

South Canterbury Museum 2014-15 Activity Report



Introduction

2014-15 was another busy period for the Museum as it carried out its key roles of collection development and research, exhibitions, education programmes, public programmes and events, local and regional collaborations, and carrying out a wide range of tasks behind the scenes to ensure that a professionally-operated museum service was provided for the District's residents and visitors to the region. Achievements during the period included:

- 763 items added to the collections
- 6 temporary exhibitions mounted
- 4 school holiday programme series conducted
- 14 public talks, events and programmes conducted
- 1 external public event participated in
- More than 2,350 volunteer hours worked in or for the Museum (in excess of one full-time position filled)
- Just under 21,000 users of our services
- Over 130 current Friends of the Museum (SC Historical Society)
- Over 440 Museum current Explorers Club members
- Over 700 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.

1. Personnel

1.1 The Museum Team: Staff, Volunteers and Supporters for 2014-15

Museum Director (full-time)	Philip Howe
Curator of Documentary History (full-time)	Tony Rippin
Curator of Social History (full-time)	Chris Rapley (from Sept 2014)
Museum Educators (LEOTC-funded)	Wendy Hurst, Keely Kroening, Anna Rimmer
Technician (part-time)	Russell Armstrong
Cleaner (part-time)	Mitsuko Kuniyoshi, Debs Brady
Weekend supervisors	Alistair Pike, Christopher Templeton, Dianne Shields, Elaine Aitcheson and David Batchelor
Volunteers	Mark Denne, Lee Keeley, David Batchelor, Elaine Aitcheson, Barbara Hertnon, Rodger Laycock, Susan Scott, Joanne Knight, Robyn Cooper, Keith Bartholomew, Alan McKenzie, Aaron Howard, John Nichol, Craig Perkins, Emma Williams, Saray Sedeno
SC Museum Development Trust Trustees	Rosie Carruthers, Craig Perkins, Ross Parkes, John Oliver, John Simpson, Christopher Templeton and Philip Howe



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. The hours worked by these additional personnel equate to the equivalent of more than a full-time staff position for the year.



The South Canterbury Historical Society continues to play an important role in supporting the Museum as the Friends of the Museum. Individual members and the Committee have contributed

considerable time towards Museum programmes. In addition, the Society actively advocates for the Museum in the wider community. The Museum Development Trust has continued to generate income and provide funds for Museum projects.

The major contribution to the Museum's success made by the commitment and dedication of all members of the wider Museum team cannot be stressed enough.

1.2 Personnel Development

Specific museum training courses are few and far between, but a number of training and networking opportunities were taken by staff and volunteers during the year. These included:

- Museums Aotearoa Conference, Dunedin
- A two-day curators seminar (Invercargill)
- In-house Timaru District Council staff training
- National Digital Forum, Wellington

In addition, staff members visited a number of other institutions during the year to view facilities and discuss a range of issues with colleagues. The Museum also hosted visits from museum colleagues from elsewhere.

2. Collection Care and Development

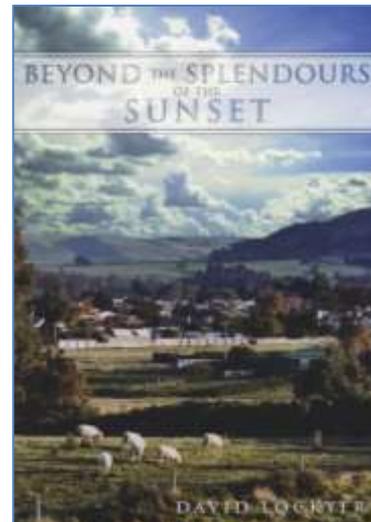
Care and management of the Museum's unique local heritage collections continues to be a major part of the work carried out by staff and volunteers. The Museum's collections are at the heart of all that we do; they are the raw material for research, exhibition and education. Considerable effort is put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

A total of 173 accessions have been recorded for the 2014-15 year, with 745 individual items catalogued from these accessions so far to date, consisting of:

- 308 publications – including books, periodicals, microfiche items and digital copies
- 53 photographic items – mostly single prints but one large negative collection included
- 83 archival documents or groups of records (often very large numbers)
- 301 objects – mostly social history artefacts

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: Among recent acquisitions from top left: fossil tracks in mudstone from Tengawai River area; an ornate silver teapot presented to Fanny Jackson for her services as an organist by Pleasant Point's Presbyterian Church in 1885; a business card for George Keen, a Timaru bootmaker c.1920s; a chasuble (priestly garment) worn by priests serving in Timaru St Joseph's parish in the 1940s; a 1935 class photo of Std5-6 at Pareora East School; publication *Beyond the Sunset*, a new biography of Dr Margaret Cruickshank of Waimate, New Zealand's first female doctor.

