

INSIDE

Cover image: *The test (shell) of a fossil sea urchin in limestone, found near Cave in 1966, a recent donation from the estate of the late Jim McCaughan*

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**SOUTH CANTERBURY
MUSEUM**
EXPLORE our heritage

**Summer
2021-2**



Director's comment: Dealing with the new reality



Above: myself and Curator Chris practicing our social distancing in the Museum reception area in October.

It now seems that every year is a year like no other. 2021 seemed to start with a return to normality. We even managed to fit in our annual Retro Rock outdoor event in February just before a COVID Level change put an end to public events for a while. Then came August, with a new lockdown and the lingering after-effects of being at Levels 3 & 2, then moving to Orange traffic light, and now requiring all visitors to have a Vaccine Pass.



Above: Museum Cleaner Jan at work in the galleries. Increased cleaning has been required to keep our visitors safe as well as keeping the Museum clean.

As museum kaimahi/workers, we've had to adjust to working with masks on, social distancing from each other and observing all protocols required. While vaccination has lessened some of these, we need to maintain high standards and public confidence in the Museum as a place to visit. Volunteer programmes have had to be suspended, and limitations placed on public programmes, archives access and several other routine activities.

Despite having to weather another lockdown and Level change restrictions, work still continues and people still come to the Museum as a visitor destination, education resource and community facility. Although schools did not visit the Museum over Terms 3 and 4 this year, our education team were busy conducting lessons at a range of sites and some in-school programmes.

We set sail in November with *Distant Shores*, a new exhibition that quietly slipped into life without the usual fanfare of a public opening event (see Page 3), as well as planning for the first exhibition in 2022, *Let Me Be Myself*, a touring show with a focus on the life of Anne Frank.

Work continues on a range of collection-based activities such as accessioning, cataloguing, storing and organising the natural and historical treasures in our care. We have also completed a tender for a new contract with the Ministry of Education to deliver educational programmes around the region for three and half years (wish us luck! We find out in March). However, open public programmes such as the annual Heritage Alive festival and Retro Rock events were put on hold.

We are also working on planning for our new facility. This involves taking part in the wider building planning process that will see a revamped Theatre Royal and new museum exhibitions space joined together to create a heritage hub on Stafford Street. We are also working closely with exhibition design company Workshop E to plan how we will tell the stories of our region's heritage in the new spaces we envisage.

We will see how different this summer holiday period will be. With Timaru's Caroline Bay Carnival cancelled and other events postponed, it could be a bit quieter, or maybe not. We're all looking forward to some well-deserved time off and a chance to recharge our batteries. We have an incredibly busy year ahead in 2022, and that's without knowing what external factors might affect how we operate. Wishing us all a happier New Year,

Philip

Rolling with the changes in our public programmes

Our October school holiday programme was not as tightly organised as previous years, with the focus more on providing activities family groups could do around the Museum rather than the usual structured close-contact craft activities. This still proved popular, with high numbers of young visitors and their caregivers completing the activities around the Museum. This will be repeated on a much larger scale over summer with the Timaru District-wide Sunsational Challenge, where participants can visit a range of Council facilities to look for clues, earn a badge, and be in to win prizes. This programme was very popular last year, and has been continued with further improvements for this summer.

Right: Museum staff Mel and Tony holding copies of one of the October holidays activities.

Below: Visitors searching for clues in the *Anyone for Tennis?* exhibition in October.



The COVID lockdown and Level changes affected our planned programmes of public talks, jointly planned with the Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society. As the Council Chambers were not available as a public venue, we made use of the internet to have Wellington-based astrobiologist Haritina Mogoşanu (below) provide a live interactive talk for an appreciative online audience who were able to ask questions. Hari had been scheduled to come and present in person, but COVID changes prevented that. We hope to have her down for educational programmes in 2022.

