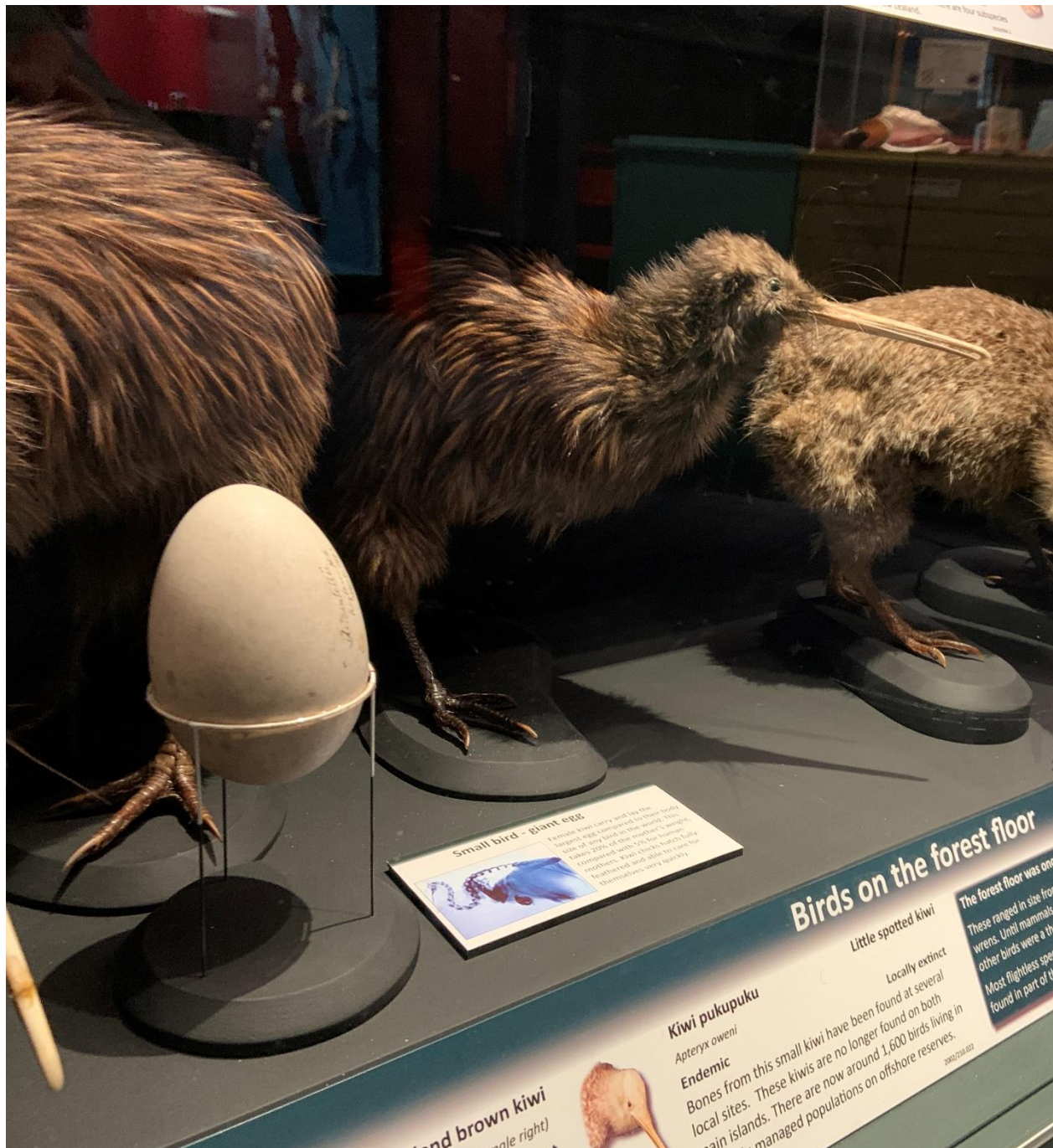


SOUTH CANTERBURY MUSEUM

EXPLORE our heritage

Activity report Jan-Dec 2021



2021 - The Museum year at a glance

- 5 temporary exhibitions
- 21,594 users of our services
- 5,291 students attending formal education programmes
- 10 public events
- 4 holiday programmes
- 550 items added to the collection (and more in progress)
- Museum closed during August-September lockdown for 3 weeks



