

UPDATE



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**SOUTH CANTERBURY
MUSEUM**
EXPLORE our heritage

**Summer
2015**



Director's comment: a busy year rolls into another

2014 has finished, a year that has seen a lot happening at the South Canterbury Museum. And this looks set to continue as we head into 2015. Over 22,000 people either visited or took part in the programmes that we offer. This included over 6,000 school students in formal education programmes either onsite or at other local heritage sites, and around 1,400 research enquiries.

Visitor feedback remained extremely positive (see the comments recorded elsewhere in this issue). The Museum also fared very well in the Timaru District Council's 2014 community survey, with 98% of visitors being satisfied or highly satisfied, and 78% of residents surveyed being satisfied or highly satisfied with the Museum.

Our school programmes were highly popular, exceeding projected student targets by 50%. Temporary exhibitions saw a wide range of visitors enjoying subjects such as local river biodiversity, engineering heritage, the local response to the start of the First World War and highlights from our textile collections.

The Museum Team worked hard during some challenging times to continue providing exhibitions, collection care, research access, school and holiday programmes, special events and generally great service to our visitors and those who sought assistance from us. Our team was joined in January by Educator Anna Rimmer, and in September by Curator of Social History Chris Rapley. Our 15 wonderful volunteers provided the equivalent of one and a half full-time staff to many of the Museum's core activities.

2015 is looking just as busy. Our exhibition programme will see a wide variety of shows during the year. The curatorial team are also working on a major overhaul of the social history displays upstairs. We will continue to run a range of visitor programmes and education programmes. And we will continue to care for and further develop the Museum's collections, that unique heritage resource that fuels our programmes.

A personal highlight for me in 2014 was a family trip to Europe. Museums did feature a bit, amongst the dining, sight-seeing and swimming. I was particularly interested in

visiting smaller museums similar to ours. A key point I took away - nothing beats great customer service and a friendly face at the front desk. It was very apparent when these things were lacking.

But the museum I most wanted to see was the largest; the Natural History Museum in London. I was delighted to be joined by former South Canterbury Museum volunteer Tracey Morris and partner Shelley.

While visiting we were able to view an insect collection store room housing several million beetle specimens. I was able to locate and view the original type specimen of a large local beetle species *Megadromus antarcticus crassalis*, collected near Albury in 1893. A long way to go to see something from our region, but it shows yet another way in which we are connected to the wider world, along with the importance of museums as places of preservation and learning - *Phillip*



Above: Tracey (in her *Timaru by the Sea* T-shirt), and I join Charles Darwin at the Natural History Museum in July

Right: Everyone has a favourite object in a museum. This just happens to be mine - something local now residing in a drawer in London.



Mrs Catriona Baker 1917—2014



Mrs Catriona Baker was a highly-knowledgeable historian who had a life-long love of the Mackenzie region. Her family had owned the Mt Cook Station since 1864 when her grandparents, Andrew and Catherine Burnett had taken up the land. Her father, Thomas Burnett MP, bequeathed the land on which our Museum now sits. Mrs Baker assisted her brother, the late Donald Burnett, to run Mt Cook Station, producing internationally-acclaimed high quality merino fibre.

Her knowledge of and passion for local heritage culminated in the publication of two books in recent years; *The Story of James Mackenzie*, and *The Man of the Trees*, a tribute to the amazing life of her late husband Richard St Barbe Baker. These books were produced while Mrs Baker was living in Fairlie, with limited sight and hearing. Assisted by others, Mrs Baker was able to produce what is certainly an authoritative account of the James Mackenzie affair that will be an essential reference.

Mrs Baker continued to take an active interest in the South Canterbury Museum, and liaised with us with regard to aspects of the production and marketing of her books, both of which are available to purchase at the Museum.

