



Better than Spiderman!

The Museum's staff are very proud to have received the 'Project Achievement Award — Significant Project' at the Museums Aotearoa 2013 Conference in Hamilton in April.



The Museum's new Josephine Foyer - Photo by Graham Warman



The citation for the award reads: 'This transformational project is on a vast scale. A bold initiative, planned over an extended period to fulfil ambitions to bring extensive social history collections together with a large transport collection, the old Otago Settlers Museum has doubled in size. A sensitive design combines a well-loved museum building with an Art Deco bus station, respecting the special character of each while creating a thoroughly modern museum. The team has skilfully incorporated a diversity of interpretive techniques to tell the stories of Dunedin's many settler communities, and the new facilities, which include collection stores many will envy, ensure that staff and visitors will enjoy this renewed Dunedin landmark.'

With a project of this size and scope, the challenges were abundant. From the Director's perspective, the key ones were the tight timeframe; the need to build the team and 'skill sets'; the volume of work required on the collections for both display and storage; the phasing of the project; and the lack of certainty of funding from stage to stage. It is not often you have the opportunity to re-think the whole Museum in one 'hit', and this was certainly an exciting opportunity to do so. The knowledgeable in-house team was supplemented with a project team drawn from around the world. The collections team was expanded to cope with the additional demand, and once the conservation laboratory was completed, a team of conservators plugged away at the enormous task of cleaning and conserving collections for display and storage.

A fresh and cohesive approach was taken in the development of new displays and the interpretation of the collections. The new emphasis is on people, especially those who shaped Dunedin and give it its unique character. Personal accounts and stories are interwoven with objects, authentic experiences, images and digital interpretation.

The final funding of \$1.25 million for exhibitions was not confirmed until nine months before the end of the project. At this point, detailed design drawings were produced, registrations of interest called for, tenders awarded and exhibitions constructed. Some areas were completed just weeks before the reopening. The final, fourth stage of the project — the new entrance and reception building — was handed over for fit-out only five days before opening, and the café, shop and reception desk were constructed within this tight timeframe.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create something special, meeting world-class standards of design, interpretation and collections care. The result is a new and dynamic museum experience that focuses on the city of Dunedin, its people and its context within the province of Otago. The redeveloped Museum is already a big hit with residents and tourists alike. More than 77,000 visitors passed through the doors in the first seven weeks, more than formerly visited the Museum in an entire year. They included families, pre-school groups and cruise-ship passengers. Encouraging repeat visits was one of our key aims, and already some people have returned three or more times. One of the most popular spots is the Smith Gallery of early settler portraits, now brought up to date with large-format diji-screens.

The Museum has received some great responses from visitors, including that it is an international attraction and a great asset to the city. Here is a taste of what has been said: 'Great work on the upgrade! It's fantastic;' 'Awesome! This place is so cool. This is the best museum ever;' 'The tram is really cool and the whole place is so shiny and new;' 'A true Dunedin stunner; a brilliant addition to Dunedin;' 'Better than Spiderman!'

Linda Wigley
Director

Project Summary:

Total budget: \$37.4 million
Construction: \$31.4 million
Exhibition fixtures & fittings: \$6 million

Exhibition Designers: Workshop e
Architects: Robert Tongue / Baker Garden
Project Managers: Octa Associates Ltd
Construction: Lund South Ltd



Top: Museum Director Linda Wigley and Project Interpreter William McKee after receiving the award at the Museums Aotearoa 2013 Conference

Whetter of the Antarctic



Violence in the classroom is nothing new if an incident from Otago Boys' High School in 1904 is anything to go by. Leslie Hatton Whetter was then in his final year at the school, in the Matriculation Form. Appropriately for one who would go on to become a doctor, he was 'a very careless writer.' The English master, FH ('Barney') Campbell, 'was quite convinced that he had made up his mind not to write decently.' Whetter was given a detention for his bad handwriting and when Campbell looked at the detention card the next day he saw that the boy had written in shorthand opposite his name: 'What rot this is!' Whetter confessed to having written it, so Campbell announced 'I am going to cane you.' As he recorded in his memoirs 30 years later: 'He was a big fellow and I disliked having to do so, but it was a piece of gross impertinence. He held out his left hand, and as I brought down the cane he let out with his right fist and hit me on the mouth, cutting my lower lip on the inside. Then he made for the door and I was too flabbergasted to follow him.'

