**The Enduring Links Between the Feminine and the
Domestic:
A case study of the development of the textiles collection at
Broadgreen House in Nelson, New Zealand**

Jessie Bray Sharpin

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Abstract

Textiles in heritage collections are marginalised because of their inextricable link with women and the domestic, and the outdated idea that textiles as ‘women’s work’ are mundane and interest in clothing is superficial and frivolous. Previous research has addressed this marginalisation in the field of fashion studies, and other research has observed that the material culture of women’s history and public history in general was only collected and explored by New Zealand museums after the Second World War and thus has only recently been valued by the traditionally masculine museum. However, the link between textiles as objects of material culture being used to portray women’s history in the domestic realm of historic houses has not been investigated and this is the focus of this thesis.

This study examines the relationship between textile collections in New Zealand and historic houses through a case study of the textile collection at Broadgreen Historic House in Nelson. It asks the following question: What can the Broadgreen Historic House textile collection tell us about how women’s history is conveyed through material culture, specifically textiles, in a domestic setting outside the professional setting of the institutional museum?

Interviews with past and previous staff, archival analysis of collection documentation and internal archives, and material culture analysis of objects in the Broadgreen collection illustrate several key things. The research shows that by combining these methods, a more historically accurate and nuanced account of this collection emerges, which shows who values the Broadgreen textile collection and how it is supported, cared for, and shared with the community.

This study highlights the ongoing value of textile collections in sharing the history of the ‘every day’, and women’s history, which is made more accessible to the public via the familiar setting of a historic house. It reinforces the value of historic houses and smaller heritage institutions in New Zealand and is an example to museum professionals to build relationships with institutions like these, rather than seeing them as old-fashioned and unprofessional. It concludes that textile collections, as objects of material culture, play a unique role in sharing stories of women’s history that are left out of the mainstream historical narrative, and that these collections are enhanced by their placement outside the professional setting of the institutional museum.

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Introduction: Textiles, Historic House Museums and Gender

‘Cloth is inherently social in its manufacture and consumption, and merits being ‘read’ like any other type of evidence.’ (Burman and Fennetaux 2019, 54).

Fig. 1: BGT191 (detail), mauve silk wedding dress from Broadgreen textile collection.

I am taking a gown off a mannequin in an upstairs bedroom at Broadgreen House, the one known as the costume room. It is a wedding dress, one that has been worn by women in the same family for multiple generations. It is mauve silk that shimmers and catches the light, looking almost grey or silver at certain angles, then unmistakably pale purple once again. My gloved hands carefully unhook the metal hooks from their eyes down the centre front of the bodice. The contrast with the lining of the bodice and the outer fabric of the gown is stark - the lining looks as old as the garment is - brown and crisp-looking with age, like ancient, discoloured paper, against the shimmering mauve celebration of the outer silk. The bodice of the gown joins the skirt low on the waist, with the front of the bodice coming to a point at the centre typical of 1850s fashion. This is accentuated by pleats in the bodice that lead the viewer's eye from the shoulder down to this same point in the centre front, highlighting the narrowness of the wearer's waist. The sleeves of the gown widen from the elbow down into a

bell shape, decorated with pinked trim in self fabric and the same lace that makes a small collar for the gown. The skirt hangs from the waist in continuous knife-pleat folds.

When I have removed the gown from the mannequin, I hang it on its padded hanger in the doorway of the bedroom to inspect it further before I encase it in a protective cotton cover and carefully carry it down the stairs, through the hallway and out the back door, through the kitchen courtyard and into the Broadgreen Centre and its home on a rack in the textile storeroom. Inside the bodice of the gown, there is staining on the front lining fabric at the breast; *this is a female text* (Ní Ghríofa 2020, 1).

The gown is entirely hand stitched, and with it hanging in the doorway with the light behind it, I can see the stitches that join the bodice to the skirt, and they look so delicate, the skirt really is hanging on by a thread; yet this garment has made it here, intact, to be exhibited and cared for at Broadgreen House, across the world from where it was originally stitched.

Question, topic, and research context

Research Question: What can the Broadgreen Historic House textile collection tell us about how women's history is conveyed through material culture, specifically textiles, in a domestic setting outside the professional setting of the institutional museum?

In early 2019 I worked as a contractor for Nelson City Council (NCC), cataloguing the textiles collection at Broadgreen Historic House (Broadgreen). I quickly realised that the collection held items of great significance, in terms of provenance and as key examples of their kind. This led me to wonder why these objects were unknown and almost forgotten. How had they ended up in the collection of a small regional historic house museum? Why were they not being given the recognition they deserved – by both the public and the wider New Zealand museum sector?

I would like to answer these questions in a way that forces us to confront the notion that those who are interested in clothing and textile collections, such as these, are often viewed as merely being distracted by pretty colours and shiny fabrics. This is a view that appears to

permeate Western society as a whole, and the museum world is not an exception. Interest in clothing in Western society has been marginalised due to misconceptions that surfaces and the outer layer are superficial. These ideas extend to those who study and work with clothing, compounded by the inextricable links between women and clothing: the making of clothing and textiles as ‘women’s work’, interest in fashion, and ties to the domestic. My research considers how this long-established view of clothing as superficial and unimportant has affected the place of textiles in museum collections and the repercussions of this.

In this thesis, I will examine how this view has affected heritage collections in New Zealand through the case study of Broadgreen Historic House in Nelson and its textile collection. I will consider the value of textiles in heritage settings for portraying women’s history, through a domestic and almost informal setting, with the critical historical analysis of my case study. Questions that I aim to address through this case study include:

- What can the Broadgreen textile collection tell us about how women’s history is conveyed through material culture, specifically textiles, in a domestic setting outside the professional setting of the institutional museum?
- What can Broadgreen House’s textile collection tell us about the way historic house museums have collected clothing in comparison to museums?
- Were textiles given to Broadgreen as opposed to Nelson Provincial Museum because they were seen as domestic items—given to the feminine/domestic historic house museum as opposed to the masculine/institutional museum?

My objective in carrying out this research is to discover how the Broadgreen textile collection has developed from inception; and, as I outline above in my research question, what this collection can tell us about how women’s history is conveyed through material culture, specifically textiles, in a domestic setting outside the professional setting of the institutional museum. It is important too, to bring to light a previously unknown collection.

Literature Review

The importance of material culture

Goggin and Tobin's *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles 1750-1950* (2017), Kuchler and Miller's *Clothing as Material Culture* (2005) and Maynard's *Fashioned from Penury: Dress as Cultural Practice in Colonial Australia* (1994) all reinforce the idea of clothing (and the people associated and interested in clothing) as superficial. This is conveyed through the broader theme of material culture. Clothing as material culture is an area of literature that has driven my preliminary research significantly, and will be investigated further, with sources such as *Stuff* by Daniel Miller (2013), particularly the chapter 'Why Clothing is Not Superficial'.

Since it is used as a covering or surface, clothing is easily characterized as intrinsically superficial...This denigration of surfaces has been part of the denigration of clothing, and by extension, of those said to be particularly interested in clothing, often seen as women. (Miller 2013, 118).

In *Clothing as Material Culture*, Sophie Woodward states in the chapter 'Looking Good: Feeling Right – Aesthetics of the Self', 'Within popular and academic discourses, clothing and fashion are therein seen to be superficial and unimportant, as material objects situated at the periphery of the body.' (Woodward 2005, 21).

However, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding clothing as material culture in New Zealand museum collections. *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Gibson, Labrum and McKergow 2007) includes chapters discussing specific clothing collections in New Zealand museums as well as the inextricable links between clothing and social history. This appears to be one of few sources that focuses on New Zealand alone.

Gender and women in museums

Other relevant studies for this thesis include those that focus on women working in museums. Kate Hill's critical work on women and museums, *Women and Museums 1850-1914: Modernity and the Gendering of Knowledge* (2016), is one of the few sources on this topic. Another, based in the USA rather than the UK, is Joan H. Baldwin and Anne W. Ackerson's *Women in the Museum* (2017). This looks at the ways in which gender bias affects women who work in American museums.

Labrum also addresses this in her essay about three women who worked as curators in New Zealand museums in the 20th century: ‘Women “Making History” in Museums: The Case of Female Curators in Post-war New Zealand’ (2018). The women who form the subject of this essay revolutionised the portrayal of social history in New Zealand institutions, institutions that had previously focussed on scientific and ethnographic collections and been staffed almost entirely by men. In the past it is only the stories of male staff members, and their associations with the typically masculine museological fields of scientific discovery and ethnographic collection, that have been shared.

The gendering of objects, professional roles and even museum types (i.e., historic house museum vs. science museum) is significant to my overall research topic. In this regard, Katherine Martinez and Kenneth L. Ames’s *The Material Culture of Gender, The Gender of Material Culture* has proved useful, particularly Belk and Wallendorf’s chapter, ‘Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting’ (1997). In it, they discuss gender stereotyping around collecting objects and how historically men’s collecting has been taken seriously and women’s collecting has been considered, ‘frivolous consumption’ (Belk and Wallendorf 1997, 12). The gendering of physical objects is also touched on, with Belk and Wallendorf quoting Louis Hertz about male and female antique collecting preferences: ‘Women are more inclined to the fragile rather than the substantial... while men lean toward more substantial materials such as iron and tin’ (Belk and Wallendorf 1997,12). This is an avenue I am interested in following regarding clothing and textiles; the idea that soft objects are gendered female and hard objects male.

Historic House Museums

Linda Young’s study of historic house museums is also relevant to my study of Broadgreen House and its textile collection as a case study for my broader research. Young’s discussion of house museums as windows into social history applies to Broadgreen and more broadly the telling of women’s stories and bringing to light the stories of marginalised groups, that are often left out of formal museum institutions. Additionally, Broadgreen house and its original owner Edmund Buxton fit into Young’s archetype of the ‘hero’ house, the paradox of this being the way the house makes visitors curious about Buxton’s wife and five daughters and domestic servants (Young 2016). Also of note to my study is the discussion in *Reclaiming the Past: Landmarks of Women’s History* (Miller 1992), around historic sites and heritage houses in the USA giving voices to women’s history through material culture and the domestic.

‘Tangible objects and structures allow historians to widen the parameters of historical study to include the day-to-day experiences of working, schooling and child-rearing.’ (Miller 1992, 18). And:

Material culture provides social historians, and women’s historians especially, a means for shifting the research interest from the public sector to ‘private places’, that is, the household, the bedroom, the nursery, kinship systems, and voluntary associations. (Miller 1992, 8-9).

Dress History and Dress in Museums

The study of fashion and dress history as an academic discipline has been marginalised until quite recently, and this has meant that fashion and textiles in heritage collections have also been marginalised.

Too often in the past has the history of fashion been treated lightly, as a rather inconsequential pageant, an arbitrary and theatrical decoration of history; too rarely has it been regarded as an integral and significant facet of the actual historical structure. (Wheeler 1933, quoted in Cumming 2004, 57).

This is linked to an outdated idea that clothing and textiles are associated with women and their supposed frivolous consumption and inane obsession with fashion. Lou Taylor (2002) recorded dress curators in the UK being referred to as ‘Frock Girls’ and in Norway being called ‘the Buttonneers’.

Another angle about clothing in museum collections being marginalised that came up was Naomi Tarrant (1994) quoted by Valerie Cumming (2004). Tarrant, Curator of Costume at the National Museum of Costume at the time, stated that other curators or other fields within the museum view costume collections with suspicion and distrust because often what is in a museum collection is the clothing of the elite and the upper class (Tarrant 1994, quoted in Cummings 2003, 74). And in a 1999 article, Tarrant argues:

After an amazing period of growth, costume collections in museums have run into problems, with several directors questioning their usefulness. This questioning of the place of clothes in museums is a flawed one. No one questions the collection of porcelain, nor do they complain that the pottery of ordinary people is not found in museums, a frequent complaint levelled at costume collections. (Tarrant 1999).

This theme of textiles being marginalised in museum collections due to their association with women and of clothing as being thought of as frivolous, is exemplified in a chapter of *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practise* (2012). ‘All out in the Wash: Convict Stain Removal in the Narryna Heritage Museums Dress Collection’, addresses the marginalisation of the largest private collection of nineteenth century dress in Australia (until it was incorporated into the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery collection in 2012): ‘The prevailing attitude of fashion as frivolous and solely of interest to women has meant the study of the collection itself has been neglected.’ (Clynk and Peoples 2012, 59).

Another theme is that people are not sure where to ‘put’ textiles and clothing, within museums and the academic sphere.

Fashion falls between disciplinary boundaries: sometimes classed as decorative art, occasionally slotted into social history, or displayed as an anomaly in and of itself, it does not, therefore, draw on any single set of display norms conventional to its subject class. (Petrov 2019, 9).

In New Zealand, clothing and textiles, as items of material culture, have only relatively recently been considered ‘museum worthy’ as a result of the change in how social history is valued in post-World War Two New Zealand (Labrum, 2018).

Internationally, the history of clothing and textiles being exhibited in museums is inherently linked to textile manufacture, industry, and technology rather than as objects of social history and material culture. Clothing, when it was first put on display in a museum context, was not used as a vehicle to share stories relating to the lives of ordinary people; instead, it was used, for example, for discussing Britain’s cloth manufacturing industry, or the manufacture of Spitalfields silk. This was apparent particularly in nineteenth century celebrations of industry in international exhibitions and world fairs. Interestingly, it was New Zealand’s version of these exhibitions that were early examples of historical clothing being displayed, with ‘period room’ displays. (Labrum 2018, Petrov 2019, Regnault 2021).

The history of clothing and fashion in museums was also closely tied with the development of department stores, both internationally and in New Zealand. This crossover saw department store window displays and museum exhibitions closely resembling one another in

their display of clothing on mannequins (or, in some cases, on real models) (Petrov 2019; Labrum 2010).

This also ties in with Bronwyn Labrum's essay 'Women "Making History" in Museums: The Case of Female Curators in Postwar New Zealand' (2018), about three female curators in New Zealand in the 20th century at the Dominion Museum, the Auckland Museum and the Canterbury Museum and how they revolutionised museum display at the time by putting social history on display through the shop front and colonial street displays. This was revolutionary for its time; the display of things associated with women, the domestic, social history and 'everyday' life. History from the bottom up; social history being interesting or museum worthy for the first time.

The successful efforts of Reynolds and others to collect and display the female past in this period, albeit in an imperial and "pioneer" framework and in the mode of "period rooms", require us to re-evaluate the importance of fashion, clothing and dressing up in the construction of the female past... Their efforts are a key example of the materialisation of history that is easy to overlook as ephemeral and middlebrow. (Labrum 2018).

Valerie Cumming, in her book *Understanding Fashion History* (2004) discusses the 1960s and 1970s being a heyday for museums and historic house museums acquiring textile or dress collections and being optimistic, and now being in a state where there is a lack of funding and staff. Broadgreen was acquired by the NCC in the late 1960s and was obviously supported by the community of Nelson to the extent that key objects with excellent local provenance were donated in order to furnish the house (such as the dining room chandelier from the well-known Tyree Photographic Studio). In contrast, there is now only one paid staff member to look after the collection at Broadgreen House, and this staff member also manages the property itself, the volunteers, public programmes, etc. and oversees other historic properties under NCC (such as Isel House and Founders Park). Thus, Broadgreen is a prime example of that optimism being gone, the collection not being given adequate funding anymore, and people not knowing about the collection (in the museum world and the public). This is what interested me in this topic originally: to uncover why this has happened or why the Broadgreen textile collection has ended up in this state.

Another matter that is linked to the history of museum display the traditional relationship between museum textile collections and theatres. Theatres would have costumes donated or costumes acquired that were often genuine historical pieces of clothing, so some theatre

collections have ended up being given to museums, which came up in my research with links between Broadgreen and the Nelson Musical Theatre. Another link between textile collections in heritage institutions and the arts was a historical trend of museums acquiring objects through artists. Artists might have acquired historic garments for models to wear and as props for their work (Petrov 2012).

The gaps revealed in the review of the literature frame this research, opening one topic of investigation on the topic of textile collections and historic house museums, and one on the marginalisation of textiles in museum collections being because of their association with women and the domestic.

We live in a patriarchal society in which it is common for instances of systemic sexism and unconscious bias against women to occur (Baldwin and Ackerson 2017), as well as generalised stereotypes about women's interest in clothing being vapid and an obsession with consumerism. 'Women's consumption, often perceived as the height of frivolous and distracted non-productive activity' (Tobin 2017, 7). The irony, of course, is that the material culture of clothing and textiles as museum objects should be representative of all genders: we all wear clothing. Throughout history, women have been mocked and stereotyped for their interest in fashion. This is representative of a trend in our society of people not taking textiles seriously, and this trend also appears in the museum world. In *The Subversive Stitch* (2019), Rozsika Parker talks about needlework and textile work done by women not being taken seriously as real art, compared to paintings, for example. Working with textiles, traditionally 'women's work' throughout history, has led to textiles themselves being marginalised for their association with the feminine. An example of this is apparent in the celebrated 'Blick Cloth' associated with Nelson and New Zealand history. Known as the first European cloth manufactured in New Zealand, the award-winning tweed-like Blick Cloth was the business of Thomas Blick of Nelson. Yet the historical narrative (and museum displays) does not remember the names of the 'German immigrant women' who worked for Blick, spinning the merino wool that made the cloth (and leaving his employ over fair pay disputes) (Blick 2020).

Research Design

The gap in the literature that became clear during my initial research is the link between gender, textile collections and historic house museums – the context of textiles within historic house museums. Thus, in my research via my main case study I aim to investigate the history of the Broadgreen textile collection: how it came to exist and how it has ended up in the context it is in today, and what this can tell us about the importance of textiles as items of material culture acting as agents for sharing untold histories, specifically those of women's lives. My research will take a range of approaches to the topic, mainly qualitative and inductive, drawing on appropriate methods in museum studies and material culture studies. My research methods will include critical historical analysis of the Broadgreen House collection, specifically through archival research, material culture analysis of specific objects in the collection, and semi-structured interviews with current and former Broadgreen staff. My aim is to gain an overall view of the history of the Broadgreen textile collection.

My status as a professional insider, having carried out contract work for Broadgreen on its textile collection, as well as my former role as Social History Curator for NPM, gives me a running start in my research as I have a level of familiarity with the collection, staff member and volunteers as well as Nelson social history.

Research Methodology: Critical Historical Analysis

My research involved a critical historical analysis of the Broadgreen textile collection in order to discover how it developed over time and came to be what it is today. This included archival research, using collection documentation records and Broadgreen's own archival material. Examples of collection documentation records includes object and donor files, registration forms, past exhibition documents, deaccession register, etc. Broadgreen's own archival material consists of folders of newspaper clippings, advertisements, event promotion/invites assembled by staff or volunteers at Broadgreen consistently over the years since the NCC took ownership of the house in 1965. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the history of the textile collection is closely entwined with exhibitions, visitors/the public, funding, and collection practises; these are all elements of interest that appear in the archival documents that help to gain an overall view of the history of the textile collection at Broadgreen.

Sources used for archival research, held by the curator at Broadgreen, include:

- Scrapbooks of newspaper articles featuring Broadgreen House since the Nelson City Council took ownership in 1965, compiled by Broadgreen staff and volunteers from 1965 to present.
- Highlights from Broadgreen Society AGMs featured in the scrapbooks.
- Collection documentation records: Current collection management system including object and donor files; research collection registers, exhibitions records.

