



OTAGO SETTLERS NEWS

MARCH 2011 | ISSUE 108



WE SAIL THE OCEAN BLUE

↔ Otago Settlers Museum Internship Project 2010 ↔

Thanks to the Otago Settlers Association and the Department of History at Otago University, in the summer of 2009-10 I was presented with the opportunity to undertake an internship project at the Otago Settlers Museum.

The purpose of my project was to create a comprehensive database of all the first-person shipping accounts in the Museum's diary collection, including manuscript diaries, typescripts and photocopies, as well as reminiscences of voyages which are held in the collection. This represents approximately 180 individuals who voyaged to the Antipodes between 1840 and 1900. The majority of these journals predate the 1880s, after which steam passages to New Zealand became more common; consequently the collection is one that represents voyages during the 'Age of Sail'. These journeys were arduous. Early voyages sometimes lasted four or five months. The voyage

to New Zealand and Australia was considered a test of one's endurance and emigrants required a great deal of courage and determination. The diaries certainly convey this theme and are an extremely valuable source of information about the difficulties of the voyages to the Antipodes for nineteenth-century emigrants.

In practice, this project required me to read all the diaries in the collection and collate as much information about the diarists as possible, using the content of the diary, shipping lists, debtors' lists, church records, marriage records, and other sources in order to profile the diarists and the collection as a whole. It quickly became apparent that to read all 180 accounts and the various copies in six weeks was ambitious. Consequently I prioritised those that were original manuscripts. There are 61 manuscripts in the collection and I read all of them as well as the copies associated with them.

A rare image of steerage passengers at sea, taken aboard the *Nelson* in the South Atlantic in 1863. A lot is known about this particular voyage thanks to a diary by Isabella Henderson, seated in the centre of the photograph. – Otago Settlers Museum

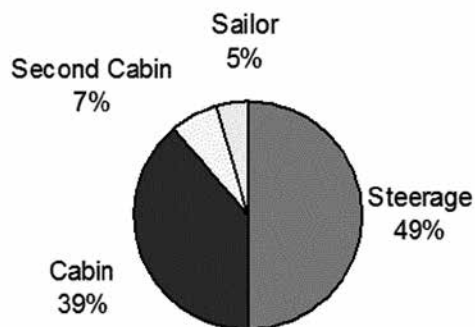
The OSM diary collection is one that does not conform to usual trends. Historians have noted that although nine out of ten passengers travelled steerage, it is estimated that only one in five of the surviving accounts were penned by steerage passengers. This does not apply to the OSM collection where almost half of the accounts were written by steerage passengers. There are also a number of excellent accounts written by women in the collection, including five written by steerage class women, easily the most under-represented group of emigrants in collections like this one. The diversity of perspectives represented is certainly a strength of this collection. Possibly the most distinctive feature of this collection is that an overwhelming majority of the diarists were Scottish. This is unsurprising, as most of the diarists were bound for Otago. The Scots had higher levels of literacy than other ethnic groups in this period, which perhaps explains the surprising number of steerage class passengers who kept diaries.

The most interesting thing about this project was gaining such an intimate knowledge of shipboard life. I learnt a lot about the differences in experiences for women and men, as well as those of different ethnicities, religions, ages and classes. There were certainly common themes throughout all the accounts: the risk of death, either due to sickness or accident, seasickness, homesickness, fraudulent captains, food, births, deaths, marriages and most prevalent, was the monotony and tedium of the 90-day sea voyage. While I could go into an immense amount of detail on each of these points, there is not sufficient space here to do so. Instead, I will share some anecdotes from a few of my favourite accounts.

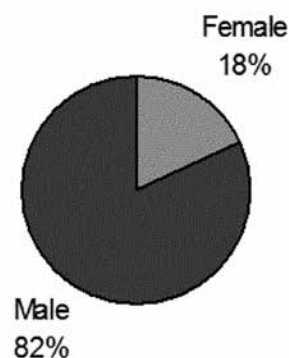
There was enormous variation in readability between the diaries. Some were completely illegible. Some were what I termed 'weather and wind' dairies that chronicled nothing more than the ship's location and the weather conditions on the voyage. Others however were filled with rich detail and personal insights into life on board these emigrant vessels.

