

# INSIDE

**Cover image:** Museum volunteer face painter Alex Rapley is positively glowing at **Museum in the Dark** on 23 July. Find out more about this event inside.

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**SOUTH CANTERBURY  
MUSEUM**  
**EXPLORE** our heritage

**Winter  
2021**





## Director's comment: history *does* repeat, but we deal with it

Once again I find myself writing this at my kitchen table and talking to my colleagues on a small screen. While we can curse the inconvenience of a Level 4 or 3 lockdown, we know that we must get through this if we are to avoid the huge problems faced overseas. We know how lucky New Zealand has been up until now, with Museum operations and services running fairly smoothly with only slight hiccups since reopening in June last year.

Now we're back to working from home, with occasional trips in to check everything at work and ensure our inānga/whitebait are still alive and being fed (that's me with them at right, in case you weren't sure). And while there is a lot of work that the Museum team of staff and volunteers can do at home, we know that so much more awaits doing onsite. Working in the sunshine at home is very pleasant, but I miss our collections, which are the raw material of the Museum, along with the people that I work with and the people who we engage with to explore our heritage: visitors, students, researchers, collaborators and more.

In the roughly 14 months since we were last closed, the Museum has seen user numbers exceed previous targets, with educational and public programmes returning to normal and an increasing appetite for what we offer. I think that last year's longer lockdown helped emphasise the benefits and enjoyment of being somewhere different, somewhere with other people, exploring and participating. I really hope that by the time you're reading this we're all



back at work and either open to the public or soon to be. If not, we'll continue to think creatively and steal great ideas from elsewhere to help people continue to explore our heritage from the safety of their homes.

*Philip*

## Public talks continuing to hit the spot

We have continued with the very popular evening talks by subject experts held at the Timaru District Council chambers. These talks are jointly organised by the Museum and the Canterbury branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand. They have attracted a wide audience with recent numbers averaging around 80-90 people.

The most recent two speakers have both had a focus on astronomical matters. On Thursday 1 July Dr Karen Pollard from the University of Canterbury's Mt John Observatory spoke about star formation and the life and death of a stars in our universe and beyond.



This was followed in August with Associate Professor James Smith (left) from the University of Otago who spoke about how we know about the geology of Mars, from site visits and analysis of Martian meteorites. James provided the audience with the opportunity to have a closer look at some samples (right).

Providing we get back to full operation, we will continue with these talks over October and November, with expert speakers looking at topics such as New Zealand spiders and early house churches of the first century AD. Due to uncertainty about COVID levels at the time of writing, dates will be advised once the situation is clearer.





## Fun and exploration in the July holidays

The July school holidays were once again a very busy time for the Museum, with large numbers of children and families visiting. We ran several drop-in craft sessions with an avian theme, linked to the Buller's Birds exhibition that was then on show in the centre of the Museum (right and middle right).

We also ran our now annual **Museum in the Dark** event. This event sees the Museum without lights but with some discrete fluorescent lighting, glow-in-the-dark face paint and some special tasks for participants to undertake by torchlight. One highlight is the "touchy-feely" box, where those who dare try to guess what the sometimes creepy (but always safe) things that they are touching might be (below).

This event is always very popular, and we have to limit numbers to 100 young participants and accompanying adults. The event is always marketed to the 2,200 or so members of the Museum Explorers Club first, who filled all spaces within several days of the event being announced.

An additional highlight was the presence outside of a local astronomy group with telescopes who enabled those attending to get a closer look at Mars, Venus, Saturn and a very bright moon (lower right).



## Comments from our visitors

Comments received among the visitor survey forms over the last three months. We ask several questions, here are some answers for two of them.

### **What do you particularly like about our current Museum, and why?**

- *Your museum has an excellent mix of items local and national interest. I am particularly impressed by the way the museum is set up for children!*
- *The Maori section I love learning about my people & I also like the sea creatures. It's awesome to see different life forms.*
- *I loved the nostalgia of remembering common home items and other things I recall from childhood.*
- *The range of the display, from the Pearse aircraft to mere pounamu!*
- *I love the children's engagement in the museum. Always something different for to focus on.*

- *Local information and treasures of the local history of peoples, places, settlements etc.*
- *The variety of exhibits set out in interesting displays – also things to keep children thinking and busy.*

### **What don't you like about our current Museum, and why?**

- *Not enough sitting places (old!).*
- *Nothing.*
- *Nope it's all good.*
- *I don't dislike anything it's great.*
- *It focuses much on European settler history which is very interesting & informative, but there is comparatively little Maori history.*
- *Make more interactive.*
- *Can't think of anything.*
- *The fish because they are a bit creepy.*



## Local Tennis History launches at the Museum



Over 100 people attended the opening of our latest exhibition ***Anyone For Tennis***, coupled with the launch of a new book. Curator Tony Rippin had worked closely with Tennis South Canterbury to prepare an exhibition that marked 100 years of their organisation and celebrated our region's tennis heritage. The exhibition features background information about local tennis and historical items, along with ball-shaped biographies of notable local players from the last 100 years.

