



## Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers

Many members of the Otago Early Settlers' Association did their bit for the war effort in 1914–18, and their successors have helped out for the centenary commemorations in their turn. To mark Embarkation Day on Sunday, 28 September, our new President Susan Schweigman organised a recreation of the scene from a century ago, showing the work done by the Otago and Southland Women's Patriotic Association in providing essential items to the men about to leave for the troopships.

Three display tables were set up in the Smith Gallery in the morning by members of a special OSA committee. They had worked hard to track down genuine antique articles for display, and to arrange for the reproduction of 'housewives' (sewing kits), knitted balaclavas, socks and a couple of cholera belts, all following the official 1914 patterns. There were also many large 1914-style ladies' hats being worn. Our Administrator Kerry Hendry appeared in a period outfit

together with several OSA volunteers and members of Images of the Past, a group that specialises in recreating and modelling period costume. They spent the afternoon talking to visitors while knitting for victory. A selection of photographs and documents was on show, together with wartime memorabilia provided by George Morris that included tins of his family's own product, Morris' Dubbin.

The Smith Gallery, lined with hundreds of portraits, was the original museum of the OESA. Throughout the Great War it was used for the distribution of kit bags to departing soldiers. Behind it, the Association's hall (where the whaling boat now is) was given over to the packing of clothing and comforts for the troops as well as the sewing of shirts. At the outset of the war, the government provided recruits with only the basic items of outer uniform clothing. Annette, Countess Liverpool, the wife of the Governor General, called on the women of the Dominion to provide the rest: flannel shirts,

Members of the Otago and Southland Women's Patriotic Association fundraising at Sprosen's Corner in the Octagon during the First World War.

underwear and socks. The men were expecting to be sent to join the fighting in Belgium, and it would be Autumn by the time they arrived. Many mothers, sisters, cousins and aunts helped sew shirts, just like Sister Susie, the heroine of the hit song of 1914. Its tongue-twisting chorus ran: 'Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers / Such skill at sewing shirts / Our shy young sister Susie shows! / Some soldiers send epistles, / Say they'd sooner sleep in thistles / Than the saucy, soft, short shirts for soldiers sister Susie sews!'

Within days of the declaration of war the women of Dunedin were mobilised by the mayor's wife, Ada Shacklock. She called a meeting of about 800 women to help with the cause, and on 10 August 1914 they formed the Women's Patriotic Association. Many of its committee members came from prominent local business families. Mrs Shacklock's predecessor as mayoress, Mary Downie Stewart, soon took over as President, though Jean Burt did a lot of the hard work. Hundreds of kit bags were needed quickly, by 25 August. The Association garnered donations from local businesses and patriotic organisations. In addition to providing its hall, the OESA promised to provide two hundred shirts. The Dominican nuns, recognising that every soldier needs a housewife, promised to supply a hundred of the compact sewing kits, thoughtfully providing the needles already

threaded. Hallensteins donated ready-cut cloth for shirts, while the Mosgiel Woollen Mill supplied underwear. Singer provided the sewing machines and other local businesses such as Penrose's also chipped in.

Branches of the Women's Patriotic Association were established in many places throughout Otago and Southland, and sent items to the Early Settlers' Hall for packing and distribution. Cotton service bags were made for holding soldiers' daily rations in the field, and the men were given a holdall, towel, facecloth, soap, cutlery and a tin opener. Cinnamon and liquorice were issued to ward off colds, and cholera belts were issued. The latter were already beginning to be considered a little old-fashioned, but were worn in the belief and hope that they would ward off chills and so help prevent bowel complaints such as diarrhoea and dysentery, especially in tropical climates. (Informally, 'Cholera' in those days could cover a range of gastrointestinal complaints.) Cholera belts were typically flannel or woollen cummerbunds, but the knitted replica ones on display were taking no chances: they were wide tubes long enough to provide warmth from waist to thigh. The Women's Patriotic Association raised money to purchase machine-knitted cardigan jackets and appealed to local women to knit additional, warm cuffs for them. The *Otago Daily Times*



Mrs Janet Hopkins and Mrs Margaret Rusbatch on duty in the Smith Gallery on Embarkation Day 2014.

published a pattern for the cuffs, and the Association was inundated with them. Sandshoes, boxing gloves, books and sheet music were donated to keep the men active and entertained on their long sea voyage.

