



**There was nothing sinister about 'Black Bob' Craig. He was given his nickname for no other reason than to differentiate him from his ginger-haired namesake and kinsman 'Red Bob.' Both were coachmen employed by Black Bob's uncle, Hugh Craig.**

Hugh had started as a stable boy but quickly attained the status of coach driver and, at the age of sixteen, it was claimed, had been the first person to drive a coach over the Old Man Range to Switzers (now Waikaia), his freight being a coachful of dancing girls. In 1870 he began to work for Hoyt and Co which ran a firm rejoicing in the name 'Cobb and Company's Telegraph Line of Royal Mail Coaches' although it had no connection with the original Cobb & Co, an Australian company. It provided transport from Tokomairiro to Queenstown. Hugh soon became known for Herculean feats on the run between Lawrence and Clyde, sometimes driving for sixteen hours at a stretch in conditions so atrocious they would have killed most men.

In 1879, by which time the railway had reached Lawrence, he took over the running of the Cobb & Co business in partnership with two other legendary coachmen. One was Tommy Pope who, in 1873, had driven the celebrated author Anthony Trollope and his wife Rose from Lawrence to Tokomairiro, at one stage making the passengers get out and shovel snow away to make a path for the coach. The other was James Mackintosh who had once delivered mail to Queen Victoria at Balmoral and had been one of the very earliest coachmen in Otago, starting in 1857. For H Craig & Co Mackintosh did the Lawrence-Roxburgh run until February 1892 when his coach overturned and he was fatally injured. That was when Black Bob arrived on the scene.

Bob had been born in Australia in 1861 and had come with his parents to Otago a year or two later when the gold rush was in full swing. Little is known of his early years but he spent much of the time in Southland and was a married man with a five-year-old son when he joined his uncle's company to take over Mackintosh's run.

Speight's transport in Rattray Street, 1919, when motor transport was replacing horse-drawn - Speights Archive  
Inset in the title: 'Black Bob' Craig as a young man - *Early Coaching Days in Otago* by Lovell-Smith



In November 1892, under the heading 'Rural Rambles,' the *Otago Witness* reported: 'The service from the railway terminus at Lawrence is continued by Craig & Co's coaches which run to Roxburgh, a distance of 40 miles, daily. These coaches are splendidly horsed and the teams are changed every 12 miles. The whips are known as among the best coachmen in the colonies. Bob Craig has charge of the coach from Lawrence to Roxburgh.' (Red Bob's run was Cromwell-Queenstown.)

Black Bob could hardly have been accused of highway robbery but there were times when he extracted more than the fare from his passengers. In June 1900 the *Tuapeka Times* reported: 'Mr Bob Craig, on his trip up to Roxburgh a day or two ago, sent around the hat amongst his passengers and raked in 15s for the "absent-minded beggar".' 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' was a song written by Rudyard Kipling and set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan as part of an appeal to raise money for soldiers fighting in the Boer War. The appeal itself was given the name of the song.

Bob had a moment of glory in 1904 when a representative of the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* was visiting Central Otago. The incident was recorded in the Preface to the Otago-Southland volume: 'The history of one memorable day might have been headed "Fighting a Blizzard for Forty Miles" or "How Bob Craig, with Twelve horses, drove Cobb and Co's Royal Mail Coach, through a record snowstorm from Roxburgh to Lawrence; with the Historian of his Achievement – his only passenger – beside him".'

The spring of 1907 was a sad time for Bob and his wife Rosina. On 19 October their son David died after a long illness. He was their only child. Less than a month later, Bob's uncle and boss, Hugh Craig, succumbed to a heart attack at the age of 58.

H Craig & Co remained in business, gradually phasing out horses in favour of motors. It was in 1914 that the Lawrence-Roxburgh run was motorised. Bob never learned to drive a motor vehicle, and found himself out of work.

He moved to Dunedin where he took a job as stableman for Speight's Brewery. Speight's transport was still in the transition stage and, although the carters were encouraged to switch to motors, the incentive being higher pay, a few insisted on sticking with horses.



In contrast to the swift coach-horses Bob was used to, these were plodding Clydesdales, but they were given just as much care and attention. They worked either singly, towing two-wheeled drays, or in pairs, with four-wheeled lorries. During the week they delivered barrels of beer by day, and spent the night in the stable which was situated behind the Gladstone Hotel (later renamed 'Broadway') in Maclaggan Street. It had originally been Smith's Livery Stables. Each horse had its own loose box with its name emblazoned on the front. Among the names that have been recorded are Dot, Plunger and 'Arry Sneaker. Every weekend for some years the horses were taken for grazing on Speight's Paddock in the Town Belt but in the 1920s this paddock was incorporated in the Belleknowes golf course and, after that, a pasture on Pine Hill was used.