The voyage of the *Palmerston* in 1872, as recorded (in English) by Mr Christen Christensen, a Danish man in his thirties, was one that was rife with scandal. Firstly, there was an incident where two female steerage passengers were found sleeping in the sailors' quarters. The girls found themselves in a lot of trouble and were sent back to their beds without their clothes, which were not returned to them until the following day. The other major scandal on board concerned the death of a Norwegian man. Rumours spread on ship that he had killed himself with poison, but Christensen explains that this rumour was only to hide the fact that he was killed accidentally through the fault of a steward. The steward had ordered everyone on deck and sealed off the quarters for fumigation; however, he did not thoroughly check all the berths before pouring in the 'Stockholm tar'. It was later found that the Norwegian man had been asleep in his berth and had been suffocated by the poisonous fumes. The man, a widower, had one son with him on board. The Captain, who wanted to avoid investigation, announced to the passengers he would raise this orphaned boy as his own. 'That promise gave satisfaction to some of the passenger, not knowing the divious side of that promise by the Captain,' writes Christensen. There is a later addition in the diary where Christensen notes that upon arrival in Port Chalmers, the boy was taken to Oamaru where he was given work and new name so that he could not be traced back to the ship: 'so ended that Honorable promise of a German Shipscaptain.'

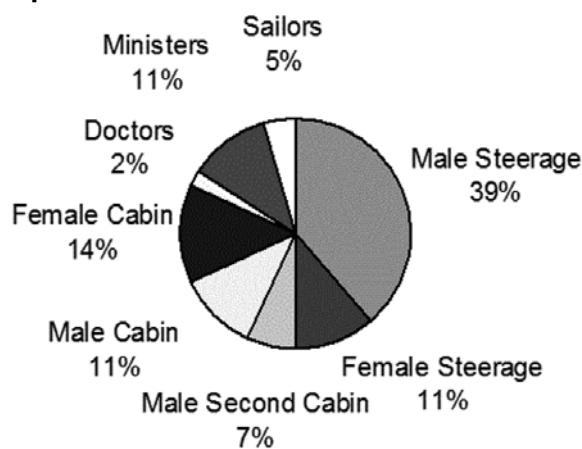
Accomodation



Gender



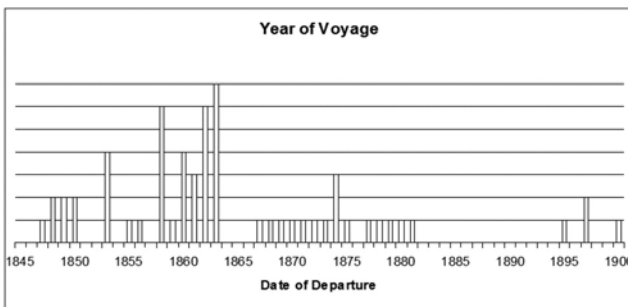
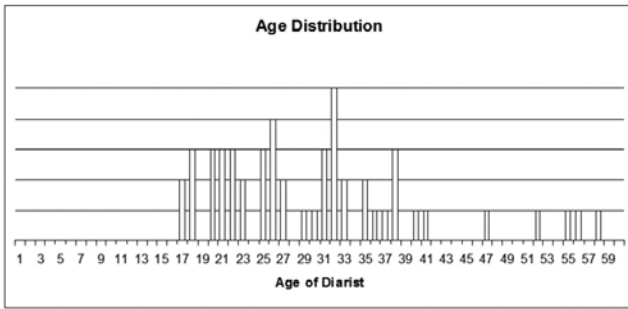
Perspectives



Ethnicity



These graphs provide a visual profile of the portion of the collection I read, representing one third of the accounts. This analysis includes known information only. Where class, ethnicity or age is unknown, that individual has not been included.



