

Lost and Found in Mud-edin

A lot of old rubbish has just gone on show in the Museum, but it is very significant rubbish.

Many of the items presented to the Early Settlers Museum had been treasured by families through several generations, but these new acquisitions are instead items that had been thrown away or simply lost. When the Woolworths (subsequently Deka) building was demolished a few years ago, the site between George and Filleul Streets was painstakingly excavated by archaeologists. Their last-minute discovery of a 12-metre long wooden track way from the 1850s or early 1860s attracted a great deal of attention, but they also discovered much other evidence of the earliest period of settlement on the site. A range of businesses occupied the site in the nineteenth century, including hotels, timber yards and shops, as well as several small cottages. Many everyday items survived smothered by the evil-

smelling mud of 1850s and 1860s 'Mud-edin.' The anaerobic conditions inhibited decay, so leather, cloth and metal items have survived in surprisingly recognisable form. Boots, hats, horse bridles, tools, even a crude child's toy have been found. Early Dunedin was a youthful society — for part of the 1850s, more than half the population was under 14 years old.

Many items come from the very earliest years of the settlement: a roof shingle made from split totara probably predates the ban on their use for new roofs in 1862. The most easily datable object was a badge commemorating the All-England cricket tour of 1864, the first international sporting tour of this country. At the Southern Recreation Reserve (now the Oval) in February 1864 George Parr's XI beat an Otago XXII first by nine wickets and later by an innings and 51 runs; a combined Canterbury and Otago XXII managed a draw.

Above: This photograph of Dunedin north of the Octagon shows significant development on the Wall Street site by 1874.

Inset top left: This jam tin was found near where Scottish immigrant James Irvine began manufacturing jam in Filleul Street in the 1860s.

Other excavation finds were surprisingly familiar: the many glass containers unearthed included a Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce bottle almost identical to the ones you can still buy today. The firm was founded in 1838, so the famous condiment had only been available for just over a decade when this bottle was thrown out. Two small perfume bottles were found, one still with traces of scent inside, from the London perfumier Piesse and Lubin. A fragrance of a different kind was provided by four sardine cans, while a tin can was even found still clearly labelled 'John Tainsh's Black Currant Jam,' which came all the way from Lanarkshire. One direct indication of the waning of the gold rushes was a cache of 79 small candle holders of a type used by miners. They were probably unsold stock, dumped when demand dropped off. A few lost tools were found under a limestone path dating from the 1860s, but in contrast none was found on the earlier track way: anything dropped then would have been too valuable and difficult to replace for its owner not to bother ferreting about in the mud to retrieve it.

Dunedin immediately before the gold rushes had only a couple of thousand residents, and most lived south of Bell Hill. To its north was originally an area of mudflats and swamps bordered by steep, bush-clad hills and gullies. A tidal inlet extended roughly as far west as the Great King Street side of the present-day Farmers building, and as far north as Albion Place. The roads had been surveyed but were not necessarily yet in use. The track way that cut across the Wall Street site was a response to the muddy conditions. One early settler recounted later that as a child she had got lost among the flax bushes somewhere between St Andrew and Hanover Streets. To cope with these conditions, men's clothing was tough and practical. The standard 'uniform' included moleskin trousers, flannel shirt, sturdy boots and a felt hat. For women, the 'Town Board uniform' entailed tucking their heavy, full-length skirts into their sturdy, long boots. The anaerobic conditions of the site meant that a hat and several hobnailed boots have survived.

A great deal of filling-in of streams and gullies was needed before the land was suitable for buildings, and the material dumped is very revealing to archaeologists. The speed with which the area was levelled also helped produce the anaerobic conditions which enabled the remarkable state of preservation of many organic items which would otherwise have long since rotted away. As archaeologists often say, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but some common items were remarkable for their relative scarcity on this site. Most men smoked and a clay tobacco pipe would last only from a few days to a few weeks, so there ought to be broken pieces of them everywhere. Yet very few have turned up; perhaps Dunedin smokers preferred a good cigar. The exhibition links the artefacts to the lives of real people who lived on the site or nearby. For instance, clothes pegs, cotton reels, pieces of cloth pinned together, and the selvedge end of a piece of patterned silk found nearby show that a seamstress was working in one of the tiny cottages on the site, and Seán Brosnahan's research has turned up a likely candidate who lived in the area.

