

A guide to the work of the

SOUTH CANTERBURY MUSEUM

EXPLORE our heritage

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Vision: why we have the South Canterbury Museum

The South Canterbury Museum will build understanding and enjoyment of our region's heritage, enhancing and strengthening our community and attracting visitors to our region. The Museum will be:

- a safe repository for important aspects of local heritage
- a vital heritage resource for research and education
- a dynamic community service
- an engaging visitor destination

that everyone can use to explore, celebrate and enjoy our region's heritage: nature, history, culture.

Mission: What the Museum does

1. Preserve heritage

The South Canterbury Museum builds, researches and cares for well-organised collections of objects, images and information that relate to our focus. These collections are used by us for on-going research, exhibitions, education and public programmes.

2. Present heritage

The Museum provides a facility and programmes for people to explore our heritage. This will be done through exhibitions, formal education programmes, public programmes, publication and media contact, research access, collaborative ventures and other means.

3. Promote heritage

The Museum provides a focal point for local heritage, and collaborates with other organisations, groups and individuals that share similar goals. The Museum provides resources for promoting our region's heritage locally and further afield.

A regional focus

The South Canterbury Museum has a geographical focus on the natural and human heritage of the South Canterbury region – from the Rangitata River in the north to the Waitaki River in the south, and from the sea to the Southern Alps. This provides a focus for the over-arching themes of *land, life and people*: the nature, history and cultures of South Canterbury.

The Museum Team

The Museum's activities are carried out by a changing team of part-time and full-time staff, temporary workers, interns and volunteers. On any given work day there can be between 6 and 10 people undertaking a wide variety of tasks, as well as a wider range of people who support the Museum and its activities. Present team members include:

- 1 Museum Director
- 1 Curator of Collections
- 1 Curator of Documentary History
- 1 Museum co-ordinator (part time)
- 3 Museum Educators (1.5 FTE)
- 1 Museum technician (part time)
- 1 Museum cleaner (part time)
- 5 Museum weekend supervisors (part time)
- 8 volunteers (part time)
- 6 Museum Development Trust trustees
- 10 SC Historical Society committee members
- 75 Friends of the Museum
- 2000+ Museum Explorers Club members (primary-school age)

Who owns the Museum?

The South Canterbury Museum is owned and operated by the Timaru District Council on behalf of the District's residents. The Museum is fully integrated into the Council; being funded primarily by rates and operated in accordance with Council procedures.

The Museum was established in 1941, by the South Canterbury Historical Society, following the bequest of land and buildings by Thomas Burnett, a local runholder and MP. The Society built up the collections and oversaw the building of Pioneer Hall in 1966. The Society continue to support the Museum and its activities today.

Who uses the Museum?

The Museum is a resource widely used by locals, visitors to Timaru, and distance researchers seeking information images or access to the collections. The Museum's services are provided at the Museum and around the region through Heritage Education Service programmes and staff talks and activities.

Main user groups, along with 2023 calendar year numbers are:

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|--|--------|
| • On-site visitors | 18,288 |
| • On-site school groups | 2,737 |
| • Off-site school classes and other groups | 4,789 |
| • On-site research users | 502 |
| • Distance research users | 418 |

Total 26,734

The Museum also has considerable online engagement through making collection resources available online, handling emailed inquiries, and providing engagement through social media, with over 5,000 followers.

Collections: at the heart of our Museum

Since its beginnings in early 1940s, the South Canterbury Museum has developed extensive collections of objects, images and documents that relate to the Museum's aims and focus. The majority of items have been donated through the generosity of the public, making the Museum a truly community museum.

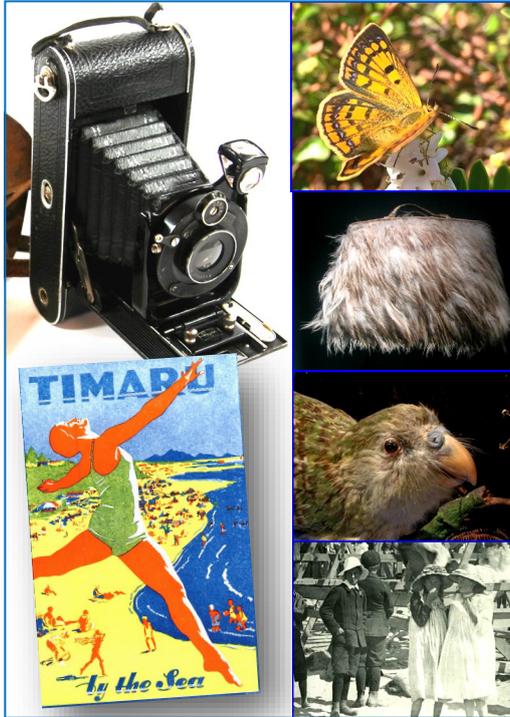
Over 100,000 items have now been documented in the Museum's collections. These items provide the raw material for the Museum's programmes of display, research and education. The Museum continues to actively collect, and ensures that all collection items are correctly stored and documented on computer database so that they are available for use both today and well into the future.

