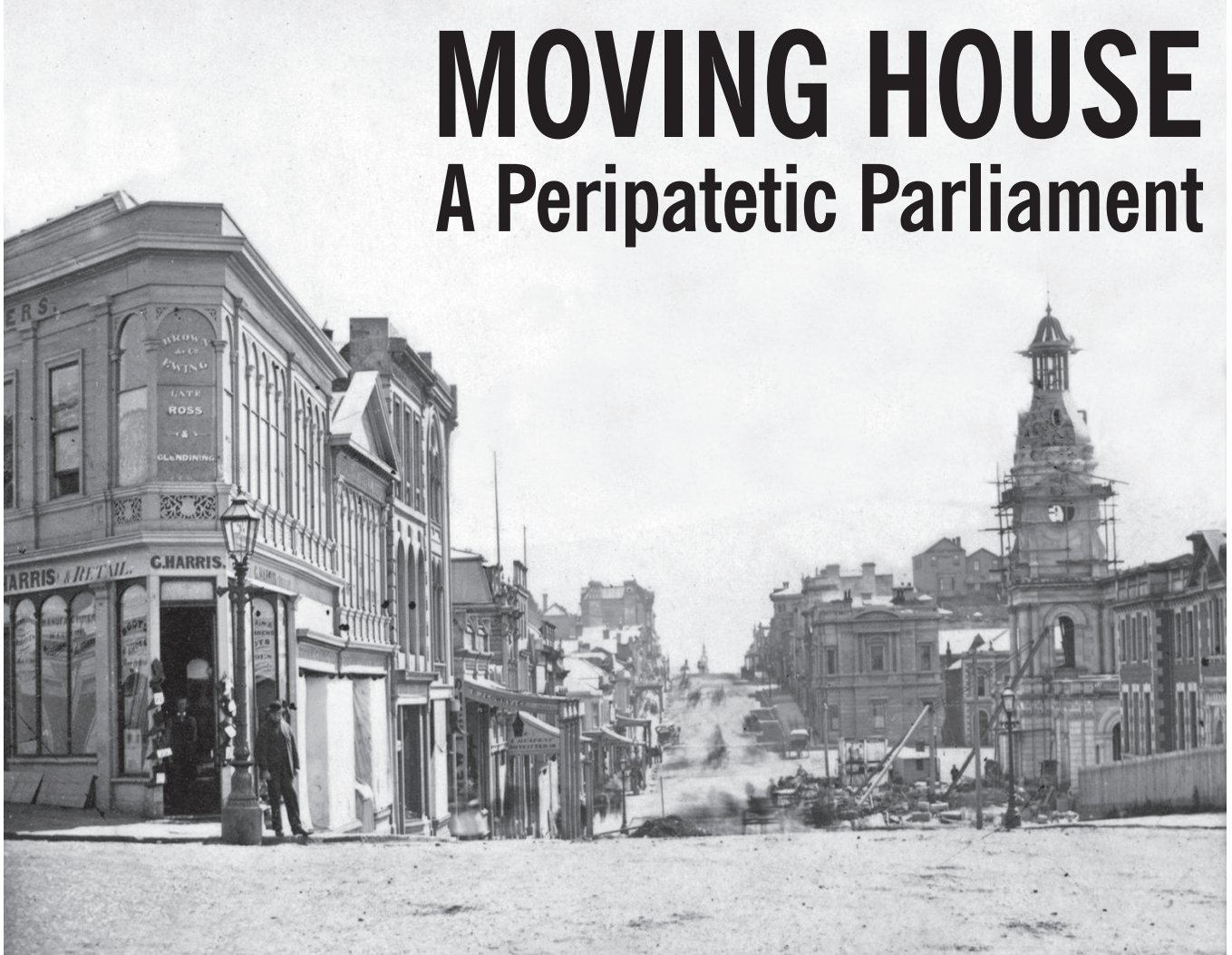


OTAGO SETTLERS NEWS

OTAGO SETTLERS ASSOCIATION *proud to be friends of* **toitū** OTAGO SETTLERS MUSEUM

