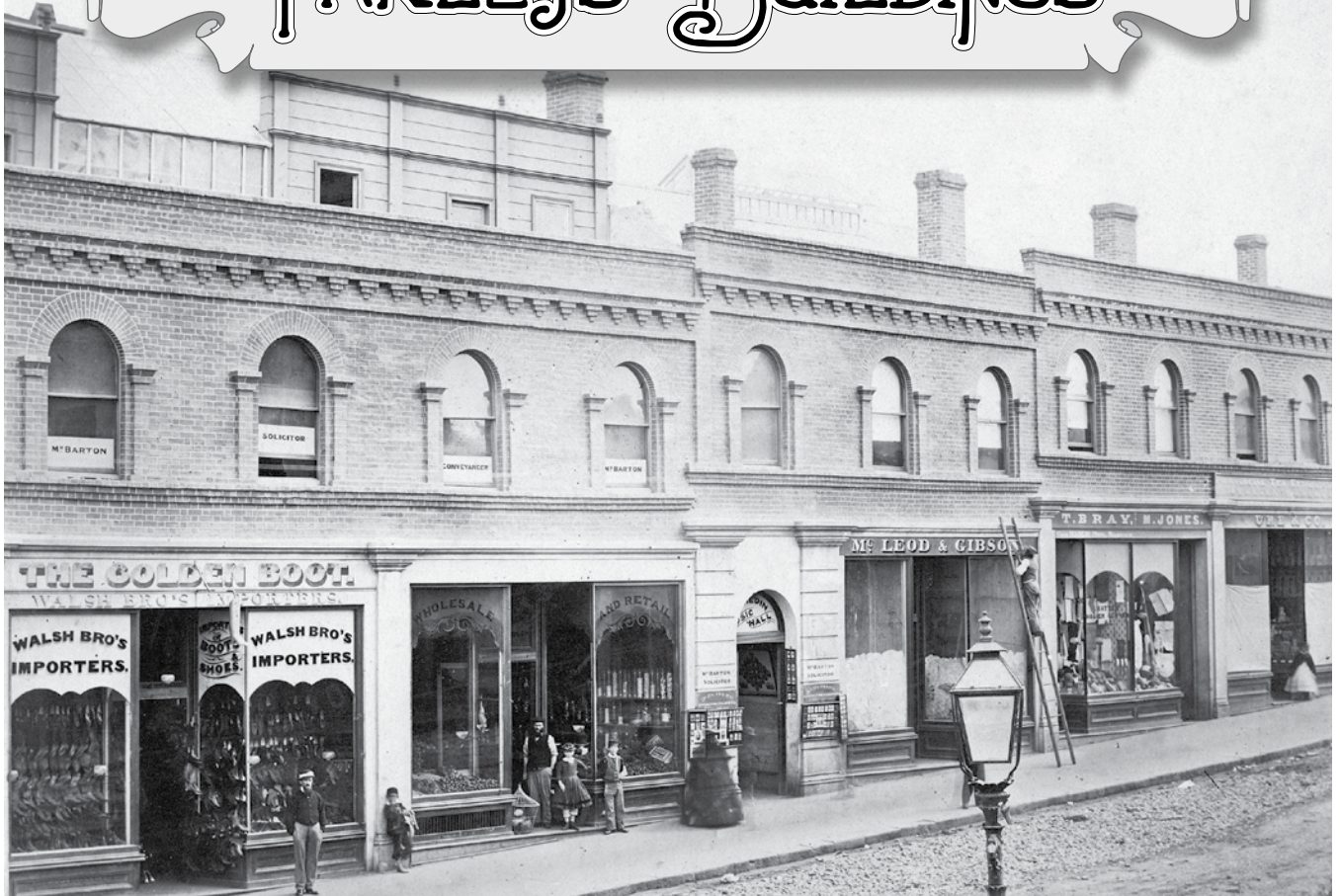




Flying Rocks, Drunken Politicians and the Brethren

FARLEY'S BUILDINGS



Drunken politicians, fatalities due to a flying rock, and a bushranger on the loose are just a few of the episodes in the colourful story of Farley's Buildings. The redoubtable Henry Farley erected the buildings in Princes Street, Dunedin, soon after the cutting-through of Bell Hill in July 1863. The two-storeyed row occupied about a third of a block on the western side of the street, starting at the Dowling Street corner.