Not all the voyages were quite as eventful as that one. However, often I found general observations as interesting as scandals. The following passage, written by Mr John Smyth Fleming in 1862, is an explanation of the perceived differences in character between the ethnic groups on board:

I must notice [i.e. mention] the marked difference between the characters of the Scotch English & Irish, which is the same in the 1st, 2nd & 3rd classes. The Scotch are immensely the best behaved – they being quiet obliging forbearing decent and intelligent. I am sorry I must class the English and Irish as one, and declare them exactly opposite to the Scotch in the above respects. Their minds are something like a moral cesspool. They are babes in intellect – they curse as much as might damn the Universe and their obscene language w[oul]d disgrace the lower regions – unless they are all the worse. Of course I speak in general for there are some noble exceptions.

It is examples like this that have led some historians to suggest the emigrant ships were 'microcosms' of Victorian Britain with ethnic differences and class hierarchies on land translating to life on board ships.

In some cases where the Museum is lucky enough to have multiple accounts from the same voyage, the comparison of these accounts was interesting. For the 1862 voyage of the *Arima*, the collection has two accounts, one written by cabin-class passenger and wife of the shipboard minister Mrs Jessie Connor (incidentally, my great-great-great-great aunt; a fact unknown to me before I began the project), and steerage passenger Miss Mary Brown. In Mrs Connor's account she describes how her son becomes firm friends with the Captain's dog and is most distressed when he goes missing. Mrs Connor

is told by fellow cabin passengers that the dog most likely fell overboard, but as they were so close to Stewart Island at the time, the dog probably swam ashore. However, in Miss Brown's account, she writes that the Captain's dog drank some sea water, went mad, jumped overboard and its body was later pulled back on deck. I really enjoy the idea that Mrs Connor was lied to in order to spare her distress, but mostly I enjoy that we know that at all, something only possible because we have more than one account from the same voyage.

The project was immensely interesting. I learnt a lot about the early history of Otago, the experience of these emigrants and about museums and archives. I have certainly gained enormous respect for these early colonists and their capacity for endurance. I want to thank firstly, my supervisor Seán Brosnahan, as well as the Otago Settlers Association and the History Department of the University for making this internship possible. It was an enormously valuable experience that I hope will continue to be offered to history students at the university.

Nicola Lomax
Summer Intern 2009-10



The latest recipient of the OSA summer internship for a second-year student in the History Department at the University of Otago is Siobhan Downes. Over this summer Siobhan worked, under the supervision of Peter Read, to seek out more stories and information relating to the operation of the NZR Road Services Bus Station. Siobhan was with us until 18 February, but Peter would still be glad to hear from anyone who has stories, photographs or any related material they would like to share. He can be contacted on (03) 474 2732 or at pread@dcc.govt.nz



The *Palmerston*, whose 1872 voyage was well documented by Danish diarist Christen Christensen - Otago Settlers Museum

STOMPING at the SAVOY



While the 121-year-old Savoy Hotel in the Strand, London, has just emerged from a lengthy, multi-million pound renovation, Dunedin's namesake restaurant on the corner of Princes Street and Moray Place is fast approaching its centenary.

The Savoy was one of Dunedin's grandest restaurants for over 60 years. It opened in 1912 as a grill room. Its early success led to crowding, especially when men needed to descend the stairs to go outside to smoke. Proprietors Philip and Pearl Barling, always concerned with customer comfort, built a roof garden as an extension to the restaurant. Quick outdoors access allowed men to adjourn from the table for a smoke without having to leave the restaurant. This form of practicality and service, combined with a one-shilling dinner (equivalent now to about \$9), led to greater successes and further expansions. In the 1920s, the Barlings added on the Tudor, Somerset and Warwick rooms which allowed for banqueting, dancing and fine dining. The Tudor Room was done up in an especially grand style: the furniture was built by master craftsman George Bruce Harper who combined traditional Tudor lines with his own original style,

