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The Sir Cyril Newall New Zealand Collection

A Prestigious Auction of Maori Treasures, Rare
Books & Artifacts from Sir Cyril Newall's Tenure
as New Zealand's Governor-General 1941-1946

25th March 2025, 21:00 GMT

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A Prestigious Auction of Maori Treasures, Rare Books, & Artifacts from Sir Cyril Newall's Tenure as New Zealand's Governor-General 1941-1946.

Churchill Auctioneers is honoured to present The Sir Cyril Newall New Zealand Collection, an extraordinary and historically significant assembly of taonga (Maori treasures), rare books, and cultural artefacts associated with Cyril Louis Norton Newall, 1st Baron Newall, GCB, OM, GCMG, CBE, KStJ, AM tenure as Governor-General of New Zealand (1941-1946).

As a distinguished military leader and statesman, Sir Cyril played a role in fostering relationships between the Crown and Maori communities. Throughout his time in New Zealand, he was presented with a remarkable selection of ceremonial Maori carvings, pounamu (greenstone) artefacts, and historically important books, many of which were gifted during official state visits and tribal ceremonies.

This auction highlights exceptional and rare pieces, including an exquisitely carved 19th-century whale bone tokotoko attributed to the master carver Raharuhi Rukupo school, a waka hoe (ceremonial paddle) attributed to Hone Ngātoto, and a prestigious 18th-century hei tiki presented to Lady Newall. Additionally, the collection features a signed first edition of J.H. Mitchell's Takitimu (1944), a historic mere pounamu, a vintage Maori-language Bible, and personally inscribed volumes reflecting New Zealand's history during World War II.

Each piece in this collection represents a deep cultural and historical connection to New Zealand's past, offering collectors, historians, and institutions a unique opportunity to acquire museum-quality artefacts with impeccable provenance.

Join us for this remarkable event as we honour the enduring legacy of Sir Cyril's time in Aotearoa and celebrate the artistry, history, and tradition embedded within this prestigious collection.



GOVERNOR AND LADY HEWALL

TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES

(P.A.) WELLINGTON, March 19.
Maori girls in traditional costume presented gifts to their Excellencies when they were farewelled by the Ngāhī-Pōneke Maori Association last night. His Excellency was given a beautifully-carved box, and a gold-mounted greenstone tiki was presented to Lady Newall. Among those who attended the function were the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Defence, Maori Affairs, and Agriculture. Their Excellencies were received by Lady Pomara and Mr and Mrs Mason, and were given a traditional welcome. "We would like your Excellencies to convey to their Majesties our sincere loyalty and our deep affection and admiration for them and their example, especially during the strenuous years of war," said Lady Pomara.



For viewing and enquiries please contact:

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Lot 01:

Exceptionally Rare 19th-Century Whale Bone Tokotoko

Attributed to the Raharuhi Rukupō School (1800s - 1873)

Possible Provenance: Ngarimu VC Investiture (1943).

This tokotoko (ceremonial orator's staff) is carved from whale bone (parāoa) and features paua shell inlays set into the eyes of carved ancestral figures. The shaft is extensively decorated with intricate whakairo (carving), incorporating flowing spirals, interlocking figures, and whakapapa narratives. The work demonstrates exceptional craftsmanship, consistent with the Tairāwhiti School of Carving. 87cm long.

The stylistic language of this tokotoko is strongly aligned with the School of Raharuhi Rukupō, the preeminent carver of Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki in the 19th century. While direct authorship by Rukupō himself is unknown, the carving techniques, stylistic features, and symbolic content all point to creation by Rukupō or a carver trained directly in his hand.

Historical Provenance:

Gifted to the Governor-General Sir Cyril Newall, in the early 1940s, likely at the Ngarimu Victoria Cross Investiture Hui at Ruatoria.

The piece very closely resembles the Rukupō whale bone tokotoko carried by Eastern Māori MP Wī Pere when he visited Queen Victoria in London, 1897. Most recently exhibited at Te Papa's Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow 2022. This tokotoko shares many key features with the Wī Pere tokotoko, a known work attributed directly to Rukupō. Both taonga are carved from whale bone, feature paua shell eyes in ancestral figures, use narrative carving, where each figure embodies elements of whakapapa and tribal history and employ the fine surface patterning and flowing, interwoven forms that are hallmarks of the Tairāwhiti School of Carving.