The men were sorely needed: as a result of its first major battle, at Mons on 23 August, it was reported that the British Expeditionary Force 'has suffered terrible losses and requires immediate and immense reinforcement,' even if the retreat showed at least the angels were on their side. A refugee crisis had also been set off by the German invasion of Belgium. The destruction of Louvain in early September alone was reported to have made 40,000 people homeless. In all, about a quarter of a million Belgian civilians made it to safety in Britain. Their most famous fictional counterpart was the Chief of Police in Brussels, Hercule Poirot. In far-off Dunedin, the Women's Patriotic Association held its first street collection on Saturday, 19 September for the relief of Belgian and British women and children. They raised £600 selling posies, equivalent to about \$88,000 now.

The men encamped at Tahuna Park came into town in batches and collected their kits from the OESA rooms. By 19 September, 1511 kits had been issued. The patriotic ladies organised refreshments, cards, games and dances in

the Early Settlers' Hall for the soldiers, and continued to do so for the rest of the war. In September 1914, the men of the Otago Mounted Rifles went swimming at the municipal baths in Moray Place and afterwards were given afternoon tea in the OESA hall. In gratitude, the regiment gave a framed photograph signed by all the troopers and their mascot, a pug named Alexander Godley after their commanding officer. He signed with his paw print (the dog, that is, not the general). This photograph hung in the hall throughout the war and was then donated to the public library. Many years later, it was given to the Pioneer Women's Hall, but it has since disappeared. Does anyone know where it might be?

**Based on talks given at the Embarkation Day commemorations by Marjorie Blackman and Seán Brosnahan.**



OSWPA members sell posies in the Octagon to fund soldier comforts, September 1914.



# Director's Annual Report

## for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014

This last year has been another incredibly busy one for the Museum and all our staff. Post-redevelopment, we are now learning how to drive our new building and working out what works best where and when. The new Museum is still less than two years old, and we are still learning about all our new spaces, new exhibition cases and new technologies. We have been putting in new displays and trying out new events and activities. We have come a long way from the old Otago Settlers Museum, and we are operating on a completely different scale. There have been many changes over the last year, but the Museum remains in a very strong position within the city, with many supporters and good links with our many communities. The visitor numbers continue to be very impressive, with 268,185 in our first full financial year. The visitor numbers last year were 221,415 (for seven months). Summer remains our busy tourist season, and we have benefited from the many cruise ships now visiting Dunedin.

### **Museum Staff**

We have had some staff changes over the year, saying goodbye to Robyn Johnston, Public Programmes Developer; Courtney Dryden, Personal Assistant; Damian Mallon, Facilities and Service Manager; Jill Haley, Archivist; Claire Nodder, Collections Manager; and Amelia Lindsay, Functions and Event Coordinator. Jennifer Evans was Acting Director from October 2013 until being appointed to the role of Director in July this year.

A very warm welcome is extended to all our new staff who have joined us during this last year: Helen McDermott as Public Programmes Developer Lifelong Learning; Mandy Butler as Administration Assistant; Rua McCallum as Public Programmes Developer; Beth Rees as Collections Assistant; and Emma Knowles as Archivist. Kirsten Glengarry has joined us on a short-term contract as Visitor Experience Manager. Donna Shield has joined us as Parental Leave cover for Yvette Billot, and Tim Cornelius has been Acting Collections Manager while Claire Nodder has been absent. There will be more new staff as we are currently undergoing another round of recruitment. And a very warm welcome too to our five new babies — four staff members are currently on Parental Leave. It has been a very productive year.

We still have a strong core of volunteers for Walk Dunedin, who run the walk every day, rain, hail or shine. Peter Holland also undertakes regular volunteer work for the collections team. Other volunteers also help out from time to time. During this period, Curator Seán Brosnahan celebrated 25 years of working at the Museum with a combined function with Museum staff and the OSA Committee. On the management side, Sue Bidrose, who was our General Manager, is now the Dunedin City Council CEO. Nicola Pinfold has been Acting General Manager during this time, and a new appointee, Simon Pickford, is due to start as General Manager — Services and Development in October.