SPRING 2017 ISSUE 134

MOVING HOUSE A Peripatetic Parliament



Aucklanders have never quite got over losing the seat of government to Wellington, and each natural disaster, or the prospect of one, prompts them to call for the restoration of what they see as the natural order of things. Parliament met for the first time in Wellington in 1865, and it was not long before MPs were itching to get on the move again. The grottness of the temporary parliamentary buildings helped the arguments of provincial separatists who were pushing for sessions to be held in other cities. Rumours spread in Dunedin that the large Italianate building put up for the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition in Great King Street was intended to house parliament, but when the exhibition closed the public hospital moved in instead. In 1866 Julius Vogel of Otago and Frederick Whitaker of Auckland proposed shifting parliament into the eminently suitable new Provincial Council buildings beside the Avon in Christchurch. The debating chamber, completed the previous year, had perhaps the best non-ecclesiastical gothic-revival interior in the country until it was destroyed in an earthquake in 2011.

Pressure grew to escape Wellington and its dodgy drains when in 1868 an MP died suddenly of what was thought to have been malaria. This time, the proposal was to move to the centre of civilisation, the country's only university city and the principal commercial and industrial centre. In October 1871 a substantial majority of MPs unexpectedly voted to hold the next four-month session of parliament in Dunedin. The ministry was not willing, and the upper house was also opposed, arguing it was 'essential to the maintenance of efficiency in the public service' that they stay put. Some thought the plan was simply an attempt by Vogel to appease the troublesome Otago MPs, 'a greedy, unprincipled crew of log-rollers, that care not what becomes of the rest of the Colony if Otago's interests are served,' in the words of a Wanganui newspaper. In those days, almost a quarter of MPs sat for Otago constituencies. Northern separatists, too, favoured the move in the hope that holding a session elsewhere would set a precedent for the eventual return of parliament to Auckland.

Princes Street looking north in late 1867 or early 1868. On the right are the Provincial Government buildings and the tower of the new Post Office under construction.

There were good, if distant, historical precedents for a mobile parliament. Though it usually sat at Westminster, until the 1400s the mother of parliaments had occasionally met wherever the king happened to be at the time. When parliament caused trouble for Charles I and the royal court found itself holed up in Oxford in 1642–46, the remaining loyal MPs met in the university's convocation house. This room is fitted out like a debating chamber, and doubled for the old House of Commons in 1994 for the film *The Madness of King George*.

Dunedin, too, had a university building that could be borrowed to house parliament. Francis Campbell, the Clerk to the House of Representatives, and William Clayton, the Colonial Architect, were despatched to work out the practicalities. Clayton was Vogel's father-in-law and had co-founded New Zealand's longest-lived architectural practice, now Mason & Wales. The governor of the colony would need a suitably grand residence, so it was arranged to rent Fernhill for £200 per annum for five years. There turned out to be a difficulty with the lease regarding whether the tenant was legally allowed to sublet the house and the cottages in its grounds, even to such elevated personages as Sir George Ferguson Bowen, GCMG, and his wife Diamantina, the former Contessa di Roma. (She was born in the Ionian Islands, and the Lady Bowen Falls in Milford Sound are named after her.) The house was eventually acquired by the Dunedin Club in 1874.

The Otago Provincial Superintendent James Macandrew offered the use of the Provincial Council's debating chamber and rooms in Princes Street, and the university was prepared to hand over its newly acquired building nearby for the session. (The university was to move next door into the much smaller customs house for the duration. This was no great hardship as it had only just opened for business in July 1871 with three professors and 81 students.) After the abolition of the provincial governments in 1876, the council's building became the post office. It was demolished in 1928 and, after several years as a large, waterlogged hole in the ground, a much larger chief post office with space for other government departments was built on the site, opening in 1937. The neighbouring building of 1868 with its distinctive clock tower originally had been intended as a post office but was instead used by the provincial museum and the young university until 1878, when it became a bank and eventually in 1900 the stock exchange. For five years from 1903 until it moved into its present building, the Early Settlers Association and its museum were housed in an office in the Exchange. The building lasted until the university's centenary year, 1969, and was replaced by John Wickliffe House.