Condition:

One of the ten pieces of Paua shell inlay is missing, there is also a missing piece from the end of the handle, likely a further piece of Paua shell inlay.



Lot 02:

Rare and Historically Significant Carved Waka Hoe (Ceremonial Paddle)

Attributed to Ngāti Porou, likely by Hone Ngātoto or another master Iwirakau school carver.

Presented to Sir Cyril Newall, Governor-General of New Zealand, at Tokomaru Bay during his official East Coast visit, 1943.

This beautifully carved wooden waka hoe exemplifies the distinctive whakairo (carving) traditions of Ngāti Porou. The hoe features stacked ancestral figures with intricately carved facial features, inlaid pāua shell eyes, deep relief carving with fine pakati (notching) and unaunahi (fish scale motifs). The reverse blade side is adorned with a pūhoro motif, a symbolic reference to speed, agility, and the connection between the canoe and the water. 138cm long by 15cm wide by a maximum depth of 5cm deep.

Historical Provenance:

Presented to Sir Cyril Newall, on the 18th of May 1943 during a formal ceremony at Tokomaru Bay on the East Coast. The occasion marked the official opening of the Whanau-a-Rua meeting house in Tokomaru Bay and the Centennial Memorial Hall at Tolaga Bay. The Vice-Regal party included Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Mrs. Fraser, Minister of Defence Fred Jones and Mrs. Jones, and Minister of Internal Affairs Bill Parry, underscoring the national significance of the event. Contemporary press reports document that a carved canoe paddle was among the gifts presented to the Governor-General.

Artistic Information:

The carving style strongly suggests the hand of a senior Ngāti Porou carver, likely Hone Ngātoto, who was active in the Tokomaru Bay region and known for his classical craftsmanship. Ngātoto was a central figure in Ngāti Porou's carving renaissance, working alongside Sir Āpirana Ngata to revitalise traditional arts during the Māori Centennial era. The influence of other East Coast masters, and possibly Anaha Te Rahui of Te Arawa (whose style was known to influence Ngāti Porou through cross-iwi training), can also be seen in the balanced form and execution.



Condition:

Previously broken at the join between handle and blade, old repair using a flat head screw, only one piece of Paua shell inlay remains and that has been reset.

Lot 03:

Important Hei Tiki pendant presented to Lady Newall

Believed to be 18th-century Hei Tiki, masterfully carved from pale pounamu (greenstone), believed to be either Kawakawa or Inanga.