At the same time the draft of a new history book with the same title launched, with the final edition being ready for sale soon. Curator Tony is pictured at right with author Carol Angland and Tony Zweis from Tennis South Canterbury. This exhibition will run until the end of October.



## Expanding Museum retail offerings: have a closer look



We've been increasing the range of items that we have for sale in the Museum foyer recently. During the Buller's Birds exhibition quite a few copies of a lavishly-illustrated book featuring the historic ornithological artwork of JG Keulemans were sold, along with cards featuring his artwork. Other new items include NZ insect playing cards and novelty hatching kiwi "eggs". In addition, we have a range of nature and history-themed books for both children and adults, making the Museum foyer a great place to find gifts for all ages.

**Left:** Museum Director Philip and Front of House Co-ordinator Mel with the NZ insect playing cards and copies of *Buller's Birds: The Complete Artwork of JG Keulemans*.



## Education Terms 2 & 3: in the Museum and around the region



**Above:** Gleniti School students get a hands-on look at life in a pre-electric kitchen at the Museum. They also went out to explore downtown heritage with our team.

**Below right:** Timaru Boys High Year 9 students examining bird specimens from the collection as part of a biodiversity unit.

**Below:** Senior biology students from Waimate High School working on an NCEA assessment at Smithfield Beach rocky shore.

The school year has continued to see a very high use of the Heritage Education Service by local schools both in and out of the Museum. Numbers for Terms 2 and 3 (until Level 4 lockdown) have been at or above target levels as more teachers make use of the free service that we are able to provide.

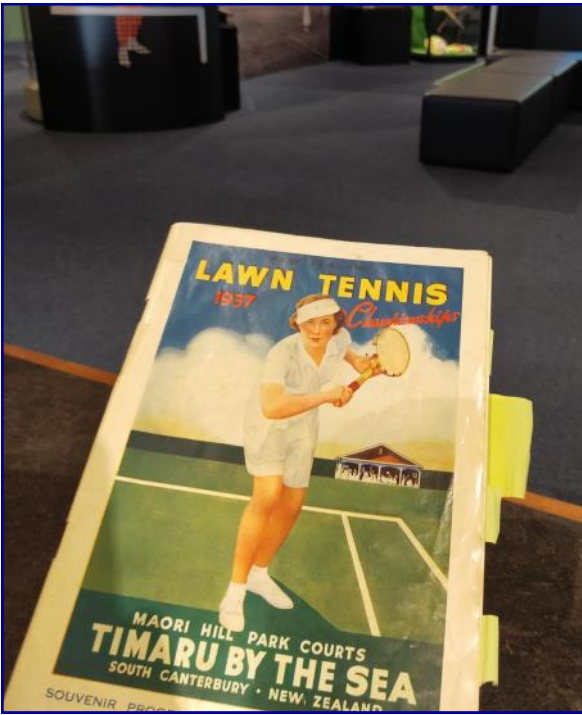
The new history curriculum has become a focus for schools at all levels. Over August (before lockdown) we had most of the classes from Waimataitai School passing through on a trial programme that focussed on local history content. This had been developed following meetings between teachers and Heritage Education Staff

**Below:** Museum Educator Keely providing Waimataitai teacher Vanessa Galbraith with a teacher's guide for the new programme.





## New arrivals in the Collections



**Above:** A 1937 NZ Tennis Championship held in Timaru, donated just after our new *Anyone For Tennis* exhibition opened.

**Top right:** Two cast models of moko kakariki/ jewelled geckos, made and painted in "South Canterbury" population colours by taxidermist Ross Brownson.

**Middle right:** A Sportronic game console, c.1980, once the epitome of hi-tech gaming when attached to a television.

**Lower right:** early 20th century theodolite used by a local surveyor up until the 1970s.

**Below:** The Victory Medal and Memorial Plaque for Timaru carpenter Patrick Fitzgerald. Patrick was only 19 when he was killed during the ill-fated offensive to capture the heights at Gallipoli in August 1915. The plaque was donated to the Museum in 2019, and the Victory Medal was received this year from another donor. We are so pleased to reunite these two items in the collection to remember him.





