

Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangī August 2022 Newsletter

Dear Member,

We hope you all keeping safe and well.

We begin this month's newsletter with some sad news. Long serving member of the branch Brian Molloy passed away two weeks ago. Below is a short comment by Alec Ford regarding Brian that he shared with the council...

'You may know Brian for his relationship with the branch on the Riccarton Bush Trust and conservation contributions, but he had more than that in his life. He was All Black Halfback in 1957'.

It has been suggested that the award the branch provides the Canterbury/Westland Schools Science Fair be named the Brian Molloy award. The Council will consider this at its August meeting.

Many thanks to those who have already paid your subscription for this year. As we continue rebuilding the branch, your support is much appreciated.

The action group tasked with updating our webpage is beginning to look at what can be done. If you have suggestions for what you like to see, or a website format you think we should consider adopting, please let us know.

The first two talks in our Science & Society have been broadcast on Plains FM and are now available as podcasts that you can listen to at any time from here...

<https://plainsfm.org.nz/Prog/ScienceAndSociety2022>

Field trips

We hope to provide details of more Christchurch field trips planned for later this year in the next newsletter.

Science & Society talk series 2022

We began our talk series last month. Grant and Rob have put together an exciting series of speakers for Christchurch.

We continue with our Science and Society talks on Monday evenings at Tūranga Central Library beginning at 6.30 pm. For those who can't come to Tūranga Central Library, the talks will be on Zoom and will be recorded by Plains FM for later broadcast on their station, but we really would like to see you in person so we can engage with you to find out what you would like to see and hear about.

The next talk is on Monday 22 August...

Sport Science - A presentation of two halves:

1. Heart stopping action!
2. Against the run of play?

Dr Peter Olsen, Ara Institute of Canterbury

Peter will discuss research undertaken on cardiovascular events during the men's Rugby World Cups (RWC) in 1999-2011 to uncover if there was literally heart stopping action. In the second half of the presentation, there will be a discussion of research undertaken in women's rugby, an area where there has been limited research.

To join by Zoom, click on the link below

<https://canterbury.zoom.us/j/99352534712?pwd=RmcxcFpPS2Y3UGhBV1FQbTIEUUIUDUT09>

Meeting ID: 993 5253 4712

Passcode: 555

Other planned talks are...

26 September - Fear to fascination: international spider adventures

Dr Fiona Cross, University of Canterbury

Fiona used to treat spiders with fear and loathing, but once I took the time to learn more about them it opened up a world full of discovery and adventure. In particular, I work with jumping spiders (family Salticidae), which have unique, complex eyes and a capacity for spatial vision exceeding that for any other animals of similar size. Despite having brains that would comfortably fit on pinheads, some salticid species have been observed to make use of selective attention, working memory and problem solving in their everyday lives, these being cognitive topics traditionally ascribed to animals with much bigger brains. Studying these spiders help us gain important insights into animal cognition by challenging long-held biases of what an animal with a tiny brain is capable of doing.

31 October – Verginia and Nga Roimata

Assoc. Prof. Alison Griffiths, University of Canterbury

Alison will talk about the Roman legend of Verginia in parallel with the (oral) historical account of Nga Roimata, the daughter of the Ngai Tahu chief Tamaiharanui, and she will show how the Māori concepts of mana, utu, and mana whenua help identify and differentiate the complex underlying issues around moral actions, social status, and political power in the Roman story of Verginia.

28 November - World War I and the ancient world

Dr Gary Morrison, Head of Classics, University of Canterbury

Gary will present a lecture on his WWI project, where he will introduce how New Zealanders reflections on and ultimately memory of WWI (and in particular Gallipoli) is influenced by the ancient world. Heroic imagery from antiquity helps frame the narrative of WWI. He will show that the allusions to antiquity are present in the personal diaries of combatants and the newspaper articles at home.

Other news

Timaru will have some speakers later in the year with Lisa Heinz, manager of Waitaki Whitestone Geopark, in September. There will be a speaker from University of Otago Marine Studies in late October/early November to coincide with the Giant Squid exhibition from Te Papa that will be held at the South Canterbury Museum during this time. Cor Vink from Lincoln University and the South Canterbury Museum will be holding a night at the wetlands in November, where the public will look for spiders. Also in November, the branch is co-hosting a speaker in Timaru with the Neurological Foundation in New Zealand.

Geoscience NZ President's Lecture

Date: Wednesday 17 August

Time: 5:30 pm

Location: ER140 (Ernest Rutherford Building, UC Ilam Campus)

Tiny but Mighty – the role of pollen and palynology in the Geosciences

Kat Holt (GSNZ President, Massey University)

For the majority of people, experiences with pollen are localised to a particular time of the year, and for those who suffer from hay fever, this is seldom a pleasant time!

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In the scientific world, pollen, spores and their study, palynology, might typically be regarded as belonging in the realm of the biologist. Yet, palynology provides an extremely valuable tool in many areas of the geosciences, including but not limited to biostratigraphy, petroleum exploration, and climate and environmental reconstructions.

The goal of this Presidential Lecture is to demonstrate the versatility and value of palynology in the geosciences, particularly here in Aotearoa NZ. I will draw on examples from my own research, as well as that of other NZ palynologists to illustrate the key contributions palynology has made to our understanding of environmental change in Aotearoa-NZ, as well as exploring some exciting new avenues in pollen-based research.

You can keep updated by our Facebook page Canterbury RSNZ Branch or twitter @CanterburyRSNZ.

If have any suggestions for speakers, field trips ideas etc please contact us and I am always willing to discuss anything regarding the Branch with you.

Keep safe and well over the coming weeks.

Regards
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...and finally, an announcement from our friends at MathsJam...

Oceania MathsJam Gathering

October 7th - 9th, 2022 | Spencer Park, Christchurch, NZ

Places are limited to 50 attendees, register now for the 2022 Oceania MathsJam Gathering to secure your place! If you have any questions email us at nzgathering@mathsjam.

[Register Now](#)

Oceania MathsJam Gathering (OMG for short) is an annual weekend get-together for like-minded maths enthusiasts to discuss interests, share maths puzzles, games, insights, ideas, network and generally have fun in a relaxed atmosphere. We welcome all abilities and backgrounds, regular [MathsJam](#) attendees, teachers, recreational puzzlers, and professionals. In short, anyone who enjoys maths! It's also a good [professional development opportunity](#) for teachers.

At the gathering, attendees are invited to give an informal 5 minute talk about an area of interest. These are given in scheduled blocks over the weekend, interspersed with activities, and opportunities to share (maths, crafts, hobbies, games, curios areas of interest) in a more social setting. The gathering also features a keynote talk. Check out the [programme](#) for this year's, or see our [archives](#) from previous years to get an idea of what we get up to.

More details on their website here: <https://mathsjam.nz/welcome>

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