The first tenants of a shop on that corner were Walsh Bros, whose footwear store, the Golden Boot, featured a knee-length boot of the appropriate colour hanging above the doorway. There were four other shops on street level, including T Bray and M Jones' hat and hosiery establishment, and Ure & Co's grocery.

Upstairs were the 'consulting chambers' of Dr Alex Hunter, the rooms of Mr Barton, solicitor, the office of the Otago Benevolent Association (at which, every Thursday at 4 pm, applicants for assistance would queue) and the Caledonian Portrait Rooms 'Under the patronage of The Caledonian Society of Otago. Portraits taken daily in every style and in all weathers. Children taken at any hour of the day.' In 1864 the Dunedin Savings Bank was established in the buildings. The thick walls of its vaults survive. In the same year Farley transferred some of his own business operations from his Commercial Sale Rooms building near the Stafford Street corner to the shop space originally leased to Bray and Jones. There he installed sale rooms and acted as a land agent and auctioneer. His living quarters were also in Farley's Buildings.

Farley's Buildings between Dowling Street and Moray Place, photographed by Daniel Mundy shortly after construction in 1863. Otago Settlers Museum collection

But the most important part of the buildings was the Dunedin Music Hall, which occupied the rear portion of the northern half of the buildings. It was, in fact, seldom required for musical entertainments and the name was soon changed to 'Farley's Hall.' It was used occasionally for such events as flower shows and art exhibitions, but much more often as a venue for meetings. The Otago Provincial Council did not yet have its own chambers, and its usual meeting place at the time, St George's Hall in Stuart Street, was not altogether adequate. Farley's Hall seemed to be more suitable, and on 11 October 1864 it became the Provincial Chambers.

It was soon discovered that it too had its disadvantages. On 12 May 1865 Councillor Adam, in a state of agitation, interrupted proceedings to announce he had just seen the Provincial Engineer, who thought the building exceedingly dangerous. There was a crack in the hillside at the back of the building and he could not say that the building was safe. Councillor W H Reynolds said tons of material had fallen even while the Council had been sitting, and 'if a large portion of the bank gave way nothing could save anyone in the building.' Councillor Bell agreed: 'If the bank behind the hall slipped, the whole building must go into the street and most probably everybody in it would be killed.' The Council adjourned at 4.30, but returned at 7.00 after an assurance from the City Engineer, John Millar, that there was no danger.

An aspect of the Farley's Hall chambers that appealed to some councillors but appalled many members of the public was the well-stocked members' bar. 'A Listener,' writing to the *Otago Daily Times* after sitting in the gallery during an unruly debate, suggested 'that no wine or intoxicating drink should be allowed in the refreshment room. It must be plain to every one that when members have been four, and sometimes six, times in the refreshment room during one sitting they cannot be in a proper state of mind for passing important measures.' Also critical was the *ODT* itself which sarcastically editorialised, 'The caterers for public amusement have no chance of competing with the low comedy of the corps dramatique of the Provincial Council Hall. They could not obtain men who riot in a reality more strange and curious than anything a playwright could devise.'

The strangest and most curious of the members at this time was the eccentric demagogue J G S Grant, who had been elected to the Council in a by-election in October 1865. The previous year, he had led an angry mob of unemployed in a protest march from the Octagon, bursting into the old chambers while a session was in progress and having to be ejected by the serjeant-at-arms. Although briefly regarded as a hero by the disadvantaged, he was despised by the other councillors. His bitterest enemy, W H Reynolds, claimed that Grant's election had cost Otago two members of the House of Representatives. MHRs who, while the Representation Act was under discussion, had proposed two additional members for Dunedin, withdrew their support on learning of Grant's election to the Provincial Council which, according to Reynolds, had 'reduced the standing of Otago.' Grant retaliated by 'comparing his intellectual qualifications with those of Mr Reynolds.'

