



## A Wedding Present for ROBERT BURNS

*that dared the billow's roar  
to reach a distant shore.*



The Association recently has played a key role in keeping in Otago a snuff-box probably once owned by Robert Burns by helping acquire it for the Museum. The history of this gold filigree box is cloaked in mystery. No-one knows how it came to be in Dunedin because the last owner who knew its story died suddenly. He left the snuff-box to a friend but with no information on its previous history.

It was acquired by the Museum with financial assistance from the Otago Settlers Association and the Dunedin Burns Club to mark this year's 250th anniversary of Burns' birth. A ceremony was held at the Museum for the handing-over of the snuff-box on 22 October to coincide with the visit of Alex Fergusson, the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, and a party of his fellow MSPs.

The new acquisition to the Settlers Museum collection of 'Burnsiana', a gold filigree snuff box.

The snuff-box has been dated to the late eighteenth century, so is certainly consistent with the lifetime of the poet, though it is not known for certain how it came into the possession of the Ramsay family, a well-to-do family of Dunedin shipping agents, from whom it passed to the seller. The box bears a faded inscription around the top, partially erased over time by the lip of the lid. What can be deciphered reads: '[Presented?] by Wm Tytler Esq. [Indecipherable words] May 8 1786 Robt Burns. For auld lang syne.' William Tytler was a friend of Burns who collaborated with him in collecting old Scottish songs, many of which were adapted or further developed by Burns. The date is highly significant as it touches on a period of great uncertainty in Burns' life. His famous book of poems had not yet been published and he had just been rejected by his great love and future wife, Jean Armour. In despair Burns contemplated emigration to Jamaica and embarked on a passionate affair with a servant, Margaret Campbell. The two may even have exchanged marriage vows according to Scottish custom during May 1786. But Margaret - known to history as 'Highland Mary' - died of fever, possibly pregnant with Burns' child. He was devastated. He wrote a number of poems to deal with his grief, including 'To Mary in Heaven.' It is this poem that Burns is depicted composing in his famous statue in the Octagon, Dunedin.

The snuff-box joins another owned by Burns already in the collection. It was acquired in 1936 and it too lacks a cast-iron, irrefutable trail of provenance all the way back to Burns himself. The Association's Minutes Book notes: 'Robert Burns's snuff mull. This was purchased by Mr Robertson, an Englishman, for £50. He wished it to be passed over to the Scottish Community of Dunedin and it consequently came into the possession of Dr D.M. Stuart. The snuff mull was presented to the Otago University Museum in 1889 by the Trustee (Mr Glendining) of the late Dr Stuart.' This ornate snuff mull bears the inscription, 'Craigdarroch - Robert Burns the Bard of the Whistle October 16, 1790.' It was a gift to Burns from Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch for acting as witness to a notorious drinking contest in 1790. At stake was a famous 'whistle' brought to Scotland from Denmark in the 1590s. The 'last man standing' had the privilege of blowing the whistle when he had drunk his competitors 'under the table'. Burns immortalized Fergusson's triumph in his poem 'The Whistle'.



This snuff mull purportedly owned by Robert Burns is also in the Museum's collection

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## The Otago Settlers Museum Archives Redevelopment Project

In September 2008 the Otago Settlers Museum broke ground on an exciting redevelopment project. This four-stage project – planned to be completed by the end of 2012 – will touch every section of the Museum, creating new spaces and reinventing old ones. Stage One, the new 3,000 square metre environmentally-controlled collections storage facility, is nearing completion. Stage Two, the refurbishment of the New Zealand Railways Road Services Building, will begin in early 2010. This stage includes work on the Museum's Archives and Research area.

Exciting changes are planned for the Archive. We are building a state-of-the-art cool/dry store for our photograph collections to ensure their continued preservation. New staff workspaces, including a special room for collection photography and scanning, will ensure archival collections continue to be properly catalogued. The general storage area will grow and allow plenty of space for future donations.