Exhibition news: garments, creatures and Gallipoli

Chosen Threads, our summer exhibition, is running through until Sunday 8 February. It features a selection of women's garments from our collection ranging from the 1890s to the 1990s. It is also a tribute to the late Davina Davis, our first Curator of Collections, whose work and passion for textile heritage saw the collections develop into the wonderful resource that they are today.

The exhibition was developed by textile collection volunteer Lee Keeley and Curator Chris Rapley. A well-attended opening was held on November 23. We were pleased to be joined by a number of Davina's friends and family members, including Davina's husband Michael Meadowcroft, her sister Sue Callan and her daughter Zarae Davis (below).



Coming in 2015

Wild Suburbia: Life and death in your backyard

(14 Feb - 12 April)

This exhibition takes a closer look at the small creatures that struggle for existence in our gardens, often unnoticed by us. Find out more about things that sting, eight-legged killers, creatures of the night and more, including the elegant but deadly damselfly below.



“The Gates of Hell had opened”

Local voices from Gallipoli

(25 April - 19 July)

We are continuing to commemorate the First World War by taking a closer look at the stories of local men who served in the Gallipoli campaign 100 years ago. The Gallipoli campaign is highly significant in New Zealand's military history. There are a number of poignant stories of local men who served, some not returning from the field. The exhibition will also feature a number of images taken by Timaru man Ernest Gibson.



Above: An iconic image of soldiers resting in the trenches at Gallipoli, taken by Ernest Gibson (courtesy of Canterbury Museum)

Museum Team News

September saw the arrival of Chris Rapley as our new Curator of Social History. Chris comes to Timaru from Rotorua Museum where he was working as the registrar and before that he was the curator of the Accoutrements and Social History Collection at the National Army Museum in Waiouru.

Despite being in the North Island for the last decade Chris is in fact something of a local boy, he spent his early years on a sheep farm near Kimbell and in the late 1990s trained as a journalist at Timaru's Aoraki Polytechnic campus.

Chris said he is looking forward to working on the Museum's collections and getting the chance to tell local stories.

"Already I have been impressed by the collection and the treasures it holds, I can't wait to research and learn about those items."

He said he was also impressed by the level of community involvement at South Canterbury Museum, as shown by the number of volunteers at the institution, which was the hallmark of an effective and healthy museum.

"The staff and volunteers here are passionate and curious about what they do and that really shows throughout the museum."

Volunteer Spotlight



Lee Keeley has been volunteering at the Museum since 2001, after viewing the Museum's collection areas on behind the scenes tour with an Otago University graduates group. Lee worked closely with the late Davina Davis, Curator of Collections, within the textiles collections; documenting new arrivals, rehousing items and improving storage conditions, and preparing items for exhibition. She continues to work in this area, working with Curator Chris Rapley to develop the **Chosen Threads** exhibition (right).

Lee has also generously supported the Museum through her skilled needlework, developing replica costumes for use in exhibitions, education and children's programmes, and for Museum Team members to wear.



Recent visitor comments from survey forms

I like the fact that the exhibits are always fresh and interesting

Timaru city visitor, November 2014

Kids had a great time. They loved finding/naming the birds.

Timaru district family, December 2014

Pity you don't have more space, eh?

South Island visitor, Nov 2014

Loved the butterfly display drawers. Good cross-section of material to suit interests, well done! Helpful staff and informative slide show

Australian visitor, October 2014

Very informative and interesting. Definitely plan to visit it again. Many thanks to those who care for it, well done.

North Island visitor, January 2015

Have been in Timaru for one year and finally visited with friends. Lovely museum, great displays. Brilliant for kids.

Timaru city family, January 2015

Très beau musée. Très bon récapitulatif de la vie en NZ (Very beautiful museum. Very good summary of life in NZ)

French visitor, January 2015

I have come to expect excellence from this museum

North Island visitor, January 2015

....most impressed with the information available on-line about your museum. Clearly you have a group of seriously committed people working there.

