

All Blacks turning 100 at Archives New Zealand (17 Nov 2005)

New Zealand's best known name – the All Blacks – turns 100 next year and this trademark is featured in Archives New Zealand's latest exhibition on our national symbols.

Making our mark – exploring New Zealand's national symbols, is being launched by former Governor-General Dame Cath Tizard at Archives New Zealand tonight.

"Our national symbols tell the story of New Zealand's path to nationhood. Through the government records held at Archives New Zealand, we can trace our growing sense of self, often inspired by war or sport", says Dianne Macaskill, Chief Executive of Archives New Zealand.

The exhibition traces the emergence of our unofficial icons such as the All Blacks, silver fern, the kiwi and the 'Buy New Zealand made' logo. One of the images in the exhibition is the trademarking of the word "All Blacks" in May 1906.

It also explores our official symbols. Initially New Zealand used British symbols – including 'God Save the Queen', the Union Jack and pounds, shillings and pence. The exhibition traces the development of our official symbols like the Seal, Coat of Arms, our currency and our flag - although the flag continues to be debated.

Highlights of the exhibition include

- Photographs of early rugby teams, including the 1888 'Native' team and the 1924-25 Invincibles, and the song written in 1924 to commemorate the Invincibles;
- the copyrighting of the silver fern by the New Zealand Rugby Union in 1986 to safeguard against commercial exploitation;
- One of the earliest uses of the kiwi on the South Canterbury Battalion's badge around 1886;

- the recommendation of the 1967 Decimal Coinage Committee to call our currency "Zeals" and cents. This was rejected in favour of dollars and cents;
- Prince Philip's comments on the initial designs for our decimal coins;
- the history of the New Zealand flag, which began as a maritime flag;
- our first Public Seal in 1840;
- the 1969 External Affairs memo which encourages our embassies to play 'God defend New Zealand' at important events;
- The Kiwi shoe polish logo was actually made famous by an Australian company in the early 1900s, chosen because one of the partners was married to a New Zealander.

The exhibition runs until late 2006.

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Further information

Contact

Hazel Dobbie

Communications Adviser, Archives New Zealand

DDI 4956 219; 021 289 4873