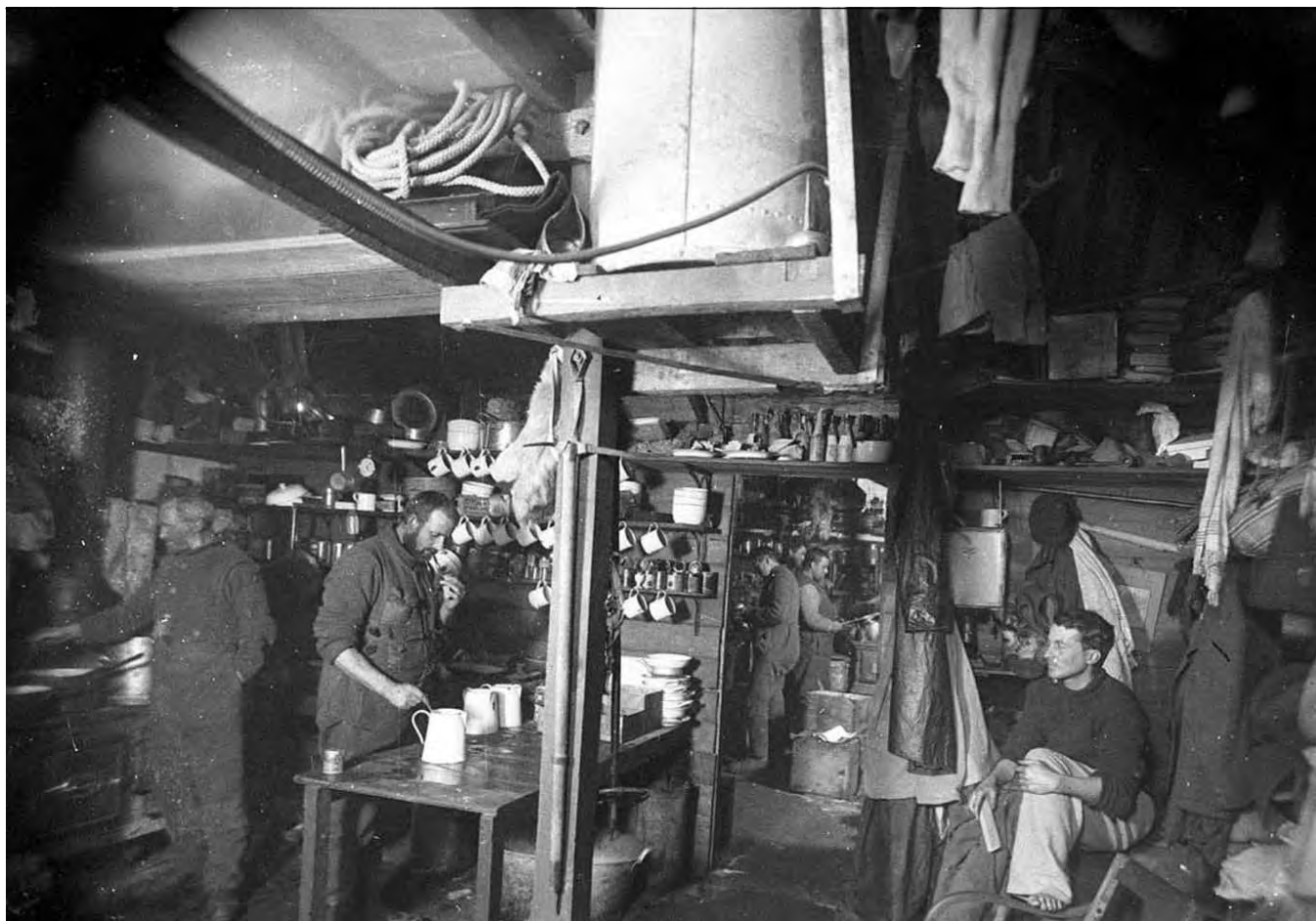
Campbell, still dripping blood from his mouth, immediately went to see the Rector and said: 'I told you what would happen. I had warned him about W—— and said I was quite sure that he was deliberately writing badly and I advised the Rector to deal with him but he did not attach any importance to my protest.' Campbell's split lip needed two stitches and he found it difficult to speak naturally. He refused Whetter's attempt to apologise, insisted his name be removed from the school Register, and had him ejected from the end-of-year prize-giving: 'I shall accept no apology ... Either he leaves the school, or I do!'

