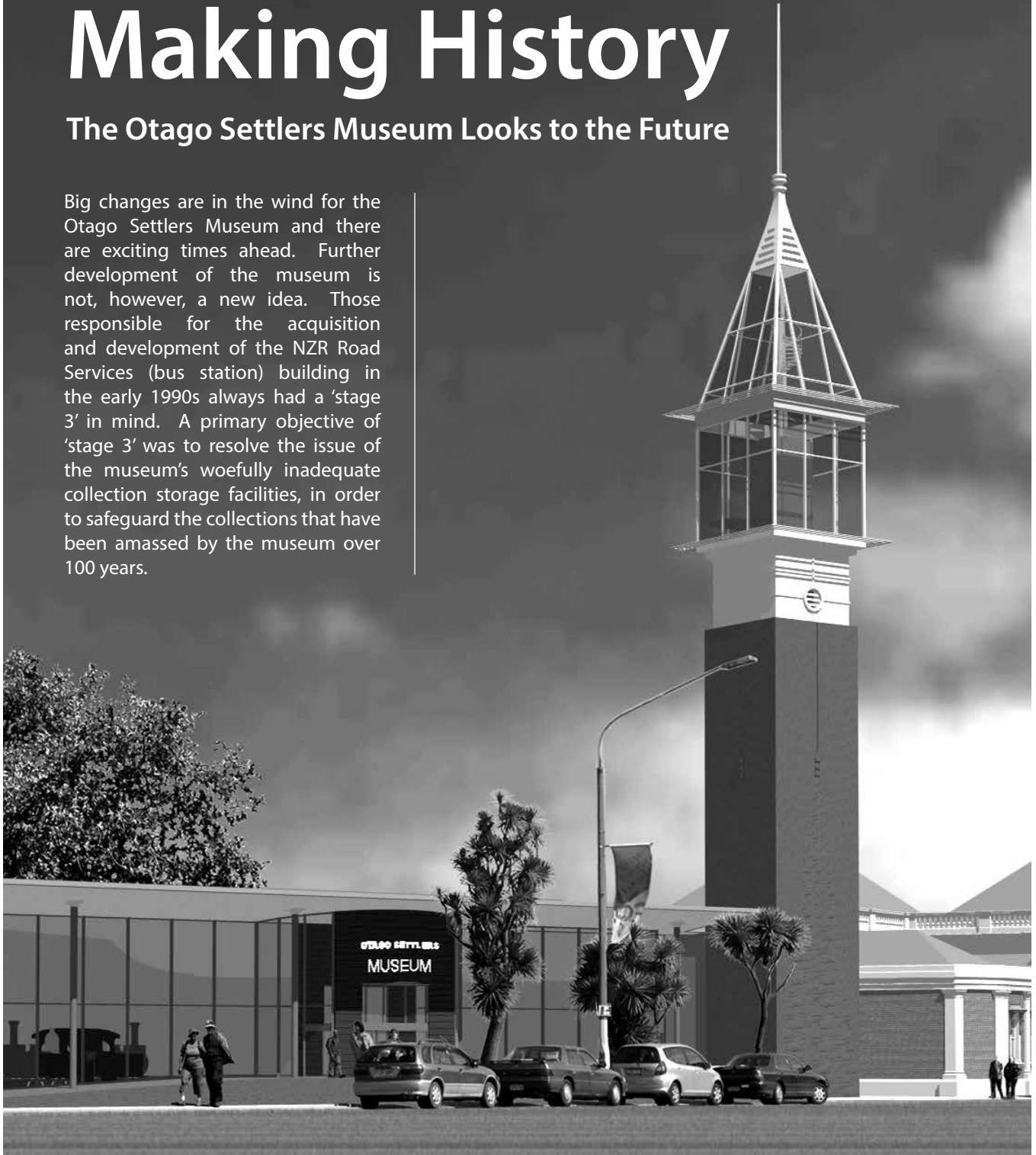




# Making History

## The Otago Settlers Museum Looks to the Future

Big changes are in the wind for the Otago Settlers Museum and there are exciting times ahead. Further development of the museum is not, however, a new idea. Those responsible for the acquisition and development of the NZR Road Services (bus station) building in the early 1990s always had a 'stage 3' in mind. A primary objective of 'stage 3' was to resolve the issue of the museum's woefully inadequate collection storage facilities, in order to safeguard the collections that have been amassed by the museum over 100 years.