Clayton's plan was to adapt the two buildings for use by the upper and lower houses of parliament, and link them with a bridge over Water Street at first-floor level. The Legislative

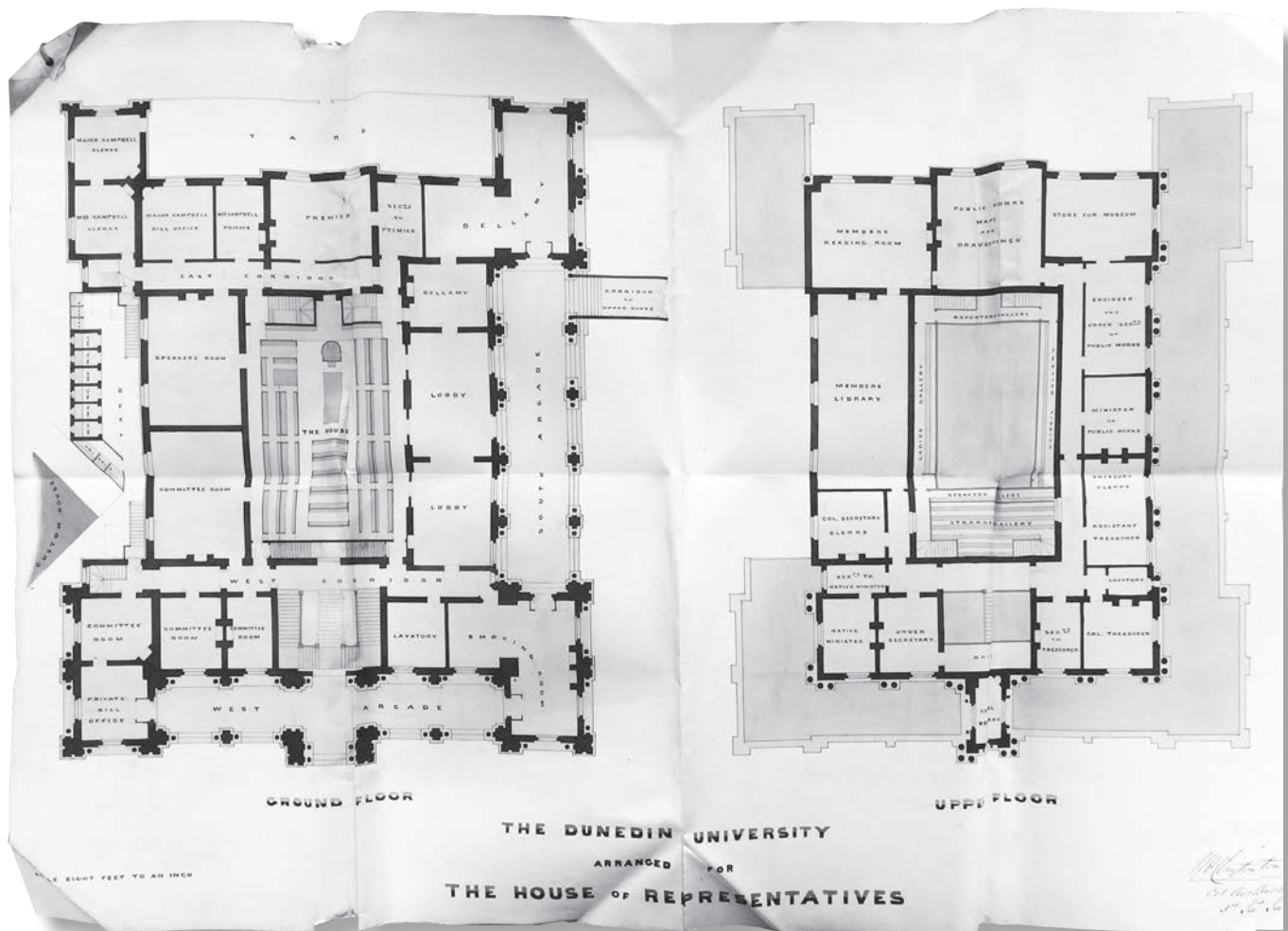


John Tensfeld's photograph of Princes Street looking north in early 1868, showing on the right the Provincial Government buildings and the new Post Office. The clock was installed in February 1868 and came from the hospital.

Council was to have the Provincial Council's rooms, while the House of Representatives was to meet in the central hall of the university building. The accommodation would be more spacious than what MPs were used to, and they could bring their furniture with them in the government's own paddle steamer. They even planned to bring the hot-water heating system from parliament buildings in Wellington.