Barney Campbell was a firm advocate of the salutary effect on boys of a good thrashing. He had been one of the first Old Boys to be appointed a master at OBHS, in 1894. He was then young

enough to fool the Rector, Alexander Wilson, who ordered at assembly one morning, 'that boy next to Denniston will take the end of the seat,' only realising when all the pupils laughed that he was addressing his new Assistant Master. Early in his career Campbell developed a technique to handle potentially refractory 16-year-old schoolboys: 'When I went to my desk after the class had come in I used to take out my cane quietly and put it on the desk and at the first sign of a disturbance I would pounce on one of these unruly ones, call him out, and cane him. After a fortnight or so the class settled down and I had no further trouble, but if I had not been desperately firm I am quite sure that those imps of mischief would have made life unbearable for me and I should have had to leave school and follow some other line of occupation.'



Top: Leslie Whetter out getting ice in drifting snow, Cape Denison - Frank Hurley. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Home and Away - 36128
Bottom: Leslie Hatton Whetter - Frank Hurley. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Home and Away - 36808



What Barney Campbell identified as Leslie Whetter's 'deliberate obstinacy' in 1904 was to come to the fore again only a few years later. He graduated from the Otago Medical School in 1910 and the following year joined Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition as assistant surgeon. This expedition, contemporaneous with the more famous ones of Scott and Amundsen, explored the hitherto unknown territory directly south of Australia and west of Cape Adare: Adélie Land and King George V Land – what Mawson called his 'Land of Hope and Glory.' It conducted geological, biological, bacteriological, meteorological and oceanographic investigations. Adélie Land proved to be the windiest place yet found on earth, the blizzards often averaging 100 mph (160 km/h), with gusts of more than twice that. The expedition used the latest technology, employing wireless telegraphy, taking colour photographs and filming moving pictures. It was also the first expedition to take an aeroplane to the Antarctic. Unfortunately, it had no wings. The aircraft had been badly damaged before leaving Australia, so with its wings removed it was used experimentally to pull sledges. Whetter's sledge party initially used this wingless aircraft, but it broke down after the first ten miles. They went on to discover the first meteorite to be found in Antarctica, and Mawson named a rocky outcrop, the Whetter Nunatak, after him.

However, Whetter frequently clashed with Mawson, who found him work-shy: 'Of late he has complained of overwork, and he only does an honest 2 hours a day,' Mawson recorded in a typical diary entry. For his part Whetter thought he and his colleagues were being over-worked. He had planned to use his time in

the Antarctic to study for his examinations for a fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. He dodged even the relatively light duties assigned to him, and gained the nickname 'Error.' His medical expertise was called on only once, to administer chloroform to Caruso, a dog. Mawson quickly came to rue his choice, confiding to his diary 'Whetter is not fit for a polar expedition. I wish I had minded his mother's cablegram warning me.'

In winter, Whetter usually spent thirteen hours a day in his bunk, retiring at four in the afternoon, and for the night at 8.30 or even earlier. He explained with disarming honesty that 'it prevented him feeling tired next day.' 'Everybody else works continuously whilst he camps,' complained Mawson. Though given comparatively light duties, Whetter still managed to make a meal of them. Indeed, he cooked occasionally, but made 'a hopeless failure of it.' Whetter's principal task was to bring in ice for the main hut each day, but even so Mawson complained about his idleness. Whetter seldom worked more than two hours a day, but on one unusually active day, he spent a total of almost four hours outside. However, as Mawson pointed out, most of this 'time was spent in standing about.' Whetter then spent a few hours talking and was tucked up in his bunk asleep by 9pm, shortly after dinner (the menu was mutton on Sundays, penguin on Mondays and Thursdays, and seal on Tuesdays and Fridays).

Mawson's patience snapped one day in June 1912 when Whetter worked only an hour and then left his colleagues outside to finish their task. Mawson found him inside the hut reading and

The interior of the expedition living hut with a view through into the workshop; Leslie Whetter is seen second from the left - Frank Hurley. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. ON 144/W72



decided to have it out with him: 'Well, I told him to come to my room and see me immediately. We then had a long talk in which I showed him that he was entirely unfit for an expedition, chiefly through lack of determination in character and failing to do his level best towards the interests of the expedition. As usual he attempted to make light of all the charges and seemed to think my opinion of little value in diagnosing the worth of a man for polar work.'

