

# INSIDE



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- Pioneer Hall turns 50
- Major exhibition upgrade
- Temporary exhibitions
- Collection and Education news
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**Above:** A framed portrait of Andrew Burnett of Mt Cook Station. This is part of the important Burnett collection recently received by the Museum. See more on P7 inside.

**SOUTH CANTERBURY  
MUSEUM**  
**EXPLORE** our heritage

**Winter 2017**



## Director's comment: It's been a while.....

This is the first printed newsletter from the South Canterbury Museum for over 18 months. It's not that we haven't been doing anything, in fact as you'll read within this copy of **INSIDE** quite the opposite! A wide range of temporary exhibitions, fundraising, planning and preparing a major new long-term exhibition, all sorts of public programmes; education sessions delivered both here and around the region; continued collection growth and a new storage area, the list goes on.

While all of these tasks are important, so too is us letting people know about what has been happening in our Museum, along with what is going to be happening. We do this in a variety of ways, through newsletters and mail outs to the Friends of the Museum, through media articles, through presentations, our annual report to the Council, and increasingly through social media such as our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/SCMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/SCMuseum) - go have a look!

What our team here are very aware of is the importance of communicating as widely as possible - as well as doing all of the tasks that a museum requires. So this newsletter, retitled **INSIDE**, may undergo a few changes over the next few months as we look at how we can improve how we let you know what's happening.

A few facts for you from the last 18 months. We've planned and prepared 6 temporary exhibitions covering a variety of subjects, three of which related to WW1 centennial commemorations. We've planned a revamp of all of our mezzanine floor long-term displays, raised over \$250,000 towards this project and opened the first half in April this year. We've leased a temporary off-site store and fitted it out to museum standards, relocating some dozens of large objects recently taken off display. Our Education team have continued to exceed target figures for school use both here and at other museums and sites around the region.

At the end of the 2016-17 financial year, we saw an 11% increase in the number of casual users visiting the Museum, despite having our mezzanine floor area closed off for most of this time. A mix of temporary exhibitions, public programmes and a revamped Museum Explorers Club (see below) were all part of the reason for this. But I can also see that all of the work currently being done in the Museum, the support and help we receive from others, and the legacy on which we build all have helped continue to grow the Museum and its role in our community.

- Philip

## Explorers Club gets a major makeover

At the end of 2015 our free membership club for primary school students, the Museum Explorers Club, was relaunched with a new initiative. Members were given a special "passport" in a plastic pocket attached to a Museum-branded lanyard. Every time they visit, their passport is stamped, and members can earn special badges to wear on their lanyards.

Developed by our Curators Tony Rippin and Chris Rapley, this new initiative has seen Club numbers nearly quadruple in 18 months, to the point where we have over 1,500 current members. We've purchased a badge-making machine which allows us to design and manufacture badges to suit changing exhibitions and other events

All members are recorded on our database, along with their parents' email addresses, so we can contact them about what's happening at the Museum. Curator Chris recently attended the national Museums Aotearoa conference in Palmerston North where he gave a presentation about the Explorers Club (below), attracting a lot of interest from other museums.





# Happy Birthday, Pioneer Hall!

The Museum reached a milestone on 10 December marking 50 years since the opening of its distinctive Pioneer Hall building. The original building was so named following the wishes of T.D. Burnett, who bequeathed the land and buildings on the site (at right) for the establishment of a museum in 1941. It was his wish that any new building on the site be named Pioneer Hall.

This radical octagonal design opened on 10 December 1966 following an extensive fundraising campaign by the South Canterbury Historical Society. It was a major step forward for the Museum, replacing the former house that had opened as the first Museum in 1952 (at right). Pioneer Hall provided a massive boost in space for displays and storage.

The building, designed by Timaru architect Ron Dohig, featured a mezzanine floor inside the octagonal space, with a series of small storage areas around the outside. Considerable amounts of glass was used, in the belief that natural light would benefit visitors..

In the years that followed, several improvements were carried out to the building, including blocking out windows and the tall skylight, putting in insulation and strengthening the mezzanine floor which had buckled slightly due to excessive heat in the summer. The collections continued to grow so that by the mid 1980s a storage crisis was developing.

Following transfer of the collections and Museum operation to the Timaru District Council in 1988, a Museum Director was appointed and planning commenced for further development of the building. This saw the construction of a rectangular wing off the south side of Pioneer Hall, completed in 2000. This provided three floors of storage and work area, allowing the Museum to open out former store rooms into more gallery space, archives library and education area.

