

## All At Sea Emigrants, Sailors and Pigs

**The sea voyage to New Zealand was long, rough, and certainly not for the faint-hearted. The diaries in the Museum's collection are an invaluable treasure-trove for historians, as they testify to the sheer difficulty of the journey, as well as the immense (and indeed in some cases, superhuman) stamina of nineteenth-century emigrants to the Antipodes.**

The project I undertook while OSA History Summer Intern for 2012 aimed to establish 'a comprehensive database' of all shipboard diaries (including *ex post facto* memoirs and reminiscences) held in the Museum's collection. This continued and completed the work undertaken by Nicola Lomax, the 2010 intern. As she had already read the 61 original manuscripts and their copies, my mandate was to read and catalogue the remainder of the diary collection. During my internship, I relished reading 129 accounts, in the form of either typescript copies or photocopies.

It soon became apparent that I would not be able to read all the copies within six weeks as well as research and record the diarists' details in an Excel spreadsheet. (I was optimistic, but thankfully, Seán Brosnahan is a realist.) Therefore, I prioritised reading and summarising the remaining diaries, to create a digitally searchable précis database, within which any interested readers could search for specific individuals, keywords or themes throughout the collection. The main product of this project is a tabulated document which records the biographical details of each diarist and provides ample notes about each account (including extracts). While the process of recapitulation could be slow going at times, this meticulous note-taking culminated in an extensive file of which I am very proud. It also proved to be an invaluable means of totally immersing myself in the shipboard experience. And so, I have no regrets.

This illustration vividly depicts a gale encountered while rounding the Cape of Good Hope. The sketch was produced by John Elder Moultray, who journeyed from Greenock to Port Chalmers aboard the *Helen Denny*, 1883 (OSM archives C 210).

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The first major problem I encountered was becoming completely engrossed in the diaries. It was extremely difficult to think about anything else, even after 5pm. I was hooked. I started reading seafaring fiction set during the 'Age of Sail,' poring through non-fiction works, and could think of nothing else. I dreamt about the diarists. *Caveat lector*: these texts are addictive.

As on land, so it was at sea. Men and women had vastly different experiences aboard emigrant vessels in the nineteenth century. Single men and women were strictly physically separated, deliberately accommodated at opposite ends of the ship. They engaged in different pastimes, completed different duties, and faced different strictures. This is confirmed in every single one of the OSM diaries. More interesting, however, is the different *mental foci* of the sexes.

A common vein running throughout the male diaries is a 'manly' preoccupation with climatic and nautical data. It is a rare male diarist who neglects to make daily recordings of latitude, longitude, and the 'daily run.' Several men also display knowledge of the proper terminology for winds, rigging and sails. Nicola Lomax coined the epithet 'wind and wave' to describe those diaries which focus monotonously on the force and direction of winds (or lack thereof) and squalls.

Moreover, a great deal of mental and emotional energy was expended in pining for the fairer (and inaccessible) sex. Richard Calverley attests that all passengers 'would be in better heart if the males could get leave to go near the females.' The captain of the *Pomona* enforced strict gender segregation, which deeply irritated the younger gentlemen. Calverley writes that two constables were charged with 'keeping the boys from speaking to the girls so that throws a damp on their spirits.' Calverley's account is a racy read, and may aptly be labelled a 'wind and women' diary (or 'wind and wishful thinking.'). The young opportunist capitalised on the seasickness of the matron and constables to approach the un-chaperoned ladies. He goes on to lament that once everybody had recovered, 'you could not get leave to speak to one of the girls ... on any account.' Calverley's diary also reveals the clandestine exchange of communications, as he relishes having 'received a letter from one of the young girls this day.' But he does not identify who, and it could be almost anybody! The young man evidently kept tabs on many young women, as his diary notes many ladies' names (presumably passengers he has met, spoken or danced with on board) along with their home towns, with no explanation as to why.

Fear was another great experiential divide. Whether from genuine courage or superficial bravado, men appeared to worry and suffer much less than women during storms and gales. Jessie Campbell was continually astonished by the bravery of sailors in the face of squally weather, and even her son John chided his mother for being frightened of a mere 'breeze.' Mrs Campbell expressed the true extent of her anxiety in her private diary, confiding that 'I would call it a storm if I was allowed.' She therefore enjoyed sitting with the gentlemen, for 'when it blows hard it gives me the courage seeing them so unconcerned.'