Above: Parks officer Jane Morrison draws a prize winner for the Sunsational Challenge contest in February, assisted by Constable Deb Quested and Museum Co-ordinator Mel Rippin.

1. Participation: Engaging with our heritage

A total of 21,594 people actively engaged with the Museum last year through visitation, education, research, and programme participation. This figure shows around a 7% drop against target figures for the year, reflecting the impact of COVID restrictions and several weeks of closure during the August lockdown.

The total breaks down as follows:

Casual visitors	12,871
On-site research service users	590
Visiting groups	1,821
On-site schools	2,542
Off-site outreach schools and groups	2,749
Offsite public programmes	578
Distance information service users	443



Membership

There are now 89 Friends of the Museum (managed by the South Canterbury Historical Society) and 2,501 members of the children's Museum Explorers Club. The Explorers Club remains popular with new members being signed up by keen parents. Club members receive rewards for repeat visits and are kept informed of relevant events through email.

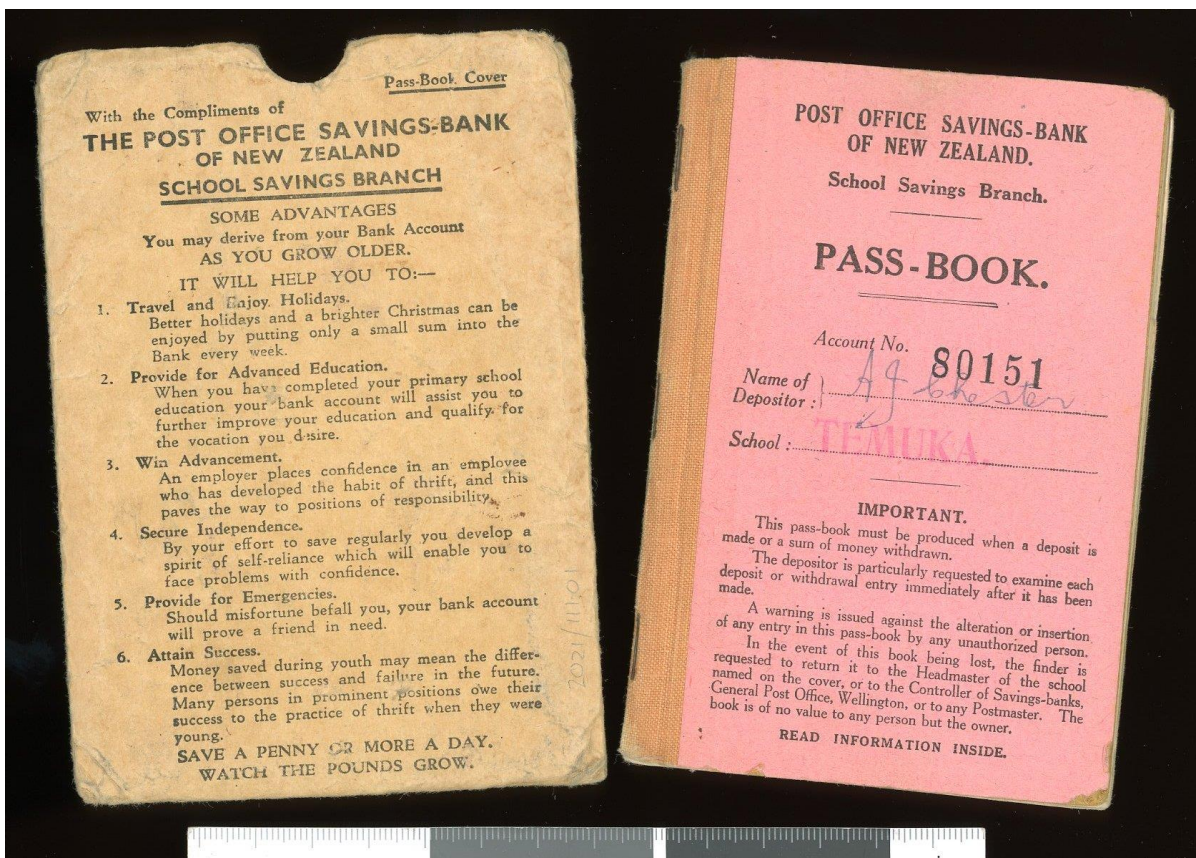
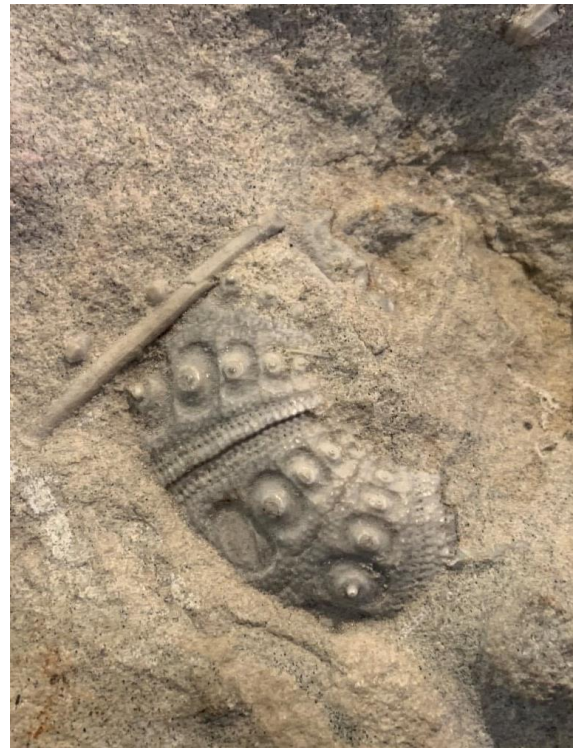
2. Collections: the raw material for the Museum's programmes

