

OTAGO SETTLERS NEWS

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

AUTUMN 2020 ISSUE 144

PRESSING CONCERNS

In the Spring issue last year I described my experiences working at Shacklocks, my first permanent job on leaving school, and this is the concluding part. I joined in March 1952 as a trainee production manager and purchasing officer, and stayed a couple of years. About the time I started, a new pressed-steel electric stove had been developed — the 'Shacklock 109' — to replace the cast-iron electric stoves. The move was into a new era. To make large pressed-steel panels the firm had to have a 400-ton press and the 'tools' or 'forms' to press the pieces. Management had entered into a contract with Chrysler Australia to make the 'tools' and actually produce the pressings for the first so many stoves — I think it may have been 2,000. The first few stoves were made and flown round New Zealand to the main centres to show off and take orders for three amazing new models. This had all happened by the time I started at the Princes Street plant.

The Shacklock 109 looked good, had fast elements on top, satisfied most customers who could get one, and generally was acceptable. Yet the new design was a bit controversial. The switches were mounted at the back above the cooking top and some users did not like this. One customer claimed she could not bake scones in the oven, while someone from the Home Science School at Otago University could produce good scones and so defended the item.

The government of the day then issued import licences, and from being a virtually protected industry Shacklocks was to face cheaper



Shacklock Chefmaster electric range, about 1960, currently on display in Toitū's Twentieth Century object wall. It was a successor to the 109 model.

imported stoves. Many problems also arose with the production of the 109, mainly chips of enamel flying off the pressed steel parts. The range tops buckled when enamelled in the furnace and many shades of white emerged. I think a lot of thought had gone into how the stoves would be assembled — masterminded by Jock Holden who was the 'Methods Engineer'. A few stoves came down the line, each with a serial number plate which I recorded daily. Crates had been designed with a wooden base and the Whakatane Board (heavy cardboard) had a wooden framework to protect the finished articles. Getting the oven doors to seal was a constant problem, with metal to metal (enamelled) contact proving difficult to achieve. It seemed to be company policy to not fit any kind of gasket to seal the oven doors. Such a move could be admitting defeat! Eventually defeat was conceded and gaskets were fitted to the oven doors. Problems also emerged with the thermostats which were imported from the United Kingdom, and from memory these were changed to Robertshaw items made in the United States.

Eventually the Dunedin factory had several thousand chipped and twisted enamelled parts stacked away upstairs. Valiant efforts were made to repair the chipped enamel and twisted items, but to little avail. It turned out that Chrysler Australia had made the parts from deep-drawing 'automobile' grade steel

whereas it *should* have been the thicker 'enamelling' grade steel. This is why there was a problem enamelling the panels. Also it seemed to be that the range tops were too prone to twisting when heated in the furnace to coat them with white enamel. I remember bracing strips being spot welded into the tops and I think the tops were produced with a heavier grade of steel (18 SWG — Standard Wire Gauge, roughly 1.2mm) instead of 20 gauge (about 0.9mm). I remember recording the numbers of useless panels which were loaded on to trucks and sent to the tip. In 1952 the tip was at St Kilda where the Memorial Park Basketball Courts were eventually established. The local kids used the smooth oven door panels and warming door panels to slide down the sandhills. I can remember calculating the value of the items sent to the tip — it was a very high figure.

In the Press Shop sheet metal was stamped in 5-, 10- and 20-ton (from memory) presses to make the various components for coal ranges (oven doors and oven shelves mainly) and also for the non-cast items for the electric stoves and rangettes. Myriads of small bits fitted in here and there, and these were stamped out in their hundreds according to the schedule which we production planners had calculated, without calculators or computers! While I was an employee the new 400-ton press was installed. A large pit was dug (probably about 8 to 10 metres deep) and this was lined with reinforced concrete, then

Women asked for this Electric Range **SHACKLOCK** designed it!