The horses were so well groomed that, according to legend, a couple decided to hire one to pull their wedding carriage. Much to the bride's embarrassment, it stopped at every pub along the route!

Bob Craig was well into his fifties when he started working for Speight's, and his weather-beaten face made him look older, but he was young enough to take the field as a member of Speight's cricket team. He carried on as stableman-cum-carter until the last of Speight's horses were dispensed with in August 1930. By then he was 69 and might have been expected to retire, but he refused to go. Speight's kept him on, as a cellarman, handling full casks of beer, until ill health eventually persuaded him to call it a day, in November 1933.

His wife died in 1940 and Bob followed on 24 October 1941, aged 80. His death registration gave his occupation as coachman. He was largely forgotten until recently when Speight's Ale Houses wanted to name a house wine after an archetypal Southern Man. The name chosen was 'Robert Craig.'

#### Donald Gordon



Top left: The Cobb & Co coach from the Otago Settlers Museum collection.

Top right: One of Speight's horse-drawn lorries; bottom: Bob Craig in 1932, the year before his retirement from Speight's - both Speights Archive.

# Saving Lives for a Century



The surf-lifesaving club at St Clair beach is one of the very oldest in the country. It begins its centenary celebrations this October, and will hold a major celebration in April next year. Though sea bathing has a history dating back to eighteenth-century England, it was not widely popular here before the 1880s. Even then, complaints about naked bathers led to local by-laws that restricted swimming at many beaches to the hours of darkness, or insisted on the wearing of non-revealing bathing costumes. Bathing at Dunedin beaches was not allowed within the daylight hours of 8am to 6pm. This regulation was widely ignored, and on one occasion a policeman was sent to arrest illegal bathers. Several hundred of them gathered to face the lone constable, who decided not to push the point. The local by-law eventually became a dead letter as a result of a legal challenge by Frank and Bert Gurr. Members of the St Clair Surf-Lifesaving Club, the brothers later lost their lives in the Great War.

In the early years of the twentieth century there was widespread concern about the number of drownings, many the result of attempting to ford rivers. The situation was such that road accidents only began to claim more lives than drownings in 1928. Many people were unable to swim, so the Royal Humane Society of Australasia, founded in 1874, provided swimming and life-saving training. Early lifesaving was mainly confined to swimming baths rather than the ocean, but the visit in 1910 of William Henry, founder of the Royal Life Saving Society in Britain and a pioneer of water polo, prompted the formation of the first surf lifesaving clubs here. Henry set up 'head centres'

of the RLSS in Otago, Canterbury, Wanganui, Hawke's Bay and Auckland. Surf patrols had been organised and rescues were carried out in the 1909-10 season at Castlecliff (Wanganui) and Lyall Bay (Wellington), and then at New Brighton (Christchurch) from March 1911. Surf Lifesaving clubs had been formed in these three places, together with Worsler Bay (Wellington) and Napier, in the course of 1910. St Clair was the next club to be formed, on 12 January 1911.

These early lifesaving clubs were usually linked to swimming clubs. The Dunedin Amateur Swimming Club had originally met at Morgan's Baths on the harbour shore at the lower end of Hanover Street. It was a warm salt-water swimming bath, the water being heated by the boilers of an old cement works. When Morgan's Baths closed, the club moved to the natural rock pool at the end of St Clair beach. Surf bathing became especially popular at St Clair and St Kilda in Edwardian times. Several keen surf bathers met at Wheeler's Tearooms in St Clair in early 1910 to discuss forming a club. A public meeting followed at the Bungalow Tearooms in St Kilda, where it was agreed to form the Pacific Surf Bathing Club. The club had three branches along Ocean Beach: St Clair, St Kilda and Forbury in between.

Early the following year, the St Clair branch decided to form a Surf-Lifesaving Club. Within its first year members had already saved two people from drowning. They made their own surf reel, wound with locally-made rope. This was later replaced with an Australian-made reel. Surf lifesaving was well established in Australia before it started here, and local clubs adopted techniques and equipment pioneered across the Tasman. The St Clair Surf-Lifesaving Club had a small hexagonal pavilion on the beach, which on one occasion was swept out to sea in rough weather. A week later, it was swept back onto the beach on the same spot. A more substantial two-storey structure was built to replace it in 1914. By then the Surf-Lifesaving and Bathing Club had grown to about 500 members, men and women. Other Otago surf lifesaving clubs followed after the war: Milton (1925), Oreti (1929), St Kilda (1930), Brighton (1938), Kaka Point and Tomahawk (both 1939), Taramea Bay (Riverton) 1956, Moana Rua (1961; Warrington from 1976), and Waikouaiti (1964).