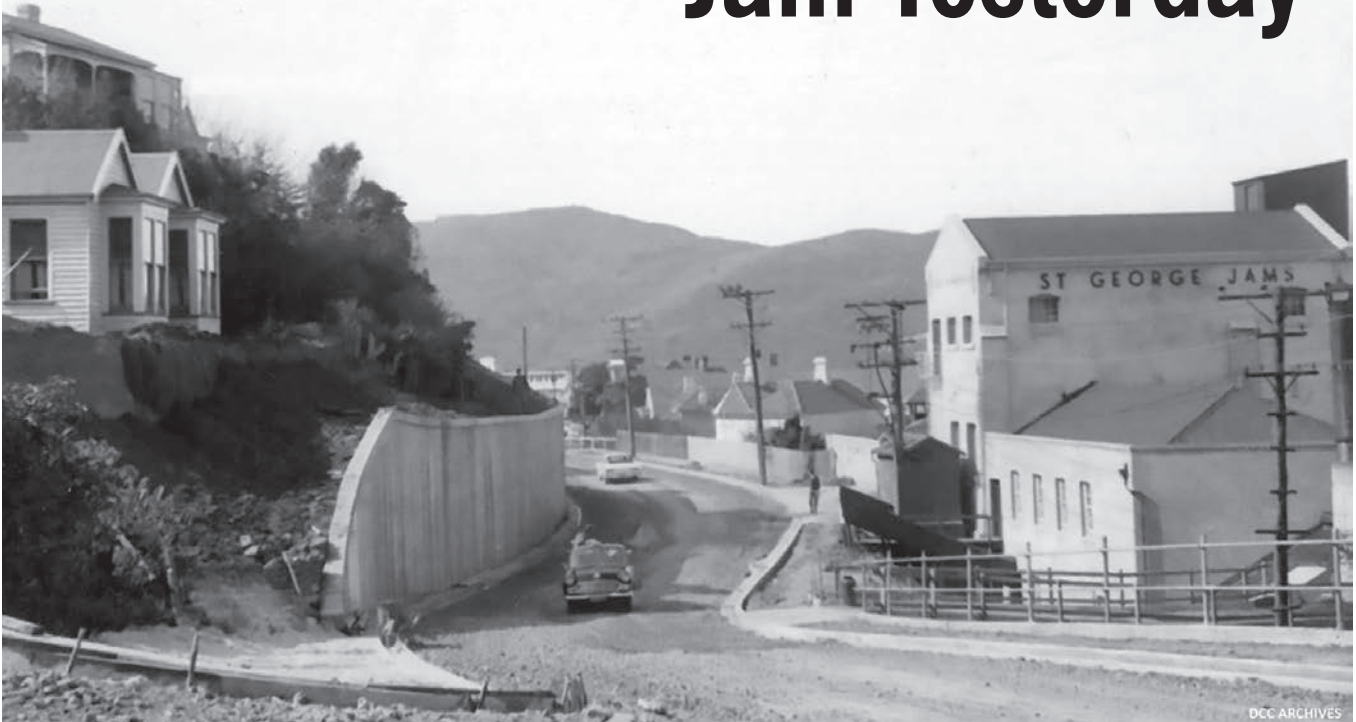
The costs however began to mount up. Hansard would need to be published in Dunedin, along with other official documentation, and the printers calculated they would need £1,385 10s 7d for additional machinery, type, ink and other items. These included 45 composing sticks, a dozen bodkins, one paper knife, and three mallets for whacking the type into place. It was planned to hire a portable steam engine to power the printing presses. In total, Clayton estimated the whole business of shifting parliament would cost £2,264 19s 10d, or less than \$320,000 in today's money. Dunedin shopkeepers, caterers and landlords who had been rubbing their hands at the prospect of a shipload of high-rollers were to be disappointed. The estimated cost of the move gave the government the excuse it wanted, and the proposal was dropped.