NEW ZEALAND'S ONLY FULLY AUTOMATIC COOKER WITH TWO OVENS

Cooks a big family dinner and cakes at the same time!
Handles fast and slow baking dishes together!
Bakes and roasts, bakes and grills simultaneously!
Saves time and electricity!

In your new or renovated kitchen, Chefmaster gives you incomparable advantages. Its exciting streamline design fits in perfectly with modern kitchen units and in use — it's a dream. Two ovens free your morning — allow you to cook both dinner and cakes during afternoons. Combined oven capacity unequalled in New Zealand. With Automatic Control you don't even have to stay in the house. Chefmaster switches on cooks and switches off, all by itself! The nearest thing to a resident cook... Chefmaster's a marvel!

The Marvelous Automatic Brain of Chefmaster. AMERICAN TIMER AND ELECTRIC CLOCK WITH TELEVISION MOVEMENT. Dial your instructions... it remembers automatically! Go out even for the day... Chefmaster will remember when to turn your dinner on, cook it at exactly the right temperature, have it ready to eat when you arrive home!

Position Switches—for fast cooking and exactly controlled simmering. Two of the three hot plates are equipped with reliable, positive contact switches that give you a choice of six exactly measured cooking temperatures for greatly increased cooking flexibility and greater economy.

NEW AUTOMATIC OVEN LIGHT.

There's a SHACKLOCK for everyone's needs... no matter what your budget or the size of your kitchen or your family, you can buy a Shacklock model to suit you. Several Chef models give you a choice of solid or radiant plates, 1 and 6 position switches, thermostats, glass doors, etc. All these models have one oven.

Chefmaster and Model 109 have two ovens. Models 108 and 105A have one oven and storage compartment. Chefmaster in addition has an automatic Timer, Electric Clock and Oven Light.

Plus these wonderful new features!

New automatic grill tray.

For easier smokeless grilling... 2 grilling levels. Grilling tray pulls out automatically when main oven door is opened... stays open while you turn the grill... returns automatically when door is closed. No more burnt fingers or spilt fat!

Spacious hob with super-rapid speed heating.

Starch solid hotplate with choice of six heats, for the utmost economy in long, slow cooking.

Starch radiant grill with six heats... a wonderfully versatile hot plate for every kind of top-of-the-stove cooking.

Ultra-rapid eight-inch radiant boiling coil, becomes red-hot in seconds. Your hurry-up hot plate... nothing faster on the market! A real blessing at breakfast time or for a quick cup of tea or meal at any time.



SHACKLOCK TWO OVEN

Chefmaster

SWITCH TO A SHACKLOCK—KEY TO GOOD COOKING.

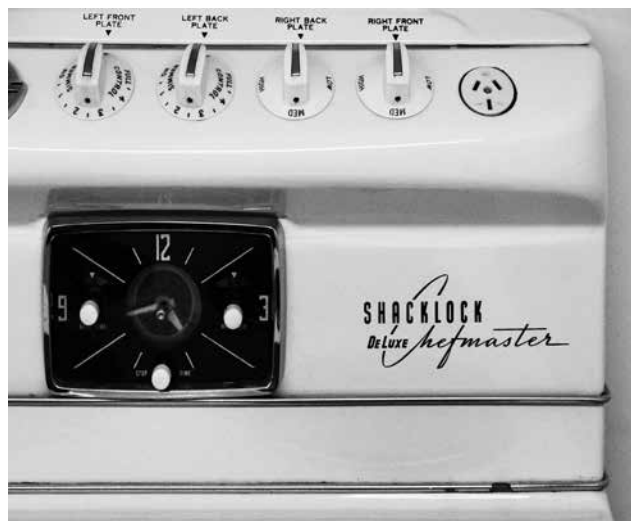
Enquire for Shacklock Ranges at Your Power Board Your Electrician (Electrician & Hardware Merchants Home Appliances Showroom or at the Manufacturers, R. E. Shacklock Ltd. Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin.

the hydraulic press was installed and wired into place. The electric wiring was a major part of the task. Eventually it was all up and running.

