

“end of the Earth”, most Islanders think still that it is a pretty special *henua*, as Olaug Andreassen showed so well in her very publishable thesis about Rapanui youth. It is also true that many if not most Rapanui see that their island has quite enough people and that they don’t want any more incomers, especially from Chile.

Land and population, who owns it and who determines it, has remained at the core of Rapanui concerns for a very long time and are the sources of discontent with how successive Chilean governments have dealt with these issues, especially with the enticing prospect of autonomy looming in law in the Chilean Senate at the moment (*El Mercurio de Valparaíso* 6 September 2010).

A conspiracy theorist – certainly the authors of *Les Luttes*, would say that the Chilean and international press is being stifled, even censored so that news of the current revolt does not reach outside. Maybe so, but the big news from Chile in the world’s press is about miners trapped for weeks, possibly months, in Copiapó. At the same time, in the south of the country, the indigenous Mapuche are protesting their rights with a hunger strike (*El Mercurio de Valparaíso* 6 September 2010, p. 13).

And all this within a fortnight of the Bicentenary (18 September 2010) of Chilean independence.

Along with all the public monuments planned for Chile, will justice for Rapanui be the Chilean Government’s gift to the Rapanui?

## WHAT’S NEW ELSEWHERE

**SHANKLIN, ISLE OF WIGHT.** A 100-year-old Easter Island *rapa* was sold at auction for a record £220,000 (US\$336,322.00). Bidding began at only £3,000 but buyers in London and Brussels sent its value past £200,000. The *rapa* was a family heirloom and was acquired in Polynesia in the 1920s by a relative who worked onboard a P&O cruise liner. The owners, based on the Isle of Wight, were unaware of the potential value and thought it might fetch about £10,000.

*The Times, 17 April 2010*

**NEW YORK:** In May, Sotheby’s New York sold some rare Pacific items: one was a bone necklace from the Austral Islands which brought \$302,000. Although some twenty necklaces like this are known, this example is unique for its rich whale ivory and bird elements. A club from the Cook Islands brought \$326,000 and an ancestor figure from Papua New-Guinea sold for \$2,000,000. This last item had been displayed at the de Young Museum in San Francisco from October 2005 to February 2010.

*Tahiti-Pacifique June 2010:41*

**SOTHEBY’S IN PARIS** auctioned other Polynesian items from the Collection Rosenthal, *Art d’Océanie*, in March of this year. Included were an important Maori nephrite pendant, from New Zealand; 7 by 4 1/3 inches; it was expected to sell

for 142,000- to 213,000 Euros. It actually sold for 372,750 Euros (US\$502,501.09), a record for a *hei tiki*. Also sold was a fine *moai kavakava* figure from Rapa Nui, 15 3/4” high. It was expected to sell for \$170,000 to \$255,000 USD but sold for 372,750 Euros (US\$502,501.09). And a fine *moai pa’apa’a* figure, also from Rapa Nui, 16 1/8” high, was expected to bring from 100,000 to 150,000 Euros; it sold for 144,750 Euros (US\$195,134.72).

**LONDON: BRITISH MUSEUM.** On 14 July, three activists from the group Culture Beyond Oil protested against British Petroleum and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico by pouring a black substance that resembled oil on the plinth upon which stands famed Easter Island statue, Hoa Hakananai’a. The three young women, dressed all in black masks, walked trance-like to the statue and poured the thick black substance out of egg-shaped bowls decorated with the BP logo. They then placed the bowls on the plinth in front of the statue and slipped away. The news item (from [www.culture24.org.uk](http://www.culture24.org.uk)) added: “Surprised visitors to the Museum took photos of the unexpected addition to Captain Cook’s 2,000-year-old relic, taken from his 18th century travels around South America and the seas now known as the Gulf of Mexico, where the much-publicized Deepwater Horizon oil spill has had a devastating effect since being triggered by a rig explosion in April. They chose the sculpture because of its fabled links with the sudden demise of reputedly strong civilizations.”

We are not sure whether this stupid act by a clearly uneducated group or the so-called “news item” is the more shocking. The statue, of course, has no relation to Captain Cook (it was taken from Easter Island in 1868 on the HMS *Topaze* some 89 years after the death of the famed explorer). Nor did Cook tootle around South America and the Gulf of Mexico; his extraordinary voyages took him to the far reaches of the Pacific Ocean.

And while protesting BP may seem like a good idea to many – given the incredible mess in the Gulf of Mexico, protests should never happen inside a museum. Should museums provide free access? And one might ask where were the museum guards? Vandalism such as this, no matter what the reason behind it, is dangerous to the collections, and museums are not set up to deal with this type of threat. The protesting group should have done their “act” outside the museum’s front doors; their stunt was totally irresponsible. We have not yet been able to determine if anyone was prosecuted for this act of desecration.

A note from *British Archaeology* for Sept/Oct 2010 (*Spoilheap*, p.4) is of interest: “The British Museum protest defiled a room illustrating complex social issues of danger, illness and spirituality, and was infantile and callous.”

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART** has two beautiful carved wooden objects from Easter Island in their Art of the Pacific Gallery; a *rapa*, circa 1800, and a *moai kavakava*, circa 1830. These items can be viewed online at: [collectionsonline.lacma.org](http://collectionsonline.lacma.org)

#### ADVENTURERS RETRACE BLIGH'S EPIC VOYAGE

THE *TALISKER BOUNTY*, a 25ft long and 7ft wide open wooden boat, set sail from Nuku'alofa, Tonga, on 19 April with four adventurers whose purpose was to recreate the epic voyage of Captain William Bligh who was cast adrift from the HMS *Bounty* following a mutiny in Tongan waters in 1789. Captain Bligh, with 18 members of his crew, travelled some 4,000 miles from Tonga to Timor in a 25 foot boat. They made it in 48 days, living off birds and fishes.

