



# The Restoration of the Townsend Telescope



K.R. Pollard<sup>1,2</sup>, G. Kershaw<sup>1,2</sup>, S. Mullen<sup>1,2</sup> and D. Kershaw<sup>2</sup>  
 (1) Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand  
 (2) Townsend Telescope committee, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

The Arts Centre  
 of CHRISTCHURCH

## Our aim:

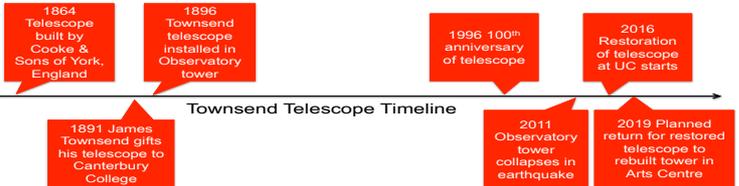
to restore the historic Townsend Telescope so that the people of Christchurch can enjoy stargazing from this heritage central city site once again.

## History and heritage

The Townsend Observatory is located in the Arts Centre of Christchurch, in what used to be Canterbury College (now University of Canterbury).

The Townsend telescope itself is a historic 6-inch Cooke refractor built in 1864 for early Christchurch colonist, Mr James Townsend, and gifted by him to Christchurch College in 1891. At the same time, the Canterbury Astronomical Society handed over its funds to the College to help erect an observatory. The College used this, and money it had set aside for a medical school, to build a biological laboratory with an attached observatory tower, which was completed in 1896. The Biology Building and Observatory Tower was the last major design by architect Benjamin Mountfort.

Mr Walter Kitson was appointed custodian of the telescope and regular public open nights commenced, and continued until 2010, with the telescope being operated by students of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury.



## Rebuild and restore

The Observatory Tower was badly damaged in the 4 September 2010 earthquake and collapsed in the 22 February 2011 earthquake. The telescope was badly damaged by the collapse, but, amazingly, the optics were found entirely intact.

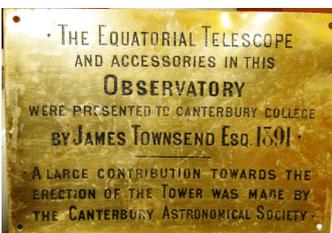
The Department of Physics and Astronomy plans to restore the Townsend Telescope so that it can be returned to a replica Observatory Tower in its central city home, enabling the people of Christchurch, and visitors, to enjoy views of the night sky through this beautiful and historic telescope once again.



**matariki at the arts centre**  
 tātai arorangi (Māori astronomy), reawakening the memories of Pauline Harris (Victoria University)  
 8-7pm, July 2: Rutherford's den lecture theatre, the arts centre  
 lecture followed by a viewing of the Matariki constellation at the Townsend Observatory, South Quad

entry by icthe, \$6 (preferred)  
 for more information contact:  
 www.rebuild.org.nz or phone 363 2886

the arts centre  
 creativity works



For more information, see the UC and Arts Centre webpages and Facebook pages:  
[www.phys.canterbury.ac.nz/Townsend/townsend.shtml](http://www.phys.canterbury.ac.nz/Townsend/townsend.shtml)  
[www.facebook.com/TownsendTelescopeRebuildFund](https://www.facebook.com/TownsendTelescopeRebuildFund)  
<http://www.artscentre.org.nz>