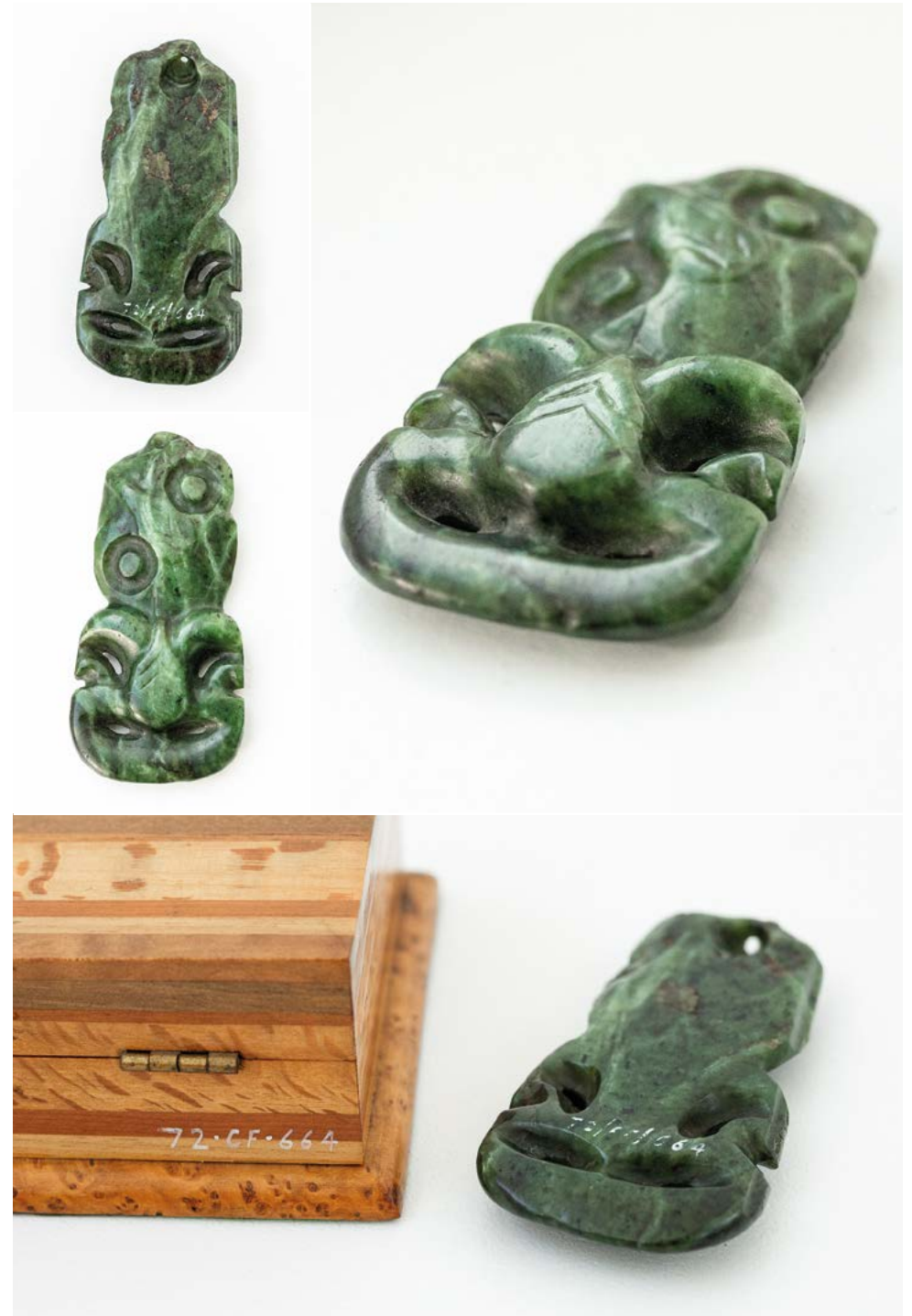
With deeply recessed triple-ringed eyes, a detailed nasal bridge, a heart-shaped mouth, and a muscular body with rib markings and pointed elbows. A raised suspension hole at the top suggests traditional wear and use. Presented in typical New Zealand specimen wooden box of the period inlaid with various native woods, the Hei Tiki and box with painted reference numbers. 9.6cm tall by 4.5cm wide.

Historical Provenance:

Presented to Lady Newall, wife of Governor-General Sir Cyril Newall, by the Ngati-Poneke Māori Association on March 19, 1944, at a farewell ceremony in Wellington, attended by New Zealand's Prime Minister and key government ministers.

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 04:

Historic Mere Pounamu, presented to Sir Cyril Newall

This exceptional Mere Pounamu, believed to be 18th Century, carved from deep green kawakawa pounamu, features a spatulate blade, finely shaped grip, and a butt adorned with five concentric grooves and a stone-drilled suspension hole. A striking milky inclusion and natural scar on the butt enhance its authenticity & mana (prestige). Partial old paper label to the reverse with illegible writing. 33.5cm cm long by 10.5cm wide.

Historical Provenance:

The mere pounamu was presented to Sir Cyril Newall on 3 March 1943, during the official ceremonies to open the Centennial Memorial Meeting Houses at Awahou and Ohinemutu, in Rotorua. This event, a landmark in the history of the Arawa confederation of tribes, was attended by the most distinguished assembly of Māori and Pākehā dignitaries gathered at a Māori event since Waitangi.

