

E.H. Gibson, taxidermist, and the assembly of Phar Lap's skeleton

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ABSTRACT: In October 1938, Edwin Herbert Gibson, taxidermist at the Otago Museum, travelled from Dunedin to Wellington to oversee the preparation of the skeleton of the famous racehorse Phar Lap for exhibition at the Dominion Museum. Gibson spent three weeks working in Wellington with the assistance of Charles Lindsay, the then-Dominion Museum taxidermist. Phar Lap's skeleton went on display soon after. It remained a popular exhibit for more than 70 years in that form, but was rearticulated in 2011 to correct errors of stance and anatomy, and to redress the impact of metal fatigue. This paper looks at Gibson's career, and how it prepared him for the invitation to participate in this significant enterprise.

KEYWORDS: Edwin Herbert Gibson, taxidermist, Phar Lap, Dominion Museum, Otago Museum, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

The famous racehorse Phar Lap was a winner, a record-breaker and a much-loved lift to the spirit for hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders in the tough years of the early 1930s (Fig. 1). His death in California in 1932 brought nationwide grief. Born and bred in New Zealand but trained in Australia, Phar Lap's links on both sides of the Tasman Sea were recognised after his death by the gift of his skeleton to the New Zealand government by his owners, and of his heart and hide to Australian institutions.

When sufficient funding and appropriate display conditions became available half a decade after Phar Lap's skeleton arrived at the Dominion Museum in Wellington, work on its articulation began. The fragile condition of the bones necessitated searching for expertise outside the museum's own staff. Edwin Herbert Gibson, taxidermist at the Otago Museum, Dunedin, was contracted for the work, being described as certainly 'the most expert bone artificer in New Zealand' by William J. Phillipps, Acting Director of the Dominion Museum.¹ At that time, Gibson had been employed at the Otago Museum for more than a quarter of a century on a broad range of tasks. For most of those years, he had worked in relative anonymity, but his association with a national icon changed that.

E.H. Gibson, naturalist and taxidermist

Edwin Herbert Gibson was born in Northamptonshire, England, in the early 1870s. He married Rennie Jarvis² in 1898 at the Islington Congregational Church, London.³ Their daughter, Olive Herberta, was born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, in 1899.⁴ The family emigrated to New Zealand early in the new century.

In 1911, Gibson was the successful candidate for the position of taxidermist 'acquainted with Museum methods' at the Otago Museum, Dunedin, advertised at an annual salary of £156.⁵ Gibson succeeded Edwin Jennings, who had been the museum's taxidermist since 1874, when he was appointed by its first curator, Captain Frederick Hutton, prior to the opening of the present building on Great King Street. Jennings died of a heart attack in October 1910, after running from his home in Ravensbourne to catch the 8.16 a.m. Port Chalmers train to Dunedin.⁶

In December 1910, William Blaxland Benham, Curator of the Otago Museum, told the Otago University Council that when he was in Australia the following month he



Fig. 1 Phar Lap and rider, 1926–28, Upper Hutt. Photo: Dr Martin Tweed. Gift of Philippa Corkill, 1999 (Te Papa O.041341).

would make enquiries for a 'suitable man' for the then vacant position. He also suggested a reduction of the salary to £150, explaining that he 'did not need a first-class man, but one capable of being taught the various methods of mounting and displaying specimens'.⁷ Members of the council, however, were strongly in favour of appointing a New Zealand candidate if possible. Benham's enquiries in Sydney were, in any case, unsuccessful. Gibson began work in May 1911.

Gibson may have lacked museum experience, but he had worked as a taxidermist in England, where he developed a business mounting sporting trophies.⁸ Benham soon acknowledged this and Gibson's other skills: 'He has had considerable experience in taxidermy, and, knowing something of cabinetmaking work, he is able to do work which formerly had to be sent out – such things as the repair of old and the making of new cases; while he is also acquainted with all the devices for improving the appearance of the woodwork.'⁹

Benham was both Curator of the Otago Museum and Professor of Biology at the University of Otago, and the

taxidermist was involved in the work associated with both institutions. Indeed, at later dates Gibson also listed work for the School of Dentistry, School of Medicine and School of Home Science as calls on his time.

