

**South Canterbury Museum
Annual Report Year Ended 31 December 2020**



Two scenes of normality before the COVID-19 storm – the Retro Rock and the Museum outdoor concert event, and a complete lack of social distancing at the opening of the Live 'n Loud exhibition – both in February 2020.



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Introduction

2020 was a year unlike any other for the Museum, as it was for so many others. Our usual programme of work began as usual, with summer holiday programmes in January, a new exhibition launching in February linked to the well-attended Retro Rock at the Museum event, school programmes gearing up in February and the first of what was to be a range of public talks attracting 100 attendees and held in the TDC Council Chambers.

All this changed in early March, due to the impact of COVID-19. The Museum was closed for much of March, all of April and through until May, with staff working from home for much of this time. We found ways to continue working on a range of collection tasks, exhibition planning, new building project work, research database compilation and providing online resources for schools; all while based in our homes.

With COVID-19 Level 2 announced, we were able to reopen to the public, but with restrictions in place on how we moved visitors through the Museum, and how we worked with each other. We quickly adapted to this new way of working, and were pleased to move to relative normality at COVID-19 Level 1 in early June. The return to Level 2 in August was able to be dealt with relatively easily, a preparation for possible future level changes.

The second half of the year was a return to business as usual. The Museum recorded very high numbers for most months from July onwards, and was able to continue with most programmes of work. This included the key roles of collection development and research, exhibitions, education programmes, public programmes and events. These activities ensure that a professionally-operated museum service continues to be provided for the District's residents and visitors to the region.

Achievements during the period included:

- 371+ items added to the collections
- 3 temporary exhibitions mounted
- 3 school holiday programmes conducted
- 9 public talks, events and programmes conducted
- 1 external public event participated in
- More than 1,000 volunteer hours worked in or for the Museum
- 19,947 users of our services
- 87 Friends of the Museum (SC Historical Society)
- 2,000 Museum Explorers Club members
- 3,000 followers on Facebook

Museum service users consistently give very positive feedback for the quality and impact of the Museum's exhibitions, services and programmes. The Museum's achievements and value to the community result from the continuing development and use of its three prime resources – people, facilities and collections.

#1406086

1. Personnel

1.1 The Museum Team: Staff, Volunteers and Supporters for 2020

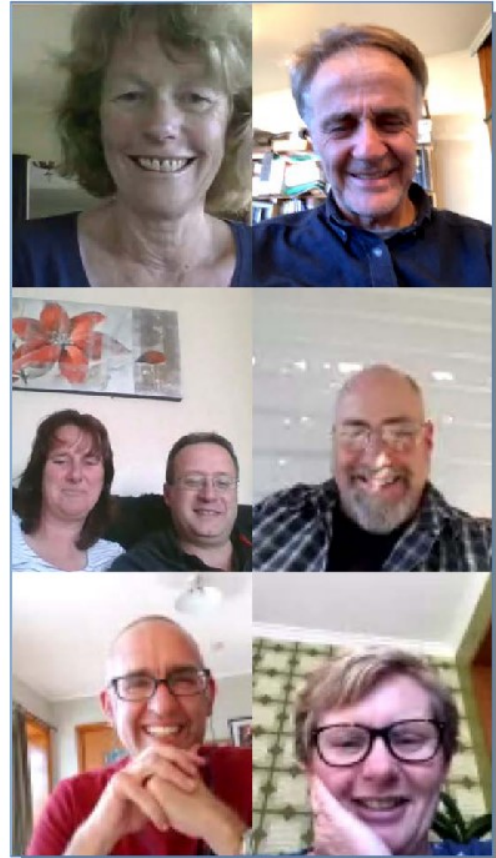
Museum Director (full-time)
 Curator of Documentary History (full-time)
 Curator of Social History (full-time)
 3 Museum Educators (part-time, LEOTC-funded)
 Technician (part-time)
 Museum Receptionist (part-time)
 1 Cleaner (part-time)
 5 Weekend supervisors
 11 Volunteers
 2 Summer Student interns (January)
 7 SC Museum Development Trust Trustees

The Level 4 Lockdown in March brought new challenges for the Museum Team in how we worked. Taking home materials and tools (but not collection items) enabled us to work on some specific projects and programmes, and maintain contact with each other and communicate externally using social media, websites and email.