The Vice-Regal party, led by Sir Cyril Newall and Lady Newall, included Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Mrs. Fraser, Minister of Native Affairs H.G.R. Mason, Minister of Rehabilitation Bob Semple, and Minister for the Māori Race Paraire Paikea.

The mere has the remains of a label on one side with the words 'Te Rang...', however the label is incomplete/damaged. As it was gifted by the Te Arawa it is believed it could be a reference to Te Rangikaheke (Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikaheke - a high ranking Te Arawa Chief and scholar). Further research could confirm this more detailed provenance.

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 05:

Rare and unusual Kākā Poria

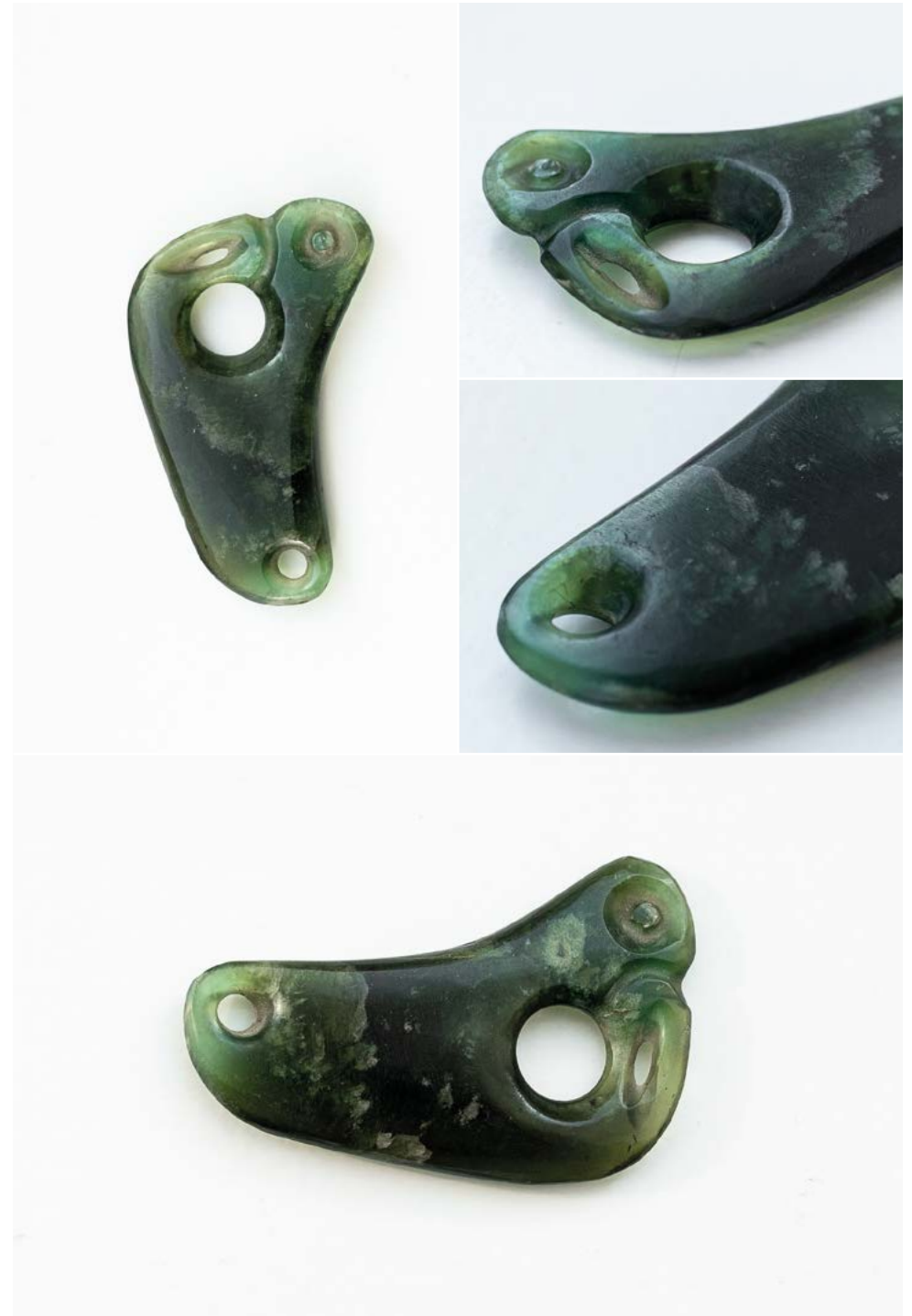
This exceptional kākā poria, believed to be carved from translucent bowenite ranging from light to dark green, features a polished surface, three sets of serrations, and an elongated end with a cratered hole. Traditionally used to tether kākā (native parrots), its rare material and refined craftsmanship suggest it may have also held ceremonial significance. The subtle facial/eye carving on one end (on both sides) - almost tiki-like - is unusual, adding extra symbolic and artistic weight, suggesting it may have belonged to someone of high status or a particularly prestigious bird. 6.5cm tall by 4cm wide.