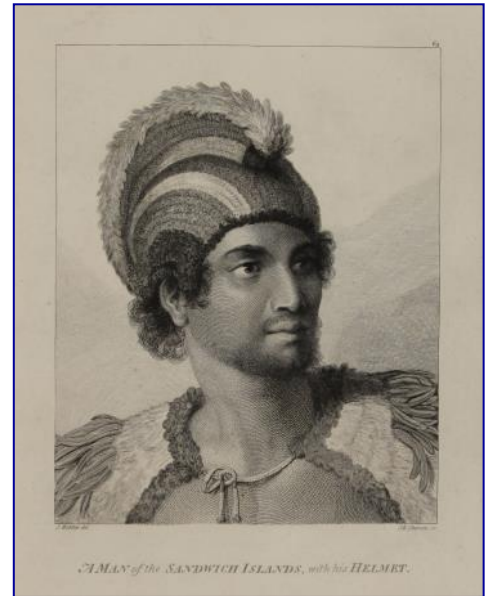
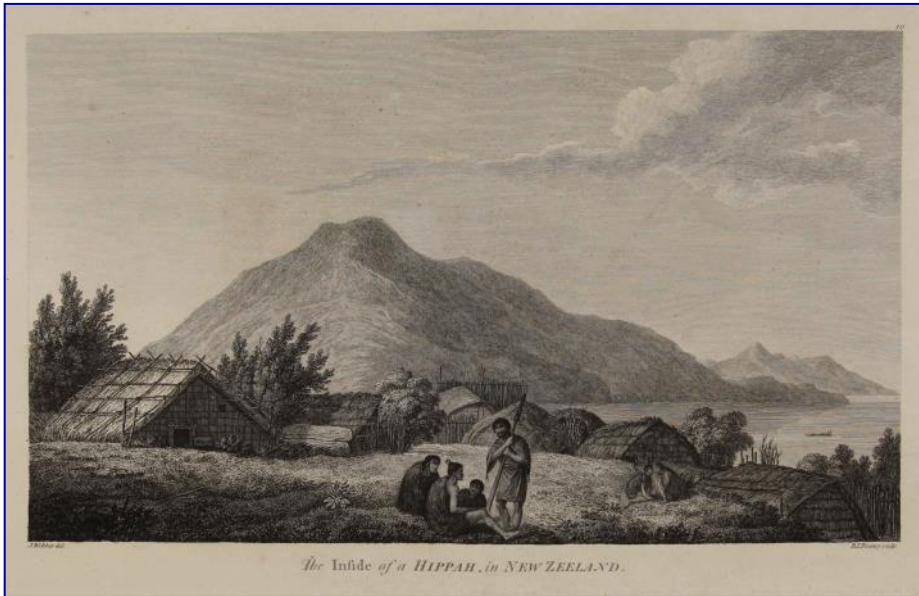


A second talk was relocated to Wilson St. Baptist Church Hall, where Professor Paul Trebilco from the University of Otago gave a talk about the beginnings of the Christian faith in house churches in the 1st century AD. We are currently planning a new wide-ranging series of talks for 2022, with one eye on the COVID situation and another looking for new possibilities for where and how these programmes can be run. We'll have details on new talks ready early in the new year.



Museum Curator Chris (left) also gave a presentation online for Aigantighe Art Gallery to mark Armistice Day in November. This was part of a series developed by Aigantighe to provide expert talks on specific artworks, their meaning, provenance or what they represented. We are looking at how we can make more use of the internet to widen our reach. You can view Chris's talk at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsP8NYtu1vc

***Distant Shores*: using images from an historic publication**



Distant Shores opened in November, running through until 30 January. It features a selection of images taken from the 1784 publication *An Atlas to Plates from Cook's Voyages*, which we hold in the collection. The images depict the range of places, cultures and people encountered during the three and a half-year voyage in which Cook lost his life. The images were made by expedition artist John Webber, covering the voyage's progress around much of the Pacific Ocean. The entire publication can be viewed on a touchscreen, and several of the images have been animated slightly with sound to add another dimension.



Coming in 2022: *Let Me Be Myself*



We are very pleased to be able to host a travelling exhibition from Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, toured locally by the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand. This exhibition provides a look at the life of Anne Frank, a remarkable young woman who captured her thoughts about her life while hiding from the German occupation of Holland, but who perished in a Nazi concentration camp. *Let Me Be Myself* is based on extracts from her diary, first published in 1947. It educates visitors about her life and the events of the 1940s, and also how some of the themes of persecution are still present today, affecting people because of race, religion, age, sexuality or disability.



Education under COVID Level 3 conditions



Above: Trying out a harakeke (flax) replica backpack at Waimataitai School. Classes couldn't visit the Museum during COVID Level 2, but we could take the Museum to them.

Right: Longbeach School from coastal Ashburton at Pleasant Point Railway and Museum, part of a two-day programme utilising several local sites.

Below: Students from Sacred Heart School at the Landing Service site beside the statue of Captain Cain. This was one of quite a few outdoor programmes run over Terms 3 and 4, enabling schools to make use of several natural and historical sites.

The second half of 2021 has had a major effect on our education programmes, with no schools visiting the Museum since we reopened after the August-September Lockdown and move to Level 2. However, this has not stopped our Heritage Education Service team from providing opportunities for schools to explore our heritage. Ruth, Keely and Marie were often on the road, heading out to nature and history sites where heritage could be explored in the open air or in wide open areas, such as Pleasant Point Railway and Museum.

