

INSIDE

Cover image: *Unlocking local heritage with the Museum's Heritage Education Service: Beaconsfield School students explore geology & Māori history at Craigmore, Term 4, 2023.*

In this issue

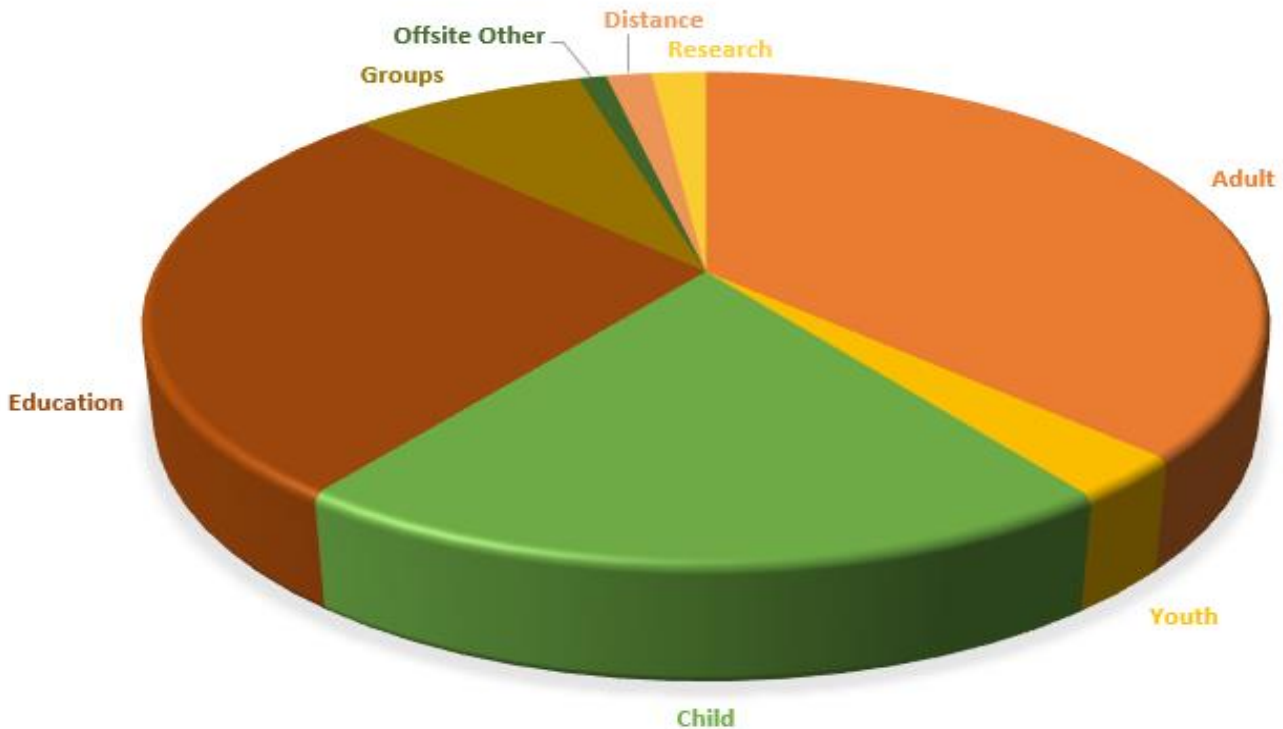
- Our busiest year and what it tells us
- Summer events and programmes
- Exhibition & programmes update
- New development project
- Education programmes
- People around the Museum

**SOUTH CANTERBURY
MUSEUM**
EXPLORE our heritage

2024-1



Director's comment: A record year and what the figures tell us



What a year! 2023 was our busiest year to date, with over 26,000 people visiting or taking part in our programmes, either onsite or elsewhere. Like many other museums, we seek to understand who uses our services and why. The above graphic represents the types of visitors and service users we had in 2023. One feature that immediately stands out is that nearly half of those indicated are children, whether taking part in formal education programmes (around 7,600 or so) or visiting the Museum's exhibitions. This emphasises the important educational role, both formal and informal, that the Museum plays in our community. So far in 2024, both January and February have also had record visitor numbers.

Children are well-catered for with the range of holiday activities we offer, along with the free Museum Explorers Club. Keen members such as sisters Jorja and Addison Williams (at right) accumulate a large number of badges and "passport" stamps recording their frequent visits to the Museum. Both proudly wear the Super Explorer red lanyard, indicating that they have visited more than 20 times.