Historical Provenance:

Believed to be 18th Century.

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 06:

Late 19th/Early 20th-Century Māori Tokotoko, presented to Sir Cyril Newall

This Te Arawa tokotoko features a stacked figure composition, where a series of carved ancestral figures are vertically linked down the shaft, symbolising whakapapa (genealogical descent). Each figure is deeply incised with traditional pākati (notched chevrons) and haehae (parallel grooves), techniques closely associated with the school of Anaha Te Rahui, one of Te Arawa's most renowned carvers. The figures' eyes are inlaid with pāua shell and upper handle features a stylised head, blending naturalism and abstraction, a hallmark of Te Arawa ceremonial carving. 89cm long.

Historical Provenance:

The tokotoko was presented to Sir Cyril Newall on 3 March 1943, during the official ceremonies to open the Centennial Memorial Meeting Houses at Awahou and Ohinemutu, in Rotorua. This event, a landmark in the history of the Arawa confederation of tribes, was attended by the most distinguished assembly of Māori and Pākehā dignitaries gathered at a Māori event since Waitangi.

The Vice-Regal party, led by Sir Cyril Newall and Lady Newall, included Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Mrs. Fraser, Minister of Native Affairs H.G.R. Mason, Minister of Rehabilitation Bob Semple, and Minister for the Māori Race Paraire Paiea.

Condition:

4 of the 6 Pāua shell roundels are missing, there are no cracks. Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 07:

Late 19th/Early 20th-Century Māori Tokotoko, presented to Sir Cyril Newall

This Te Arawa tokotoko features a vertical sequence of carved figures, each intricately linked to represent whakapapa (genealogy) and ancestral presence. The figures are adorned with deeply incised haehae (parallel grooves) and pākati (notched chevrons)—hallmarks of the Anaha Te Rahui carving school. Each figure's pāua shell eyes symbolise ancestral vision and spiritual awareness. The handle is carved in the form of a stylised bird head, likely a manu rangatira (chiefly bird). 83cm long.

Historical Provenance:

This finely carved tokotoko was presented to Sir Cyril Newall, on the 24th March 1943, during the official opening ceremony of Te Awahou's whare wananga, lawakeheimoa. The ceremony took place in the Rotorua district and was attended by prominent Maori leaders, government officials, military representatives, and members of the public.

The tokotoko is present in Sir Cyril's hand in a press photograph of the event.

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 08:

Toki (Adze Blade), Pounamu or Argillite, presented to Sir Cyril Newall
Pre-European, 16th–18th century

A finely worked toki, made from dark green stone, most likely kawakawa pounamu but possibly green argillite, both highly valued materials in traditional Māori carving. This example features a well-polished cutting edge, a worn poll showing signs of hafting, and evidence of sustained use. Functional toki like this were essential for tohunga whakairo (master carvers) working on waka and wharenui, and such tools often accumulated great mana through their role in major projects and their journey through generations.

Historical Provenance:

Believed to have been presented to Sir Cyril during a formal Māori gathering, this toki symbolises Māori craftsmanship, leadership, and the tradition of high-status gift exchange. Such tools were essential for waka (canoe) and wharenui (meeting house) construction and often became treasured taonga (sacred artefacts).