The Museum's collections encompass a wide range of items, including natural history specimens, taoka Māori, costume, social history artefacts from the last 150 years, items of community and civic history, archival documents, publications and photographs. The Museum team endeavours to catalogue every item to ensure we have all information about it, where it is housed, and any other relevant details. Collection care, documentation and storage are key museum activities carried out by curators, interns and volunteers. Once processed and housed, collection items provide resources for exhibitions, education programmes and research.

Every year new items are added to the collections, in line with the Museum's collection policy. There are now over 101,600 documented items held in the collections. In 2021, 114 separate accessions were recorded, ranging from single items to larger collections of items. To date, 550 separate items have been documented, with work progressing.



Above left: a shelf clock sold in Timaru in 1899. Above right: A prize-winner's sash for the 1955 Caroline Bay Carnival Tiny Tots competition.



Large fibreglass Santa used as part of Stafford Street Christmas decorations, 30 million year old fossil sea urchin in limestone block from Tengawai River near Cave, 1937 Post Office Savings Bank deposit books owned by a Temuka High School student.

3. Exhibitions: showcasing our heritage

Work has continued on the further development of the Museum's long-term exhibition areas, with new display elements incorporated in to the natural history exhibition area and replacement of costume items in the upstairs social history area.



Above: Museum Technician Simon Cullimore puts the finishing touches on a new display case featuring moa and other extinct local megafauna.

The following temporary exhibitions ran through 2021.

