



Can you tell us more?

The Museum's major temporary exhibition for 2007, *Fabulous Frocks II*, opened in grand style on 13 March. There was a magnificent turn-out of dress enthusiasts and the added bonus of the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, announcing a \$6 million government contribution to the Museum's redevelopment. The exhibition is of course a 'sequel' to the very popular 2003 exhibition on our nineteenth-century dress collection. This time the focus is twentieth-century dresses (1900-1950). Reaction to the new show has been very positive, a further reminder, if any was needed, of the popularity of costume and textile displays at the Museum. Visitors seem to appreciate the combination of personal stories and the historic context that the exhibition, like its predecessor, provides for its survey of women's fashion through half a century of tremendous social change.

Unfortunately, for almost a third of the selection on show in *Fabulous Frocks II*, such a personalised account of the dresses' histories is not possible. For various reasons the Museum does not have any information on the wearers, sometimes even on the donors, of many of these dresses. The editor of the *Settlers News* has kindly suggested appealing to readers for any further information that might help us recover more of the story behind them. Below I will describe four such dresses in the hope that readers can offer some assistance. It may be that members donated the dresses themselves or perhaps might recognise details of donors who we were unable to track down for further details. I would also like to appeal for a photograph of one of our identified dress wearers and, finally, I have an error to acknowledge, prompted by advice from an exhibition visitor.

Blue taffeta evening dress, late 1930s. Otago Settlers Museum collection.

The first dress (pictured on this issue's cover) was donated by Mrs J S Webster of Weston in 1988, but no further information about it was recorded and Mrs Webster could not be traced. It is a full-length late-1930s evening dress made from a blue synthetic taffeta. It has a Mandarin collar, which fastens at the throat with two circular buttons encrusted with diamantes. There is an opening below the buttons running down to a floral decoration in multi-coloured bands of taffeta at the bust. The same colours – stripes of red, white, blue, black and silver – are used in the yoke of the bodice, almost like a shortened vest that runs from the waistline to the collar at the back and from the armhole to the collar at the front. The short sleeves are extravagantly puffed with deep pleats at the shoulder and smaller ones underneath. This dress is rather glamorous and inspires thoughts of Hollywood screen goddesses from the 1930s. It would be great to know whom it belonged to.

The second dress is a beige pink lace wedding gown from the mid-1930s. It was donated by Mrs Anthea Wooding in 1986 but again, no further details were recorded on whom it had belonged to and Mrs Wooding has subsequently died. This is quite a distinctive style of dress, especially for a wedding garment. Stylistic features, particularly the sleeves and the cowl neck with a sewn-in weight, point to a date around 1935. The long sleeves taper to the wrist with a peak extending over the hand, secured tightly with two domes and trimmed with crêpe



in the same colour. The tops of the arms have deep gathers to create the high shoulder with a little bit of net to add shape. The lace fabric requires little additional embellishment but there is a band of ruching at the centre of the waistline. The dress is fitted over the hips, flaring out in the skirt before being gathered at the hem. Wedding dresses are usually the easiest dresses to date because we know exactly when they were worn. It would be great to identify the unknown bride who wore this one for her big day.

The third dress is a magnificent example of the radical changes that occurred in 1920s fashion. It is an elegant little day dress in apple green crêpe. It is sleeveless and comes to just below the knee, a somewhat 'racy' length that was new in this period. The main body of the dress is of simple construction; a tubular 'shift dress' without bust or waistline. It is enlivened by an asymmetrical insert of pleated net that angles down to the left hip. This line of angle carries on through the pleated sash that falls to the hemline and which is echoed in the smaller version at the left collar. There is a trim of self-fabric to form the slightest of collars and a peculiar armhole construction that juts out under the armpit. We have no information on when this dress came into the collection or whom it belonged to. It is one of the more popular costumes in the show and it would be nice to re-connect it to its wearer's history.



