters. Towards the end, the rain finally left and we had three days to clean up all the loose ends. With a big push the survey was completed and the last little bit of excavation was cleaned up.

Since returning home it took several weeks to put things back in order. I pulled out several carbon samples for radiocarbon dating, which have been made possible by generous donations from some of my participants. Three samples were sent off to the lab and the results arrived just a few days ago. The date from the shallow pit full of obsidian and in front of the house was around AD 1630. Further away from the entrance, carbon from a basin-shaped hearth with red soil dated to approximately AD 1410. The third date was from a sample beneath the house in an old planting pit that was created long before the house was used. This feature dated to AD 970, a real surprise. The first two dates fell within our expectations but the AD 970 age is very early and is equivalent to some of the earliest dates for Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena. Were people really using the inland part of the island at this time? If the obsidian dates also date to this early period it would support the presence of activity in this area. If not, the early date may be the result of dating a piece of old wood (the inner part of a palm tree).

In addition, other dating results are in from the large garden soil profile next to the airport runway at the base of Orito (obsidian quarry). Two samples were removed from a buried garden that did not have lithic mulch or any form of stone on the surface. Both radiocarbon dates fell within the mid-15th
century.

Thus, for the first time, we have a pre-lithic mulch garden. The implications of this are significant, suggesting that the rock garden innovation occurred after AD 1450 and therefore is a late development. All those rocks that were relocated were moved in less than 250 years. This was quite an accomplishment by the prehistoric Rapanui.

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PUBLICATIONS


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Orliac, C. and V. Willemnin. 2005. The Little Tree of Rapa Nui. Te tumo o Rapa Nui. El arbolito de Rapa Nui. Easter Island Foundation. ISBN 1-880636-02-6. Text by C. Orliac and photographs by V. Willemnin. This is a children’s book in four languages; it tells the story of two little Rapanui girls who go in search of a toromiro tree on their island. Along with the two girls we see also Don Enrique Pakarati, the governor, Viki Haoa, and others. Thanks to a grant from the Louise Leiris Gallery in Paris, copies of this book will be provided free of charge to Rapanui schoolchildren. For further information, contact rapanuibooks@att.net