In various reports in the decade following Gibson's appointment, Benham repeatedly mentioned routine tasks that had fallen to the taxidermist, such as repairing skeletons, dusting case contents, mounting specimens, refilling jars from which spirit had evaporated, and placing naphthalene in display cases and entomological storage cabinets. He also noted, for example, that Gibson had

made casts in plaster or gelatine of a large scaleless tunny, a small ribbonfish, an old stuffed specimen of *Macruronus*, which was falling to pieces, but owing to its rarity was worth preserving, and other smaller animals. He also made casts in plaster of a large number of stone Maori implements ... [was] excavating the skull of a fossil whale from the solid block of Milburn limestone in which it was embedded: a tedious job ... made a commencement of painting the dried crustacea, so as to give them a more life-like appearance ... and all the necessary though unsuspected work connected with a museum.¹⁰

In succeeding years, Benham further mentioned that Gibson had prepared rabbit skeletons for the University of Otago's biological department and mounted plants to illustrate lectures in botany,¹¹ and occasionally attended visitors to the Hocken Library when the librarian was absent.¹² In 1916, the taxidermist helped with the preservation of the faunal specimens brought back by the crew of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (ITAE) ship SY *Aurora*,¹³ and he painted the background for a display case showing life in the Antarctic, in which some of the specimens were displayed. He also made dissection boards for biology students and was present during the drawing class – in part to help the instructor to keep order,¹⁴ ground and mounted sections of teeth for dental students, prepared skulls for medical students and helped in the laboratory with university examinations.¹⁵ Presumably, it was for university biology classes that the advertisement for '100 hedgehogs (alive). Apply E.H. Gibson, Museum' was placed in the *Evening Star* in 1920,¹⁶ and the summer advertisements that appeared through much of that decade, each seeking 1000 live adult frogs.¹⁷ In 1920, the University Council recommended a salary increase for Gibson of £10.¹⁸

Nor was Gibson's work restricted to the natural sciences. In 1917, for example, he and Benham spent six weeks working on a display of South Island Māori rock art, mounting drawings on calico and photographs on card, embedding the removed rock art fragments in concrete and framing them in wood, and making a map on which the sites were located.¹⁹ In 1921, Benham reported that Gibson 'had to repair a number of Maori carvings' and had made a list of the firearms in the Otago Museum.²⁰ In later years, it was noted that Gibson had fitted new barbs to spears, replaced decorative shell elements in bowls, supervised photography for the museum postcards,²¹ and 'pieced together' a number of Greek and Etruscan vases.²² At one time, Benham described the taxidermist as 'at the beck and call of the professor of Biology, the Curator, the Keeper of Ethnography, and the Lecturer in Botany'.²³ He consistently praised Gibson's helpfulness, conscientiousness and sense of responsibility.

Gibson was allowed to maintain a private taxidermy business alongside his museum duties. In early 1912 the local press reported, 'What is said to be the finest stag's head ever brought to Dunedin has been preserved and mounted by a local taxidermist (Mr E. H. Gibson) ... The monarch they once adorned was shot in the Otago deer-

forest by Mr A. Cowie, jun., of Dunedin.'²⁴ That winter, Gibson wrote to Augustus Hamilton (then Director of the Dominion Museum) regarding the gelatine model of a fish for which Hamilton had asked Benham,²⁵ saying, 'it is a faithful reproduction of the live fish. It is a gay spark is it not ... I can assure you that it is very strong and that the gelatine will keep its fishy clammy feel for years without deterioration.' Gibson concluded, 'At any time I shall be pleased to undertake any thing for you as I have a right to do any private work'.²⁶ Hamilton took this seriously, and when he replied to a September 1912 note from Gibson asking for an address for his son, Harold, he finished off by saying, 'If you have a pair of Fantails that are in good condition and stuffed, I shall be glad to purchase them from you next time you have an opportunity of sending anything up.'²⁷