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. In a normal year, the hours worked by these additional personnel equate to the equivalent of more than a full-time staff position for the year. Many of our volunteers, such as Keith Bartholomew below, continued to work on



#1406086



Above: How we worked up until mid-May:
A Museum team virtual meeting in progress on the Museum Director's phone.

Museum projects at home, supplied with material co-ordinated by Museum Receptionist Mel Rippin, working in tandem with curators and other staff.

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.

2. Collection Care and Development

Care and management of the Museum's unique local heritage collections continues to be a major part of the work carried out by staff and volunteers. The Museum's collections are at the heart of all that we do; they are the raw material for research, exhibition and education. Considerable effort is put into improving standards of collection care, organising storage for easier access and updating collection records on computer database.

A total of 84 accessions have been recorded for the 2020 year, with 371 individual items catalogued from these accessions so far to date.

The great majority of these items were donated to the Museum by their owners, or collected by staff. Some purchases were made, particularly of appropriate reference books and materials. Items are assessed for relevance and importance to the region's heritage before being formally accessioned.

Work continues on documenting all of the items received during this period. In addition significant progress generally has been made in earlier clearing cataloguing backlogs, updating data and carrying out a host of minor improvements in most collection areas.



Above: 2020 COVID-19 related acquisitions included signs, a gollywog knitted at home during Lockdown. Other acquisitions at the top are a 1/5th scale model of an Emeus moa skeleton made by paleoartist Geoffrey Cox, and a conscientious objector's medal awarded to an Auckland man but found in a Timaru garden.

#1406086

Work continued behind the scenes on a range of projects to better house, document and make available the heritage items in our collections. Much of this work focussed on so-called collection backlogs – material received but not yet catalogued, including this very large Timaru Harbour plan being photographed in the Museum foyer. The Museum aims to house its collections to international standards for care, access and data preservation.

Work has continued on a project to provide digital access to parts of the Museum's collections. Online visitors are able to browse many parts of the Museum's collection catalogues through the PastPerfect Online programme that link to the Museum's pages on the Timaru District Council's website. Around 17,000 records are listed, providing access to the collections resulting in enquiries from around the world. Further access is

provided through an external site, New Zealand Museums Online, which now has over 140 items from our collections featured, along with access through the externally-operated Digital NZ search engine.



3. Exhibitions

Three temporary exhibitions were mounted during the year, all planned and developed by the Museum Team, sometimes in collaboration with external parties. A fourth travelling exhibition was postponed until the year following due to COVID-19. Exhibition work is very intensive and involves considerable research, with all labels, graphics and display furniture prepared on site by Museum staff.



In addition, the Museum's long-term exhibition area has had some new cases installed as part of a scheduled upgrade. This will better enable the Museum to highlight aspects of local natural heritage. Among specimens featured was a nautilus fossil from the Pareora area (above, at left) dated as being around 16-20 million years old, compared with a modern counterpart from the South Pacific.

#1406086

The temporary exhibitions were:

Live 'n Loud (February – July)

This was the third of our local music scene shows, focussed on the 1980s and 90s period. It featured objects, posters and images from the era, along with video footage and recordings, given that the technology became more widely available at that time. A number of people (such as Paul & Kat Fairbairn, right) provided material from their past to make the exhibition an engaging and widely-encompassing nostalgia trip for many. It was launched with an



outdoor concert, the third annual Retro Rock at the Museum show, reported elsewhere in this report. This exhibition was extended to cover the gap created by the COVID-19 lockdown.