A preview of the 'Ghosts of Wall Street' was given at a 'Victorian Extravaganza' on Tuesday, 22 October. The archaeologist Peter Petchey described the Wall Street dig and what it discovered, and Seán explained how the selection of artefacts for the exhibition was made, described the research, and showed some of the interpretative material. This event was organised by the OSA together with the Rotary Club of Dunedin East. It included the unveiling of a plaque marking the restoration of the Roslyn No 1 tram and an auction of paintings of Dunedin cable cars by Christchurch artist Don McAra to raise funds.



The All-England cricket team that visited Dunedin, 1864. Their visit was marked by processions and festivity, so souvenirs like the badge found during the Wall Street excavation (top right) must have sold like hot cakes. Cricket was the first organised team sport played in New Zealand.

The Waves Rolled On



Life and Death on the High Seas

As summer intern for 2012, I completed a comprehensive database of all the shipboard diaries, memoirs and reminiscences held in the Museum's Archives. The collection boasts over 180 diaries, all of which are individually useful historical resources for those interested in the crux of the emigrant experience. You could pick up almost any one of them (bar a few uninspiring 'wind and wave' copies) and fall head over heels into the borer-ridden, oaken panelling of a slender steerage bunk, or into the lavish, recently remodelled cabin of a *nouveau riche* in the privileged Saloon.

Leitmotifs of shipboard life included ethnicity; religion; and mortality, loss and grief. Of all the ethnicities represented in these diaries, the most remarkable prejudice is expressed about the Irish Catholics. These various expressions of revulsion and superiority are founded on inseparable nationalistic and religious convictions. The diaries of John Dagg, Wilhelmina B Glendinning Riddell and William Hill contain examples of everything from anti-papist comments to accusations of perpetual lice infestations.

There are no diaries of black passengers, but there were black crew members aboard the emigrant ships, usually deck-hands or cooks. Many passengers describe the performance of 'nigger minstrels' and 'Negroe (sic) entertainments' at concerts, which involved male passengers coating their faces with charcoal or soot, and indulging in a variant of slapstick comedy and song. Overt racism seems to have been relatively rare, however. One significant example occurred aboard the *Pladda* in 1860. James Samuel recalled that when passengers caught sight of a black man aboard the *Philosopher*, some shouted 'Where you come from Sambo?' and 'Where you catch that black bird?' On the *Waimea*, fifteen years later, George Palmer was infuriated when 'a black sail maker took Flo and Emma on his knee and kissed them.' Mr Palmer reacted crudely, openly ordering his daughters 'to wipe the black off their lips.'

Anti-Semitism was not frequently reported or expressed, but certain ships did have a disproportionate amount of violence and 'rough skylarking' directed against Jewish passengers. One such example was the *Waimea*, where several fights erupted between Jews and Gentiles. The Captain and doctor eventually intervened to prevent the single men from ganging up on Jewish emigrants, read them the Passengers' Act, and threatened to prosecute the next aggressor upon arrival in New Zealand.

The Highlanders were also a much-maligned group, especially aboard the *Blenheim*, where Captain Gray complained to his favourite cabin passengers about 'the indolence and filthy habits of the Highlanders, the few Paisley emigrants keep themselves cleaner, he says.' Mrs Campbell, so vociferous on every issue, was disgusted by reports of the Highlanders using their food pans for bed pans.

From the very moment they walked the gangway, emigrants were surrounded by religion, just as surely and just as completely as if they had been ashore. New Zealand was shaping up to be God's own country, indeed. While the passengers were on deck, nervously awaiting the mandatory Government Inspection, they were invariably addressed by a member of a religious society and presented with pamphlets. John Bathgate was very pleased when an agent of the London Religious Tract Society came on board the *Star of Tasmania* and presented a brown paper package of reading material to every passenger.