We also continued a programme with Waimataitai School which had been disrupted in August, by taking a range of items to the school to allow those classes that had not been able to visit to experience our local Māori heritage programme. While not the same as an in-museum programme, the students were able to view collection items and handle replica items. We are now looking at how we can extend this type of programme using a mix of digital technology coupled with in-school visits. This will be important if we face another Level change or to help schools if organising travel to the Museum is a problem.

Despite the effects of the COVID situation on our programmes, we were still able to meet our Ministry of Education target figures for the year, indicating the popularity of and need for our service. And reflecting the hard work put in by our creative educators.

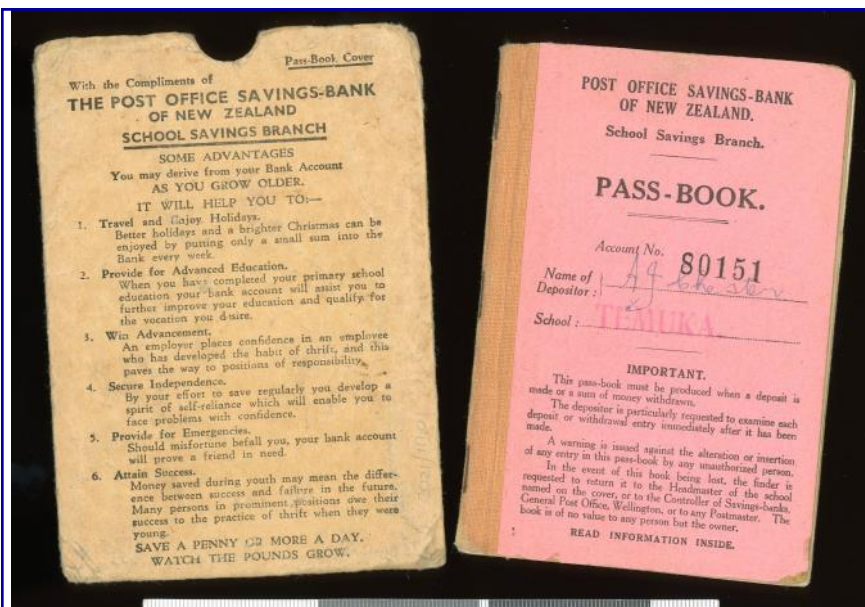


News from the Collections



A new lockdown brought new opportunities for collecting. Museum staff members Chris and Marie Rapley took a number of photographs of Timaru's deserted streets in late August; above is the normally busy section of SH1 on Craigie Ave, now eerily quiet. At left, a QR code scan in poster for one of our joint Royal Society talks, and at right, an anti-vaccine sticker photographed on the Bay Hill in October by Madison Kroening.

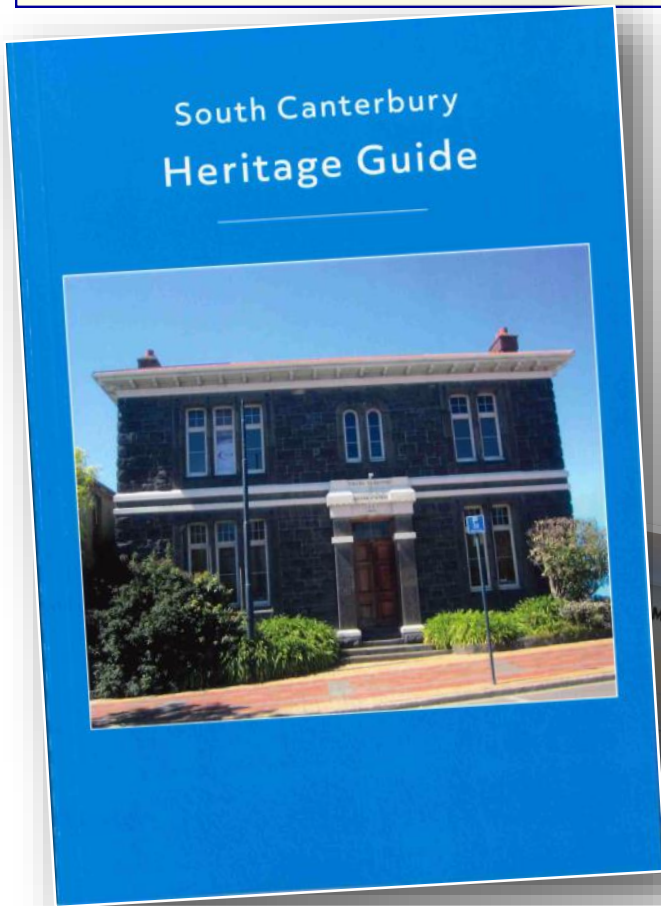
Lower right: We have been joined by summer university student intern Amy Doran. Amy is working with curators Chris and Tony, along with Museum Director Philip, on a range of collection housing and documentation projects. Her project is for 12 weeks before returning to her studies