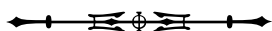
and the moulded ceilings and brass fittings continued a décor reminiscent of the best English dining rooms. Yet the transition from a casual grill room to a fine dining restaurant befuddled many of the Barlings' early punters. The opening of the Warwick Room was a particular disaster. The brass chandeliers, original oil paintings, fine silverware and sparkling glasses proved too fancy for many regulars who took one look at the dining room and deemed it 'too good to eat in.' Only the Barlings and their lawyer dined there on its opening evening, in a room set for 200. The lesson was clear: 'make the patrons feel at home and create an atmosphere which is acceptable to people in all walks of life.' With a bit of deft marketing, the restaurant quickly became popular and continued to thrive, eventually becoming one of the largest in Australasia over the successive years.

During the 1930s, the Savoy did witness a drop in sales. But instead of cutting back on luxurious dining, the Barlings expanded their services. 'Many Dunedin people ... have their fondest memories of the Savoy during the Depression years' when the Barlings held a series of cabarets, novelty dances and

The Savoy Restaurant in the 1920s or 1930s

orchestras. The dances were popular and the Barlings ran them well. In March 1930, the Savoy hosted a ball for Admiral Richard E Byrd, the American Antarctic explorer. After dinner, there was to be dancing in the Tudor Room where a large American flag was draped over the main table. During dinner, some patriotic prankster stole the flag. An irate Philip Barling then turned off all the lights and refused to allow any dancing until the flag was returned. When Barling turned the lights back on, the flag had reappeared; no one wanted to delay the fun.

There was a segment of the Dunedin population that found the luxurious dining rooms to be a perfect backdrop to their private parties. In 1933, Percy Velange, an up-and-coming employee at Dalgety's, held an exclusive dinner in the Somerset Lounge. Twenty-seven of Dunedin's bright young things arrived for the Japanese-themed dinner party complete with silk lanterns and waitresses wearing kimonos. Diners sat on cushions on the floor in their tuxedos and evening gowns and were served on small, individually built tables. An extraordinary centrepiece took up most of the room, recreating a mountain scene complete with a potted forest, hanging cherry blossoms, a lake and a smouldering volcano, possibly a miniature Mt Fuji. The elaborate scene was constrained neither by the grey mood of the Depression nor even the licensing laws, each table being replete with filled champagne and wine glasses. These pleasure seekers were showing off their finery and sophistication, as well as their disregard for the rules, by documenting such an exclusive, but private, affair.



This is an extract taken (with the kind permission of the publisher) from Perrin Rowland's *Dining Out: A History of the Restaurant in New Zealand* (Auckland University Press, 2010), pages 84-86, citing the *Otago Daily Times* 20 May 1974, page 4, and 8 November 1952, page 6.

Afternoon Tea at the Savoy

New Zealanders have always consumed far more tea than even the English, and afternoon tea was a favourite custom. Since the Southern Heritage Trust revived afternoon teas at the Savoy nine years ago, many Dunedin people have enjoyed rediscovering a tradition that combines elegance, nostalgia and sociability in the Savoy's Tudor Room, which is unchanged from its heyday.

The 2010 series was a resounding success with over 100 participants on each occasion. There are five themed teas a year, usually held on Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:30. Hats are not obligatory, but fun. Bring your friends and join us.

The first afternoon tea this year will be on Wednesday 6 April, with the theme 'A Garden of 1001 Roses,' presented by Heritage Roses Otago.

Reservations are essential: telephone the Savoy on (03) 477 4649 and leave a message including your telephone number for confirmation.

The aim of the Southern Heritage Trust is to foster the appreciation of Otago's rich cultural, social, architectural and industrial heritage and to preserve it for future generations. We are based in the Sexton's Cottage at Dunedin's Northern Cemetery, which is now an attractive information centre. Visit our website (www.southernheritage.org.nz) for an update on activities and our popular informative cemetery website (www.northerncemetery.org.nz). For further information contact Ann Barsby at barsby@xtra.co.nz

Ann Barsby



Afternoon tea in the Tudor Room of the Savoy in 2010.

