



Otago Settlers Museum CENTENNIAL

Saturday 15 March to Sunday 23 March 2008

'What do the old settlers want with a hall?' Donald Reid, the President of the Early Settlers' Association, was asked in 1908. It was not them that wanted a hall, he replied, but instead it was to be a monument 'to those who had departed and those who would soon pass away,' a place where surviving pioneers and the descendants of pioneers could meet, and where they could deposit records and pictures. It was not yet entirely paid for, and on being asked when the Early Settlers' Memorial Hall would be opened, the President said 'Anniversary Day, if the hall was not in the hands of the bailiffs.' At the opening ceremony it was joked that as a descendant of Rob Roy Macgregor, Donald Reid could employ his ancestor's techniques to raise funds for the Association.

A picnic and sports day at the Caledonian Ground was planned for the Golden Jubilee of Otago, but rain forced its cancellation. Instead, an afternoon tea and impromptu conversazione were held in the Association's new rooms. The contractors had left the premises only a couple of days before, and only two rows of chairs were available. They were allocated to the 'old identities,' survivors of the first year's immigrant ships.

By March 1908 these numbered 15 from the *John Wickliffe* (one of them, Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Cargill, was then in India), 46 from the *Philip Laing*, one only from the *Victory*, 28 from the *Blundell* and 12 from the *Bernicia*.

Praise for the new building was widespread: the Mayor of Invercargill called it 'a valuable addition to the public buildings' of Dunedin, while the *Otago Daily Times'* reporter described it as spacious, solid, and well-lighted.' The Revd James Chisholm thought the hall beautiful, though 'somewhat severe in its simplicity.'

The bad weather on Anniversary Day did not stop a regatta going ahead at Port Chalmers, and that evening a concert was held in a packed Garrison Hall. A programme of popular, patriotic and comic songs, recitations and Highland dances was organised in association with the Gaelic Society, Caledonian Society and the Burns Club; 'all present considered the concert a happy conclusion to a historic day.'

Austin Gee

The newly constructed Otago Settlers Hall, 1908. This view shows the northern facade, now obscured by the extension housing *Josephine*. The entrance was later moved to face Queen's Gardens. Otago Settlers Museum.

OSA and the Centennial

A century on, plans are well under way for what will be an exciting celebration of the endeavour of the Otago Early Settlers Association in building the museum in 1908 – with us in mind. Any organisation is only as strong as its membership, and the Association can be justifiably proud of their dedication and achievements over the past century. The 2008 Otago Settlers Association Committee hopes that members will join in the activities during the celebrations of 15 to 23 March.

Maybe you might visit the museum during the special Archives hours to check out family records, see the centennial archives display, or hear Seán Brosnahan talk on 19 March about the updated edition of his history of the Association, *To Fame Undying*. To celebrate the centenary, the Association has decided to make this book available without charge to all its members. We would, however, appreciate any contribution towards the costs of production that you might care to make. The book will be launched on the occasion of Seán's lecture, so come and join in the celebration and take your very own copy home with you.

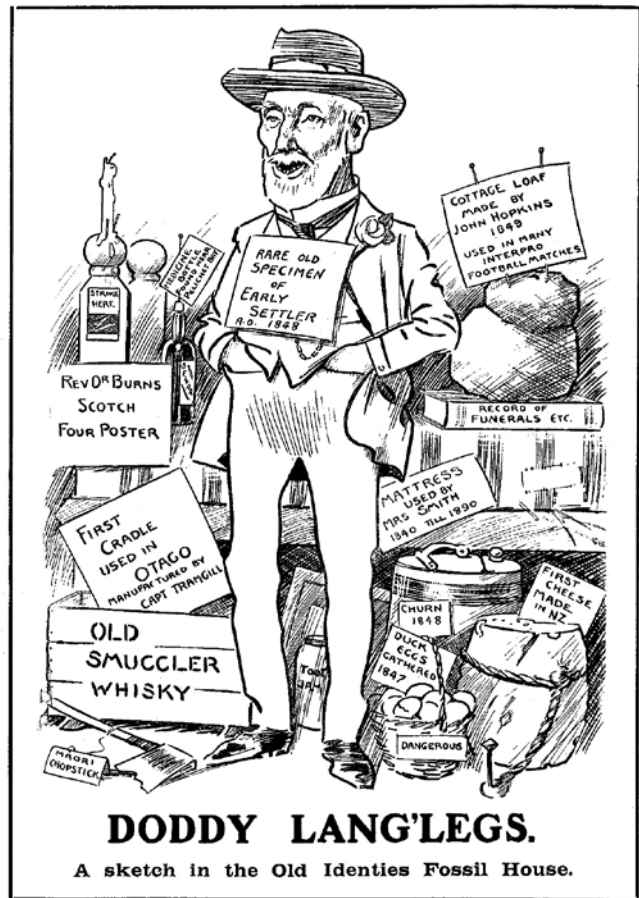
Places for the Middlemarch Train and Settlers' Picnic (Saturday 15 March) are filling steadily, and the response to the Edwardian Soiree (Monday) and the Edwardian Tea Dance (Tuesday) has been very encouraging. The Anniversary Day Dinner will be very special, and tickets for it are still available.