Natural History

This collection area includes several thousand specimens of rocks and fossils, marine life, birds, insects, mammals and other life forms. Highlights include locally-collected examples of creatures now extinct or absent from our region.

Recent Social History

These collections, the largest in the Museum, cover a huge range of items ranging from the every-day to the rare and special. They include personal belongings, household items and clothing from the last 150 years; and a wide range of items that reflect local history and the lives of local people.



Māori History

The Museum holds several hundred items relating to local Māori heritage, some dating back hundreds of years. Most items recovered from local sites. There are some textile items and special *taoka* (treasures) entrusted to the Museum's care by local families.

Documentary History

Collections include photographs, archival documents, maps, plans and books. These collections provide a rich resource for the Museum to use and for researchers. In recent years, digitisation has allowed much greater access to these collections for a wide variety of purposes.

Exhibitions: bringing our stories to life

The Museum's exhibitions explore our region's natural and human heritage. The long-term exhibitions use our collections and research to explore a range of local subjects including local geology, wildlife, early Māori history, European settlement and how people have lived their lives over the last 150 years.

A temporary exhibition area has a variety of changing exhibitions that explore a wide variety of topics. These often draw upon the resources held in the Museum's collections or from elsewhere. Travelling exhibitions from other museums are also featured occasionally.



Education: a central role

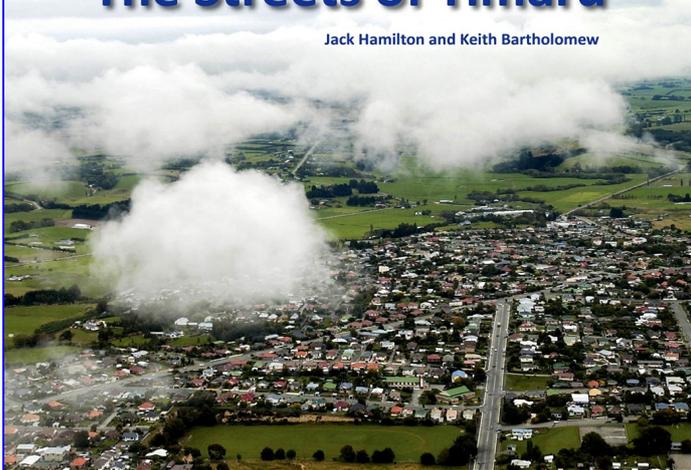
The South Canterbury Museum is a key resource for local schools. The Museum hosts the Heritage Education Service, funded by the Ministry of Education, which provides curriculum-linked programmes for schools both at the Museum and throughout the region at a range of other museums and heritage sites. Several thousand students use this service each year, and have the opportunity to experience local nature and history in a way that no book or website can provide.

At the South Canterbury Museum and throughout the central South Island, the HES provides programmes at a range of partner museums and heritage sites. This enables local schools to make the best use of the rich array of heritage resources found in our wider region.



The Streets of Timaru

Jack Hamilton and Keith Bartholomew



Research: exploring the past

The stored collections are a treasure trove of information for Museum staff and visiting researchers. In particular, the rich collections of documents, photographs, local history publications and information sources are very useful for family historians, authors, researchers and students needing local information.

Material belonging to the South Canterbury Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists is also housed in the Museum's research library. Increased digitisation of the Museum's resources is providing greater access to our heritage. The Museum has now produced and published several important local history books, working with local authors.

A place for people

The South Canterbury Museum provides an important social space for public events and opportunities for exploring heritage themes. These opportunities are provided through exhibition openings, public talks and seminars, school holiday activities and a range of outdoor events.

The Museum's Heritage Theatre provides a venue for talks, the screening of films, and events such as training for local museum workers. Local people can become more involved with the Museum through the Friends of the Museum, operated by the South Canterbury Historical Society. This provides members with a varied activity programme.

Local primary-school aged children can join the free Museum Explorers Club, receiving a "passport stamp" every time they visit the Museum, and earning badges. The Museum has become a regular destination for many local families.