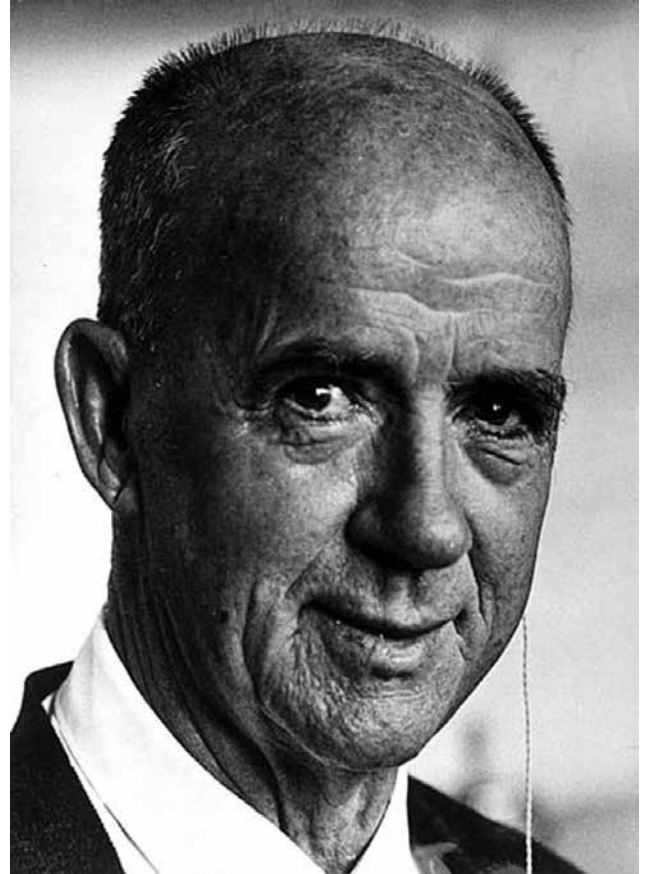
The Museum is planning a separate free-of-charge, self-service research area. This area will hold many of our general genealogical sources such as passenger lists and cemetery records. Our searchable collection database will also be available so visitors can virtually explore our collections in storage.

In order for the Museum to realise these ambitious plans we will need to alter our regular Archives services. The Archives and Research Reading Room will close at 1 pm on Thursday, 24 December 2009, allowing staff to pack and relocate the Archives collection to temporary storage. At this time we will take the opportunity to catalogue and digitise the collection and enter this information on our collection database.

During this period we will be offering new Archives services in another area of the Museum. We will have some of our more popular genealogical sources, including our collection of passenger lists, available on a computer for Museum visitors to access at no charge. Our photo portrait collection will also be available for viewing as digital images and visitors will have the opportunity to purchase digital copies of any of these portraits.

The Otago Settlers Museum regrets any inconvenience caused by this temporary change in our regular services. However, when Archives and Research reopens in 2012, we will be able to offer researchers improved facilities and greater access to our unique archival collections.

## Did You Know Mr Rich the Nature Study Man?



A book about the life of Dr Lance Richdale, 1900-1983, pioneer penguin and albatross scientist, is planned for release in 2011. It will be co-authored by Neville Peat of Dunedin, the author of more than 30 titles and recipient of the 2007 Creative New Zealand Michael King Writers' Fellowship, and Christopher Robertson of Wellington, an eminent bird scientist, who knew Dr Richdale and has collected all the material published by him.

OSA members may be able to help with memories of one particular aspect of Dr Richdale's career, his work for the Otago Education Board as itinerant instructor in agriculture and natural history. For many years from 1928 he toured schools throughout the region, making a lasting impression on tens of thousands of children. They called him 'Mr Rich, the Nature Study man.' If you were one of these children, and have memories you can share, get in touch with Dr Robertson by e-mail at [cjrr@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:cjrr@slingshot.co.nz) or by writing to the Richdale Project, PO Box 12397, Wellington. Or you can send your reminiscences to the OSA and we will pass them on.