When a motion was put 'That the Government be subject to the same regulations which are now in force for the eradication of thistles against the landholder,' the Scottish-born Grant opposed the motion, protesting against spending money on the eradication of 'the emblem of my country, of which I am proud, indeed as a stalwart, strong emblem, compared to the pygmy rose, the emblem of another country.' Councillor Miller thought Grant's protest justified the application to him of the quotation 'Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat' (Whom God wishes to destroy, He first turns mad).

Usually, however, Grant was simply ignored, both by fellow Councillors and by the press. His motions were seldom seconded, one of the many that got no support being a proposal that a Hansard be kept of the proceedings of the House. This may have been provoked by seeing much of his grandiloquent oratory curtly reported in the newspapers as 'Mr Grant spoke.' Grant shared 'A Listener's' views regarding the bar, and formally proposed that it be 'swept away.' Another member moved, as an amendment, that the last word be changed to 'daily!' Grant's membership of the Council lasted less than three months. In the middle of a debate on 5 January 1866 Provincial Superintendent Thomas Dick walked in and, without warning, terminated the session. Grant did not stand for re-election.



Farley's Buildings photographed in late 1864. The buildings now housed the Dunedin Savings Bank and the Otago Provincial Council Chambers. Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago

During the Council's tenure of the hall, a notable art exhibition was held there. In July 1866 the internationally-acclaimed Russian landscape painter and cartoonist Nicholas Chevalier displayed the results of an eight-month painting tour of the South Island financed by grants from the Otago and Canterbury Provincial Councils. The expedition had included visits to nineteen lakes from Manapouri to Brunner. Chevalier was accompanied by his wife Caroline, who produced a written account of the journey and the hardships endured.

On 6 November 1866 the Provincial Council moved into purpose-built Council Chambers on the site later occupied by the Chief Post Office. After that, the most regular users of Farley's Hall were Plymouth Brethren, some of whom began meeting there towards the end of 1866. The following year they were joined by a larger flock led by the dynamic Alfred Brunton who formed a choir of over 100 which attracted packed audiences of 300 or more to the hall. Brethren do not have ministers, and have not always been too fussy about the suitability of their preachers. An occasional preacher in 1867 was the bushranger Henry Garrett, who in 1861 at Maungatua had led a gang that waylaid fifteen miners, tied them to trees and robbed them of £400. While in prison for this crime, Garrett studied the Bible and was befriended by Brunton, who later found him a job at James Wilson's Well Park Brewery. Garrett built himself a hut beside the Leith and, according to Wilson, worked steadily, was very tidy and clean in his habits, and was of a kindly and generous nature. What Wilson did not know was that, while no-one was watching, Garrett was quietly cutting an assortment of skeleton keys. November 9, 1867, the Prince of Wales' birthday, was a public holiday, and the main streets were nearly deserted. Thomas Allen, a seedsman with a shop in Farley's Buildings, was on his way to the Vauxhall Gardens (another of Farley's creations) when he realised he was short of cash. Popping into his shop to pick up some coins from his till, he caught Garrett red-handed in an act of theft. For this, and another robbery committed on the same day, Garrett was sentenced to a total of 20 years' imprisonment. The Brethren, minus Garrett, continued to use Farley's Hall until 1879 when they moved to the Garrison Hall, but after a schism, a faction returned to Farley's in 1887.

In that year there was a sensational event in another part of Farley's Buildings, upstairs in Frederick Irwin's London Portrait Studio. Irwin's wife and her sister Mrs Finch were quietly working at a table on 17 May when a massive hunk of rock crashed through the ceiling. Mrs Finch was killed instantly; Mrs Irwin was fatally injured. The tragedy was the result of blasting operations involved in creating the Dowling Street cutting.