Research Methodology: Interviews

As well as archival research, two interviews provided invaluable insight into the development of the textile collection over time. These were with current curator (recently Heritage Collections Officer) Mahina Marshall and former long-serving curator Margaret Paul. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into the historical and contemporary context of the Broadgreen House textile collection.

- Interviewees:
 - Mahina Marshall – Heritage Officer for Nelson City Council
 - Margaret Paul – early and long-serving curator for Broadgreen House

Research Methodology: Material culture analysis

My third area of research was the material culture analysis of six items from the Broadgreen textile collection. Through these targeted dives into the collection, my intention was to examine the rich cultural resource that even a very small portion of the textile collection can demonstrate. These object case studies highlight my questioning of how such a significant collection has ended up largely unrecognised, locally and nationally. These

- Targeted dives into the collection
- Analysis of six specific objects from the Broadgreen textile collection

- Aim to highlight my questioning of how such a significant collection has ended up largely unknown and uncelebrated and showcase what makes it significant.
- What can textile objects of material culture tell us when 'read' like any other type of source?

Chapter Outline

In Chapter One I will set the scene for my research and establish both my own background and the relevant background to my main case study – the Broadgreen House textile collection. I will do this through a description of Broadgreen House’s history, both as a private residence and its transformation to a public heritage site. The Broadgreen of today will also be introduced more thoroughly in order to establish the context for the research findings of Chapter Two. Finally, I will discuss my own background, working as a social history curator at Nelson Provincial Museum, then carrying out contract work with Broadgreen’s textile collection.

Chapters Two and Three look at the findings from my research. Chapter Two will focus on my interviews with a past and a present curator of Broadgreen, and at the archival research I conducted via Broadgreen’s collection documentation and on unofficial records, such as folders of newspaper clippings relating to Broadgreen. Chapter Three is a material culture analysis of specific object case studies within the Broadgreen textile collection, and what they can tell us about the importance of clothing and textile objects in heritage collections.

1. Background

‘House museums are more than their architecture. They are repositories of objects, which may act as agents for time travelling’. (Clarke 2018).

Fig. 2: Broadgreen Historic House visitor entrance. Photograph by author.

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the context for my case study, the Broadgreen textile collection. This includes Broadgreen’s history as a private dwelling from 1850-1965, lived in by the Buxton and Langbein families, and as a public historic house after it was purchased by NCC in 1965. I will also discuss contemporary Broadgreen to set the scene for my research findings in Chapter Two. As well as this, I will outline my own background. This will include my professional background in the museum sector, particularly NPM and how I came to work for Broadgreen. I will also place myself in the wider theme of this thesis by acknowledging my background with historic house museums and my interest in textiles as vehicles for sharing women’s history.

Living at Broadgreen: The Buxtons, Cordelia Buxton, and the Langbeins

The Buxton Family

Broadgreen House was built for the Buxton family around 1855, the same year that Edmund Buxton founded E. Buxton & Co. Merchants. Edmund and Martha Buxton came out to New Zealand from Lancashire, England with their six daughters Martha, Adeline, Cordelia, Everhilda, Alice and Matilda in the early 1850s. The Misses Buxton ranged in age from 11 to mid-20s when they moved into Broadgreen House. The Buxton's property was originally 100 acres which was crop farmed. There was a stable, coach house and granary on site that no longer survive (Broadgreen Society 2020, 4-9).

The house itself is built in a traditional Devonshire cob farmhouse style. The material for the building was dug from under the house, forming a cellar. However, only the first storey of the house is cob, the upper storey is made from a timber frame finished with lath and plaster. The ground floor consists of a parlour, dining room, pantry, study, kitchen, scullery, and veranda. At the back of the house, joined on but accessed from the outside, are a dairy and a conservatory. The upper floor of the house has five bedrooms and one smaller narrow room known as the 'box room', for storing luggage, but it could also have had a narrow bed in it for guests. Two of the bedrooms have a door between them, so they are now called the nursery and the nanny/nurse's room (Broadgreen Society 2020, 4-6).

The way that Broadgreen has been referred to in the past as the home of Mr Buxton, a wealthy merchant, and his (secondary, unnamed) family, is in contrast with the fact that Mr Buxton lived with his wife and six daughters. So Broadgreen, in the time of the Buxtons, was a supremely feminine space. Broadgreen can be viewed in line with Young's (2016) writing on historic house museums - that they can tell us about women's histories and the lives of those who are often left out of 'official' narratives and institutions. The masculine, professional museum versus the feminine, unprofessional historic house.

It intrigues me that Edmund Buxton's image is so vividly associated with the house when so much of that space was taken up by women. It may be because Buxton's daughters and wife did not leave personal records or a strong social presence in nineteenth century Nelson, like other women of their era, such as Sarah Greenwood, Mary Hobhouse or Sarah Higgins. In

contrast, Buxton had his eponymous business, which kept his name even after it changed ownership, and lives on today in the naming of Buxton Square in Nelson's city centre. Mainly, it seems that when Broadgreen was set up for the public in the style of a Victorian home, Victorian sensibilities were kept, in the way that the one male Buxton is most readily associated with the house – always named first.

Functioning below the largely feminine family life of the house was the domestic workforce that the family would have employed, which would also have included women. There is a large kitchen and scullery, with the original bread oven still in the wall next to the large main fireplace. Crossing the kitchen garden from the backdoor is the dairy, and a pump and well are in the kitchen yard too. There would have been male servants working at Broadgreen, but female staff would have been just as present if not more so. The scullery has an attic space above it and a hole in the ceiling and it is said that this could have been a place where servants slept. The Broadgreen guidebook states, 'When the ceiling lining was removed during reconstruction to reveal the joists, the hole leading to the loft was uncovered. This probably once had a ladder for access, and it is possible that servants once slept in the attic' (Broadgreen Society 2020, 31). This anecdote has lived throughout the public years of Broadgreen, as there were no obvious 'servants' quarters' elsewhere in the house. Looking up into the loft space from below, you can see natural light from windows, and it looks to have room enough to sleep domestic staff. However, the domestic servants may not have been live-in. Like many historic properties, oral history plays a large role in passing stories on when there is hard evidence lacking. It is an intriguing idea nonetheless, and makes visitors wonder about the stories surrounding not just the women of the families who lived at Broadgreen, but those who worked there also.

'Miss Delia' at Broadgreen

The last member of the Buxton family to live at Broadgreen was Cordelia Buxton, one of Edmund and Martha's unmarried daughters. She purchased the property from her father's estate after his death in 1882 and leased the land for cropping and derived her income from this. A famous anecdote about Cordelia is that she was the owner of several cats and had a cat cemetery at Broadgreen somewhere - the location of which is lost to time (Broadgreen Society 2020, 10). Other much told stories that live on about the Buxton women include

Adeline falling in love with the head gardener, Thomas Chisnall, which Mr Buxton did not approve of. The diplomatically worded and italicised reference to this in the 2020, updated version of the Broadgreen guidebook says, ‘Indeed *it is said* that for many months he [Mr Buxton] locked her in her room each morning before leaving for business.’ (Broadgreen Society Inc. 2020, 10). Eventually he must have relented, because Thomas and Adeline were married in the parlour at Broadgreen and lived in a cottage on the property that still stands, privately owned, next to the Broadgreen grounds (Broadgreen Society 2020, 10).

The Langbein Family

Fred and Mary Langbein purchased Broadgreen from Cordelia Buxton in 1901, where they lived with their family of six sons and two daughters. When they bought the property, it was around 50 acres. The Langbeins sold a portion, used the rest for an orchard and kept one acre for gardening and farming. During the Langbeins’ time at Broadgreen there was a water tank and tower built behind the house and a windmill on the property, as well as the small upstairs ‘box room’ being converted into a bathroom. The next generation of Langbeins to live at Broadgreen were Fred and Mary’s son Edward (Ted) and his wife Diana and their children. Two of Ted and Diana’s sons carried on the orchard until 1965 (Broadgreen Society 2020, 15).

The Langbeins owned and lived at Broadgreen until 1965, when Broadgreen was purchased by the Nelson City Council. The project to transform Broadgreen from private residence to public heritage place began in the 1965, so to the people carrying out this work, the Langbein’s time at Broadgreen was contemporary. It is interesting to now see Broadgreen set up as a Victorian home and focusing on the Buxtons, when the Langbein family are also a significant portion of its story. This is reminiscent of Lorrie Mastemaker’s dissertation on Duart House in Havelock North, where she describes history/displays in the house ‘stopping’ at the 1920s (Mastemaker 2010, 73). There is an opportunity for future exhibitions and displays to tell the twentieth century history of Broadgreen. This is being done at Isel House, another NCC historic house in Stoke. As well as the Marsdens, the original Isel occupants, a wealthy Victorian family, there are upstairs rooms with interpretation about the family that lived at Isel after the Marsdens, the Nicholls family. The Nicholls family, Mabel, Archibald and their eight children, lived at Isel from 1938 – 1960 (Stade, 2020). An extra layer of history is added to the fabric of the large Victorian house with the stories of the Nicholls’s,

such as marks in the doorway of the dining room made from moving the family boat through the space after it was worked on in the dining room (Personal Communication, NPM colleagues, 2016).

From Private to Public: Broadgreen's Transformation

In 1965 the NCC bought Broadgreen from the Langbein family. A group of volunteers established the Friends of Broadgreen in order to restore the house and set up the interior reminiscent of the time when the Buxtons were first in residence there. In 1980, the Friends of Broadgreen evolved and the Broadgreen Society Incorporated was established. The society was originally financially responsible for the care and preservation of the collection objects inside the house, but this now is the responsibility of the NCC. In 1968, the Samuels Rose Garden (named after the nurseryman who established the garden) was opened in the grounds of Broadgreen. Christopher Vine, a heritage architect from England who moved to Nelson, had a lot to do with the house's restoration. There was also volunteer labour from students (Nayland College is just a few blocks down the road). As well as help from experts in certain areas, such as the man who restored the original wallpaper in the parlour.

Because the majority of the objects that furnish Broadgreen did not come from past occupants (as opposed to other New Zealand historic houses, e.g., Olveston House in Dunedin and Ewelme Cottage in Auckland, both acquired along with their contents), Broadgreen has the unique quality of being a trove of material culture taken from a cross-section of Nelson's history, representative of the way that the Nelson community came together to donate items for Broadgreen's restoration.

Examples include the armchairs in the study, from the Nelson Provincial Buildings, demolished in 1969 and most likely salvaged by heritage architect Christopher Vine, who was involved in the attempt to save the Provincial Buildings. Vine also restored the chandelier that hangs in the dining room, a relic from the Tyree home, of Tyree Photographic Studio fame. The chandelier was once a gasolier, and William Tyree was a keen purveyor of gas-powered inventions. The original marble fireplace in the dining room was badly damaged in an earthquake and was replaced by one from Dr and Mrs Bett's house in central Nelson. Dr Frances Arnot Blackader Bett was a medical doctor and collector of historical material

who donated a large collection of objects relating to Nelson's history to the NPM, now known as the Bett Collection. In the upstairs bedroom furnished as a nursery, there is a small wooden straight-backed chair, one of two made by Samuel Johnson for his sons using teak from the wreck of the *Fifeshire*. The *Fifeshire* was the New Zealand Company's first immigrant ship to arrive in Nelson in February 1842, and it was wrecked as it left the harbour on Arrow Rock (before the cut had been made in the Boulder Bank). Most Nelsonians now know Arrow Rock as Fifeshire Rock, a Nelson icon visible from the drive around Rocks Road. Also in the nursery is a green cane pram and child's doll donated by well-known Nelson artist Marjorie Naylor. The piano in the parlour was brought out to Nelson by the Saxtons, a wealthy British family who were some of the region's first European immigrants. Many of their belongings are held in the collections of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), NPM, and the Broadgreen textile collection (Broadgreen Society Inc. 2020, 24-27).

There are not many items belonging to the house's original occupants displayed in the house, or in the collection, but some that share small glimpses of Broadgreen's private history. A highlight, although not from the house's owners, is a small pink, glass basket on display in the parlour. It was donated by a woman who worked as a maid at Broadgreen for the Langbeins, who bought it with her first pay of 6d (Broadgreen Society Inc. 2020, 25).

One of the Buxton sisters with descendants is Everhilda, who married William Black. Some objects in the house's collection were donated by members and descendants of the Black family, such as several of the parasols I inventoried during phase two of the inventory project at Broadgreen in February 2021. On display in the house's nursery is a wooden 'colonial cot' that also came from the Black family (Broadgreen Society Inc. 2020, 27).

Traces of Edmund Buxton, his travels and mercantile wealth are represented by the parlour's wallpaper, which he is said to have been purchased at the Paris Exhibition. There are also photographs in the hallway of the Buxton's shop in Nelson and of their family holiday house in Ruby Bay. The Ruby Bay house makes an interesting talking point for visitors, but it would not have been hanging on the wall in the Buxton's day as it was the scene of a family tragedy in 1881. Matilda, the youngest Buxton, had married Henry Buckeridge and had three sons. While they were on holiday, the middle son, Leopold, was swept out to sea in a canoe. His father drowned trying to save him. Leopold was eventually rescued, but the loss of Henry

Buckeridge meant that the Buxton's sold the Ruby Bay house (Broadgreen Society 2020, 13-14).

The combination of female domestic staff employed at Broadgreen and the presence of Martha Buxton and her five daughters, while the house was a private residence, add to the sense of Broadgreen as a family home, a domestic setting, thought of in Victorian times as being the 'woman's sphere'. When visiting Broadgreen now, the visitor is immediately greeted by these feminine themes on a tour of the house, as the entrance is now what would have been the back door, entry through the kitchen courtyard with the dairy adjacent, realms of domestic servants. The kitchen spaces of the house are a dominating feature of the home, the first rooms of the house that visitors enter, and with a strong sense of the past in the way they have been restored and furnished. For example, the original bread oven in the wall, the tiled floor, cast iron cookware, and domestic objects redundant to 21st century life on benches and tables, as intriguing to modern visitors as the cradle butter churn in the dairy.

Former Broadgreen curator Margaret Paul believes this capacity to show the lived experiences of the servants at Broadgreen, in direct comparison with the wealthy family in residence, is one of the strengths of Broadgreen (Paul, 2021). This sense of Broadgreen as a feminine space extends to the upstairs rooms of the house, with objects from the textile collection furnishing the house and subtly revealing the women's work of everyday life: beds covered by intricately worked quilts, framed embroidery and samplers on display, sewing workboxes to hand, dolls on display in the nursery wearing handmade clothing. This sets the scene for Broadgreen House to be a space where women's stories are brought to the forefront.

Broadgreen Historic House Today

Currently, the NCC employs one fulltime staff member to oversee Broadgreen House and its collection: Curator, Heritage Facilities Mahina Marshall (during the course of my research, Marshall's role changed from Heritage Collections Officer to this one), whose role I will discuss in Chapter Two. A team of dedicated Volunteer Guides conduct the front of house and visitor hosting at Broadgreen, and an Education Volunteer works with school groups and develops holiday activities for children and families. The Curator and a volunteer textiles expert work together to create regularly rotating textiles exhibitions in Broadgreen as well as

carrying out extensive research into the textile collection and conducting day to day collection care and larger projects like inventory and registration of new acquisitions.

Broadgreen textile collection and records

The textiles collection is stored in one climate-controlled storage room inside the Broadgreen Centre, next door to the house. The centre was built in the 1990s and contains the information/ticket desk, a staff office space, a small kitchen, bathroom, and a meeting room. The collection is stored on shelves in acid-free museum standard boxes and hanging on custom hangers or rolled (in the case of some quilts). Before I began contract work and helped with Broadgreen's ongoing inventory project, many of the boxes were overpacked due largely to a lack of shelving space, e.g., one box contained around 45 chemises, and although the boxes were labelled with the type of object (such as petticoats or nightwear), the listed contents of the boxes, with object numbers, were not recorded.

During the first inventory project week that I took part in during summer 2020, new rolling shelving was installed in the storage room. While the room was emptied for the new shelving to be built it provided an opportunity to try and inventory the collection, so that objects could be more easily located in future. This work was continued over a week in February 2021. Time had to be set aside for this large piece of work due to a lack of workspace. The function room is almost in daily use by community groups, such as the Embroiderers Guild, so income would be lost by having the room booked out by the inventory project. The amount of work the (at the time) Heritage Collections Officer had under her remit also meant that she was often too busy to dedicate as much time as was needed to the Broadgreen Textile Collection as it was only one facet of her role.

The Broadgreen collection has a unique numbering system, where objects are given a BGT or BGC number (T - Textile and C- Costume - now interchangeable, or BGT usually used). However, the collection data is not stored digitally in a collection management database. Other than a master Excel spreadsheet, all the information is stored in the form of physical copies in filing cabinets. There is a filing system for donors, organised alphabetically and numerically by each donor's unique code. The textile collection has its own filing system - object files are organised alphabetically by type (e.g., bodice, chemise, dress) and within type, numerically by their BGT or BGC number.

Object files include a registration form, filled out with basic details about the item and donor. These forms have also been filled out in detail regarding the description and construction of the garment or textile by someone who clearly has a knowledge of textiles and sewing. Additionally, each object has been meticulously drawn by hand. This is an interesting addition to the collection records as a practise that we no longer see because of the accessibility of digital photography. The drawings of each textile collection object have become an object worth preserving, a collection in its own right. 'Registers are themselves museum objects - 'meta-objects', collections of records about collections, an archive of an archive'. (Swinney 2012, 31).

Donor files include some or all of the following: a donor form listing the donor, items donated and their assigned numbers, signed donation forms, copies of letters of thanks and acknowledgment to donors, provenance notes (family history, copies of photographs, small handwritten notes, etc.).

My background

As I will outline below, my own background in social history collections has been in museums. However, in 2020 I worked on the development of Te Whare Waiutuutu Kate Sheppard House for Story Inc¹, which won the Canterbury Heritage Supreme Award in 2021. In 2019 it was announced that the New Zealand Government had purchased the Christchurch house (to be managed by Heritage New Zealand Te Pouhere Taonga), lived in by iconic New Zealander Kate Sheppard while she led the campaign that resulted in New Zealand becoming the first self-governing country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1893. Story Inc won the contract to develop the visitor interpretation and experience for Kate Sheppard House, working together with the Heritage NZ staff and in consultation with an advisory committee. This was a unique opportunity to assist in the development phase at the inception of a historic house cultural institution. The client had made it clear that they did not want this to be a stereotypical historic house, which fits with my discussion in Chapter Two around the

¹ Story Inc is a company that create and consult on visitor experiences for clients within New Zealand and internationally, such as galleries, museums, science centres, and heritage sites.

assumption that historic house museums are often amateur, unprofessional, and old fashioned.