Whakamana o te Tamariki: 75 Years of SC Kindergartens (November 2020 – February 2021). This popular show looked at the South Canterbury Kindergarten Association's history and the changing place of early childhood education.



In Service: the South Canterbury RSA Memorabilia Collection (February-May). This exhibition featured highlights from the collection transferred to the Museum in 2019 following the closure of the SC RSA building in Wai-iti Road.

Below: RSA members Rapa Whiu, John Bradley and Museum curator Chris Rapley at the opening of ***In Service***.



Buller's Birds: The Art of J Keulemans and Buchanan (May – July). This show toured from Te Papa, featuring reproductions of the artwork used in Walter Buller's 19th century publications on New Zealand birds.





Anyone for Tennis? (July – November) This exhibition was developed in partnership with Tennis South Canterbury to mark their centenary jubilee. It featured images and artefacts relating to tennis through the ages.

Distant Shores: Images of the Pacific from Cook's third Voyage (November – January 2022) This exhibition featured an historic publication from the Museum's collection, the 1784 Atlas to Plates of Cook's Voyages, which contained 62 large-format lithographs from Cook's third voyage around the Pacific. The entire book was photographed, and all images available on a touchscreen and selected images enlarged on the walls.



4. Heritage Education

Our current contract with the Ministry of Education for delivery of Learning Experiences Out of The Classroom (LEOTC), was extended until June 2022. A new tender bid has been submitted for a contract running from July 2022 – December 2024, with notification likely in early March. This followed considerable work by the Education team to ensure that our proposal was in line with the changing focus of education and curricula.



During 2021, 5,291 students participated in our Heritage Education programmes, easily exceeding our annual performance target of 4,200. Just under half of these were onsite at the Museum, with the rest taking place at natural or historical sites, or in other museums and facilities around the region. In addition, several programmes were adapted to be taken into schools where COVID requirements had made class trips problematic.



5. Events: engaging with our community

The Museum was able to run much of its usual range of public programmes and events through the year, despite the impact of COVID restrictions and the August lockdown.

Summer Holiday programmes

The Museum had a key role in the Community Services-wide Sunsational Summer Challenge, which saw over a thousand participants visiting various Council public facilities around the district to complete activities and gain entry into prize draws. The success of this programme has seen it repeated in January 2022. The Museum also ran several summer holiday activities within the Museum and elsewhere.



Above: two happy Museum Explorers Club members embarking on the Sunsational Challenge in January. Below: Participants in a fossil exploration programme in the summer holidays at the Museum.



School holiday programmes

School holiday programmes were run in April and July, with September school holidays activities curtailed because of COVID restrictions. Families enjoyed being able to take part in craft activities and gallery quizzes, with repeat visitation from many members of the Museum Explorers Club.



Above: A kind donation of ANZAC biscuits to Museum staff by two happy Museum Explorers in April. Below: adding butterflies to a tropical forest wall.



Retro Rock at the Museum

This was held on 13 February, with another pleasant evening luring over 600 people to the Museum grounds to watch four local bands and enjoy a free community event and take the chance to explore the Museum. Increased COVID restrictions brought in a week later would have prevented this event from proceeding.





Exhibition openings

Three exhibition events were held during the year, linked to the opening of the following exhibitions. These events provided a social opportunity for local residents and invited guests to enjoy hospitality within the Museum. Below: the opening of ***Anyone for Tennis***, which attracted over 100 guests.



Following the changes to COVID levels, no opening event was held for the final exhibition of the year, ***Distant Shores***.

Public talks

Six public talks were organised in conjunction with the Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society. Two were held at the TDC chambers, one each at the Landing Service building and at the Wilson St Baptist Hall and one held on Zoom during the August lockdown. Attendee numbers averaged around fifty, with an ongoing interest in more events like these being held in 2022.