Blame fell on no less a person than the Mayor of Dunedin, the notoriously uncouth John Barnes. It transpired that Barnes, without authority, had given the job of supervising the blasting to his own son William who had no qualifications for such a position.

Henry Farley had died in 1880 and subsequently the buildings have been owned by low-profile investors who have continued to lease the various component parts. In 1890 an extension with a similar façade was added to the northern end of the buildings. This housed the original Dunedin store of Whitcombe & Tombs. The first two managers were Felix Tombs and Bertie Whitcombe, sons of the founders of the company, which originated in Christchurch in 1883. The space was then taken by the N Z Bible, Tract and Book Society, which stayed there until 1933. For the next four decades the occupants were the Silk & Frock House. The Disk Den, which had been established in Rattray Street by former broadcaster Russell Oaten, moved to the Farley site in 1986.

The original parts of Farley's Buildings have been occupied by an amazing variety of businesses over the years. Two photographic studios have already been mentioned. There has been a succession of others, probably located in a sort of penthouse above the southern end of the buildings. The structure had large windows which would have afforded plenty of natural light. The buildings have also attracted many watchmakers and jewellers. During the 1930s there were no fewer than five of them there simultaneously. Other people to set up shop in the complex have included dressmakers, florists, bootmakers, milliners, typists, confectioners, fruiterers, a pastrycook, a gymnastic instructor, artists, booksellers, chemists, dentists, solicitors, commission agents, a sharebroker and a quarry operator (George Calder). Among the more mysterious occupations represented have been 'powder manufacturer' and 'chaser' (most likely an embosser and engraver of metalwares).

A notable figure who rented office space in Farley's Buildings was Thomas Bracken, who, as editor of the *Saturday Advertiser*, was there in the 1870s – the period in which he wrote *God Defend New Zealand*. Around the same time, the buildings housed the offices of two estimable men with rhyming names – Edmund Quick, the Danish, Portuguese and Chilean Consul and SPCA Secretary; and Thomas Dick, the former Provincial Superintendent who held the portfolios of Colonial Secretary, Minister of Education and Minister of Justice in the New Zealand government of 1879-80. Outside his political activity, he was an auctioneer.



Farley's Buildings (centre left) depicted in a detail from a woodcut print of Dunedin in the late 1860s. Otago Settlers Museum collection

The business with the longest association with Farley's Buildings was Stewart Dawson Ltd. In 1902 this London-based company acquired two small shops at the Dowling Street end and, by removing the dividing wall and inserting steel girders under the floor above, converted them into one large room. The entire design of the shop was the work of Stewart Dawson himself, who was in Dunedin at the commencement of the work and left one of his Sydney-based employees to oversee the rest of the job. The main contractor was Dunedin builder James Annand. The interior, when finished, was described as having 'the appearance of a fairy palace'; the exterior was 'most striking' with its polished marble facings, while the Princes Street entrance, a cut-glass panel, was 'a work of art in itself'. The shop was said to compare favourably with the leading establishments of Regent and Bond Streets in London. Stewart Dawson's retained the shop until 1971, after which the business was carried on by Keith Weatherall. After nearly 80 years as a jeweller's, the premises was transformed in the late 1970s when it became one of Bezett's butcher's shops. That business closed in 2001 and the shop is now occupied by Plan It Travel.

Well-known occupants of smaller premises in Farley's Buildings have included George Withers, hairdresser; Lands for Bags; Helean, tailor and kiltmaker; Cookham House shoe shop; Adams menswear; Hamel & McKenzie menswear; Ivan Coward, suit surgeon; Preen's drycleaners; Sanitarium health food shop; J C Gore, jeweller (run for several decades by well-known identity 'Paddy' McLaughlan); and Winston Darling Travel, the last-named transmogrifying in 2001 into the Travel Bar, later Tonic.

