



Lyttelton Museum



NEWSLETTER - Autumn 2019

HARBOUR PLACES

THE LITTLE LYTTELTON MUSEUM

As you probably know, we are about to undertake a long-term fund-raising campaign to build a new museum in Lyttelton on London Street. While we fundraise for the large museum, we are very keen to create a mini museum for people to get involved with. We plan to dot the site with outdoor exhibits from our collection; interpretive panels detailing the stories of Lyttelton; hold small exhibitions within the cabin; and create a meeting place for historical walks around Lyttelton.

As part of this project we plan to improve the appearance of the site, as it is currently just a flat section covered in shingle containing our beautiful little cabin. We held a working bee in February and cleaned up all the rubbish and weeds, and another one recently to lay a lawn in front of the cabin where people can meet and have events, or relax on the lawn surrounded by the outdoor exhibits and interpretive panels.

Mitre 10 Ferryhead very generously donated the soil, timber edging, grass seeds and fertiliser, and materials to cordon off the area while the grass grows.

And many thanks to those volunteers who gave up much of their Sunday. Your help is very much appreciated.

We are also going to paint the concrete steps white in preparation for our plan to invite Lyttelton youth to decorate the giant steps to add some colour and vibrancy to the site. Thanks to Geoff Edwards for donating the paint for this project.

We are very excited that the canon will be one of the first objects to reappear. Many thanks to Starks for generously agreeing to transport and install it on site.



The Cabin after our working bee



Working bee volunteers

We also hope to drop in some picnic tables and plantings to add to the appeal of the site and encourage visitors to come down and take a look at what's on display. We hope that the site will become a place to meet and share stories of Lyttelton and Whakaraupō with visitors and locals.

Please keep checking our Face book page and website for updates and upcoming events and volunteering opportunities for this site.

HARBOUR PEOPLE

Volunteers to staff the Little Museum

With this in mind, we are on the look-out for keen volunteers to staff the cabin, to answer queries and talk to visitors about historical Lyttelton and the exciting plans for the Museum. At the moment, Holly, our part-time administrator, is based in the cabin on Thursdays and Fridays but we would like to have the cabin open over the weekend and even during the week if we can round up enough volunteers.

We are asking volunteers to meet and greet anyone who wanders down to the site, to hand out our literature, and generally be a contact for anyone with information or questions about the community's history. If this sounds like something you would be interested in being involved with, please contact Holly at info@lytteltonmuseum.co.nz or pop down to the cabin to see Holly for more information. Even if you can only spare an hour or two here or there we are keen to hear from you.

Holly our Part-time Administrator

Holly Cunningham, our part-time administrator, has been with us since October last year. Holly has a post graduate diploma in Museum studies and has worked as curator of Aigantighe Art Museum and in public programmes at The Air Force Museum of New Zealand. In Lyttelton Holly managed the Tin Palace art gallery and has curated a number of exhibitions throughout the town. With Sarah Amazinna, Holly also started the activation of the Lyttelton Museum site with the miniature art gallery, outdoor displays and hākari (feasts) supported by Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke as part of Ka Awatea last year.

Holly Cunningham



Meet the committee

Liz Grant, PRESIDENT

1. Why did you get involved on the committee?

At the time of the earthquakes, I headed the Writing Team at Te Papa. It was a fascinating place to work but I decided I must return home. My Mum was 97 at that time and, although she was well, I felt that in Wellington I was too far away under the circumstances. Settling back into Lyttelton I wanted to see how I might contribute to the community. I hadn't been involved with Lyttelton Museum before but went to an AGM and asked if I could volunteer in any way. I was co-opted onto the committee, and the rest is history ...

2. What's your background and skills?

I'm a freelance writer, editor and video maker. Most of my work is for the museum and heritage sector.

3. The best exhibition you've ever seen and where.

I visited MONA (the Museum of Old and New Art) in Hobart. Much of it is underground, in great cavernous spaces with the rock exposed. The collection is fantastic. Some of it is pretty confronting; other works are exquisite; and they were all interesting. Collectively it was an amazing experience. No labels on the walls but a gizmo that recognised which work you were looking at and gave you the option of a curatorial statement and/or the irreverent and often very funny commentary from David Walsh, whose museum this is.

4. Your favourite object from the Lyttelton Museum collection and why?

I really like the tortoise. It's quite poignant to see one taxidermied, but there is something wise and contemplative about tortoises that appeals to me.



Liz Grant, PRESIDENT



Lizzie Meek, VICE PRESIDENT



Kerry McCarthy, VICE PRESIDENT

In the next few issues we will be introducing our committee. This issue we interview Liz, Lizzie and Kerry.