With thanks to Murray Wilson of the St Clair SLSC. See also Ivan Jackson, *Sand Between My Toes: The Story of Surf Lifesaving in New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2006).

# JUST PASSING THROUGH

Celebrity Visitors to Dunedin



This exhibition was my daughter's idea. Some years ago when she was just a little girl I asked her what she would like to see at the Museum; something about all the famous people who have visited Dunedin was her response. This sounded like a worthwhile idea and in preparation, I began compiling a list of all the 'famous' people I could find who had passed through Dunedin. It grew fairly quickly into a sizeable roll call. As KC McDonald noted in his centennial history of Dunedin City, 'There is no gainsaying Dunedin's remoteness. It looks to the south, with its back to the world. Yet it is surprising how many of the great ones of the earth have found their way, at one time or another, to this far city.'

But there were a couple of problems. What exactly constitutes 'famous' was the first. Celebrity is such a passing thing. Someone who was 'world famous' in their day can quickly be forgotten after their passing. Carrie Nation is a good example. This temperance fanatic from the United States achieved worldwide notoriety in the early twentieth century for her antics smashing up saloons with an axe. An imposing figure at over six feet tall, Carrie was more than a little mad and indeed ended her days in an asylum. She apparently visited Dunedin in 1909, though without her famous axe. Yet who remembers Carrie now?

The second issue was the challenge of completeness. Lists imply comprehensive coverage and I quickly realised that this was a very unlikely goal. Even with a commonly understood concept of what constitutes 'celebrity', it seemed unlikely that a list would satisfy every visitor's notion of who should be included. I therefore opted instead to explore a few thematically linked groups of famous visitors and leave the display open for visitors to add their own suggestions and memories. This has proven fascinating as the notes added to the show by recent visitors demonstrate a remarkable range of 'celebrities', many of whom I have never heard of! (Though 'I woz here' doesn't really count).

The first theme was 'pop icons'; some staples of twentieth century popular culture. Quite apart from the alliterative appeal, the Beatles, Batman and Bond made a great set of names to start with. Few people alive in the 1960s could be unaware of the existence of the Beatles, and most Dunedin people will probably recall that the 'Fab Four' passed through the city, albeit very briefly. Unlike many other 'famous' names of the 1960s, the Beatles' popularity continues unabated down to the present. So too does the cartoon character of Batman, finding new incarnations on television and at the movies in each decade since. Likewise James Bond, originally debuting on screen in 1962 and still one of the major movie 'franchises' in the 2010s. All three have their Dunedin connection, outlined in the display.

The second theme looks at Dunedin as the staging post for expeditions to Antarctica, especially during the 'Heroic Age' of exploration associated with Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton. Both of these great British heroes of the early 20th century passed through Dunedin en route for the ice. Dunedin and Port Chalmers were indeed the last inhabited places that Scott's doomed expedition to the Pole ever visited. Admiral Byrd followed in their footsteps, to Dunedin as well as to the ice, and American expeditions to Antarctica continued to use the city as a supply base until the 1960s. New Zealand's own great Antarctic expedition – the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 1956-58 – also had a Dunedin link, both as a port of call for HMNZS *Endeavour* en route and through Dunedin participants like the late Murray Ellis.

The final theme was a literary one. Dunedin has a reputation as a writers' city and some giants of world literature have been visitors here. I chose just three: Anthony Trollope, Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) and JB Priestley. All of them had lovely things to say about Dunedin and that's what we really want from our celebrity visitors after all. Priestley's visit in the 1970s offers an instructive lesson on how hard it can be to tell what visitors – famous or otherwise – will enjoy. Priestley was hosted by the inimitable Shona McFarlane and her account of their Sunday picnic on the Otago Peninsula describes an absolute disaster where everything went wrong, especially the weather. But Priestley wrote of the same event, 'This Sunday in Dunedin wasn't simply a good day. It still lives in my memory as the peak day of all our days in New Zealand...'

*Just Passing Through* will be in the *Kā Hau Ē Whā / People of the Four Winds* gallery until 26 September.

**Seán Brosnahan**

The August 1964 edition of *Photo Review* featuring the arrival of The Beatles in Dunedin - Otago Settlers Museum collection

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## Upcoming Events at the OSM in September

Sunday 5 September 2pm

**Tour: Smith Gallery – Last Chance to See!**

Join our guide to hear the personal stories behind some of our favourite portraits in the Smith Gallery.