An architect's digital rendition of the new entrance and observation tower – part of the proposed Otago Settlers Museum redevelopment project.

This vision started to look as if it might become a reality when, in 2003, Dunedin city councillors requested a report from the museum director on the state of collection storage at the museum. In response to that report, funding was set aside for a feasibility study on ways in which this very significant problem might be solved. Octa Associates, along with Dunedin City Council staff, proposed a number of options, managed public consultation on the issue and, with city architect Robert Tongue and museum staff, produced a detailed report on the option that met with almost unanimous approval — to develop on the museum's current site.

The proposal outlined in the Octa report was approved by the Council in early 2005 and in November last year a public fundraising appeal was launched under the aegis of the Otago Settlers Association and the patronage of long-time Association member Iain Galloway. Discussions have begun with potential major funders The Community Trust of Otago and the Lottery Grants Board, and an application for funding under the Government's Regional Museum Policy was made in February this year. The project has been costed at around \$28 million (as at December 2004) and the Dunedin City Council has committed almost \$20 million to the development.

The proposed development is an ambitious one — but it's one that is designed to resolve all the museum's current (and foreseeable) problems in a manner that is realistic, pragmatic and economical rather than lavish. Key features of the proposed development are:

### A new collection storage facility

This is a two-storey building which will be sited behind the brick Burnside building. This will provide a secure, international-standard environment with properly resourced conservation and workshop areas to enhance the preservation of the museum's nationally and internationally important collection.

Two of the current on-site storage areas will become **new exhibition galleries**. These are Collection Store 1 (the former transport gallery) in the Burnside building and the garage in the NZR Road Services building. These are architecturally impressive spaces that will make stunning galleries. They too will have high-level environmental controls and will, of course, enable substantially more of the collection to be displayed.

Most of the **existing galleries will be extensively refurbished** as part of the project and the environment they provide will be markedly improved.



An artist's impression of proposed new exhibition space in the NZR Road Services building garage – now collection storage.

The museum entrance will be relocated to the northern end of the complex, where Josephine currently lives. A major advantage of this is that it allows for a **more coherent and logical narrative** to develop as visitors move through the museum.

The first gallery space visitors will enter (currently Collection Store 1) will tell the stories of Kai Tahu Whanui, early European contact period (sealers, whalers, traders, etc) and the beginnings of colonial settlement. Opening off this will be the portrait gallery on one side and, on the other, *Across the Ocean Waves*, with its story of 19th century travel by sea to Dunedin. The portrait gallery will thus regain a much more logical relationship to the story of our region and our people than is possible at present. What is now the Hall of History will focus on 19th century Dunedin and Otago and the NZR Road Services building will showcase 20th and 21st century history, with an emphasis on transport and technology in the former garage/storage area.

The Hudson Gallery will remain our temporary exhibitions space. However, the new route through the museum will mean it can be closed off to the public during exhibition changes, a much more satisfactory state of affairs than at present with visitors who want to visit the portrait gallery and Josephine having to run the gauntlet of hammer- and paintbrush-wielding workers.

The **new foyer** will offer a highly visible and welcoming entrance to the museum, visually linked to the Railway Station. It will also allow for **improved visitor services** such as modern toilets, a larger shop and a small food outlet. The existing costume and textile store will become an event and orientation space (with a kitchen close by to cater for openings and other events).

Visitors will also be able to take a lift to the top of the **viewing tower**. This striking structure will provide visitors with a unique opportunity to view the city of Dunedin at a glance and specially designed orientation features will help to inform them about the cityscape and its major features.

As well as helping to safeguard the museum's collections and providing significantly more space to show them, the development will also generate more revenue for the museum than is possible at present, through such avenues as venue hire, retail sales and entry to the viewing tower.