Gibson advertised as a naturalist and taxidermist in the *Otago Daily Times* in 1918, offering to preserve and mount animals, birds and fish from his home address in Normanby, Dunedin.²⁸ In 1925, he mounted a trout weighing over 7 kg that had been caught in the Mataura River by the president of the Wyndham Anglers' Association. The trophy was planned for display at the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, held in Dunedin over the summer of 1925/26.²⁹

In general, Gibson's display work for the Otago Museum was thought to show a more modern aesthetic than had Jennings'; one that made greater reference to the natural environs of the specimens when they were alive. His work on a swan was described as 'a happy relief from the stiffly-mounted birds on stands':

In most museums to-day birds and other animals are mounted so as to recall their natural surroundings and mode of life, but the Otago University Museum, being primarily a teaching museum, has hitherto not attempted anything of the kind. A new departure has, however, now been made. A short time ago one of the white swans at the Gardens died, and its body was presented ... to the Museum. It has been set up ... in a manner which attempts to represent it as floating on a sheet of water with a background of bull-rushes and reeds.³⁰

The Otago Museum registers include a small number of donations from Gibson, including a collection of Māori bone artefacts from Long Beach (Wairauwera) and a steersman's glove that was given to him by members of the ITAE.³¹ He is also noted as the acquisition source for a number of New Zealand birds, including several



Fig. 2 South Island kōkako (*Callaeas cinereus*). Purchased by E.H. Gibson (Otago Museum, AV742).

from Stewart Island/Rakiura (Fig. 2). Some of these are noted as purchases.

Gibson was elected a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London in 1935.³²

Phar Lap's skeleton

In April 1932, the champion Timaru-born racehorse Phar Lap died in America. Born in 1926, he had been bought in the yearling sales at Trentham in early 1928 and then sent to Australia for training,³³ so had strong associations with both countries. After his shocking and unexplained death, his owners gave him his heart and hide to separate Australian institutions,³⁴ and his skeleton was donated as a gift to the government of New Zealand.

Phar Lap's skeleton was accepted by Prime Minister George Forbes and placed in the Dominion Museum. The Auckland, Canterbury and Dominion museums had all expressed interest in it.³⁵ The Dominion Museum argued that the skeleton should be exhibited by the national institution because Phar Lap had been bred in New Zealand, because it could show the structural characteristics of a racehorse and because it had no specimens of ungulate skeletons.³⁶ The museum's director, Walter (W.R.B.) Oliver, also pointed out that the Canterbury Museum already held the skeleton of the

racehorse Traducer, and that Auckland War Memorial Museum had 'the stuffed head of "Carbine"'.³⁷ Before Phar Lap's skeleton left America, however, it was reported to have been mounted at Yonkers³⁸ and photographed, and was then (in mid-September) due to be shown at Belmont Park, another well-known New York raceway, before being sent to Australia.³⁹

The *Free Lance* published a photograph of the bones in Phar Lap's skeleton being viewed by Oliver, William Phillipps and Charles Lindsay on their arrival in Wellington. It was titled 'The last lap'.⁴⁰ At that point, however, assembly was delayed while the museum moved from its Sydney Street site to the new National War Memorial Building.

Phar Lap's skeleton had originally been planned for display near the south wall of the mammal gallery in the new building. However, a reduction in the original planned width of the gallery by *c.* 1.5 m and the corresponding reduction in the size of the display cases meant that Phar Lap's skeleton no longer fitted one of the gallery cases.⁴¹ A purpose-built display case was therefore needed, which in 1937 Oliver estimated could cost £130. He anticipated that by the time a metal frame, painting, assistance from a taxidermist and labelling were added, the figure would rise to £175, which was more than he felt he could ask the board to spend from that year's income. It was suggested that the *New Zealand Sporting Life and Referee* newspaper, which had shown an interest in the situation, might be enlisted to encourage public subscription to cover the sum.⁴² The New Zealand Racing Conference also sent a circular to clubs requesting donations.⁴³