While myriad denominations were represented on board, perhaps the lowest common religious denominator relates to the observation of the Sabbath (or disappointing lack thereof). Mr Bathgate brilliantly describes a Sabbath service on the poop as: 'the little floating temple, out of sight of land, afar on the wilderness of waters, with its assembly of humble, earnest worshippers.' John Bathgate was a very religious gentleman

A characteristically illustrated spread from Adam Wright's diary of the *Strathmore* passage in 1856.

who possessed a real sense of socio-religious responsibility. Every Wednesday and Sunday evening, he journeyed below decks to conduct Scripture readings and prayer for the Steerage passengers. Many diaries describe the Sabbath festivities and formalities with the same reverence and pleasant surprise. However, many others speak with candour about the utter lack of religious feeling aboard. Adam Blackwood's account of sailing aboard the *Titan* in 1857 stands in stark contrast to Bathgate's devout experience. Blackwood opines that 'very few ... attend to the sermons, Religion is very much despised in this ship.' Evidently, the religious experience varied greatly according to the ship's master, passengers and weather conditions.

Fervent religious debate was rife, as Keturah Davies witnessed in the *Schah Jehan* in 1860. In the aftermath of a group quarrel over religion, 'one poor Irish girl cried because she was told she would never go to Heaven if she remained a Catholic.' And Heaven was certainly on everybody's mind. Appeals were constantly made to a higher power, for survival, solace, courage, and for more material desires (such as money, coffee, or Welsh rarebit). If you wish to pry into personal addresses to God, refer to the diaries of the Revd William Nicholson, Robert Watson, Agnes S Gray McGregor, Elizabeth Purdie, John McLay or the Revd Walter Harris. John Bathgate's account even contains a hymn he wrote to mark the denouement of his voyage.



One of the many evocative illustrations from John Elder Moultray's diary of the *Helen Denny* passage in 1883 – "The Culinary Department watching the Passengers coming on board."

It had previously been thought that Hogmanay celebrations were non-existent on these voyages, and Christmas festivities were rare. Several of the diaries I read, however, attest to the very merry commemoration of Christmas. In preparation for Christmas aboard the *Piako* in 1879, the Captain ordered the slaughter of three pigs and one sheep (to be the steerage passengers' first taste of fresh meat on board), and an extra allowance of currants and raisins for puddings (Mary Brooke). Mrs Campbell likewise relays that, during Christmas festivities, 'a good allowance of wine put the gents in famous spirits!'

In the midst of the ocean, one could not help but be conscious of mortality and the possibility of imminent death. The death and sea burial of another passenger affected all aboard, albeit in different ways. Some reacted to the passing of strangers with great solemnity and sorrow, others barely reacted at all. Following the death of several infants, Alexander Campbell Begg wrote that 'there is nothing ... more sad than deaths at sea; we are all, as it were, one family, shut out from the rest of the world ... we all feel it very deeply.'

The loss of a family member was well-nigh unbearable, and many parents suffered heart-rending grief over the loss of a child. When Jessie Campbell's daughter Tibbie died, Mrs Campbell deeply regretted being at sea: 'my dear lamb ... expired this morning ... what would I give to be on shore with her little Body, the idea of committing it to the deep distresses me very much ... she will make a sad blank to me for a long time.' Captain Gray was 'so much affected, he could scarcely read the funeral service.'

Equally, certain individuals were chastised and lampooned for their inadequate or misdirected mourning. For the most brilliant, tragicomic example, look no further than *The Affair of the Doctor's Goat*. Francis Pillans noted with characteristically acerbic flair, that when Doctor Purdie's goat died, 'Mrs Purdie thought [it] proper to weep, altho[ugh] when her child died and the other one was at death's door ... not a tear fell nor did she ever seem to care a button for them — a more heartless bitch I never saw.' However, readers ought to avoid blithely taking such statements of opinion as fact. Indeed, Elizabeth Purdie's diary gives a rather different account of the voyage, and is crucial reading for triangulation of the 1849 *Mooltan* voyage.

