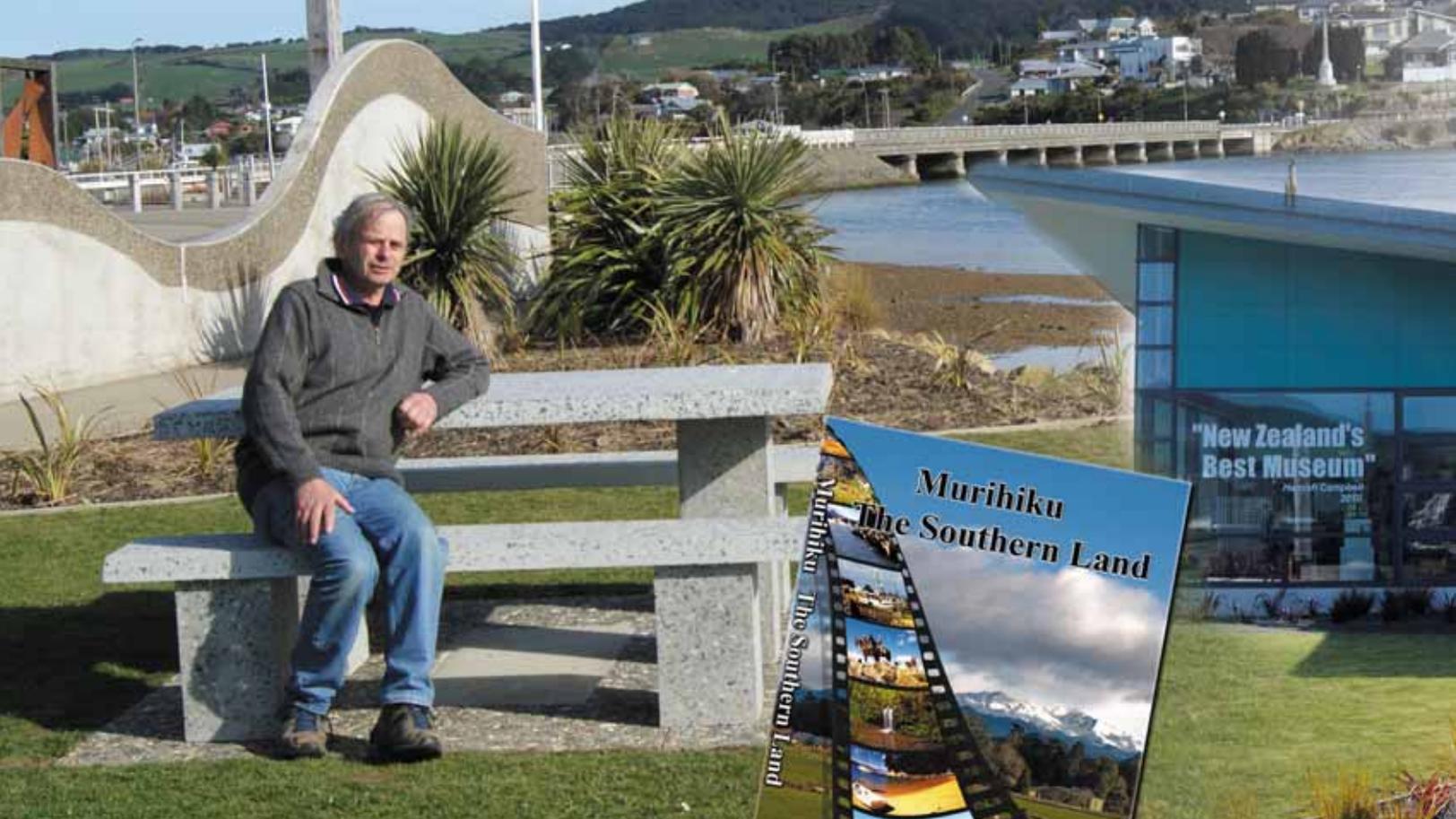


Southland District Council Newsletter  
*the* **FIRST EDITION**  
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*Pictured here is the serene haven of Lonnikers Bay on Stewart Island.*

The third largest island in New Zealand, Stewart Island is 75km long and up to 45km wide.

Glowing skies is the translation of the island's most commonly used Māori name Rakiura.



## Our Southlanders... DAVE ASHER

*Looking at the world through the lens of a video camera is second nature for Riverton film-maker Dave Asher and there's nowhere in the world he loves capturing more than his beloved Southland.*

Growing up in Pukerau, Dave's intrigue with filming began at a very early age. "It's always been part of my life. My father had a movie camera when we were younger which gave me an interest in film and my brother an interest in photography."

To earn a living, Dave managed an engineering business based in Riverton. However, filming was always at the forefront of his mind and ten years ago he made the decision to start making films full-time.

Together with business partner Dave McCarlie from Te Anau, they formed the company South Coast Productions. The pair's first venture was the film "The Venison Hunters". Dave recalled taking the DVD on a road-show around the South Island and receiving an overwhelming response for it.



*Dave filming "Arawata Bill" with Mike Bennett.*

"In Christchurch, there was over 240 people packed into a room to see our film and there was double the amount queuing outside to get in. It was incredible," he said.

Dave's digital editing suite is based in his home in Riverton, which he shares with his wife Dawn. The technology for filming has changed immensely over the years and has been embraced by South Coast Productions, even with the hefty price tag attached.

Although Dave has no regrets of following his dream to make films for a living, he is the first to admit that it is a labour of love and requires perseverance, as well as strong will.

"It's not an easy thing to do. One production funds the next and it's always a challenge to sell DVDs to make some money back," he said.

There is no shortage of material for Dave to conjure up ideas for new film projects. He is influenced by a variety of sources such as the people he meets, stories he has been told and the magnificent landscape that surrounds him in Southland.