With thanks to Vernon Wybrow at Archives New Zealand in Wellington. The plans are reproduced with the permission of Archives NZ: William Henry Clayton, Colonial Architect: Reference ACGO 8333 IA1 40 1872/56 Archives New Zealand — The Department of Internal Affairs — Te Tari Taiwhenua.



Top: The former Post Office in early 1882, with the corner of the Provincial Government buildings on the right. To the left is the Cargill monument and the Bank of New Zealand, still under construction. **Bottom:** Plans for the alterations to the University building. Archives NZ, Wellington: ACGO 8333 IA1 40 1872/56

Jam Yesterday



Tom Rawcliffe's account in our last issue of his research into the history of Irvine and Stevenson's while OSA summer intern at the Museum has prompted Harold Browett to recall the time he worked for the firm 66 years ago:

I left school in December 1951 unsure as to what employment I might seek. In those days work for a school leaver was not hard to find. I was offered a job at the Dunedin Savings Bank (I went to school with the manager's older son.) I was offered another job with a well-known and respected accountant. I toyed with the possibility of seeking work as an apprentice electrician but somehow none of these appealed to me. My brother-in-law to be who taught in a country school somewhere suggested that I do as he had done and get a holiday job at Irvine and Stevenson's where they wanted some workers processing the Central Otago fruit into jam.

After Christmas I duly reported at 7.55 am and started in the jam factory. From memory there was an older person, my brother-in-law to-be, myself, the foreman and his girlfriend; a total of five producing nice jam. Fruit with stones was put into a machine which scrubbed the pulp out and left the stones, which were tipped into a bin. The pulp was bucketed into steam-heated vats. I can't now remember how much sugar was added: it could have been one of pulp to one of sugar, along with a little water. The steam was turned on and the mixture in the vat was heated to a given temperature, carefully measured by a long metal thermometer. Was it for five minutes? After the time expired the very hot jam was tipped into a copper channel. Here the jam flowed to the tinning machine which miraculously measured the correct amount, perhaps by weight, and the

lid was somehow spun onto the tin of hot jam. The tin sizes could be varied, going as large as a square tin half the size of what used to be a four-gallon can. I remember being told that these largest-sized tins were for bakers and caterers. We even produced a mixture of apple and raspberry, being a cheaper version of raspberry jam for bakers and, someone suggested, for boarding-houses!

Sometimes we could not get the large amount of fruit processed within the working day and at about 3 o'clock we would be given some cash — about three and sixpence, which was a meal allowance. When the day's work was done everything was rigorously scrubbed clean. I can still visualise the copper gleaming and the concrete floor being quite clean. If the apricots and raspberries didn't arrive because of a cool spell in the weather, a barrel of strawberries would be rolled out. I think that these were imported. They had been preserved with sulphur dioxide which had bleached them. When heated up the colour reappeared.