Timaru Fire Brigade: 150 Years Serving the Community (July – October)



This exhibition was developed by Curator of Documentary History Tony Rippin in partnership with the Timaru Fire Brigade who were marking their 150th anniversary of formation. The exhibition looked back over the Brigade's history, providing visitors with the opportunity to see a lot of historic images from the Brigade's own archives as well as two hand-drawn

appliances from the 19th century loaned for the exhibition. This was probably the only time we would attempt to fit a fire appliance in the Museum. Visitors could try on Fire Brigade uniform items to "pose with the hose", and we were able to run a holiday activity in September linked to the exhibition.

Whakamana o te Tamariki (October – February 2021)

We worked with the SC Kindergarten Association to produce an exhibition that marked their 75 years of operation. This provided an overview of local kindergarten history, along with a look at aspects of today's kindergartens. This project was overseen by Curator of Social History Chris Rapley (pictured right), who was able to draw on material in a publication

#1406086

written by the Association's archivist Marie Rapley (pictured far right), who also happens to be a part-time Museum Educator and married to Chris.



4. Heritage Education Service

The Museum's education programmes were affected by the imposition of COVID-19 alert levels in March, with no programmes occurring until later in June. Schools were quick to resume uptake of LEOTC opportunities in Terms 3 and 4, with the Service recording good numbers to exceed contract requirements.

4.1 Ministry of Education Contract

The Museum's Learning Experiences out of the Classroom (LEOTC) contract with the Ministry of Education has now run for a year with one to go. The Museum's Heritage Education Service reports regularly to the Ministry, and is inspected once a year by an external evaluator. It has received positive feedback about the quality of the services provided by both client schools and the Ministry of Education. The Museum will be preparing for a new contract round in late 2021. Contracts are contestable with no guarantee of continuation.

4.2 On-site Education Programmes

A wide variety of topics were taught in the Museum, using exhibition areas and the Museum's Education Space. Students ranged from New Entrants to Senior High School level. Programmes were able to utilise specimens and artefacts from the stored collections, often providing students with a hands-on approach to learning. The audio-visual system in the Education Space proved very useful for many programmes.

#1406086



Above: Mountainview High School Year 13 students use historic aerial photographs at the Museum as part of an urban development study

4.3 Off-site Programmes

A number of schools worked with the Museum's Heritage Education Staff at several local sites for natural history studies, including Raincliff, the Otupua Wetlands, Centennial Park and Washdyke rocky shore area. Cultural sites visited included local rock art sites, Timaru inner-city heritage buildings, Caroline Bay and the harbour area.

Classroom teachers have appreciated the specific expertise and student-centred approach that Museum staff and their partner organisations can provide in these settings.

As part of our Ministry of Education contract, several programmes were also delivered in other local museums in the wider region at Pleasant Point and Waimate. This particularly benefited schools that were unable to travel to Timaru.



#1406086



The Museum also engaged with schools and teachers to widen opportunities for local heritage education. Staff attended school meetings, plus a teacher meeting was held at the Museum.

5. Public Programmes

5.1 User Statistics

A total of 19,947 users of the Museum's services were recorded for the period, a significant drop on the target figure based on the average of the three previous years, brought about by close to three months' closure and reduced tourism. Figures are recorded for on-site visitors and service users, off-site outreach to schools and groups, and distance users of our services, via mail and email requests.



Casual visitors	11,947
On-site research service users	442
Visiting groups	1,592
On-site schools	1,693
Off-site outreach schools	2,919
Other offsite programmes	967
Distance information service users	414

Note: There was a noticeable increase in monthly distance enquiries during and after the COVID-19 lockdown.

#1406086

5.2 Archives/Research

442 in-person visits to the Archives Library were recorded for the year, ranging from genealogists to professional historians and authors. This was a significant drop in previous years, affected by COVID-19 related closures and reduced travel. The South Canterbury Branch New Zealand Society of Genealogists, whose material is housed in the Research library, continues to provide voluntary staffing to assist genealogists on Sunday afternoons.

414 written or emailed inquiries from outside of the region were received and dealt with by Museum staff, as well as many casual telephone and front desk inquiries. These range from questions on how to preserve family treasures to identifying various invertebrates in jars.