Some of the metal parts, which were mainly 20 SWG, were finished after stamping and pressing. Some metal pieces were cut on guillotines and then punched and shaped. A few had some welding done. Gas welding was used to finish some pieces and where two or more pieces had to be joined this was done on a spot welder. Some spot welds required the operator to press down with his foot until the weld was complete. Another type of spot welder tacked pieces together almost like the action of a sewing machine without thread.

The sheet metal had to be degreased and then heated in sulphuric acid to ensure the surface was right for enamelling. After drying, the metal was immersed in a 'grip coat' which was allowed to dry — again in a drying room. This coat was baked on and it covered the complete item, unlike the cast iron, which had only the viewed side coated. After the grip coat, the colour coat was sprayed on and then baked in the oven(s). When cool, the items were handled carefully to avoid chips. Lots of problems arose in the enamelling process.

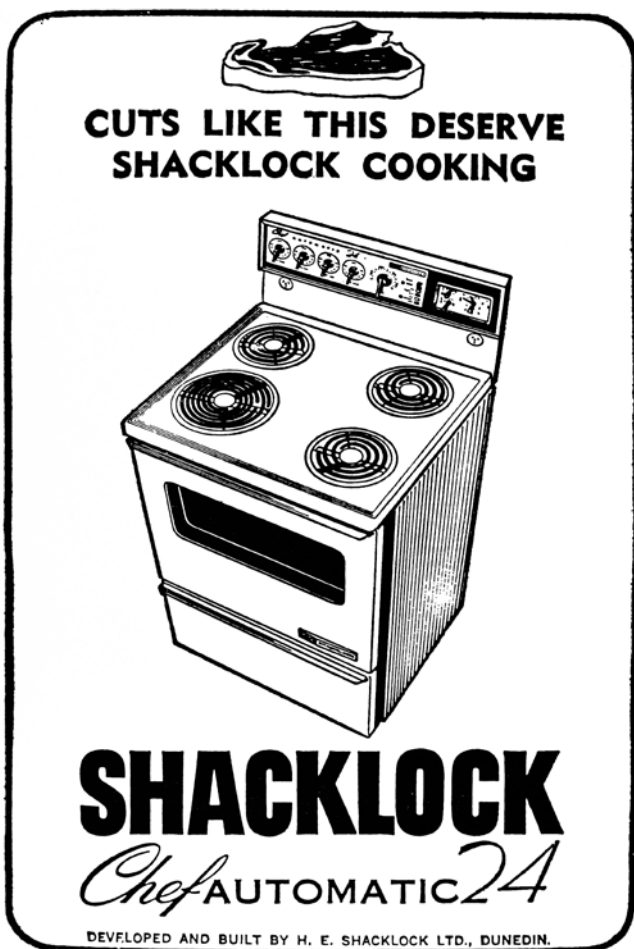
There were two assembly lines, one for cast-iron ranges which I described last time, and the other for the pressed-steel ones.



The items were built up as the product moved on rollers down a track, progressing from a base to the finished product. Initially fibreglass from sacks was fed into the space around each oven. A much more efficient method was possible when fibreglass batts bonded with some kind of resin meant that the oven assembly was much faster. The electric wiring was assembled separately and much was done by one man.

Yet not all was running as smoothly as it seemed: at the end of March 1954 I was granted a 10 per cent bonus and I saw a cheque for a large amount which the firm had to pay as Company Tax. When profits were made, tax had to be paid. Because of its financial problems the firm had to change banks, and so Shacklocks changed to the BNZ. Soon after that a man, Mr Potter, appeared to oversee a few financial matters. I remember him having to sign the purchase orders which I used to sign. Even the petrol for the trucks and the car was approved by him. The new press was installed, production became more possible with improvements, but sales were down. Hard times led to lay-offs and rumours. I understand that Fisher & Paykel guaranteed Shacklocks' overdraft and put in management. They introduced new methods and techniques. Before this took place, a shareholder's son, who was one of the engineers, said to me he was not sure what he was going to do — it became obvious I could well be out of a job before too long, so I decided to apply for entry to Dunedin Teachers' College, and thus in 1954 I started learning a new tune and became a teacher.