After this, Whetter bucked up for a while, but was soon back to his old habits. In September 1912 Mawson asked him to dig the snow out of the aeroplane hangar, but Whetter ignored him and returned to the hut to read a book 'in direct disobedience to my orders. I was very wroth about this and asked him why he was coming in under the circumstances. He said he had done enough.' Mawson then asked him why he had bothered coming on the expedition in the first place. Whetter replied 'not to do such kind of work.' Mawson told him he was a 'bloody fool to come on the expedition if that was the case,' to which Whetter retorted: 'Bloody fool yourself ... I won't be caught on another one.' Mawson recorded in his diary: 'I was wild but immediately calmed and talked things over with him at length in the most lenient and persuasive terms possible to try and let him see his error. It was of little use. He believed that we were doing too much. He stated that I found work for anyone who did not appear to be busy, consequently he and certain others had been in the habit all the winter of drawing out their work so they would not get additional jobs. I pointed out that I had been fully aware that 3 of the men had done so and had always pretended not to see it but at the same time despised them

for it, and my action had been to let them "stew in their own juice," for had they acted otherwise I would have given them a large quota of leisure. It must be remembered that Whetter's work during the winter has never been more than to bring 12 boxes of ice into the verandah each day.' This was a task that had previously taken others only an hour. Whetter told Mawson he thought the scientific work of the other members of the expedition was a 'pastime' with them. Mawson 'told him that he was the most lucky man on earth to have such a job as he had, for it kept him in good health.' After this incident, Mawson relented and reduced the workload for everyone to six hours a day, and gave them Sundays off.

Whetter had other failings apart from laziness, stewing in a different sort of juice to the one Mawson was thinking of as suitable for the idlers. On one occasion a bottle of port was found to have been drunk secretly, so Mawson added some croton oil, a powerful purgative, to another bottle in order to flush out the offender. A few days later, it became apparent that Whetter had drunk it. It seems that not all those who took part in the 'Heroic Era' of Antarctic exploration behaved particularly heroically.

When the explorers got home in 1914 they found the Great War had broken out in their absence. Whetter, though an army reservist, did not volunteer but instead settled in Inglewood, where he practised as a GP. After conscription was introduced he was called up in the ballot in April 1917 at the age of almost 32. Perhaps characteristically, Whetter tried to get out of this by appealing against his enlistment, claiming circumstances

A view from the interior of an ice cavern with Whetter standing near the cave mouth - Frank Hurley. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Home and Away - 36727



beyond his control: 'one can not wind up a country practice at a moment's notice.' The Department of Public Health pointed out that as there were two other medical practitioners in the district, there could be 'absolutely no objection to his being called up.' The Appeal Board dismissed his case and he was ordered to report to Trentham Camp in August 1917. As Captain Whetter of the NZ Medical Corps, he sailed with the 31st Reinforcements in November 1917. He left camp in England for the front in April 1918, joining first the NZ Machine-Gun Reserve Depot. He subsequently served with the Nos 2 and 3 NZ Field Ambulance units. He fell ill with pleurisy and was hospitalised in July, then returned to Blighty the following month on sick leave. Whetter recovered in time to return to France for the final victory over Germany, though he was never again in the front line. He was briefly part of the occupation forces in Germany, and returned to New Zealand in January 1920.

Within a month Whetter was off again, this time for Samoa, where he had been appointed Resident Medical Officer. He worked as bacteriologist in the hospital in Apia. Samoa was then under New Zealand rule as a League of Nations mandate. While working in the heat of Apia in 1920 he finally received his Polar Medal. He did not last long there, and was back in New Zealand by 1923, practising in a 'semi-retired way' at Matakana, north Auckland. In contrast to his adventurous and widely travelled early life, Whetter spent the rest of his days there. He was a very private person and indulged in many hobbies, gaining a reputation locally as an eccentric. He married, and together with his wife developed a large showpiece garden. Whetter's past caught up with him in 1935 when the Department of

Defence realised that he had returned from Samoa and though he was listed among the officers on the army reserve, they had not heard anything from him since 1920. Despite regular orders from headquarters over the years, he had never reported for duty, so his name was finally deleted from the Army List.

Whetter's story and many others can be found in Dr Rory Sweetman's *Above the City: A History of Otago Boys' High School, 1863–2013*. The first history of OBHS ever to be published, it will appear shortly as part of this year's sesquicentennial celebrations of one of the country's oldest and best-known secondary schools. See also Mawson's *Antarctic Diaries*, edited by Fred and Eleanor Jacka (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988).

