

Over 160 years ago, Timaru's first ship of immigrants from the UK arrived. Ever wondered what they experienced and what they found when they got here?

England was a wealthy country, but wealth was unevenly distributed. Bread, potatoes and dried peas were the diet of the working class person and a loaf of bread cost half a worker's wage. So in the hope of a better life, they risked it all to sail across the world to the new colony. This was 18 years after signing of The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

**50%** Of the fare was subsidised to help the passage of a working class. Officials warned that the greater the assistance, the lower the class of applicant, but in the end the government in London offered half the cost of passage with bills from those already in the colony also gifted toward costs.

**1858** 12th October, The Strathallan left with mostly English passengers, some were from Scotland, Ireland and one family was from Germany.

**110** In total 250 total passengers left on the Strathallan with about 20 crew. 110 of these were destined for Timaru including 30 children under 10 years old.

**2** Children were born. Five children and two adults died. As a sign of the hardships of the times the Strathallan was considered fairly fortunate compared to some other immigration ships that suffered terribly from disease and illness.

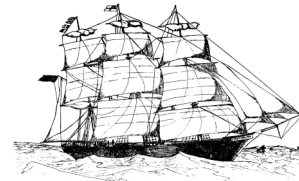
**6x2ft** Cubicles were for single passengers and married couples had 6x3.5 feet. The space was not just for sleeping but for storing possessions which were not in the hold.

**12-13** Were the ages of the children accommodated as single men or women. Singles were segregated from married couples and single women were supervised, and not allowed contact with males. Families were housed together.

**1** Broken top-sail during a severe storm after passing by South Africa. "The water every now and then dashed down the hatchways and the deck leaked in every direction, so there was not a dry place to be found - even the beds were soaked". With few lifeboats, passengers feared for their lives.

**4** Crew members (aside from the Captain) were fit for duty after Christmas celebrations got somewhat out of hand.

## THE FIRST IMMIGRANT SHIP TO SAIL DIRECT FROM ENGLAND TO TIMARU



**110 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN**  
DEPARTED OCT 12 1858 - ARRIVED JAN 14 1859

**1859** 13th January, New Zealand was finally sighted after passengers had spent days looking. The Strathallan anchored offshore at Timaru by 1pm on the 14th.

**90** Days at sea. The voyagers had left their homes and followed advertisements to this "thriving" town. Some were "bitterly disappointed" with what they found - a barren, treeless coastal Timaru.

**3** Men (Captain Cain, Mr Woolcombe and Samuel Williams.) rowed to meet the Strathallan. Woolcombe wore "a blue serge jumper, moleskin trousers tied at the knee and turned up at the bottom and heavy boots, yellow to the top with clay. I thought if this is the Resident Magistrate we have come to a queer place". Sam was described as "old" despite being only 40.

**4-5** Houses in sight included William's cottage which was having a lean-to added to serve as Timaru's first licenced pub. With no permanent housing ready, most voyagers slept in Rhodes woolshed.

**1/4** Of the size of London, was the expectation for one lady. She had been told the district was one of the most thriving in New Zealand. Imagine her surprise when she arrived. At the time Canterbury was populated by several hundred Māori and a just a small number of early European settlers and overstayers from the whaling days.

**40-60** Houses had sprung up in Timaru by Jan 1860 (one year after arrival). The population was 200.

**1861** There was 1 clergyman, 1 tinsmith, 1 milliner and 1 cordwainer in Timaru. There were also 187 labourers, 151 servants, 99 shepherds, 59 bushmen, 47 bullock drivers, 25 gentlemen, 19 publicans, 5 blacksmiths, 5 bricklayers, 5 medical practitioners, and a few bakers, gardeners, carters, drapers, police, saddlers and stonemasons.

## WuHOO Challenge

Colour in the sheet of the Strathallan, can you find the flying fish, shark, whale and broken sail? What do you think the journey must have been like? What do you think the local Māori might have thought about the new arrivals?

