

# NOwsletter

Newsletter of the Owaka Museum, managed by The Catlins Historical Society, February 2021

## MUSEUM SUCCESS DESPITE COVID DISRUPTION

The Owaka Museum has seen a strong return of visitor numbers in 2020 after the lengthy closures and disruptions caused by Covid19.

The museum was closed completely or working with restricted numbers (only 10 visitors in the complex at any time) for approximately two and a half months of 2020. And yet, visitor numbers overall are recovering well. In the months from July to December in 2019 we had 1802 visitors into the museum and in 2020 the same period saw 2457 visitors – a 36% increase.

We appreciate the support from many parts of New Zealand. The percentage of people who come into the Information, Library, Museum complex who then go into the museum has risen from 27.3% in 2019 to 33.2% in 2020.

“This newsletter is one of the projects from our last meeting. Many of you will have heard or read of the Society and have wondered what it was doing. This newsletter and those which follow it will keep you informed of our doings, and we hope, encourage more of you to become actively interested in the Society either by becoming members or by giving donations to help with the work the Society is trying to do. By just being in the district you are part of its history and it is our task to gather, preserve and share the knowledge of the past upon which we build the present and the future.”

From ‘Newsletter No 1, November 1970’ -



## ANNE & KEITH BROWN STORAGE BUILDING OPENED

Our three year and \$300,000 project for a state of the art storage facility for the Owaka Museum came to its completion on 24 October last.

The Owaka Museum community were pleased to have Tony Flint (Anne’s brother) and Anne & Keith’s sons Rhys and Shaun help us formally open the building (picture above). Anne was President at the time of the development of our combined complex with the Clutha District Council, and she and Keith were tireless in their support of the museum as it made huge strides towards a modern, professional museum base and organisation.

We received generous funding for this project from NZ Lotteries, Community Trust of Otago, The Trust Charitable Foundation (ex. Pub Charities), Owaka Lions Club, and the Estate of George Berney. The Society appreciates these grants and all the other volunteered hours and the expertise given by community members to help it all come together.

The new Anne & Keith Brown building has top-museum standard shelving, cabinets, drawers and racks all designed to house items that have been, to this point, kept in containers, off-the-premises buildings and generally cramped quarters. Temperature and humidity control to professional museum specifications will keep our collection items much safer.

Our records are already in the process of being brought up to date and new displays will be easier to curate – we’ll know where the items are and be able to access them easily.

Continued from page one:

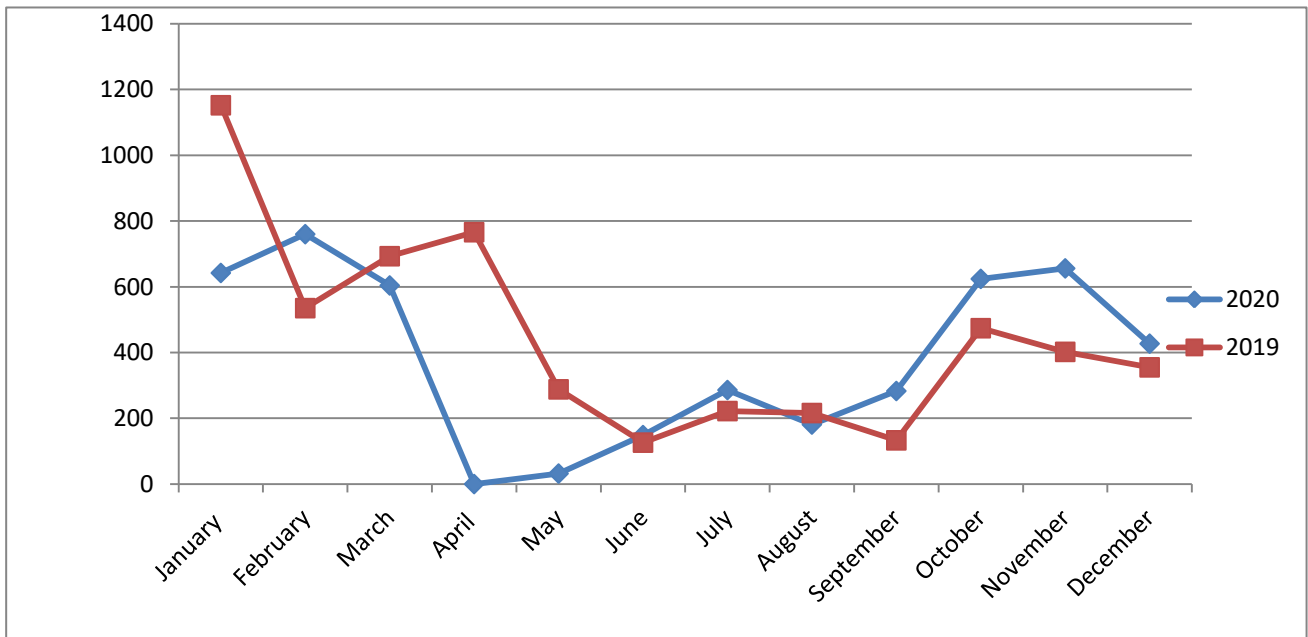
We have a Visitors Book at the museum's exit. One page from the year's end has three entries from people from Dunedin and three from Wellington, and others from Auckland, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Rotorua, Te Puke, Wanaka, Rangiora, Timaru, Oamaru, Takaka, Riverton, Invercargill, Tapanui, Milton and Balclutha. All just on one page!