Planning is well under way and building is scheduled to begin in July 2008 with completion planned for December 2012.

**Priscilla Pitts**  
Director



# The Future of Our Past

An extract from Iain Gallaway's speech as Patron of the Otago Settlers Museum Development Project, officially launching the fundraising appeal:

It is my great privilege to address you in the role of patron of the Otago Settlers Museum Development Project — I hasten to explain with due modesty that I would challenge anyone to deny that my credentials were not impeccable. I served on the Early Settlers' committee many years ago when Miss Pryde and Edgar Hazlett ruled the waves and everything else — when you went home surrounded by an all-pervading smell of must. Most important, I'm sure that I must be the longest surviving life member of the Association — my parents always had their priorities right. When I returned from some five years of war service, my father's first priority for me was that I should join the Dunedin Club (Fernhill) as the third generation, which I did in 1946. My mother's first priority was that I should join the Early Settlers Association, and in fact gave me no choice in the matter as she paid my life membership fee, and I celebrated 60 years of membership in 2005.

But it is only in relatively recent times that I have realised just what this organisation has to offer every citizen of our city and that I have learned to appreciate the outstanding skills and the remarkable dedication of its staff. Some time ago I spoke at the presentation of the Oral History exercise relating to the Law Society and I subsequently had the privilege of giving an address on my grandfather Watson Shennan's life. More recently I have been a very minor contributor to the major exhibitions celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Otago District Law Society and the recent *Dunedin's War* exhibition. So I have been able to realise, appreciate and acknowledge at first hand just how fortunate we are in the quality of our administration board, committee and every member of our staff.

We have seen our Art Gallery flourish in recent years under the direction of Priscilla, and the Settlers Museum also, to the extent it has been able to do. We have seen since the Second World War a period of transformation in administration, with the transfer of the governing authority to the DCC, and in development, with the freeholding of the NZR site, and the purchase of the NZR Road Services building, the acquisition of the 'bus station' and the Cooke Howlison Transport Gallery development. A new vision statement was agreed to in 1999 and the museum's mandate became 'to collect, preserve and promote the heritage and culture of Dunedin and Otago.'

I have also seen the suffocating restrictions placed on the museum by its limited finances and the ageing and inadequate areas and facilities which it has available. I have explored the stark storage areas where thousands of items patiently await exposure (only 10% approximately of 50,000 items are on display) with a total lack of adequate temperature control, their leak-stained walls with peeling paper, their hundreds of square metres of shelves housing cartons of precious gowns and other clothing, which should be on display or at least on 'models' or coat hangers. Borer flourishes always ahead in the one-sided battle to extinguish it. You should see the old bus depot in its present dilapidated, depressing state: dusty, musty, rusting machinery, most of it priceless in its own right and with little prospect of it ever being restored to operative condition. I'll share a secret with you: every one of the collections staff has a special section of the museum's storage areas allocated to them for a single purpose — to inspect it every day during the winter months and at all other times when there has been heavy rain to check whether there are any leaks!

That is our present state: yet week after week, month after month, year after year, stunning exhibitions, great and small are consistently produced and provided for our education and enjoyment, young and old. We are setting out on a \$28 million mission which will rectify all this.



A view of the north end of the proposed Otago Settlers Museum redevelopment, showing new entrance and observation tower.

As its Peer Reviewer for this project, the city chose Dr Seddon Bennington, Chief Executive of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. His comments are much more erudite and impressive than any I could make. These are extracts from his report:

The proposal to redevelop the Otago Settlers Museum is timely recognition of the importance of this museum's collection and the stories that it has to tell, both for the people of Otago and visitors to Dunedin and Otago. Visitors to New Zealand are looking for an understanding of its history and the Otago Settlers Museum is one of the best resourced in the country for portraying its region's history. It's a history covering the past 200 years that is fascinating, from the original Maori residents, the development of the Scottish settlement of 1848, the gold rushes and the commercial development of the city, along with its development as an academic centre.