Before this, my main professional encounter with a historic house museum was volunteering as a room steward at Charles Dickens House in London once a week, when I lived in the UK for two years. The enthusiasm I had for the history I was surrounded by in London in the first half of my stay was obvious when I now consider the fact that I worked full time as a Gallery Assistant at Royal Museums Greenwich and then at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), but that I was still willing to spend one of my two days off doing the same thing, voluntarily, at Charles Dickens House. This had happened because a colleague at Royal Museums Greenwich was an Education Volunteer there. At the time I was interested in museum education so I thought this would be a good way of gaining some experience. I met the team at Charles Dickens House but was asked to be a Room Steward Volunteer instead of an Education Volunteer as I did not have a teaching background. I had not anticipated doing more front of house work, but I loved this small museum from my first visit and decided to take the Room Steward role. I enjoyed it there a lot – visitors from all over the world walked almost reverently between rooms, as though struggling to believe that Charles Dickens had really written at this desk, eaten his dinner at that table. I smiled and gave out information and tried not to let anyone know I had never read a Charles Dickens novel. This was my first experience getting to know intimately a heritage institution that used the everyday, the mundane, the memory of a place, and the material culture associated with a person, to provide the visitor with another layer of experience that they could not get from reading a book or looking at a photograph. Significantly, the main take away from my time at Charles Dickens House was what I learned about the women in Dickens' life. Aside from discovering that this celebrated author was quite an awful person, I learned about the women in his life by being in a domestic space that they had inhabited. Stories of women that would probably not be told if I was instead viewing a museum display about Charles Dickens, the author.

It was also in London that I discovered the power of a stitched object. On my first visit to the V&A I was a member of the public, lacking the notorious red cravat of my Gallery Assistant uniform. I remember walking through the British Galleries on Level 2, in awe of a harpsichord played by Queen Elizabeth I, and the interior of a Tudor room in its entirety remade in one gallery. I came to a glass case with pieces of embroidery inside displaying interesting interpretations of animals, like a fish with a comically human, smiling face. These

pieces of needlework were part of the Oxburgh Hangings, and they were stitched by Mary Queen of Scots during her imprisonment in England around 1570. I sat down on a seat in front of the display and felt overwhelmed. There is something about an object not only belonging to someone from history who, to me, recently arrived from New Zealand, hardly seemed real. I think that textiles add another layer to the feeling and emotion that material objects can evoke. Imagining someone from the past physically making a textile item, whether decorative needlework or piece of clothing, it is something that has been created stitch by stitch. Thread selected, passed through a needle, tied, and broken off at the end of a segment. This links directly to the material cultural analysis aspect of my research that I discuss in Chapter Three, and what specific objects in the Broadgreen textile collection can tell us about women's lives in the past. These pieces of textile material culture can act as agents for sharing untold stories that focus on those whose voices are lost from the traditional historical narrative.

Working in the Nelson Heritage Sector: Nelson Provincial Museum and Broadgreen Historic House

From 2015 - 2018 I worked in the collections team at NPM. First, as a Collection Technician on their inventory project, then in a newly created role as the Social History Curator. Over this time, I became familiar with the history of the Nelson Tasman region and many well-known figures, places, families, and businesses that were materially represented in the social history collection. I also developed gallery and outreach talks that focused on stories and characters in Nelson's history that had links to the museum's collections, with an overall goal of amplifying the voices that were less commonly told, specifically of women.

I resigned from my position in 2018 to move to Wellington and study towards a master's degree at Victoria University. In December 2018 and January 2019, I returned to NPM to work as a contractor, handing over to the new Social History Curator and carrying out more inventory work with the social history collection. At this time, I again worked with Karen Richards, a volunteer textile expert at NPM. Karen also volunteers with the Broadgreen textile collection, and she informed me that Mahina Marshall, the Heritage and Collections Officer at Broadgreen, was seeking a contractor to carry out work with the textile collection.

In February 2019 I was hired as a contractor for the NCC to carry out 160 hours of work cataloguing and repacking the Broadgreen textiles collection. This was funded by the council after a request from the Heritage and Collections Officer, and a donation was made towards this from the Nelson Embroiderers Guild. The work that I was contracted to do by NCC for the Broadgreen textiles collection was as follows:

1. Unpack boxes systematically and identify garments based on their BGT/BGC number.
2. Locate their object file.
3. Manually complete an updated object form including details not included on previous registration form, such as provenance (from donor file) (donor form would also be copied and placed with object file), condition, suitability for exhibition/display and deaccession potential.
4. Reference photograph taken of object.
5. Objects repacked to collection care standard with tissue roll supports etc.
6. Outside of boxes clearly labelled (e.g., Bodice Box 1) with garments and their object numbers listed.

During this time, I began to learn more about dress history and became fascinated with the Broadgreen textile collection. In the past my interest had not been limited to textiles, material culture and social history collections in general were my areas of interest. However, carrying out this project put me physically close to these objects that were physically close to the people in the past whose lives I was so interested in; clothing and worked textiles are by their very nature intimate objects. I began to look at these objects and the stories they could tell us in a different way. Always wanting to find out more about women from the past, so often left out of the mainstream historical narrative, I came to find that the lives of these women could be read, in a way, through their clothing. Therefore, it could be said that my interest in researching the Broadgreen textile collection stemmed from my interest in women's history, combined with my fascination with material culture and social history.

It is in the nature of cloth that it readily absorbs and retains the evidence of its various uses and abuses; over time, its patina becomes a kind of document, requiring historians to bring to bear on it the same awareness of the specificities of its production and consumption, its materiality, artifice and biography, as they do on

texts or images. The cloth itself, its wear and tear, repairs, degradation, accidental and intentional marks, construction with fine or botched stitches, all contribute to the physical, historical record constituted by these objects. (Burman and Fennetaux 2019, 16).

Broadgreen's changes over time

The arc of Broadgreen's life from private dwelling to public heritage site is one that fits in with post-World War Two New Zealand's celebration of its Pākehā past, exemplified by the opening of new exhibitions and heritage sites across the country and the continuation of commemorative celebrations beginning with the 1940 Centennial, the focus of *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, edited by William Renwick (2004). Simultaneously, this encouraged the sharing of domestic and specifically women's histories, through the recognition of the history of the 'every day', a particular element of which was collecting and displaying historic textiles and clothing. My status as a professional insider, having worked at NPM and at Broadgreen, gave me the advantage of having the knowledge of both collections and Nelson Tasman history in order to lead to the questions I seek to answer in my research. Now that I have provided background context to my research, Chapter Two will discuss my research findings, focusing on the analysis of archival research and interviews.

2. Findings: Interviews and Document Analysis

Fig. 3: A plaid bodice from the textile collection and a reproduction crinoline on display in Broadgreen's master bedroom as part of the *Passage to Nelson* exhibition, 2020. Photograph by author.

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss my findings from research carried out in Nelson: two semi-structured interviews and the results of my analysis of archival material relevant to Broadgreen and its collection. My interviews were with current Broadgreen curator Mahina Marshall and with past curator Margaret Paul. My interview with Margaret Paul was more extensive, as Paul worked at Broadgreen for almost forty years and was thus able to tell me about the role and development of the Broadgreen textile collection before I came to know it. Mahina Marshall was able to shed light on the ways that the role of the textile collection is changing over time and it now being in a phase of having recognition for its potential and significance.

The archival records and collection documentation I used included past and current collection records, such as donor files, objects files, exhibition folders, deaccession records. An invaluable source were the folders of chronologically organised archival material that a previous staff member or volunteer/s at Broadgreen had collated over time, mainly including cuttings of newspaper articles featuring Broadgreen. Some other items that are included in the scrapbook-like folders are brief updates on the Broadgreen Society Inc.'s Annual General Meetings, invitations to events at Broadgreen, and bulleted 'highlights' of specific decades.

Interviews

Margaret Paul (past curator, 1978 - 2014)

Margaret Paul began working at Broadgreen after she and her family moved to Nelson and found that their garden had a view of the house. She could see the restoration work happening and went over to speak to members of the Broadgreen Society in its very early days about what they were doing. Margaret began to help as a volunteer with the collections that had already been and were still being donated to Broadgreen. When the custodians - two women from the Broadgreen Society - decided to step down from their work at the house, the NCC asked Margaret Paul to take on a permanent paid position at the house. She accepted, on the condition that she could attend training in museum collection care, paid for by the council. As a result, Margaret Paul attended courses at (what was then) the Dominion Museum, now Te Papa, like the courses National Services Te Paerangi offer now. She also attended training courses that they held elsewhere in the Nelson Tasman region. Over a period of about four years Margaret learned about collection practise at the same time as she was establishing a collection management system at Broadgreen.

Before the Broadgreen Centre was built next to the house, Margaret worked in the house itself. Her 'office' was the butler's pantry, a very small room off the dining room. One of the bedrooms upstairs, still called the Costume Room, was used to store the textile collection and to exhibit the textiles when exhibitions started taking place. Margaret's work with the collection was aided by an assistant with a significant knowledge of textiles and clothing history who helped Margaret in cataloguing the textiles. This assistant drew the meticulous line drawings of every item in the textile collection at the time, which I mentioned in Chapter One.

Mahina Marshall (Heritage and Collections Officer for NCC)

Mahina Marshall began her employment with NCC five years ago, working with programmes for the heritage properties under the council, including Broadgreen. When the curator role at Broadgreen was left vacant for over a year, Mahina took on the role of Heritage and Collections Officer. This encompassed the collections across all NCC Heritage Facilities, including Broadgreen, Isel House and Founders Heritage Park, an outdoor heritage park with heritage buildings as well as a large collection. In Mahina's words, 'It was a huge role, too big for one person'. (Marshall, Personal Communication, 2021). Just this year, Mahina has been given a new title and refocused role: Curator, Heritage Facilities.

My primary mandate [is] the care of Broadgreen House and its collections, as well as overseeing activities at Isel House. I'm thrilled with this change and see it as a huge opportunity to give more time to the Broadgreen collections. I'm looking forward to being able to spend more time on collection care, conservation, and research, as well as developing exhibitions and visitor experiences in the houses. (Marshall, Personal Communication, 2021).

This new title acknowledges the extensive work Mahina has done for Broadgreen and the textile collection in her time there. This includes the new rolling shelving in the textile storeroom, the ongoing inventory project collaborating with NPM and various textile experts, and a vast amount of research into the house, the families who have lived at Broadgreen, and objects from the textile collection for exhibitions. These are just the items on Mahina's development of Broadgreen that relate to the textile collection – there are many other areas including restoration to the cob of the building itself (being carried out when I was there in February 2021), that come under Mahina's remit.

Archival Analysis

Broadgreen House Newspaper Scrapbook

Volunteers at Broadgreen and/or members of the Broadgreen House Society have kept a scrapbook folder over the years containing newspaper articles relating to Broadgreen since it first changed hands from private ownership to the NCC. The folders begin with articles about the house's purchase by the council, the work restoring the physical house, and playful requests for donations of furniture and items to furnish and decorate the house.

Collection Management System - Object Files and Donor Files

When Margaret Paul came to Broadgreen, the collection was recorded in one master record- a book with objects listed. Friends of Broadgreen were not trained museum professionals, they were dedicated volunteers, and it is easy to imagine how much work they had on their hands when Broadgreen underwent its transformation from private dwelling to public historic house. Therefore, it is understandable that a more rigorously maintained collection management system was not established at Broadgreen until Margaret Paul began her role as curator and began professional training and learning about collection best practice at the time, via courses at the National Museum.

The work that Margaret Paul and assistants did over time was to establish a functioning collection management file system, in which every object in the Broadgreen collection has its own object file. The object files are kept in a filing cabinet in the office of the Broadgreen Centre, and Margaret informed me that there were two copies of everything created. The filing system meticulously divides objects into folders by type alphabetically: Aprons, Bodices, Chemisettes, Dolls' clothing, etc. The detail includes Parasols, Umbrellas, and Sunshades all having separate files, as an example. Differentiation is made between babies', children's, men's, and women's versions of universal clothing like nightgowns. Within these object type files, the separate object files themselves are arranged numerically based on their BGT or BGC number and kept in a clear file which also may hold documents relating to provenance, condition reports and the object's identifying drawing or photograph, for example.

Alongside the object files filing cabinet is one that includes donor files. The donor files are arranged alphabetically, with donor's reference codes consisting of a surname-correlating initial and a number. Sometimes the provenance relating to the object/s is in the donor file rather than the object file and referred to on the object's registration sheet (in the object file). This makes sense if a donor has donated a number of objects, and the provenance can be found in one place. But it can also be frustrating when something as key as an object's provenance is not readily available in the object file. When I was carrying out the cataloguing work for Broadgreen in 2019 we were beginning to photocopy the donor file and contents to put with the object file, to take a step out of this process.

This also means that if you are looking up a certain object you can immediately see if it was part of a set or ensemble, for example, rather than stand alone, as the filing system for objects by type might mean a connection between objects is lost (unless the donor file is always referred to), unlike with a computer-based collection management system like Vernon CMS, where separate object records can be linked. This includes not just a set like Rose Ellis's evening gown, gloves, and shoes (see Chapter Three), but if an object was donated inside another object, like a hat box and the hat it originally contained.

An example of this flaw in the paper-based system came to light when I assisted with Phase 2 of the Broadgreen textile collection inventory project in February 2021. One goal of this project was to identify objects for potential deaccession, as well as finding out more about certain objects that may have been previously unknown to current staff. Some textile items were put to one side if they were anomalies, e.g., if it was not immediately apparent what an object was, or if it did not have a number attached, etc. Subsequently, object files would be checked if we could see what an object *might* be e.g., what object type to search under, to find the object record that matched the item in front of us.

One such object was a tablecloth sized piece of pale blue fabric with white embroidered decoration. I recognised the combination of the embroidery pattern on the blue fabric; it reminded me of a gown in the Broadgreen collection. I was familiar with this gown because it was associated with the Hewett family, who I did some research on during my first period of work at Broadgreen. (Ellen Hewett wrote an autobiography, *Looking Back, or, Personal Reminiscences*, in 1910, about moving from Nelson to the North Island when she was married at 15). I checked where the Hewett gown was hanging in the storeroom to compare

the two, and the gown and miscellaneous piece of fabric were a match. The gown, in consistency with its life being worn as a functioning garment, had faded to a much paler blue than the piece of spare fabric. Checking the object records and donor file confirmed that the gown and fabric were donated together, and the fabric was recorded as being possibly a make-at-home bodice. Many steps of this discovery process would be removed with an electronic system, displaying a flaw in the paper-based system. However, speaking to Margaret Paul about the work she put in to create the paper-based system makes me have more appreciation for what an incredibly detailed and thorough cataloguing system it is, starting from very little, that is still functioning decades later.

Analysis and Discussion: Themes

Collecting: ‘Have You Any Fire Dogs, Scotch Hands, A Love Seat or A Spit?’

In our interview, Margaret Paul told me that in Broadgreen’s early days, visitors would be queuing at the door to come inside. One reason for this enthusiasm may have been because members of the public felt as though they had a stake in the project, after a call went out via an attention-grabbing article in the *Nelson Mail*:

Would you by any chance have a spare love seat? Or perhaps a what-not, or fire dogs, a candle-lamp or a spit? Maybe a mangle, a standfree copper or a pair of Scotch hands? To a younger generation these names may have little meaning, but to older people they recall forgotten items from daily Victorian life. And there is a special need for them in Nelson at the moment.

The article then goes on to appeal to Nelsonians by reminding them of their stake in Broadgreen: ‘A lot of work has been done already, but there is still a long way to go in the restoration of the cob house which now belongs to the people of Nelson.’ The article updates the public on how the restoration work is progressing, with the leaking roof fixed, ‘under the experienced direction,’ of Christopher Vine, and referencing working bees, ‘consisting mainly of students from Nelson and Nayland Colleges,’ and Richmond decorator W. H. Shackleton’s work restoring the original parlour wallpaper. It ends with another request for objects to furnish the house:

Lists of needed furnishings have been put up in every room so that anyone able to help can see at a glance what is wanted and where it will fit in. They range from kitchen utensils to a chaise longue, a dining table, hanging and standard kerosene lamps, button-back and leather button chairs, a carver, firescreens, china and glass ornaments, cutlery, china cabinet, candle mould, Scotch hands - in fact, most things which would have been found in such a home in the 1880s or earlier.

It is noticeable in this article requesting donations that textiles, whether household or clothing, were not explicitly sought out from donors to furnish the house. Margaret Paul said that she thought that the reason textiles were donated and accepted anyway was because textiles and clothing are part of a home/house setting, which fits with the Friends of Broadgreen's original mandate to create the experience of a 'lived-in Victorian home'. While some textile objects, such as bed covers, could be put on display in the house as with furnishings, other textiles and especially clothing had to be stored all over the house – under beds and in wardrobes and drawers for example. Margaret Paul described retrieving these in order to catalogue and properly store the textile collection. Although textiles were accepted into the collection as part of the restoration of Broadgreen, it seems as though their future storage and care were not considered in Broadgreen's early days.

Why Broadgreen and not Nelson Provincial Museum?

This was a big question for me early on in terms of the context and development of the Broadgreen textile collection. How had the public come to donate items of significant Nelson provenance to a small historic house instead of the larger and well-established Nelson/Tasman institution, the NPM? This question was reinforced when I was working at Broadgreen and a new donation was made, a shawl belonging to Ann Bird.

Ann Bird was an early English emigrant to Nelson, arriving with her husband and young daughter on the New Zealand Company's first immigrant ship to arrive in Nelson, the *Fifeshire*, in February 1842. The Birds set up a butcher shop on Trafalgar Street, and when Ann's husband died suddenly, she continued to run 'Nelson landmark' (Bishop 2019, 246) Birds Butchers successfully with the help of her children. She died in 1891, a prominent member of Nelson society, exemplified by the procession of 40 carriages at her funeral up to Wakapuaka Cemetery. She left money and land, and a legacy as one of Nelson's first businesswomen (Bishop 2019, 246).

Ann Bird was one of a group of women whose stories I shared in my first gallery talk at NPM about women of early Nelson. My aim was to highlight the oft-forgotten roles of half of the city's population, so often missing from the history books and the gallery walls. This talk was one in a series over my time at NPM. Like Rose Frank, who I introduce in Chapter Three, Ann Bird's story and face were very familiar to me after my time at the museum. Within the NPM collection we can find photographs of Ann in older age, of her children throughout their lives, and a particularly engaging glass plate negative showing the front of the Bird Butcher shop, complete with hanging carcasses, two men in aprons, and a blurry figure in the doorway wearing a crinoline skirt (possibly Mrs Bird in action herself), but there are no material items in the social history collection that belonged to her, nothing that makes this woman feel tangible and three dimensional.

When I arrived at Broadgreen for a period of contract work and staff member Mahina Marshall told me that a shawl belonging to Ann Bird had been donated, I was extremely excited, which soon led to curiosity when I was provided with an additional piece of information: The descendant who had donated Ann Bird's shawl to Broadgreen also had another object that had belonged to Ann: a jewellery box. However, this was not part of her Broadgreen donation, he was planning on donating it to NPM. This felt like an 'a-ha' moment - a contemporary example relating to the question I had about why a significant textile collection had ended up being at Broadgreen. This proved that donors were choosing Broadgreen as a repository for their *specifically textile* donations, to the extent that the same donor would donate non-textile material objects to NPM. This must mean that Broadgreen had a reputation as a place for textile donations to go. But how had this come about?

I discovered that the donor was connected with the Nelson Musical Theatre, which has a large collection of theatre costumes and fits with the tradition, noted in my introduction, of theatre companies the world over using actual historical garments as costumes. Some of these items, when recognised as original, end up being donated to museums or collections like Broadgreen's. This relationship between Nelson Musical Theatre and Broadgreen may have been why the donor of Ann Bird's shawl knew of Broadgreen as a place with a significant textile collection.