The Museum's collections are also accessible online through the Collections Online section of the webpages. This provides viewers with access to several thousand collection records, leading to increasing requests for information.

5.3 Museum Events



11 different events were held at or by the Museum during the year, including exhibition openings and public talks, a partnership formed with the Canterbury branch of the Royal Society of NZ saw expert speakers delivering public talks using the Council chambers as a venue. Four such talks were held, with between 70 and 100 people attending. Topics included recent fossil bird finds (Dr Paul Scofield), the science/religion controversy in 19th century New Zealand (Professor John Stenhouse), the Greek translations of the New Testament (Dr Katie Marcar) and the internationally important Foulden Maar fossil site in Otago (Dr Daphne Lee). These talks will continue in 2021.

Left: TDC chief executive Bede Carran and the Rev Josh Taylor at the opening of the *Whakamana o te Tamariki* kindergarten exhibition.

#1406086

Three exhibition opening events were held, with a large number of people attending and taking the chance to socialise in the Museum environment.



5.5 School Holiday Programmes

Successful programmes were run two of the three end-of-term breaks during the school year, with both organised programmes and self-directed activities for visiting families. This included the now annual “Museum in the Dark” event held in the July school holidays (above). The Museum has become an important community resource for local families during the holidays, with many children being repeat visitors. Many positive comments have been received from grateful caregivers. A particular highlight were the outdoor sessions held in January, such as the pop-up Museum at a bug hunt at Talbot Forest, Geraldine.



5.6 Museum Explorers Club

The Museum Explorers Club is a free membership club for primary school students, rewarding them for museum visits and

#1406086

enabling programme information to be communicated easily to families. We have around 2000 members. Children are particularly excited about the opportunity to collect member's badges that are issued with new exhibitions and special events. It has continued to grow in numbers and proven highly successful in attracting repeat visitation and greater engagement with heritage for families.

5.7 External Events

The Museum had a presence at the South Canterbury Rose Festival, with a stall featuring Caroline Bay history displays and souvenir items for sale. Taking part in these events is an effective way to promote the Museum and its programmes. Volunteers from the Museum Development Trust helped to ensure success.

5.8 Heritage Alive event



The Museum joined forces with St Mary's Church to hold another Heritage Alive event on Saturday 21 November. This saw the area between the Museum and Church come alive with market stalls, heritage games and costumes, live music, a free BBQ, special competitions in the Museum and around the Church, and more. Over 400 people passed through the Museum during the day.

5.11 Retro Rock at the Museum

Over 700 people attended the third annual outdoor 70s-style music event on 17 February. Perth Street was closed to traffic, with 3 bands playing, plus food stalls and a retro fashion contest judged by Mayor Nigel Bowen. This is now an annual event.



#1406086

5.12 Visitor Feedback

The Museum's visitor survey forms have consistently shown very high ratings by our visitors, with many positive comments recorded about the Museum's displays, layout and helpfulness of staff.

The Museum has also received very positive reviews on the online Trip Advisor website, with a 4 ½ star rating, along with many positive comments on the Museum's Facebook page.

6. Development

6.1 New Heritage Hub development

The Museum Director has become very involved as part of the Council project team on many aspects of this projects, from architectural and contractor selection to developing an architectural brief for the project. This work has also involved the wider Museum team who have contributed ideas and review progress.



Above: Museum Director Philip Howe was delighted to be present when Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced a government grant of \$11.6 million towards the heritage hub project. The Museum Team have begun working with architectural firm Architecus to refine the brief for this key project. This project will require considerably more time from the Museum team over the 2021-2023 period.

6.2 South Canterbury Museum Development Trust

The Trust has continued to promote and raise funds for specific Museum projects, in particular finding additional funds to support the Heritage Education Programme. The Trust also generates income through sales and hire of the Heritage Theatre in the Museum. The Trust ran a stall at the Timaru Rose Festival Market Day for the 5th year running, providing both income and visibility for the Museum.