THE OLDEST KNIGHT OF LITTLEBOURNE

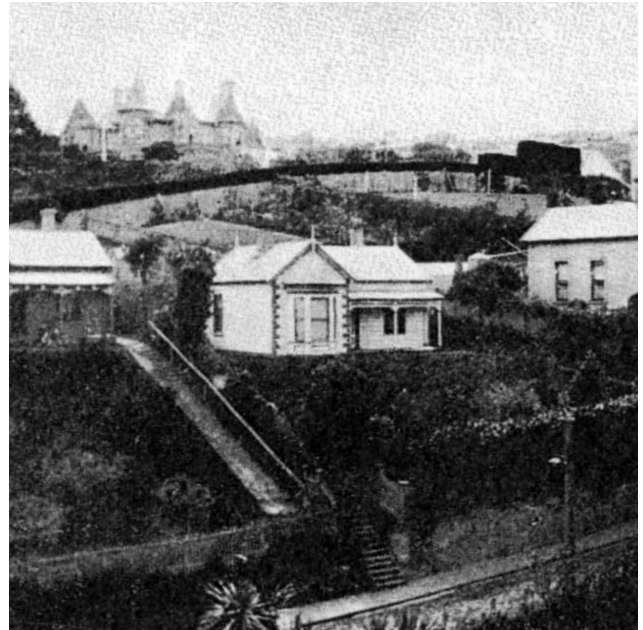
The last of the seven knights who lived within a stone's throw of Littlebourne was Alfred Hamish Reed. (The others were John Roberts (senior and junior), Alexander Fowler Roberts, George Fenwick, Charles Hercus and Robert Kennedy.)

Many readers will remember AH Reed as a snowy-haired old man but it was as a young man, newly wed, that he and his frail visually impaired wife Isabel moved into a rented cottage at No 44 Littlebourne Road in 1900. It stood in the shadow of Littlebourne House but the contrast between the two dwellings could hardly have been greater. One was the grandest house in Dunedin, the other one of the humblest with no electricity, gas or sewerage and very little in the way of furniture. That was because the Reeds had very little money.

Born in Middlesex in 1875, Alf had come to New Zealand with his parents and siblings in 1887, the family settling at Whangarei. Alf had little formal education and a bad leg injury, which troubled him for the rest of his long life, and which incapacitated him for about two years before he was able to work. The first money he earned was as a gum digger. In his spare time he taught himself shorthand and later mastered typing as well. It was as a typewriter salesman that he came to Dunedin in 1897. A devout Methodist, he became a Sunday School superintendent and eventually developed a lucrative business as a Sunday School supplier.

His bad leg precluded overseas service in the First World War but, because of his shorthand and typing skills, he was employed as a clerk at the Featherston and Trentham camps.

In 1932 he and his nephew Alexander Wyclif (Clif) Reed established the publishing house AH & AW Reed, and AH became a prolific author. Most of his books dealt with aspects of New Zealand history, his most successful being *The Story of New Zealand* which ran to seven editions between 1945 and 1955. (The twelfth edition appeared in 1970.)



In 1938 AH and his wife established the Alfred and Isabel Reed Trust to which the name of Alf's sister Marion was later appended. The trust promoted Christianity, education, literature and philosophy. Isabel died in 1939.

AH had a lifelong passion for collecting mediaeval manuscripts, early Bibles, famous autographs and other antiquities. By 1948 he had amassed a large and valuable collection which, in that year, he donated to the Dunedin Public Library. It is now housed in the library's Reed Gallery.

At the advanced age of 80 AH Reed started to become famous for feats of mountain climbing and long-distance walking. He climbed Mount Ruapehu at 83, walked from North Cape to Bluff at 85, and Sydney to Melbourne at 89 – all this on a gammy leg!

He had some well-known idiosyncrasies: he always slept in a sleeping bag with the window wide open whatever the weather, and had daily conversations with his long-dead wife. He was in his 100th year when he died in his sleep in 1975.