In our interview, Margaret said that one thing she found difficult was having pieces of the collection which did not have any provenance recorded. This is no different to how a

contractor like me, or the current staff and volunteers feel now, when they come across a beautiful or fascinating garment that does not have any provenance, or even a donor, associated with it. Margaret said that some object donations were literally left on the house's doorstep. When exhibitions began to be shown and when Broadgreen was open to the public, Margaret began asking those who had donated items to come back to the house and share more information about their donations. Margaret and her colleagues were able to 'fill gaps' in this way, but she expressed disappointment that at the end of the creation of the catalogue, there were still many objects with 'gaps', (Paul 2021). Karen Richards and Mahina Marshall are using this to their advantage now, with an exhibition featuring Broadgreen's dresses that have no provenance. They are instead imagining the lives these dresses may have had.

The new direction for collecting at Broadgreen stems from the recognition of the significance of the Broadgreen textile collection. Current curator Mahina Marshall says that she believes the focus of the collection is shifting. They are now seeing the clothing and textile collection as, 'significant for New Zealand history, and perhaps even the history of clothing and textiles themselves' (M. Marshall, Personal Communication, 2021), rather than focusing on fulfilling a request for donations to a collection to furnish the house in Victorian style, or to fit with the families that lived at Broadgreen from the 1850s to the 1960s. A development with contemporary collecting practices for the textile collection under Mahina Marshall is that:

We are collecting items that are not already represented in the collection, items that appeal because of their rarity, their special significance, or for being representative of a particular textile material or technique of production. (Marshall, Personal Communication, 2021).

This is a direct result of Broadgreen staff recognising the value of the Broadgreen textile collection, and the way that exhibiting the collection can teach visitors about history with an emphasis on women's history and the domestic.

Exhibitions: Sharing the Broadgreen textile collection with the public

Fig. 4: Photographs of an early exhibition at Broadgreen showcasing the textile collection, from a photo album held at Broadgreen.

Under Margaret Paul, exhibitions began to be shown at Broadgreen with the purpose of showcasing the textile collection. Mannequins were bought to model clothes in the house, and later the meeting room in the Broadgreen Centre was used to show the costume and textile collection. Margaret said:

I felt that we had this beautiful collection of all sorts of things in the house, not only textiles and costumes, [and] we really needed to tell the Nelson people about how people lived in Victorian times. Because this was what the house was set up for. Each time we had an exhibition, it usually involved items from the house and collection as well. We showed quite a bit of the collection in various ways. Even furniture and furnishings. We got a set of models to dress, you can get the ambience and feel of what a person's like [with mannequins/models]. Those were very popular. We had people standing at the door waiting to get in to see exhibitions. That's what made Broadgreen House what it is. (Paul 2021)

The importance of displaying historic dress on figures is reinforced by Julia Petrov (2012) when she discusses the way that visitors participate, using their imaginations, when seeing clothing displayed. She says that historical clothing is such a powerful object for learning and memory because we can all imagine what it must have been like to wear a specific item, however elaborate, because we all wear clothing, and that the space left by a dress form or mannequin in a costume display can be a ‘vehicle for fantasy and memory’ (Petrov 2012, 230).

The mannequins so often placed in historic houses or in room settings within museums, add to their interpretation precisely because they are stand-ins for the living humans who, for reasons of conservation, can no longer interact with the spaces as they were meant to. This staging presents evidence of the performance of shared human behaviour using artefacts as props. (Petrov 2012, 236)

Exhibitions Leading to Donations

These exhibitions proved popular and led to more textiles being donated to Broadgreen. Margaret Paul said that it was ‘a very common phrase’, that members of the public would say something like ‘they would never see their donated item again’ if they were to give it to the NPM instead of Broadgreen (Paul 2021). The exhibitions made people feel that their donations would be seen on display if they were to be housed at Broadgreen instead.

This is interesting, an example of the trend in the public viewing a museum as hoarding its objects away from the public (West 2011). An extension of this distrust of the institutional museum that encouraged the public donating to Broadgreen is that many people seem to have found Broadgreen more approachable than NPM. Margaret Paul, in our interview, talked about how before the Broadgreen Centre was built there was no reception or information desk; people literally walked up to the house’s door to donate items. The domestic, familiar setting of a house may have made potential donors feel more comfortable when considering approaching a cultural institution with donations.

Perhaps this is why the Friends of Broadgreen (later Broadgreen Society Inc.) stated in the minutes of their first meeting that Broadgreen was strictly *not* a museum. There was obviously a desire to step away from the traditional concept of a museum; perhaps they wanted to appeal to the museum non-visitor or step away from the idea of glass cases and a

disconnection between visitors and objects. It was said early on that Broadgreen was to be presented as a 'lived in' Victorian home. Whether or not it was intended to, this clearly had a significant impact on the donation of objects to the Broadgreen textile collection. This descriptor of Broadgreen as a non-museum is reinforced in the Broadgreen guidebook, a small paperback edition available for sale that provides a brief history of the house including the Buxtons, Langbeins and the house's restoration and subsequent opening to the public. It also provides a guide to each room and particular 'highlight' objects and their provenance. Under the section on The Broadgreen Society (Inc), it reads:

The original 'Friends of Broadgreen' who were responsible for restoring and setting up Broadgreen made the policy: 'That Broadgreen Historic House be known as a mid-Victorian home, not a museum, and for it to continue as such until if at any time the house and contents were sold or disposed of. (Broadgreen Society Inc. 2020, 33)

At the beginning of my project, I thought that a contribution to the marginalisation of the textile collection at Broadgreen - its relative anonymity, the lack of funding and staff time to care for it - may have been due to the context of its place in a historic house museum compared to a museum. The feminine, unprofessional, domestic space as opposed to the masculine, professional, institution of a museum. However, it seems as though these attributes are what encouraged a lot of donors to feel comfortable donating items to Broadgreen, and not NPM. This 'unprofessional' context, the familiarity of a domestic house setting, enabled Broadgreen's textile collection to develop into a collection that is of great significance to the Nelson/ Tasman region and to New Zealand as a whole. Additionally, visitors and potential donors may also have found Broadgreen more accessible and been less intimidated by the fact that it was mainly staffed by volunteers. There are parallels with my findings and that of Lorrie Mastemaker's research into Duart House in Havelock North (Mastemaker 2010), relating to a historic house being seen by the public as 'unofficial'. Although some elements of 'non-professional' behaviour with collections and a heritage space may make museum professionals uncomfortable at times, there are real benefits to the close engagement with visitors that can stem from a historic house feeling 'unofficial' and less intimidating than an institution like a museum - as I discovered in my interview with Margaret Paul about Broadgreen's exhibitions leading to donations and the way that people expressed to her their preference in donating to Broadgreen over NPM.

This idea of women in smaller heritage institutions and their ‘amateur activity’ is compared to ‘the professional activity of the predominantly male-dominated museum institutions’ in a chapter on the preservation of the material culture of rural Scotland in Donald and Hurcombe’s *Gender and Material Culture in Historical Perspective* (2000). In 1935, Isabel Grant established Britain’s first folk museum, the Highland Folk Museum, on the isle of Iona. A southern counterpart to this was established by Jean Maitland in 1953, the Angus and District Folk Museum, and in 1955 Margaret Michie established the Glenesk Museum. The chapter investigates why the collecting these women did was, ‘neglected by British institutions, such as museums and societies of antiquaries, which were essentially male-dominated’. The idea is discussed in this chapter that these institutions were more interested in foreign rural communities, rather than British, as they were not ‘other’ enough (Donald and Hurcombe, 2000). This links to domestic and social history material culture in the past not being considered ‘museum-worthy’. In New Zealand in the mid-20th century, when women working in New Zealand museums began to display the material culture of social history through costume, period rooms and shop displays, this was progressive and out of the ordinary.

A careful examination of the displays of women and things in museums in the 1950s and 1960s uncovers an intriguing and significant set of processes. These exemplify the active production of meaning through popular forms of history and heritage, which, rather than distorting them, materialized certain styles of women’s history in ways that made sense to large audiences, and which acted as a foil to the production of a modern female present. (Labrum 2009, 325).

Labrum (2018) also states that, ‘these displays of colonial artefacts, domestic interiors, and costumes marked off and materialized a predominantly female past’, (Labrum 2018, 75). This directly relates to Broadgreen’s context in sharing women’s history through material culture in a domestic setting.

Visitors to Broadgreen also appreciated the collection care and practices that were being used to look after the collection. Margaret Paul said, ‘They [visitors] used to compliment us on how things were set up and how we acted with simple things like wearing gloves. And they realised that it was under museum standards that the collections were being cared for.’ (Paul 2021).

Fig. 5 & 6: Photographs from Mahina Marshall and Karen Richards' exhibition *Suffragists at Home*, 2018. Photographs by author.

Records relating to exhibitions at Broadgreen show that the most popular exhibition in the past in terms of visitor numbers was the 1989 exhibition on mourning, which tied in with an exhibition the NPM had on simultaneously on Victorian mourning practises - *Good Grief*. This suggests that more visitors were aware of Broadgreen's exhibition when it was in tandem with an exhibition at NPM - the exhibitions would have promoted each other. This interests me because when I worked at NPM there were quarterly meetings of museums/heritage institutions in the Nelson Tasman region at which staff could meet one another, share ideas and potentially resources. I recall it frequently coming up that there needed to be a way we could promote one another to our visitors - a heritage map or brochure or a way of tying in our exhibitions with one another. There is a Nelson heritage brochure put out by NCC that showcases NPM, Founders Heritage Park and the council-owned heritage properties like Isel House and Broadgreen. But this idea of linking the exhibitions seemed like it was being suggested as a new one. As I do not work at NPM anymore I cannot speak on the current works in progress in terms of collaboration. I know that NPM does link up with other organisations in terms of assistance (for example, NPM collections staff helping with the ongoing textile collection inventory at Broadgreen) and there is a feeling of mutual

support among some Nelson Tasman heritage sites/institutions. But the more direct teaming up of exhibitions, as happened with the grief and mourning exhibition in 1989, was obviously a good one for Broadgreen and may be useful to keep in mind for the future in terms of boosting numbers of visitors to Broadgreen.

Mahina said of Broadgreen's current exhibition work, which involves putting garments from the textile collection on display throughout the house on dress forms and mannequins. This is in contrast with the exhibitions in the past, which Margaret Paul worked on, which at first focused on the 'costume room' and later included displays in the Broadgreen Centre's meeting room.

Exhibition wise, we don't have a gallery as such. The house, set up as a Victorian house in situ is our gallery. Karen and I have done four exhibitions together now, *Age of Grace: Silk and Lace*, *Suffragists at Home: Stitching for a Cause*, *A Passage to Nelson: Unpacking the Past*, and *A Traditional Christmas*. For each exhibition, we bring out different costumes and textiles and tell their stories. We do the same to highlight objects in the house. Often, because there is little provenance I spend the bulk of my time on research. (Marshall, Personal Correspondence, 2021).

Material Culture and Memory

Margaret Paul also talked about visitors recognising certain objects in Broadgreen, such as seeing an object that reminded them of something their grandmother owned, or something that they had at home themselves. This link for people with their own personal lives and families, and the triggering of memories, was an important role that Broadgreen played in connecting its visitors with Nelson and New Zealand history. Margaret Paul said that sometimes certain objects would lead visitors to bring in their own similar examples - not just to donate, but also to show and talk about with Broadgreen staff and volunteers.

Seeing objects in their 'original' setting, in a fully furnished Victorian home, had an impact on visitors that led to their valuing of objects in their own homes or families, as well as encouraging them to donate objects to Broadgreen. It excited people to see objects in their original context instead of 'in glass cases' (Paul 2021). With Broadgreen putting the majority of its collection on display (to furnish/decorate the house) and regularly put on exhibitions (featuring the textile collection), members of the public could donate items with the knowledge that they would see these objects displayed; igniting a feeling that their family

heirlooms were being given as much value as the donors themselves would have bestowed upon them in their own family.

Especially if it was something that someone had treasured all their life and had been part of their family and traditions and things in the way of costume and things and uniforms. People needed to have them shown. And I understand that. If I had something that was extremely important to family and the region, I would be wanting to have the best possible way I could show it. (Paul 2021).

This links to Labrum (2018) describing Auckland War Memorial Museum curator Edna Stephenson being given a tour of Canterbury Museum's 'Canterbury Street' exhibit by curator Rose Reynolds, 'who told the director of the Auckland Museum that "she also understands the personal care of looking after other people's things, not regarding them as merely Museum exhibits."' (Labrum 2018. 86).

Collection Storage

Fig. 7: Broadgreen textile storeroom before rolling storage was installed, 2019.

Photograph by author.

Objects kept in the collection store at Broadgreen are almost entirely its textile collection. Almost all the collection objects of other material are on display furnishing and decorating the house. This means that the house's displays are very full and busy. The irony is that having all objects on display is what made people trusting and fond of Broadgreen and encouraged them to donate originally, whereas this method of display would now be considered unfashionable and not best practice in a historic house setting.

Compare with the 2018 redevelopment of Experience Wellington's Nairn Street Cottage, for example. The cottage has been pared back to the bare minimum furnishings; for example, a bedroom upstairs has a single bed with one small toy sitting on it. It makes the visitor pay more attention to the house itself as object, such as children's heights in pencil on a door frame, and the intention may be to take away the 'distractions' of objects that do not hold provenance directly to the house or its inhabitants. This is in stark contrast with the bedrooms at Broadgreen, which hold furniture but also many personal items, such as a dresser with a jewellery box and jewellery, and a bed made up with items from the textile collection. Even some objects fill the house that cannot be seen by the visitor - items in the drawers of a

duchess or writing desk, or an ornate wooden box with hair ornaments inside, for example. It would be interesting to compare visitor feedback between Broadgreen and Nairn Street Cottage – Nairn Street has clearly been redone in line with a museum professional's vision and seems to be an attempt to distance itself from 'old fashioned' historic house displays, as opposed to the 'unprofessional' way that Broadgreen was originally set up and furnished, with a 'the more, the better' approach in terms of objects and furnishings on display. This is a case of the people setting up these heritage sites adhering to museum best practise as opposed to being of a generation that celebrates the past due to their own memories (Mastemaker 2010). But which do visitors prefer?

The collection storeroom at Broadgreen was originally one of the upstairs bedrooms of the house, still known as the 'costume room' for this reason. Margaret Paul spoke to me about how much a purpose-built storeroom was needed for the textiles before the Broadgreen Centre was built (Paul 2021). This came when the centre was built in the 1990s, and although the room is small, it is temperature and humidity controlled and made a huge difference to Paul's work with the textile collection, especially including the office and workspace that meant she could move out of the butler's pantry.

In early 2020, new rolling shelving was installed in the storeroom to make better use of the space available. This became an element of Mahina Marshall's inventory project, as it was considered prudent to begin an inventory of the collection while the storeroom had to be emptied.

Fig. 8: Broadgreen textile storeroom with new rolling shelving installed, 2020.
Photograph by author.

Programmes: ‘Playing dress ups’

Fig. 9: Reproduction children's dresses at Broadgreen House, purpose-made, 2020. Photograph by author.

An education volunteer at Broadgreen works with education groups and public programmes for children and families. Classes come to the house for educational visits, and Victorian-era activities are planned for school holidays. One day when I was working at Broadgreen a class of Year 9 Nayland College students were entertaining themselves with the Victorian-era outdoor games that the Broadgreen educator had set up on the house's lawn. I spoke to the educator after they left, and she told me that even the teenaged school visitors love to try on the reproduction dress-ups kept in the upstairs 'box room' of the house (which also has children's interactives/playthings, e.g., a dollhouse). Recently, Mahina has had new children's reproduction Victorian clothing made for Broadgreen, including dresses (pictured),

petticoats, breeches, shirts, and waistcoats. The fabric for the dresses was chosen in consultation with a book on historic textiles to find era-appropriate fabric. The importance of learning through dressing up in period costume, for young and old, at heritage sites, is not to be looked down upon. There is a link between this and the display of historic clothing, enhancing the visitors' understanding of clothing they may see exhibited in the house but cannot touch, by allowing them to simulate the wearing of artefacts by trying on costumes.

It is clear from the archival records of Broadgreen's newspaper presence over time that Broadgreen used to draw large crowds to public events, particularly its annual Rose Day festivities. However, putting on a large event like this one each year is like any other issue that Broadgreen faces – it needs a great deal of staff time and funding in order to happen.

Funding: Curator's office or butler's pantry?

'Adequate funding is the major obstacle that historic houses struggle with continuously.' (Bonilla 2006).

Initially, I thought that Broadgreen fits the model of the international trend that I came across in my literature review for 1960s/1970s historic house museums and collections being optimistically set up, then running out of funding and staff in the long term (Taylor 2002). This seems to be true in terms of visitors and the local community being more excited about the house early on, but in terms of the common issues of funding and the subsequent issues that arise like staffing and resources, it deviates from this model. What I have discovered through archival research and from interviewing former curator Margaret Paul, is that it was a struggle from the start in terms of funding and staff. The same issues that affect Broadgreen today were present during its establishment.

Margaret Paul, as curator, did not work full time and had to do many things outside of caring for the collection. Although Margaret was curator at a time when Broadgreen was popular and received consistent visitor numbers, she initially struggled to keep up with the workload afforded to her as the only paid staff member. She was eventually given help from an assistant one day a week after expressing her needs to the NCC. She also struggled with getting adequate storage for the Broadgreen textile collection for some time. The challenge, it

seems, was always to get the textile collection cared for at museum standards of best practice. Speaking with Margaret Paul about her time at Broadgreen made me realise that Broadgreen, like many heritage institutions, has struggled for funds since its beginning. This is not a change or a new thing that has occurred due to changing attitudes over time and is exemplified by the newspaper article (see below) from the first years of Broadgreen's restoration in which the Mayor of Nelson criticised Broadgreen's spending.

The following article was cut out from the *Nelson Mail* and kept in the Broadgreen archival news scrapbooks, with the handwritten annotation, 'paper cutting date approx 1967 68 or 69', putting it very early on in Broadgreen's restoration and opening to the public.

MAYOR CRITICISES BROADGREEN COSTS:

Over expenditure at Broadgreen by \$2108 was criticised by the Mayor, Mr D. N. Strawbridge, at the Nelson City Council's meeting last night.

Replica costumes and patterns: Valuing textiles and raising funds for Broadgreen

'Colonial Costume No. 1'

Fig. 10: Cover sheet of the 1840s gown, ‘Colonial Costume No. 1’ replica pattern sold by Broadgreen during Nelson’s 150th Anniversary celebrations. Photograph by author.

In our interview, Margaret Paul told me about ways that they managed to bring in small pockets of income during her time at BROADGREEN. One of these was through the hiring out of replica costumes (Paul 2021). This started in an interesting way, that I think is representative of the community of Nelson and its relationship with heritage in the past compared with the present day. In 1992, Nelson celebrated 150 years since the arrival of the first New Zealand Company immigrant ship, the *Fifeshire*, on February 1st, 1842. Celebrations included a re-enactment of the ship’s arrival at Tahunanui beach, with large crowds, some in costume, including a 2-year-old me with my family.

Fig.11: The author attending the Nelson 150th Anniversary celebrations at Tahunanui Beach, 1992. Photograph by Trish Bray.