Conversely, some diarists provide curt, factual statements of death — devoid of any emotion. A prime example would be Adam Blackwood's terse reportage of an infant's death: 'and it was thrown overboard at half past five.' The Reverend Walter Harris even composed a rather unfeeling poem, to mark the sea burial of a young boy: 'One sudden plunge, / Then all was O'er / The waves rolled on / As they rolled before.'

In some cases, fatal shipboard epidemics (for example scarlet fever or typhoid) may have desensitized individuals to death en masse. The diaries of S Powell and Alexander Collie provide two perspectives of the scarlet-fever-ridden voyage of the *Oamaru*.

This internship was the best job I have ever had. I learned so much about archival research and organisation, the experience of emigration, and savoured every morsel of information about New Zealand's early settlers. I would like to thank the Otago Settlers Association, Toitū / Otago Settlers Museum, and the History Department at Otago University for the amazing opportunity provided by this internship. I would also like to express particular gratitude to (and respect for) my brilliant supervisor, Seán Brosnahan, who is an awesome curator and an intellectual powerhouse, as well as Jill Haley, the superlative archivist.

Emma Gattey
OSA History Intern, 2012

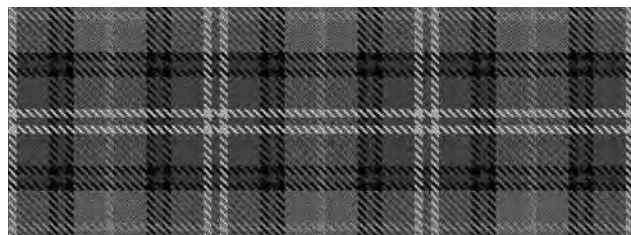
The first part of Emma's article was published in the September 2013 issue. If you are tempted to look at some of these diaries yourself, here are a few that provide history with humour, deep human emotion, and flair. They deserve a wide readership:

Mr Alexander Campbell Begg, 1859, *Alpine* (C 008)
Mrs Mary Brooke, 1879, *Piako* (C 14)
Mr Robert Brown, 1868, *William Davie* (C 138)
Mr Richard Calverley, 1876, *Pomona* (C 19)
Mrs Jessie Campbell, 1840, *Blenheim* (C 20)
Rev John Christie, 1862, *Cheviot* (C 22)
Miss Annie Douglas, 1865, *Peter Denny* (C 136)
Mr William Hill, 1873, *Waitara* (C 137)
Mr John Elder Moultray, 1883, *Helen Denny* (C 209)
Mr Francis Scott Pillans, 1849, *Mooltan* (C 88)
Mr S. Powell, 1874-75, *Oamaru* (C 219)
Mrs Elizabeth Millar Purdie, 1849, *Mooltan* (C 198)
Mr Ben Smart, 1850, *Phoebe Dunbar* (C 143)
Miss Annie Vernon, 1884, *Pleiades* (156)
Mr John Wimpenny, 1879, *Hermione* (C 173)

The first task for this summer's OSA History Intern, Violeta Gilbert, will be to research the biographical details of the diarists Emma has identified. She will then move on to assess a few hundred casualties of the Great War in order to establish if they had a connection with Dunedin. If so, they will be added to the Museum's Roll of Honour.



Above left: Another illustration from John Elder Moultray's 1883 diary – "The Captain being rowed down the Clyde by the midshipmen".
Above right: The Dunedin Highland Rifles photographed in Queens Gardens, about 1885.



From Auld Reekie to New Edinburgh



To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the sister city connection between the capital of Scotland and the capital of Scottish New Zealand, the Museum has arranged its first temporary exhibition since the reopening. *DUNedinburgh* is on show until 13 July in the new gallery partitioned off from part of the former bus garage, and is proclaimed by the saltire of St Andrew and the rampant lion of royal Scotland flying atop the building. The exhibition looks at the diverse ways in which Scottish identity has expressed itself, from literature to art, music and dance, place names and cultural groups. It asks how Dunedin's Scottish heritage manifests itself today.