Pay day was once a week. I was paid exactly half of what the older workers received. The reason was that I was only 17. I could not lie and tell them that I was 18 because I would have had to produce my certificate indicating that I had registered for Compulsory Military Training. I did get time and a half for overtime, but at my rate, not that of an older worker. A week or so after finishing making jam I became employed by another Dunedin manufacturer, HE Shacklock Ltd, as a trainee production manager, so it was off to Princes Street south.

Harold Browett

The St George jam factory in London Street, from the corner of Herriot Row, 1962. From this level, deliveries were tipped down a chute to the lower level. DCC Archives, Architect Series 1, Miscellaneous 1 (1957 – 84) Album

An Art of Stone



The new temporary exhibition 'Sketched in Stone' includes a selection of the many and varied lithographs in the Museum's collection, together with a lithographic press and a few printing stones. The Bohemian actor and playwright Alois Senefelder invented *Steindruckerei* in 1796 as a cheap method of printing using waxy crayon on smooth limestone. The wax resists the water-based ink, which is then transferred to the paper. Because the process enables artists to draw directly onto the stone, precise effects are possible in both text and pictures. The exhibition also includes rare examples of original artwork for lithographic reproduction. One of them is this watercolour by George O'Brien depicting Dunedin as seen from the south in

1888. It was commissioned by the newsagent William Pricor and was completed just a few days before O'Brien's death on 30 August that year. Pricor had the Caxton Printing Company of Princes Street produce a 12-colour chromolithographic reproduction, and sent salesmen door to door to collect orders for it. Problems with the supply of paper from England meant printing was delayed until June 1889.

The lithographs on show include maps, plans, portraits, landscapes, bird's-eye views, botanical illustrations, advertising posters and many more. Among the colourful posters is one advertising the celebrated African-American contortionist William Ferry, the Human Frog. Also known as 'the boneless wonder,' he toured Australasia with Orpheus M McAdoo's Georgia Minstrels at the turn of the last century. He appeared in a variety show as part of Percy Dix's Gaiety Company at the Alhambra Theatre in Dowling Street, Dunedin in early 1901. Billed as 'The Anatomical Wonder of the Age ... the most Artistic, Graceful, and Astounding Contortion Act the World has seen,' Ferry's 'Weird and Fascinating Act' prompted one reviewer to wonder 'whether he is not possessed of a pneumatic tyre instead of an ordinary spine,' so much did 'his wonderful agility and contortionist feats seem to be done in defiance of the laws of human anatomy ... Nothing like it has been seen here before and without doubt he is the prince of contortionists.'

Ferry 'gambolled about and uttered froggy noises' and 'went through a long series of marvellous contortions, twisting and bending his body and limbs in a manner that can hardly be credited, and which baffles description,' wrote another reviewer. The Human Frog was 'undoubtedly a marvel — apparently

Twelve-colour lithographic print, Dunedin 1888, lithographed by Caxton Printing Company, Dunedin, from a painting by George O'Brien, published by WJ Pricor, 1889.



shapeless and boneless ... the beauty of his performance is that there is nothing in it that is not thoroughly graceful ... Everything was done with ease and grace, so that there was nothing repulsive about the display.' Ferry's act opened with the curtain rising 'on a scene representing a pool surrounded by ferns, moss, and appropriate scenery. An enormous green frog gravely hops out of the pond, stares solemnly round at the audience and jumps about in front of the water ... Froggy — or rather Ferry — after hopping about for a minute or two climbs up on a stump about 5 ft high, and then proceeds to execute some of the most extraordinary contortionist feats imaginable ... Ferry's performance must, as the handbill announces, "be seen to be believed." For 15 minutes this remarkable man continues to force his anatomy into positions and attitudes such as baffle description, and the audience sits in silent amazement, wondering what he will do next.'

After his resounding success in Dunedin, Ferry toured 'the front blocks and the back blocks', appearing in Port Chalmers, Outram, Kaitangata, Milton, Naseby, Middlemarch, Tuapeka, Clinton, Riverton and Invercargill. He was still treading (or hopping on) the boards 20 years later, returning to Dunedin to entertain 'admirers of the grotesque' in 1921. Ferry was still agile enough at the age of 72 to be able to wrap his feet around his head, and attributed his good health to his unusual and lucrative career.