2.1 Collection Management Projects

Work continued behind the scenes on a range of projects to better house, document and make available the heritage items in our collections. 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 on-line 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 TDC website. Several thousand records are listed, providing access to the collections resulting in enquiries from around the world. Further access is provided through another programme, Virtual Exhibit, and also through an external site, New Zealand Museums Online, which now has over 140 items from our collections featured.

3. Exhibitions

3.1 Temporary Exhibitions

Four temporary exhibitions were mounted during the year, all planned and developed by the Museum Team. Exhibition work is very intensive and involves considerable research, with all labels, graphics and display furniture prepared on site by Museum staff. The exhibitions were:

1914: South Canterbury on the Eve of War This exhibition looked at our region and how it first responded to the start of WW1. It featured images, artefacts and contemporary information sources from the time, showing how quickly the region changed its focus from peacetime activities to events overseas.



Chosen Threads An exhibition of selected highlights from the Museum's rich textile collections, featuring garments from the 1890 – 1990 period. The exhibition was also presented as a tribute to the work of the late Davina Davis, Curator of Collections at the Museum from 1997 to 2014.

Wild Suburbia A closer look at the creatures that make their homes in Timaru's backyards and gardens, and how they survive and thrive despite our best efforts.





Into Hell Itself This exhibition was the second WW1-themed exhibition developed by the Museum Team and had a focus on the fate of South Canterbury men who served in the Gallipoli campaign 100 years ago. It opened on ANZAC Day 2015, and was very popular with visitors and school classes.

3.2 Long-term Exhibitions

Planning continued for the next major upgrade of the Museum's long-term display areas upstairs, scheduled for instalment in 2015-16. The new exhibition areas will focus on a number of aspects of local heritage from the 1870 – 2000 period, including growth of settlement, local Maori communities, personal and social like, harbour history and Caroline Bay.

4. Heritage Education Service

4.1 Ministry of Education Contract

The Museum's LEOTC contract with the Ministry provides for the delivery of education services both in the Museum and at other museums and heritage sites from Mid Canterbury to North Otago. All programmes are developed by the Museum's Heritage Education Service staff and are linked to the curriculum and carefully designed to meet identified outcomes in consultation with schools. In 2013-14 there were two Museum



educators delivering the Museum's Heritage Education Service programmes, one full-time and one part-time. These positions are fully funded by the Ministry of Education through the LEOTC contract, which was renewed for another year.

The 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.

4.2 On-site Education Programmes



A wide variety of topics were taught in the Museum, using exhibition areas and the Education Space located in the Museum's Heritage Theatre. 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.

Students were also able to use the Heritage Education Service's growing collection of replica historic costume, which saw students dressing as Victorian school children or native birds.

4.3 Off-site Programmes

A number of schools worked with Heritage Education Staff at several local sites for natural history studies, including Raincliff, the Otipua 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.

Several programmes were also delivered in other local museums in the region including the Te Ana Rock Art Centre, Pleasant Point, Waimate, Geraldine, and Ashburton. This particularly benefited schools that were unable to travel to Timaru.

5. Public Programmes

5.1 User Statistics

A total of 20,986 users of the Museum's services were recorded for the period, a two per cent decrease below the target figure based on the average of the three previous years. 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.

The user numbers break down as follows:

Casual visitors	11,560
On-site research service users	1,025
Visiting groups	1,245
On-site schools	3,526
Off-site outreach schools and groups	3,175
Distance information service users	455

5.2 Archives/Research

1,025 in-person visits to the Archives Library were recorded for the year, ranging from genealogists to professional historians and authors. 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.

In addition, 455 written or emailed inquiries from outside of the region have been 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.

5.3 Community Engagement



A number of community groups have been taken on “behind the scenes” tours of the Museum’s Collection Wing, often during pre-arranged evening visits. This has proven valuable for educating local people about the preservation work carried out by Museum staff, and the need for storage and workspaces to protect our region’s heritage. Some groups have offered significant donations and individuals have taken up Friends of the Museum membership as a result of these tours. Museum staff gave several talks to visiting groups at the Museum focusing on displays, particularly WW1 or visited offsite service clubs and community groups to provide talks about the Museum and exhibitions.

5.4 Museum Events

14 different events were held at or by the Museum during the year, including exhibition openings, public talks and a session for the public to have WW1-related items identified by staff. Several of these events were put on with the assistance of the Friends of the Museum. There is considerable potential for increasing the type and number of such events in order to widen audiences and generate revenue.

5.5 School Holiday Programmes

Successful programmes were run in the three end-of-term breaks during the school year, with both organised programmes and self-directed activities for visiting families. 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.