As someone who has the benefit of having played a very long game here (I ticked over 35 years in February), I have seen several generations of children grow up through the Museum, then return as parents with their own children. To me, one big indicator of success is the sight of a family group, perhaps of three generations, exploring the Museum together and discussing their own memories, or taking part in one of our programmes.



Our increase in visitor numbers in 2023 is also fuelled by increasing levels of tourism, both domestic and international. While we don't get the chance to talk to every visitor when they arrive, we learn where people are from if we can. There are noticeable groupings here: retired NZ or Australian couples in campervans, young European backpackers or independent travellers, cruise ship passengers (left), and an increasing number of family or adult day trippers from a two-hour drive radius.

This is the role our Museum can play in adding to Timaru's value as a visitor destination, and the possibilities that a new world-class facility on Stafford Street will bring. Our key focus will always be to provide a service to our local communities. If we do this well, what we provide will only add to our region's attraction to visitors

Philip

An event-filled summer



World history depicted in heavy metal

On Saturday 11 November our Museum joined dozens of others around the world to screen *The War to End All Wars*, an animated film that depicted several little-known aspects of the First World War. This was set to the music of Swedish heavy metal band Sabaton, who provided the film to museums free of charge to use to mark Armistice Day 2023. Several dozen viewers, some travelling over two hours, enjoyed the film. Admission fees went to the Museum Development Trust.



Heritage Alive

November 25 saw the Museum join forces with The SC Historical Society and St Mary's Church to hold a heritage event and market on the "village green" between the Museum and church. Dozens of happy family attendees enjoyed performances, market stalls, fun competitions, Edwardian games and free refreshments.



The Sunsational Summer Challenge

Once again we played a major role in bringing this popular summer programme to the public. Several Council facilities took part to create a trail of activities for challenge participants to visit, along with parks spaces and Geraldine and Temuka museums. Participants had their passports stamped, winning small prizes as they did so, and entering the draw at the end of the contest for some rather good digital devices. Over 1200 challenge cards were given out, with several hundred participants completing all challenges to enter the final draw. A number of those participating were from out of the region, with some having timed their local holidays to allow their families to take part.

Retro Rock at the Museum returns

We were blessed with good weather for the sixth annual outdoor externally-funded event which saw over 600 people coming to hear four local bands playing a range of music on Perth Street, along with a dance demonstration from the Timaru Rock 'n Roll club. Performers ranged in age from mid teens to mid 70s. Many audience members took time out to look through the Museum, as well as participate in a local history quiz and win spot prizes for retro rock costumes and outfits. Our thanks to Creative Communities Timaru, RSM Law Trust and Mainfreight for their ongoing support.



On Show: The Museum and Theatre Royal's past and future



Then-Now-Next ran through September, and presented images, information and artefacts relating to the past, present and future of the South Canterbury Museum and Theatre Royal. The exhibition featured items from the past, but also a more detailed look at plans and images for the planned new combined Theatre and Museum facility on Stafford Street.

Artefacts on display included a small brass tankard (left) from the Criterion Hotel, sited where the Museum will be going. This was recently donated by ex-Timaruian Graham Jack, following contact through Facebook.



On Show: Forest & Bird turns 100



Forest & Bird: Local People Protecting and Restoring Nature opened in October, and will run through until 1 April 2024. This exhibition celebrates both the centenary of the national organisation and the hard work of the South Canterbury Branch, established in 1959. It looks at work to restore local reserves, species and habitat protection, and the work that local volunteers have done with advocacy and awareness building. Exhibits include local bats and the artificial shelters made for them

We were delighted to have seven local recipients of the Society's Old Blue award for contributions to conservation present at the opening (at left, from rear) Margaret and Malcolm Macpherson, Hermann Frank, Ines Stager, John Talbot, and (at front) Fraser Ross and Peter Keller.

Coming up at the Museum

Local Māori weaving

Contemporary local Māori weaving will be the focus of our next exhibition, starting in mid-April and running through until mid June. Museum educator Keely Kroening is working with a group of weavers to bring examples of modern weaving using traditional techniques echoing the past and highlighting new materials and approaches. The April school holidays will include some weaving sessions for children to try.

ANZAC talk 24 April at 7pm

Curator Chris Rapley will present an illustrated talk on the eve of ANZAC Day looking back at the pivotal Gallipoli campaign 109 years ago that shaped the ANZAC story.