In August 1938, when funds were in hand and the museum was finally in a position to undertake the articulation, William Phillipps, Acting Director of the Dominion Museum, wrote to the Department of Internal Affairs with his assessment of the situation, documenting the condition of the individual elements.⁴⁴ Further, he informed them that cleaning by the Dominion Museum's taxidermist, Charles Lindsay, was underway, and recommended an approach to the Director of the Otago Museum to ask that Gibson's services be made available for three weeks. Gibson's talents were required because of extensive damage to the skull of the racehorse, the result of work by the American veterinary surgeon who had extracted Phar Lap's brain, apparently before the decision was made to retain his skeleton for articulation: 'Saw cuts had been made in different directions, the back of the

skull had been broken off, and the section containing the forehead and crown not replaced.⁴⁵

In arguing his case, Phillipps described Gibson as 'the most expert bone artificer in New Zealand', citing his 28 years of employment under Professor Benham,⁴⁶ the varied nature of which must have been well known. Phillipps estimated that if the work was achieved in a fortnight it would cost the Museum £22 18s 4d, including £15 15s to cover a daily allowance of 15s for Gibson's expenses. A fortnight later, with the support of the Committee of Management of the Dominion Museum, Phillipps wrote to Henry Devenish (H.D.) Skinner, Director of the Otago Museum, to make the request. He noted that the skull was 'in a very bad state indeed and will require quite a lot of remodelling to get it in a condition suitable for use for exhibition'.⁴⁷ The following month, September 1938, Phillipps further clarified his request: 'Actually, the work Mr. Gibson would be called upon to do would be to take charge of the whole concern; and we would instruct our taxidermist to co-operate with him and work under him. Our taxidermist, Mr. Lindsay, has not had anything like the experience in bone work that Mr. Gibson has had.'⁴⁸ How Lindsay felt about the situation is not clear.

Gibson suggested the skull be sent to Dunedin so that he could begin working on it there, but Phillipps was, understandably, reluctant to take the risks involved in transporting it. Instead, arrangements were formalised, and rail and steamer tickets were sent to Gibson for his travel to Wellington.⁴⁹ He started work on the skeleton on 14 October 1938 and corroborated Phillipps' assessment of the skull's condition. An initial two weeks was extended to three due to unanticipated repairs required by the delicate condition of all the bones. Gibson wrote to Skinner, saying that they 'had evidently been boiled in water containing some corrosive acid ... but nobody of course, knows anything about them ... The skull, & clavicles, and also the knuckles of most of the Big Bones, were practically decalcified ... Things were in a worse condition than I expected.' His cheerful confidence that nevertheless, 'everything will be alright and looking bony' when he was finished evidenced the years of experience that made his participation in the project so desirable.⁵⁰

The Wellington newspapers followed the progress of Gibson's and Lindsay's work. One described Gibson in his first week: 'before him on wide tables, were set out haphazard the bones of the famous racehorse looking like

a gigantic Chinese puzzle in some 162 pieces – but no puzzle at all to a man who in 30 years has set up hundreds of skeletons, ranging in size from elephants to shrews'.⁵¹

A negative note was sounded in what seems to have been an otherwise happy project when Gibson's participation looked to have been pointedly ignored in the later coverage by the *Sports Post*. When David Teviotdale, then Honorary Archaeologist at the Otago Museum, brought the matter to Skinner's attention, Skinner wrote privately to Phillipps expressing his disappointment.⁵² In consequence, Phillipps wrote to the editor of the *Sports Post*,⁵³ to Gibson, noting 'The picture and the article savoured very much of the type of journalism that papers like to give to the public';⁵⁴ and, separately, provided the following testimonial:

This is to certify that Mr. E. H. Gibson was selected by the Dominion Museum Management Committee to take charge of the articulation of the skeleton of the racehorse "Phar Lap" for exhibition in the Dominion Museum. Mr Gibson was regarded as the most expert osteologist of his kind in New Zealand; and it was realized that as the skeleton was in a bad condition only expert and thorough reconditioning would enable it to be mounted in a satisfactory manner. Mr. Gibson carried out this work to our great satisfaction. His knowledge of bone work has left us in no doubt that we chose the right man for the work. I have pleasure also in testifying to the conscientious manner in which Mr. Gibson worked through the whole of the period he was at the Dominion Museum, taking the minimum of time for meals and devoting every available moment to the work in hand.⁵⁵

Gibson seems to have enjoyed the assignment and retained positive memories of his stay in Wellington. He told Skinner, 'They have given me a Royal time up here.'⁵⁶ He wrote to John Salmon at the Dominion Museum, asking for extra copies of one of the photographs taken, and said, 'Did those newspaper chaps do anything with the Pictures they taken [*sic*] on the Friday afternoon of Phar Lap, he is looking rather pale about the Head, but when Charles has tinted it, that will improve it' (Fig. 3).⁵⁷ At New Year he telegraphed Salmon, wishing him happiness and prosperity.

Back in Dunedin, Gibson's work was celebrated by a pun in the *Evening Star* when he was described as 'the man who "mounted" Phar Lap, in a strictly taxidermal sense'.⁵⁸

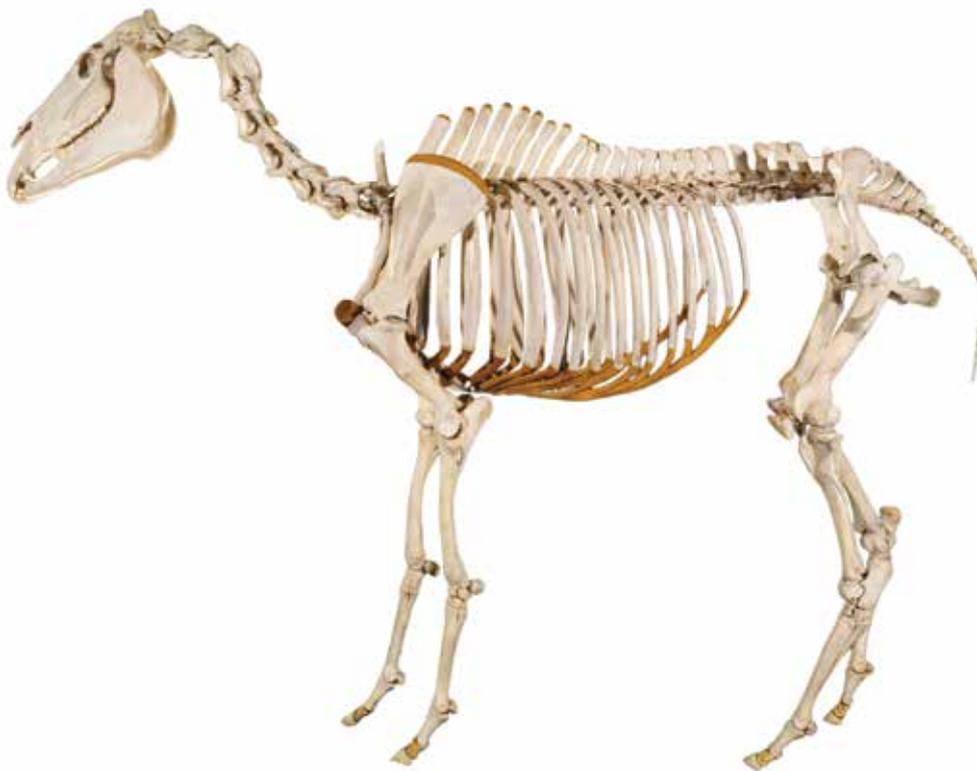


Fig. 3 Phar Lap's articulated skeleton. Horse, *Equus caballus*, collected 5 April 1932, Menlo Park, California, United States of America. Gift of D.J. Davis and H.R. Telford, 1932 (CC BY-NC-ND licence; Te Papa LM000760).