Shipboard duties and recreations were also divided along gender lines, with precise delineation of 'male' and 'female' jobs. Bethia Cromb's account reveals the pastimes deemed acceptable for single steerage 'girls' aboard the *Kaikoura* in 1887: the Matron of the single women's compartment distributed the contents of a New Zealand government-supplied work-box, designed 'to keep the girls from wearying' with sewing and knitting. Despite their protestations to the contrary, even the socially-elevated cabin passengers were similarly divided in their hobbies, as Annie Douglas inadvertently divulges in 1865. Miss Douglas denounces the steerage women's amusements as 'flirting, singing, and occasionally dancing, all well mixed with plenty of quarrelling and scandal!' Whereas the cabin ladies knit stockings, read, and watch 'the gentlemen at their amusements, which are multitudinous, and which I cannot name but which are all athletic sports.'

Domestic quarrels were commonplace, and ranged from horrible acts of violence to incessant nagging. As an example of the latter, Jessie Campbell frequently scolded her husband for trivial matters, which were no doubt exacerbated by the discomforts of shipboard life. Mrs Campbell berated her Captain Moses for neglecting to bring oatmeal and molasses for 'the bairns' (the children's 'wee bodies complaining of the hardness and toughness of the biscuit!'); and 'for being so simple as to allow' their consignment to a tiny cabin. Captain Moses was evidently an even-tempered man, for Mrs Campbell admits that 'he bore [her] reproaches with great calmness.' As will become evident upon reading this diary, Mrs Campbell's complaints *may* have been partially generated by her unreciprocated affection for the ship's master, Captain Gray.

Far from embarking on a luxury cruise, nineteenth-century emigrants had to be hardy and industrious, for they had essentially entered a severe (unpaid) apprenticeship in life aboard ship! Complaints about spatial limitations are common fodder in all the diaries, even those of first-class passengers such as John Bathgate. Mr Bathgate solemnly declared that he and his fellow cabin passengers 'passed the first night of our voyage on the narrow shelves allowed us for sleeping places, feeling very much like books stowed away in a bookcase.'

Furthermore, all passengers were subject to tacit sailors' rules regarding shipboard boundaries. Nobody was permitted to climb up the rigging, or cross the forecabin. The punishments meted out were consistent, and never excessive. Passengers caught clambering up the rigging were tied 'hard and fast to the shrouds,' and only released upon payment of 'a fine in the current coin of the channel, "a stick of baccy"'. Those who strayed onto the forecabin had their shoes 'chalked' until they paid 'a grog fine' (John Bathgate). These rules were essentially a traditional means for opportunistic sailors to cadge money, liquor, and tobacco from passengers, and are best described as a customary law similar to trespass.

AC Begg's diary vividly describes the suspicion, exposure and comeuppance of untrustworthy crew members, who stole provisions from the passengers for personal profit and consumption. The abuse of victualling was unfortunately a common practice at the time, and involved Captains under-supplying their ships in order to maximise their income, and outright theft and denial of supplies by ship officials or servants.

Begg suspected that the *Alpine's* baker was cheating them of their flour quota, thus he and other steerage passengers firmly demanded 'a sight of the Passengers' Act' and drew up a list of grievances to be investigated at Dunedin. This was the upper limit of quality control aboard ship. A mere glimpse of the Act was the emigrants' sole avenue for redressing grievances. And it was largely ineffectual, for if a Captain or a member of his crew evinced disdain for the Act (as occurred here), little could be done until the final port was reached. In this instance, Captain Crawford of the *Alpine* was charged under the Passengers' Act upon arrival in Dunedin. He was fined £50 for insufficient provisioning of the ship; £5 for loose pigs; £5 for insufficient separation between young men and married couples, and ordered to provide five shillings compensation to each steerage passenger. (In terms of purchasing power, 5 shillings would be about \$40 today, and £5 more than \$700.) For Begg, and for many thousands of emigrants during the 'Age of Sail,' such retrospective punishment was too little, too late.