Beige pink lace wedding gown, mid-1930s. Otago Settlers Museum collection
Apple green crêpe day dress, 1920s. Otago Settlers Museum collection

The final appeal is for information on a fabulous beaded evening dress – the quintessential ‘flapper’ costume of the mid-1920s. Very few survive in such good condition as the one on display. The weight of the beading was such that it began to pull the backing fabric (usually chiffon or net) apart from the moment such dresses were worn. For the same reason our example is displayed flat rather than on a mannequin to avoid the destructive pull of gravity. Simple in construction, this tabard-style over-dress is completely open at the sides with just a stitched section at the hips to hold front and back together. The fine black net base is elaborately adorned with a stunning series of patterns and emblems set out in seed and bugle beads in black, red and raspberry. The black/red contrast is inverted from top to bottom between the background and the decoration. The most striking feature is the sweeping lines of beads that curve toward the circular emblem at the waist from above and below. Such a distinctive costume deserves a history to match.

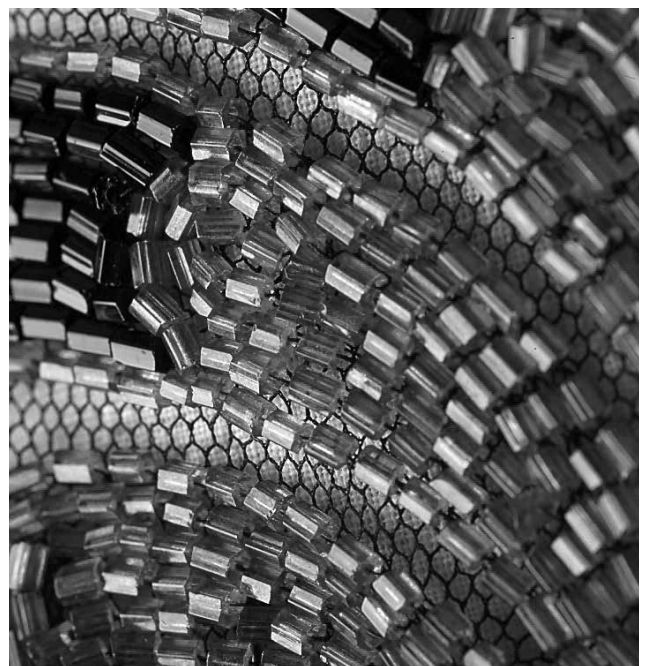
Likewise, we would love to have a photograph of the owner of one of our display’s most beautiful outfits. This is Mrs Isabel Emma Dawson Walker, *née* Blakely, who was Mayoress of Dunedin in 1909. Mrs Walker wore the fabulous old rose silk satin two-piece day dress while carrying out her official duties. This may have included the infamous occasion when her husband, James Hamlin Walker, was hosting Lord Kitchener,



a major Imperial celebrity, on his tour through the colony in February 1910. According to Dunedin legend, Mayor Walker was involved in an unsavoury fracas with the Prime Minister, Joseph Ward, after insufficient places had been provided in the carriage to convey the official party from the Railway Station to their hotel. The story is that Mr Walker punched the Prime Minister’s jaw, shouldered him out of the carriage and took his place beside Lord Kitchener, who never blinked an eye. This is almost certainly untrue but, if it were, one wonders what poor Mrs Walker’s reaction would have been. Her dress was donated to the Museum by a grand-daughter, Mrs M J Wilkinson, in 1996 but no portrait of Isabel could be located for the display.

Finally, the error. A very fine navy blue day dress was donated to the Museum in 1987 by Mr Clement Howden. It had belonged to his mother, a well-known Dunedin music teacher. Mr Howden described it as being from his mother’s trousseau on her marriage in 1924 but this seemed a bit early for a dress of its style. We assessed it as being a late 1930s dress and compared it to similar-looking costumes shown in *Vogue* magazine in 1937. The dress had a label, ‘Cherry Brown George Street Dunedin’, but I was unable to find further information on such an establishment in trade directories for the late 1930s. A recent visitor to the exhibition suggested that I look a bit later. She could well remember her mother buying many stylish outfits from Cherry Brown at 253 George Street (about the site of the present Golden Centre). Sure enough, when I checked Stones directories I found the business first appearing in the 1949 edition. Our ‘1937’ is probably therefore about 11 years too early, with 1948 probably the earliest that a ‘Cherry Brown’ dress could have been purchased.