Epilogue

Gibson retired from the Otago Museum in May 1939, the year following the articulation of Phar Lap's skeleton. On leaving, he was presented with a walking stick, a reading lamp and an illuminated address. The *Otago Daily Times* reporter who 'inspected his intensely interesting laboratory' just before his departure described a stuffed collie dog prepared for display at the Dunedin Winter Show in an exhibit showing the dangers of hydatid disease. Gibson's first planned retirement project was to be the 'setting up a series of South Island trout for the Fisheries Department' for display at the Centennial Exhibition held in Wellington in 1939–40.⁵⁹ Newspaper articles marking his retirement⁶⁰ and his obituary⁶¹ noted the work on Phar Lap's skeleton as the highlight of his career and proof of his reputation.

Edwin Gibson died in Dunedin in 1949. He and his wife Rennie, who predeceased him, are both buried in the city's Northern Cemetery.

In 2011, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), the current successor of the Dominion Museum, decided to act on contemporary critiques of the 1938 work on Phar Lap's skeleton. The most notable of the critics was Alex Davies, retired associate professor of veterinary anatomy at Massey University, who pointed out 'a series of minor errors that collectively meant the skeleton [did] not ... match the proud physique of Phar Lap in his prime. This was exacerbated by metal fatigue of the rod holding up the neck and skull.'⁶²

Rearticulation was subsequently undertaken so that the skeleton would more closely match the stance of Phar Lap's mounted hide at the Melbourne Museum, beside which it had been displayed the previous year as part of the celebrations for the 150th Melbourne Cup (Fig. 4).⁶³ This improved accuracy seems completely in accord with one of the tenets of Oliver's original argument for Phar Lap's skeleton to be displayed in the Dominion Museum: that it could show the structural characteristics of a racehorse. At a time when taxidermy is enjoying an