## Exhibition news: From tennis to 18th century Pacific images

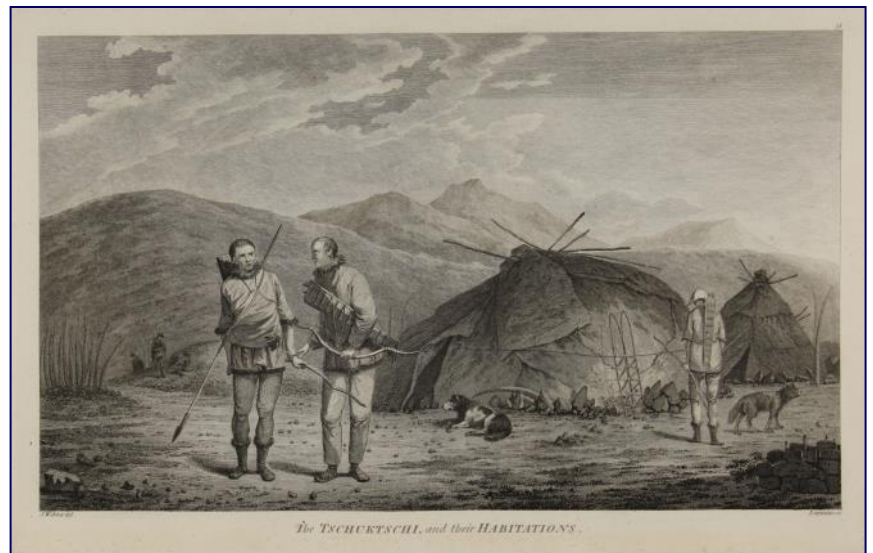


Following our current exhibition **Anyone for Tennis** (left) we will have a very different show that draws upon an historical publication in our documentary history collection, a folio of plates depicting the third and final fateful voyage of Captain Cook to the Pacific, ending in his death in 1879. This voyage travelled up from Tasmania to New Zealand, where Cook spent more time in Queen Charlotte Sound, meeting Māori who he had met on his earlier voyages. The expedition then travelled through the eastern Pacific to arrive at Hawaii, before moving on to the north-west coast of Canada and Alaska before returning to Hawaii. Here Cook was killed during an incident between the ship's crew and the subjects of the Hawaiian King.

Images made by the voyage's artist, John Webber, depicted people and places encountered on the voyage, from Tasmania and New Zealand through to the islands of modern-day French Polynesia, Hawaii and the north-western pacific coast of North America. These were printed in the atlas of plates that accompanied the first official publication of Cook's third voyage which has the lengthy title *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean. Undertaken, by the Command of His Majesty, for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere, to Determine the Position and Extent of the West Side of North America; Its Distance from Asia; and the Practicability of a Northern Passage to Europe. Performed under the Direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore, in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Discovery, in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780*. It was so eagerly awaited by the public that it sold out in three days when first published in 1784.



Curator Tony has been making high resolution copies of the images (left and below). These will be added to the book's catalogue record. A selection of these will be enlarged and displayed in the exhibition, along with background information about Cook's voyages and the artist whose work is figured here. This exhibition will be on show from November to the end of January.



**Right:** Curator Chris and Technician Simon installing a recent acquisition in our staircase display case *Spotlight on the Collections*. This case features items drawn from different parts of the collection to highlight the more than 100,000 documented items in our collections. Next time you're visiting, pause as you go up the stairs to see what's on show.





## People around the Museum



**Above left:** Timaru District Council staff members Cassidy Willets and Katrina Symons installing a Happy or Not kiosk, a touch screen that allows visitors to rate their experience at TDC facilities.

**Top centre:** Cassidy Hayward relaxes during her first visit to explore the Museum with mum and dad, having had a great time discovering new things.

**Top right:** Local astronomers outside the Museum during the **Museum in the Dark** event, where participants could observe four planets and a beautifully full moon.

**Left:** Museum volunteer Wayne Pahl sorting a large collection of Theatre Royal programmes and posters retrieved during site redevelopment work.

**Right:** Curators Chris and Tony took part in a national Gumboot Day raising funds for the **I Am Hope** charity. As gumboots aren't always the most practical things to wear whilst working in a museum, the Museum Director suggested that they try wearing them on their heads. Not the most helpful suggestion, as it turned out.....



See more from out the front and behind the scenes on the Museum's Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/SCMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/SCMuseum)



### Contact the Museum

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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 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.

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Membership type:</b> Individual | \$30.00  |
| Family                             | \$35.00  |
| Organisation/Business              | \$35.00  |
| Overseas                           | \$35.00  |
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Send your information and cheque for the correct amount to:

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