Whetter and dog (perhaps Caruso?) at Cape Denison, Adélie Land - Frank Hurley. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. PXE 725 / 1393-1415

Otago Anniversary Day Dinner 2013

Large Chinese lanterns decorated the Savoy and a special Lion Dance, performed by the Otago Southland Chinese Association, set the scene for this year's Otago Anniversary Day dinner on Saturday, 23 March. After a quality three-course dinner, the guest speaker Seán Brosnahan, Curator Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, gave a warm and thoughtful tribute to the contribution of the Chinese community of Otago under the title 'Chinese Dunedin — Past, Present & Future.'

Acknowledging Dr James Ng's published research volumes *Windows on a Chinese Past*, Seán traced the progress of the Chinese settlers from the time they were invited to work on the goldfields, suffering hardship and discrimination, to the present day, when members are well represented in the professions and respected for their community service. This was after a long period of hard work in small businesses such as market gardening. It was a very successful evening and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Ann Barsby
Convenor

Annual Conference of the New Zealand Federation of Historical Societies

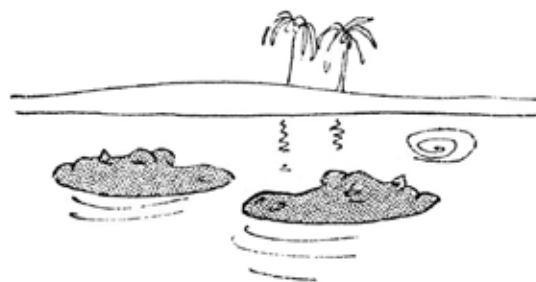
This conference attracted about 30 registrants, mostly from societies and museums in the upper North Island. It was a friendly and enjoyable occasion, hosted by the OSA over the weekend of 5-7 April. It provided an excellent opportunity for us to show off the delights of our redeveloped Toitū Otago Settlers Museum and some of Dunedin's heritage treasures to an appreciative audience. Our guests first gathered on Friday evening at the lovely nineteenth-century home of Ann and John Barsby, built by Richard Hudson, of biscuit fame. Saturday was a full day. Most visitors to Dunedin began with a comprehensive bus tour of the city, which ended at First Church and its interesting heritage centre. OSA volunteers then served a light lunch in the church's Burns Hall. There was time for exploration of the Settlers Museum before we all gathered in the auditorium for the Annual General Meeting and well-received talks by Seán Brosnahan (on the Buchanan settler cottage) and Tom Brooking (on the uniquely rapid transformation of rural New Zealand).

The day ended with a fine dinner at the Dunedin Club, once the home of early settler Johnny Jones. Entertainment began with a piper and the traditional address to the haggis and ended with items of 'migrant music' composed in Otago and performed by pianist Vivienne Mclean and singer Bruce McMillan. On Sunday conference-goers were free to choose from among the pleasures of Dunedin's heritage tourist attractions, from a trip on the Taieri Gorge railway to a tour of the stately home Olveston or Speight's brewery. Visitors voted the weekend a great success and we enjoyed their company.

I Keep Thinking it's Tuesday

If, like the hippopotamus in the famous cartoon, you keep thinking it's Tuesday, then we have the club for you: the Tuesday Club brings together members of the Association and a range of interesting speakers each month. It meets, as its name suggests, on Tuesdays: the second Tuesday of every month at the Museum. The club began in 1995, organised by Val-mai Shaw. If you are interested in coming along, give your telephone number to Sue at the Otago Settlers' Association or to the Museum receptionists. You will then be informed of the speaker for the second Tuesday of the month by a telephone call. The starting time is 10am for morning tea or coffee, following which we have the speaker. The whole event lasts usually just under an hour.

Carol Pike



“ I KEEP THINKING IT'S TUESDAY.”