# Otago Settlers Museum

## Annual Report 2009



### Museum Director

This year saw the long-awaited appointment of the Otago Settlers Museum's own Director, Linda Wigley.

With having only been in post for four months prior to this report, Linda particularly acknowledges the work of Grant McDonald as Acting Director and the OSM Team who have undertaken a huge amount of activity during the year, as highlighted in this report.

### Exhibitions

The OSM curated 15 exhibitions staged during the year in four special exhibition spaces. A number of these exhibitions were opened by distinguished guests and attracted widespread audiences and new faces each time. These changing exhibitions are a huge drawcard and an excellent excuse for celebrating our history with different target audiences.

**The Hudson Gallery** has seen three full-gallery exhibitions over the 2008/2009 year:

- *Fabulous Frocks II: More glorious gowns from the Otago Settlers Museum Collection 1900-1950*. This exhibition was curated by Seán Brosnahan; it opened in March 2009 and continued until the end of August 2009.
- This was followed by *Shopkeeping: A View on Dunedin Retailers* by Chris Gable which as well as Chris's photography featured the restored Barton's Pig and Fresh Freddy neon signs from the Museum's collection. The latter was restored with a grant from the OSA.
- *Paint-box Pioneers: Visions of the Past from the Otago Settlers Museum Art Collection*. This exhibition was curated by Peter Read, which followed in March 2009 and ran until 11 October 2009.

The **Ka Hau E Wha: People of the Four Winds Gallery** has also been the host to three exhibitions in the past 12 months. These exhibitions were:

- *Erin Go Bragh: The Irish in Otago and Southland*.
- *Chinese Treasures from the Otago Settlers Museum and Dunedin Public Art Gallery*.
- *Willkommen in Dunedin: A History of German-speaking People in Otago*.

**The Smith Gallery** saw the continuation of the exhibition *To Fame Undying: The Otago Early Settlers Association 1898-1908*. This exhibition was curated by the OSM's Archivist Jill Haley. The Smith Gallery also saw the continuation of the exhibition *For Auld Lang Syne: 250 Years of Robbie Burns* and the Piping and Dancing Centenary.

In the **Bus Station Foyer** we staged the touring exhibition *Joseph Conrad: Twixt Land and Sea* and *Our Southern Poles: 10 years of the Polish Heritage Trust of Otago and Southland*. *On Your Bike: Cycling Then, Cycling Now*, an exhibition in association with Bike Wise '09 was also hosted there, as well as the annual *We Will Remember Them* exhibition and the touring exhibition *Passchendaele: The Belgians Have Not Forgotten*.

In conjunction with our signature event *Pixie Town* we staged the small exhibition entitled *Welcome to a Kiwi Christmas*.

### Visitor Programmes

These relate to our exhibitions and collections and during the year included a wide range of floor talks, lectures, special events, Tuesday Club talks, tours, walks and Walk Dunedin. Sixty three events were held here at the museum and 90 walking tours in various guises (excluding Walk Dunedin). The 63 events are broken down as follows:

- Fifteen Floor talks
- Eleven lectures
- Thirteen holiday programmes
- Thirty specialist walking tours
- Sixty other tours, mostly for cruise ships
- Four book launches
- Seven drama/musical events
- Three workshops
- Ten other events

Plus our signature events such as ANZAC, *Pixie Town* and Walk Dunedin which operates twice daily for 364 days of the year, thanks are due to a loyal and passionate group of tour guides. Also thank you to the OSA for their support of Walk Dunedin in their annual grant towards uniforms and publicity.

The Museum continued to encourage the use of its facilities by local organisations and this has included the Heritage Festival, musical events, book launches and specialist groups such as the genealogists who meet in the Archive each month and the **New Edinburgh Folk Club**, who have held a few of their concerts at the Museum.



