

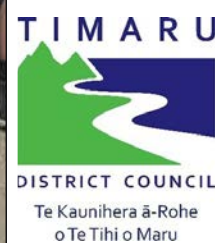
INSIDE

Cover image: Local school students outside the recently reopened Temuka Museum in one of our Heritage Education Service programmes.

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**SOUTH CANTERBURY
MUSEUM**
EXPLORE our heritage



Director's comment: There's a hole in the ground!

Have you driven down Barnard Street recently? It's a bit messy, but in a good way. Work has begun on preparing the site for the construction of our new museum building next year. This is planned to be completed and opened to the public in early-mid 2027.

As you can imagine, there's quite a lot of work to be done. The Museum team have been working closely with the architects, NB Architects and DLA, to ensure that we have a museum fit for purpose that will serve our community well into the future. This involves everything from spatial layout to the positioning of power switches, floor coverings, finishing materials, and so much more.

The curatorial team are working with experienced exhibition designer Sally Papps to develop a new plan for an exciting and engaging long-term exhibition area. And we're all now imagining and planning for a whole range of temporary exhibitions, education programmes, public events and other things that make this exciting opportunity come to life for Timaru and the district as we work our way through all of the possibilities.

An important aspect of this work will be ensuring we have sufficient funds to achieve everything that we need to for this marvellous opportunity. Expect to see more about this as the South Canterbury Museum Development Trust steps up its fundraising campaign. To date



\$1.3m of a \$2m target has been raised. This includes significant personal donations from members of the Friends of the Museum, including \$55,000 over the last few weeks.

Keep an eye out for more information about how things are shaping up soon, and for ways in which we can all support this exciting development.

Meanwhile, business as usual continues, with a range of exhibitions, programmes and events underway, as well as the ongoing work of collection care, asset management and all of the other tasks that occur within a museum. We're gearing up for an eventful summer with a new exhibition, a record number of cruise ships calling in to Timaru, and steadily-increasing visitor/user numbers in general.

You can find out more about what's coming up in this newsletter or by following us on social media. And encourage others to do the same! Merry Christmas and a happy 2026 for us all.

Philip



New children's book launched at Museum

Museum Educator Keely Kroening (right, with graphic designer Rose Fauth) has developed a book for use by school children that uses local photographs from our collection to help younger students understand more about life in the past. Entitled *South Canterbury: How We Lived*, the book explores how households, streets, shopping, schooling and other everyday subjects differed in the past.

The book was funded by a grant from the South Canterbury Historical Society, and we are providing copies to all primary schools who would like them. The book is also available for sale from Museum reception for \$20.00 - an ideal Christmas gift or stocking filler!

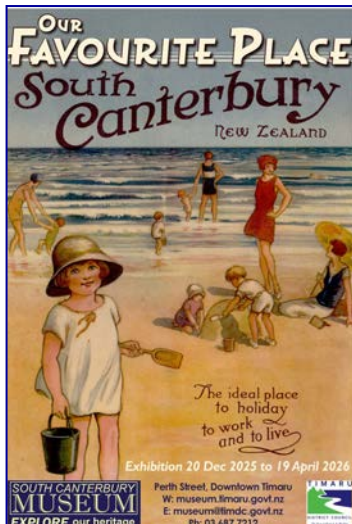


On now and over summer



Above: Some of the Heritage Education staff past and present from the last 21 years: Museum Director Philip Howe, Marie Rapley (2022) Cynthia McCaughan (2005-2008), Aimée White (2015), Keely Kroening (2011-present), Nadine McFarlane (2007-2010), Wendy Hurst (2011-2019), Andrea Askin-Mills (2025).

Right: Museum Educator and exhibition curator Keely Kroening speaks at the opening.



Our next exhibition, **Our Favourite Place**, will provide a nostalgic and light-hearted trip around some of our favourite places of recreation around the district – whether that be frolicking on the beach, exploring local waterways, or playing around in the snow and ice further inland.

Generations of South Cantabrians and visitors have enjoyed these spaces, so the exhibition will also include an opportunity for the public to share small images or memories of their favourite place in the district.

The exhibition opens on 20 December, just in time for locals and visitors to take some time to enjoy summer – and perhaps discover new spots or revisit their favourite places in the region.