Margaret said that in the lead up to the 150th celebrations, Broadgreen fielded enquiries about the hiring of costumes, with Margaret having to explain that the collection items were not for hire or wearing. Broadgreen decided instead to have a pattern created of an 1840s gown, adapted from a Janet Arnold pattern with the assistance of the sewing/textiles teacher at Nayland College. This pattern was made available for sale, and those that purchased it were encouraged to donate the gown to Broadgreen after the events. Some people who bought the

pattern had a dress made, and others sewed their own. Broadgreen also hosted workshops where people could make their gowns together and receive help. Margaret Paul said these were ‘very successful’, and ‘almost got to the point where we couldn’t cope!’ (Paul 2021). The gowns that were donated after they had been used for the 150th celebrations then made up a collection of replica costumes that could be hired out for a fee, creating another small income stream for Broadgreen. Broadgreen became known for its costume hire, so as well as being income generating, this project helped to raise Broadgreen’s profile, Margaret Paul explained (Paul 2021).

It is hard to imagine something like the gowns and in a broader sense the 150th celebrations receiving the attention and community support now that occurred in 1992. A key reason for that is the changing discourse around the colonisation of Aotearoa. For example – the massive backlash to the ‘Tuia 250’ Cook commemorations planned for 2019 – 250 years since Cook and the crew of the *HMS Endeavour* came to Aotearoa, long described as the ‘discovery’ of New Zealand – a land already occupied by Māori. This change in New Zealand’s commemorations of its colonial history from the 20th century to today is the focus of Rebecca Nuttall’s thesis (2016) discussing Gisborne’s celebrations of the bicentennial (200th anniversary) and sesquicentennial (250th anniversary) of Lieutenant James Cook’s arrival in New Zealand in 1769. In 1969, the commemorations referred to a ‘Cook Week’, ‘Cook Year’ and ‘Cook National Day’ (Nuttall 2016, 45). Nuttall states that, ‘It is fair to say that the commemorations of 1969 were largely European focused. The Māori narrative appears absent in these representations, or otherwise as a historic ‘prequel’ to events.’ (Nuttall 2016, 56). Compare this with the sesquicentennial’s focus away from Cook and onto topics like navigator Tupaia and Polynesian voyaging (Nuttall 2016, 68).

The sense of commemoration and national pride in New Zealand’s ‘pioneer’ past is the same setting in which Broadgreen was created to begin with in the 1960s, when New Zealand and its heritage institutions were seeing a trend in celebrating New Zealand’s Pākehā settler history after the 1940 Centennial, commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Labrum 2018, 78). Te Papa curator Claire Regnault (2021), like Labrum, refers to the way this influenced textile collections in New Zealand museums, when she talks about the active collection of textiles and dress by staff at the Dominion Museum in the 1950s:

This was in part a response to a growing interest in New Zealand's colonial past among Pākehā New Zealanders, fuelled by a series of settler centenaries, with the 1940 Centennial marking one hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. These celebrations of 'material progress' and the 'pioneering spirit' included exhibitions, re-enactments, pageants and fashion parades, which encouraged descendants of the early settlers, usually daughters or granddaughters, to donate their family heirlooms to their local museums, and also to what was by now called the Dominion Museum. (Regnault 2021, 10).

Broadgreen and its restoration, public popularity and celebrations of Nelson's pioneer past, as well as the specific example of the reproduction 1840s gowns for Nelson's 150th celebrations, fit into this wider national context, which is also recognised and discussed in the work of Dr Bronwyn Labrum, in the way that post-war New Zealand encountered a new age of sharing women's history through material culture, often via female staff at museums and heritage sites. Margaret Paul as a heritage professional championing textile collections fits into this, discussed in Labrum's essay 'Women "Making History" in Museums', about three women working at Auckland Museum, Canterbury Museum and the Dominion Museum after WWII. These women were at the forefront of the trend for displaying and interpreting 'history from below' – the history of everyday lives, which included women's history. This was done through material culture displays and exhibitions highlighting textile and costume collections, objects of domestic life, and street and shop scenes. Labrum's writing offers an alternative to the way we view this dismissable element of past heritage practice in New Zealand. In Labrum's chapter in *Material Women*, 'The Female Past and Modernity', she says that:

The successful efforts of Reynolds [Dominion Museum curator Rose Reynolds] and others to collect and display the female past in this period, albeit in an imperial and 'pioneer' framework and in the mode of 'period rooms', require us to reevaluate the importance of fashion, clothing and dressing up in the construction of the female past. Their efforts are a key example of the materialization of history that is easy to overlook as ephemeral and middlebrow'. (Labrum 2009, 334-335)

This 'construction of the female past' is a key factor in the importance of textile collections in museum and heritage site collections, a fact that I aim to explore in this thesis, continued in Chapter Three via a close inspection of case study objects from the Broadgreen textile collection.

‘Christening Gown For Hire’

When I came across a cardboard box labelled ‘Christening Gown for Hire’ during the first stage of Mahina Marshall’s inventory project for the Broadgreen textile collection, I assumed that this was a remnant of past collection practises at Broadgreen; an item of the collection being hired out for public use. However, when I spoke to Margaret Paul, I discovered that replica christening gowns were made for hire after Broadgreen was approached by members of the public asking if one was available for use, similar to the situation with the 1840s gown. She said they had, ‘a considerable amount’ of people who would come in and ask if Broadgreen had a christening gown that could be borrowed for a christening, sometimes because they could not find their family christening gown (Paul 2021). Broadgreen staff would inform them that the collection items were not available for loaning out to the public. Paul said they would respond by telling visitors, ‘[The christening gowns are] for the collection and the collection alone.’ She then explains their next step: ‘We thought about it; we could make some money and make replicas for people to hire.’ (Paul 2021).

Thinking that a christening gown from the collection was hired out for public use when I saw that box is an example of the assumptions that I made coming to my work at Broadgreen about past practises there. In my experience working with collections at Nelson Provincial Museum, too, I think this is easy to do when looking at the work of our predecessors. This is especially so when practises have changed dramatically over time, to the extent that esteemed institutions like the Victoria and Albert Museum and New Zealand’s own national museum have had people dress in their costume collection in the past (Regnault 2021, 10). Smaller things, like textiles being washed or fixed, best practice now tells us that such interventions should not be carried out by collection practitioners without conservation skills and experience. When I found a circa 1990s photograph of someone wearing a gown that I recognised from the Broadgreen Collection in an old filing card system (used to be the donor files), I assumed it was a Broadgreen volunteer or staff member. I now realise it may have been, but it could also have been a family member or previous owner before the gown was donated, as I have seen with other collection items (historic clothing used as family dress ups by descendants etc).

This all makes me realise the irony of investigating the potential marginalisation of the Broadgreen Textile Collection, including the relevance of its context as a small regional

historic house museum, and comparing this to the ‘professional’ institution of a museum, but having my prejudice and assumptions about the amateur nature of small museums / heritage houses come into play. Of course, what constitutes best practice changes over time, but speaking with Margaret Paul taught me that her work with the Broadgreen Collection (and thus, work in general with the Broadgreen collection for a significant period) was up to professional museum standards at the time, where possible, based on staff time and funding.

Fig. 12: Box labelled ‘Christening Gown For Hire’, 2020. Photograph by author.

‘The Broadgreen Sampler’

Available for sale at Broadgreen now is a replica pattern for an 1811 sampler that is displayed upstairs at Broadgreen outside the Costume Room. The sampler (BGT581) was stitched by Catharine Walton, born in Worcester, England in the late 1700s. Catharine married George Yeomans in 1820, but died of pneumonia as a young woman after she was caught in a snowstorm while out driving in a coach. Catharine’s daughter, Mary Ann Yeomans, was an accomplished seamstress who made her mauve silk wedding dress, also in Broadgreen’s collection. Mary Ann’s daughter Fanny came to New Zealand in 1913 with her husband and

daughter Ruth. Ruth, Catharine's great-granddaughter, donated the wedding dress and sampler to Broadgreen (Broadgreen object and donor files, 2020).

The sampler is embroidered in cross and eyelet stitch on unbleached linen ground and features samples of numbers, letters, and symbols. Some motifs include strawberries, hearts, and roses in urns. Angels flank the bible verse:

Balaams Wish
Let me die The Death of The
Righteous And Let My Last
End Be Like his

It is signed Catharine Walton's name and the year 1811. Documentation from the National Museum Conservation Unit – Textiles, show that Broadgreen paid to have the sampler conserved in 1988. The form, signed by Broadgreen Curator Margaret Paul, shows that the National Museum's Textile Conservator, Valerie Carson, outlined the process and costs which would have the sampler re-mounted and cleaned (Broadgreen object and donor files, 2020).

A replica of the sampler is framed and hangs in the reception of the Broadgreen Centre. It was through asking about this replica version that I learned about the pattern for sale, which was created in 2009. With the pattern, the purchaser receives an A4 sheet of information about the provenance of the sampler and a message from the two women who created the reproduction pattern, with the heading 'The Broadgreen Sampler':

We have enjoyed the challenge of re-creating this charming piece of embroidery and we wish to thank the curators of Broadgreen House for their patience and forbearance and to Catharine's family who have been so kind in providing the background story about their great, great grandmother. This brought the sampler to life for us. Also a special thanks to members of the Nelson Embroiderers' Guild for their expert advice and guidance. We hope you enjoy stitching the sampler as much as we enjoyed recreating it. (Ashton and Johnson 2009.)

A sampler is a particularly symbolic item for Broadgreen to celebrate through the creation of a reproduction pattern. Within textile-based material culture, samplers are unique because they often state the maker's name and the date made, (like Catharine Walton's sampler) with some including a location also, making them 'powerful biographical documents' for women

and girls (Cramer 2020, 64). Samplers are also representative of female education, thus a key jumping off point for stories of girls and women's education in the past.

Fig. 13: A framed reproduction of Catharine Walton's sampler hanging in the reception of the Broadgreen Centre. Photograph by author.

Both the dress pattern and sampler pattern being made available for sale to raise funds for Broadgreen is indicative of the domestic nature of the establishment and the way that textiles are respected in this setting. Embroidery and dress making, traditional 'women's work' are trades that are appreciated and encouraged, via the patterns for sale, by staff, volunteers, and supporters of Broadgreen.

Development of a collection

One of the biggest consequences of the under-resourced and overstretched community of house museums is that it is difficult for them to share their successes with others – they just don't have time... There is lots of good work happening in house museums but we're simply not aware of it. (Balgooy and Turino 2019, 4).

There were many links between the results of the interviews with Margaret Paul and Mahina Marshall and through the archival analysis. These emerged as themes including collecting,

exhibitions, funding, collection storage, and the sale and hire of replica costumes and patterns.

It became clear doing my research that there are parallels between Margaret Paul's previous work at Broadgreen and Mahina Marshall's currently. Although Broadgreen saw a period of large visitor numbers and excitement after it underwent transformation, its purchase by the NCC in 1965 coinciding with the national fervour at the time for celebrating New Zealand's 'colonial' past, the struggles for funding and resources to adequately care for the textile collection were still part of Margaret Paul's time with Broadgreen.

The exhibitions showcasing the textile collection at Broadgreen, started by Margaret Paul, saw a significant rise in visitors to the house and the community feeling connected to Broadgreen, as evidenced by the increase in donations linked to exhibitions. Mahina Marshall, with the invaluable assistance of volunteer textile expert Karen Richards, has continued the exhibiting of the textile collection at Broadgreen. The work of Mahina and Karen has begun to raise Broadgreen's profile once more, via the recognition of the textile collection as nationally significant.

Margaret Paul's work to create a cataloguing system for the entire Broadgreen collection was a huge task and left an important legacy for future work at Broadgreen. This is being utilised via an inventory project currently underway led by Mahina. The next step will most likely be Broadgreen having a digital collection management system at some point. The work that they are able to carry out using a paper-based system is admirable. Things like the inventory project, and the new shelving in the textile storeroom, show that Mahina's work for Broadgreen is making headway in improving the care and use of the textile collection for perpetuity. Having now examined the institutional context for the objects in the Broadgreen textile collection, Chapter Three will look at what these objects themselves can tell us, through material culture analysis of a group of case study objects.

3. Material Culture Analysis: Letting Objects Speak

‘Clothing is a form of material memory, carrying the imprints of its intimate relationship to the body’. (Kim and Mida 2018, 62).

Introduction

When I began working with the Broadgreen textile collection, the first box I opened was a large acid-free box of nineteenth century women’s bodices. The bodices were the perfect start to my cataloguing work, and they drew me into the collection completely. There was a smart bronze-coloured silk bodice with large leg-o-mutton sleeves, as though it had stepped straight out of a Tyree Studio portrait from 1890s Nelson. A cobalt blue and cream bodice missing one sleeve, like we had caught it part way through being repurposed and the fabric reused for another garment or adjusted to fit with the changing fashions of the time, a common recycling of fabric that has happened throughout history. I loved the inside of these garments, the internal work and handstitched finishes, the boning with contrasting stitches in large X’s, pale pink or yellow highlighted against a black lining. Sometimes, the hidden bodice lining presenting a surprise within itself – a striking colour left unfaded by sunlight. Tapes, belts, hidden hooks and eyes, lace cuffs. I came across a pair of bodices in matching floral brown and cream fabric – one with a high neck, long sleeves and buttoned down the front; The other, short sleeved with a wide, open neckline. I was excited to discover this pair- a day bodice and evening bodice to alternate with the same skirt, and not listed as such in their records.

Discoveries like this one, which make a collections professional like me feel as though they have unlocked another clue into the garment’s life, are so satisfying. A more elaborate example of this was curator Mahina Marshall and textiles volunteer Karen Richards finding three pieces of beautifully embroidered fabric that were listed as a collar and cuffs. Karen carried out research and contacted the V&A, who confirmed her hunch that they were three pieces of a stomacher – part of an elaborately embroidered nineteenth century haute couture bodice, reminiscent of something created by iconic international designer Charles Frederick Worth.

I also remember that some of the garments in the bodice boxes were clearly suffering from being so tightly packed. One specific garment had such sharp creases in its sleeves from the weight of other garments packed on top of it that the outer fabric was shattering along these creases. It felt that the repacking I was doing alongside the cataloguing work was extremely important for the longevity of these collection items. Repacking, of course, made the collection take up more space – dividing over-filled boxes into new boxes, meaning some boxes could not fit on shelves in the already full storage room. Boxes were stacked up under the table I was working at, on my chair, or the table itself at times. This was before the new rolling storage was put in.

Fig. 14: Two matching bodices from the Broadgreen textile collection, for evening and day wear, in the textile storeroom. Photograph by author.

After the bodices, and working with the vast chemise collection, I began to feel that I had stepped into a new level of working with material histories – the intimacy of working with clothing that has been worn next to the skin. I unpacked delicately embroidered chemisettes and practical, sturdy corset covers, layer after layer between tissue. Some had small splashes of colour or identifying elements – a blue knitted drawstring tie through the neck; a

handwritten name on the inside hem in dark ink; a button restitched with bright red cotton; a crocheted butterfly motif. Some of these undergarments were obviously worn by women of different social classes, but they all had things in common regardless of who their wearers were: sweat stains under the arms; discolouring, particularly yellowing of white fabric, often around the neck; sometimes a stain from something having been spilt; or small, handstitched mends. The relevance of this element of close material analysis of clothing is referenced in Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim's *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-based Research in Fashion* (2018).

Garments and accessories are distinctly different in material form and character from Other objects of material culture, in that objects of dress bear some relationship to the body that wore them... The fact that dress is worn on the body also means that the actions of the body become imbued in the cloth, especially at points of contact with body parts that move, such as the elbows, the knees, or parts that sweat. These marks provide evidence of a personal history in the garment's biography... This intimate relationship to the body offers the researcher additional clues to create a narrative for that artifact. (Kim and Mida 2018, 27)

Fig. 15: Detail of a named chemise in the Broadgreen textile collection.
Photograph by author.

In this chapter, I aim to tie the analysis of these textiles to the main themes of my research around the connections between textiles as objects of feminine material culture and their place in historic houses, and as objects of storytelling; how they can be used to share a

distinctly women's history. These objects will illustrate the inextricable links between the feminine, the domestic, textiles and women's history.

I will highlight a selection of objects from the collection and examine them through close material culture analysis, using both my experience as a social history curator to describe the garments from a curatorial perspective, as well as assessing their provenance and what else we know about these items from the records held at Broadgreen. This will then be related to the relevant theory to discuss what can be learnt from these objects.

Rose Frank's Garden Party Dress, BGT234

In 2017, the Tyree Studio Photographic Collection was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. This collection, comprising 87 years of photographic negatives of Nelson, New Zealand from shortly after European settlement, survives in the care of the Nelson Provincial Museum and the Alexander Turnbull Library. That it survives at all is because of a woman called Rose Frank (Sivignon 2017).

Rosaline Margaret Frank (1864 – 1954) began working for Tyree Studio, owned by brothers Fred and William Tyree, in 1886 when she was 21. She worked as an assistant before managing the studio while William was in Australia from 1895 (Fred had moved to Golden Bay), and again when William moved to Australia permanently in 1910. In 1914, Rose purchased the studio from William Tyree, with the agreement that she kept the name of Tyree Studio. Because of this, the brothers are more often associated with the plethora of photographs that have survived under the Tyree name, although Rose Frank owned and ran the studio until she retired in 1947.

Fig. 16: Rose Frank. Photograph, Nelson Provincial Museum: Frank, Miss, Tyree Collection 39927.

Rose Frank had the foresight to donate the Tyree Studio Collection (which also comprised some work from other Nelson photographers), around 200,000 glass plate negatives, to the Nelson Historical Society before she died in 1954. (Around 1,100 negatives from the 1880s and 1890s were sold to the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1948, mostly landscape scenes.) These glass plate negatives had been kept in a fireproof safe built by William Tyree behind his studio. The Nelson Historical Society then donated the collection of glass plate negatives to the Nelson Provincial Museum in the early 1970s. When the UNESCO inscription was announced in the *Nelson Mail*, NPM Senior Photographic Curator Darryl Gallagher said of Frank, 'It was her life's work. She did want to make sure the collection got handed on.' (Sivignon 2017).

There are many portraits of Rose in the Nelson Provincial Museum Tyree Studio collection, which together give some insight into one of New Zealand's first female professional photographers. She is consistently photographed dressed in the height of fashion, following the trends through the decades, such as the princess bodice of the 1880s, the leg-o-mutton sleeves and decorative bodices of the 1890s, and even some taken outside the studio showing her with a group of friends wearing the uniform of the turn of the century's 'new woman' -

plain skirt, shirtwaist with leg-o-mutton sleeves, a tie, and a boater hat. There are also many photos of Rose and her family, with her sister Josephine and many joyful shots with her nieces and nephews.