International Museums Day 18 May

We'll be marking this annual event with an illustrated talk about the plans we have for the new Museum facility to be built on Stafford Street. Learn more about the new spaces and the activities planned for them, along with details of the new exhibitions that will feature our region's heritage.

International Biodiversity Day

22 May at 7pm

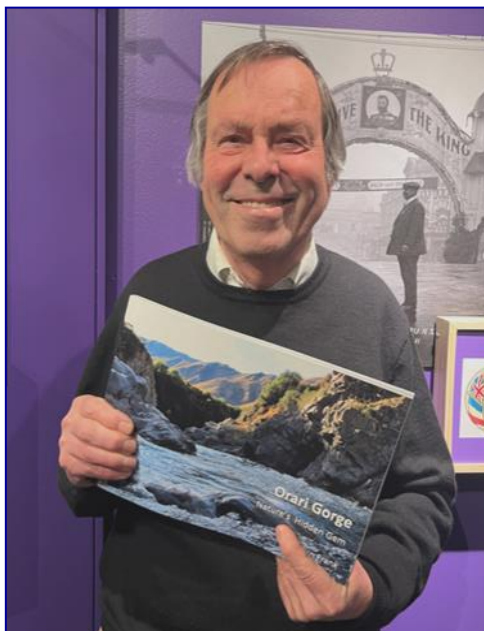
Museum Director Philip Howe will give an illustrated presentation about some little-known locals, past and present, that make up our region's biodiversity. Our region was once home to an amazing array of lifeforms, who were shaped by geologic events and environmental changes over a long period of time.



Clever Crustaceans from June 29

This is a touring show from Te Papa which looks at the range of crustaceans found in and around New Zealand, and explores the unique features of five marine crustaceans in detail. The exhibition will run from the end of June to September. This exhibition follows on from a previous touring show we hosted about the colossal squid, and will feature an interactive discovery table.

Orari Gorge book launched



Orari Gorge: Nature's Hidden Gem was launched in August. Written, illustrated and designed by Hermann Frank (left), it has 180 pages of high quality colour photography and text outlining the unique natural values of this incredible natural site. The book was published by the South Canterbury Museum Development Trust and is available from the Museum, and can be mailed - \$35 plus \$7 p&p.