The replica trip, "Mutiny on the Bounty Expedition," took seven weeks with a four-member crew led by Australian adventurer Don McIntyre. Crew members were David Bryce, an experienced sailor from Australia; David Wilkinson, a businessman from Hong Kong, and 18-year-old Christopher Wilde of the UK, who had no sailing experience.

The *Talisker Bounty* first sailed toward Vanuatu, a string of more than eighty islands (formerly, New Hebrides). Bligh and his crew did not stop here for fear of attack, even though suffering from thirst and hunger. True to the voyage of Bligh, the *Talisker Bounty* sailed around the top end of the islands before heading towards Australia and the Great Barrier Reef. But conditions on the *Talisker Bounty* became difficult; the leaky boat needed pumping out every hour, and the crew was desperate for rain (there had been none since the expedition began), and fresh water supplies were low. On 27 May, the *Talisker Bounty* was 900 km from the Australian coast; by May 31<sup>st</sup> they were heading toward Restoration Island on the Cape York Peninsula. The complaints of the crew ranged from ship duties to hygiene, from dreadful food to worries about algae in the water supply, from mysterious rashes to the cramped conditions ... plus one of the crew was suffering from kidney stones. Diarrhea became a regular topic of conversation.

The crew had a two-day rest on Restoration Island, and were interviewed by reporters. Still following Bligh's voyage, the crew spent two days on the island. (Bligh had aptly named the island 'Restoration', partly due to the plentiful native fruits and oysters found there and which aided his crew's recuperation). It was reported that the crew of the *Talisker Bounty* ate two chickens, three cabbages, peas, and eight potatoes. They left Restoration Island at dawn on 3 June, and continued on toward Kupang in Timor, minus one crewmember who jumped ship at Restoration Island, having "had enough."

From Restoration Island they sailed north, inside the Great Barrier Reef, and then through the Torres Strait to West Timor. One crewmember lost 40 pounds but he doesn't recommend this kind of trip as a weight-loss plan. Happy to reach their destination, they hit the karaoke bars in West Timor, apparently thinking that they hadn't yet suffered enough. Although they simulated Bligh's voyage, they were unable to match his sailing time, arriving to West Timor three days behind Bligh's time. (*Matangi Tonga*, 2010)

THE FONCK MUSEUM IN VIÑA DEL MAR was damaged by the great February earthquake in Chile. Although some parts

of the building were severely impacted, it recently reopened (the first floor only), and the Biblioteca Rapanui now is also open for visitors, the first time in just under six months. A "re-inauguration" is scheduled for October 1st. While the artifacts and books were safe, the building and some display cases required repairs. Readers who wish to help with this, or the library on the Juan Fernández Islands, can send donations for these projects to the Easter Island Foundation.

**LONDON CONFERENCE: Easter Island: Cultural and Historical Perspectives.** 19 November 2010, Embassy of Chile, 37-41 Old Queen Street, Whitehall, London. Papers will include: Hermann Mueckler "The Forgotten Scientist: Walter Knoche"; Grant McCall "Woollett Makes a Sale: Rapa Nui as a Site of Regret"; Phil Philo, "Those Gigantic Statues": Captain Cook's Visit to Easter Island and the Marton Moai; Paul Horley, "Palaeographic Analysis of Rongorongo Script"; Rafal Wieczorek, "Tablet Keiti: Does it Contain Astronomical Instructions?"; Martyn Harris "Analysis of Literary Genre in the Rongorongo Inscriptions"; Easter Island in Popular Culture: Ian Conrich; "Moai, Myths, and Western Popular Culture"; Roy Smith, "They Came From Outer Space: Science-Fiction and the Creation Myth of the Moai" ; Maxi Haase, "Imagination Creates the Situation: Popular Perceptions and Local Negotiations of Easter Island Culture"; Sue Hamilton, "Rapa Nui's Landscapes of Construction"; Colin Richards, "On the Road to Rano Raraku"; and Ruth Whitehouse, "Caves and the Underworld of Rapa Nui". An exhibit entitled "Popular Culture and the Representation of Easter Island" will take place from 9 November to 26 November 2010 (Advance exhibition at Canning House, London). From 5 March to 4 September 2011; there will be a full exhibition at the Captain Cook Museum, Middlesbrough, UK and from 6 October 2011 to end of March 2010 at the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo, Norway. The exhibition then moves to the Museo Antropológico P. Sebastián Englert, dates pending.

The exhibition aims to bring together the fascinating diversity of cultural artifacts that have depicted Easter Island and to define the popular appeal of the *moai*. Fiction films, cartoons, album covers, toys and board games, computer games, novels, and comic books will be a central part of this exhibition along with objects of material culture. The exhibition will consider the popularization of the *rongorongo* tablets, and music of Easter Island. The exhibits will be supported by film, presentations, and workshops and is curated by Dr Ian Conrich. Co-curators are Dr Roy Smith and Martyn Harris, with support from Frieder Wahl, Grant McCall, and Dan Bendrups.

**BARCELONA, SPAIN:** We have received a note from Francesc Amorós i Gonell of Barcelona informing us of his appointment as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of London. Congratulations to Francesc on this richly deserved award!