When I began contract work for the Broadgreen textile collection in 2019, coming to the collection having worked as the Social History Curator for NPM made me acutely aware of objects held by Broadgreen that related to figures in Nelson/Tasman's history that I had come to know through my work at the museum. Especially exciting was when these objects filled a gap in NPM's collection. In 2017 my colleagues and I took part in a documentary series by Jam TV, following writer Mark Twain's travels through New Zealand in the 1860s, and focusing on the quirky and noteworthy people or events that happened in the locations he visited on his tour at that time. My manager spoke with host Oscar Kightley about the infamous Maungatapu Murderers, I talked to him about the history of the Griffin's biscuit and confectionary factory, and the photographic curator shared stories about Tyree Studio and Rose Frank. A descendant of Rose was also invited to be interviewed, and she brought with her a dress of Rose's that had survived within the family. Seeing the clothing of this remarkable woman displayed on a dress form, it felt like she was in the room with us. More so, because not a lot of material culture exists in the museum's collection that represents the well-known photographers from Nelson's past beyond the large photographic collection. So, to see the dress of Rose Frank felt particularly special, more so because of her apparent interest in fashion, seen through all the striking outfits she wears in the NPM Glass Plate Negative Collection's many studio portraits of her. What I did not realise, until beginning my work at Broadgreen, was that a few minutes away from my office and NPM's collection storage facility at Isel Park in Stoke, a gown belonging to Rose Frank was hanging on a padded hanger in the textile store at Broadgreen.

In 1900, Rose attended a garden party at Australia's Government House in Sydney. For this occasion she wore a commercially made pink floral 3-piece gown, consisting of a bodice, skirt, and underskirt. The bodice and skirt are made of the same floral printed muslin and the underskirt is a pale pink lawn. The bodice alone looks like a long-sleeved blouse, with pintucked sleeves ending in buttoned cuffs. It has a cream Bedfordshire lace high collar that is slightly discoloured with age and would have been a stand-up collar when Rose wore it. Now, it has softened and falls over itself, more like a fold-over collar we would know today. Many of Rose's portraits in the Tyree Studio Collection show her wearing bodices with

similar high, stand-up lace collars. The bodice has a front fastening with brass hooks and eyes. When worn with the skirt, the gown would look as one rather than a separate bodice and skirt.

The outer skirt is gored and closes at the waistband with one hook and eye. It has a pocket and is decorated with three frills of the same material at the hemline. The underskirt fastens at the left side with one button and a hand-worked buttonhole. It has a tape drawstring at the waist that ties at the back and seven frills around the hemline.

Fig. 17 & 18: BGT234, Rose Frank's gown and detail of gown bodice (fig. 18). Broadgreen textile collection. Photographs by author.

Conservation work was carried out on Rose Frank's gown in 2010 by a Broadgreen staff member who documented both her recommendations prior to conservation work being carried out and what she had done with the garment as per those recommendations, recorded after the work was undertaken. Prior to conservation, she described the overall condition of the garment as 'fair' (on a scale of poor, fair, good, excellent) and says the fabric is 'torn and frayed in places, generally deteriorating'. On the Description of Work Undertaken form,

approved with signature from curator Margaret Paul, the conservation work is described as follows:

Bodice: Back seam restitched, sleeve seam repaired and tear repaired. Buttons [at cuffs] secured.

Skirt: Repaired back seam/opening.

Carefully ironed. Further work needed as condition report.

The inside waistband of the outer skirt has a fabric label, cream and gold coloured, still well-attached to the garment but fraying so that the words on it can hardly be deciphered.

However, earlier Broadgreen staff have recorded that the label reads:

*London Clothing Com.
Bond Street
London*

Bond Street in London's West End has a history of association with luxury brands and fashionable retail. In 1892, Charles Eyre Pascoe wrote in *London of To-day - An Illustrated Handbook for the Season* that:

The Shops for Ladies comprise the principal part of the shops of London; and if you wish to see the best of these, and the latest novelties direct from Paris, go into Regent Street, Bond Street, Piccadilly, and Oxford Street. (Pascoe 1892).

It is not known whether Rose Frank bought the gown herself at Bond Street on a trip to England, or if it was bought for her by family or friends, or if she sent away to the London Clothing Company in Bond Street and ordered it from the comfort of her home in Nelson, New Zealand. What we do know is that the brand label on Rose's gown, associating her clothing with fashionable London society, fits with the impression Rose gives as a fashionable woman with an appreciation for clothing and fashion, as evidenced in photographs of her in the Tyree Studio Collection. It is also not recorded in the gown's object file why Rose Frank was attending a garden party at Government House in Sydney, or the date that the party was on. National Library of Australia's Trove database has issues of The Sydney Morning Herald from around the time Rose wore her gown to an event at Sydney's Government House. The gown is recorded as being from circa 1900, rather than a specific year. A quick search shows that garden parties at Government House were a regular event, held at least annually if not more frequently. Rose could easily have fitted in with the attendees of the Government House Garden Party on Wednesday 11 September 1901,

described in an article in the Herald. Under the subheading 'THE DRESSES', three different ladies were reported to have been wearing pink floral muslin, like Rose Frank's. An example of one guest's attire reads: 'Miss Hope Faithfull's pink floral muslin was trimmed with white lace and worn with [a] floral toque' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, September 11 1901). A fashionable woman like Rose Frank would most likely have worn a hat, like Miss Faithfull, to complement her gown.

Interestingly, the Broadgreen donor file associated with this gown is 180/F, Miss R Frank of Nelson. Listed in this file as donations to Broadgreen are the gown and part of a handheld banner screen (BGT769) which was hand painted by Rose Frank. The donor file is stamped with 'deceased'. However, Rose Frank died in 1954, when Broadgreen House was still a private residence. Were these items donated to Broadgreen by someone who wished to donate them in Rose Frank's name? Or did she have a descendant who was also 'R. Frank' who donated them? Rose Frank never married or had children, so perhaps the donor was a descendant through one of her nieces or nephews. A loan form in the gown's object file indicates that the gown was loaned to Nelson Provincial Museum in 1998 as it was given the loan number B.20.98.

It feels so personal to look at clothing worn by a woman who is famous, in a way, yet of whom relatively little is known. There is Rose Frank - the woman whose photograph we see in many Tyree studio portraits - whose short biography is often repeated when the Nelson Provincial Museum's glass plate negative collection is being described, or early New Zealand photography, or the foresight with which the Tyree Studio Collection was saved for perpetuity. Then of course, there is Rose Frank the sister, the aunt, the daughter, the businesswoman, the photographer. Rose Frank in private. Rose Frank caught in photographs: With her sister and a black dog in a garden or park, or at a large family picnic. Rose Frank who selected this gown, who touched the delicate muslin between her thumb and forefinger and admired the colour, the pattern of large, pale flowers.

Being close to clothing allows us to imagine the lives of women from the past in a way that not much else can, in the absence of written material, like personal diaries or letters, and in the absence of their imprint on the 'official'/ mainstream historical narrative - dictated often by men. Examining Rose Frank's gown allows us to more readily imagine or understand how

Rose moved through the world (metaphorically and physically) and how she chose to present herself. This garment builds on the narrative of Rose as a fashionable, worldly woman.

Clothes... are some of the most intimate and compelling of all social history objects because of their close connection to the body, and a careful study of the physical details of a garment can often reveal much about its original use, as well as its successive “lives”. (Kim and Mida 2015, 84).

Rose Frank’s pink muslin gown is an example of a unique material object owned and worn by a woman of regional and national significance. Rose Frank is a key figure in New Zealand’s photographic history and the person behind the existence of the vast UNESCO recognised Tyree Studio Collection at Nelson Provincial Museum. Including Frank’s gown in this chapter is representative of the incredible stories of provenance that reside in many of the pieces in Broadgreen’s textile collection. Frank’s gown is also an example of the evocative power of the material object in filling a gap in the record of a person’s life, when combined with archival and photographic sources. Another layer is added to our knowledge of Rose Frank when, alongside the many black and white photographs that exist of her, and our knowledge of her role in Nelson’s history, we can see a colourful, soft, tangible piece of her life in an article of her clothing.

The Cressy Dresses:

Alicia Townsend's maternity gown, BGT 212, & Miss Townsend's dress, BGT 250

The *Cressy* dresses, as they have come to be known at Broadgreen, were brought to New Zealand by the Townsend family aboard the immigrant ship *Cressy*, which arrived in Lyttelton in December 1850 as one of the Canterbury Association's 'First Four Ships'. They are two handsewn dresses: a woman's maternity dress and a girl's dress.

The woman's dress is a tan silk taffeta lined with glazed cotton. It is a classic late 1820s - 1830s style with fashionable *gigot* sleeves at the shoulder, the sleeves then tightening to the cuff from the elbow down. The bell-shaped skirt has wadding and a zig-zag decoration at the hem and a piped trim. There is a matching pelerine with 'Vandyke' trim, also seen at the cuffs with covered buttons for embellishment. This dress has elements indicating that it could be used for maternity wear and breastfeeding: an adjustable waistline with drawstring tapes; and the bodice and skirt are disconnected at the front, allowing movement for this adjustable waistline. This detachment at the front waistline means that the bodice front can also be lifted, which would enable breastfeeding.

The girl's dress is a pale cream/pink embossed silk with glazed cotton lining. Like the woman's dress, it is handsewn. It has a separate tippet (a short cape) of the same material. A condition report from 2013 states that textile labels were sewn into the gown and tippet at the inside neck, 'repairs completed' and the garment was ironed. It was likely done to ready the dress for display in an exhibition. When this work was being carried out, a previously unrecorded pocket was discovered in the gown. The condition report also reads, 'the hidden pocket revealed original colour and dyes used (on selvedge). This suggests the colour was [a] very pale orange/cream mix'. This is an example of the way that reading a physical object can offer new information.

Items of clothing can have colourful and varied former lives, resulting in stains, creasing patterns, alterations and damages that tell stories about the people who wore them. From creases and distortions we sometimes get a physical sense of the original owner, such as an uneven shoulder line or a suggestion of a post-baby bump. Evenly spaced holes may indicate where a brooch has previously been pinned. There can be stitched holes in fabric where an outfit has been altered or repurposed. Tears and losses can also reveal information that is not otherwise accessible, such as tailors' tacks, exposed baleen boning, or a vibrant shocking-pink and gold selvedge border

that could provide clues about the fabric manufacturer. (Blair, Colling and Gatley 2021, 381).

(Blair, Colling and Gatley

Fig 19: Reference drawing in object file of BGT212, Alicia Townsend's maternity gown, showing drop-front of skirt and bodice. Photograph by author.

In 2019, conservation work was again carried out on the child's gown to ready it for display in Broadgreen's *Passage to Nelson* exhibition. Volunteer Karen Richards recorded and photographed the work she carried out, materials used, and work time estimated, for example: 'Silk thread used to attach bridal net to cover fabric damage at CF [centre front] neck on outer and inner edges. Cotton thread used to restitch hem.'

The dresses were brought out to New Zealand by Alicia Townsend, who had 13 children, 10 of whom travelled with her and her husband to New Zealand. The maternity dress may have been worn by Alicia during one of her 16 pregnancies and brought with the family when they emigrated for future use by one her six daughters: Frances (29), Mary (25), Alicia (25), Priscilla (19), Marcia (15) and Margaret (13). Alicia Townsend also travelled with four of her

seven sons and her husband, James Townsend, who was at age 62 one of the oldest immigrants. The family would live and farm at Ferryroad, Christchurch.

The woman's dress has recently been featured in Te Papa curator Claire Regnault's book *Dressed: Fashionable Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840 – 1910* (2021). In the 'Rites of Passage' chapter, there is a section on maternity and breastfeeding clothing. Regnault says that the evidence in dresses like Alicia Townsend's disproves the popular belief that Victorian women stayed at home and out of sight whilst pregnant (Regnault 2021, 165). The gown, and Townsend's own 16 pregnancies, fit with Regnault's statement that, 'As women spend much of their adult lives pregnant, and as clothing was an expensive commodity, it needed to be adaptable' (Regnault 2021, 165).

The pelerine of the dress, covering much of the front join between bodice and skirt would also help to cover any gaps that may appear due to adjustments to accommodate 'the increasing body' (Regnault 2021, 161); like the pelisse worn by Sarah Wrigley in one of the photographs Regnault uses in this part of *Dressed* to indicate a garment that 'helps conceal any gaps or unseemly goings-on at the waist' (Regnault 2021, 167). This chapter of *Dressed* also features another gown from the Broadgreen House textile collection adaptable for maternity wear: an eye-catching cashmere and red velvet tea gown worn by Margaret Foster-Barham during her 1904 pregnancy (Regnault 2021, 168-169).

The donor of the *Cressy* dresses, Mrs Reeves, was a descendant of the Townsends. She allowed the gowns to be donated to Broadgreen on her behalf after saying that her relatives were uninterested in the gowns, and that she wanted them to be cared for 'where they will be seen and appreciated'. This information comes from a handwritten letter in the garments' object files from the person who gave the gowns to Broadgreen on behalf of Mrs Reeves and who had suggested Broadgreen to Mrs Reeves as a potential home for her family heirlooms. The handwritten letter says, 'perhaps they could be displayed on figures if you ever get any, as they have done in the old French cottage at Akaroa.' The letter is signed (but not dated) 'Enga'. It is likely this is historian and author Enga Washbourne, a member of the Nelson Historical Society around the time Broadgreen opened and author of the book *Courage and Camp Ovens: Five Generations at Golden Bay* (1970). The letter refers to research at the Alexander Turnbull Library, and Tyree photographs being selected for an unnamed book. As *Courage and Camp Ovens* was published in 1970, this would date the letter to the late 1960s,

which also aligns with Broadgreen not yet having mannequins to display clothing, it being the early days of Broadgreen's life as a heritage institution.

In 2020, while I was in Nelson to carry out research and work some contract hours at Broadgreen, I assisted Broadgreen curator Mahina Marshall in having Alicia Townsend's gown and another gown in Broadgreen's collection dressed on forms to be photographed for Claire Regnault's book *Dressed* (mentioned above). Mahina and I took both gowns to the Nelson Provincial Museum Research Facility at Isel Park for them to be photographed by the museum's Digital Imaging Technician Tatsiana Chypsanava. Also being photographed for the book were two gowns from the NPM collection: a black gown that belonged to Ngāti Tama, Te Āti Awa and Ngāti Toa landowner Hūria Mātenga, and a gown made by Nelson woman Sophia Anstice's successful, multi-branch dressmaking business (Bishop 2019, 159). This was a good example of collaboration between local institutions, as NPM had the space, set up and photographer to take professional photographs.

Alicia Townsend's gown that was being photographed was very difficult to get onto the dress form; the features that make the *Cressy* gown unique are also what made it difficult to dress. As described above, the gown is for maternity wear, and the bodice is detached from the front of the skirt. The gown is somewhere between a two piece and a one piece. As well as this, the waistband is adjustable and fastens with ties, which are difficult to fasten without weakening the fragile ties and waistband fabric. Another obstacle was making a suitable base for the gown from the materials to hand, which involved a lot of improvisation with tissue paper and dacron. At the end of *Dressed* there is a chapter called 'Behind the Image' by Regnault's colleagues Kate Blair (Kaitiaki Taonga Conservator Textiles), Rachael Collinge (Kaitiaki Taonga Conservator Textiles) and Samantha Gatley (Object Support Preparator) about preparing the gowns from the Te Papa collection that feature in the book to be photographed.

Few items within a museum collection routinely require as much preparation for display as historic dress, largely because dress is dependent upon its relationship with the body to fully function. It is only when a garment is viewed on a suitable mannequin that it is possible to discern the fashionable silhouette of an era or see how it complements, reveals, or hides a figure. (Blair, Colling and Gatley 2021, 383).

Fig. 20: BGT212, Alicia Townsend’s maternity gown, Broadgreen textile collection. Positioned for photograph for *Dressed* publication at Nelson Provincial Museum. Photograph by author.

I selected the Alicia Townsend gown to focus on as one of my object case studies because material culture analysis – looking inside this garment – reveals a new layer of interpretation when it is revealed that the gown can be adjusted for the wearer’s pregnancy or to enable breastfeeding. Regnault states this in the introduction to *Dressed*; what can be gained from an intimate reading of a garment that would not be known from looking at a photograph, ‘the garment’s secret interior workings’ (Regnault 2021, 9).

Alicia Townsend’s gown can be used as a means not just to highlight women’s history, but more specifically histories of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. These are particularly relevant for the era of Broadgreen’s historic interpretation, when many women were pregnant for such a large proportion of their lives, like Mrs Townsend herself (a mother of 11 with 16 pregnancies). Martha Buxton (née Senior, 1807 – 1875), the first mother to live at Broadgreen, had the many and frequent pregnancies typical of a married woman in Victorian England. The Buxtons emigrated to New Zealand with their six daughters, their only surviving children of 11 (Marshall, exhibition panel, 2020). Alicia Townsend’s maternity

gown is an object that can be used to tell the wider story of the everyday lives of nineteenth century women, including motherhood, an example of domestic social history that has traditionally been overlooked in the mainstream historical narrative. The vital layer of history that emerges upon an internal analysis of Alicia Townsend's gown may also be a reason that this history is overlooked, due to the fragility of historic textiles and thus the barriers to their permanent display.

Fig. 21: 'The Cressy Dresses' on display in the *Passage to Nelson* exhibition at Broadgreen, 2020. Photograph by author.

Jessie Morris's Day Gown (skirt and bodice), BGT 232

Janet Morris (née Moodie, 1834 - 1910), known as Jessie, owned this two-piece day gown, a highlight of the Broadgreen House Textile Collection and known by current staff as the 'Signature Dress' for this reason. This striking 1890s gown, worn by Dunedin socialite Jessie Morris, is an example of the treasures that can be found in smaller regional collections.

The gown is a machine sewn two-piece day gown, of brocaded silk satin, in black with green and cream decoration; the flowers resemble foxgloves or erica, but Mahina Marshall confirmed for me that they are in fact larkspur flowers. The language of flowers was popular in Victorian society, which may denote why this print was chosen by Jessie Morris to be worn when she attended a wedding: 'I think it's quite special that larkspur denotes love, affection and a strong attachment in Victorian flower language, and larkspurs were often given as gifts or on special occasions. Both beautiful symbols for a gown worn to a wedding', (Marshall, Personal Communication, 2021).

Another trend at the time of this gown's creation was for Japanese-inspired textiles. The fabric of the gown, with its 'clearly defined' flora and the contrast between the bright larkspur and the black background fit with this trend. A similar gown in the V&A collection dating from 1891 features lifelike oranges on a dark background, but like Jessie Morris's gown, with a fashionable Western silhouette (Johnston 2016, 136).

In our interview, Mahina reinforced Jessie Morris's gown as what she considers a highlight of Broadgreen's collection.

Fig. 22: BGT232 (detail), bodice of Jessie Morris's day gown, Broadgreen Textile Collection. Photograph by author.

Both bodice and skirt of the gown are made from the black brocaded silk satin fabric and lined with lemon-coloured cotton. The interior of the bodice, which fastens at the front with hooks and eyes, reveals the bodice is boned and made in seven pieces. The boning is covered in black fabric, with edging in the gown's outer brocade, hand stitched, that stands out against the bodice's pale lemon-coloured lining. A black waist-tape is attached at the centre lower back inside the bodice, with a three-pronged metal buckle. This band, where it attaches to the bodice, has a gold embroidered label that reads:

*George Henry Lee and Co
Bassett Street
Liverpool*

This is framed on either side with a logo consisting of flourished overlapping initials, ‘GHL’, inside a circle. Having a label inside the garment is another factor that makes this gown an exemplary object of 1890s high fashion. Designer Charles Frederick Worth is thought to have been the first to add labels to his garments in the 1860s and added waist-tape woven signature labels like this one in the 1880s (Johnston 2016, 36).