The National Museums of Scotland have had a strong partnership with Toitū for the past 15 years. They have kindly sent some items from their collection to illustrate the Disruption in the Church of Scotland of 1843 that prompted thoughts of setting off across the oceans. The military tradition is illustrated with uniforms and standards. Later this year the New Zealand Scottish Regiment will be formally disbanded and its ceremonial colours will be laid up, not in a church, but instead in the Museum. There may be no oatcakes or deep-fried Mars bars on offer, but the exhibition does include a good selection of books on Scottish migration and Scottish Otago.



Writing History to Order

The guest speaker at last year's Annual General Meeting was well-known broadcaster and historian Jim Sullivan. He gave a lively and entertaining talk about writing and publishing commissioned histories. They are quite a different sort of publication from histories written out of personal interest: however popular their publications are, writers cannot hope to live on the proceeds of historical books alone. History-writing has become a part-time occupation for Jim as he winds down his broadcasting commitments. He began his publishing career with an oral history, interviewing Catholic boys about their lives. The interviewees included former boys as various as Jim Bolger and Sam Hunt. A book based on interviews with women about their experiences in the Second World War followed.

Over the past decade Jim has been commissioned to write histories of businesses that had reached significant anniversaries. He pointed out that many people who want a history written assume it will be done for the sheer love of it, and are surprised when the subject of payment is mentioned. Basic decisions such as how much the project will cost and how many copies of the book will be printed have to be decided at the outset, and have not always been given much thought by the commissioners. Some firms see a history as a promotional item rather than a book — a two hundred-page advertisement for themselves — while others are happy to have their portrait painted, warts and all. Commercially sensitive matters usually do not make it into published histories, but Skyline in Queenstown for instance felt it important that the story of an accident in which two of its customers were killed should not be omitted.

Jim's first commissioned business history was for the centenary of Arthur Barnett in 2004. He mixed social history with the story of the business, and credits to this the continuing popularity of the book — he found all the public library's copies were on loan when he came to borrow one to show it to the OSA. Jim was approached by Skyline for an anniversary history as their fiftieth year approached. Next came the Plunket Society for its centenary. Jim had worked for them before, so knew many of the people already. Though the head office had moved to Wellington, Plunket's archives remain in Dunedin, at the Hocken Library. Momona Airport reached its half-centenary in 2012, and Jim took the opportunity when writing its history to expand the remit to examine the wider history of aviation in Otago. This filled a gap in the existing literature, and drew on some sources in the Toitū / Settlers Museum archives.

Among Jim's most recent projects was a commissioned history for the centenary of Scott Technology, a firm that has developed out of all recognition from its origins as a family-owned engineering works just before the Great War. Just out is Jim's history of the Dunedin Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute, which is one of the longest-lived institutions in the city. He says the book is in effect a history of Dunedin's reading habits, and how reading and books are an important part of our society. The 'Tartan Mafia' that ran the early town also ran the Athenaeum. Another project in prospect is the history of a local law firm, but this may prove difficult as their files have been dumped. In contrast, the Athenaeum has retained important parts of its archive, while other files are at the Hocken. Jim encourages all businesses to deposit their records either at the Hocken or in the Toitū / Settlers Museum's archives, and not to run the risk of losing this irreplaceable material.

Several of Jim's other publications are works of rural local history. He has a crib at Patearoa in the Maniototo, and on discovering there was no history of the place, decided to write it himself. It is a sign of the great interest in local history that although only about 40 people live in Patearoa, a thousand copies of the book were sold. Since the Patearoa Rugby Club also needed a history, Jim wrote it for them. As Jim pointed out, rural rugby clubs are vital to their community and much more central to social life than they are in towns. More centenaries loomed in 2010: both Stonehenge and Patearoa Stations were to commemorate a hundred years in family ownership, and in a spirit of friendly rivalry each wanted a book to mark it. Another local history, Patearoa at War, resulted from a chance encounter in the local pub with a man who had a shoebox full of letters written to his aunt from local men serving in the Great War of 1914-18. Initially only a hundred copies of the book were printed, but as men from virtually all local families appeared in it, a few hundred more copies had to be printed to meet the demand. Reflecting on the many commissioned histories he has written, Jim concluded light-heartedly: 'for an author, it doesn't matter if your book doesn't sell, as you've got your fee!'