Class divisions were both rigid and experientially decisive. Social stratification continued aboard ship: each class of accommodation perceived themselves as significantly distinct from the others, and accordingly arranged their own religious services, recreations, concerts, and even newspapers. The 'us' versus 'them' mentality is evident in the cabin and intermediate passengers' exclusionary use of 'emigrants' to describe those in steerage. And yet, a degree of egalitarianism was fostered by the simple fact of having undergone common shipboard experiences.

An excellent corroborative account is that of John Bathgate, whose status as a cabin passenger accorded him many desirable rights and privileges, and who ultimately concluded that, in fact, the 'humble [steerage] emigrants were ... the best conducted passengers on board.' An unusually privileged passenger, Bathgate usually concluded his day with half an hour of strolling on deck with the Captain, which proved 'not a good soother at bed-time' for they invariably talked of shipwrecks and notorious maritime disasters. Most important, however, is Bathgate's description of the imparity of experience during serious storms. When heavy waves flooded the berths, the cabin passengers' momentary panic quickly turned to laughter, as they were well-elevated and informed. But their fright was 'nothing compared with the terror and discomfort of the lower deck passengers.' Some steerage women fainted, believing that the ship was sinking.

Despite the persistence of social hierarchies, all passengers were rendered equal in one respect: they all had to endure the arduous voyage. Nobody was above seasickness, homesickness, sunburn, discomfort, or sheer ennui. In this sense, emigration was a levelling experience. As Bathgate informs us, while the cabin gentlemen playing whist were envied by the steerage-men, they 'would gladly have exchanged the card-playing ... and all the apparent luxury and ease, for the bustle and fatigue of their daily avocations on shore.'

One of the most surprising, and most entertaining, facets of the shipboard diaries was the incredible omnipresence of pigs. They were present on nearly every voyage, as food-source, commodity, or even illegal luggage. Unsurprisingly, they tended to create a great ruckus — which was evidently a great source of amusement to on-looking passengers. Here are some of the best shipboard porkers: John Bathgate narrates a slapstick comedy of a pig-hunt, where the swine escaped its pen around 3 am and 'insisted unceremoniously on getting into bed beside one of the passengers.' Alexander Begg writes that pigs were hoisted up in a long-boat as a prank, and their squealing caused great alarm. Adam Blackwood states that one of the American Independence Day amusements was a pig-hunt, complete with a five shilling prize for catching the pig by its tail. John Paterson describes a 'rich prank,' whereby a slain pig was dressed in a night shirt and laid beside Mr Orr in bed.

— to be continued.

**Emma Gatley**  
History Intern 2012-13

Emma is the latest recipient of the OSA History prize for the top second-year student at Otago University, which provides a six-week internship at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum to undertake supervised research in the Museum's archives.



An early depiction of life as a steerage passenger.

# Here's Flowers For You



The Dunedin Botanic Garden, which is celebrating its sesquicentenary this year, has been transformed almost beyond recognition since it moved to its present site in 1869. Some well-loved features of today's garden would however still be recognisable from a century ago. The bandstand and the first plantings in the Rhododendron Dell, for instance, both date from 1914. Perhaps more surprisingly, the Shakespeare Garden is also about to celebrate its centenary. Laid out in a formerly waste area on the northern edge of the gardens, its present appearance largely dates from a reconfiguration in 1923-24, when the fountain moved from Queen's Gardens was installed. The knot garden was added and crazy paving laid in 1933.

Shakespeare gardens are found all over the world, in places as different as Cape Town, Vienna and Regensburg in Bavaria. They are most common in Britain and the United States, where at least 25 survive. Many are the product of the commemorations in 1916 of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death, so the Dunedin garden slightly pre-dates them; 1914 was the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Probably the most famous of the Shakespeare gardens is in Central Park, New York, formed in 1916. Vassar College's Shakespeare garden claims to be the second-oldest in the United States, having opened in April 1916. It was laid out by young lady members of the College's Shakespeare and botany classes.

