

MEDIA RELEASE

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**Archaeology week celebrated by West Coast Museum and Education Centre.**

The first week in April marks the inaugural National Archaeology week and across the country various organisations have been encouraged by the New Zealand Archaeological Association to design and host events between April 1-7 with the aim to increase public awareness and highlight the importance of protecting New Zealand's archaeological heritage.

On the West Coast, Shantytown Heritage Park in conjunction with the Shantytown based Marsden Valley Education Centre are doing their part by introducing a LEOTC (*learning experiences outside the classroom*) programme themed around Chinese Archaeology and the Shantytown Museum will unveil a new Archaeological themed exhibition.

The Museum and Education centre staff at the Heritage Park have been excited with their involvement in the launch of the National Archaeology Week. This has included researching the extensive Museum collection to find items that can be used for display purposes during the week or for use by the Education Centre for school visits.

A new concept has been to create a display called Drawers of Discovery using a repurposed sideboard that will be located in the exhibition room. For archaeology week this will be filled with a variety of items from the Shantytown Collection that have been found through digs over the last 100 years. Visitors and students will be able to view items and discover their provenance. After Archaeology week, the drawers will be repurposed once again with curiosities from the Museum which are not often on view to the visitor generating a moment of anticipation as each drawer is opened to discover the strange and wonderful.

The Education centre have used this opportunity to introduce an exciting new programme to their portfolio allowing teachers to take a different approach to delivering their history studies. The Chinese Archaeology programme is a full day of hands on activities including a 'dig' down in Shantytown's Chinatown with a class from Hokitika's St Marys School being the first to have the opportunity uncover the treasures from the past on Monday April, 03. The Shantytown Educators have carefully designed the programme to be easily adapted to the level of the students be it juniors, seniors or secondary groups and although this new programme will be launched to coincide with Archaeology week, the Education Centre are offering to deliver this programme any time throughout the school year.

The Museum and Education staff are pleased to use Archaeology week as one of research, exhibition, interpretation and one where a new display is introduced to the wide offering already on view at the Heritage Park.



Photo: Educator Lisa Flood from the Shantytown based Marsden Valley Education Centre hammers home on the Chinatown excavation site.

ENDS

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