In 2014 a feasibility study was conducted to look at the building's future development. The Timaru District Council will be considering future options in its next Long Term Plan.

**Above right:** Pioneer Hall nears completion in 1966.

**Right:** Pioneer Hall is opened by Timaru Mayor D. Dowell, watched by South Canterbury Historical Society members T. Hall and J. Hamilton, and architect R. Dohig.

**Below right:** A drawing room display set up for the opening in 1966.

**Below:** A postcard view of the building in the 1970s.





## ***Times of Change: Telling stories from the last 150 years***

2016 saw a hive of activity happening in our upstairs gallery spaces. One half of the area was closed late in 2015 to allow displays to be packed up and work to proceed on installing new displays. This was followed by the other half closing in August 2016. So what was going on?

We've been carrying out a major upgrade of the entire mezzanine floor, installing brand new exhibition areas that help tell stories of our region's heritage from the last 150 years. This follows on from the exhibition areas downstairs, allowing visitors to follow the unique course of local history and gain insights into who we are and where we are.

The mezzanine floor area will include the following topics:

- Local Maori community history
- The growth of European settlement
- Timaru's shipwrecks and harbour history
- Working life
- Farming the hinterland

- Domestic life
- Schooling and childhood
- Caroline Bay's growth
- South Canterbury at war
- The significance of water
- 20th century social life
- Local industry
- Inventors and innovators

We've used a mix of real artefacts, historic images, text panels and digital touchscreens to help visitors explore our heritage. Because of the huge amount of work involved, and the need to raise funds, we made the decision to do the work in two stages, opening the first stage in April this year once we completed it and then carrying on with Stage Two.

We're very pleased with the initial public reaction to the work completed and opened. We also have the opportunity to further refine Stage 2 displays to reflect what has been successful in Stage 1.



**Above:** Part of the former displays where the upgrade changes are taking place. These displays had been in place since 2000. Every artefact had to be removed, checked and documented before being moved into storage.

**Below:** A wide-angle view of the same area after opening in 2017. Additional walls, new internally-lit cases, pull-out drawers and touchscreens with dozens of historic images now create a very different immersive feel for visitors, enabling them to explore local history topics in greater depth.





## ***Times of Change: Telling stories from the last 150 years***

The design process enabled us to identify likely costs, very necessary as it was apparent that developing a quality exhibition space would cost far more we had in the Museum's budget. An extensive fundraising programme brought in significant donations from organisations and individuals. The Museum now has raised \$340,000 towards a final estimated cost of \$395,000. Significant external grants include \$100,000 from Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury, \$50,000 from the Janie Murray Trust, \$40,000 from the Purvis family, \$25,000 from Perpetual Guardian Trust, and \$5,000 from Lillian Smart. This enabled Stage One to proceed and much of the preliminary work for Stage Two to be completed. We are optimistic that we can raise the remaining \$45,000 to make this a reality.

**Right:** Clinton Tamati from Perpetual Guardian Trust presents a giant cheque for \$25,000 for the project to Museum Director Philip Howe.

**Below and right anticlockwise:**

Museum Technician Russell Armstrong preparing bollards for display. Russell retired in February 2017.

Curator Tony Rippin finishing a display on local shipwrecks.

Timaru District Mayor Damon Odey prepares to cut the ribbon at the bottom of the stairs at the opening of Stage 1 in April.

An 1870s velocipede bicycle in a new display, which features an 1875 Temuka street scene.





## The changing focus of exhibitions: 2016



The year started with **Rock'nRoll** (above), a look at Timaru's music scene in the 1960s. This was followed by three WW1-themed exhibitions; **Equipped to Survive** (above right) which looked at a soldier's equipment and included an interactive exhibit for students to understand the importance of having the correct equipment. **Battle Flag** (right) marked the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland by displaying the battle ensign from HMS New Zealand, now in our collection. Finally, **Never A Week Goes By**, a travelling exhibition which compared how communities in South Otago and New Caledonia remember their war dead.

### Visitor comments from survey forms

*Really enjoying the "new upstairs". 6 year old daughter enjoys the touchscreens. Keep up the great work!*  
Timaru visitor May 2017

*Great to absorb local colonial history and that of the tangata whenua. We enjoy visiting local museums. Very interesting*  
North Island visitor, May 2017

*The Fishing exhibition was extremely interesting & comprehensive - the audio makes it! All round I found your museum refreshingly different.*  
South Island visitor, June 2017

*I really like it! Good job! The upstairs section is great*  
Uruguay visitor, May 2017

*Lots of information, being able to open drawers for clear views was very good. Staff friendly. Very enjoyable.*  
Australian visitor April 2017



## The changing focus of exhibitions: 2017



the 1850s to the near present. Craig designed the exhibition and the comprehensive display panels which provided a wealth of historical detail and photographic facts. Craig also hosted several visiting school classes and special interest groups to provide insights into the exhibition and subject matter.