If any reader is able to help, please contact **Seán Brosnahan** at the Museum, or by e-mail to sean.brosnahan@dcc.govt.nz



Beaded evening dress, mid-1920s. The close-up shows the seed and bugle beads used in the elaborate patterning. Otago Settlers Museum collection

Centennial Celebrations



Well, we did it! A week of successful celebrations completed. One of the aims of the organising committee was to mirror the types of celebratory activities that existed in 1908 when the Otago Settlers Museum was officially opened. Hence during the week preceding 23 March we had a train ride and Edwardian picnic, a soir e, a tea dance, a book launch and a lecture. People attending these events got into the spirit of the occasion and the majority sported some very fine looking Edwardian clothing. By the end of the week we had almost 800 participants who had enjoyed our celebrations.

The big day was, of course, Sunday 23 March. Following a very appropriate church service (many thanks to the Rev John Sinclair) we embarked on the procession. With the Octagon closed off our gathered team of community groups and vintage machinery looked very impressive as it set off for the museum. Upon arrival we had a very short ceremony, the highlight of which was the Association's donation of \$20,000 to the Redevelopment Fund (bring their total contribution to about \$200,000). Following this a very busy programme of rides, hands-on activities, children's events and a fashion show all took place. The majority of these activities was supervised by a crew of OSA volunteers who did a magnificent job of ensuring that all ran smoothly. I think a special mention also

should go to Barry Clarke who did an outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies, so much so that he got the job again at the evening dinner. We received many positive comments about the afternoon, mostly focusing upon it being so family-orientated, fun and *free* (a rarity nowadays). Almost 3,000 people attended the Sunday celebrations, bringing the overall total number of participants to 3,775, a very pleasing result for the organising committee.

It is this committee that deserves the final mention. The planning committee had been operating since last April, and the care that went into the planning showed. The whole celebration would not have got off the ground without the support of the Otago Settlers Association. Your members made up the majority of the Centennial Committee and worked tirelessly towards these wonderful celebrations. (The OSA also funded the expensive items). I think all members of the OSA can be justifiably proud of your members of this committee. I know that I am, as well as being exceedingly grateful to them.

John Ingram
Visitor Programmes Co-ordinator
Otago Settlers Museum

Settlers Association members lead off the procession from the Octagon to the Otago Settlers Museum.

We Will Remember Them

*No more the clash of arms or shriek of shell,
No more the storm and stress of life,
The bell has tolled the soldiers passing knell
And tragic death bequeaths eternal life.*

In Memoriam for V. Egglestone, *Otago Witness*, 7 June 1916

The Otago Summer Internship of 2007 was based around the development of a comprehensive database of all identifiable casualties of war with a Dunedin connection. As a single list of these servicemen has never existed, the process of finding their personal details and connections to Dunedin was a moving and challenging experience.

Along with entering information into the database, the process led me to research the particular battles in which large numbers of Dunedin men fought and died. This additional information gave me a deeper understanding of the horrific impact of war, both on its servicemen and the community on the home front. In many cases I was able to pinpoint exact addresses in Dunedin to which the men were connected.

A combination of finding the names and photographs of the fallen in the research process, and being able to link them to the details of the battles in which they fought, allowed me to develop an emotional connection to the struggles of those involved in the war-time experience. Due to this I feel extremely honoured to have been given the opportunity to pay my respects to these brave men, through finding their personal details and incorporating them in a list of their fellow countrymen who also made the supreme sacrifice in a series of conflicts.

The sources used to collect details were a combination of the *Otago Witness* and a number of school and church rolls of honour. These were then cross-checked with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website's 'Debt of Honour Register'. The Auckland War Memorial Museum's website was also of assistance through its link to the Cenotaph Database.*

As the Second World War losses had already been developed into a database for the 2005 *We Will Remember Them* exhibition, my main focus was on the Great War, and post-1945 conflicts. For the purposes of the project, 'Dunedin' was taken to extend to its modern boundaries, stretching to cover Waikouaiti, Outram and Middlemarch. Where possible, the information on each casualty records: surname; first name(s); decorations; the source from which their name was extracted; rank; unit; date of death; age at death; memorial where they are commemorated; home address in Dunedin; city of residence; how and where they died; and which conflict they were involved in.

