

INSIDE

Cover image: *Never too young to rock 'n roll: a happy little punter takes in the crowd gathered on the Museum hillside, **Retro Rock at the Museum**, 13 Feb.*

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**SOUTH CANTERBURY
MUSEUM**
EXPLORE our heritage

**Autumn
2021**



Director's comment: A year like no other (in a good way)

It's hard to believe that this time last year I was spending much of my working day staring at multiple faces on a small screen in my kitchen, endeavouring to run a Museum that was closed to the public, carrying out a whole range of administration tasks for the Council, and generally trying to plan for a future that seemed uncertain. Despite a couple of later COVID level change hiccups in the later part of the year, and in February this year, we managed to get things up and running, to the point where we are now just as busy as before it all started.

But of course, everything has changed. We notice both the absence of overseas visitors and the increased number of New Zealand tourists who have replaced them. Visitors are more aware, with many still signing in with the contact tracing QR code or using our hand sanitiser at Level 1. School class numbers quickly returned to normal levels, and apart from the obvious drop during periods of Level 3 and 4 closure or restricted activity, our overall numbers remain at expected levels.

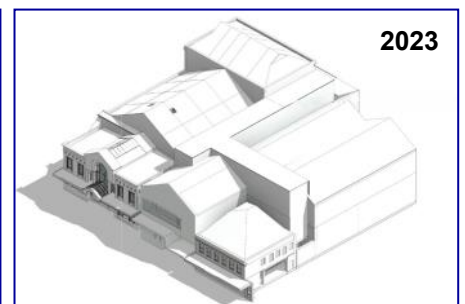
The experience of 2020 has taught us that we cannot take things for granted, but that we can adapt to changed circumstances and find new ways of providing access to our heritage. We hope not to have to go through this again, but we know it can be done.

What is certain is that this year sees the next phase of the Museum's history underway with the architectural planning of our new heritage facility alongside the historic Theatre Royal. When completed, the whole complex will provide local residents with an exciting facility which contains a new museum, a renovated state-of-the-art yet historic theatre, and a place that will act as a centre for heritage, performing arts and community involvement.

The images below show three phases of the Museum's development: the original 1952 house museum on Perth Street, the 1966 Pioneer Hall construction that replaced it, and an initial architectural drawing of the new heritage hub complex that will be developed on Stafford Street, opening in late 2023. This will be a major step for us.

We are now working on designing exhibitions for the new gallery spaces we'll have, reviewing how we will operate this new facility as well as the original site which will be retained for archives and storage, and planning for all of the new opportunities that will come with this exciting development. Keep watching this space for updates, it's going to be an exciting, fascinating and hard working time over the next two years!

Philip



Public talks under way

We began a new series of evening public talks by visiting experts in March. These talks are jointly organised by the Museum and the Canterbury branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

In March we heard from Terri Elder, curator of the Teece Museum of Classical Antiquities in Christchurch (right). Terri spoke about how this incredible collection of Greek and Roman artefacts had developed through one Canterbury University academic's passion for the classical past and the development of a new museum based in the Christchurch Arts Centre. In April Hamish Spencer gave a talk to a large audience at the Landing Services building about the rise of COVID and how new viruses can arise, and how effective vaccinations can be (lower right).

Late in April local collector and historian Malcolm Brady gave two talks at the Museum about the historical development and use of masks to prevent disease and to fight the use of gas in warfare. In May Lincoln University soil scientist Dr Peter Almond presented a talk at the Council Chambers about the geological record of climate change and how this can be traced in local deposits of loess, the clay-like dust that forms deep layers on our landscape.

A new series of talks will kick off on Thursday 1 July at 7pm, when Dr Karen Pollard will provide a talk on star formation and Matariki, the constellation that ushers in the Māori new year.



Summer Holidays: The Sunsational Summer Challenge



Above: Jane Morrison from the TDC Parks department and Mel Rippin from the Museum draw the winning entrants under the watchful eye of Senior Constable Deb Quesada.

Over the last summer we ran *The Sunsational Challenge*. It was a combined programme that encouraged families to visit as many Council community facilities as possible, carrying out activities or finding facts and having their Challenge passport stamped. Participating facilities along with us included Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru Parks and Reserves, District Libraries in Timaru, Geraldine and Temuka, public swimming pools in Geraldine, Temuka, and Pleasant Point. In addition, Geraldine Historical Museum and Temuka Courthouse Museum took part.

Following on from an earlier joint programme from 2019, Museum receptionist Mel Rippin refined the programme and co-ordinated with participating organisations to set the programme up. Over 1,000 passports were given out, with several hundred kids and families completing the challenge to win badges, free swims and the chance to be drawn for some very nice donated prizes, including a laptop and digital tablet. A great result from some great work by all involved.



Above: Some of the happy winners from the prize draws

Getting active in April

The Museum was a very busy place over the April holidays, with hordes of kids and their caregivers coming and going (hats off to all grandparents who take the grandies to the Museum over the holidays!) . As well as our usual gallery activities, we organised some drop-in craft sessions where kids could add to a tropical butterfly wall (at right) or make ANZAC-themed medal replicas linked to the RSA collection exhibition running at the time (see two pages over).

We also managed to take around 50 children and adults out on a fossil hunt at Evan's Crossing on the Pareora River. This event had been rained out in January, so it was good to finally get out there and spend the afternoon locating a range of marine molluscs from around 40 million years ago. Lots of interesting discoveries (see one later this issue!) and youthful enthusiasm ignited.