He received several unusual tributes during and after his life. The AH Reed Memorial Park near Whangarei was given that name when he was still alive; his knighthood at the age of 98 got him into the *Guinness Book of Records* as the oldest person to be knighted; and, despite being a life-long teetotaler, he was a posthumous recipient of one of the nine Speight's Honours awarded in 2001 to people who had evinced the characteristics of a good Southern Man.

Donald Gordon

This is the much-delayed concluding part of Donald's series on the holders of knighthoods who lived in and around Littlebourne House. If you would like to read more about AH Reed, see Ian Dougherty's *Books and Boots: The Story of New Zealand Publisher, Writer and Long Distance Walker, Alfred Hamish Reed* (University of Otago Press, 2005).

The Reed home at 44 Littlebourne Road (centre) with Littlebourne House visible in the background.

Dunedin Fire Brigade 150th Anniversary



On 11–13 March this year, the Dunedin Fire Brigade will celebrate 150 years of service to our community. During this period:

the Dunedin Volunteer Fire Brigade had its first meeting on 20 February 1861. However with the discovery of gold in Central Otago, this group simply locked the station doors and rushed off to make their fortunes. This left the rapidly developing town without fire protection for the next eighteen months.

An early way of preventing the spread of fire was to demolish buildings. However when Lieut Robinson did this in 1864 he was sued by the building's owner. This brought about reluctance on the part of Brigade officers to continue this practice and contributed to the spread of some of Dunedin's larger fires in the late 1860s.

Dunedin became incorporated as a city in 1865, and the Dunedin Volunteer Fire Brigade became the first city fire brigade in New Zealand.

The whole Brigade fell out with the Captain and resigned en masse in 1890. When the Dunedin City Council readily replaced them, they retaliated by setting false alarms and pelting members of the new brigade with eggs.

During the late 1920s and Depression years, times were so tight that a fireman was sent by bicycle from the South Dunedin Station to put out a wash-house chimney fire in Tainui. The brigade may have saved petrol but the wash-house was destroyed.

The Dunedin Metropolitan Fire Brigade managed to destroy Donaghys Ropeworks whilst undertaking a fire safety inspection in 1949. When a fireman held a lighted torch up to check the rooftop fire sensor, he stumbled and dropped the torch amongst the flammable bales. As a result the building was completely gutted.

Amongst these types of incidents, the Dunedin Brigade continually strived for technological and training improvements and led the way in the implementation of these as National Standards in the 1950s and 60s.

This story is told in the 150th Anniversary Celebrations publication *Ready Aye Ready: 150 years of Fire Brigades in Dunedin, 1861-2011*, written by John Ingram and Paul Clements and published by Dunedin Fire Brigade Restoration Society.

The publication has kindly been supported by the Alfred and Isabel Reed Trust, administered by the Otago Settlers Association. It contains over 140 historic and contemporary illustrations and will be launched this March. It is a limited edition of only 500 copies. Should you desire a copy, preferential orders can be taken by forwarding your details and a cheque payment of \$45 (made out to the Dunedin Fire Brigade Restoration Society) to:

Secretary DFBRs,
c/o 238 High Street,
Dunedin 9016.



Top left: Dunedin Volunteer Fire Brigade uniform 1862-1864 - DFBRs; Above left: South Dunedin station, opened 1 April 1917 - Otago Settlers Museum
Right: Paul Clements demonstrates an early Salvus Breathing Apparatus and the new-style Cromwell helmet - Gaylene Baird

The Christmas Meeting 10 December 2010

The Association's Christmas meeting at the Knox Hall was very well attended. We were entertained by the group Panache with music, songs and readings relating to Victorian Christmases. The music was performed on piano and harp, and the songs included J and M Robertson's 'A Scottish Emigrant', the English composer Ezra Read's medley of Christmas party music and the Australian composer George Clutsam's arpeggio-strewn 'La pluie de printemps' (he is best remembered as composer of 'Lilac Time'). More familiar tunes, played on the harp, included 'O Come All Ye Shepherds' and 'O Tannenbaum'. The readings included Mrs Isabella Beeton's recipe from her *Book of Household Management* for Christmas cake, and appropriately the evening concluded with refreshments, including Christmas cake, rum balls and strawberries. Some of the conversation was prompted by the discovery that forebears had once been shipmates.