The research undertaken has since culminated in the exhibition *We Will Remember Them*. This opened directly after the Dawn Service on Anzac Day, 25 April 2008. The public was invited to view the banners created from the database, with the hope that the immense scale of loss in Dunedin through warfare will be realised and duly mourned. Visitors are welcomed to record the names of any servicemen not incorporated into the lists in a book provided, in order to rectify that situation. I sincerely hope that I have recorded all of the casualties, and apologise for any mistakes or omissions made.

My time at the Otago Settlers Museum has been immensely valuable to me. I have gained research skills and knowledge that has extended my interest in the topic of New Zealand's involvement in twentieth-century warfare, a topic that I intend to continue to research in post-graduate studies. The experience of working in a museum has also been of great benefit, as this is a career option that I have often considered and am now sure I would be much suited to.

I would like to sincerely thank the Otago Settlers Association and University of Otago History Department for the opportunity to work as an intern at the Otago Settlers Museum. I would also like to thank Seán Brosnahan and the rest of the staff at the Settlers Museum for welcoming me so warmly and offering their guidance and support. I hope that future winners of the History Prize will take as much enjoyment and fulfilment as I have done from the experience.

Theresa von Dadelszen

Winner of the 2007 History Prize, a summer internship at the Museum funded by the OSA

* www.cwgc.org/debt_of_honour.asp?menuid=14
www.aucklandmuseum.com/130/cenotaph-database

About 500 people attended the opening of the museum after the Anzac Day dawn parade, many of them in family groups. They admired the banners, and volunteers from the Association served them tea and coffee.



Some of the 48 banners containing over 2,500 names on display in the *We Will Remember Them* ANZAC display at the Museum.

The Crime Scene: Early Dunedin

Crime in early Dunedin makes for an interesting topic because there was little serious crime, and punishment was relaxed. The Police charge book covering the period 1851-1861 contains some interesting cases. The most common charge in the records is drunkenness. Furthermore, many of the other crimes seem to be a result of drunkenness; for example, people would be charged with 'drunkenness and stealing,' 'drunkenness and assault,' etc. Another common charge was absenting from sea duties. Often a number of men would be charged with this at one time. For example, half a dozen men might be listed with a paragraph beside their names such as: 'These men were charged by Capt. William Sewell of the ship, "Isabella Hercus," with refusing to work on the high seas on the passage from Port Cooper [i.e. Lyttelton] to Otago.'

Towards 1861 different crimes begin to become common as well. For example from 1860 'Being in a room for unlawful purposes' (prostitution?) becomes more common, as does yesterday's counterpart to speeding: 'furious riding' (on at least one occasion accompanied by drunkenness). The first charge for murder was in 1857, against a man named George Crawford, who apparently stabbed another man to death. However, murder does not appear to have been a common charge.

Who committed the crimes? The charge book lists occupations, countries of origin, and the sex of those charged. For the first few years, the most common offenders were sailors, who had very cosmopolitan backgrounds. They included Americans, Scots, Irish, Africans, Norwegians, Spaniards, French and Prussians. Over time however, local men started to overtake them in offences, and a huge variety of employment types appear beside men charged after too many drinks, among them butcher, tailor, labourer, baker and many more. It was not just the working class that had problems. 'Gentlemen' occasionally turn up in the records, as do a handful of 'settlers' and 'surgeons' – including the first doctor in Dunedin, Henry Manning. The absence of women from the list ends in 1860 with Mary Roberts, a twenty-year-old spinster charged with 'being in a room for unlawful purposes.' After this, a number of women appear on the same charge, as well as other charges, including of course, drunkenness.

The experiences of two repeat offenders can stand for no doubt many more; Thomas Farquar and Jane Stewart: Thomas Farquar is listed as an Irish surgeon, and first appears in the book on 10 June 1859 for drunkenness. He is merely fined, but when he returns for the same reason six days later he is imprisoned for 48 hours. He returns twice that year, and more than half a dozen times in 1860 (all for drunkenness and related crimes), and most of the time he is given 48 hours imprisonment, or if he has been in recently he is given nine days. His given age changes from 43 to 41, 40 and finally 36, but why is not clear.