We were delighted to have a parent post this comment on our Facebook page following the fossil trip:

Thank you so much for putting this on. My son Jamieson has been looking forward to this since the last school holidays, but it was put off due to the weather. He has asked me nearly every day for the past few weeks when he could go. Today he asked every 30 mins or so if it was time to go, as he was so excited. When he had a dress up day at school he dressed up as an archaeologist, as that's what he would love to do when he grows up. I have one happy child. What a great experience. Thanks to the staff and everyone who made this available. In his words "Thanks to the archaeologist for the experience for us kids".

Retro Rock: another great night of music at the Museum

Fourth time around and the annual Retro Rock event had great weather and a great crowd again. Over 650 people crowded onto the Museum hillside on the evening of 13 February to hear local bands Bring on the Chops, Monkey Wrench, The Soul Agency and Devil's Handbrake deliver lively high-quality rock, soul and funk. The audience participated in the retro quiz and some took the chance to dance on the street or take part in the Retro Fashion Contest. Delicious food from local vendors, a chance to explore the Museum, brilliant lighting and a great crowd vibe made the night perfect. And yes, we'll look to doing it again, as next year will be the 5th anniversary of this unexpectedly successful venture. Our thanks to the bands, Museum staff and volunteers, funders and all who supported this free public event.



Museum team members marking milestones



Two work anniversaries for a couple of team members so far this year. Museum Educator Keely Kroening (at left with TDC Group Manager Symon Leggett) received a certificate for chalking up 10 years in the role. And not to be outdone, weekend supervisor and volunteer Dave Batchelor (right) marked 15 years of employment with us. Great work, both of you, and we know that there will be more to be done as we move ahead into even more interesting times. And there are a few of the staff and volunteers who have been here even longer! (in some cases *much* more....).



Education: A very busy Term 1



Term One saw our Heritage Education team all over the place, but in a good way. Classes were taken around the region, from Waimate to Peel Forest, as well as in the Museum and around downtown Timaru. We are so lucky to have such a wide range of heritage sites and resources to provide for local schools.

Above: An Ashburton Intermediate student researches invertebrate life at Peel Forest.

Above right: Mountainview High School geography students exploring Timaru's inner city history.

Right: Museum Receptionist Mel works with students from Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education NZ in the Museum while at the same time the Education Team are working at Richard Pearse airport with Timaru South School (at lower right).

Below: Waimate Main School students learn lore about local moa at Waimate Museum with our Heritage Education team.



New arrivals in the Collections



Left: An octagonal 8-day clock, made by Jerome and Co. This clock was sold by local retailer "Honest" John McNab to his future mother-in-law around 1899.

Right: A Caroline Bay Carnival "Tiny Tots" beauty pageant sash won in 1955 by Christine Ridler. She donated it after spotting herself in colour footage of the Carnival playing in our Caroline Bay exhibition area.



Below: A large fossilised worm tube in sandstone, recovered by a participant in the April Holiday's fossil hunt at Pareora River, and donated to the Museum.



Local RSA memorabilia collection on show Feb - May

In Service: The South Canterbury RSA Memorabilia Collection was on display from February to the beginning of May. Curator Chris Rapley selected highlights from the collection which had been gifted to the Museum by the SC RSA memorabilia Trust in 2019. Among items featured were medals awarded for service throughout the 20th century right up to peace keeping duties in the 1990s, uniform items, a 27th Battalion flag that had been "souvenired" by a Battalion member during WWII and personal images from military personnel.

Below: Trust members Rapa Whiu and John Bray with Curator Chris Rapley at the exhibition opening.



Exhibition news: *Buller's Birds* have landed



The current exhibition on show in our temporary exhibition space is ***Buller's Birds: The Art of Keulemans and Buchanan***. This exhibition, developed and toured by Te Papa, features reproductions of the artwork that was commissioned by Walter Buller to illustrate his highly successful books on New Zealand birds in the 1870s and 1880s. These were the first coloured depictions of our unique bird fauna, and were eagerly acquired by scientists and wealthy laymen around the world. The exhibition also features several specimens of the birds depicted, and is on show until 25 July.



When giants roamed our land

In March we opened a new display case in our natural history area that has a focus on moa and other large extinct birds. This features bones from five of the six moa species found in our area (right), along with cast replicas of moa skulls (below), a moa egg and an extinct eagle's toe bone. In addition we incorporated scale models of two complete moa skeletons and a model of the terrifying foot of the extinct pouākai/NZ eagle. This case is part of an upgrade funded through the Museum's budget and a grant from the Brian Mason Scientific and Technical Trust. It is part of a project to revamp several sections of our local natural history exhibition area.



People at *Retro Rock at the Museum*



Above left and centre: Museum team members (all Rippins) get into the spirit, with Mel, Tony and Louise at left, and our cleaner Jan, virtually unrecognisable in wig and groovy 70s threads, at top centre.

Top right: Retro fashion judges Steve Wills (TDC councillor) and Carmen Hayman (2x previous retro fashion show winner) judging entrants.



Mid left: Roman and Lili from Sead Crepes dispense yummy goodness from their caravan.

Left: The Soul Agency's Sharleyne Diamond and Al Walker performing.

Right: Kieran Daly and Charlotte Kelly from Devil's Handbrake.



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

www.facebook.com/SCMuseum



Contact the Museum

Phone (03) 687 7212
Postal PO Box 522, Timaru
NEW ZEALAND
Email museum@timdc.govt.nz
Website museum.timaru.govt.nz

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.

Membership type: Individual	\$30.00
Family	\$35.00
Organisation/Business	\$35.00
Overseas	\$35.00
Life	\$300.00

Send your information and cheque for the correct amount to:

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