Return of the Intern



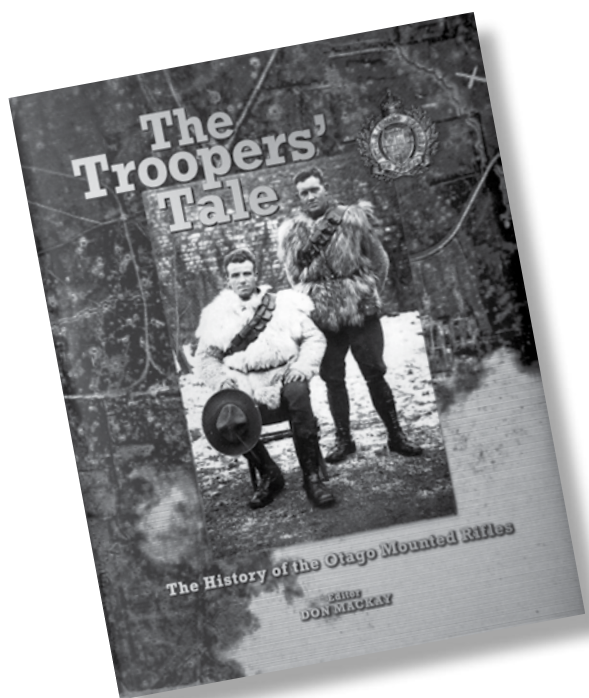
Anthonie Tonnon, one of the first winners of the OSA History Summer Internship, returned to the Museum on Thursday, 18 April. This time it was as singer and songwriter rather than archival researcher. Anthonie presented a set of songs and stories and played the piano and guitar.

For Your Diary

OSA Winter Meeting

The Winter Meeting will take place from 7.30 pm on Thursday, 20 June. Members and friends will meet in the auditorium where Seán Brosnahan will speak about the Settlers' Cottage, its construction and its owners, the Buchanan family. We'll then go to the cottage itself where Claire Nodder will discuss the artefacts in the cottage and those the Buchanans brought with them from Scotland. We will then return to the auditorium for supper.

Book News



The Troopers' Tale: The History of the Otago Mounted Rifles, edited by Don Mackay (Turnbull Ross Publishing, 2012).

382 pages, hardback. \$49.95 (or \$42.45 with the 15% discount for members of the Association).

This authoritative, comprehensive and profusely illustrated book follows the history of the Otago Mounted Rifles from its beginnings in Dunedin and Invercargill in 1864 through war and peace to its official disbandment almost a century later, in 1956. The story is brought up to the present day by looking at the OMR Association (founded in 1946) and the 4th Otago Southland Battalion Group.

The OMR fought in South Africa, Turkey, France and Belgium, but Dunedin residents may be unaware of the Battle of Belleknoves of 25 May 1885. The future suburb was then still farmland, and was chosen as the site of a practice 'sham fight' between local volunteer corps. The cannons boomed; the infantrymen fired their muskets; the cavalrymen drew their swords and charged, but the only blood shed was from an accidental, though nasty, scalp wound from a helmet-spike. The only time the OMR was actually to charge in anger was at Messines in Belgium on 7 June 1917, but the regiment kept its horses into the early stages of the Second World War. In April 1941 the unit was mechanised and the remaining animals were sent home to their farms. Many of the horses had been lost only a few weeks earlier as a result of inoculation for strangles with a cheap serum that instead caused a major outbreak of the disease.

As the title suggests, *The Troopers' Tale* is not just a history of institutions and events, but also gives prominence to individual troopers and their personal experiences. Narratives, diaries, letters and photographs were contributed from all over the country, many of them as a result of the photographic exhibition at the Settlers Museum in 2009; others came from as far afield as Australia, the United Kingdom and South Africa. Many of the photographs have never been published before, and the maps have been specially drawn for this publication. The contributors are a team of well-known military historians: Christopher Pugsley, Terry Kinloch, George Davis, Graham Scott, Jeff Plowman and not least the editor himself. Rather like Edward Gibbon hitting upon the idea for his *Decline and Fall* while musing amid the ruins of ancient Rome, Don Mackay had the idea for this book when he by chance stumbled across the grave of Trooper D Mckay of the OMR in the Hill 60 Cemetery at Gallipoli in 2007.



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

This newsletter was produced by the Otago Settlers Association, founder and supporter of the Toitū 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 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 Toitū Otago Settlers Museum*

OTAGO SETTLERS ASSOCIATION

31 Queens Gardens
PO Box 74 Dunedin 9016
Ph / Fax 03 477 8677
email otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz

TOITŪ OTAGO SETTLERS MUSEUM

31 Queens Gardens
PO Box 566 Dunedin 9016
Ph 03 477 5052 Fax 03 474 2727
email osmmail@dcc.govt.nz