Above: A Post Office Savings Bank book owned by John Chester when a student at Temuka District High School in 1937. "Bank books" were a feature of everyday life right through the 20th century until their eventual replacement with bank cards. John went on to become a primary school teacher, teaching at local schools for many years, including Timaru Main School and Watlington Intermediate, where he worked alongside young teacher Philip Howe, who changed career to become Museum Director.



Two very different new local publications available

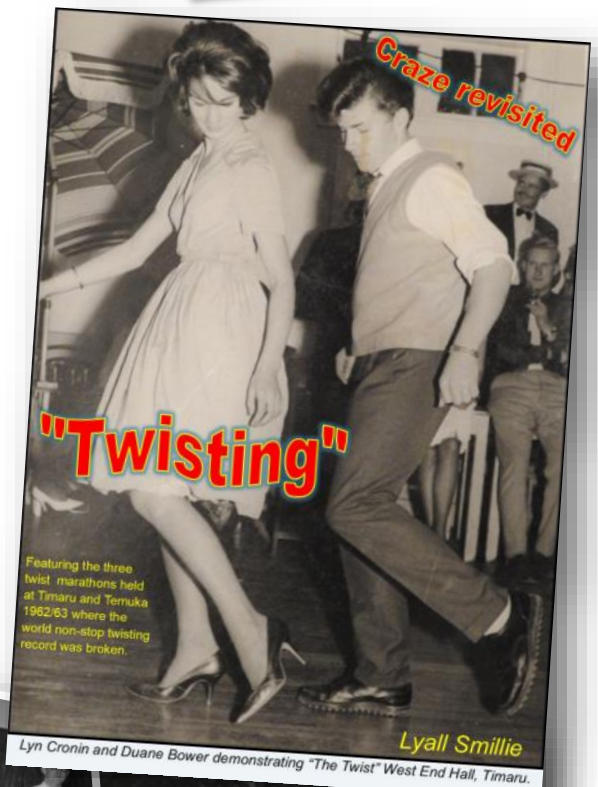


The end of 2021 has seen the arrival of two publications with a local focus, both available from the Museum or by mail order. The long-awaited *South Canterbury Heritage Guide* (left) is an A5-sized book designed to act as a guide to heritage buildings and structures around South Canterbury. A major revision of the first Heritage Guide published in the 1980s, this guide has over 300 entries grouped according to district within the wider South Canterbury region. Author Keith Bartholemew has incorporated images and text to create a very handy guide that can fit in a car glove box or sit on a coffee table as a reference to dip into. The *Guide*, published by the South Canterbury Historical Society, is priced at \$29.95 and can be purchased from the Museum, the Timaru Herald Office, several local book shops or by internet banking (see details below). All proceeds will support the ongoing work of the SC Historical Society to preserve and promote local heritage.



"Twisting", researched and written by former local musician and music historian Lyall Smillie, is a pictorial account of the events that saw the world record for "twist" dance marathons made in Temuka and Timaru in the early 1960s. Lyall, who was a young Temuka teenager at the time, has been in contact with a range of people who took part and remember this event, bringing us an array of images and recollections that capture the excitement of a time before social media or widespread television use. It records how the wider community got in behind an international fad to create an event that brought people together and brought attention to our little part of the world. The publication retails for \$19.95 and is available only from the Museum, or by internet bank order. It is published by the South Canterbury Museum Development Trust, with all proceeds going back to the Trust's work to support Museum development.

To find out more about these publications and how to order online, send an email to museum@timdc.govt.nz to request payment details.



Keeping ourselves busy during another lockdown...



Late August and we were all back to working from home. Educators Keely and Ruth (above and above left) made great use of the time, creating woven ti kouka (cabbage tree leaf) containers and simulated tuna (eels) made from stockings for use in hands-on education programmes.

It seems, however, that the Devil finds work for idle hands, and when Curator Chris is left alone at home with Photoshop, we end up with what you see on the left: a somewhat fanciful image about an imaginary staff "family" trip to Rome and other far-off and currently very inaccessible lands. Well, we can dream....

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

www.facebook.com/SCMuseum



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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.

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