The crescendo will be Easter Sunday, 23rd March, beginning with a service at First Church at 10.00am, followed by morning tea in Burns Hall. We invite you to assemble at 12.30 in the Octagon and to take your place near the head of the procession that will travel to the opening ceremony at the museum. The big parade will reflect the community changes in Otago over the past century, and we encourage members to come along in tartan, other cultural dress, or Edwardian clothing and represent your families (both past and present). The afternoon's family-orientated activities will be launched at the museum by Mayor Peter Chin.

There are too many other activities to mention, but the enclosed Centennial Programme will be your guide to this once-in-our-lifetime experience. We hope to see you on this very special occasion.

Hilary Allison (on behalf of the OSA Centennial Committee)

Further information is available from John Ingram at the Museum: jingram@dcc.govt.nz or telephone 4742728.



Above: Early Settlers Association Secretary Lachlan Langlands is here caricatured as 'Doddy Lang'legs', sitting amidst the piles of 'fossils' that constituted the Museum collection and himself as one of its principal artefacts. Amidst the ridiculous items being satirised there is in fact one that is genuine: the first butter churn made from a water cask from the Philip Laing in 1848. Otago Settlers Museum collection.



The original insignia of the Otago Early Settlers Association. Otago Settlers Museum collection.

Travel Back in Time

For our centennial celebrations why not travel back in time and enjoy a train ride and picnic from the Edwardian era? For only \$30 per adult (with family discounts available) you can join our centennial train and head for Middlemarch on Saturday 15 March. It leaves Dunedin Station at 10.00am and heads up the magnificent Taieri Gorge. We are encouraging everyone to wear their best Edwardian finery and plan to present one prize per carriage for the best dressed traveller. Upon arrival at midday you can enjoy your picnic hamper lunch, or purchase a Devonshire tea or barbecue lunch. We then have the rest of the two hours to join in the Edwardian games and activities that the Middlemarch community are organising for us: all provided free. This will be a great way to start the centennial celebrations, but be quick, as almost 100 seats have already been sold. Inquiries can be made to John Ingram at the Museum on 4742728, and bookings can be made at the Taieri Gorge Railway office in the Dunedin Railway Station.