The most colourful, literally, of the present businesses is Visual Intelligence run by Aaron Manuel, tattooist and graffiti artist, some of whose startling murals have been commissioned by the Keep Dunedin Beautiful organisation. Also in the buildings today are the Galata Turkish Café, DUS school uniform suppliers, and the K-World karaoke bar.

During the twentieth century the façade of Farley's Buildings gradually fell victim to Modernism with its disdain for ornamentation. Brickwork was covered with plain plaster, and arched windows turned into rectangles. The hall has not been used as such for a century and the space is now taken up with the attics and back rooms of three or four business premises, but the original roof is still intact. Henry Farley was responsible for several ventures that were famous in their time. Not a trace remains today of Farley's Arcade or the Vauxhall Gardens but, 144 years after they were built, Farley's Buildings still survive.

Donald Gordon



Farley's Buildings today – Many of the windows have lost their original arched form and most of the decorative brickwork has been covered.

Romanticism, Art and Conservation in Otago, 1840-1860

What became of appreciation of the natural environment in Otago? Did it lead to conservation elsewhere? This, the concluding part of an essay exploring settler attitudes to the Otago environment between 1840 and 1860, seeks to answer these questions.

In Dunedin, places like the Botanic Garden (established in 1863) and others of that century (Vauxhall Gardens, or William Martin's Fairfield Nursery) exhibited settlers' aesthetic delight in native bush and flowers alongside introduced species. Later in the century, European aesthetic conventions, most notably in the idealisation of mountainous nature through the Sublime and in the desire to preserve wild woods and streams corresponding to the picturesque, informed conservation decisions throughout New Zealand. It was certainly no coincidence that those subsequently marked for conservation purposes were those which aligned closest to European aesthetics.

Driving these decisions was a myriad of notions. Conservation was driven by the realisation that a great many environments had been lost during settlers' own lifetimes and thus should be preserved. Fear of resource scarcity and growing settler identification with New Zealand's native plants were added factors later in the century. Significant too was the notion that civilised areas (such as towns and cities, farms and fields) required their counterpoint in nature, that 'wildness' could act as a balm to the effects of too much civilisation. By giving precedence to pockets of 'wild nature' and Sublime landscapes in legislation such as the Scenery Preservation Act (1903) and through the creation of national parks (Tongariro was New Zealand's first in 1894), tacit acceptance was given to the process of civilisation and cultivation taking place over much of New Zealand, but also to the significance of these aesthetic conventions.

The aesthetic values settlers brought with them were not politically or socially neutral. They reflected the particular principles, as well as the time and place of the cultures in which they were formed. Nor were they socially benign. Demarcation of scenery and forest reserves often came at the expense of Maori access to land and resources, a process fulfilling a similar function to European land purchases and confiscations.

Yet, it is clear that settlers were far from exhibiting indifference to the natural world. They in fact found much beauty and solace in the environment of their new home, expressing pleasure in its appearance just as they went about changing it.

James Beattie

The first two parts of this article appeared in issue 88 (March 2006) and issue 92 (March 2007).

Otago Anniversary Day Dinner 2007



The Otago Anniversary Day dinner was held in the Old Grand Hotel style in the Heritage Room of the Southern Cross Hotel on 23 March as part of Dunedin's inaugural Heritage Festival. The dinner was a major event and was promoted in the festival programme as well as to the Otago Settlers membership. The 90 tickets were sold out, despite an increase in price to \$55. The programme comprised a three-course served dinner, with pre-dinner bubbly sponsored by Montana, who launched a new special reserve. The master of ceremonies was the Mayor, Peter Chin, and the guest speaker was Chris Laidlaw, the well-known broadcaster, diplomat, MP, All Black and Rhodes scholar. His title was 'Dunedin — Confessions of a Native'. The entertainment provided by Dunedin members of the Tower NZ Youth Choir was first class, and thanks to MC Peter Chin, additional donations were added to the fundraising for their forthcoming tour.

