

150th Anniversary factsheet

January 2009



E whakanui ake ana Ngā Kete Wānanga-o-Ōtautahi
library150.com Ph (03) 941 7923

Key dates:

- 4 August 1859 – Mechanics Institute opened Christchurch's first public library
- 1948 – Christchurch City Council took control of the library
- 1982 – Central Library building opened

Names:

- Christchurch Mechanics Institute (1859 – 1868)
- Christchurch Literary Institute (1868 – 1876)
- Canterbury Public Library (1876 – 2000)
- Christchurch City Libraries (2000 – present day)

Current Libraries and Information Manager: Carolyn Robertson

Firsts and innovations:

- First automated circulation system in New Zealand libraries (1958)
- First public library with a computerised lending system in New Zealand (1975)
- First public library in New Zealand to give internet access to its catalogue (1995)
- First public library in New Zealand with pages on the World Wide Web (1995)
- First public library to establish a "Books for Babies" programme (1990)
- Use of radio shows for storytelling and book reviews - (City Librarian, Ernest J. Bell championed and presented radio shows on 3YA in the late 1920s)
- Original paintings collection made available for loan (1955)
- First NZ public library to work with a sports team to promote reading – Reading Crusade with Canterbury Crusaders (2003)
- First in New Zealand to employ a qualified female librarian, Miss V.K. Bull (1920)

Digital library:

Christchurch City Libraries is a New Zealand leader in public library online services and content

- Library website - christchurchcitylibraries.com - contains 15,000+ original pages and gets more than 9 million page views in a year (not including the library catalogue, CINCH or localeye)
- Library users have access to millions of librarian selected web pages via the libraries' Internet Gateway and premium sites



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Library statistics:

- No. of libraries: 20 (including mobile library)
- No. of staff: 400
- No. of customers: 251,895 (72.29% of Christchurch population, June 2008)
- % increase in borrowing over last 10 years: 21.96%
- No. of library cafes: 3 (Parklands, South and Upper Riccarton)
- Total size of collection: 1,100,767 items (June 2008)
- No. of books: 816,566 (June 2008)
- No. of CDs: 54,926 (June 2008)
- No. of DVDs: 19,914 (June 2008)
- Events delivered per year: 2,500 (June 2007)
- No. of foreign language collections: 13
- No. of Books for Babies packages given per year (average): 5000
- No. of Babytimes sessions per week: 13
- No. of Storytimes sessions per week: 16
- No. of computer terminals available for customers: 229 (June 2007)

Library disasters:

- 4 May 1942 - Fire in the Reading room
- 5 April 1957 - A fire in the library is prevented from causing serious damage by speedy evacuation of customers and quick action in extinguishing the flames
- 8 December 1984 - Hornby Library severely damaged by fire in when a lit newspaper was pushed through the book return slot on the evening of 8 December
- 20 April 1997 - Shirley Library and Service Centre are severely damaged by fire caused by an electrical fault
- 10 June 1998 - Faulty sprinkler sets off a flood in the Aotearoa New Zealand Centre's microfilm and microfiche centre in the Central Library
- October 2004 to December 2006 - A ring of book thieves is caught and its participants sentenced under police Operation Pukapuka
- 3 September 2005 - South Library is targeted by a ram-raid theft resulting in thousands of dollars worth of damage to the library