## Collection Management Internship

The OSA supported the Summer Internship. This year the OSA History Prize Recipient was Tim Hyland, who produced an excellent report entitled *Report on the Computer Collection at the Otago Settlers Museum* in January and February this year.

## Loans and Exhibitions

The collections team have worked on ten exhibitions, arranging contracts, loan agreements, condition reports and treatments. The highlights were *Fabulous Frocks II* and *Paint Box Pioneers*, for which many items were restored by contract conservators.

## Cataloguing Project

During 2008/2009, cataloguing has been completed in collection store one, the bus garage, all exhibition galleries and the clock store. Also a third of the textiles and costumes stores have been done.

## Registration and Accessioning

The IR 95 project has been completed with the assistance of Naomi Boulton who was recruited as a Temporary Registrar Assistant.

- Reject Project Completed: 95% of the items were disposed of.
- Seven Trams were disposed of from the Green Island Offsite Store.
- Repatriation of the DeSoto Car and inventory of all the parts.
- Roslyn No. 1 tram was sent to Ferrymead for restoration.
- Items on long term deposit from Kevin Weatherall, Peter Johnson and John Sutherland were given back to their respective owners.
- A flood damage claim was successful.
- The key donation during the year was the medals and pardon documentation for Jack Braithwaite, who was executed during the First World War.

## Archives

This year saw the beginning of the digitisation of the Photo Portraits Collection which is planned to be completed by the end of December 2009 and will be directly accessible to the public during the Archives closing period in 2010.

## LEOTC

Five thousand six hundred pupils participated in the OSM programmes for the year and the overall response from evaluations indicated that 95% of the programmes were rated Very Good, 5% Good and 100% met the teacher's needs.

Highlights include a Kai Tahu Research Activity aimed at intermediate level groups which involved using the Kai Tahu exhibition as a resource tool. This was trialled with Balmacewen Intermediate. Students researched how life for Kai Tahu changed with the arrival of European people and involved pupils using artefacts, text and photographs to develop statements.

Sara Sinclair worked with Ashley Mackenzie-White, a Museum Studies Post Graduate Student Intern, on the production of a tactile Kai Tahu Teaching Resource. The Resource will include an interactive poster showing the migration of the four main tribes that make up Kai Tahu and a Kete containing special treasures relating to migration to Te Wai Pounamu offered by Kai Tahu.

## Drama

The dramatic component of the programmes continues to develop as a strength of this service. All schools participating in the *Across the Ocean Waves* Immigration Programme dress up as immigrant families and take part in a process drama. Parents also become part of the families. Everyone participates and as a result of this process the connection pupils make with the early immigrants from Otago intensifies.

The *Across the Ocean Waves* exhibition space was used once again by Kavanagh College's year 12 students in their production and performance of this year's melodrama. The pupils participated in two sessions with our educator followed by weekly visits and it culminated in an evening performance for their friends and family.

A popular programme celebrates the arts of the many cultures living in Otago which includes: Chinese shadow puppet making, Chinese lantern making and screen printing workshops inspired by Kai Tahu rock art and Chinese design.

The Otago Settlers Museum continues to offer joint programmes with The Dunedin Chinese Gardens and Sara Sinclair contributed to the development of a unit plan relating to the Dunedin Chinese Gardens which has been placed on the Ministry of Education's Asia Knowledge website.

All in all it has been a very successful year meeting Ministry of Education milestone reports throughout, and Sara is now applying to the Ministry of Education for funding for the next three years.



## Promotion and Marketing

### Promotion and Profile

The OSM continued to receive good media coverage throughout the year in the *Otago Daily Times*, *Star*, *D Scene*, Channel 9 and Radio Works stations. We have also widely promoted our activities in these media outlets and on a scrolling banner at Dunedin Airport.

### Visitor Numbers

Visitor numbers for the year from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 were 66,051, which exceeds the annual target of 60,000.