'Sketched in Stone: Lithographic Printing in Dunedin' opens on 18 August in the temporary exhibition gallery next to the transport and computing display.



Top left: Advertising print for 'Ferry the Human Frog', Caxton Printing Company, Dunedin, about 1901.

Top right: 'Human Frog' William Ferry - *Otago Witness* 13 March 1901. **Bottom right:** Ferry performs in costume - *Australasia* 19 August 1899.

Tuesday Club

If you, along with Robert Geldof KBE, don't like Mondays, the Tuesday Club is the thing for you. It provides an eclectic mixture of speakers on topics of general interest, mainly with an Otago connection. Despite the name, the club isn't a members-only affair. The meetings are a cooperative effort involving the OSA and Toitū; Rua McCallum arranges the programme of speakers, other Museum staff set up the room, and Association members clear up afterwards. There is a loyal band who attend every second Tuesday morning of the month at ten, but some meetings can almost fill the Museum's auditorium. Many of the talks lead on to other events, and sometimes our speakers find themselves snapped up by other organisations round town, such as Probus and Rotary clubs. For instance, Jono Martin from the Fortune talked about the theatre's programme, and as a result the OSA was able to get Roger Hall as a speaker for this year's Winter Meeting; a group then went to see his latest play 'Last Legs.' Charmian Smith showed us the costumes she was constructing for the recent production of Schiller's 'Mary Stuart' at the Globe Theatre last year. Learning about and seeing the costumes in action led many members to attend the production. And Chloe Geoghegan, the then Director of the Blue Oyster Art Project Space, gave a talk on the purpose of this not-for-profit gallery, and this ignited an interest among several of the members present.

The Museum's own staff too have given some interesting presentations. Seán Brosnahan has done much to raise the profile of various exhibitions at the museum with his popular talks. Peter Read was able to try out a speech he was planning to give to another group, while Rua McCallum gave us a botany lesson on how and why some plants were used by Maori. Dr Jane McCabe from the History Department at the University, who researched the temporary display on the 'Kalimpong Kids,' returned recently to talk about her new research project on land ownership in the Taieri and Hokianga. It was fascinating, and it resonated with members in the audience and their family histories.

Not all the topics are Otago-centric. Our speaker for July was Anna McKee (sister to our Christmas Quiz Master of Ceremonies Will). She was entertaining — a great communicator — and fascinated her audience of about 50 on a rotten day with the subject of childbirth and women's health in West Africa and Tanzania. If she hadn't been leaving at the end of the month she would doubtless have been invited to speak to many other groups elsewhere.

Some of the best-attended meetings have been for talks by authors of newly published books, and these have led to increased interest in their publications. Last year, Danny Knudsen talked about his research on the history of Skippers Canyon, and like his all-star production commemorating the centenary of the Anglican saint Edith Cavell's execution in October 2015, prompted interest in his book. Hilary Hunt spoke about her biography of the bespoke milliner Lindsay Kennett, the publication costs of which were supported by the Alfred and Isabel Reed Fund, which is administered by the OSA. Earlier this year, Naomi Miller gave a talk to the Club which helped to promote

interest in her services facilitating and writing memoirs. A former journalist, she set up 'Water Under the Bridge' publications after returning home to Dunedin five years ago. Families commission her to record, transcribe and professionally write their personal histories in the form of an individually crafted book. Sometimes Naomi provides advice for someone wishing to write his or her own autobiography, as did Marion Barnett with her book *Marion's Miscellany: Adventures, Ideas, Events, Family & Fun*, privately published last year for her family and friends. Naomi seeks to capture the voices, anecdotes and reflections of the people she interviews, knowing that over time the resulting biographies are likely to become treasured family heirlooms. She often works with people in their eighties and nineties, who give some very vivid accounts of their childhood and adolescence, which provide their children and grandchildren with a window into a time in our local history that is rapidly disappearing. 'Though we say so ourselves,' says Susan Schweigman, 'the Tuesday Club attracts thinking people, and appreciates knowledgeable speakers who are engaged with their topics and combine them with a touch of eloquence and humour. We are lucky with the selection provided by Rua and her team.'