### Collections and Exhibition Teams

Throughout the year, regular changes have been made within the permanent displays, some to protect the more fragile objects and others to keep the displays fresh and ensure that repeat visitors have new objects to explore. The new 'Ghosts of Wall Street' exhibition opened in December. The OSA had a 'sneak peek' at this at the 'Victorian Extravaganza,' which included a talk by Seán Brosnahan and an early viewing of some of the video stories within this display. The new interactive ride-on penny farthing has been installed and is already proving to be very popular. Throughout the year there have been smaller displays and events celebrating various events in the area, including the Bledisloe Cup rugby game, and the Polish and Jewish communities.

The first exhibition in the newly finished Special Exhibition Gallery was *DUNedinburgh*, providing a chance to reflect on the city's Scottish heritage and ask ourselves to what extent we are still the Edinburgh of the South. Are the bagpipes and tartan just something we play up for the tourists or do people here still value their Caledonian heritage? Highlights of this exhibition included: the colours of the New Zealand Scottish Regiment, symbolising the honour of our uniquely Scottish military unit and rarely displayed outside army premises; the Caledonian stone chair, Dunedin's own stone of destiny, carved from a huge block of Waikawa granite and with Gaelic inscriptions referencing Scotland's coronation stone; original weavings of the Dunedin and Otago tartans, distilling our Scottish heritage in thread and creating a tartan pattern that symbolises our history and shared identity; Presbyterian treasures from the National Museum of Scotland, reminders of the religious passions that led to the establishment of Dunedin as a Free Church settlement; and the Edinburgh Reliquary, a symbol of Dunedin's special relationship with Edinburgh, presented to the city on its centennial in 1948.

The new *wharerau* was constructed on site, in its current location. Visitors were not only able to watch, but could join in too. The Material Culture Gallery was changed over to 'Outerwear' under the guidance of guest Curator Jane Malthus. These changes and special exhibitions require a great deal of work behind the scenes by our Collections Team, in organising loans, preparing, conserving and treating objects, in addition to all the daily tasks



involved in processing new donations of objects and working on our backlog. Work has also been progressing on providing online access to our portrait database through 'Vernon.'

### Regular Events and Highlights

Anzac Day continues to be popular and, as ever, we could not serve so many cups of tea so very early in the morning without our crew of OSA helpers. The Cadbury Magic show appeared at the Museum for the first time last July, and *Josephine's* birthday was celebrated with many fun events and an amazing replica *Josephine* cake. *Pixie Town* also has a very loyal following and continues to delight new generations of Dunedin children. Many thanks must go to the OSA, which continues to support this event every year. Many of our regular events now have quite a following, such as the Craft Collective, Book Club, Toddler Time and of course the increasingly popular Tuesday Club.

### Education — LEOTC

Increasingly the Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom and Lifelong Learning Educator programmes are reaching more and more groups, including University, Polytechnic and College of Education students. They are not just history students, but also from the fields of design and geography. Secondary schools from as far away as Canterbury and Southland travel to Dunedin to take part in our Education programmes. We also had a group from an Aboriginal School in Australia, who were very interested in what we teach about identity. Numbers for all classes are well above the Ministry of Education's targets.

During this period we have seen dance and drama presentations, performed as part of the students' NCEA assessment, often while the Museum is open, to an audience of family and friends, as well as Museum visitors. A Bring Your Own Device scheme has now been introduced, so that instead of removing phones and electronic devices from students visiting the Museum, they are now being encouraged to use them as part of the lesson. In fact one programme is centred on the use of iPads and other devices to undertake research while looking at the objects of interest. A very successful pilot project with the Amenities Society, using Cragieburn, has been developed and offered to schools.



### **Community Engagement**

Many talks have been given over the last year by members of the Collections, Exhibitions and Management Teams on a wide variety of topics, to an even wider range of audiences. This is an important role for us as Museum staff — to be ambassadors out into the community, telling people what we do and why, and encouraging people to come and visit the Museum and Garden. 'Robbie Rocks' was held in January and proved to be very successful, as was the Burns Supper held in the Foyer, in conjunction with the Burns Club and the Caledonian Society. Museum staff also took part in the filming of the 'Tour of Duty' television programme with Tony Robinson. Meetings continue for the Kai Tahu Liaison Group, the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum Board and the Dunedin Chinese Garden Board. The Director also attends the DCC Maori Participation Working Party, as well as OSA Committee Meetings. We continue to support the Port Chalmers Museum, the Strath Taieri Historical Society Museum in Middlemarch and the Gasworks Museum.