The Otago Settlers Museum has probably been taken for granted by the people of Otago as being the place where their history is kept in the form of memorabilia and portraits and the challenge in this redevelopment is not only to keep those items safely in good conditions for perpetuity, but also to present them in ways which they will not be taken for granted but become a part of the daily lives of residents and the experience of visitors to the region.

Dr Bennington makes the final comment that the redevelopment investment is important for the community, 'both because of the significance of this record for the community's well-being, and also as an anchor in positioning Dunedin as a heritage city. The Otago Settlers Museum is the orientation to Dunedin and Otago which every visitor to the region should feel is their first stop, and in turn, the Otago Settlers Museum must regard itself as the interpreter of what people will encounter and discover as they continue on their exploration of Dunedin and the rest of the Otago region.'

The *Otago Daily Times'* issue of 11 October 2005 headed its splendid editorial 'A Heritage City' and went on to say 'as the Dunedin City Council contemplates the advent of a two-yearly "living heritage festival," Dunedin people might wonder where exactly their city is heading in terms of heritage and town planning. While Dunedin, unlike faster-growing cities, is fortunate to have retained much of its built heritage, it still shows an alarming disregard for some good and significant architecture and a town-planning tolerance that our descendants might look back on with regret. Dunedin has a wealth of buildings, grand and obscure, that make it ideal for the kind of heritage festival the council is investigating. Let planning for it press full steam ahead.' Hear, hear; and Robin Charteris, we know exactly where we are heading and we are, emulating our precious Josephine, going full steam ahead.

We are well past the planning stage — we are setting out on an inspirational venture. Completion is planned for 2012 (I'll be 90!) and what a festival that will be:

1. New collection storage facility (a secure international-standard environment with state-of-the-art conservation and workshop areas);
2. More outstanding exhibition gallery space;
3. New foyer and visitors' services, visually linked to the railway station;
4. Viewing tower providing an unique panorama of Dunedin at a glance.

#### **Iain Galloway**

Fundraising is now under way, initiated by a donation of \$150,000 from the Otago Settlers Association. Members who wish to contribute may send a donation when they renew their membership.



Another view of the Museum, this time looking from the south towards the Railway Station.

# Our Southern Poles

## The Polish Boarders at Otago Schools



Two years ago the Museum developed a small display *From Poland to Pahiataua* to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of New Zealand's wartime welcome to a large group of Polish orphans. That display subsequently went on to the Canterbury Museum and to Te Aratoi in Masterton. It was then borrowed by the Polish Heritage Museum in Auckland to send on to Poland where a commemoration of the Pahiataua story is being held during May 2006 at the University of Lublin. The Museum is returning to the subject of Otago's Polish heritage this month with a new display in the *Ka Hau E Wha* Community Gallery. This time the focus will be on all three waves of Polish settlement in Otago: the pioneers of the nineteenth century; the orphans and post-war refugee arrivals; and the more recent era of late twentieth century refugees and skilled Polish migrants.

In *From Poland to Pahiataua* the Museum traced the story of the wartime refugees through the experience of the Wierzbinski family. Two of the surviving members of this family subsequently settled in Otago, though neither spent any of their childhood here. There were, however, a significant number of Polish adolescents who spent their formative years at Otago Catholic secondary schools. This was not part of the original plan for the Polish orphans. Their wartime sojourn in New Zealand was meant to be temporary, pending a return to Poland at war's end. Accordingly the Pahiataua camp was structured as a 'Little Poland' with all education in Polish and according to the Polish school curriculum. It was only the post-war political settlement, which abandoned Poland to Soviet domination, that prompted a change of direction.

The wartime Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, had taken a deep personal interest in the well-being of the Polish orphans. With the dramatic turn of events in Europe in 1945, he offered all of the Pahiataua Poles a permanent home in New Zealand. Most accepted this offer but then had to chart a new life's course adapting to the New Zealand way of life. The secondary age children at Pahiataua were consequently sent out in small groups to board at Catholic secondary schools all over the country. The first groups arrived in Dunedin and Oamaru in 1946. Over the next seven years some 47 Polish girls attended St Dominic's and St Philomena's in Dunedin while smaller groups of girls and boys attended Teschemaker's and St Kevin's in Oamaru.