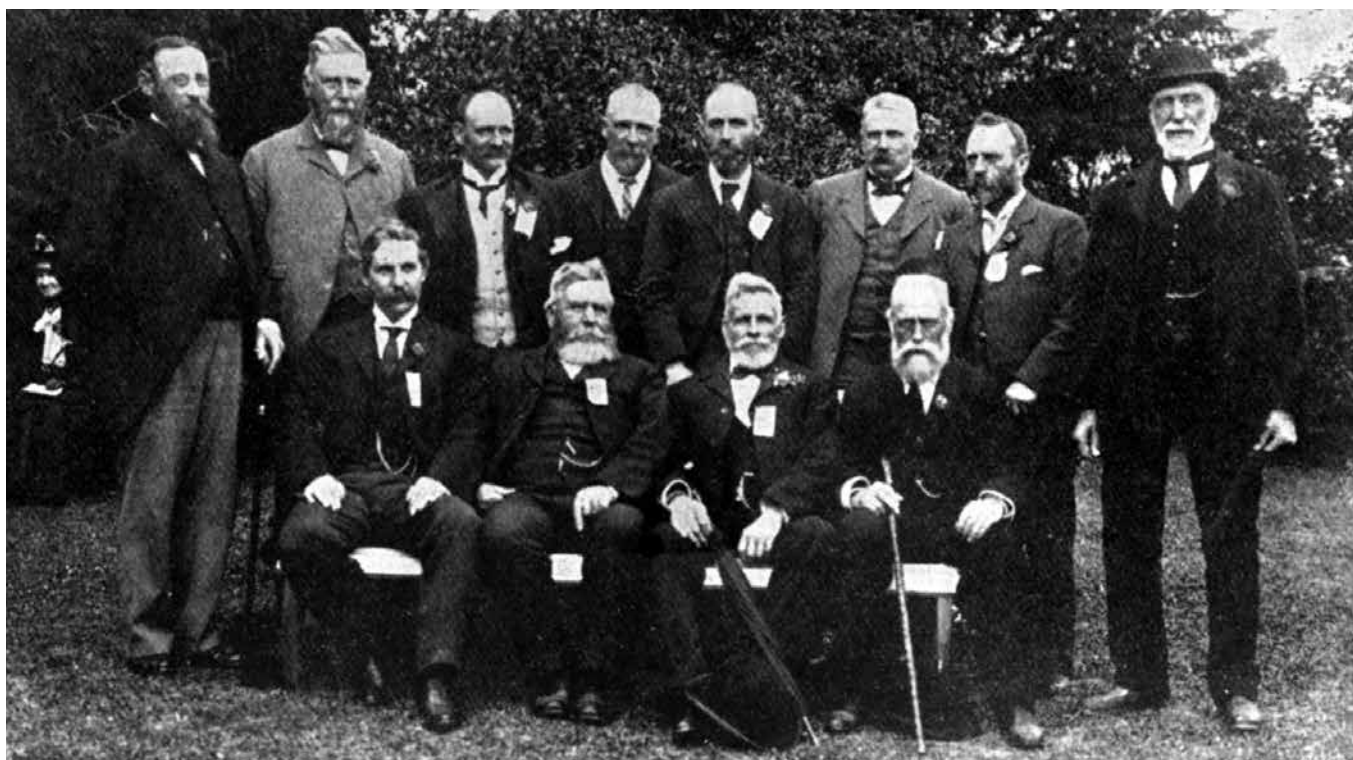
The First Decade 1898-1908: A New Exhibition

This exhibition, *To Fame Undying* (named after the publication marking the centennial history of the Otago Settlers Association), looks at the first ten years of the OESA, from its formation in 1898 until the opening of the Otago Early Settlers Association Hall and Museum in 1908. The exhibition will feature items held in the Otago Settlers Museum Archive as well as a selection of Museum artefacts. It runs from 17 March to 31 August 2008 in the Smith Gallery.

A New Edition Writing a supplement for *To Fame Undying*

Back in 1998 I was very privileged to write the centennial history of the Otago Settlers Association, *To Fame Undying*. The Committee of the day took the generous decision to distribute the book to all members, ensuring it wide distribution and disseminating the organisation's proud history to the people that mattered most. The ten years since have passed very quickly. It came as something of a shock to be invited to write a supplementary chapter for a new edition of the book to cover the last decade. Few authors get such an opportunity to see 'what happened next.' Quite a lot, as it turned out. I was gratified to find that the Association has amply fulfilled the hope expressed in the final pages of the original book that it was finding 'a real sense of purpose' in its 'post-museum' phase. Surveying all the ups and downs since 1998, they have been good years for the Association and for the Museum. As we stand on the cusp of even more significant developments in the years ahead it is timely to celebrate the Museum's centenary and congratulate the Association on its 110th birthday.

Seán Brosnahan



The Otago Early Settlers Association Committee, 1902 – Otago Settlers Museum collection

Fabulous Frocks II

More glorious gowns from the Otago Settlers Museum Collection, 1900-1950

In 2003 the Museum had a big 'hit' with its exhibition *Fabulous Frocks*. This seemed to strike a real chord, especially with female visitors who poured into the display by the bus-load to check out the wonderful array of nineteenth-century dresses on show. The exhibition presented a fashion overview of Otago's pioneer era as well as insights into the lives of individual women who had worn the dresses. This dual perspective seemed to have wide appeal and led to many demands, both for a permanent souvenir of the show and for more displays of clothing. *Fabulous Frocks II* aims to fulfil both requests. First, by presenting a second group of dresses from the collection and, secondly, with the publication of *Women of Substance*, a booklet based on some of the pioneer women's stories from the earlier exhibition.

As a 'sequel' the new display repeats the thematic approach of the original exhibition but carries the story of Otago fashion on into the first half of the twentieth century. There are 46 dresses in the new selection, slightly more than in the 2003 show, but following the same broad groupings: wedding gowns; evening wear; and day dresses. Twentieth-century fashion changed at a much sharper pace than in the Victorian era so that there was a bewildering succession of new fabrics, changes in fashion ideals and improvements in the mass production and retail distribution of textiles. This all makes for a rather more varied array of costume, perhaps less glamorous to the modern eye than the elaborate constructions of the nineteenth century, but nonetheless reflective of women's fashion aspirations in a rapidly changing world.