With thanks to OSA President Susan Schweigman

For Your Diary

Annual General Meeting

The 118th Annual General Meeting of the Otago Settlers Association Inc will be held at 7 pm on Thursday, 21 September 2017 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 2017; the election of officers; and the report of the Director of Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, Jennifer Evans. Several committee members plan to stand down this year, so please send your recommendations for their replacements to Kylie at the OSA office as soon as you can. Nominations will also be accepted at the AGM.

Following the business of the evening, our guest speaker will be Seán Brosnahan. He has been preparing a major exhibition on women and the First World War, and will talk on 'The Women's War: Patriotism, Service and Dissent.'

'The Women's War' will be supplemented by a travelling exhibition 'The Belgians Have Not Forgotten' to mark the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele. This contains artefacts (the 'iron-harvest'), photographs and films from the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 in Zonnebeke, and is supported by both the regional government of Flanders and the national government of Belgium. The exhibition has been seen throughout Australasia and its final call will be Dunedin from 22 September until 19 November; the disastrous offensive was called off on 20 November 1917.

Migrant Ships

OSA life member Evan Tosh has researched a very detailed account of 'Migrant Ships to Otago 1848 to 1861'. From the *Phoebe Dunbar*, the *Stately* or the *Pudsey Dawson* to the *Sea Snake* and the *Storm Cloud*, he quotes extensively from letters and newspaper reports, both British and New Zealand, among many other sources. If you are interested in the voyages of any or all of the more than a hundred ships that made it to Otago before the gold rush, please contact Kylie at the OSA office, who has a copy.

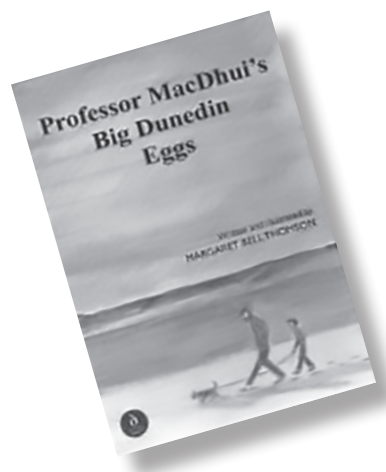
Book News



Slice of Life: The World Famous Dunedin Study

(Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, 2017). 24 pages, paperback. \$5.00 (With OSA members' 15% discount, \$4.25 plus \$5 packing and postage. Please make out cheques to the DCC.)

There are masses of colour illustrations from the long-running and highly successful exhibition on the Dunedin longitudinal study in this booklet, accompanied by brief summaries of the important points.



Professor MacDhui's Big Dunedin Eggs

by Margaret Bell Thomson (Dunedin, 2015) 17 pages, paperback. \$14.95 (With OSA members' 15% discount, \$12.71 plus \$5 packing and postage. Please make out cheques to the DCC.)

In this charming story, profusely illustrated by the author, a professor returns home to Dunedin from Oxford and as a retirement project tries to revive a moa using ancient DNA. The experiment goes wrong and two dodo chicks hatch instead. Helped by his ten-year-old great-nephew Nat, Professor MacDhui and the dodos visit many well-known parts of Dunedin that children will recognise. The book is intended for children up to about the age of 12.

Members of the Association are entitled to a handy discount of 15% on the cost of books and other items from the Museum shop. They also have free access to the archives, and for those living outside Dunedin an hour's free research each year by the Archivist, Emma Knowles.



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, website www.otagosettlers.org.nz

 **Otago Daily Times**

The Otago Daily Times supports Toitū Otago Settlers Museum

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