The dinner menu was an old-fashioned traditional one, and staff entered into the spirit of the occasion by dressing in period costume: definitely service with a smile! Hotel management added extra touches in the presentation around the room of the roast pork and rib of beef, and sponsored port and dessert sherry with the dessert. The hotel also provided accommodation for the guest speaker. Dress was formal, and fourteen members of the group 'Images of the Past' attended in period costume, which added to the atmosphere of the evening.

Funding from the Dunedin Heritage Festival enabled the Otago Anniversary Day Dinner committee to plan a more lavish event than would otherwise have been possible. We were able to invite and host the Wellington-based national figure and son of Dunedin as guest speaker, and engage quality choral entertainment.

History on the Doorstep

A Museum Internship

A few months ago, I received a call from Professor Barbara Brookes of the History Department at the University to offer me an internship at the Settlers Museum. Of course I was over the moon to accept this, and excited to make a start. After a couple of meetings with Seán Brosnahan, curator at the museum, we agreed on a topic that the museum would find useful and I would be interested in. I would do preliminary research for a new project on Dunedin's inner city. This would be a continuation of the museum's successful area-based exhibitions, such as *The Birth of Modern Times* and *Water Like Wine*. My task in the six weeks I had would be to collect as much information as I could on the area inside the Town Belt, and to use this information to suggest ways to tell stories about the area, and compile these stories into themes and narrative blocks. This was a very open-ended brief, as it allowed me to delve into any specific subjects that interested me.

Getting to work on the first Monday of January, I soon realised just how broad a subject I was taking on. As I was rather a newcomer to Dunedin history, I spent my first couple of weeks combing through the major texts on Dunedin and Otago that Seán had helpfully compiled for me, looking for more specific directions to go down and ways to fit everything into a bigger picture. After this, I spent the next 2-3 weeks doing some directed research on areas that interested me. This was especially rewarding for me as I gained some valuable experience with primary research, and was able to appreciate the potential that exists in the real 'bones' of history – sources like police charge books and committal books for industrial schools. Finally (in true Uni-student style), I left myself only a

week or so to actually write my report. However, after adding some finishing touches at home during Orientation week, I finished a preliminary survey which I think incorporates a mix of the better-known stories of the inner city, and a little of my own specific research contextualised within it. Most importantly, I hope the report will provide a useful base for further research on the area.

Apart from the huge value this internship had to me as a learning experience, I discovered some fascinating things that will continue to intrigue me for a long time. I realised just how rich in history Dunedin is, both in the events and processes that have happened here, and in the great resources we have to research our past, like the Hocken and McNab collections, and of course the Settlers Museum itself. As a student living in North Dunedin for the last few years, I found it particularly fascinating to look back into the records of my area, and explore the diverse community that once inhabited the houses people like myself now live in. I now realise that I walk through museums every day on my way to class, and that to see the processes of world history that I study at University I only need to look out my own doorstep. My time at the Settlers Museum also opened my eyes to the potential that history has outside of the kind of analysis I learn to do at University, and the huge value to the community that more accessible forms of packaging the past can have.

I would like to express my many thanks to the Otago Settlers Association, the Otago University History Department, and to Seán Brosnahan and the fantastic team at the Settlers Museum for making this internship possible and guiding me through it. I hope that my work will be of some value to all concerned, but regardless, I can say that if nothing else, this internship has won Dunedin history a dedicated new fan.

Anthonie Tonnon



Otago Settlers Museum collection

For Your Diary

Be Prepared!

Mark the evening of Thursday, 21st June, 7.30 pm on your social calendar now, for the OSA's Winter Members' Evening. We will be celebrating a century (well, 99 years, but who's counting?) of Scouting in Otago. Our speaker will be OSA member Sinclair Jones, who has just written a history of the Scout movement here. There will be some traditional campfire songs. And we are asking you to participate too – to delve into your memory chests and bring out some of those wonderful reminiscences that you tell so well, this time about your experiences as boy scouts or girl guides. You can send them in to us in advance by mail, fax or email (otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz), or just tell us on the night. With our usual mulled wine, delicious supper and good company we can promise you an entertaining evening.