Some reminiscences about this Otago education were published in the book *New Zealand's First Refugees: Pahiataua's Polish Children* put out by the Pahiataua orphans' group in 2004. Stanislaw Manterys came to St Kevins after first being at St Pat's in Wellington. His sisters Anna and Stefania were already at St Dominic's in Dunedin: 'I did not regret it [the move from Wellington] because the four years at the college were my best, and the teachers of the Christian Brothers Order gave me a good education and insight into the New Zealand character.'

Stan's sister Stefania (later Sondej) also appreciated her time in the south: 'At St Dominic's College, the Sisters, instead of pitying us ("poor little Polish girls, they don't know any English") and giving us easy work as some other schools did, constantly encouraged us to do the work that the rest of the class was doing. We cried, struggled and thought the nuns cruel, but our work improved steadily. I never dreamed of attempting any of the public examinations ... but again the Sisters signed me up saying: "You can do it, Stefania". ' When the exam results were published Stefania was delighted to receive a congratulatory letter from the seemingly stern Mother Patricia at St Dominic's: 'Dear Stefania, A thousand congratulations on your success in the University Entrance! I wonder if you could imagine just how happy I was to know your name was in the paper. It is a great reward for your diligent study. May God bless you in the years to come with a like success.' Stefania went on to graduate B.A. from Victoria University in 1956 and a career as a secondary school teacher.

Stefania's older sister, Anna Manterys, had been the first of the St Dominic's Polish girls to carry her studies as far as the University Entrance, going on to Training College in 1951. Like her classmates she made her social debut that year at the Dunedin Charity Ball. It was all a far cry from the family's appalling experiences just ten years earlier. In the dead of winter Russian soldiers had come knocking on the Manterys' door at Zarogow. Along with over a million other Poles they were deported to slave labour camps in Siberia. Their parents had died of hunger and exhaustion two years later in Uzbekistan on the route to freedom in Iran. Coming to New Zealand as orphans, one can only wonder at the difficulties these children faced in making their way in the world. Their early lives had been so blighted by the evils of war and oppression. It is good to think that their few years in Otago helped redress the balance a little.

### Seán Brosnahan



Polish boarders at St Dominic's 1947: Stefania Manterys, Anna Manterys, Christina Czoba, Dioniza Gradzik, Irena Cwirko-Godyka, Roma Sokalska, Helena Chwieduk, Zofia Rombel - Hocken Collections; Frank Kubiak, Stanislaw Manterys and Jozef Zawada, pupils at St Kevin's. - Jozef Zawada

## Shipwrecked Maritime Mishaps and Misadventure

From 10 June until 24 September the Otago Settlers Museum will hold an exhibition in the Hudson Gallery focussed on some of New Zealand's most infamous shipwrecks.

The story of New Zealand seafaring is littered with tales of mishaps and misadventure. Since European ships first began coming to New Zealand more than 2000 vessels have been wrecked around the New Zealand coastline. About 150 of these have been in Otago waters but many more have had Otago connections. In *Shipwrecked* we examine around fifty of these dramatic maritime disasters, most of which are strongly connected to Otago.

The exhibition will look at some of the compelling tales of great calamity, acts of bravery and tragic loss surrounding Otago and New Zealand's best-known shipwrecks. Other aspects of the story of shipwrecks, such as the courtroom dramas created as investigators probed the causes of the wrecks, efforts to improve safety by establishing a lighthouse network and the founding of the Dunedin-based New Zealand Shipwrecked Relief Society, will also be covered by the exhibition.

One of the design highlights of this exhibition will be a five metre tall reproduction of the historic Moeraki lighthouse, placed in the centre of the exhibition space. The lighthouse will be operational, casting a revolving beam of light around the gallery for the duration of the exhibition.