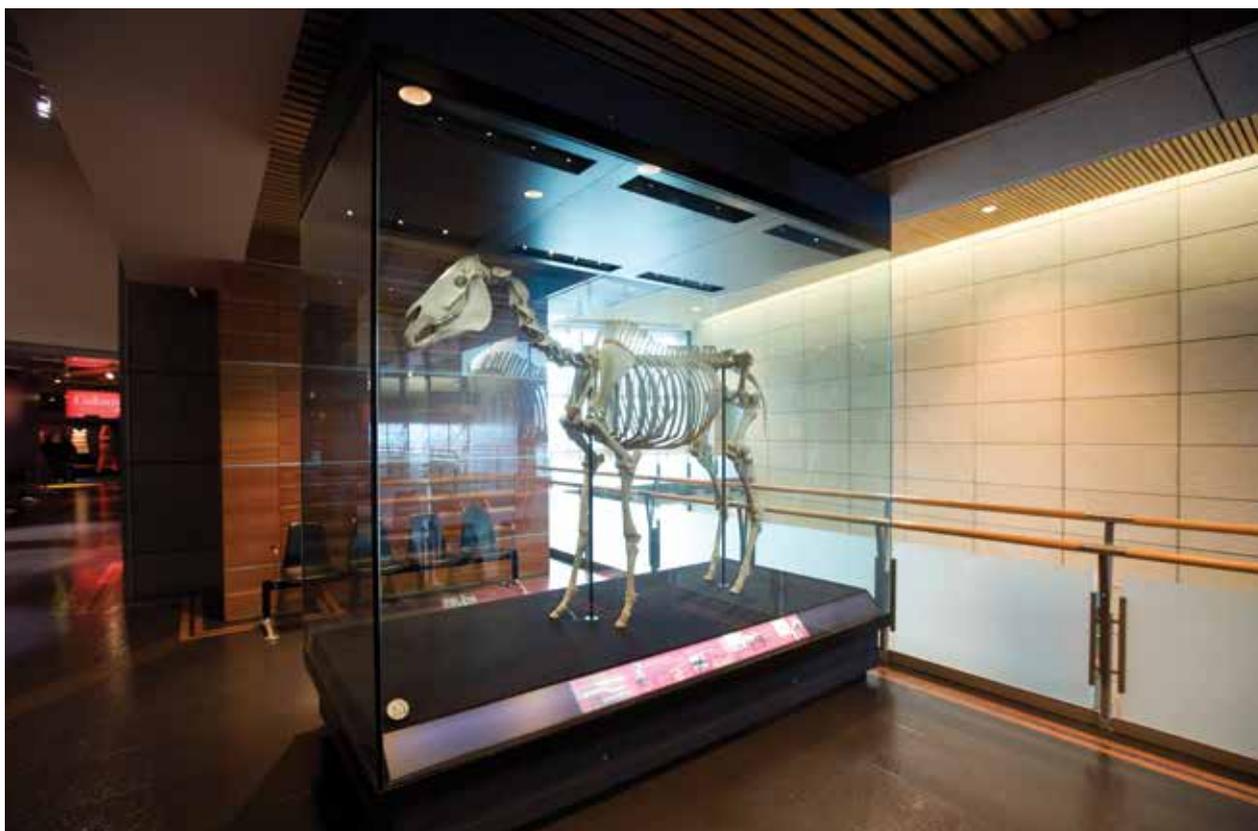


Fig. 4 Phar Lap's skeleton on display at Te Papa, Wellington. Horse, *Equus caballus*, collected 5 April 1932, Menlo Park, California, United States of America. Gift of D.J. Davis and H.R. Telford, 1932 (CC BY-NC-ND licence; Te Papa LM000760).

artistic renaissance,⁶⁴ even morphing into 'craftydermy' for those for whom some physical aspects of the process is off-putting, it seems appropriate to bring to mind what was involved nearly 80 years ago when Phar Lap's skeleton was originally articulated, and a little over a century ago, when Edwin Herbert Gibson was appointed to the position of taxidermist at the Otago Museum.

Acknowledgements

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Past website, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>. Microfilm or paper copies of the others were accessed at the Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

Notes

1. Memorandum from W.J. Phillipps to Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 11 August 1938, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
2. Rennie Jarvis was born in England, but had moved to Auckland in the 1870s as a young girl with her parents, Annie and William.
3. 'Silver wedding', *Otago Daily Times*, 20 October 1923, p. 8.
4. 'Births', *Auckland Star*, 20 January 1900, p. 8.
5. 'Situations vacant', *Otago Daily Times*, 23 February 1911, p. 1.
6. 'Obituary', *Evening Star*, 31 October 1910, p. 4.
7. 'University Council', *Otago Daily Times*, 7 December 1910, p. 10.
8. In London, by his own account ('Expert osteologist', *The Dominion*, 19 October 1938, p. 10).