### **Media Coverage**

We have had incredible media coverage of the wide range of events, activities and exhibitions that have occurred throughout the year. The Museum has appeared on the national news on a number of occasions, on 'Campbell Live' during coverage of the Royal Tour to Dunedin, and a live broadcast of the Sports News from the Josephine Foyer before an All Blacks Test Match.

### **Revenue Earned**

Venue hire is going from strength to strength as word gets around about how great the Josephine Foyer is for functions. We have had conferences, family reunions, business seminars, cocktail events, dinners and balls. Venue Hire is a growing part of our revenue stream, with dinners being hosted in the Josephine Foyer and sometimes the entire Museum being booked for a group to look through and enjoy before their dinner or function. Often this is being combined with drinks and nibbles at the Dunedin Chinese Garden, which gives guests a great appreciation for all aspects of the history of Dunedin.

Retail sales have remained steady, with great sales in the pre-Christmas period, largely due to the influx of families visiting Pixie Town. Great thanks go, as ever, to the OSA for their wholehearted support, backed up by grants for various projects within the Museum, notably the annual History Internship and the sponsorship of the Cottage.

### **Awards Received**

We have received so many awards during the last year that I will simply list them: Gold Award Winner — Commercial and Civic Project Award; Qualmark for Walk Dunedin and Toitū Otago Settlers Museum (2013 and 2014); Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence (2013 and 2014) — currently ranked number 3 Dunedin attraction and number 1 Museum; New Zealand Institute of Architects Awards — Heritage Category, Public Building and Resene Colour Award. The annual DCC Residents' Opinion Survey has given us a 94% satisfaction rating, our highest yet.

### **The Dunedin Chinese Garden**

Since 1 July 2013, the Garden has been a Business Unit within the Museum, and all aspects of the Garden have been run by the Museum, with the existing staff at the Garden. Delegations from China have come from Qingdao (the home of Haier, who own Fisher & Paykel), Changning, the Yu Garden (Shanghai) and Jinshan. We also helped to host Zhifeng Yuan, who was the first staff exchange post between the Shanghai and Dunedin local government departments. We have also hosted Madame Tan, the Chinese Consul General based in Christchurch, and Mr Li Xin, Vice Consul General. Models from Shanghai were hosted at the Garden as part of Fashion ID week. The fifth birthday of the Garden was celebrated in June, and a delegation came over from our sister city, Shanghai, to open an exhibition in the Museum on the Yu Garden. This 450-year old traditional Chinese garden sits in the cultural district of Shanghai and we are very fortunate to have a sister-Garden relationship. Very successful celebrations were also held of Chinese New Year (also attracting national news coverage) and the Dragon Boat and Moon Festivals.



### The Year Ahead

The WW100 Exhibition *Dunedin's Great War* is now open. This is only the second exhibition in our Special Exhibition Gallery, but I can confidently say it's our best yet! This exhibition opened on 1 August, almost 100 years to the day after the First World War began, and it will run until 3 May. It offers visitors a chance to explore what life was like at home and away during this era. Curator Seán Brosnahan has recently returned from a trip to Turkey, France and Belgium to film sites of significance for Otago soldiers. This footage forms part of the exhibition to provide a contemporary connection to these distant places. We have also provided a beginner's guide to tracing First World War family history at the Research Centre, as well as a series of talks and events to complement the exhibition. The Embarkation Weekend on 27–28 September commemorated the gathering and departure of the first contingent of soldiers from Otago and Southland. On Sunday, 28 September the Museum held a range of events to complement this city event, including a talk by eminent historian Chris Pugsley. We are also planning for a bit of light relief after the War, with an exhibition featuring Cats and Dogs.

The Museum and the Garden are both successful visitor attractions in Dunedin, and continue to be popular with visitors. We will continue to build on this success; we will continue to innovate; we will become more sustainable, both in a business and an environmental sense; and we will continue to tell the stories of the people of this city and this region.