One of South Coast Productions most notable films is "Murihiku: The Southern Land," a film showcasing the captivating scenery of Southland. The film features a stunning array of aerial footage, from the grandeur of Fiordland to the tranquillity of Stewart Island.

"This film is a great way of showing somebody overseas just what Southland is like," Dave said. "As well as scenery, it shows the people that make up the communities of our province."

One of his latest projects is a film under the working title of



the township is the open water. "The sea is never still. Our whole history revolves around the sea - sealing, whaling, crayfishing - Riverton wouldn't exist without it," he said.

Dave's desire to preserve the community's heritage led him to joining the Wallace Early Settlers Association in Riverton. "I've been involved with the group, along with some very dedicated volunteers, for a very long time."

Te Hiko Museum in Riverton is a project that Dave is extremely proud of and he believes it is a testament to the dedication of the people in the Riverton community who worked endlessly to make it what it is today.

The museum contains historical displays, information and memorabilia that dates back hundreds of years and provides tourists to the region with an in-depth knowledge of Southland's past. Visitors to the museum watch a film at the start of their journey through the ages, courtesy of South Coast Productions.

"Te Hiko is an on-going project and there are lots of plans for its future," Dave said. "We hope that new people from Riverton will continue its work as time goes by."

A firm believer of serving his community, Dave was a member of the Riverton Community Board for four consecutive terms.

*"The best thing about the community board is helping out fellow citizens when they have a problem and being able to achieve something."*

"Kiwi Company". A soldier from Riversdale approached South Coast Productions about documenting his time in Afghanistan. Dave supplied him with a camera to take the footage and the film will be put together on his return.

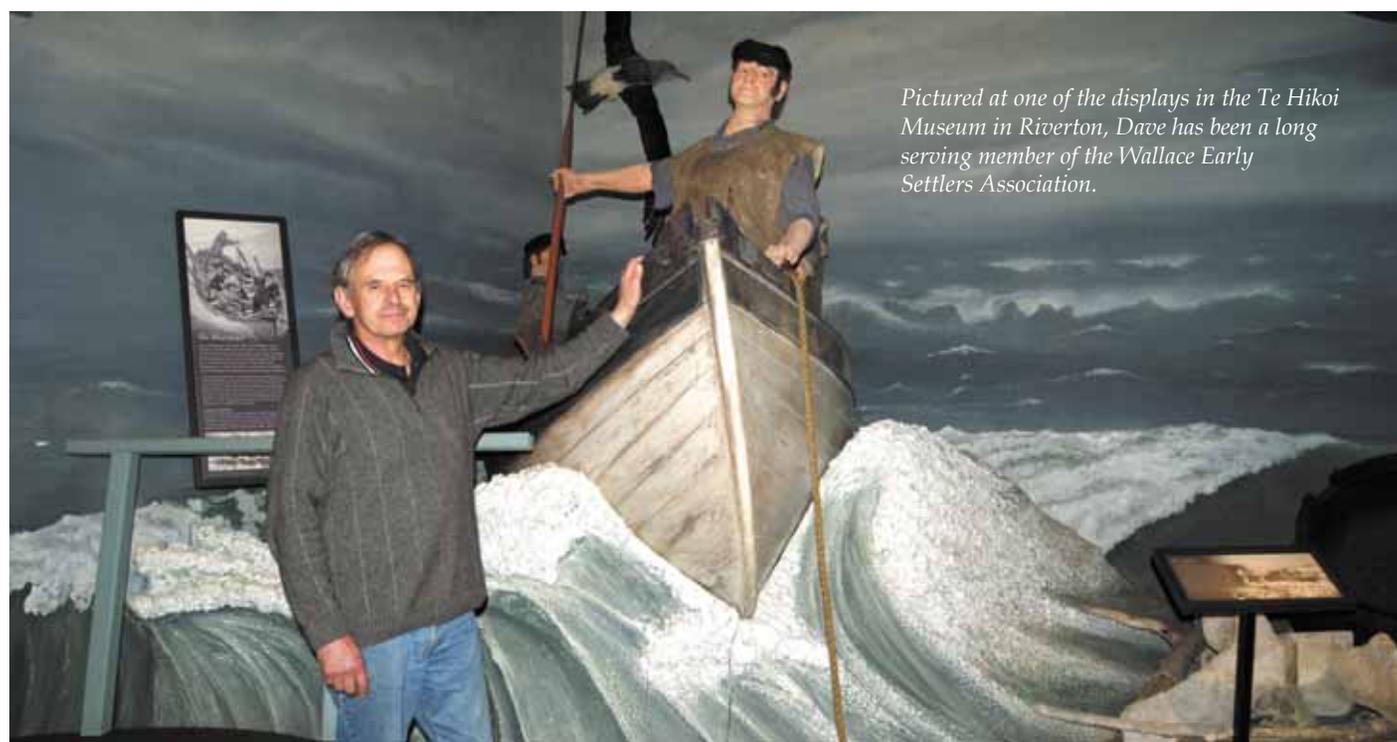
"The thing that captures people most is other people and their stories," Dave said. "This film on Afghanistan will give an insight on what it's really like over there for soldiers."

Riverton has been Dave's home for the last 30 years and one of his favourite aspects of

"Since you're on the ground and live in the same community, you make it your business to sort things out for others." he said

With a never-ending list of projects in the pipeline, Dave continues to enjoy living his dream of producing films and sharing stories with the world.

When asked what he would advise young film makers starting off in the industry, Dave replied: "You've got to be determined to succeed - you've got to give it your all."



*Pictured at one of the displays in the Te Hiko Museum in Riverton, Dave has been a long serving member of the Wallace Early Settlers Association.*