Harold Browett



Bottom left: Advertisement for the Shacklock Chef Automatic 24.



CATCHING UP

When the staff of an institution such as the Museum have been busy developing exhibitions and helping the public with their enquiries, some of their own behind-the-scenes work can inevitably get overlooked. In the course of the past five years 4,815 items had entered the museum but had not yet been through the accessioning process. In October 2018 a concerted effort began to deal with the accumulated material, and the project was brought to a successful conclusion in August 2019. Whether the museum still wanted or needed these items in the first place had to be assessed, and then once taken on, each of them had to be conserved, catalogued and safely stored. Items already in the collection also needed attention. Some of the heavy, large or otherwise awkward objects in the purpose-built store rooms had been placed in the aisles or in inappropriate containers. If given a few good shakes such as Canterbury Museum experienced in 2010–11, the various pieces of industrial and agricultural equipment, along with things such as ovens or computer hardware, would have made a bid for freedom. A new shelving layout enabled the rationalisation of the storage arrangements, and seismic restraints in the form of bars and straps mean the objects should stay put. The temporary exhibition 'Brought to Light' includes a time-lapse video showing a set of shelves being erected and filled with a variety of objects, including antique computers.

Just as Caesar described Gaul, the Museum's staff is *divisa in partes tres*: the Collections, Exhibitions and Communications & Operations teams. Only four people work in the Collections Team, so three Exhibitionists were seconded to help them work on the project. However kindly meant, all donations to the museum are treated like gift horses. Looking in their mouths consists of asking whether they are wanted for the collection at all, or whether they would be better donated to another museum, or to the education department. The main questions

are whether an item was made in, relates to, or was used in Otago. If the museum has, for example, six or more of the same thing already, it needs to be pretty special to gain admittance. Some things are simply too big to store so have to be declined with thanks, but the museum's idea of what constitutes too big is a pretty generous one: the temporary exhibition includes for instance a 1963 Holden EJ saloon car. The other big question is whether the donor is legally entitled to give the item away. Sometimes too they wish to impose a legal restriction on their donation, such as not allowing sensitive documents to be seen by the public for a set period.

Before an object can be welcomed into the collection, the conservator needs to make sure it is not accompanied by any smaller, unwanted donations. The items are wrapped in plastic and treated with toxic methyl bromide or put in a freezer to discourage any insects from making themselves at home. Some objects are themselves made from hazardous materials, which need to be dealt with in various ways. Others are made from perishable ingredients, such as an impressive wedding cake decoration confectioned from sugar.

Each new accession is given an identifying number which will follow it for the rest of its days. The number is written on archival documents in pencil, while for metal objects a specialised removable chemical label is painted on. For textiles, the number is put on a label and sewn on. In the Costume Store, more than a thousand textile items have recently been inventoried and are now stored flat in large blue-grey acid-free archival boxes on new, especially wide shelves. Formerly, some items had been folded or crumpled in acidic cardboard boxes. One of the team probably had a nasty turn when they opened one of these boxes and found the beady eyes of a ventriloquist's dummy staring back at them.

Curator Seán Brosnahan and Registrar Claire Orbell working on the cataloguing project in the Costume and Textiles Store. In the foreground is the Dunedin City Council coat of arms which was processed during the project and features in the *Brought to Light* exhibition.

Cataloguing the Archives is not quite like painting the Forth Bridge, since improved modern paint has meant the bridge last needed to be painted in 2011. Work in the Archives is in comparison never-ending, and about half of the items dealt with in clearing the backlog were assigned to the Archivist Emma Knowles and her three temporary assistants. They have created about 4,600 new records for photographs, books, documents, maps, plans and electronic files. Even the latter take up more space than you'd think, as a single scanned image can sometimes be as large as 400 megabytes in size — there wouldn't be enough space on a CD-ROM for even two of these.