9. Otago University Museum, *Report of the Curator*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1911, pp. 1–2.
10. Otago University Museum, *Curator's report for fourteen months ending December 1912*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1913, pp. 6–7.
11. 'University of Otago', *Otago Daily Times*, 18 June 1914, p. 4.
12. 'University Museum', *Otago Daily Times*, 28 April 1915, p. 12.
13. White, 2017.
14. Otago University Museum, *Annual report of the curator for the year ending December 31st, 1916*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1917, p. 7.
15. Otago University Museum, *Annual report for the year 1918*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1919, p. 6.
16. 'Late advertisements', *Evening Star*, 25 May 1920, p. 5.
17. For example, 'Miscellaneous wants', *Otago Daily Times*, 24 December 1927, p. 14.
18. 'University Council', *Otago Daily Times*, 23 April 1920, p. 8.
19. Otago University Museum, *Annual report for the year 1917*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1918, p. 2.
20. Otago University Museum, *Annual report for the year 1921*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum, 1922, p. 14.
21. Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, *Annual reports for the year 1924*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, 1925, p. 12.
22. Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, *Annual reports for the year 1928*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, 1929, p. 6.
23. Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, *Annual reports for the year 1929*, Dunedin: Otago University Museum and Hocken Library, 1930, p. 10.
24. 'The Evening Star', *Evening Star*, 5 January 1912, p. 4.
25. 'The Evening Star', *Evening Star*, 12 June 1912, p. 6.
26. Letter from E.H. Gibson to A. Hamilton, 4 June 1912, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
27. Letter from A. Hamilton to E.H. Gibson, 20 September 1912, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
28. For example, 'Advertisements', *Otago Daily Times*, 4 April 1918, p. 1.
29. 'The Otago Daily Times', *Otago Daily Times*, 14 March 1925, p. 9.
30. 'Local & general', *Otago Witness*, 14 May 1913, p. 31.
31. 'Otago University Museum', *Evening Star*, 12 May 1920, p. 7.
32. Michael Palmer, pers. comm., 17 May 2015.
33. 'Phar Lap (1926–1932)', *Tai awatea/Knowledge net*, online database, retrieved on 19 June 2016 at <http://tpo.tepapa.govt.nz/ViewTopicExhibitDetail.asp?ExhibitID=0x000a3af4&ExhibitionID=0x000a39ba&Language=English&dumbyparam=search>.
34. They are in the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, and the Melbourne Museum, respectively.
35. Letter from Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, to W.R.B. Oliver, 22 April 1932, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
36. Letter from W.R.B. Oliver to Secretary, Board of Trustees, 4 June 1937, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
37. Letter from W.R.B. Oliver to Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 26 April 1932, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
38. Presumably at Yonkers Raceway, a harness racing track.
39. 'Phar Lap's skeleton, mounted for display', *Northern Advocate*, 15 September 1932, p. 9.
40. 'The last lap', photograph and caption, *Free Lance*, 18 January 1933, p. 50.
41. Nor did those of the whale skeletons, also planned for the same gallery.
42. Oliver to Secretary, Board of Trustees, 4 June 1937.
43. 'Phar Lap's skeleton', *Evening Post*, 8 September 1937, p. 15.
44. Phillipps to Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 11 August 1938.
45. Oliver to Secretary, Board of Trustees, 4 June 1937.
46. Phillipps to Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 11 August 1938.
47. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to H.D. Skinner, 26 August 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
48. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to H.D. Skinner, 9 September 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
49. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to E.H. Gibson, 26 September 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
50. Letter from E.H. Gibson to H.D. Skinner, 29 October 1938, 288, Otago Museum Archives, Dunedin.
51. 'Expert osteologist', *The Dominion*, 19 October 1938, p. 10.
52. Skinner's response, on 17 November, is referred to by Phillipps in the reply he wrote to Skinner on 23 November 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
53. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to the editor, *Sports Post*, 16 November 1938, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
54. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to E.H. Gibson, 16 November 1938, MU000002 – 050-0006, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
55. Letter from W.J. Phillipps to Whom It May Concern, 16 November 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
56. Gibson to Skinner, 29 October 1938.
57. Letter from E.H. Gibson to J. Salmon, 16 November 1938, MU000152 – 010-0084, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.

58. 'Plucked moa', *Evening Star*, 19 February 1941, p. 4.
59. 'Unusual life-work', *Otago Daily Times*, 2 June 1939, p. 10.
60. 'Museum preparator', *Evening Star*, 12 May 1939, p. 5.
61. 'Mr E.H. Gibson was a noted taxidermist', *Evening Star*, 19 February 1949, p. 8.
62. Colin Miskelly, 'Re-articulation of Phar Lap's skeleton – bold decisions and expert advice', Te Papa blog post, 19 October 2011, retrieved on 19 June 2017 from <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2011/10/19/re-articulation-of-phar-laps-skeleton-part-1-bold-decisions-and-expert-advice>.
63. Ibid.
64. For example, Laura Secorum Palet, 'Taxidermy: the new hipster hobby', *OZY* [website], 9 August 2014, retrieved on 19 June 2017 from www.ozy.com/fast-forward/taxidermy-the-new-hipster-hobby/32756.

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