SCROLL online viewer, January 2015



Going digital: taking the Museum beyond the front door

We are making increased use of computer technology and the internet to provide people with greater access to our collections and information, provide news updates and opportunities for sharing information, and to generally create greater interest in the Museum and local heritage. Much of the audience for our online offerings lies away from our region, and we can interact with people around the world.

The Museum's main website (museum.timaru.govt.nz) provides a wealth of information about the Museum, what's on, the services we offer and more. Schools are able to make bookings for visits and download various forms. We provide access to our Collections Online database, to the SCROLL WWI memorial database (read more about this on next page) and to the Museum's Facebook page.



Collections Online

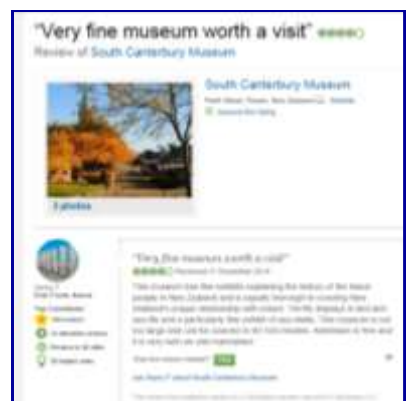
We now have over 7,000 database records from our PastPerfect collections database online (see three examples at right) This enables viewers to search using keywords to find specific photographs, specimens, artefacts or books, along with accompanying images. Access to this great resource is off our main web page. Collections Online is receiving a large number of "hits" each month, some of which generate inquiries and requests for image copies.

Facebook

We continue to use our Facebook page to provide greater access and engagement with the Museum. We post news about the Museum, images from our collections and also share posts from other pages. A number of the historic images that we share are then picked up and used on other pages with an historic interest. This then directs more traffic back to our Facebook page and website.

Facebook also enables us to hold conversations with our viewers, providing feedback and comment. Over 560 people 'like' our page, which means they have our posts directed to their pages.

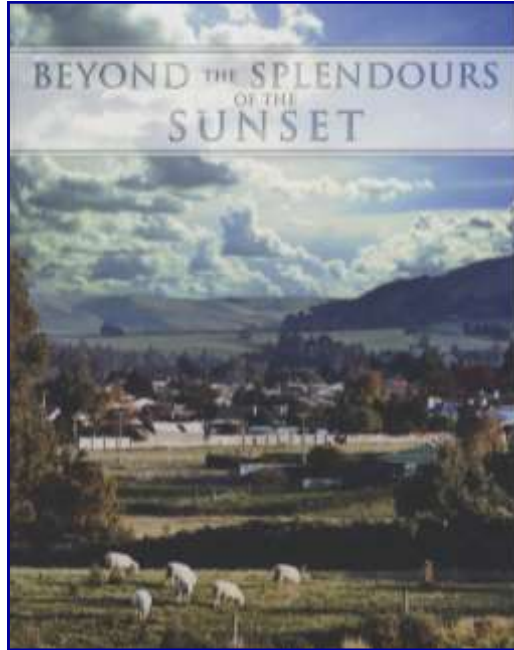
Facebook is a very effective way of keeping touch with the Museum, so if you are a Facebook user please visit our page and "like" us if you have not already done so.



Trip Advisor (see right)

The South Canterbury Museum features on the Trip Advisor website, where people can post reviews of their visits. As our reviews are all positive, this acts as a great way to promote the Museum to others around the world. To view our ratings, and perhaps add your own favourable one, go to www.tripadvisor.co.nz and search for **South Canterbury Museum**.

New arrivals in the collection



We added nearly 2,500 items to our collections in 2014. Around 189 separate accessions were received, ranging from single items to a large collection of over 900 fossils.

Above, from left: A chasuble, a priestly garment worn at Timaru's St Joseph Catholic church in the 1940s (2014/141), a new biography of Margaret Cruickshank, a Waimate doctor who was the first female doctor in New Zealand (2014/142), and part of a trace fossil—tracks left in ocean mudstone, from the Tengawai River near Albury (2014/093).