For those interested in the district, see also Keith Scott's *A history of Gimmerburn: The land that God forgot to finish* (Gimmerburn Community, 2013). Jim Sullivan's *Reading Matters: A History of the Dunedin Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute* was published by the Athenaeum in late 2013.

Jim Sullivan - Photo by Craig Baxter, *Otago Daily Times*.



Barry Clarke MNZOM

Our former long-time Treasurer Barry Clarke has become a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in recognition of his services to the community. That community is an extensive one — Barry is closely involved with a wide range of charities and other community organisations in addition to his work for the OSA as a committee member and chairman of the fund-raising committee. He also chairs the Southern Heritage Trust, the Dunedin Gasworks Museum trust board and the Tapestry Trust, and is a trustee of the Cargill's Castle Trust and the Dunedin Prison Trust. Barry is a past President of the Dunedin Club, a life member of Rotary and a national councillor and board member of the Automobile Association. We are very lucky to have a share of his energy and expertise, and congratulate him on a thoroughly merited honour.

OSA Christmas Meeting

The Kia Orana Performing Arts Group provided spectacular (and loud) entertainment at the Christmas meeting of the Association on the evening of Tuesday, 3 December. Under the leadership of the Revd Tokerau Joseph of First Church, the group's members are mainly from the Cook Islands but also other parts of Polynesia, including New Zealand. They performed traditional dances and action songs, among them 'Beautiful Land' from Rarotonga. Some of the more nimble and energetic members of the audience were enticed onto the floor to dance. Hilary Allison thanked the performers on behalf of the Association, after which Susan Schweigman thanked Robyn Johnston, who has organised the speakers and meeting places for the Tuesday Club for the past four years, including the difficult period of the rebuilding. She has organised the Walk Dunedin programme also, and is now handing over to Rua McCallum. The formal part of the proceedings ended with the drawing of a raffle, the proceeds of which went to the Settlers' Cottage appeal. The evening was rounded off with Christmas cake, strawberries and conversation.



Top left: Barry Clarke - *Otago Daily Times* photo; Above left: Kia Orana Performing Arts Group performing at the OSA Christmas meeting. Above right: Fernhill, venue for this year's Anniversary Day luncheon.

For Your Diary

Otago Anniversary Day

Members are cordially invited to First Church at 10am on 23 March to commemorate the 166th anniversary of the foundation of Otago, to be followed by morning tea. President Phil Dowsett will give one of the readings at the service. Since Anniversary Day falls on a Sunday this year, it was felt that a luncheon would be more suitable than an evening dinner. The venue will be Fernhill, an historic grand home built for John Jones in 1867, now the Dunedin Club. It will be a privilege to lunch in gracious surroundings, and the dining room overlooks the garden and the club's bowling green.

The event will commence at noon, and lunch will be served at 12.30. It will be a buffet-style meal, comprising ham on the bone, a vegetarian option, salads, gourmet potatoes and the trimmings. The guest speaker, Councillor Neville Peat, will talk on 'Hills of Home.' Tickets cost \$35 per person; numbers are limited.



Do Keep in Touch

Many thanks to those members who have sent in their electronic addresses so the OSA can keep in touch more easily and cheaply than before. If you have not yet done so, please contact the Secretary at otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz This will not affect the printed newsletter, though if you would like electronic copies of recent issues, they can be found in portable document format at www.toituosm.com/about/otago-settlers-association/otago-settlers-news

Introduce a Friend to the OSA



Otago Settlers Association Membership Application Form

Please return this section with payment to
Otago Settlers Association, PO Box 74, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand
 Phone/Fax: (03) 477 8677 Email: otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz



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.

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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



The Otago Daily Times supports Toitū Otago Settlers Museum

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