New Museum update: exhibition design & fundraising

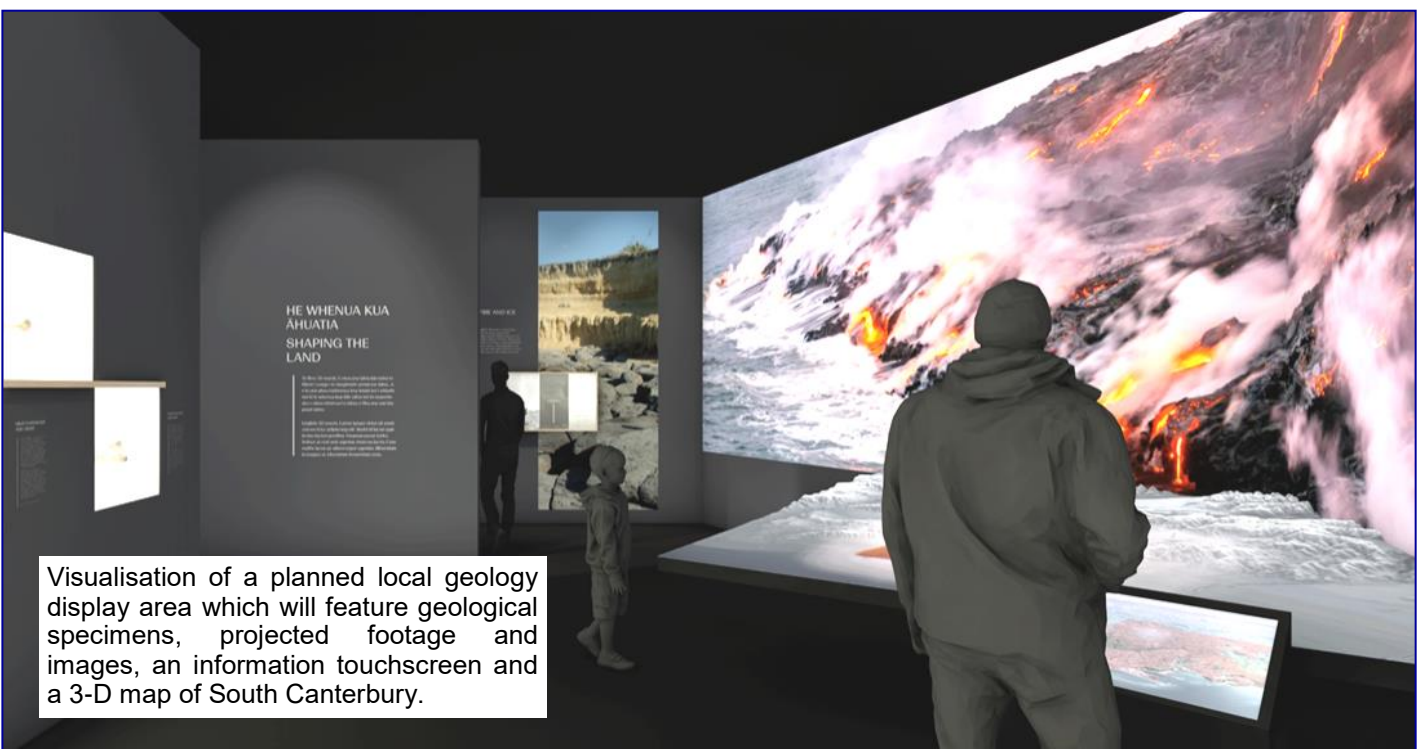


As the Timaru District Council's planning for the redevelopment of the Theatre Royal and a new museum space in the planned heritage centre take shape, we are working on developing new immersive exhibition experiences that will make this new space a must-see. Our overall planned budget for this project is \$3 million, and in November the Council approved to release \$846,000 from two historic bequests to this project, this now brings total funds available to over \$2 million. The South Canterbury Museum Development Trust has raised over \$600,000 of the total to date, and is continuing fundraising efforts to reach the final goal. Generous individual donations have now reached \$100,000.

The Museum's curatorial team have been meeting with external exhibition consultants, designers and subject experts. We are also working with a small group of local iwi representatives to review how local Māori heritage and knowledge is represented and woven through the exhibits. Find out more about the project and fundraising online at scmdt.org.nz



Above Iwi representative group members Fran Spencer, Rachael Solomon and Karl Russell with curators Tony Rippin and Chris Rapley during an exhibition planning meeting.



Visualisation of a planned local geology display area which will feature geological specimens, projected footage and images, an information touchscreen and a 3-D map of South Canterbury.

Heritage Education: hands-on learning across the region



Our Heritage Education Service team have been very active delivering programmes around the region, with the warmer months allowing a range of offsite visits. Recent programmes have made use of the new heritage-themed C-Play playground on Caroline Bay and associated structures such as the historic lighthouse (left).

Regular programmes within the Museum included local Māori heritage (lower left) or immigration stories (right) where replica items enabled students to have a hands-on experience to make their learning memorable. A local high school class were able to utilise the TDC council chamber for a re-enactment of the 1893 suffrage debate (below) while in-school programmes enable students to come to grips with a wide range of items, including a replica tuna/long-finned eel, made with the correct 2kg weight of a live eel (bottom of page).



People around the Museum (and beyond)



Left: Several Syrian families who have now settled in Timaru visited recently. Language barriers were overcome by the use of phone interpretation apps that enabled them easily translate labels and spoken word into Arabic. Like our many recent cruise ship passengers, they also welcomed the chance to have a closer look at a kiwi.

Right & below: We celebrated a couple of weekend staff milestones last August with Christopher Templeton marking 25 years service and Elaine Aitcheson retiring after 16 years of service. In February curator Tony Rippin (below left) marked 25 years of service with the Timaru District Council, while Museum Director Philip Howe marked 35 years in the role. Time flies!



Right: We were very grateful for an extensive donation of mobile shelving from Timpany Walton Lawyers, who needed to find a good home for a unit they were replacing. Practice manager Kate Holden (pictured) ensured the shelving was dismantled and delivered to our offsite storage area. Here it will be stored until we have space for it at Perth Street.

Below left: Not sure what a collective of curators is known as, but that's what happened here last August where professional staff from council-run museums and galleries in Oamaru, Timaru, Ashburton and Akaroa came together at our museum. We discussed issues that we all have in common, toured parts of our museum, and heard presentations about various projects and programmes from around the region. Online meetings are no substitute for in-person discussions like this.



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

www.facebook.com/SCMuseum



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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 or note with the following details and correct amount and we'll sign you up! Name, Address, Phone no. & email if you have it.

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