

RISE UP, HUNGARIAN!

Exhibition at the Canterbury Museum

It was the late Paul Szentirmay's idea to introduce and promote Hungarian history and culture to the New Zealand public.

We have worked alongside him spending unforgettable hours entertained by his intellectual conversation.

I sorely miss his astute direction and advice saying: "It does not worth to be heartbroken over petty animosities my girl, the result and the people who came to enjoy it are far more important."

Under his watchful eyes (down here and "up there") together with my husband, we have accomplished four past events.

1992 Icon Exhibition of Ilona Jonas's works

(In partnership with Gilbert Glausius at his Nova Gallery)

1994 Folk Art Exhibition of their own collection

(as part of the Second Hungarian Festival in Wellington and in partnership with Gilbert Glausius in the Christchurch Arts Centre)

1996 1000 Anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest (graphics and folk art)

(as part of the Second Hungarian Festival in Wellington and the same event by the Christchurch Hungarian Club at the Arts Centre)

2004 First European Festival at The Arts Centre

(Independent members of the organizing committee. I was in charge of the folk art section and my husband of the "Taste of Europe" Market.)

This Christmas Paul's daughter, Klára beat the recruiting drums in the Magyar Szó calling all Hungarians (societies and individuals alike) to take their share of work, in the celebration of the 1956 Revolution's Anniversary.

After some unfruitful negotiations with others we have decided to undertake the project on our own and to find willing allies elsewhere.

We wrote down a plan based on the idea that :

We wanted to remember the past and celebrate the present and future. We wanted to put up a memorial to all true revolutionary martyrs, and to those who stayed behind suffered the consequences and built today's Hungary.

We contacted the Canterbury Museum. Much to our surprise instead of just giving us a small space to set up an exhibition ourselves, they offered to organise and stage the Exhibition in conjunction with us as part of their official 2006 program, lasting two months from 7th October for the benefit of the expected 80 000 visitors.

(on the condition that we were able to supply the necessary contents.) Their generous offer included all costs for the preparation, setting up, promoting and display of the exhibition.

They honoured me with the position of joint curator for the duration.

After some frantic e-mailing, we were able to advise the Museum, that everybody whom we asked coming on board to support this event, so that on my forthcoming trip to Budapest I can collect their contributions.

We would like to thank:

The Institute and Archives of 1956, Budapest (János Rainer Director)

for giving us all the pictures we selected and for forfeiting all the usual charges in recognition the Museum's generosity and our work.

Tibor Magyar (our faithful family friend)

for visiting and photographing all the sites of the archive pictures and taking pains to capture them from the same cut and angle as the originals.

The associates at MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum)

for giving me their poster of the "Hungarian Shield" to be our welcome picture and accompaniment to an other famous poster we have already had.

(Thanks for the advice and the shared jokes)

The Riccarton Rotary Club

for supporting us with some of the travel expenses of our overseas guest speaker.

Thanks to modern technology whilst still in Hungary I was able to exchange many e-mails between myself, the Museum, and Tom - sharing the additional materials, writing and editing tonnes of texts and a nutshell size illustrated History of Hungary, debating on the the right phrasing and number of words we could use.

I found very rewarding to accomplish all this hard work in the company of such expert and able people as the three Canterbury Mus(eum)keteers:

Stephen Ruscoe, exhibition manager

Rachel Vavasour, Education and Public Programmes Manager, and last but not least:

Paula Granger, Communications Co-ordinator

We are at the stage when we can announce the exhibition and seminar programme:

EXHIBITION:

Contrasts

Archive pictures of the destroyed and colour photographs of today's Budapest and other pictures of the revolution.

Famous Hungarian Inventors and inventions

Hungarian History in a nutshell

LECTURES:

Sandor Szakaly well respected Hungarian historian and **Miklos Szabo** an eyewitness of the events in Budapest

We have sent invitations to all Christchurch Hungarians know to us and would like to invite all Readers who will be able to visit Christchurch during the Exhibition.

Helga Dombay