The Dunedin Shakespeare Club had been formed in the mid-1870s to encourage the study of the 'best literature,' and this spurred the formation of similar societies elsewhere in the country. On the suggestion of Mrs Colquhoun, in October 1913 the Club offered to pay £20 (worth about \$3000 today) for a collection of plants and trees that are mentioned in the works of the immortal Bard of Avon. There are surprisingly many of them, 114 in all: aconite, apricot, aspen, bay, bilberry, birch, blackberry, blessed thistle, briar, broom, burdock, brown furze, burnet, chamomile, carnation, cedar, charlock (wild mustard), chestnut, clover, cockle, colocynth (bitter-apple), columbine, cowslip, crab, crow-flower (buttercup), crown imperial, cuckoo buds, cypress, daffodil, daisy, darnel, dewberry, dog rose, cherry, eglantine, elder, elm, erigerons (groundsel), fennel, filberts, fleur-de-lis, fumitory, furze, garlic, gillyflowers, harebell, hazel, hawthorn, hebenon (or poisonous hebona), hemlock, hemp, henbane, holy thistle, honeysuckle, ivy, kecksies, knot grass, lady's smocks, lavender, leek-lilies, lime-tree, locusts, long heath, long purple, love in idleness, mandragora or mandrake, marigolds and their 'mary-buds,' marjoram, medlar, mint, mistletoe, moss, mulberry, musk-rose, mustard, nettles, nightshade, oak, oakwort, onion, oxlip, pammy, peony, petty whin, pignut, plantain, poppy, potato, primrose, quince, rose of May, rosemary, rue, rushes, saffron, speargrass, strawberry, sweet flag, sycamore, thistles, vine, violets, warden pear, willow,

The Shakespearean garden as it appears today. The Elizabethan knot garden in the foreground was laid out in 1933 and has hardly changed since.

woodbine, wormwood, wild thyme, and yew. Of these, a few remain to this day in the garden: examples of dog rose, quince, medlar, hollies and silver birch. The mulberry planted by a visiting theatrical celebrity alas does not survive.

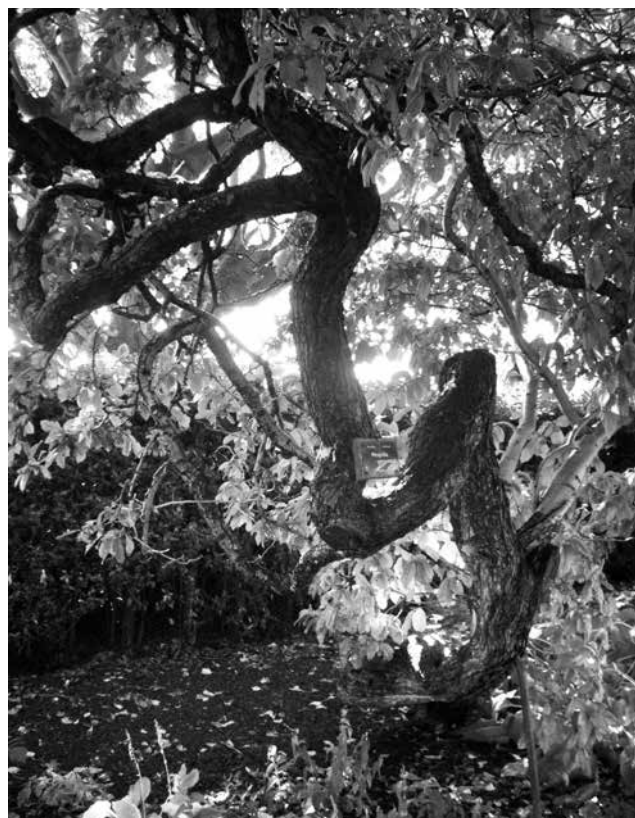
The garden was officially opened on 6 July 1914, when the Mayor of Dunedin planted an oak and members of the Shakespeare Club planted other trees, including an aspen and silver birch. The star of the show was Ellen Terry, one of the most famous actresses of her time and well known for her Shakespearean roles, who planted an already well-grown mulberry tree. Several Shakespeare gardens contain white mulberries said to be grown from cuttings taken from the tree believed to have been planted by Shakespeare himself in 1602 at New Place, his house in Stratford. David Tannock, the curator of the gardens, helped with the planting, prompting Miss Terry to remark jokingly that in contrast she had had to do the hard work herself in America.