The local fishing industry is the focus of the current exhibition **Fishing the Bight**, which opened in June (below). This exhibition is a collaboration with local oral historians Ruth Low and Linda Hepburn who interviewed a



Over summertime, we featured items recently “retired” from the mezzanine floor displays in **Pieces of the Past** (left). This was followed in February by **Salt to Silicon**, a collaboration with photographer and collector Craig Perkins (below) who displayed over 70 photographic items, mostly from his collection, which outlined the changes in photographic technology from



number of local fishing industry identities to record stories from the 1950s to the 1980s. Their recordings and photographs enabled Museum Curator Tony Rippin to produce an exhibition that has attracted a lot of attention from locals associated with the industry in earlier times. (Tony, Linda and Ruth below).



Finally, at the end of September we will be opening a new exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the battle of Passchendaele, one of the worst faced by New Zealand troops in the First World War. **Hell Let Loose** takes a closer look at the experiences of locals who served on the Western Front in 1916 and 1917. This exhibition will be accompanied by a dramatic presentation in mid-October being staged in the gallery space over several evenings by local drama teacher Glenys Whittington - more information to follow!





## Our collections: The Museum's core assets

The last year has seen significant growth in our collections. 142 separate accessions were received in 2016, with over 400 individual items from those accessions now catalogued. By mid 2017, 67 accessions had been recorded, with over 200 items catalogued from these so far. These range across our key collecting areas of nature specimens, social history artefacts, photographs, archival documents and local history books and publications.

A particularly important collection documented in 2016 was the Burnett Family collection. These items are especially significant given the role that the family played in 19th and 20th century regional history, including gifting the land that our Museum now sits upon. The items date from the 1860s to the near recent, tracing the family lineage and their lives at Mt Cook Station, and wider involvement in the region and its communities. The items came from the estates of Catriona Baker and Donald Burnett, the last surviving members of the family.

**Right:** *Photographic portrait of Catherine Burnett, wife of Andrew, featured on the cover.*

**Below from left:** *Waimataitai School dux medal awarded to Donald Burnett, Small wooden table made by Thomas Burnett while a student at Timaru Boys High School in the 1890s, shaving gear that belonged to Thomas Burnett*



An important project for the Museum Team over the last 18 months has been the establishment of an off-site storage area in leased premises. This space has been fitted out with insulation, temperature control, security, smoke detection and shelving. It has enabled us to relocate items coming off display during the Mezzanine Floor upgrade project, as well as shift collection items out in order to reorganise our existing storage areas.

Our collections are the raw material for everything we do—research, exhibition, education, public programmes and more. They are an irreplaceable regional asset that help build a unique picture of where we are and who we are.

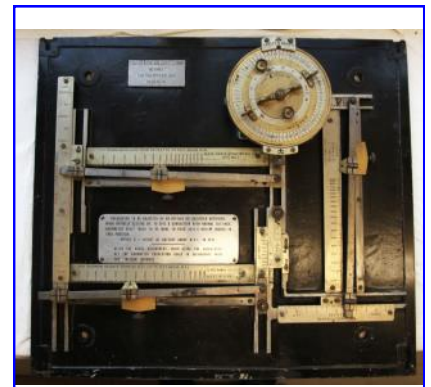
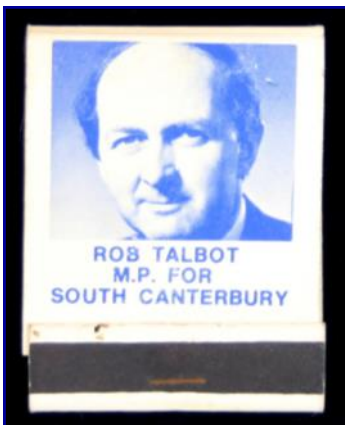


### Among other recent accessions

**Right:** *Ballistic range finding device, believed to have been part of the WWII coastal battery equipment used by the gun emplacements at Smithfield.*

**Above right:** *Fossil mussel shell, collected at Silver hills, Tengawai River.*

**Left:** *Promotional match packet for local National Candidate in the 1975 general election.*





## People at the Museum



**Above:** RNZN Commodore John Campbell with Timaru Sea Scouts at the opening of Battle Flag in May 2016. A flag-raising ceremony by a Naval contingent was a highlight of this event.

