

3. AKAROA MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

3.1 VISITORS

Visitor numbers

Visitor numbers to mid-year (end of December) were on target and comparable to last year, but the summer months of January and February have shown a slight drop. Visitor total to the end of February 2010 is 11,464 compared to 11,551 for same period last year.

Research enquiries

As usual during the summer, our front of house staff are dealing with a lot of enquiries with the majority being related to family history. For the three months December – February 148 enquiries have been dealt with, 113 of those being family history.

Opening hours

Some hours have been lost recently due to the tsunami alert of 28 February and a power outage on 2 March. In both cases the Museum remained closed until early afternoon.

3.2 EXHIBITIONS

Nga Roimata o Takapuneke

We opened *Nga Roimata o Takapuneke* on Thursday 4 February with a very well-attended event, and a fitting degree of ceremony. Council's support for this exhibition was crucial and appreciated. The Mayor's Office contributed just over \$6,000 toward the costs of the exhibition development and production, while the Community Board granted \$1,000 from its Discretionary Response Fund for an opening reception, organised by the Friends of the Museum.

The Akaroa Civic Trust, Onuku Runanga, and southern regional office of the Historic Places Trust partnered with the Museum to deliver this exhibition, but many others, individuals and institutions, paid and unpaid, contributed to the exhibition in a variety of ways.

Visitors' response to the exhibition has been very positive, with the audio component in particular eliciting quite emotional responses. There is a possibility that the exhibition may get another showing at Our City O-Tautahi in Christchurch, which would mean we get even greater value from it.

Recent Additions to the Collection

From time to time we like to show visitors the variety of objects that have been added to our collection, so we will mount an exhibition of *Recent Acquisitions* in May running through until July.

Quirky Collections III

A third in the series of local collectors and their collections will be developed during the winter.

Heritage Week

We will this year be participating in Heritage Week (22-31 October), showing a selection of maps and charts of the Akaroa Harbour area, fitting well with the theme of Discovery, Settlement and Adventure.

3.3 COLLECTIONS

Accessions

A highlight of the various items received over the last few months has been the donation of a patchwork blanket made from samples of woollen fabrics from the Akaroa Tweed Factory. This will feature in our Recent Acquisitions exhibition later in the year.

Loans

We have recently lent a greenstone pendant in the shape of a fish hook (pounamu hei matau) to the Christchurch Art Gallery. It is displayed in the Mana Whenua room in the new Brought to Light galleries.

Valuations

Work continues on determining valuations for the collection, with the entire firearms collection having recently been assessed by an independent expert.

Establishing a local contemporary art collection

Following the Committee's request at its September meeting to investigate a process for the expansion of the Museum's art collection, further work has been undertaken on the establishment of an acquisitions committee and its terms of reference.

3.4 PROJECTS

Storage Building

Our new building was opened formally by Councillor Claudia Reid on Friday 19 February at an event well attended by the Friends of the Museum, and those associated with the project. We are waiting for the internal environment to settle, while monitoring the air conditioning systems, before moving collections into the building.

Improvements to shop/foyer

New shop shelving was installed before Christmas, with the remaining half of the foyer (reception area) to be tackled when the summer rush has abated.

3.5 OTHER

Shackleton Lecture

Geoff Selley's lecture on Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition on Sunday 7 March was very well attended by almost 150 people. Mr Selley delivered a lecture illustrated with lantern slides first delivered by Leonard Hussey, a member of the expedition, in 1917. The venue for the lecture was The Gaiety, which we had decided to use instead of the Museum, anticipating a high level of interest. This event was organised by the Antarctic Heritage Trust, with assistance from the Akaroa Museum.

Tsunami alert

The tsunami alert in the early morning of Sunday 28 March saw staff heading for the Customs House (close to Daly's Wharf) to shift objects onto benches and tables out of reach of a predicted wave. Civil Defence officials had advised that businesses in the centre of town should close, so the Museum remained shut until 1.30pm, when the risk was considered to be lower. High tide later in the afternoon passed without incident.

3.6 UPCOMING EVENTS

Guided tours of St Peter's Church	-	Sunday 21 and 28 March, 2pm Sunday 4 April, 2 pm
Exhibitions:		
Recent Acquisitions	-	May - July
Quirky collections III	-	August – October
Discovering the Harbour	-	October - December
Heritage Week	-	Friday 22 - Sunday 31 October

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Museum Director's update be received.