Comments were all positive, including: "More to see than first appears. Worth a look." "Excellent museum and staff. A joy to visit. Brings back memories." "Amazing. Just amazing, I loved the jail cell, got the laughs."



Could anyone date this article about the early days of the museum?

## Owaka Museum Visitors 2019 and 2020



### The Catlins Historical Society officers 2020-21

<b>President</b>	Bruce Wilson
<b>Vice President</b>	Leadman Ibbotson
<b>Treasurer</b>	Gordon McLay
<b>Secretary</b>	Carolyn & Malcolm Deverson Jane Young (minutes)
<b>Iwi representative:</b>	Maureen Wiley

We also have these sub-committees:

Six Museums, Maintenance, Collections, and Strategic Planning.

Anyone is welcome at the Catlins Historical Society monthly meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month (except December).

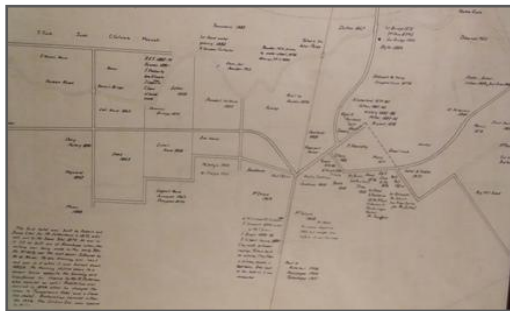
Have you seen this in the museum?  
Yes, it's a floodlight,  
But what's it for?



Answer on page 4.

## Volunteer hours

In a disrupted year, Museum volunteers continued their weekend duties, and also committee work, shop support, ground and garden work outside, cataloguing, cleaning, researching and other stuff. Despite the closures over some 16 weekends as a precaution for the protection of our volunteers, we totalled 876 hours of weekend support for the Society in 2020. There was also 1513 recorded hours of volunteer, unpaid support on all the other tasks from the committee and many others. That's a total of 2389 hours, and at the minimum wage, that's nearly \$50,000 of support by this community for this community. Thanks to everyone.



### To see in the museum . . .

The display of The Catlins area maps continues in the Museum's rotational space while we sort collection items into our new storage spaces and get them recorded onto the on-line system.

Would you like to be a Friend of the Museum?

### Become a member

Individual \$20

Family (at same household) \$30

Please consider giving us your support.

Pay online or send your payment to the museum at 10 Campbell Street, Owaka.

## Notable from the President's Annual Report at our last AGM in October 2020

There was a successful Railway Heritage bus tour (an annual feature) in January 2020 to stations at Caberfeidh, Maclennan, Stuarts and Tahakopa. Thanks to Kelvin Ross, Don Jenks and Glenda Landreth.

We reprinted these books: *The Catlins River Wisp Run* by Isobel Dreaver and *A Corner of the Catlins* by Hilda Stott with generous Stott family support. We also published one new book, *The Catlins Scoria Blocks* by CHS committee member, the late Stephen White.

Amongst many others, the President thanked Bridget Wilson, who is retiring from coding and preparing GST returns for us. We are training a replacement for this position.

Our Manager, Mike McPhee, has had his working hours increased after Covid by an extra hour a day, to 35 hours per week.