Members had been asked to fill in slips naming the first member of their families to have arrived in the Colony, Dominion or Realm of New Zealand, the craft in which they arrived, and when. Of the 59 who did so, an impressive number knew the specific dates, one even being able to recall the specific flight number (our Director, on flight NZ002).

When the slips were pinned up by decade, it emerged that the most popular year by far for arriving was unsurprisingly 1848 (ten members' ancestors) followed by 1858 (six) and 1863 (five). The earliest arrived in the country in the reign of George IV in 1823 and the most recent was in the reign of his great-great-grand-niece Elizabeth II in 2004. This is by no means a scientific survey, as no-one admitted to an ancestor having arrived between 1875 and 1951. Nineteen arrivals were in the 1840s, fourteen each in the 1850s and 1860s, and just seven in the 1870s.

Of the ten arrivals in 1848, half were in the *Philip Laing*, four in the *Bernicia* (though one of these inexplicably got off in Nelson) and only one in the *Blundell*. Pairings of former shipmates were rare: from the *Robert Henderson* (1858), *Silestria* (1861) and the *Earl of Zetland* (1875). In two instances, ancestors were in the same ship but on different voyages: the *Sevilla* (1859 & 1862) and *Pladda* (1862 & 1863).

Miss Hooligan's Christmas Cake

Sung by Harry Melville and J. M. Oates with success.
Copies of this Song can always be had at the Poet's Box, 10 Hunter Street, Dundee, for the small sum of One Penny.

As I sat at my windy one evening,
The letter man brought unto me
A little gilt edged invitation,
Saying, Gilhooly, come over to tea.
Sure I knew that the Hooligans sent it,
So I went just for old friendship's sake,
And the first thing they gave me to tackle
Was a piece of Miss Hooligan's cake.

Chorus—There was plums and prunes and cherries,
And citron and raisins and cinnamon too,
There was nutmeg, cloves, and berries,
And the crust it was nailed on with glue.
There was caraway seeds in abundance,
Sure 'twould build up a fine stomachache,
'Twould kill a man twice after 'ating a slice
Of Miss Hooligan's Christmas cake,

Miss Mulligan wanted to taste it,
But really there wasn't no use,
They worked at it over an hour,
And they couldn't get none 'of it loose,
Till Hooligan went for the hatchet,
And Killy came in with a saw,
That cake was enough, by the powers,
To paralyze any man's jaw.

Mrs Hooligan, proud as a peacock,
Kept smiling and blinking away,
Till she fell over Flanigan's brogans,
And spilled a whole brewing of tay.
"Oh, Gilhooly," she cried, "you're not 'ating,
'Try a little bit more for my sake,"
"No, Mrs Hooligan," sez I,
"But I'd like the resate of that cake."

Maloney was took with the colic,
M'Nulty complained of his head,
M'Fadden lay down on the sofa,
And swore that he wished he was dead.
Miss Dally fell down in hysterics,
And there she did wriggle and shake,
While every man swore he was poisoned,
Through 'ating Miss Hooligan's cake.

For Your Diary Otago Anniversary Day Dinner

The Anniversary Day Dinner is always held on 23 March, and this year will be the final Heritage Festival event. Dunedin will celebrate the growth and prosperity that were the result of the gold rush years, it being 150 years since Gabriel Read made his auric discovery. The dinner will be held at the Mill Restaurant (2 Manor Place) on the ground floor of the old Crown Roller Mills, which is an interesting heritage venue. Enjoy a pleasant evening and three-course dinner, with menu choices, served at your table. The guest speaker will be Hamish Saxton, chief executive of Tourism Dunedin. He will talk on 'Celebrating Otago'. Tickets are \$45, available from the Otago Settlers Association and the Dunedin i-SITE/Visitor Centre.



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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