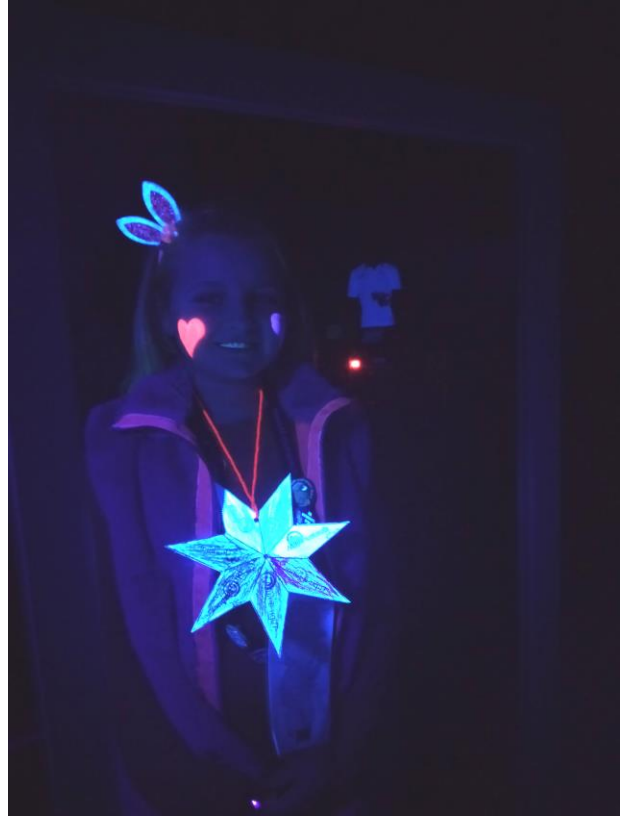
Above: Epidemiologist Ben Harris gives an illustrated talk at the Landing Service building in April about how new viruses develop.

Below: Haritina Mogoşanu, a Wellington-based science communicator, gave a talk via Zoom for an online audience about astro-biology and the issues around space travel and life.



Museum in the Dark

This annual event attracts a lot of interest, with limited spaces being booked out. It enables family groups to explore the Museum by torchlight, with special clues, UV lighting and face-painting, and interactive items in place. In addition, local astronomers provided telescopes for viewing of planets on what luckily was a clear night.



6. Communication: reaching out

The Museum has increased its following on social media with approximately 3,500 followers on Facebook and 480 followers on Instagram. The Museum team post nearly every day with a planned strategy of posts relating to events, news items, behind the scenes looks and general updates.

Inside, the Museum's newsletter, was produced three times in 2021, and made available in print form and a digital edition.

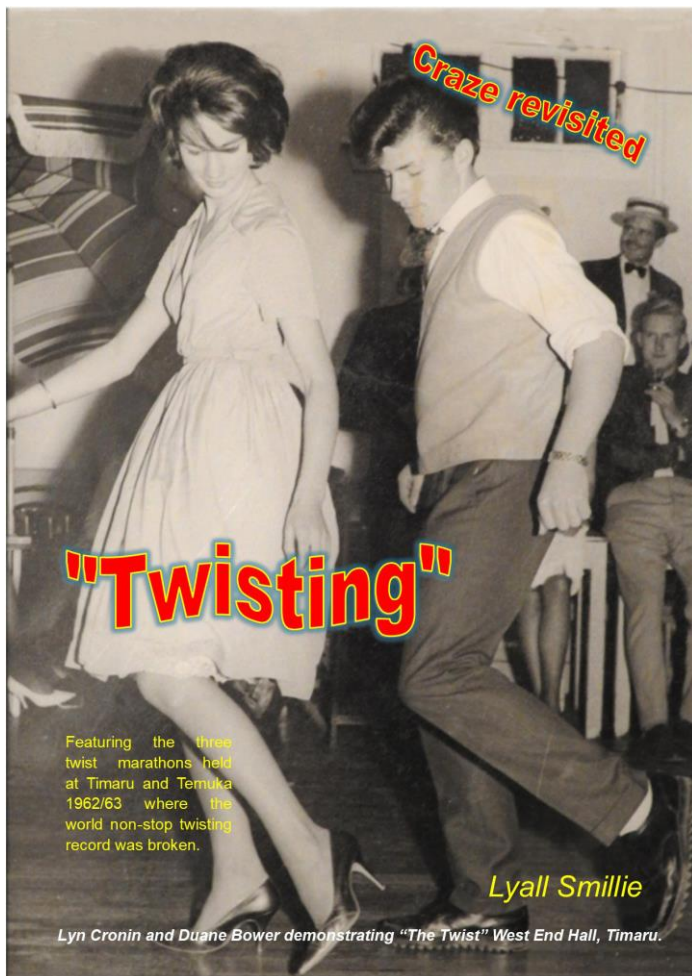
A regular Museum Piece column was contributed to the Saturday edition of the Timaru Herald each week, with articles featuring items from current exhibitions or collection items with specific stories.