We agreed to increase fees by just \$1 at each category, to the following:

Adult	<b>\$7</b>
Senior citizens and post-school students	<b>\$5</b>
Students in a school tour group	<b>\$4</b>
School-age children	<b>Free</b>

31 July 1970

Dear Lloyd, (McLay -ed)

*At the meeting of the above Society last night, I was instructed to write to you thanking you for your offers concerning the old blacksmith's shop on your property.*

*The Society is most grateful for your thoughtfulness in not doing away with what many would regard as just another old building.*

*The Society has resolved to restore the smithy and plans to start work 'after lambing'. The President, Mr Duley, will be contacting you about this work at a later date.*

Thanking you again,

Yours faithfully,

Ernest E. Trask. Acting Secretary

**From the archives:** The blacksmith was a Mr Dan McIntosh. Ed.

Follow 'Owaka Museum and Catlins Information Centre' on

**facebook**

## SNIPPETS

How many Waterfalls are there in The Catlins?  
72 according to Rhys Buckingham, who worked for the Forest Service in the 1970s and 80s, and who visited them and recorded them in a journal.

~ ~ ~

What do you do with a shipping container you don't want?  
We sold ours to the Owaka Pony Club.

~ ~ ~

A plaque is being prepared to acknowledge all the funders of our storage project to be displayed on the inside workroom of the building.

~ ~ ~

232 students from 5 schools visited in the month before our November committee meeting. Thanks to Marian Smith who employs her long-held skills with these groups, and Glenda Landreth too.

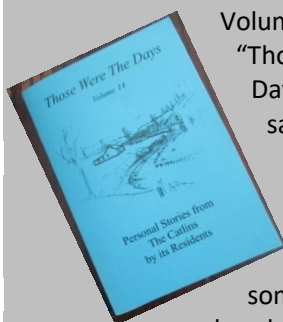
~ ~ ~

The solar panels that were installed as part of the building project are already showing their benefit with reduced power bills for the museum and the Clutha District Council.

~ ~ ~

The very popular Topographical Map near the entrance has been spruced up by Marie Reid and a new push-button control panel installed by Eddie McPhee. Bring the kids and do some Catlins geography at some time. Thanks Marie and Eddie.

~ ~ ~



Volume 14 of "Those Were the Days" went on sale at our October Market Day. We have reprinted some of the early volumes also.

Carolyn ([deversons@actrix.co.nz](mailto:deversons@actrix.co.nz)) is happy to receive further family and personal stories, or referrals and suggestions for likely subjects.

## Manager Mike

Mike McPhee has been the Museum Manager for nearly two years now.

Mike says it has been a bumpy ride but it has all been thoroughly enjoyable. Mike is especially pleased that he has been able to see progress through the various stages of our Storage Building project to its completion. One of his next medium term goals is to manage a display of our currently largely stored Lockerbie archaeological collection.

He still finds time to read, mostly biographies, history, NZ people and places, and to visit daughters in Wellington. Mike is a researcher and published writer of local history.

After a confidential Performance Review, the committee has agreed that Mike's work is of a high standard.



Mike McPhee thanks funders and the community at the opening of the Anne & Keith Brown building with Tony Flint and Iwi Representative, Maureen Wylie

### New in the Gallery from 5 February Paintings by Caley Hall and Maryann Darmody

**Caley** is a listed investment artist working in Invercargill, Queenstown, and the Catlins. Hall specializes in oil painting, and is well known for his Fiordland landscapes and expressionist abstracts. [www.caleyhall.co.nz](http://www.caleyhall.co.nz)

**Maryann** is the art teacher at The Catlins Area School and she has also taught at South Otago High School. Her work is based on the conservation of nature and native species. People in The Catlins and beyond will be interested in what she has to offer.

Thanks to Norman Sinclair, High Country Artist, and Thelma Emslie, Ceramicist/ Artist for their "Two Artists Exhibition" which ran from the end of November to the end of January 2021.

A mini-exhibition has also been in the museum from Marie Reid Beadle, and this closes on 8 February.

The Catlins Historical Society, managing  
the Owaka Museum: Wahi Kahuika, the Meeting Place  
[www.nzmuseums.co.nz/account/3021](http://www.nzmuseums.co.nz/account/3021)  
[www.owakamuseum.org.nz](http://www.owakamuseum.org.nz)

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ph 03 4158 323 email [owakamuseum@outlook.com](mailto:owakamuseum@outlook.com)

The floodlight was used by New Zealand Railways workers when working in tunnels.