7. Management and Facilities

7.1 Administration and Maintenance

Standard Timaru District Council planning and budgeting procedures were carried out during the period. Regular building inspections and checks were carried out in accordance with

#1406086

requirements, along with necessary Health and Safety reports and checks. A number of small maintenance tasks were carried out during the year to repair minor problems.

7.2 Dealing with the impact of COVID-19



While New Zealand was under COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3, the Museum was closed to the public, with very limited access to a few staff. Under Level 2, announced in mid-May, the Museum reopened, with appropriate signage, physical guidelines, and an enhanced cleaning regime in place. The Museum team were able to respond quickly to changing levels in August, and have refined procedures based on their experiences.

Left: Museum cleaner Jan Rippin at work on the front door of the Museum. During COVID-19 Levels 2 and 1 there has been a requirement for a higher level of cleaning.

8. Marketing and Communications

8.1 Media Relations and Marketing

Close relations were maintained with local media, and the Museum featured in a significant number of newspaper articles and several radio news items. Museum exhibitions also featured in several national publications of social media sites looking at events and exhibitions around the country.

Paid advertising was placed in a number of national tourist guides, along with local advertising in newspapers and radio, particularly for special exhibitions or holiday events.

8.2 Media Articles

Museum staff contributed regular articles, usually weekly, focusing on local heritage and Museum topics to the Timaru Herald newspaper. These have received positive attention from members of the public and are an effective medium for communicating about our region's heritage and the work of the Museum. Of particular significance are the articles regularly contributed to the Timaru Herald for its Saturday edition "Museum Piece". These, along with the material regularly supplied to local reporters, have ensured a wide audience for the Museum's information and collection resources.

8.3 Internet and Social Media

The Museum continues to have its main web access hosted on the Council website. Here visitors can find information about the Museum, download information resources and obtain contact details. The Museum's Heritage Education Service has a separate page allowing schools to review and place bookings for particular programmes. Former Museum exhibitions

#1406086

can be placed on separate pages to provide access to the content long after the exhibition has finished.

Increasing numbers of external researchers are making use of various digital resources now available from the Museum's pages on the Council's website. This includes the SCROLL database of local people who served overseas during the First World War.

The Museum continues to make considerable use of Facebook as a way of communicating with the wider public. Museum information can be posted on other Facebook pages, widening interest and engagement. Over 3,000 people now actively follow the Museum on Facebook, with many more seeing Museum posts on other sites. Future social media developments may include the use of Instagram and YouTube to further provide access to images and information.

9. External Relations

9.1 Organisational Partnerships

The South Canterbury Museum has continued 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 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 assist with enquiries on Sunday afternoons in the Research Library at the Museum. Both the Historical Society and the Genealogists make regular use of the Museum's meeting room.

The Museum has continued to provide assistance for local museums through the Central South Island Museums Group. In addition it has provided advice to individual local museums as well as providing storage materials at cost and surplus display equipment free for museums within the Timaru District.

9.2 Other Organisations

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

- Te Ana Maori Rock Art Centre
- Te Runaka o Arowhenua
- Te Runaka o Waihao
- Local schools
- Aoraki Polytechnic and South Canterbury Community College
- National Services Te Paerangi (Te Papa)
- Local Rotary and Probud clubs
- Ministry of Culture and Heritage

#1406086

- Central South Island Museums Group

The Museum, or individual staff members, belonged to the following professional organisations during 2020:

- Museums Aotearoa
- 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
- The New Zealand Costume and Textile Section, Auckland Museum Institute
- Entomological Society of New Zealand
- New Zealand Military History Society
- New Zealand Cartographic Society
- New Zealand Teachers Council
- Geological Society of New Zealand
- Museums Association (UK)
- American Association for State and Local History

10. Conclusion

The South Canterbury Museum has as its mission the aim to preserve, present and promote our region's heritage. The wide team of people associated with it continue to provide a highly effective and popular service to a wide range of local and out of district users. The Museum's collections, exhibitions, programmes and resources continue to receive very favourable comment from users.

#1406086