There have been a number of other articles generated in local newspapers, either initiated by the Museum or from external reporter enquiries.

6. Wider networks

Organisational Partnerships

The South Canterbury Museum has continued in its close relationship with the Friends of the Museum, as part of the South Canterbury Historical Society. Museum Friends and Society members have supported the Museum through attending events and exhibition openings, and through raising funds for projects. Society members act as Museum advocates in the community, and provide a focus for members of the public who wish to become more involved with the Museum and local heritage.



The South Canterbury Museum Development Trust has continued to generate revenue through sales earmarked for supporting the costs of developing new exhibitions in the planned Heritage Hub. The Trust, formed in 1997, has charitable status and is administered by six trustees. In 2021 it collaborated with local music historian Lyall Smillie to produce a booklet about the world record-beating "twist" dance competitions that ran in Temuka and Timaru in the early 1960s, with all proceeds going to the Trust.

The Trust has undertaken to pay for the initial Preliminary Concept Design plan being produced by exhibition design company Workshop E for the Museum's new long-term exhibition areas that will be installed in the new Heritage Hub. The Trust will continue to support this project through fundraising and advocacy.

The Museum continues to host the South Canterbury Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, whose research material is housed in the Museum's research library. Volunteers from the Branch were assisting with enquiries on Sunday afternoons in the Research Library at the Museum. Both the Historical Society and the Genealogists made regular use off the Museum's meeting room. However, COVID restrictions have reduced the ability of external collaborators to continue operating at the previous level.

Local Museums



The Museum hosted a meeting of the Central South Island Museums Group in 2021. In addition it has provided advice to individual local museums as well as providing surplus display equipment free for museums within the Timaru District. COVID restrictions have curtailed regular meetings and events for this group.

Other Organisations

Contact has been maintained between the Museum and a number of local and national organisations including:

- Te Ana Māori Rock Art Centre
- Tē Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Tē Rūnanga o Waihao
- Local schools
- National Services Te Paerangi (Te Papa)
- Ministry of Culture and Heritage
- Central South Island Museums Group

The Museum, or individual staff members, belonged to the following professional organisations during 2021:

- Museums Aotearoa
- Te Pū Tiaki Mana Taonga - Museum Educators Association of New Zealand

- Archives and Records Association of New Zealand
- Directors of Smaller Museums Group
- New Zealand Archaeological Association
- National Oral History Association of New Zealand
- Entomological Society of New Zealand
- New Zealand Military History Society
- New Zealand Teachers Council
- Geological Society of New Zealand
- Museums Association (UK)
- American Association for State and Local History

7. Planning for a new future

The Museum Director is part of the planning group for the new Heritage Hub complex planned for Stafford Street. Museum team members have also contributed to reviews of architectural development. In addition, the museum has engaged with national museum exhibition design company Workshop E to develop a plan for new long-term exhibitions that will be installed in the new complex once it is built. The exhibitions will provide an opportunity to develop a high-end high-impact visitor experience that tells the stories on our landscape, life forms and human history up to the present day. The aim will be to create a must-see experience that will draw locals and visitors to the region in again and again.

