

# Mt Hutt College Maori Carving

The carving was made by a local Māori carver, Vince Leonard. He had help from the staff and students at Mount Hutt College.

Former Head of the Art Faculty – Thriza Currie, was the driving force behind the carving. She thought a school carving would be good and was advised to approach Vince Leonard, a very well respected Maori carver living in Ashburton. He came to the college to look around on 16/8/2004.

Vince Leonard was asked to create a carving for our school in 2004. The school brainstormed eight words to describe our College and our community. They were: education, mountains, river, nor'west wind, growth, agriculture, fellowship and international peace.

Vince Leonard designed and carved four figures for the carving. It took him twelve months to complete the project in his workshop in Ashburton. There were two students from the college who helped with the carving. Their work can be seen on the bottom panel. When Vince Leonard had finished, the carvings were brought to Mount Hutt College. It was a very special occasion when the carvings arrived at the school gates, and were walked into the College grounds. All of the male students lined the school driveway to the hall and performed a traditional Māori welcome.

The carvings were moved to the old squash courts (which now form a side area to the main gym) and further work was done (stain, varnish etc) by Vince and some students.

The arch over the front of the stage had to be strengthened before the carvings could be mounted.

The carving is now above the stage in the school hall. The two carvings on the outside represent male and female. The carving on the left-hand side holds Hine Paaka (Single Tree) and the carving on the right-hand side holds an olive branch. The olive branch is the international symbol for peace.

The statue in the middle at the top of the carving represents the nor'west wind. You will see that he has a kete around his neck. Ms Ponweiser weaved the kete and she collected the flax from Alford Forest. Inside the kete is a small piece of pounamu. The pounamu represents coloured stones of the Rakaia River. The serpent-like figure in the middle of the carving represents Tu Te Raki Hoa Noa, the taniwha who lives in the Rakaia Gorge. Tu Te Raki Hoa Noa is the taniwha from the earth who struggles with the wind hence the positioning of these two centre pieces.

The painted panel behind the carvings shows the nor'west arch in the sky, and the foothills, plains and rivers of Canterbury. Ms Ponwieser and students at the College painted the panel.

The carving was blessed in the traditional Māori way, and it was presented to the school on April 2, 2006. The College held a special assembly for the students, staff, teachers and invited guests.

The moral of the story is that we must all work together and be understanding and tolerant of others differences.

## The Single Tree held by the male figure bottom left.

This represents the significant tree that was at Alford Forest. It was a sapling when the Maoris arrived in NZ about 950AD, and the solitary Black Pine became a famous tree used by the Ngati-Mamoe and Ngai-Tahu tribes for navigation. It was named Hine Paaka. This tree helped early travellers as it could be seen from afar. Respected by the European settlers as the Single-Tree, it was still a living giant in 1890, but a dead skeleton in 1930. IN September 1954 it was blown down in a severe Northwesterly gale.

A stone memorial and plaque were placed at the site of the tree during the centenary celebrations of the Springburn district in 1976. A new seedling was also planted then to symbolize the unity of both peoples.

For those who wish to read more about our district's history, a copy of the book 'Bush, Bullocks & Boulders' is in our College library.

**The Olive Branch on the female figure bottom right.**

This represents peace and harmony which is the international symbol for peace.

**Female Figure**

This is on the male carving's left. Her three fingered hand represents the three major stages of life: Birth, Life, Death.

**Two Curriculum Panels**

Curriculum areas were asked to come up with a symbol to represent them.

**Left panel has:**

English	Geography
Agriculture	
Technology (Wood)	Home Economics
Visual Art	
Technology Fabric	Science
Sport/Physical Education	

**Right panel has:**

Social Studies And International Students	Economics
ICT	
Outdoor Pursuits	Music
Mathematics	
Graphics	History
Curriculum	

**The carved board** that runs along the bottom of the carving has the symbol for continuing growth on it.

**The greenstone** around the sky father's neck was gifted to Mt Hutt College from Vince's family and gives a blessing and goodwill to the carving.