**Jennifer Evans**  
Director

## Annual General Meeting

About fifty members attended the 115th Annual General Meeting of the Otago Settlers Association on the evening of Wednesday, 17 September. Outgoing President Phil Dowsett welcomed them and swiftly got down to business. The minutes of the previous AGM were approved and he presented the highlights of his annual report, which was distributed with the September newsletter. Enlarging on them, Phil made especial mention of Rhonnda and Jan Martin, and thanked them for their work for the Association. He spoke of the great success of the revitalised Museum and the pride he felt in supporting 'this wonderful Museum.'

Treasurer Keith Clifford then presented the financial statements. He explained that the Committee aims to meet the running costs of the Association with income from its investments so that all other income can be devoted to Museum projects. After the accounts were approved, Phil Dowsett oversaw the election of officers. Vice President Susan Schweigman was nominated as the new President and was elected unopposed. Having served four years as President of the Association, Phil promptly handed over the levers of power to Susan. She then presided over the unopposed election of Hilary Allison as Vice President and a Committee of ten members. She welcomed its sole new member, Shan White.

The Director, Jennifer Evans, presented her annual report: see pages 5–7. Long-serving members of the Committee were then presented with badges to mark their contribution to the Association. On receiving hers, former President Dot Page said 'it has been a joy to work with the lovely committee members ... a pleasure the whole way.' Hilary Allison, Eleanor Leckie and Ann Barsby also received the award for more than a decade's service, though Ann admitted she 'didn't think it was that long.' The evening's guest speaker was Warwick Jordan: a full report of his talk will appear in a future newsletter.

## For Your Diary

### OSA Christmas Function

The Association's Christmas meeting will be held on 9 December in the Museum foyer, beginning at 7.30pm and winding up about nine-ish. An appropriately seasonal supper will be provided. The evening will feature a show-and-tell Antiques Roadshow-style event: members are encouraged to bring their cherished objects for display, but they must be registered in advance. Ten items will be selected, and their owners will give brief talks about them. It will not be exactly like the BBC's Antiques Roadshow, however. No valuations will be given, and Fiona Bruce unfortunately will be otherwise engaged. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Kerry at the office as soon as possible so she can ensure there will be a good variety of objects. Call (03) 4778 677 or write to the OSA Administrator, PO Box 74, Dunedin 9054, or [otago.settlers.assn@extra.co.nz](mailto:otago.settlers.assn@extra.co.nz)

## Book News

### ***Creature Comforts: New Zealanders and their Pets. An Illustrated History*** by Nancy Swarbrick

(Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2014) 292 pages, paperback. \$55 (with OSA members' 15% discount: \$46.75 + \$5 postage & packing).

A good pet will stick with you to the very end: for instance when James Mackenzie the sheep-stealer was eventually arrested and taken to court, he was reunited with his faithful dog Friday. Weeping, he said to her: 'Aye Lassie, poor Lassie, they've got you too.' In other cases, it was quite literally to the very end: Thomas Brunner took his dog Rover with him on his expeditions, but in the end, lost, starving and desperate, he was forced to roast and eat him. Fortunately not everyone was forced to such extremes.

In this attractively illustrated book, Nancy Swarbrick (herself a cat lover) uses a wide variety of first-hand accounts to examine people's changing relationships with all kinds of animals, not just conventional pets. Animal celebrities such as Opo the friendly dolphin and Shrek the seriously shaggy sheep are considered. She looks at the social impact of fanciers' organisations, the moral influence of the SPCA and other animal welfare groups, the educational role of calf clubs, and the questions raised by animal rights activists.

How Maori and European attitudes towards pets influenced each other is also discussed. For instance, *mokai*, the Maori word for pet, could also refer to a human slave. New Zealanders have a notoriously pragmatic and exploitative view of animals raised for slaughter, yet at the same time have the highest rate of pet ownership in the world. All this is accompanied by some wonderful, often little-known, illustrations.



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 near the Archive, where the old shop was situated before the rebuilding. Members of the Otago Settlers Association qualify for a 15% discount. 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*

### **OTAGO SETTLERS ASSOCIATION**

31 Queens Gardens  
PO Box 74 Dunedin 9016  
Ph / Fax 03 477 8677  
email [otago.settlers.assn@xtra.co.nz](mailto: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](mailto:osmmail@dcc.govt.nz)