Along with planning for the new facility, the Museum team have begun work on planning for the future of the existing Pioneer Hall building, with work to continue on this over the next two years.



The South Canterbury Museum Development Trust, has commissioned the first part of the exhibition concept design, and will support the continuing design and development process with fundraising to supplement funds in the Council's Long Term Plan.

8. Operations: keeping things going

Administration and Maintenance

Standard Timaru District Council planning and budgeting procedures were followed and maintained during the period. Staff were able to take part in several TDC staff training sessions and workshops.

Regular building inspections and checks were carried out in accordance with requirements, along with necessary Health and Safety reports and checks. A number of maintenance tasks were actioned during the year to repair minor problems and maintain the building asset. The Museum's health and safety procedures have undergone considerable development to comply with Council requirements and national standards.



Participation in Timaru District Council Activities

The Museum continues to have a working relationship with the Aigantighe Art Gallery and Timaru District Libraries. This has resulted in joint promotional activities, along with sharing of resources. Three Museum staff members are members of the Timaru District Emergency Management Team (public information management team). Museum staff also provided access to Museum images, resources such as display cases, and information services for other Council units when requested.

Disaster recovery planning

Curators Tony Rippin and Chris Rapley have continued to develop a disaster recovery plan to guide the recovery of the Museum's priceless heritage collections in the advent of a disaster such as fire or earthquake. The value of this planning cannot be overstated, borne out by experiences from cultural institutions elsewhere. They have also been assisting the Library on developing a disaster recovery plan.

COVID response

In August the Museum closed for three weeks during a brief change to Level 4 and lockdown. Following reopening, the foyer was rearranged to control visitor movements, in a similar fashion to what had been carried out in 2020. COVID requirements also meant that visitors

had to wear masks, as did staff when working in public areas. In December, the Museum required all visitors to present a vaccine pass, in line with Council requirements.

Considerable effort has gone in ensuring visitor safety and comfort in line with COVID requirements. This includes an enhanced cleaning regime, limitations on personnel in particular spaces and reduction of infection risks where possible.

9. The Museum team

- Museum Director (full-time)
- Curator of Documentary History (full-time)
- Curator of Social History (full-time)
- Museum Co-ordinator (part-time)
- 3 Museum Educators (LEOTC-funded)
- Technician (part-time)
- 1 Cleaner (part-time)
- 5 Weekend supervisors
- 7 Volunteers
- 1 Summer Student intern
- 6 SC Museum Development Trust Trustees



Above left: Museum Educator Keely Kroening is congratulated on 10 years of service by Group Manager Simon Leggett in February. Above right: Student Intern Amy Doran rehousing stored archaeological taoka in December.

The Museum has been greatly assisted by our volunteers, who have worked on a wide range of collection care, exhibitions, public events and programmes, and information access

projects behind the scenes. The hours worked by these additional personnel usually equate to the equivalent of more than a full-time staff position for the year. Unfortunately volunteer access had to be restricted with increased COVID requirements restricted numbers of personnel in specific areas. The major contribution to the Museum's success made by the commitment and dedication of all members of the wider Museum team is greatly appreciated.



Above: Museum Educator Ruth Gardiner and Museum Co-ordinator Mel Rippin showing off a new holiday activity for the October holidays when organised programmes were more problematic. Above right: museum volunteer Wayne Pahl sorting through a collection of old theatre posters retrieved from the Theatre Royal building.

Below: Curator of Social History Chris Rapley filmed for an online presentation by the Aigantighe Art Gallery to mark Anzac Day.





Above: the Museum team celebrate the opening of the Distant Shores exhibition with empty wine glasses – no one could attend under Level 3 conditions.

Below: supermarket worker Shane King added his 2020 staff t-shirt to our COVID collection project.