Fig. 23: Inside-back of bodice of BGT232, displaying label on waist tape. Broadgreen Textile Collection. Photograph by author.

The bodice has a V-neck and the fashionable 1890s leg-o-mutton sleeves (an evolution of the 1830s *gigot* sleeve). The cuffs are black silk. Long tabs fall out over the waistline at the front of the bodice, and the back is trimmed with a bow. The gown’s skirt is gored and has a placket at the back. There is a pocket in the right-side gore seam. At some point in its history the skirt has been altered; the waistband is not original to the gown, and it had raw seams and hem when it came into the Broadgreen Collection. A condition report from 2010 detailed this and conservation work was undertaken. The form reads, ‘The skirt has been altered and has a very uneven raw-edged hem which needs to be neatened and hemmed. The centre back seam beneath placket is split and needs re-sewing.’ The work undertaken, signed off by curator Margaret Paul, was recorded as, ‘Hem line neatened and sewn. Centre back seam repaired’.

The gown's owner, Jessie Morris, was born in Scotland and married Arthur William Morris in Dunedin in 1857. Arthur Morris was an early director of the successful Union Steamship Company which operated out of Dunedin and was at one time the largest shipping company in the southern hemisphere. It was known as 'the Southern Octopus' and dominated trans-Tasman shipping in the second half of the nineteenth century. This wealth meant that Jessie Morris lived as a socialite in Dunedin and was well known for hosting lavish society events at the family's home, Marinoto, in Maori Hill, a mansion with 14 main rooms, a tennis court and a croquet lawn. Articles showcasing Jessie's hosting at Marinoto feature in the 'Table Talk' segment of the local paper at the time, such as the following from 1901:

On Wednesday afternoon a ladies' "At Home" was given by Mrs A. W. Morris at her residence "Marinoto". The weather was perfect, a clear, still day, with bright sunshine, a cloudless sky, and no wind. Tea and refreshments were served in the large dining-room, after which the visitors wandered about the conservatory, lawns, and grounds, which were all looking their very best, with lovely autumn tints intermixed with the green foliage...About 150 ladies were present... Very noticeable were the number of black dresses worn, and black hats and bonnets, sometimes relieved with white, were universal. Mrs Morris wore a handsome black gown, the bodice finished with vest and undersleeves of purple. *(Otago Witness, 10 April 1901).*

The article goes on to extensively list many of the guests and their chosen outfits for the occasion.

As indicated by her capacity to host 150 ladies at her home for afternoon tea, Jessie Morris clearly had enough money to make regular trips to the UK, something well out of the reach of many other Victorian New Zealanders. It was on one of these trips with her husband, that Jessie bought this gown, or had it made, from George Henry Lee & Co, a Liverpool department store. Provenance information in the gown's object file at Broadgreen confirms that the Morrises were in England at the right time for Jessie to have bought the gown herself, rather than having it sent out to New Zealand or bought for her. A handwritten letter referring to 'The Broadgreen Gown' highlights the importance of any information relating to an object's provenance and how this can reveal more about the historical context of a garment:

[I] believe it was bought to wear at a family wedding and would have been acquired in Liverpool as Mr and Mrs Morris made frequent trips back to the UK. Jessie Moodie

was the maternal grandmother of the donor. Checked my records – the Morris’s [sic] were in Liverpool in October 1895! (Broadgreen House Donor Files, 2021)

The donor file for Jessie Morris’s granddaughter shows that, alongside the ‘gown – black and gold’, several other items from this donor were donated to Broadgreen, including a christening gown, a collection of purses, a marmot fur that was deaccessioned in 1996, and a lead toy collection. The gown was used in the Broadgreen House exhibition *Glad Rags: A Collection of Fine Fashion 1880s – 1950s* alongside Rose Frank’s garden party dress, detailed above. There was also an information booklet accompanying the exhibition, detailing the garments in the exhibition and their provenance where known.

Jessie Morris’s gown is in incredibly good condition for its age. Its colours glow, particularly the bright, arsenical-green leaves on the floral sprays. The sheen to the black silk satin of the dress looks as though it is new; an example of a garment owned by someone with enough money not to have to wear and reuse or repurpose a garment out of necessity. Being someone whose clothing at social events was reported in public newspapers fits with the image of someone with enough wealth to own a gown in the condition that the Broadgreen ‘signature gown’ is in over 100 years since it was first worn. Although this garment is not representative of what a lot of women would have worn, which is a reason for the criticism of costume collections – being only the clothing of the wealthy or upper classes – this gown *is* representative of the kinds of garments that end up in heritage collections for a number of reasons. One, as mentioned above, that the gown was owned by someone with enough wealth not to have to wear it as a ‘best’ gown repeatedly (Mida and Kim 2015, 68), remake the gown to fit with changing fashions, or cut down the fabric to make clothing for children or to make furnishings. Two, it is remarkably eye-catching and striking – making it fit the category of a piece of clothing that descendants would value, keep, and pass down; less likely to be considered for something considered mundane or every day and more likely to become a treasured heirloom. When members of the public, not museum or heritage workers or volunteers, choose to donate something that has been in their family for some time, it is an example of passive collecting, making up a lot of Broadgreen’s textile collection (as opposed to the collections furnishing the house). Active collecting, from someone working in a cultural institution who is aware of the lack of textile objects relating to the mundane and every day, would result in different items, such as a well-worn apron, coming into a collection. ‘Survival of this or any artifact for hundreds of years usually favours the beautiful

and the unusual', states Baumgarten in *What Clothes Reveal* (2011), an analysis of the Colonial Williamsburg (Virginia, USA) clothing collection.

Morris's gown is an example of an exceptionally well-preserved garment in a regional collection, reminiscent of 1890s haute couture. This gown is an example of the aesthetically pleasing pieces of textile history that are often treasured by family and end up in a heritage collection. The gown is also exemplary of the class differences common in textile collections, made apparent by the close reading of garments in these collections. The excellent condition of Morris's gown, in contrast to garments with wear, fading, stains, and loss of fastenings indicate the luxury of an owner with a large enough wardrobe that this gown was not worn out, recycled, or remade. Jessie Morris's gown is also representative of changing collection practises over time at Broadgreen, discussed in Chapter Two. The gown's provenance is Dunedin-based, not Nelson or Tasman, which fits with past acquisition practises at Broadgreen before a stricter collection policy was put in place. However, if Morris's gown were to be offered to Broadgreen today, it might be accepted into the collection regardless of its Dunedin provenance, as current curator Mahina Marshall explained that the collection policy is now also focused on the development of a significant textile collection.

Rose Ellis's Evening Gown, BGT 1268

Fig 24: BGT 1268, Rose Ellis's evening gown, Broadgreen textile collection. Photograph by author.

Rose Ellis (1897 - 1988) wore this gown to a ball in Wakefield, near Nelson, to celebrate the coronation of King George VI in 1937. Rose bought the dress from Louissons, a shop on Nelson's main street. The gown is a striking deep orange satin in a distinctly 1930s style, with short, ruched sleeves that 'hold the emphasis of the whole gown', as described on the object's registration form when it was first donated to Broadgreen. The gown's skirt is made in one piece with back seams only. The bodice has a V-neck at front and a round neck at the back with flat taffeta shoulder pads inside. At the back of the bodice there is an open gusset up to the neck. The gown fastens at the left side of the waist with three metal hooks and handmade hook loops. The fastening is concealed under one of two waist-tie belts. The registration form also describes the gown's condition as 'excellent', and that it is 'a good example of the '30s'.

In 2016, conservation work was carried out on the gown by Broadgreen textile volunteer Karen Richards. She recorded that she restitched the base of one sleeve under the arm,

replaced two broken hooks, stitched on two fabric tapes for hanging the gown, and herringbone stitched two raw fraying edges of the inside facing.

A handwritten note with the gown's object file and a page printed out from Nelson Provincial Museum's Collections Online database with a family photograph gives some personal history of the gown's owner. Rose Ellis was the daughter of Richard and Ada Ellis who farmed east of Belgrove, Wakefield. Rose and her sister were home-schooled, and their teacher boarded with the Ellis family. Rose would go to her teacher's family farm for school holidays. Rose had an older sister, Annette, and an older brother, Edward. There is a family photograph of the Ellis's in the Nelson Provincial Museum's Tyree Studio Collection, showing Rose as a teenager, around the time of WW1, as Rose's brother is in uniform. The note is a perfect archival accompaniment to the material history of the donation that included this gown, particularly with one of its last sentences: 'Rose was always neatly dressed - hat, gloves, stockings.' Donated with the gown and worn with it as an ensemble were a pair of velvet shoes and a pair of women's cream kid gloves. The donation was made in 1995, by Rose N. Ellis. I am unsure if this is the gown's original owner or a descendant - possibly a niece, perhaps one of Rose's brother's children. The Rose Ellis who wore the gown died in 1988 according to sources, prior to the donation being made to Broadgreen. The donor's middle initial is 'N', but the gown-owning Rose's middle name was Victoria. If the donation were made by a younger Rose Ellis, this would also fit with the handwritten note, written about a Rose Ellis in the past tense. A mirror to the other gown earlier in this chapter, belonging to a Rose and donated by a Rose with the same name.

Louissons, the shop where the gown was purchased, was a family-owned business on Trafalgar Street in Nelson. As noted above, after I had left my curatorial position at NPM, I returned to do some contract with the collections team, continuing their inventory project. While carrying out inventory in the Domestic and Technical storeroom, I came across a cardboard merchandise box from Louissons. The box, dark purple with faded areas, has 'Louissons Ltd. Nelson' in cursive in the centre of the lid. A paper label attached to the bottom right-hand corner of the lid had the printed logo: 'Louissons Ltd. Direct Importers. Drapers and Ladies Outfitters' and 'Specialists in High Class Goods'. Handwritten on this label was 'Miss Jamieson' with an address and the date: 3.7.30. Coincidentally, this box was from 1930 – dating it to the same decade that Rose Ellis made her purchase at Louissons.

Its place in storage, among other boxes and containers, made me wonder if it was donated to the museum holding something which was the focus of the donation - possibly an item of clothing, maybe even its original contents. That other accession ended up elsewhere in the collection - the textile storeroom, for example. The Louissons box at Nelson Provincial Museum, alongside Rose Ellis's gown, is an interesting example of regional collections connecting in complimentary ways and reinforces the need for museums and institutions with shared histories to be connected. It also allows us to imagine Rose Ellis having her Louissons gown for the coronation ball she attended in 1937 packaged in a similar box. Imagine when the box was first taken home and opened, the flash of colour inside, the gown perhaps wrapped in paper. That first spill of silk over hands as it is pulled from the box and begins its life as a worn garment, before coming to its second life as a collection object removed from the cycle of fashion and its 1930s context. Now, in 2021, it is seen as a snapshot of a previous decade of New Zealand's history.

It is unknown if Rose bought the gown specifically for the celebratory coronation ball at Wakefield, as told by the donor, but because the gown, gloves and shoes were donated with this event specifically mentioned, it is likely. King George VI's coronation was on May 12, 1937, and Nelson's newspapers show that it was just one of many towns in the commonwealth that were celebrating. 'A Cyclonic Attraction - A Unique Spectacle', was advertised as being shown on 'Two Wonderful Evenings' in Nelson's Queens Gardens, with 'The Waterway to Joy' and 'A Night in Venice' promoted: pageantry of some sort in the ponds of the Queens Gardens. It also stated that, 'Mrs M. M. Moncrieff will judge the Decorated Boats'. This is Perrine Moncrieff: author, conservationist, and granddaughter of pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais. Moncrieff's wedding dress is also in the Broadgreen textile collection. Advertising in the Nelson Evening Mail by Louissons around the same time (13 May 1937) shows a stylised illustration of four dancing couples in evening wear above the capitalised headline, 'Glamorous Evening Wear at Louissons'. The advertisement goes on to say that Louissons have:

An attractive and exclusive collection of graceful Evening Frocks...a regal display of lovely Velvets, new Silks - all specially chosen for their beauty and quality. We Welcome your inspection! (*Nelson Evening Mail*, 13 May 1937).

Fig 25: BGT 1268 (detail), Rose Ellis's evening gown, Broadgreen textile collection. Photograph by author.

Rose Ellis's evening gown is an example of the 20th century garments in the Broadgreen Textile Collection. In Broadgreen's collecting history, at first objects were only sought out and accepted to furnish and decorate the house in Victorian style, in line with the dates that the house's first residents, the Buxtons, lived there. As only one other family lived in the house in its life as a private residence, the collection policy was adapted to include the Langbein family's time at Broadgreen, up to the 1960s. Until the collection policy was changed, many of the 20th century garments held by Broadgreen made up the 'Research Collection', which existed to show a broader range of fashion history. Some of this collection has now been accessioned into the Broadgreen Textile Collection proper. The 20th century garments in Broadgreen's Textile Collection are no less interesting and unique for their more recent date than some of the more historical items in the collection. Highlighting Rose Ellis's gown in this chapter was a way to represent this 20th century element of the collection. Other examples include a crazy-patchwork dressing gown and a gown made from World War Two synthetic parachute 'silk' nylon.

The presence of Rose Ellis's gown in the Broadgreen Textile Collection exemplifies the way that clothing as material culture allows us a snapshot of a woman's life through a single garment. The provenance provided with the gown – other items donated alongside the gown, the event to which it was worn, and the shop where it was purchased - combine to offer a detailed window into the life of Ellis, not just her biographic details. This is reminiscent of the way that Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux (2019), in their book on women's removable pockets throughout history, highlight how material objects, however small, can offer vital clues into women's lives in the past. They state the importance of using object-based researched for their study and express that 'this is not simply a book on tie-on pockets. It is a social and cultural history of women's lives in the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain through the examination of this small object.' In their conclusion to *The Pocket*, Burman and Fennetaux quote Laurel Thatcher Ulrich:

The fullest possible engagement with objects is crucial to enriching historical understanding. Like Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, we believe attention to material things 'can reveal connections among people, processes, and forms of enquiry that might otherwise remain unnoticed' and 'uncover what would be undetectable lives' otherwise. (Burman and Fennetaux 2019, 223)

Rose Ellis's gown is representative of other garments in textile collections that can express stories of women's everyday lives, their domestic, social and consumer practises - an example of what we can learn through examining history of 'the everyday', even though Ellis's orange silk gown was worn for a special occasion, but with the human commonality of best dress and dressing up for a special occasion. In this case, the gown gives us a sample of the way in which one woman in Nelson/Tasman society celebrated an event that was commemorated not just in the rest of New Zealand, but in Commonwealth countries around the world. Rose Ellis's gown is an example of the much larger story that can be told to visitors, researchers, and museum professionals alike, through one piece of clothing.

Sarah Higgins Quilt, BGT 2210

A quilt in the Broadgreen Textile Collection was once thought to be the oldest quilt in New Zealand. It was made in the 1740s in Ireland by Francis Cleland, who also wove the white linen background fabric of her pieced and appliqued quilt. The hearts and stars on the Cleland quilt indicate that it may be a wedding quilt. This quilt features in Pamela Fitzgerald's book *Warm Heritage: Old Patchwork Quilts & Coverlets in New Zealand and the Women Who Made Them* (2003), in which the author identifies one privately owned quilt and two in the Canterbury Museum that predate Francis Cleland's. However, the significantly early date of this quilt makes it a highlight of Broadgreen's textile collection, identified in early newspaper articles about Broadgreen (during the 'setting up' of the house) and one of few specific items in the textile collection referenced to me by former curator Margaret Paul in our interview. However, this is not the quilt in the Broadgreen collection that I will examine further as an object case study. The quilt that I want to focus on is one said to have been made by Nelson woman Sarah Higgins. It is particularly interesting to me because of my experience accessioning another Sarah Higgins-made quilt into the Nelson Provincial Museum collection during my time as social history curator there, and it is a key piece of Nelson's material history.

Sarah Higgins, (née Sharp, 1830 - 1923) arrived in Nelson as a twelve-year-old girl with her father and brothers, on the *Bolton* in 1842. We know the details of her life because Sarah learned how to write when she was in her 70s and in her 80s wrote down her memoirs in a record for her family entitled *Granny Higgins' Diary*. This document is unique because it tells the story of a working-class girl and woman in early New Zealand, in her own words. So often the primary sources that survive in public collections are written by women who were literate and who had the time to write - diaries, letters and reminiscences written by women of higher social class. In contrast, Sarah had her first job as a domestic servant as a teenager when she went to work for the Otterson family in the country, looking after their children. She missed her father terribly and described how she would save and dry out the family's tea leaves to send them home to her father.

As a young woman Sarah married her 'boy' Sydney Higgins and the couple farmed at Spring Grove (Higgins in Drummond 1960, 91). The newlyweds' small house did not have a kitchen, and Sarah Higgins built the kitchen herself after Sydney helped her mix the clay one

morning before going out to work as a farm hand; work he could not afford to miss to build the kitchen which made Sarah's life so much easier. Sarah also describes helping Sydney with other outdoor labour, rigging up a sunshade to shelter their first baby while they did farm work together. Sarah worked as an assistant to a doctor, then as a midwife in her own right. In her writing she states that she helped to bring over 350 babies into the world. As well as raising 11 children and this work, she took in boarders to earn an income. It is no wonder she did not learn to write until she was in her 70s - she would not have had the time (Higgins in Drummond 1960, 83-96).

While working at NPM, after a talk I gave at a rest home in Richmond, a resident shook my hand and asked me if I had visited 'his museum'. A staff member explained that he was talking about Higgins Heritage Park near Wakefield, an umbrella heritage park that encompasses several smaller museums including the Pigeon Valley Steam Museum, showcasing early forms of transport and farming history. The Higgins name made me ask him about Sarah Higgins - he told me that she was his grandmother. It was very special to meet someone with such a close link to a woman whose life I was fascinated by and who I spoke about in talks and in my work at the museum so often.

Unlike Rose Frank or Ann Bird, Sarah Higgins did have material representation in the NPM social history collection during my time there. There is a black gown that she owned as well as some smaller items such as a lace jabot and a ceramic crock. Her jabot and a pair of undergarments are on display in the NPM's Regional History Gallery; interestingly, alongside the potters in the Nelson Clay section, referencing Sarah's building her own kitchen.

A highlight of my time as Social History Curator at NPM was the day I answered the phone to a call from one of Sarah Higgins's great-great grandsons. He then came out to the Isel Park Research Facility where I was based, to donate a quilt on behalf of his mother, Sarah Higgins's first great-granddaughter. When this woman was a baby, Sarah had made her the quilt, and she had kept it all her life, intending for it to be donated to the museum after she passed away. Her son told me that she had donated other items of her great-grandmother's to the museum, but the sentimental value of the quilt meant that she wanted to keep it with her while she was alive.

Spread out on a worktable, the quilt at NPM is the size of a single bed covering. It is covered in a pattern of half-square triangles with a backing of a pale pink, soft fabric. The pattern on the backing fabric may be paisley; it is faded consistent with use. A variety of different fabric types and colours make up the quilt in the pattern of half-square triangles, a common and versatile quilt pattern that enables the maker to create their own design or follow a pattern. Some of the pieces were clearly finer, less sturdy fabrics, as some have worn away almost completely while others are still vibrantly coloured and wholly in place. The quilt's condition was consistent with its owner's lifetime of using it as a coverlet. The date of the NPM quilt owner's birth means that Sarah would have made this quilt in old age, not long before she passed away in 1923. One of the things that struck me so much when the quilt was donated was thinking about this one quilt, and about all of Sarah's descendants, many of whom still live in the Nelson/Tasman region. How many more quilts like this one could have been made? When I think about this, it is no wonder that another Sarah Higgins-made quilt has shown up in another Nelson/Tasman heritage collection. But it was no less exciting when I learned of its existence in the Broadgreen collection.