**LOOK DOWN... HOW MANY STRATHALLAN SHIP MANHOLES CAN YOU FIND IN THE CBD OF TIMARU?**

**HAVE A PICNIC BY THE PLAQUE ON SOUTH STREET ON THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING WHERE THEY CAME ASHORE**

Do the brass rubbing hunt at Caroline Bay and find the Strathallan Rubbing on the Terrace at the Bay Hill

## Strathallan Celebrations

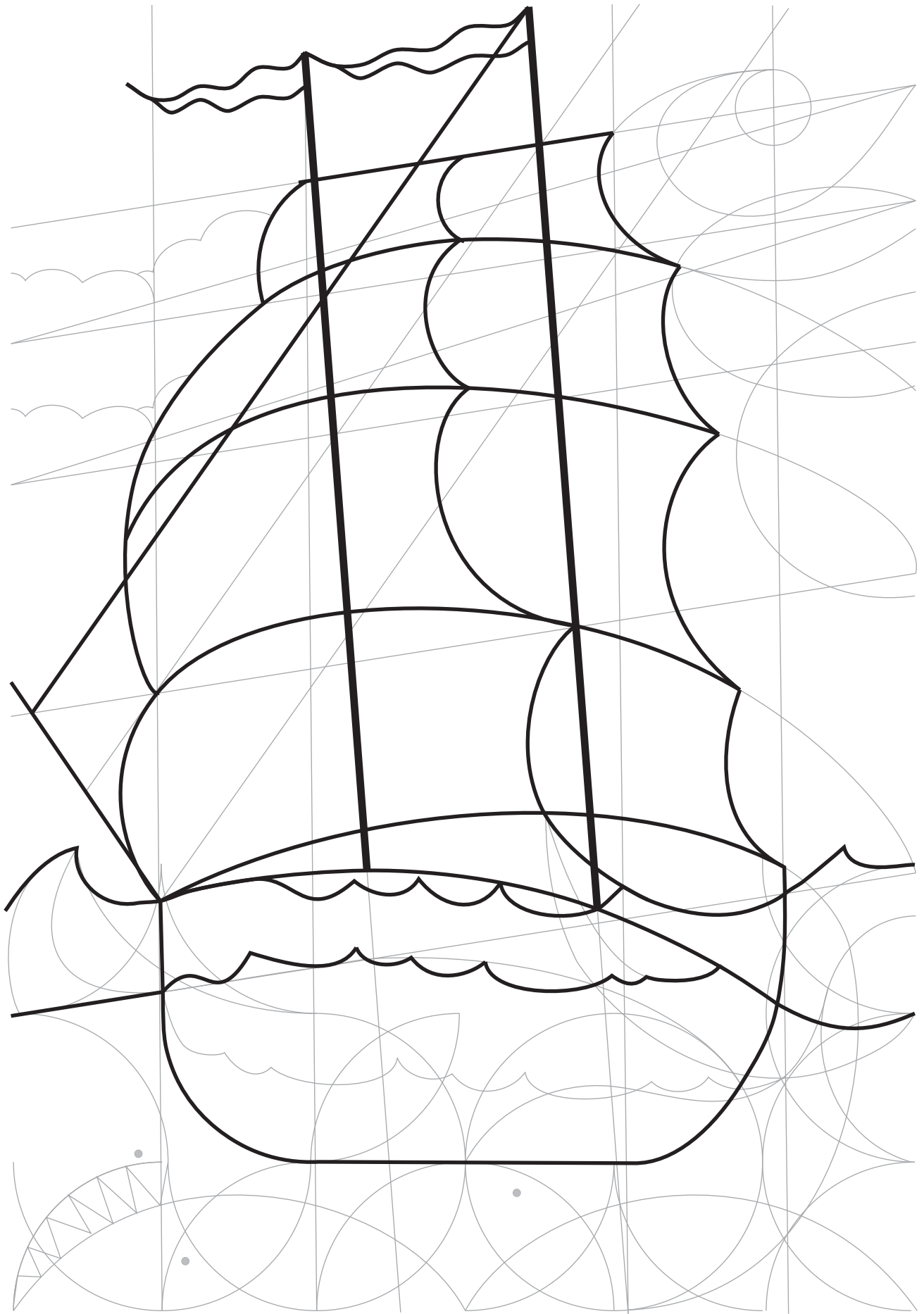


Perhaps the first gathering one year after the Strathallan arrived (Jan 14 1859). Photo from The South Canterbury Museum. Ref 1665

For many years Timaru celebrated the anniversary of the Strathallan's arrival with a picnic at Otupua Lagoon. Cricket, quoits,

watching horse racing and athletics, and chasing a pig with a greased tail, were favourite activities on the day.

## LEARN MORE AT The South Canterbury Museum



*The Strathallan*

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**Colourful Facts**

You are welcome to print and share to celebrate Timaru. But artwork is not to be used for financial gain. Artwork By Roselyn Fauth © WuHooTimaru 2019

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