Sunday 12 September 2pm

**Lecture - Gold and Coal Mining in Otago**

David Craw, Professor of Geology, University of Otago will discuss the principal environmental issues of historic mining in Otago. **FREE**

Sunday 19 September 2pm

**Tour: Smith Gallery – Last Chance to See!**

Join our guide to hear the personal stories behind some of our favourite portraits in the Smith Gallery.

Sunday 26 September 2pm

**Guided Walking Tour - Women of Dunedin**

Our President, Dr Dorothy Page will share the lives of some of the women of Dunedin's past: wealthy and poor, respectable and disreputable. Meet at the Museum. **\$10.**

**Booking essential:** robyn.johnston@dcc.govt.nz ph 4742728

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## Last Chance to See...

As part of our continuing redevelopment, the Otago Settlers Museum will be closing for a short period from 27 September 2010. We will re-open in early December 2010 in the Art Deco former NZR Bus Station Building Foyer, further along Cumberland Street (towards the Chinese Gardens).

Come in before Sunday 26 September for your last chance to see these old favourites before we close!

- **The Smith Gallery**
- ***Across the Ocean Waves***
- ***Kāi Tahu Whānui ki Otago***
- ***Windows on a Chinese Past***

as well as the **Hall of History** displays on early Dunedin, gold mining and the *Appliance Emporium*.

Also, don't miss ***Just Passing Through: Celebrity Visitors to Dunedin*** which also has its last day on Sunday 26 September.

While we are temporarily closed, keep an eye on our website [www.otago.settlers.museum](http://www.otago.settlers.museum)



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## Do You Remember the Dunedin Housewives' Association?

Sandra Spence is researching the history of the Dunedin Housewives' Association from 1930 to 1977. She has been looking at why housewives felt they needed to form an association, what their ongoing concerns were, and what they did about them. The Association's minute books and correspondence survive, but Sandra would love to hear from any former members or their relations, or from anyone who has any other information about the Association. She can be contacted at home on (03) 4712237, by e-mail at sandants@hotmail.com, or by post at 105 St Leonards Drive, St Leonards, Dunedin 9022.



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## OSA Auckland Meeting

Sixteen members of the Association attended a meeting held at Ferndale on 17 April to hear Linda Wigley speak on the redevelopment of the Museum. She showed a very interesting slide show of the progress on the redevelopment project. Linda described Stage One, which is now complete with its very large storage areas, together with conservation and processing facilities. All the objects in the collection are fumigated and treated prior to being stored in the new area: a mammoth task. Linda also talked about Stage Two which has recently begun, and involves removing the roof of the former NZR Road Services Garage as well as internal alterations.

Jean Jackson gave us an overview of the new book she is working on, the Chinese population of Lawrence. A general discussion followed, and the meeting concluded with a pot-luck lunch.

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## OSA Winter Meeting



Elizabeth Caldwell, Director of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery spoke about her first year in the post to the well-attended Winter Meeting of the Association in the Burns Hall on 7 July. Describing herself as 'a new settler in Dunedin,' though descended from one of the earliest settlers of Canterbury, Elizabeth outlined her career and the highlights of her first year at the Gallery. Visitor numbers are the highest ever, and more than two million individual visits have been made since the Gallery moved from Logan Park to the Octagon in 1996. It has had six sites since it opened in what is now the Maritime Gallery of Otago Museum in 1884, narrowly pipping Auckland to the title of the first public art gallery in the country. When the collection moved to the Municipal Chambers in 1888 it had seven oil paintings and six watercolours, though the collection then began to grow rapidly. About 60% of the current collection has been given rather than purchased, and this proportion has risen to 80% in the last decade.

Elizabeth showed us a 'sneak preview' slide of the Gallery's latest acquisition, 'The Farmer's Daughter' of 1929-30 by Frances Hodgkins. It is a portrait of Annie Coggan painted when Hodgkins was staying at 'The Croft,' Bradford-on-Tone, Somerset, and was in the family's possession until recently. It was bought in December 2009 for \$230,000 with support from the Richdale Trust, the Friends of the Gallery and the City Council, and will be on public display from late August. Elizabeth admitted her favourite painting in the collection, though, is James Tissot's 'Waiting at the Station, Willesden Junction'; Reuben Patterson's works are favourites of hers, too.

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Jean Spence Rust née Sutherland, who joined the Dunedin Housewives' Association in 1939 and held office as secretary, president and executive officer.  
Frances Hodgkins' *The Farmer's Daughter*, 1929-30, a recent acquisition of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery - Webb's Auctioneers

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## For Your Diary

# Annual General Meeting

The 111<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Otago Settlers Association will be held in Burns Hall, First Church grounds at 7.30 on Tuesday 14 September. There is some parking in the church grounds for those who require it and also a drop-off point at the door of the hall.