Ellen Terry then delivered a speech to the crowd quoting Francis Bacon at length but William Shakespeare only briefly (unless you believe the former wrote the latter's works anyway): 'I think I need not say how glad and proud I am to be asked to plant a tree in this most beautiful garden of this most beautiful country. I pray that it may live and flourish and be a joy to your children and their children. In one of Bacon's Essays, he speaks of a garden as "the purest of human pleasures," and he goes on to say: "It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man — without which buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks." Again he says: "And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the

air. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, especially the white double violet. Next to that is the musk rose ... sweetbriar, wall-flowers, pinks, and gilliflowers. But those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three — that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water mint — and therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread." In return for the pleasure you have given me this morning, may I ask you to accept a little gift? Here are some violets to plant in your Shakespeare garden — some white double violets. I give them with my love, remembering that Shakespeare says: "Never anything can be amiss when simpleness and duty tend it." Good-bye my friends, and good-bye, my tree, and may all the saints have you in their keeping' — she was rewarded with cheers.

The idea for a garden of Shakespearean plants did not come from nowhere. Stratford-upon-Avon had been a place of pilgrimage for his admirers for centuries, particularly since the Jubilee of 1769 that had been organised by the celebrated actor David Garrick. The mulberry tree supposedly planted by the Bard's own hands at New Place was already attracting so many tourists and souvenir-hunters by 1756 that its owner had it cut down in order to drive them away. This did nothing to stem the tide, so in 1759 he had the house itself demolished. Yet still they came, now to visit the empty site; defeat has long since been conceded, and in recent years plans have been hatched to rebuild the house.

As second-best, the house in which Shakespeare had been born and where he lived until his mid-twenties was bought



Left: Actress Ellen Terry in 1914, the year she opened the Shakespearean garden in Dunedin.

Right: This gnarled medlar tree, still extant in the Garden, is evidently a remnant from the original 1914 planting.



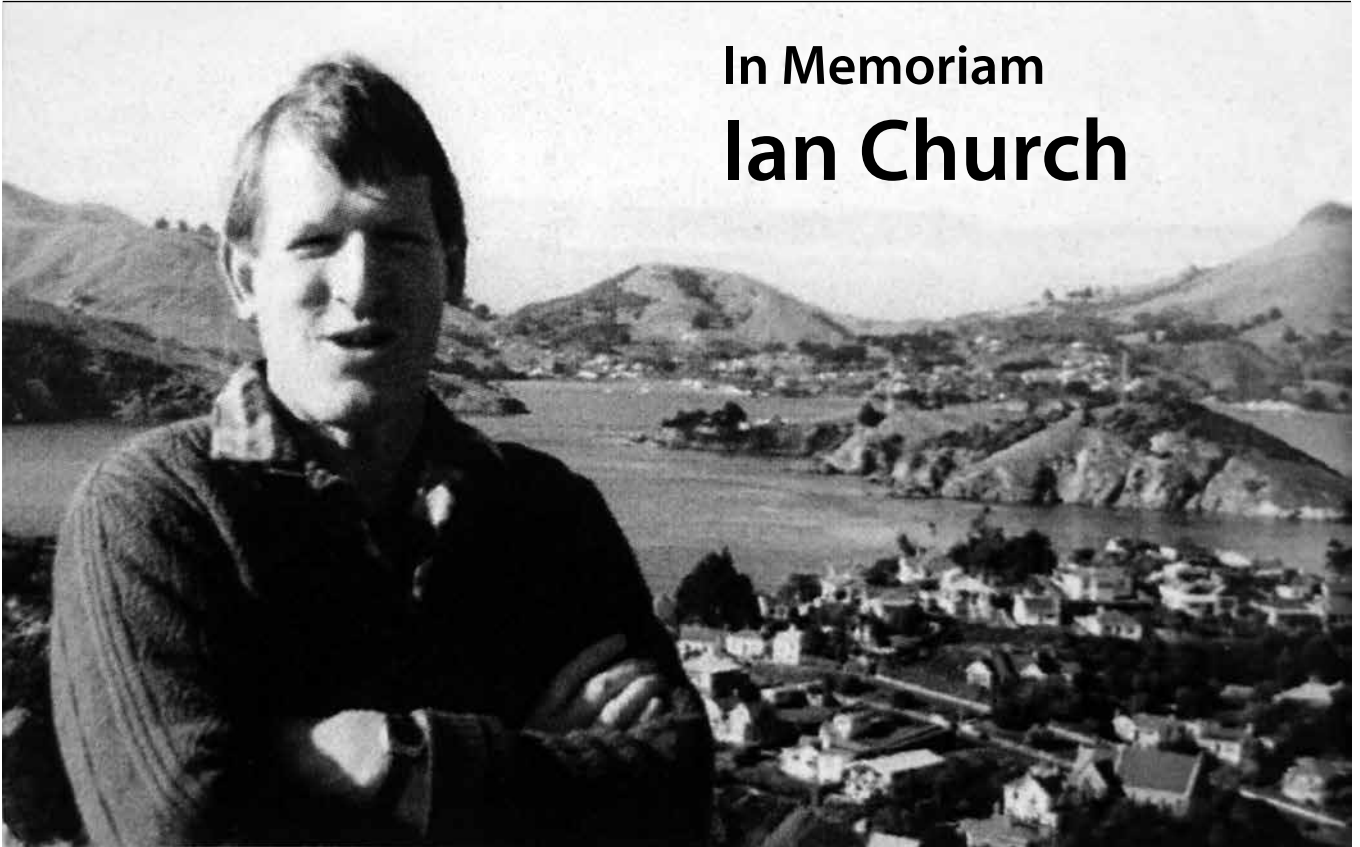
by a trust in 1847 and 'restored' to its conjectural 'original' appearance. Its garden was planted with plants mentioned in his works. The fad for Shakespeare Gardens probably owes a great deal to Walter Crane's illustrations to the book *Flowers from Shakespeare's Garden: A Posy from the Plays* (1906) and the influence of *Shakespeare's Garden* (1903) by the appropriately named J Harvey Bloom. There was something of a craze for the Shakespearean period in general at the time the Dunedin garden was formed. A 'Shakespeare's England' exhibition had been held at Earl's Court in London in 1912. It included street scenes with almost full-size replicas of actual Elizabethan buildings, designed by the famous architect Edwin Lutyens. There was even a mock harbour with a replica of the galleon *Revenge*, Drake's flagship against the Armada in 1588 and a warship of revolutionary design.