The Broadgreen Sarah Higgins quilt is similar in style and design to the NPM one that I was familiar with. The style is common in quilting, using 'Half Square Triangles', which are as they sound. They enable the maker to create a quilt in their own design rather than following a set pattern like, for example, a Log Cabin Quilt. The obvious differences between the two Higgins quilts, however, are that the one in the Broadgreen textile collection is larger – a double bed size – and that it is in much better condition, indicated by the brightness of the colours and lack of wear compared to the one in the NPM collection. This fits with my memory of the donor of the NPM quilt's son saying that his mother kept the quilt on her bed her whole life; many of the fabric pieces are faded and some are worn completely away, revealing a layer beneath.

Fig 26: BGT 2210, piecework quilt made by Sarah Higgins, Broadgreen textile collection. Photograph, Broadgreen Historic House.

Another intriguing difference is the presence of a small pattern in the centre of the Broadgreen quilt. I noticed this in a photograph of the quilt while writing, after my period of research at Broadgreen, with fresh eyes having read more about quilt patterns. I did not know what this pattern was, but thought it looked reminiscent enough of the Log Cabin pattern to warrant investigating further. It was exciting to think of Sarah Higgins choosing to incorporate a popular nineteenth century quilt pattern into her work. It felt as though this unlocked another little insight into the life of this woman who I felt to close to via the textile craft she had left behind. I sent a photo of the quilt to a quilt-savvy friend, and she said that she thought the pattern could be one called ‘Courthouse Steps’, which is a variety of the Log Cabin quilt pattern that I had been reading about.

Fig 27: BGT 2210 (detail), central pattern of piecework quilt made by Sarah Higgins, Broadgreen textile collection. Photograph, Broadgreen Historic House.

The Broadgreen Sarah Higgins-made quilt came to the Broadgreen Collection from Founders Heritage Park. Founders is also run by NCC, but it is a very different type of heritage institution to Broadgreen. It encompasses heritage buildings and active businesses, but it does have a collection; it excels at showing larger scale collection items like transportation equipment and printing presses, and it is not surprising that textiles are deemed more suitable for the Broadgreen collection, where they can be adequately stored and displayed. Founders clearly acquired textiles in the past, but they would not now. Documentation in Broadgreen's records show that it was common for Founders to transfer textile items to Broadgreen's collection, and when I have assisted with inventory at Broadgreen in recent years there have been objects that need to be assessed that have come from Founders even recently. Unfortunately, the objects that come from Founders often lack provenance and donor information.

Originally, I thought that there was no other information with the Broadgreen Sarah Higgins quilt other than that it came from Founders and had the name Sarah Higgins associated/attached. I did not doubt this provenance because of its likeness to the Sarah Higgins-made quilt at NPM. However, while I was writing this thesis, Mahina Marshall sent me provenance information that she managed to find from the original Founders donation form. We *do* know who Sarah Higgins made the quilt for: her granddaughter Grace Hunter (nee Higgins), the mother of the donor. Grace was the daughter of Sarah's son George and his wife Alice. Additional information on the donor sheet stated that Sarah Higgins made a quilt

for all her granddaughters when they married. It also says that Grace's wedding was 17 August 1921. Sarah Higgins died in 1923, and from memory her quilt for her first great-granddaughter – the quilt in the NPM collection – was also made around this time, because I recall thinking it was near the end of Sarah Higgins's life. Another reason the two quilts share similarities – in a life as long as Sarah Higgins's, they were made very close together.

Another piece of valuable information that I had overlooked until recently was Sarah's quilt making in her own words. When I originally read a copy of her memoirs in the NPM archives, I was not specifically looking for references to textiles and needlework. In future when I wrote or talked about Sarah Higgins's life, I referenced what I now realise are probably very similar secondary sources regarding her writing. It was not until I read Alison Drummond's 1960 book, *Married and Gone to New Zealand*, which is unique in that it has printed Sarah Higgins's memoir in full, that I read her writing in full again. This is the passage that stood out, about Sarah's children leaving home to marry:

I tried to help them as much as I could, so as each one had to leave, I got wool, washed it, picked it, and cut it up for beds for each one. There were 11 of them to do, beds and pillows. We had our own sheep so my husband did give me the wool. I have made about 40 pair of netted curtains and given them to the children and grand-children. I have made 27 patchwork quilts, fancy ones, and about 18 plain ones.
(Higgins printed in Drummond 1960, 95).

Sarah Higgins goes on to say that she didn't get a sewing machine until after the birth of her tenth child: 'I did not have a machine until my last baby but one, so I had to sit up at nights to get it all done. I made all the clothes that they wanted for many years.' (Higgins printed in Drummond 1960, 95). Sarah's experience highlights the incredible value of an object like a sewing machine to women with incredibly large workloads like hers. Sewing machines are a common sight in social history collections in museums, and I think their abundance makes museum professionals forget their significance to women's daily lives in the past and how revolutionary they have been in the history of women's labour.

The piecework style of the Sarah Higgins quilt in Broadgreen's collection, the differences in fabric colours and types, make it easy to imagine that this quilt, like the NPM quilt, was made from different fabrics to hand, offcuts of outworn or outgrown pieces of clothing or scrap fabric from other projects. It reminds me of the quilt described by Catherine Harper in her chapter of *Love Objects: Emotion, Design and Material Culture* (Moran and O'Brien, 2014),

‘Sex, Birth and Nurture unto Death: Patching Together Quilted Bed Covers’. Harper describes an Ulster utility quilt made for her by her grandmother, which her father could point to and name the different fabrics as being the different items of clothing of his siblings:

Because my grandmother wasn’t given to idle chat, my father - after her death - named each fabric scrap as the Sunday ‘bests’, working shirts, and dance dresses of his sisters: ‘there’s Alice, there’s Lily, there’s Eileen’. (Harper 2014, 32).

A significant element of quilts is the power of *memory* in material objects, particularly handmade, and more so gifted, textile items.

Broadgreen has several interesting quilts in its collection as well as the one I am focusing on, such as a striking ‘light and shadow’ Log Cabin quilt, a colourful 1861 sampler quilt and the celebrated Cleland quilt, among others. Pamela Fitzgerald, in *Warm Heritage*, states that Broadgreen House has a ‘fine collection of quilts’ (Fitzgerald 2003, 98). In the introduction to her book on historical New Zealand quilts, Fitzgerald laments the state that she found many quilts in, in NZ heritage institutions, large and small, when she first began her research in the 1970s and 1980s. She wrote that the way some of these quilts were being stored or displayed showed a lack of awareness of the amount of work that had gone into these pieces and the value that they had, for example being displayed in full natural light or mounted with rusty pins. (Fitzgerald 2003, 8).

It is interesting to consider the link between Broadgreen’s quilt collection and the symbol of the quilt as a feminine, domestic art form. Broadgreen having such an excellent collection of quilts is likely down to the value placed on these quilts early on in Broadgreen’s restoration by the women who were furnishing the house. Quilts are very much a representative object of the feminine, the domestic and family, and thus fit naturally within a historic house setting. The people that wanted to set Broadgreen up as a domestic space, a home, may have automatically placed more value on a bed covering traditionally made by women than a professional working at a museum, who potentially could have held interests in many other areas such as natural history or ethnographic collections, for example.

Such quilts therefore are embedded - in their composition, design, image content, and in their bodily usage - with human emotions, operating as textile interfaces where human subjects performatively meet and merge with designed objects. If cloth itself is in some fundamental way a container of human experience (Barnett, 1999), and

thread a 'malleable transmitter of ideas' (Johnson, 2000, p 19), they are co-joined in a quilt to extremely powerful effect. (Harper 2014, 36)

Object Case Studies: More than material

A bodice which was said to have belonged to a Suffragette, both friendly with the famous Pankhurst family and imprisoned for the cause, in the collection of a small regional historic house museum in Nelson, was where my interest in carrying out this research began. While I was working on a contract with NCC with the textile collection held at Broadgreen House, a staff member or volunteer came across an eye-catching nineteenth century bodice in the Research Collection within the Broadgreen textile collection. Objects in the Research Collection were not accessioned into the Broadgreen textile collection officially, they were kept on a separate register and had clearly at some point been added to the collection regardless of provenance but perhaps due to a gap in the collection. Often, these are twentieth century items, that fall outside the dates of the original occupants of the house, the Buxtons, who lived at Broadgreen in the nineteenth century and with whom the house's restoration and Victorian-era furnishing are contemporary. But this intriguingly decorated bodice seemed out of place with a BGR (Broadgreen Research) number.

A petite, tailored day bodice, it looked forest green in some lights and dark brown in others but was settled on as brown. The bodice, made of felted wool, has long sleeves with a gigot puff to the sleeve from shoulder to elbow. It fastens down the front with hidden hooks and eyes, and round dark brown, velvet-covered buttons follow the front opening down on either side, appearing again at each cuff. There is a cream-coloured square of fabric at the front top of the bodice, split by the front opening, and another at the front hem. This fabric is also at each cuff, making the buttons stand out against the paler fabric. Bordering these pieces of fabric and around the neck of the bodice are elaborate decorations of Dorset buttons, braid, and frogging. The provenance recorded in the donor file connected the bodice to Alberta Clare, a suffragette in the UK who was jailed for her part in protesting for women's right to vote and who knew the leaders of the movement, the Pankhurst family. This information was recorded on a note from the person who donated the bodice to Broadgreen, saying that the man who gave her (the donor) the bodice had acquired it from his mother, Alberta Clare Mitchell (born 1912), and that the bodice was most likely from the estate of *her* mother - Alberta Clare the suffragette.

At face value, the case study objects I have selected are similar in that five of the six are gowns or dresses. However, they each represent a different key element of the Broadgreen Textile Collection. Rose Frank's garden party gown is a rare material glimpse of a well-known woman from New Zealand's history. The Townsend (or *Cressy*) gowns are an example of the importance of cloth and clothing to previous generations, of emigrants to New Zealand bringing out items to re-use, or because of their importance as family heirlooms, like the mauve wedding gown (described in the introduction). Alicia Townsend brought with her an incredibly practical garment, one that could be adjusted throughout pregnancy and to enable breastfeeding. The child's gown which would have been worn by one or several of the Townsend girls, is just one example of the many pieces of interesting children's and babies' garments held in the Broadgreen textile collection, the way that children's garments of the past echoed their parents' styles in miniature, and the excitement of finding parts of a piece of clothing upon close reading, like the pocket in the Townsend girls' gown.

Jessie Morris's luxurious day gown is an example of the kinds of clothing that often end up in collections, and of the class differences obvious in textile collections particularly, as clothing worn by those who could not afford an elaborate wardrobe like Morris's would have needed to wear out their clothes, or reuse the fabric, or hand them down to family members. The Morris gown also allows us to look at the way the collection policy at Broadgreen is developing over time. Rose Ellis's orange silk party gown from Louissos shares a snapshot of a woman's life in 1930s New Zealand and showcases the twentieth century garments in the Broadgreen textile collection. The quilt made by Sarah Higgins exemplifies the benefits of ties between regional institutions, and it is representative of the non-clothing objects in Broadgreen's textile collection. It also reveals the meaning embedded in a 'love object' that has been made for a family member, as well as the material culture left behind that can enable the sharing of a woman's history as remarkable as that of Sarah Higgins.

Conclusion

So, what can the Broadgreen Historic House textile collection tell us about how women's history is conveyed through material culture, specifically textiles, in a domestic setting outside the professional setting of the institutional museum? The Broadgreen textile collection has been a successful case study for exploring the relationships between material culture and women's history outside of the mainstream museum, specifically in the setting of historic houses. The combination of research methods employed in this study: interviews with past and present Broadgreen staff, critical historical analysis of the Broadgreen textile collection through collection records and internal archives, and a deep dive into the collection itself through the material culture analysis of six object case studies, have shown the way that Broadgreen, as an inherently domestic, feminine space, connects with visitors in a way that mainstream museums do not. This led to members of the public making donations to Broadgreen and explicitly stating that they were choosing to donate to Broadgreen over NPM, likely based on Broadgreen's approachability as a familiar house setting. The power of material culture in conveying the history of the 'every day', and women's history in particular, comes alive for visitors when they can see these objects and learn about these stories in the physical setting of a historic house. This research shows the value in museum studies of focusing on case studies outside of the mainstream museum, and on smaller 'unofficial' museums or heritage sites like Broadgreen.

Broadgreen's textile collection has developed since the house's transformation from private to public, when textiles were donated to furnish the house and the collection almost accidentally came together during this time. Early curator Margaret Paul's dedicated organisation and cataloguing of the textile collection parallels the work of other female curators in post-war New Zealand (Labrum 2018). The 'unofficial' nature of Broadgreen as a domestic house setting, in contrast to the institutional museum, in this case NPM, worked in Broadgreen's favour as visitors and potential donors felt that Broadgreen was more accessible than the museum. They also saw, through the exhibitions that Broadgreen was using to showcase the textile collection, that donated items would be displayed and seen – that Broadgreen was placing value on these donors' own family treasures. The reason textiles, specifically, were being exhibited at Broadgreen was because the textile collection is the majority of the collection that is not on display – the other types of objects are literally in

place in the house. Textiles were also given the value that they may not have received in a masculine museum setting. At Broadgreen - a domestic, feminine space - the material culture relating to the home and the Victorian 'women's sphere' was valued on a scale that is specific to historic house museums and domestic heritage sites, where domestic objects of material culture are displayed in situ. Examples of this can be seen in the replica Catharine Walton sampler pattern available for purchase (Chapter Two), the presence of a significant quilt collection (Chapter Three), and the textile collection in its entirety.

Howick Historical Village in Auckland is another heritage site with an extensive textile collection. Many of its collection items can be viewed online on the NZ Museums website. While it is a great achievement to have these items catalogued and photographed for online access, the photographs are basic reference-style shots, with the garments laid on tables rather than on dress forms or mannequins, making it harder for the viewer to assess the object as it would have been originally worn. This shows that Howick Historical Village, by sharing these objects online, has done what many other heritage institutions aspire to, advancing their online access and digitisation projects. Yet, the nature of the photos is evidence of the lack of funding and resources at hand. Textiles are difficult objects to digitise – their very nature makes them more fragile and less likely to be displayed due to factors such as light sensitivity. Likewise, many garments would benefit from being on a dress form to be photographed which is more time consuming and requires more resources ('Howick Historical Village' on NZ Museums website). This links to Broadgreen as a historic house that has overcome ongoing struggles with resources and funding, but has successfully continued to share its textile collection with the public through exhibitions and highlighting the stories that can be shared through the domestic and feminine setting of a historic house, and with objects of textile material culture.

Other historic houses in New Zealand, such as Heritage New Zealand's Alberton House and Highwic House in Auckland both include textile collections like Broadgreen's to furnish the houses. What stands out about these properties is the way that the domestic, feminine nature of these spaces are celebrated through programmes and events. These include textile craft workshops, and events like 'Mother's Day Weekend: Tea at Alberton', and the 'Coal Range Baking Days at Highwic' (Alberton 1863 and Highwic 1862, Facebook pages 2020-2021). This is reminiscent of Broadgreen having an extensive textile collection and celebrating feminine pursuits such as embroidery and sewing through the reproduction of the Catharine

Walton sampler pattern and the 1840s gown. Broadgreen also has similarly domestic-themed programmes and exhibitions (see Chapter Two).

When I began this study, I thought that the textiles in the Broadgreen collection were being marginalised, but they are thriving. The collection has new storage; an ongoing inventory project with the collaboration of textile and museum professionals; and while writing this thesis, the news that the heritage and collections officer has the new title of curator and more capacity in her role to care for and research the Broadgreen textile collection. The textiles continue to be shared with the public through carefully curated exhibitions, and they are slowly being conserved where possible to strengthen them for display.

What I came to realise, instead, is that the reasons for my assumption that the collection was marginalised (lack of awareness of the collection in the museum sector and the Nelson public, small storage space, few staff, etc) are all things that affect Broadgreen as a whole, not just the textile collection.

I also discovered that these issues have existed for Broadgreen since it began life as a public heritage site. Perhaps it is the NCC and our New Zealand funding bodies in general that need to recognise the value of collections like the Broadgreen textile collection, amidst the diminishing view that historic houses are old fashioned and amateur (Lumley 2005). It is only with funding and adequate staffing that these collections can be cared for and events, public programmes, education programmes and exhibitions can be put on to highlight the collection and bring in the public numbers, which these funding bodies so often require to justify said funding - the catch-22 of heritage institutions. Broadgreen is small, and like many regional historic houses or small museums throughout the country, it needs help. If visitor numbers are needed to justify funding, assistance and designated funds need to help make this happen first. For example, marketing and promotion of programmes, events and exhibitions would enhance the standing of Broadgreen in the eyes of the community as well as boosting visitor numbers. Broadgreen cannot be left to languish because it does not have a popular café like Isel or Melrose Houses, or the ability to host large income-generating events like Founders Heritage Park.

This study, based on the analysis of a range of sources including the material culture of objects in Chapter Three, argues that heritage professionals in New Zealand need to see the value in ‘unprofessional’ heritage sites or historic house museums, in contrast with the

mainstream professional museum. Likewise, places like Broadgreen put women's stories front and centre, aided by the display and care of textile collections. Textiles and clothing, so often made by women, offer the chance to explore the past via a third source, outside of archives and photographs, to learn about the lives of those who are left out of traditional historical narratives.

The value of smaller institutions is exemplified in Chapter Two when the idea is examined that members of the public found Broadgreen more accessible and thus were more likely to donate objects to Broadgreen instead of NPM in many instances. Historic Houses like Broadgreen do not always display 'best practice' compared to mainstream museums, an example of which is in methods of display and a 'less is more' approach. As discussed in Chapter Two, in the case of Broadgreen, having so many objects on display had the positive result of encouraging visitors to donate their treasured objects to Broadgreen, whereas this method of display is not now considered fashionable or best practise in heritage site display (e.g., the 2018 redevelopment of Nairn Street Cottage discussed in Chapter Two).

Members of the public and professionals in the New Zealand museum sector may not know that key objects of Nelson's material past are at Broadgreen, an old cob house on a suburban street, where students from the high school down the road sit on the grounds in the rose gardens on their lunch breaks. Museum professionals should be aware of the collections held by smaller 'unprofessional' heritage institutions, and the value of building relationships with these places, even as these historic houses are often derided as old fashioned and like 'Grandma's attic' (Bonilla 2006). The marginalisation of historic textiles and the marginalisation of historic house museums go hand in hand – both are inherently tied to their links with women and the domestic.

Reference List

This list is set out under the following headings:

Primary Sources

1. Unpublished Interviews
2. Heritage House Registers and Databases
3. Heritage House Documentation

Secondary Sources

1. Books, Articles and Conference Papers
2. Websites

Primary Sources

1. Unpublished Interviews

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