Kerry McCarthy, VICE PRESIDENT

1. Why did you get involved on the committee?

Baden got me interested. My partner Roy and I were caretakers at the old museum and we lived on the top floor. Plus, there were so many amazing stories to tell and a fascinating collection. It was hard to resist. After the earthquakes, I was excited by the opportunity of developing a new museum for Lyttelton and keen to be involved.

2. What's your background and skills?

I was a Curator at Canterbury Museum for over 15 years. Specifically, I looked after the historic picture collections – photographs, paintings, architectural plans and movie film but I was involved with a range of projects across the museum, such as setting up the electronic collection management system, developing new collection stores, and numerous exhibitions, large and small. I also have a PhD in Antarctic Studies, with a focus on photography during the early expeditions led by Scott and Shackleton.

These days I work freelance on exhibition and collection projects and also spend quite a lot of my time designing and writing eLearning.

3. The best exhibition you've ever seen and where.

I was recently at MTG in Napier, and was impressed by the way they tell the story of local iwi. Taonga and stories from distant history and recent times are presented side by side, describing a strong and resilient community with proud and enduring traditions. For example, wooden carvings dating back hundreds of years sit alongside WWI era watercolours, and visitors are welcomed to the exhibition by a contemporary waiata performed on a large video screen.

4. Your favourite object from the Lyttelton Museum collection and why?

It would have to be the red stone head from Sumner Road, carved by a prisoner at Lyttelton Gaol, in the 1860s I think. The carver's attempt to create something beautiful in what must have been a harsh environment is poignant. I don't know what instructions he was given, but I wonder whose face he thought of as he carved – his wife? Mother? Sister?

The carving is weather-beaten now and most of the facial features have been worn away by the wind. To my mind this makes it even more interesting, thinking of it sitting beside the road for all those years watching new arrivals to Canterbury making their first journey over the hill from Lyttelton, and seeing the pace of commercial traffic increase as the port and the city took shape.

To view Liz, Lizzie and Kerry's favourite museum objects search our online database:

<https://ehive.com/collections/5362/lyttelton-museum>

Tortoise: 90.1;

Diving Suit: 1122.1;

Stone carving: 2983.1

HARBOUR HERITAGE

Great progress on our digitisation



Amy working

Amy Ryan, our digitisation technician, has been hard at work cataloguing and digitally recording the museum's collection. So far this has involved recording glass slides, sheet film negatives and photographic prints.

So far 5625 objects have been accessioned and housed as part of the project, of these 3030 have been fully catalogued. Approximately 4933 objects have been captured by the micrographics team and of these 3114 digital files have been delivered, named and stored on our hard-drives.

Reeling in the years

Lyttelton resident Hamish Fairbairn got in touch with Lyttelton Museum late last year to propose the idea of an historic film night, in collaboration with Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision. Searching through their archives for film and television featuring Lyttelton, NTS&V collated a fabulous playlist of excerpts covering a wide range of eras, subjects and styles. Hamish was successful in gaining major sponsorship from Lyttelton Port Company, and additional support from Lyttelton Supervalu, as well as Gail Anderson Creative, and Printable Solutions, enabling all proceeds raised (nearly \$7000) to go towards the new Museum.

The first half of the (approximately 70 minutes total) film was silent, and local musician Motte (Anita Clark) was commissioned to create a special soundtrack, which she and her fellow musician Danny Brady performed live at the first screening. Local entertainer Gary McCormick was MC, with film introduction by Sarah Johnston of NTS&V. A very special thank you to the Pitama whanau for permission to show the karakia featuring Rāpaki elder Riki Te Mairaki Pitama.



Membership matters

Renewals

By now you may have already received a reminder by email or mail if you haven't received one please let Holly know.

We've come a long way since we lost our old museum on Norwich Quay! Our collection is catalogued and in safe storage; we've got land in London St, in the heart of Lyttelton; and we have an exciting building design.

This year we'll be working hard on our fundraising campaign to make the new Lyttelton Museum a reality. And while we get on with that, we'll be creating a 'mini museum' on the site and hope that you'll enjoy our events and exhibitions during the year.

Memberships run from 1 April until 31 March the following year. Thank you for your continuing support – it's really important. We also welcome new members who would like to join us on this great journey.

Liz Grant - President

The fees this year are: Individual membership \$30, Senior (65 years +) and Unwaged membership \$20, or Family membership \$40. The completion of the renewal form and payment can now be made directly from our website.

AGM

Pop into your diary Sunday 21st July 2–4pm.
Lyttelton Fire Station.

The film screenings ran for two nights at the LAF theatre, with great support from Darryl Cribb in running the event. Although the Christchurch tragedy necessitated the re-scheduling of one of the shows, both nights were sold out, and it was fantastic to hear the audience laugh, sigh, and generally exclaim in recognition of the many Lyttelton personalities and places of days gone by.



Reeling in the years team



Reeling in the years crowd



**Lyttelton
Museum**

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