One of the highlights of the 2003 exhibition was the identification of a number of dresses whose history had been lost over time. It was possible, for example, to reconnect Janet Thomson's 1878 wedding dress – originally displayed as a wedding dress of unknown provenance – with another dress in the show that belonged to Janet's mother, Jane Thomson (née Dodds). We could even speculate that the mother's dress might also have been worn at the wedding. Janet's granddaughter, Mrs Jean Campbell, made the identification when she visited the exhibition and recognised the dress, which she had donated some years earlier. The continuity of pioneer families' connections with the Museum is neatly demonstrated by the inclusion of two more dresses from this family – *Blundell* passengers who were founding Port Chalmers identities – in the new exhibition. The 1916 wedding dress of Janet Thomson's daughter, Janet Stewart, and the 1943 wedding gown of her daughter, Mrs Janet Campbell, are both included, the latter specially donated for the show.



Above: Jane Thomson (née Dodds) the pioneer Port Chalmers settler whose 1878 dress featured in *Fabulous Frocks* along with the wedding dress of her daughter Janet Stewart (née Thomson). Otago Settlers Museum collection.



When Janet Stewart died in 1937, aged 86, her grandchildren gathered at 'Dalkieth' the old family home in Port Chalmers and played dress-ups in some of her clothes – including the wedding dress that was later donated to the Museum and featured in *Fabulous Frocks*. Thompson family.

These dresses are among the fifteen wedding costumes in the exhibition, ranging in date from 1905 to 1943. Two are 'going away' outfits rather than the wedding dresses themselves, smart outfits that became an important part of the culture of New Zealand weddings in this period. As wedding customs evolved into an increasingly elaborate series of rituals, the focus broadened to include not only the bride's dress – always the central feature – but also those of her bridesmaids, her 'going away' outfit and even the costumes of the mothers of bride and groom. Elaborate accounts of weddings began to appear in newspapers and magazines, reporting in loving detail the fashion choices of each of these important participants in the grand event. Along with the almost uniform choice of white as the bridal colour, these developments reflect how important weddings had become as the central social ritual of many women's lives.

Contact has been made with many of the original donors to source more detail on the wearers and manufacturers of these dresses. In many cases photographs have been obtained, particularly of the wedding dresses, to reconnect their stories with the lives of the women whose special treasures they were. Unfortunately, there remain a large number of dresses for which there are no such personalised stories. Donor details have been lost or were never recorded, such that these dresses have to stand on their own. Such unprovenanced dresses have been selected for display nonetheless because of their intrinsic aesthetic appeal and for the fashion trends that they exemplify. It may be that exhibition visitors will recognise some of these dresses, as Mrs Campbell did in 2003, and help us recover their histories.

Fabulous Frocks II is the Museum's major temporary exhibition for 2008. Its opening coincides with the Museum's centenary celebrations and helps us reflect on the institution's evolving role chronicling the lives of Otago people. The earliest dresses in

the show are precisely the sort of costumes that were in fashion when the Museum opened in March 1908. It says much for the vision of the Museum's founders that we can now draw on the magnificent collection they established to commemorate not only the pioneer generation but also those of all the generations that have followed. In this exhibition we can see how their dresses evolved from the ornate formality of the Edwardian period, through the radical chic of 1920s 'flappers,' the sinuous elegance of the 1930s and on to the square-shouldered austerity of the war years.

Fabulous Frocks II: 13 March to 31 August 2008.

Seán Brosnahan, Curator

Below: Janet Wood's daughter – yet another Janet – married Alexander Campbell in 1943. Her wartime wedding dress also features in *Fabulous Frocks II*, continuing a family connection with the Museum collection that now extends over four generations. Janet Campbell.



Janet Stewart's daughter – also Janet – was married to James Wood from 'Dalkeith' in 1916. Her wedding dress will feature in *Fabulous Frocks II*. Janet Campbell.

An Octagonal Heart

Over the last few years, OSA has been pleased to give financial support, through the Alfred and Isabel Reed Trust, towards the production of a number of varied books with an Otago focus. The most recent of these is *The Heart of a City: the Story of Dunedin's Octagon* by Norman Ledgerwood. It is particularly good to be involved in this case, because the author is an OSA Committee member and his interesting and well-illustrated book is very much in our territory.