Another challenging summer: We're gearing up for a busy January with the return of the Sunsational Challenge. This district-wide vent sees a range of activities at museums, Aigantighe Art Gallery, libraries and open spaces around the Timaru District where families are encouraged to carry out activities in order to get these marked off on their cards to be in to win prize draws and more. Many enjoy the chance to see and do something different around the region. It's popular with locals and with visiting holidaymakers.



Retro Rock at the Museum will return on 14 February in 2026, thanks to an event funding grant and road closure support from the Timaru District Council. Expect a colourful fun evening out with local talent on display plus a chance to win big by dressing up in 70s garb - we're going to travel back in time 50 years! This will be the 8th Retro Rock we've run since 2018, and will feature at least four local bands along with dancers and fun events.

Recent events around the Museum and beyond



Herstory of Women's Rugby This travelling exhibition from the NZ Rugby Museum in Palmerston North arrived just in time for the start of the Women's Rugby World Cup in Britain. Rugby enthusiast and curator Chris Rapley took it upon himself to set up and maintain a score board as the games proceeded, with all eyes on the Black Ferns. Local interest was strong with the presence of young local star player Jorja Miller in the team, and we were delighted to be loaned one of her jerseys (right) from her family, as well as a special signed Black Ferns jersey loaned by local rugby supporter Sienna Spackman (lower left).



Visitor numbers were high during the exhibition, with many people travelling from further afield to view it. National interest grew with the Museum featured on a slot on the TVNZ Good Morning show where Museum Director Philip Howe was joined by Timaru Girls' high rugby coach Grace Kerridge who worked with Jorja Miller in her younger years as a local player (below).



Astronaut talk pulls the crowd We had a packed house for a talk given by US Astronaut Hall of Fame member Michael López-Alegria (left) in early October. Over 100 people came to the talk, held in the Timaru District Council Chambers, to hear from the former NASA astronaut with several international space missions under his belt. Michael also spoke about his work with a private company in the forefront of space technology development, and where the direction of space exploration would be heading in the future. The talk was arranged through the US embassy who were touring Michael around the South Island.

Local reserve covenant signed in Museum In August the South Canterbury Branch of Forest & Bird held an event in the Museum to mark 50 years since the restoration of Arowhenua Bush began. Key local member Fraser Ross led the efforts to retain, protect and enhance this small patch of lowland podocarp forest, the last remaining patch on the plains between Timaru and Christchurch. National Forest & Bird chief executive Nicola Toki (right) joined the gathering to sign the QEII covenant which will protect the remnant for perpetuity. This site featured in a collaborative exhibition with the local branch at the Museum in 2023-24.



Recent events around the Museum and beyond



Crafty carry-ons in holidays

The September-October school holidays saw a big influx of local youngsters taking part in a range of activities, including making mini rugby uniforms and supporters frames.

In August we held another Museum in the Dark event (below), allowing family groups who had booked to explore the Museum at night by torchlight, solving a puzzle and encountering some interesting sensations in the "touchy-feely" box (including a taxidermied rat). Always popular and a great fundraiser for the Museum Development Trust.