Right: A photograph of a tree near Cave, peppered with bullet holes. It was fired upon by local Home Guard during machine gun target practice during the Second World War (2014/128)



Remembering those who served: the SC Roll project

The South Canterbury Roll (or SCRoll) project was launched last year to provide a place where biographical details of the men and women from our region who served in the First World War could be recorded. The public are encouraged to send in images and information that can be added to the database which is then available for people to browse and search. To date nearly 2,000 biographies have been added by a team of 24 volunteers.

The project is overseen by a group with representatives from the Museum, the SC branch of the NZ Society of Genealogists, and the Timaru Herald. The project is supported by other organisations such as Waimate Museum who have begun contributing material from their collections.

The site has proven popular, with over 4,500 unique visits since launching in October. Each week new entries are received, and it is expected that the number of biographies could reach 8,000 by the project's target completion date in 2019.

To find out more or research the site, go to the Museum's pages on the Timaru District Council website, or go directly to museum.timaru.govt.nz/explore/scroll.

Right: Gustave Wood Squire, who served in a machine gun company in the First World War, before becoming an officer in the Home Guard in the Second World War. It was his Home Guardsmen who riddled the cabbage tree near Cave, shown above.



Heritage Education Service news



It is with a combination of happiness and sadness that we farewell Anna Rimmer (left and right) as she heads to a new classroom teaching job. Anna joined us at the beginning of 2014 as relief cover for a year. She has worked hard to provide an excellent service to the schools that we work with, and was a valued member of our team. We wish her all the best as she embarks on a new phase of her teaching career.

Keely Kroening has rejoined the Heritage Education Team after a year away, working 2 days a week, along with Wendy Hurst who will be working one day a week. We hope to have a third educator to bring our service up to full capacity. Term One is looking like it's going to be another busy time.



Terms 3 and 4 in 2014 saw a wide range of programmes being delivered, both in the Museum and around the wider region at a number of museums and heritage sites. School camps in Term 4 kept the team particularly busy, with students researching river life (left), discovering facts about early Timaru history at Caroline Bay during an "amazing Race" competition (lower left), learning how to cook pioneer food (below) or about Search and Rescue techniques (at bottom).



Recent Museum events

We held our third annual end-of-year public party on 23 November, with around 170 people attending. Once again the sun shone for us, allowing people to enjoy free refreshments outside, with Timaru Suburban Lions manning the BBQ and South Canterbury Historical Society members dispensing cold drinks outside, or hot drinks and Christmas cake in the Education Space. A small team of Museum staff and volunteers made sure the day ran smoothly so visitors could enjoy the day.

There were several competitions and lucky number prize draws, with winners receiving prizes courtesy of Jeff Elston and Ray Bennett (below and below right). Visitors were able to get a closer look at the newly-opened **Chosen Threads** exhibition and meet friends and new people over refreshments. Many thanks to all who helped make the day successful.



See more from this and other events on the Museum's **Facebook** page:

www.facebook.com/SCMuseum



Contact the Museum

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 NEW ZEALAND
 Email museum@timdc.govt.nz
 Website www.timaru.govt.nz/museum

Become a friend of the Museum!

Receive this newsletter, invitations to Museum openings and events, members' meetings, discounts on some sales and services at the Museum and more. All Museum Friends are automatically members of parent organisation the South Canterbury Historical Society. You'll also be supporting the Museum, so it's **always** a good cause!

Membership forms are available from the Museum, simply phone, write or email and we'll send one out. But if you can't wait, send us a note with the following details and correct amount and we'll sign you up! We'll need: Name, Address, Phone no. & email if you have it.

Membership type: Individual	\$25.00
Family	\$30.00
Organisation/Business	\$30.00
Overseas	\$30.00
Life	\$300.00

Send your information and cheque for the correct amount to:

Friends Membership
 South Canterbury Museum
 PO Box 522, Timaru 7940