We are now extending our involvement by joining the Otago Settlers Museum to co-host the launch of *Heart of a City* on 12 March. The occasion, which will be in the Museum concourse, will make an appropriate start to the centennial celebrations. The book will be available at the pre-publication price of \$32.50, and Norman has generously offered to donate 10% of sales on the night to the Alfred and Isabel Reed Trust.

Chariots of Fire

Our centennial parade and activities afternoon set for Sunday 23 March should be even more resplendent thanks to the support of the Dunedin Fire Brigade Restoration Society. Not only will its members be available to drive the museum's fire engines (most of which they have restored themselves), but the Society will also attend in several of their own appliances. This will certainly guarantee an eye-catching parade. On arrival at the Museum they will give free rides to the public. Together with the New Zealand Fire Service, the Society has organised a hands-on activity area where children can see the fire engines at work and squirt water themselves – all making for an action-packed, fun afternoon.



Watching the Good Times Roll



Readers who have difficulty receiving a clear signal even for Channel Nine may have found the television set displayed in the *Let the Good Times Roll* exhibition intriguing. It was made locally by the donor in order to watch broadcasts from the Melbourne Olympics of 1956. Television broadcasting was introduced to Sydney and Melbourne in time for the opening of the games on 22 November. At the time there were only about 5,000 sets in all Australia. The *Otago Daily Times* reported on 3 December 1956 that Invercargill radio engineer Maurice Wills had achieved the first successful reception of the Olympic broadcast in New Zealand. Though television signals normally have a range of only up to 160km (100 miles), given favourable atmospheric conditions and a suitable aerial, transmissions can be received over very much greater distances. As early as 1938, BBC television broadcasts from London were picked up across the Atlantic on Long Island. Settled high-pressure weather favours the transmission of signals in the lower atmosphere, particularly over water, whereas conditions in the upper atmosphere can also allow signals to be reflected over thousands of miles. It can give a whole new meaning to 'channel surfing'.

Join the Club

Do you realise that if you are a member of the Otago Settlers Association, you are entitled to become a member of the Tuesday Club? This group meets from 10.00 to 11.00am on the second Tuesday of the month in the museum foyer. Following a morning tea (for only \$2) the group is addressed by a wide variety of speakers. We have had the curators keeping us up with current exhibitions, management speaking about museum developments, representatives of local groups on a range of topics (for instance the Historic Cemeteries Trust of NZ and the Southern Heritage Trust), local historians, the Victorian Sewing group, poets and even a world-famous archaeologist.

All you have to do in order to join is phone John Ingram on 4742728 or write to jingram@dcc.govt.nz.

The Museum's centennial celebrations will be another chance to see a procession of fire appliances restored by Dunedin Fire Brigade Restoration Society. This television set was built by a Highcliff resident in 1956 and is currently on display in exhibition *Let the Good Times Roll - Dunedin in the 1950s*

Christmas Meeting

The well-attended Christmas meeting of the Association was held on Friday 14 December in the former NZR Road Services bus station foyer. The new President, Dr Dorothy Page, welcomed members and announced that the winner of the Summer Studentship at the Museum for 2008 would be Theresa von Dadelszen, a second-year history undergraduate at Otago University. Dr Page also noted with regret the passing of two prominent members of the Association in 2007. Thomas Sidey had been a member since the early 1930s and served on the Committee from 1947 to 1958. John Macpherson was President from 1976 to 1978, and a committee member from 1970 to 1990.

John Drummond, Blair Professor of Music at Otago University, entertained and informed us about Otago in the early gold rush days with examples of the popular satirical songs of Charles Thatcher. The 'voice of the newcomers', Thatcher arrived in Dunedin from Victoria in 1862 and stayed five months. Over the next eight years he visited a further four times, including a stay in Queenstown. Thatcher wrote about 51 satirical songs, 32 of which survive. Accompanying himself on the piano, Professor Drummond sang five of these; at least three had not been performed in public since 1862. One (see right) satirised William Cargill's speech of 1862 in which he sought to preserve the 'Old Identity' in the face of the new gold rush settlers, while 'The Old Identity v. The New Iniquity' (sung to the tune of 'The King of the Cannibal Isles') portrayed the clash of cultures over the question of Otago provincial autonomy. 'English Intelligence' contrasted petty local concerns with the great events of the time, including the American Civil War and the marriage of the Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra. A familiar perennial complaint surfaced in a song berating the Dunedin Town Board for neglecting the state of the roads. This most successful evening concluded with refreshments, including strawberries and Christmas cake.