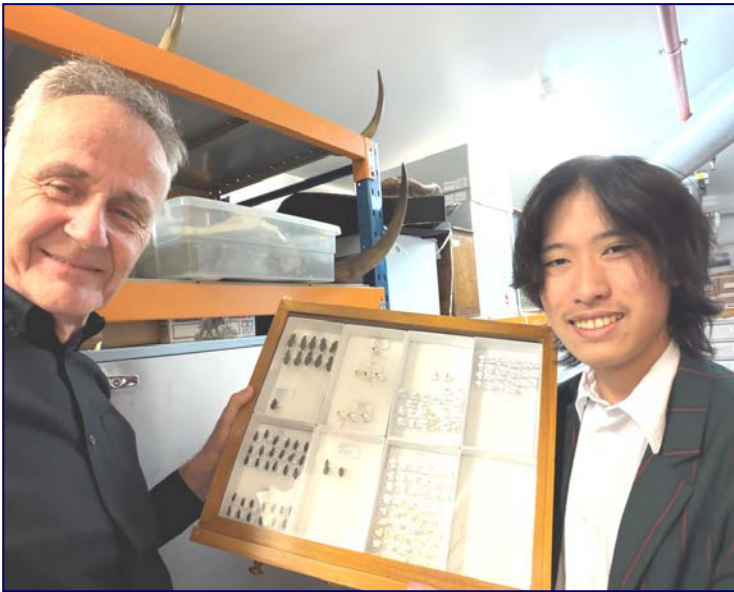


(Above) Museum curators Tony Rippin and Chris Rapley, along with Museum Director Philip Howe, presented booked evening talks on subjects such as how to care for family photographs, family treasures, or on geological subjects. These well-attended talks also raised funds for the Museum Development Trust.

Heritage Alive was held at the end of November, with the launch of a children's book, a local heritage guide book, and plenty for visitors to enjoy, including vintage cars outside (lower right) and giveaway decorated driftwood (below).



Documenting the collections: uncovering local natural heritage



Our natural history collections contain thousands of specimens from local sites covering various aspects of biology, paleontology and geology. Only a small fraction of these collections are ever on display, with the rest carefully stored and documented as an important resource for research, education and publication.

Knowing what we have, where it came from and all relevant scientific information is important. A considerable amount of time and effort has been put in by staff, volunteers and fixed term workers to document items. Many are able to be put onto our online portal, making them accessible to others around the world.

One recent project was carried out by student volunteer Shou Saito (at left with Museum Director Philip Howe). Shou used his considerable photographic skills to capture images of each of the 200 beetle species found at Claremont Bush. Shou's excellent images of specimens, often only a few millimetres in size, will be used for cataloguing, exhibition and online access. Shou has now returned to Japan to commence university study and we're looking forward to learning more of his microscopic adventures.

Earlier in the year Julie Brown, a fixed-term project worker (below with Philip) had completed a major reorganisation of our stored New Zealand mollusc and local fossil mollusc collection. This involved carrying out identifications, updating records and photography of the specimens. Some of these are now viewable on our Collections Online portal on the Museum's website. The collection contains specimens from several local sites. A recent donation by a local collector has now added several hundred more local fossil specimens to this significant local paleontological record.



Heritage Education in Term 3 and 4



The Heritage Education Service team have continued to deliver a wide range of programmes around the region over Terms 3 and 4. This has included programmes at other local museums, local heritage sites and visits to local early childhood centres to work with very enthusiastic three and four year olds. Bookings are now coming in for the 2026 school year, both for programmes within the Museum and around the wider region.

Above: Exploring South Canterbury Museum while dressed in replica period costume.

Right: Checking out the *Herstory of Women's Rugby* exhibition.

Lower right: Learning about early Timaru history at the Landing Services building.

Below: Re-enacting a court room drama at Temuka Courthouse Museum.



People around the Museum (and beyond)



Above: Our preschool education programmes received a helping hand from local high school student Kiera recently, who created several crocheted bees for young students to handle.

Above middle: One of our lucky "Find the Golden Frog" winners from the Sept-Oct holidays. The frog is hidden in different parts of the Museum, and all correct entries go into a prize draw.

Above right: We farewelled long-serving Museum Educator Ruth Gardiner in September, retiring after a long and varied teaching career at local schools and ten years in the Museum.

Right: Three keen long-term Museum Explorers Club members trying on old-school dress-ups at the opening of the Heritage education exhibition in November.



Left: The Museum's Heritage Education Service was a Community Award finalist in this year's Chamber of Commerce business awards. Andrea, Philip and Keely headed along to represent the Museum at this glitzy affair and be presented with a finalist's certificate.

See more from out the front and behind the scenes on the Museum's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SCMuseum



South Canterbury Museum is part of the Community Services Group of Timaru District Council

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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 an email with the following details and correct amount and we'll sign you up! Name, Address & phone number please.

Membership type:	Individual	\$30.00
	Family	\$35.00
	Organisation/Business	\$35.00
	Overseas	\$35.00
	Life	\$300.00

You can pay over the counter at the Museum or by bank deposit to the following account

Bank account number: **02 0888 0028865 000**
Reference: your **surname**
Code: **SUB**

And again, please don't forget to email us your full name, address and other contact details when you've paid.