## Museum Development

This year saw the start of our major Museum Redevelopment Project which is now going full steam ahead.

The Museum received a visit from the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, who announced major funding of six million dollars from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. The OSM is also grateful to the Otago Community Trust and the OSA, not only for their financial support for the project but also for their support in kind.

The tender for the Stage One Storage Building was awarded to Lund South in August 2008.

This has grown from the pile of rubble used to compact the ground into a splendid new storage building. There were only a few problems arising, one being the new lift shaft missing the remains of one of the railway platforms by a matter of centimetres. Pre-cast slab construction saw a speedy rise of the building; the roof was secured by March 2009 and the building was covered in before the worst of the winter.

Tenders were put out for shelving throughout the year. The Museum has acquired sliding art racks from Building Maintenance Units in Australia. The heavy-duty shelving has been supplied by Dexion, and light-weight 'compacta' shelving from Hydestor, both New Zealand companies with South Island branches.

### Stage Two: New Zealand Railways Road Services Building

The Consultant Team has been busy preparing detailed design work for the Stage Two NZR Road Services Building with the aim of having updated costs completed by August 2010, and being put out to tender by September 2009.

The Project has involved a number of discussions with Historic Places Trust to keep them informed of progress.

## Exhibition Planning

The Museum staff have been developing the exhibition narrative, and with the arrival of the new Director, Linda Wigley, a full review of the exhibitions is underway and will be completed later in the year.

## Pre-Move Programme

Laurence Le Ber was recruited to crate 700 very fragile items from the Museum's collection prior to the relocation to the new building. John McGann was recruited to construct stillage for the many heavy items to be moved to the new offsite storage facility.

## Conclusion

The 2008/2009 year was extremely busy, which was reflected in the Museum's visitor figures for the year which were over target by almost 6,000, total visitor figures being 66,000. The OSA continues to support the OSM and in particular the Director, Linda Wigley, in her new role. Linda expresses her thanks to the OSA for her tremendous welcome party and especially the ongoing support of the OSA's President, Dr Dot Page and the OSA Committee.

## Linda Wigley

Otago Settlers Museum Director

17 September 2009



## Farewell from John Ingram

Some of you may be aware of my resignation which was announced on 3 September 2009, exactly seven years to the day since I first started work at the Otago Settlers Museum. I began my role in a job-share position with Val-mai Shaw and (to be very honest) was initially a little bored as I helped sweep out the Hudson Gallery in preparation for an exhibition opening. I asked was there something a little more exciting that I could get my teeth into and was told I could assist the Settlers Association which was preparing a birthday party for *Josephine*, the 1872 locomotive. This was a huge event, attracting over 4000 people, and was very, very busy. (I actually spent a lot of my day visiting local supermarkets trying to buy more balloons and sponge cake that we could pass off as part of the official birthday cake).

This event marked the beginning of an extremely enjoyable period of co-operation between the Association and me. Together we established programmes such as Jigger Racing (which supported a Dunedin youth charity), large family fun days (such as fire-safety celebrations) and the Centennial which the museum celebrated last year. I think the most significant of our joint ventures was 'Pixie Town.' I had tried for a year to establish this Christmas programme with no success and it wasn't until the Association offered to sponsor the costs involved that it got underway. I remember trying to talk Melville Carr (then the OSA President) into being a tall, thin Santa and being deafened by the sound of his rapidly retreating feet. Pixie Town now brings joy to a new generation of Dunedin people and provides over 20% of the Museum's annual visitor numbers. The Association has also assisted with a huge range of other activities, such as being the major sponsor of the Walk Dunedin inner city guided tours programme. Throughout all of these events I have found members of the Association to be enthusiastic, imaginative and hard-working. We've had a lot of fun together and the Otago Settlers Museum is certainly a better place because of your support.

I also wish to say a special farewell to the members of our OSA Tuesday Club. I inherited the club from Val-mai and what a neat crew they turned out to be. We met every second Tuesday of the month for all of these years, listened to a huge range of speakers and had a great social get-together. I now look upon many of the members as true characters and friends. I will miss our time together.