An Elizabethan knot garden was laid out on the site of New Place in the 1920s, based on a publication for gardeners of 1586. This was very influential on the design of Shakespeare Gardens elsewhere in the inter-war years. Esther Singleton's *The Shakespeare Garden*, published in 1931, is likely to have been the model for the knot garden laid out in Dunedin in 1933 (and hardly changed since).

When Ellen Terry visited Dunedin she was 66, having first appeared on the stage at the age of eight. She was a member of a large English theatrical family, and in the 1880s after a short-lived marriage had established herself in London as the leading Shakespearean actress of the time. She and her partner Henry Irving dominated the British and American theatrical world. On retiring from the stage in 1903, Ellen Terry went into theatrical management and gave lecture tours throughout the world. She was made a dame in 1925 and died at the age of 81 in 1928.

For more on the history of the gardens, see Eric Dunlop's *The Story of the Dunedin Botanic Garden: New Zealand's First* (2003).

Another view of the garden as it appears today. The Wolff Harris fountain was moved to its current location from Queens Gardens in 1923-24.



## In Memoriam Ian Church

Local historian, author and teacher Ian Church died in June following a short illness. In 71 years he gained a much wider experience of life than most of us have realised, and he had much to show for it in what he achieved in his professional and community life, and especially his work with pen and paper. The smell of the sea pervaded Ian's family background. His father, 'Jock' Church, enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1921 at age fifteen. His ship was attached to the New Zealand Division and he met Doris Cowsill in Auckland; they married in 1935. Her family connections went back to the early days of Auckland and the Fencibles. Ian was born in 1941, by which time his father was back in the Navy, and it was the best part of a year before father and son met. The family moved to Port Chalmers in 1948, and Ian attended Port Chalmers School, later becoming a 'train boy' at Otago Boys' High School. In the holidays he worked in the dock, scraping and painting ships' hulls, or in his father's rigging gang, acting as a ship's night-watchman, or in the machine shop with the chippies.