Jane Stewart is listed as a twenty-year old spinster, and first appears on 8 April 1859 for drunkenness. She is given 48 hours. She gets nine days on April 17 for the same offence. The next time we see her on 31 May it appears she may have lied about her age; she is now listed as 18, and this age stays

consistent throughout the rest of her appearances. She returns six times before the next August, all for drunkenness, except for one charge of 'being in a room for unlawful purposes.' On one occasion she is given nine days, and is back again ten days later. She disappears for some months after 31 August 1860 when her punishment reads simply as 'sent to gaol.' In April 1861 she reappears, and is charged on the 16th and the 20th with drunkenness and given 48 hours and 48 hours hard labour respectively. On 1 July she is given nine days, and on 10 July she is straight back and given another nine. On the 12th she is charged with escaping from gaol. On the 18th she is given nine days for drunkenness. The last we see of her is on the 27th, when she is again charged for breaking out and is 'committed for trial.'

Anthonie Tonnon

History Department Summer Intern 2006-7

Among the Last of the First: J A D Adams



Mrs L Buchanan of Wanganui has kindly sent an obituary notice from the *Otago Daily Times* of October 1936 for her grandmother's brother, J A D Adams, one of the founders of the Early Settlers' Association. John Adams arrived with his parents in the *Blundell* aged four and a half on 21 September 1848. By 1936, he and Mrs A Fraser of Timaru were the last survivors of the 152 passengers. One of his youthful pastimes was to count the number of houses in Dunedin: 'there were then six, including a public house, which was on skids at the time, having been drawn across a swamp from somewhere on the eastern side of Princes street to High street.' John Adams once sailed a five-ton boat across what is now the junction of Princes Street with Manor Place and Hope Street. He left school at an early age and took up a variety of employment until turning to the law at the age of 27. He set up in practice at Port Chalmers for several years with his younger brother, who later became a Supreme Court judge. John Adams retired in 1910 and the firm was continued by his two sons. Throughout his life, he 'was an uncompromising opponent of the liquor traffic, for the suppression of which he worked enthusiastically for very many years' as a member of various licensing committees. Recognising the importance of preserving the records of the early days of settlement, in 1884 John Adams was among those who formed the Early History Society of Otago.

J A D Adams

Phonography, Typewriting and Pirates: Rossbotham's College



Rossbotham's School of Shorthand, Typewriting & Bookkeeping was founded in Dunedin by Thomas Rossbotham* towards the end of the nineteenth century. After education at the Christian Brothers School in Dunedin, Rossbotham went on to study the subjects he later taught. In 1892, at the age of 20, he established his first school in the Temple Chambers in Princes Street. He encouraged the introduction of the typewriter to Dunedin businesses and became deeply involved in the production of the *Phonographic^s Magazine* which was published in Dunedin and had an Australasia-wide circulation. Most of the text was in shorthand.

In 1901 his college was transferred to a site in upper Dowling Street, in front the hill that was to be removed in 1907. As soon as that obstruction was out of the way, he doubled the size of the college, erecting a second building at the front of the property. Each of the two buildings consisted of eight rooms – four upstairs, four down. Most were used as classrooms or offices, but one or two on the street frontage were let to businessmen.

There were tailors there in the 1920s, and later a watchmaker. This was Henry Neill, one of a dynasty of horologists, all with the same name. His grandfather had installed Dunedin's Town Hall clock. His son, the last of the Henry Neills, also trained as a watchmaker but, because of poor eyesight, turned to a less intricate trade and ended up as a plumber for Speight's Brewery.

In 1920 Thomas Rossbotham married and moved with his wife to the North Island, leaving his sister Sarah in charge of the college. He later returned and had living quarters installed in the college buildings, where he died in 1934.

Two years later the college was transferred to the Stock Exchange building and the Dowling Street premises were acquired by Speight's. This was to allow for possible expansion but the buildings were never used by the brewery. Instead, through the influence of Speight's head brewer Reg Dawson, who was patron of the Pirates rugby club, the former college became the Pirates' club rooms. Has any other rugby club ever been in the enviable position of having rooms in a brewery?