Lynley Hood, author of *Minnie Dean: Her Life and Crimes* will speak on 'Making peace with the past: another chapter in the Minnie Dean story'. For more than a century, while her grave lay unmarked in the Old Winton Cemetery, the legend of Minnie Dean haunted Southland. Then, in February 2009, a headstone was unveiled on Minnie Dean's grave in a ceremony of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. Lynley will present an illustrated account of this historic event, and the circumstances and personalities that brought it to fruition.

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## OSA Greeting Cards



We have recently taken delivery of an order of most attractive greeting cards, designed for us by Tim Cornelius (to whose skill we owe the design of this newsletter), and using the image of the Early Settlers Museum members will know from the cover of *To Fame Undying*. We are delighted with them. The cards, which are blank, had been intended for Committee use but the response of the first two people we sent them to was to ask if they could buy some. So we have decided to sell them to interested OSA members at \$2 for a single card or \$10 for a set of six (envelopes included.) They will be available on 14 September at the AGM.

## Introduce a Friend to the Otago Settlers Association

Help us extend the network of support for the Otago Settlers Museum as it enters the 21st century in an exciting phase of expansion and development.

### What we do:

- Regular financial support for the Museum. Currently this is \$15,000 a year. This year's donation is earmarked for digitising the iconic ancestral photographs in the Smith Gallery.
- Purchase of special items for the collection when they come up. In 2009 we contributed \$3000 (together with the Burns Club, which gave \$1000) to purchase a gold filigree snuff box, believed to have belonged to Robert Burns.
- Sponsorship of the much-loved annual *Pixie Town* exhibition.
- Sponsorship of *Walk Dunedin* tours, always popular with tourists.
- An annual History prize, for the top second-year history student at Otago University. Our \$3000 provides an internship supervised by Museum staff over six weeks of the summer break. Some excellent projects have resulted.
- Volunteering, as requested by the Museum, for example when the Museum is opened after the ANZAC Dawn Service.
- Contribution, through the Alfred and Isabel Reed Trust, to the publication costs of selected books with a local content. The most recent included *Robbie: The Story of Dunedin's Burns Statue* by Donald Gordon and *Growing Up in Wartime* compiled by Isobel Veitch.

### What's in it for you?

- An excellent programme of Members' Evenings, with outstanding speakers and the companionship of people with similar interests.
- Invitation to the Anniversary Day Dinner on 23 March.
- Occasional book launches – always popular and interesting, typically of books that have benefited from our contributions through the Reed Trust.
- The Tuesday Club: one morning a month, really interesting speakers and morning tea.
- This high-class newsletter, full of local history interest, four times a year.
- A complimentary copy of our history, *To Fame Undying* by Seán Brosnahan.
- The satisfaction of belonging to an organisation which has greatly changed with the times since it was founded in 1898, but which has always been at the heart of Dunedin.

# Introduce a Friend to the Otago Settlers Association



**Otago Settlers Association Membership Application Form**  
Please return this section with payment to  
Otago Settlers Association, PO Box 74, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand

## Annual Membership

**1 July to 30 June.** Discounts are available for those joining during the year.

Receipts for Subscriptions and Donations of \$5.00 and over may be attached to your Tax Rebate Claim.

Family and Family Life Membership include two adults and children under 18 at the same address.

Please complete personal membership details overleaf.

## Subscription Category (Please tick as appropriate)

ANNUAL		LIFE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$700.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Over 60	\$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 60	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Over 60	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Over 60	\$450.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior (U18)	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Endowment	\$1,400.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Company/Firm	\$75.00		
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organisation	\$55.00		

## I/We wish to join the Otago Settlers Association Inc.

PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

Family and Two Over-60 members; please give family name and first names of both proposed members.

Title (please circle): Dr/Rev/Mr/Master/Mrs/Ms/Miss

Family Name(s): .....

First Name(s): .....

Junior Members, please give date of birth: .....

Address: .....

Suburb: ..... City: .....

Postcode: ..... Telephone: (0\_\_ ) .....

Email: .....

Your reason for joining the Association:

.....  
.....  
.....

### Privacy Act Declaration

I understand that the information I have given will be used for the general purposes of Association administration and membership benefits. The Privacy Act gives the right to access this information and to correct if necessary.

Signature: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Cash/Cheque \* enclosed for \$ .....

(made payable to Otago Settlers Association)

\* EFTPOS and credit card facilities not available



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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

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