However, it's time to say goodbye and I would like to thank you once again for your support over my seven years and wish all Association members the best in your future endeavours to support the Otago Settlers Museum.

### John

Visitor Programmes Co-ordinator 2002-9



## Good-bye John

OSA members will be sorry to learn that John's cheerful smile will no longer be seen in the concourse of the Settlers Museum. As an ever-accommodating Visitor Programmes Co-ordinator over the past seven years John has initiated a whole raft of new enterprises, all with a strong community focus and often strikingly imaginative and child-friendly. Who can forget the rapt expressions of the children eating Josephine's birthday cake, trailing balloons or – imagine it – actually riding on fire engines? And it wasn't only the children who were enthralled by the comic miniature world of Pixie Town. Adults enjoyed the monthly Tuesday Club lecture and social programme and tourists have increasingly flocked to Walk Dunedin. John not only had a seemingly endless fund of ideas but also the capacity to put them into practice, in style.

Over these years OSA has been glad to co-operate in any way possible, financially or (in the case of Dunedin members) in volunteer labour. It has been very satisfying, and great fun. Thank you, John, for giving us the opportunity to help you. You leave with our warm good wishes for your future enterprises.

### Dot Page

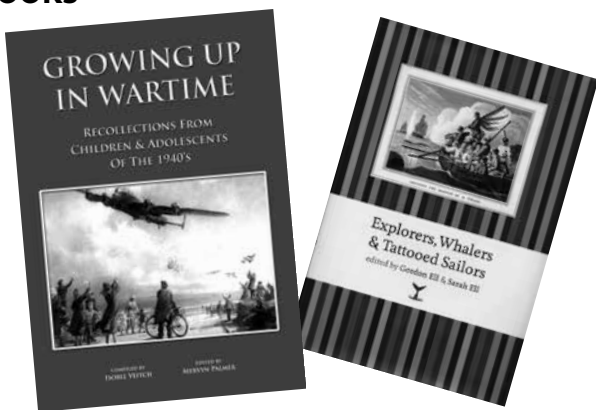
OSA President

## Christmas Party

The OSA Christmas Party will be held in the Museum concourse from 7.30 pm on Friday 11 December. The theme this year will be 'Songs of Our Colonial Past.' A festive evening is assured.

## The Otago Settlers Museum Shop

### Books



**Growing Up in Wartime:**  
*Recollections from Children & Adolescents of the 1940s*  
compiled by Isobel Veitch and edited by Mervyn Palmer

This collection brings together the recollections of 37 contributors who were children or adolescents during the Second World War. The majority are linked now by living in Otago, but their childhoods were spent in the Netherlands, Britain or southern New Zealand. The Alfred and Isabel Reid Trust, which is administered by the Association, helped fund the expenses of publication.

101 pages, paperback; \$25

**Explorers, Whalers & Tattooed Sailors:**  
*Adventurous Tales from Early New Zealand*  
edited by Sarah and Gordon Ell  
Random House, 2008

This is a collection of first-hand accounts of exploration, risk and adventure by the first Europeans to visit this country, drawn from early writings and out-of-print books. The writers include Abel Tasman, Joseph Banks, missionaries, traders, whalers, sealers and scientists among many others. This is an attractive hardback reprint of the Ells's *Adventurous Times in Old New Zealand: First-Hand Accounts of the Lawless Days* (Bush Press, 1994).

302 pages, hardback; price \$25



### Tea-towels

A range of good quality machine-washable cotton tea-towels is available, decorated with screen-printed single-colour designs showing cabbage trees, paua shells, tikis, Jaffas, fern leaves, jandals and other characteristic kiwiana.

\$14 each

## General Information

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](mailto:otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz)

 **Otago Daily Times** *The Otago Daily Times supports Otago Settlers Museum*

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