Ian studied history at university, graduating MA in 1963 with a thesis on Sir Frederick Whitaker. He went into teaching, at Palmerston District School and in 1968 at Tokomairiro District High. Having close relatives in Taranaki, he took up a post at Patea High School in 1974. There Ian became involved with the newly opened local museum and published the first of many books on local history, *The Little Ships of Patea*, in 1977. He subsequently became a part-time archivist at the Wanganui Regional Museum, from where he was enticed back to Port Chalmers in 1987 to run the museum which was to be set up in the old Post Office. The Curator's position allowed Ian to combine his historical and maritime interests. He worked

methodically and meticulously to establish comprehensive and usable records, strengthened by his involvement with local historical societies, and came to be called 'The Oracle of Port Chalmers.'

Ian published 27 books and made contributions to even more. *Of Port Chalmers and its People* (1994) one reviewer pointed out how Dunedin was fortunate to have a strong regional press, and Otago Heritage Books in particular: 'this book is a shining example of ... the building blocks of New Zealand history.' Most would regard *Gaining a Foothold* (2009) as Ian's magnum opus. He loved to tackle and demolish what he regarded as 'myths' in our understanding of New Zealand history. One of those myths was that the all-important stuff of early New Zealand was centred on the Bay of Islands. Leading a team of researchers, Ian brought together all that was known about the busy life of southern New Zealand between Captain Cook and 1839. Some reviewers pointed out that in seeking to demolish one myth, Ian sometimes ran the risk of creating another. Nevertheless, we are profoundly grateful for all that he has written, for each book provides a broad coverage of events that may not have appeared in print, or been written by any other, if Ian had not tackled the subject. Within Port Chalmers and further afield he will be greatly missed.

**The Revd John G Sinclair**  
Minister Emeritus, First Church

This is a brief extract from the eulogy delivered on 24 June.

Ian Church with Port Chalmers as a backdrop.

## Linda Voyages North

Linda Wigley will be moving to Auckland in October to take up the position of Director of 'Voyager', the National Maritime Museum opened in 1993 on Hobson Wharf in the city centre. She says 'it has been a very difficult decision for me as I have created my ideal museum here in Dunedin and worked with some tremendous individuals and groups in its creation. However Voyager is a new and exciting proposition with the prospect of a \$25 million refurbishment on the table — no rest for the wicked!'



## For Your Diary Association AGM

The 114<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Otago Settlers Association Inc will be held at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 19 September 2013 at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin. Business to arise will comprise the presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2013; the election of officers; and the Report from the Director of Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, Linda Wigley. After the conclusion of formal business, our guest speaker, well-known local writer and broadcaster Jim Sullivan, will talk about Scott Technology. Formerly J & AP Scott, this prominent local firm is currently celebrating its centenary.

## Shop News

The Museum shop stocks a wide range of books, postcards, tea towels, cushions, coasters, jewellery, toys and other gifts. There is also a further range of books displayed where the shop was situated before the rebuilding, near the Archives. Family History Starter Boxes can also be found there. These sturdy grey acid-free clamshell conservation boxes will be familiar to anyone who has researched in an archive. They contain a selection of polypropylene pages to protect documents: ten A4 pocket pages; seven three-pocket pages, two portrait, one landscape, and four six-pockets; five 5x7 inch, seven-strip pages for photographic negatives; a page to hold CDs; and ten sheets of acid-free A4 copy paper. The accessories comprise a self-adhesive spine label; a fine-tip acid-free pen; an art-gum rubber; a pair of cotton gloves for handling documents; and a copy of the National Preservation Office's leaflet on the 'Care of Family Collections.' All these items are of archival quality and the boxes cost \$40 each (\$34 with OSA members' 15% discount, plus \$5 postage and packing). See [www.conservationssupplies.co.nz](http://www.conservationssupplies.co.nz)

The fascinating Burton Brothers panorama of Dunedin taken from the top of First Church in December 1874 that surrounds the end of the Museum's display on the darker side of the Victorian city is now available as a fold-out postcard for \$5. Several other images from the Museum's collection are also available as standard-sized postcards, for \$1 each.

For further details, contact the Museum shop on (03) 477 5052; cheques should be made payable to 'Toitū Otago Settlers Museum.'



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

 **Otago Daily Times**

*The Otago Daily Times supports Toitū Otago Settlers Museum*

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Linda Wigley officially opening the newly redeveloped Toitū Otago Settlers Museum in December 2012.