Professor John Drummond at the OSA Christmas meeting.

The Old Identity

Words by Charles Thatcher
Tune: Duck Leg Dick

First performed at the Commercial Hotel, Dunedin in the week of 24 March 1862

Mr Cargill in the Council made such a funny speech,
He got up and he stated that it devolved on each
Of all the early dwellers to preserve safe as could be,
Amidst the Victorian influx, the Old Identity.

This speech some of the Council pooh poohed and did resent,
But now I'm really puzzled to know what Cargill meant:
Perhaps on us newcomers he has a down, you see,
And fears we'll be destroying the Old Identity.

Does he wish each brother Scotchman to come out in a kilt –
To kittle up the chanter, and go in for a lilt?
With bare legs in Otago how very cold 'twould be!
But it's one way of preserving the Old Identity.

Does he wish posts erected, and each be rubbing, while
He asks a fervent blessing on Scotia's Duke Argyle?
Or in tartans like the Postman would he his brethren see?
What means he by 'preserving the Old Identity'?

Are we to hear the slogan, and each one wear a dirk,
And every Sabbath morning crowd to that little kirk?
While some quite thankful ponder how they came with nae
A nice way of preserving the Old Identity. bawbee,

Are we to live on parritch*, does Mr. Cargill think?
Or is that fiery whiskey to be our usual drink?
But I'll tell Mr. Cargill how his brethren here and he
May always be preserving the Old Identity.

Go on in the old fashion, and ne'er improve the town,
And still on all newcomers keep up a fearful 'down';
Don't alter your Post Office, let that old jetty be!
And thus you'll be preserving the Old Identity.

Still cherish barbarism, stick to Dunedin mud,
And with your eight-year leases chouse[§] the Victorian blood.
Still dress your ancient Postman in the style we daily see,
His costume is essential to the Old Identity.

* porridge

§ dupe or swindle

Thanks to John Drummond for providing these lyrics.

The Otago Settlers Museum Shop

Books



Design and the Decorative Arts: Victorian Britain

Michael Snodin and John Styles

Published by the Victoria and Albert Museum

This beautiful publication tells the story of design and the decorative arts in Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria. Lavishly illustrated and unmatched in its coverage, this book explores the subject from a number of points of view. It assesses the place of design and the decorative arts in the wider history of Victorian Britain. It examines style, the question of how things looked. It asks who led taste; who decided what was to be considered beautiful, fashionable and desirable. It looks at how fashionable things – from houses to clothing – were used. It asks what was new, examining new products and innovations in the ways they were made.

Paperback – 168 pages, with 300 colour and 68 black and white photographs.

Price to members \$58.50 (Postage and packing \$8.50)

Samplers from the Victoria and Albert Museum

Clare Browne and Jennifer Wearden

Published by the Victoria and Albert Museum

'This is a lovely book, a pleasure to own and, for anyone interested in samplers, essential' *Textile History*

Illustrations and text combine to provide a historical survey of samplers, their purposes and patterns, together with a practical guide, through details and line drawings, to the many different types of stitches used in their working.

Paperback – 144 pages, with 162 colour images and 40 line drawings.

Price to members \$67.50 (Postage and packing \$8.50)

Authentic Victorian Fashion Patterns: A Complete Lady's Wardrobe

Edited by Kristina Harris

This book, compiled by costume authority Kristina Harris, painstakingly reprints a rich selection of scaled dressmaker's patterns of the 1890s, taken from rare issues of *The Voice of Fashion*, a popular late-nineteenth century dressmaker's journal. The collection includes nearly 500 patterns and illustrations detailing 50 garments for women. Every wardrobe necessity for the Victorian woman is covered – from nightgowns and wrappers for the boudoir and breakfast, a riding habit and tennis outfit, to walking dresses for town and visiting, elegant dinner dresses and elaborate evening gowns.

Paperback – 144 pages, with 498 black and white illustrations.

Price to members \$31.30 (Postage and packing \$5.50)

General Information

Orders should be posted to the Otago Settlers Museum, PO Box 566, Dunedin, and cheques should be made out to the Dunedin City Council.

The shop holds a wide selection of Dunedin- and New Zealand-made books, cards and gifts. You are always welcome to browse.



Editor: Austin Gee; Designer: Tim Cornelius; Publisher: Otago Settlers Association.

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



Otago Daily Times

The Otago Daily Times supports Otago Settlers Museum

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