**Right:** Karen McCrostie from South Canterbury Hospice with Curator Tony Rippin holding a tea towel produced by the Hospice that used images from the Museum's collection. These popular tea towels are now almost sold out.

**Below:** Teachers from Waimataitai School try out our replica costume during an in-service course in January 2017. Around 30 teachers attended this day, which gave them a closer look at how the Museum can be used by schools.





## Family and public programmes

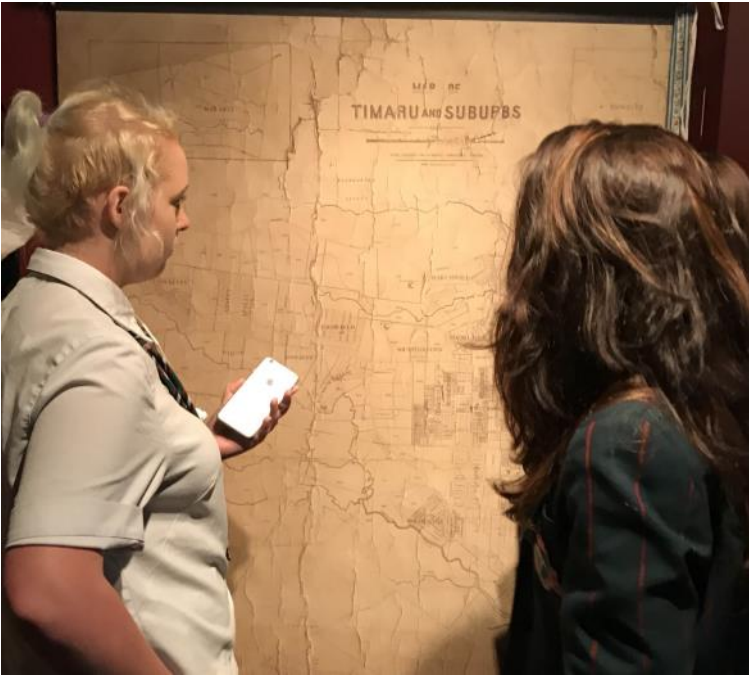
We've continued to run a variety of holiday programmes and special events for local families and children, finding ways to help our younger customers to explore and enjoy nature and history with us. As well as in-house craft and handling sessions, we've led trips to explore local nature and history around Timaru, helping families unlock their own district heritage.

Other programmes aimed at a wider audience have included visiting speakers and a talk by an English geologist about Timaru's John Hardcastle delivered via Skype to our Heritage Theatre. We are looking at ways of increasing events like this to broaden access to heritage. The public Heritage Alive party held in conjunction with St Mary's Church next door in December saw several hundreds of people take part. Keep an eye out for further developments!





## Heritage Education Service news



The Heritage Education Service team have had continued to provide an essential service both in our Museum and around the region, taking programmes in a range of museums and heritage sites. Our programmes are funded by the Ministry of Education. We had a glitch last year when our contract was reduced in funding for the next three years, but this has been made up for 2017 by generous support from Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury, Trust Aoraki, Janie Murray Trusts and RSM Law Trusts.

Our hard-working team receive great responses from students and teachers alike, along with excellent assessments from Ministry evaluators during annual visits. 2017 has seen programmes taken in three other museums and a marae, and at several nature sites as well as here at South Canterbury Museum. Over 3,000 students have taken part so far this year, with Term 3 bookings already in place. We remain grateful for the support we've received for this vital service.





## Animal encounters around the Museum



Nothing beats experiencing the real thing (or a life-like replica). Here we see (going anti-clockwise from the top left): young dinosaur enthusiasts getting up close to a replica velociraptor during last year's **Dinosaur Footprints** exhibition; Curator Chris Rapley closely examining a sheep; Museum Technician Simon Cullimore (who started with us in February this year) endeavouring to secure a weka in the new **Times of Change** exhibition area; and (above) students using our displays and collections for study and learning.

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

[www.facebook.com/SCMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/SCMuseum)



### Contact the Museum

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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 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.

<b>Membership type:</b>	Individual	\$25.00
	Family	\$30.00
	Organisation/Business	\$30.00
	Overseas	\$30.00
	Life	\$300.00

Send your information and cheque for the correct amount to:

**Friends Membership**  
 South Canterbury Museum  
 PO Box 522, Timaru 7940