*Pronounced 'Rossbottom'

^s'Phonography' was an early term for shorthand

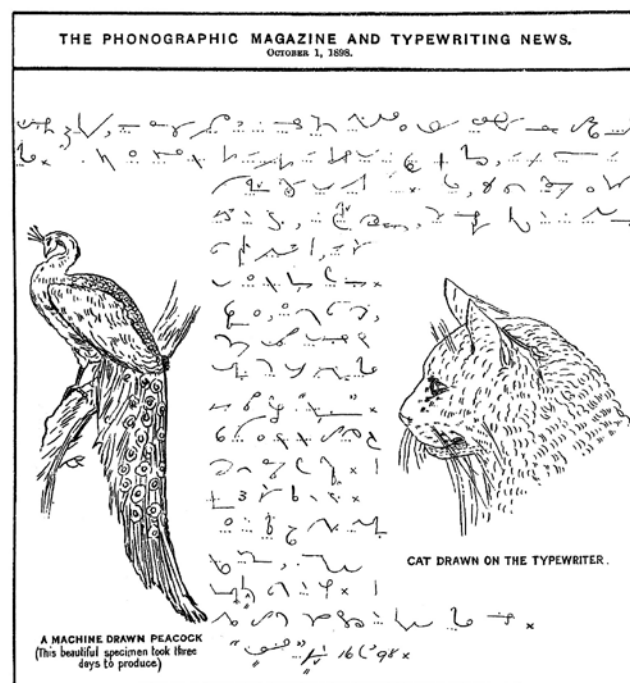
After Pirates moved to Hancock Park in 1958 the old Rossbotham College housed residential tenants. The first that I remember were newly-weds Mark and Hilary Bracefield. Hilary went on to a distinguished career as head of the Music Department at the University of Ulster.

The Rossbotham buildings were demolished in the 1980s, but the name survives in Dunedin in Rossbotham's Secretarial Service.

Donald Gordon

Erratum

In the related article *Delving into Bell Hill: Memories of Upper Dowling Street*, Issue 95 (December 2007), page 3, column 1, John Donaldson's original profession should read 'baker,' not 'banker'.



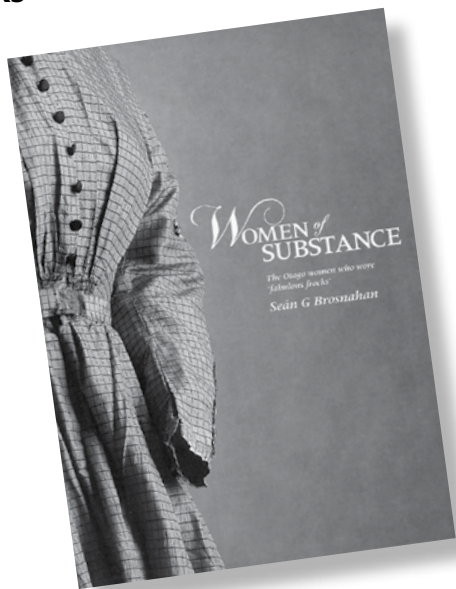
For Your Diary

Members' Evening, 27 June

For our Winter meeting, we will celebrate our past by recognising some long-serving members. Our speaker will be from 'Images of the Past' and her talk will be illustrated by members of the group in (newly made) period costume.

The Otago Settlers Museum Shop

Books



Women of Substance:
The Otago Women who Wore 'Fabulous Frocks'
Seán Brosnahan
Published by the Otago Settlers Museum

This beautiful publication was produced recently as a companion to the exhibition *Fabulous Frocks*, an exhibition held at the Otago Settlers Museum in 2003. The exhibition presented 39 dresses from the museum's costume collection, selected to showcase the type of costume worn by nineteenth-century Otago women when they wanted to look their most refined.

60 pages, with 90 colour and black-and-white photographs and an essay by the exhibition's curator. Paperback.

Price to members \$22.50 (Postage and packing \$2.50)

Gifts



Fabulous Frocks II: a souvenir postcard set

A set of seven souvenir postcards of dresses from the Otago Settlers Museum costume collection currently on show in the exhibition *Fabulous Frocks II*.

Price to members \$4.50 (Postage and packing \$1.00)

Fabulous Frocks II: greeting cards

A pair of larger souvenir greeting cards featuring two of the dresses are also available.

Price to members \$4.50 each (Postage and packing \$1.00)



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.



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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

 **Otago Daily Times**

The Otago Daily Times supports Otago Settlers Museum

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