5.6 Museum Explorers Club



The Museum Explorers Club, aimed at primary school-aged children, continues to be popular with over 440 members at present. Members receive a Museum Passport, which is stamped every time they visit the Museum, earning them a small Museum souvenir after five visits.

5.7 External Events

The Museum had a presence at the November 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 Friends of the Museum, Museum Development Trust and the Museum Explorers Club all helped to ensure success.

5.8 End of year event

An open public end of year party was held on Saturday 23 November. Jointly organised by the Friends of the Museum and Museum Staff, it attracted nearly around 150 people to take part in various competitions for donated prizes, view new exhibitions and enjoy free refreshments provided by Timaru Lions.



A number signed up to become Friends of the Museum. It was a highly successful day that brought in a number of local residents who had either not used the Museum before or not for a very long time, including a number of family groups.

5.9 World War One Commemorations



Curator Chris Rapley gave several Gallipoli-themed talks at the Museum and to community groups around Timaru

As well as mounting two exhibitions with a WW1 focus, the Museum has played an active role in co-ordinating efforts to commemorate local effort in the Great War. Curator Tony Rippin continued to develop the SCROLL (South Canterbury Roll of Honour) web database in co-operation with local genealogists to record information and images of all locals who served in the War. There are now more than two thousand entries on this database, with more than twenty volunteers feeding in new entries and updating records. This information has been made available on a computer touch screen which has now been displayed at the Museum and libraries around the district.

5.10 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 1/2 star rating. The wider community has also shown its support for the Museum through the Council's Community Survey, where 98% of visitors were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the Museum, and 78% of residents were very or fairly satisfied with the Museum (20% did not know). This compares to a national average of 64% for similar museums elsewhere.

6. Development

6.1 South Canterbury Museum Development Trust

The Trust has continued to promote and raise funds for specific Museum projects. A further short film was completed for the Heritage Theatre. The Trust continues to raise money to support the Museum's forthcoming exhibition overhaul and publishing programme through earned income and targeted grant applications.

6.2 Museum Development Feasibility Study

Museum consultant Richard Arlidge was contracted to carry out a review of the existing Museum building and to consider possible options for physical redevelopment of the Museum. The three options outlined are to extend from the existing building, demolish part of the existing building and rebuild, or locate another site for the Museum's public functions of exhibition and education, and retain the existing buildings for storage, archives and work spaces.

These options are still under consideration by the Council, with a proposal for a new development once finalised, included in the Council's Long Term Plan for the 2018-19 financial year.

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 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 Participation in Timaru District Council Activities

Two Museum staff participated as members of the Timaru District Emergency Management Team (public information management team). Museum staff also provided access to Museum images, resources such as display cases, and information services for other Council units when requested.

7.3 TDC Long Term Plan

The Museum carried out preparation of its Activity Management Plan to contribute to the Timaru District Council's Long Term Plan. A number of issues that the Museum will face in the future were identified and included for further consideration by the Council when making decisions for the delivery of services in our region.

8. Marketing and Communications

8.1 Museum Newsletter



The Museum continued to produce an illustrated newsletter. This was sent to members of the South Canterbury Historical Society, Timaru District Council elected representatives and management, individuals connected with the Museum, local media and selected New Zealand museums and heritage organisations. Visitors to the Museum also took copies on offer. The newsletter is a useful communication tool for reaching a number of audiences.

8.2 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 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.

8.3 Media Articles

Museum staff contributed regular articles, usually weekly, focussing on local heritage and Museum topics to both the Timaru Herald and Courier newspapers. 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.

8.4 Internet and Social Media

The Museum continues to have its main web access hosted on the Council website, which was recently overhauled. Here visitors can find information about the Museum, download information resources and obtain contact details. The Heritage Education Service has a separate pages allowing schools to review and place bookings for particular programmes. Former Museum exhibitions 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 TDC web site. These include biographical files, rates rolls and other sources useful to family historians.

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 750 people now actively follow the Museum on Facebook, with many more seeing Museum posts on other sites.

9. External Relations

9.1 Organisational Partnerships

The South Canterbury Museum has continued in 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.

9.2 Local Museums

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.

The Museum Director has continued to be active in helping co-ordinate a national support network for directors of smaller and medium-sized museums, organising and chairing a session at the Museums Aotearoa conference in May.

9.3 Other Organisations

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

- Central South Island Tourism
- Te Ana Rock Art Centre
- Te Runaka o Arowhenua
- Te Runaka o Waihao
- Caroline Bay Association
- Local schools
- Aoraki Polytechnic and South Canterbury Community College
- National Services Te Paerangi (Te Papa)
- Local Rotary and Probus clubs
- Ministry of Culture and Heritage
- Central South Island Museums Group

The Museum, or individual staff members, belonged to the following professional organisations during 2014 -15:

- 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.

Recommendation

That the information be received and noted.