Be Prepared - 100 Years of the Scout Movement opens at the Otago Settlers Museum on 14 July.



STOP PRESS!

Museum Redevelopment

Detailed planning at all levels for Stage I, the collection storage building, is well under way. It is expected that tenders for this phase will be let early next year with construction to begin in July 2008.

Applications for grants from several suitable trust and funding organisations, including the Lottery Grants Board and the government's Regional Museums scheme, have been or are being made. The Association is most gratified to announce a grant of \$1,000,000 from the Community Trust of Otago for the collection store.

The Otago Settlers Museum Shop

Books



Princes Street by Gaslight

By Hardwicke Knight, 2006

Princes Street by Gaslight is a fascinating record of life in Dunedin's main street more than a century ago. Daniel Louis Mundy, the man who took these spontaneous and candid photographs, worked during the earliest period of photography and produced work of remarkably high quality. *Princes Street* may not have had dancing bears and lavender sellers like London's Piccadilly, but it had its own distinct character, and these intimate and sometimes poignant photographs are full of the atmosphere of a period of great change in Dunedin's history.

48 pages, with more than 50 black and white photographs.
Paperback

Price to members \$17.90 (Postage and packing \$2.50)

Illustrated History of Central Otago and the Queenstown Lakes District

By Gerald Cunningham

Central Otago is steeped in history. Old stone buildings and tumbledown cottages abound, wild rivers tumble through rocky gorges and mine-scarred landscapes, and fertile valleys and vineyards are a startling green against golden tussock and dry hills. With its small towns and picturesque villages, this is the loveliest and the most intriguing region in New Zealand. Find out about the personalities and events that have shaped this unique place in this richly illustrated history. Discover unexplored territory with the moa hunters, early explorers Reko and Chalmers, the first surveyor (and father of nine daughters) John Turnbull Thompson, and the founders of Queenstown, William & Francis Rees. Learn how the region was shaped by the Chinese gold miners, the stock and station companies, the pioneer orchardists – and the feral rabbit. Meet the Frenchman who planted the first vines, and Hannah Hayes, the cycling saleswoman.

232 pages, with more than 200 black and white photographs
Paperback

Price to members \$36 (Postage and packing \$3.50)

Roslyn and Maori Hill Christmas 1909 camp at Portobello. The Scout Association of New Zealand, Otago Zone

Gifts

Marion Sandilands cross stitch sampler

The embroidery sampler replicated in this pack is the first known to have been acquired by the Otago Settlers Museum. It was designed and stitched by Marion Sandilands, who arrived in Dunedin on Boxing Day 1858, and died of consumption at the age of sixteen. It is likely that this sampler, with its beautifully executed and unusually painterly landscape scene, was made by her during the course of her illness.

The pack contains everything required to create an exact replica:

- Charted design
- Needle
- 100% cotton floss
- 28 count quality even-weave linen
- Complete directions and stitch instructions

Price to members \$79.20 (Postage and packing \$4.50)



Journeyman's mustard

Delicious cardamom and honey-infused mustard, made by hand in Dunedin.

200g re-usable jar with screw-top lid.

Price to members \$9
(Postage and packing \$3.50)



Newsletter Volunteers

The Association is very grateful to the volunteers who faithfully come in and fold the newsletter and also put the newsletter and other notices into envelopes. More volunteers are required, so do come along and meet new people, have a chat and coffee whilst folding the newsletter.

General Information

A complete list of items for sale in the museum shop is now available. If you would like a copy, please contact the Secretary, Otago Settlers Association, PO Box 74, Dunedin.



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This newsletter was produced by the Otago Settlers Association, founder and supporter of the Otago Settlers Museum. Membership of the Association is open to everyone interested in the heritage of this region. Details of membership are available from the Museum Reception desk or Otago Settlers Association Secretary, Box 74, Dunedin. Phone/fax 03 477 8677, email otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz



The Otago Daily Times supports Otago Settlers Museum

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