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 09:

Pounamu Menu or Place Card Holders

A set of 4 early 20th century silver and New Zealand green Pounamu menu or place card holders, the silver clasps seemingly unmarked but XRF confirmed, each approx 30mm in diameter, presented in a Denton of Wellington box.

Historical Provenance:

Believed to have been presented to Sir Cyril Newall.

Condition:

Wear commensurate with age.



Lot 10:

Rare Signed First Edition of Takitimu (1944) by J.H. Mitchell, Presented to Sir Cyril Newall

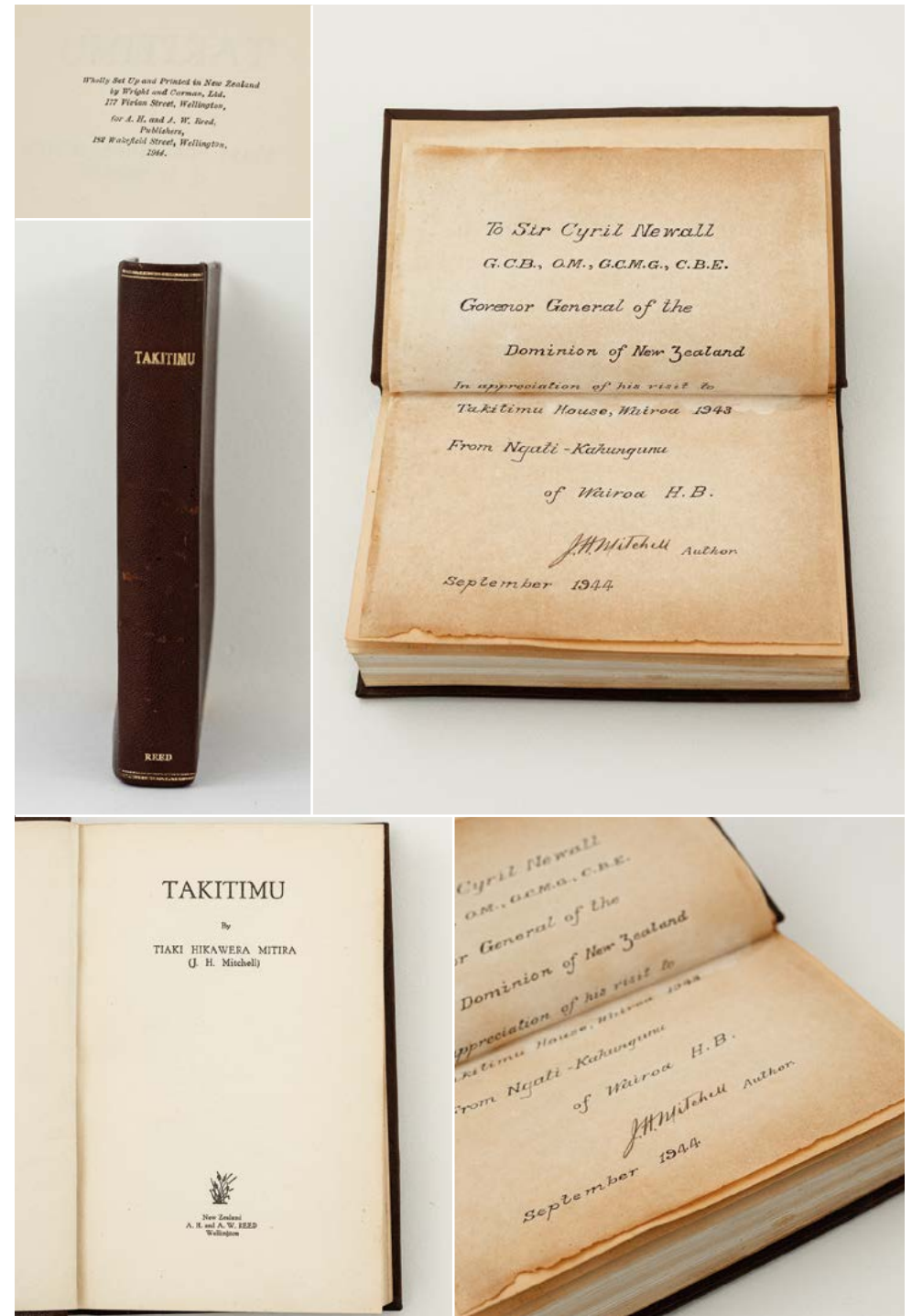
Takitimu by Tiaki Hikawera Mitira (J.H. Mitchell) printed 1944 by A.H. & A.W. Reed of Wellington, containing an interesting hand written dedication by the author to Lord (Sir) Cyril Newall in appreciation of his visit to Takitimu House, Wairoa 1943 and signed by the author, full leather bound with gilt spine. This rare first edition of Takitimu by J.H. Mitchell is a historically significant Māori historical text, documenting the genealogy, traditions, and history of Ngāti Kahungunu and the Takitimu waka.