Numerous images and illustrations of ships succumbing to the surging sea, along with treasured keepsakes salvaged from the stricken vessels, will be used to create an exhibition that will be sure to engage a wide local, national and international audience.

## The Wreck of the *Tararua*

One of New Zealand's most notorious shipwrecks began 125 years ago, on 28 April 1881, when the SS *Tararua* left Port Chalmers bound for Melbourne. The following morning she sailed into the annals of infamy when she became lodged on Otago Reef at Southland's Waipapa Point.

A lifeboat launched at 6.00 am carried passenger George Lawrence close enough to shore that he could swim to the beach and raise the alarm at a nearby farmhouse. A farmhand then began the relay of news of the disaster by horseback. The nearest telegraph office was almost fifty kilometres away. The message, which reached Dunedin just after midday, was not marked urgent.

A few more of the *Tararua's* occupants made it ashore in or from the lifeboats but the boats were unable to return to the ship to collect further survivors. As the *Tararua* slowly began to sink, several people were washed overboard. The ship's cook Antonio Miscellief was the only one to survive by swimming from the ship to the shore. He spent two hours in the water.

By the time a relief ship arrived it was dark. The rescue effort would have to wait until daybreak. However at about 2.30 am a crash and screams were followed by silence. As dawn broke it became clear that the *Tararua* was gone.

Of the 151 passengers and crew on board, only 20 survived, making this the second worst shipping disaster in our nation's history.

**Peter Read**



Chief Officer Lindsay (right) and Seaman Denz, two of only twenty survivors from the sinking of the *Tararua* - Otago Settlers Museum collection

## For Your Diary

For our Winter members' evening on Friday 23rd June the Association is following up on the theme of shipwreck. Charles Clark, whose riveting book *Women and Children Last*, dealing with the disaster of the *Cospatrick* in 1874, has just been published, will give an illustrated talk. There will be sea shanties and mulled wine (we thought about tots of rum and decided against), and a chance to view the exhibition.

## Afternoon Tea at the Savoy

On Wednesday 5 April a party of 52 Otago Settlers Association members, along with 112 others, congregated in the Savoy Tudor Room for the biggest Afternoon Tea of recent times. Many had dressed for the occasion and several others took advantage of a hat from Ann Barsby's collection. Traditional three-tiered cake stands graced the tables along with an assortment of china, and tea was served from original Savoy silver teapots and hot-water jugs. Meanwhile conversations flowed, interspersed with 'I remember...'

Entertainment was provided by celebrated pianist and OSA member Edgar Frazer, who played a selection of period pieces, accompanied by his son Alan on the drums. For many who had experienced Afternoon Tea at the Savoy with mothers or grandmothers it was a nostalgic occasion which brought back memories of times past. The initiative of the Southern Heritage Trust in reviving this old Dunedin tradition was much appreciated.



## Tour Guides

We are still looking for additional voluntary guides to assist with the *Walk Dunedin* tours. These tours have recently been extended and now operate 11am - 1pm Monday to Saturday. The commitment would be for two hours, once a week. We can be quite flexible with days and can arrange cover to cater for appointments and other family events.

We are looking for people who have enthusiasm for our city, good communication skills, a reasonable degree of fitness and high standards of presentation. We are very aware that our guides represent not only the Museum, but also the city as a whole.

If you are interested, we offer places on two of the tours (one run by Val-mai Shaw and one by me) so that you can observe what is involved before making a commitment to being trained. Our goal is to train you over the quieter winter, ready to start around October this year.

If this sounds like a community contribution that you might enjoy, we hope to hear from you!

### John Ingram

OSM Visitor Programmes

Telephone 4742728 e-mail john.ingram@dcc.govt.nz

## The Otago Settlers Museum Shop

The museum shop holds a wide selection of Dunedin- and New Zealand-made books, cards and gifts. You are always welcome to browse.

A complete list of items for sale is now available. If you would like a copy, please contact the Otago Settlers Association Secretary, PO Box 74, Dunedin.

Left: Entertainers at the Savoy afternoon tea – Edgar Frazer (piano), his wife Fay and son Alan (drums).



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

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