Historical Provenance:

The book was personally presented to Sir Cyril in 1944 at Takitimu House, Wairoa, by the Ngāti Kahungunu people, in appreciation of his visit. The presentation inscription is professionally printed on the end-paper and hand-signed by the author, adding to its cultural and collectible value.

Condition:

The book remains in good condition, showing mild age-related wear and foxing, while the signature remains bold and legible.



Lot 11:

5 Assorted WWII Books

5 assorted books relating to WWII in New Zealand to inc Gunner Inglorious by Henderson 1945, signed by the author and dedicated to Lady Newall, Wingspread by Leo White 1941 signed by the author, Lady Newall's New Zealand Gift Book, dedicated by the author to her son 1943, and 2 other similar books, one a gift from the Prime Minister of New Zealand.



Lot 12:

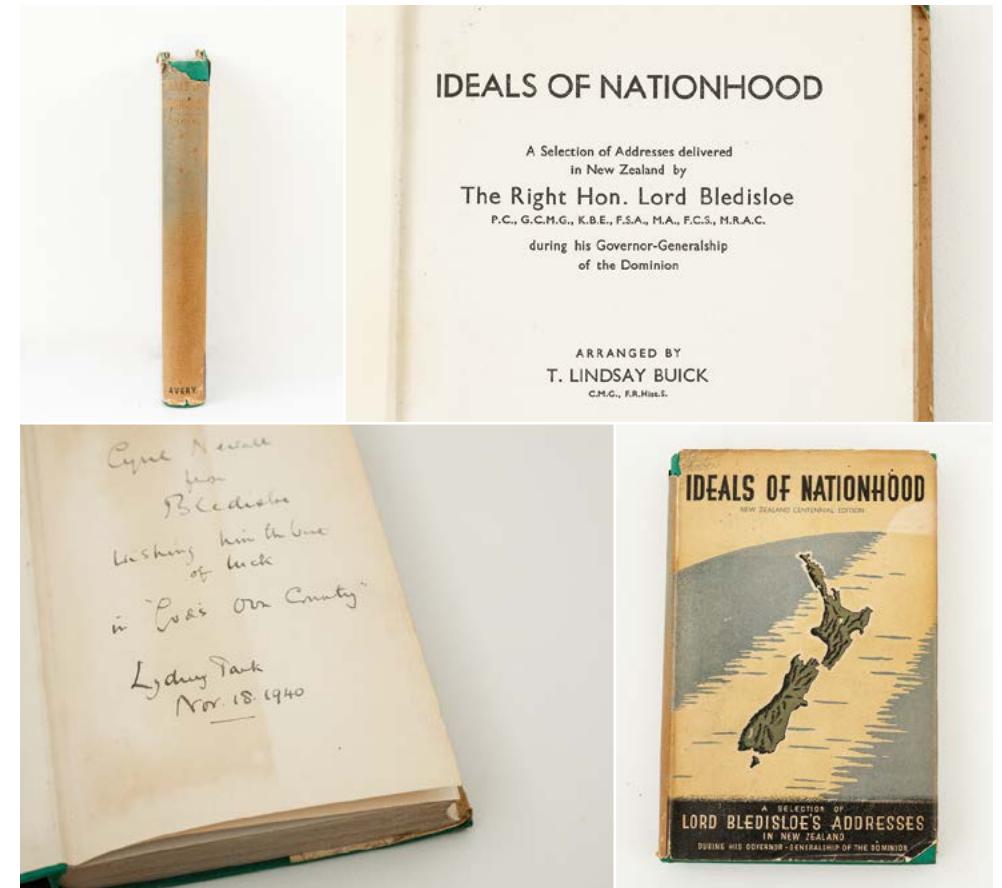
Maori Language Bible

A vintage Maori language bible covered with leather, Paipera Tapu, both old and new testaments, printed 1924 by The British & Foreign Bible Society.

Lot 13:

3 Assorted Comic Books

3 assorted comedic books relating to New Zealand to inc New Zealanders as we see 'em, published 1934-35 by New Zealand Cartoonists Association, with letters to the front and 2 volumes of From N to Z a Humorous Survey of New Zealand by C. V. Smith, illustrated by Minhinnick, published 1947 & 1950.



Lot 14:

Ideals of Nationhood

Ideals of Nationhood - New Zealand Centennial Edition - A Selection of Lord Bledisloe's Addresses in New Zealand, printed 1940 by Thomas Avery & Sons of New Plymouth, hand written and signed dedication to front from Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount Bledisloe, GCMG, KBE, KStJ, PC to Cyril Newall wishing him the "Best of luck in God's Own Country" November 18th 1940, with dust jacket.

Lot 15:

The Gift of Waitangi & The Treaty of Waitangi

Two interesting books relating to Waitangi to inc The Gift of Waitangi by Vernon H Reed, published 1957 by A.H. & A.W. Reed of Wellington, signed and dedicated by the author to Cyril Newall, and The Treaty of Waitangi by T. Lindsay Buick published by Thomas Avery & Sons of New Plymouth 1936.



Lot 16:

2 Signed Books

Two interesting signed books relating to New Zealand, to inc Te Waimate: Early Station Life in New Zealand by E.C. Studholme, signed by the author and dated 1943, published 1940 & Better Than Golde by J. H. Harvey published 1937 and signed and dedicated by the author 1941.



Lot 17:

4 New Zealand Books

Four books all relating to New Zealand all with dedications to Cyril Newall, to inc History of the County of Patea by C. J. Roberts 1942, Native Custom Affecting Land by Norman Smith 1942, Old Westland by E. Iveagh Lord 1939 and an undedicated version of Abel Janszoon Tasman & The Discovery of New Zealand published by Department of Internal Affairs 1942.



Lot 18:

1940 New Zealand Road Map

A vintage leather bound New Zealand road map set showing both the North & South Islands, the gilt tooled leather cover named to "His Excellency The Governor General Sir Cyril Newall" containing large canvas backed fold out maps of New Zealand dated 1940 by Walshe, a smaller more specific map book.



Lot 19:

4 Books Sir Cyril Newall

Four books relating to the service of Sir Cyril Newall in New Zealand to inc Only The Stars are Neutral by Quentin Reynolds 1942, Captain William Hobson by Guy Scholefield, etc 3 with dedications.

Lot 20:

Masonic Regalia

An extensive collection of Masonic regalia, aprons, sashes, jewels and ephemera relating to Sir Cyril's tenure as Grand Master of New Zealand's Grand Lodge during his period as Governor General.

Included in the lot are 5 aprons, 5 sashes, 4 silver and silver gilt jewels to include one for the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of England, two 9ct gold and enamel jewels, one marked 9c and XRF confirmed for Grand Lodge of New Zealand [48.88g gross], a further 9ct gold and enamel jewel for Royal Colonial Institute Lodge No 3556, marked for London 1939 [33.21g gross], a large gold plated Supreme Grand Chapter of R.A.M. of NZ jewel, many of these jewels with engraved details and a very interesting engraved wooden masonic gavel.

Also included are a number of letters, books and other ephemera, many hand written notes about ceremonies etc.



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