In the meantime, the museum continues to acquire items. Sadly, some of them come as a result of the recent closure of long-established local businesses. One of the chocolate moulds from the Cadbury's factory is on display in the 'Brought to Light' exhibition, while the Asian Restaurant in Moray Place donated some of its crockery and utensils after it had taken its last orders. A new accession process has been developed to avoid a backlog developing in future, so the staff and donors will not have a delay like the one over the last few years.

Based on Beth Rees' talk to the Tuesday Club, November 2019.



Christmas Meeting

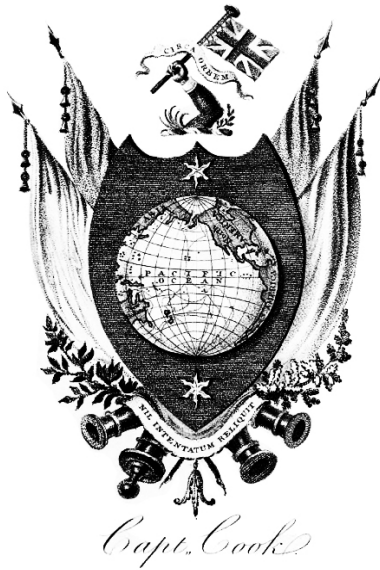
The Association's Advent soirée was held on St Lucy's Eve, Thursday, 12 December. On a windy but mild night with occasional glimpses of a bright bomber's moon, President Pete Smith welcomed more than 80 members and guests. Representatives of the Caledonian Society and the Otago Scottish Heritage Council also attended. Charlotte Morris read accounts of Christmases celebrated on emigrant ships from the 1840s through to the 1870s. The transcripts of shipboard diaries were undertaken by OSA History Department Summer Interns, among them Nicola Lomax and Emma Gattey. Perhaps surprisingly, they found no accounts of shipboard Hogmanay celebrations, but there was plenty of wassailing on Christmas Day.

A 1960s GEC 700-series telephone — not one from the Museum's collection — sat mysteriously on a side table throughout, and turned out to be the vital prop for the first part of the performance by members of Opera Otago. Mārama Grant introduced the singers Ingrid Fomison-Nurse and Scott Bezett, who performed Gian Carlo Menotti's short comic opera of 1947 *The Telephone (L'Amour à Trois)* accompanied by Mark Wigglesworth on the piano. The plot, in which crucial, tender moments were constantly interrupted by phone calls to Lucy on Dunedin 7345, showed that the modern obsession with mobile phones is nothing new.

After a brief interlude Lillian Gibbs performed the slave girl Sylphinia's song from Seymour Barab's *Only a Miracle* (1985), set at the inn in Bethlehem. Kieran Kelly then joined the other three singers to perform a quartet from Philip Norman's Dickensian opera *A Christmas Carol* (1993). Kieran continued the Christmas theme with a song from *The Time of Snow* by Bob Chilcott, who was a boy soprano in the choir of King's College, Cambridge in the mid-1960s and later a tenor with the King's Singers. Two older Christmas standards concluded the programme: Scott Bezett sang 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus' by Tommie Connor (1952) and the audience joined in with 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' (in Arthur Warrell's arrangement from 1935.)

Despite their peremptory demands, the carol singers didn't get any figgy pudding, but instead a spread of Christmas treats and refreshments. Pete Smith thanked the volunteers who had helped make the evening a success, in particular Carol Pike, Rhondda Martin and Susan Schweigman, along with our Administrator, Gemma Murphy. Thank you too to those who gave items for the prize hampers. The proceeds of the raffle went to subsidise the summer outing to the Catlins. Nancy and Melville Carr struck it lucky, winning two of the three draws. Our former President however graciously forewent his rights to the final hamper and a fourth draw was made.

This taltus was one of many objects processed as part of the IR Backlog Project. It was presented to Trooper Charles Reid of the Otago Hussars, winner of the Challenge Cup for the second year running, in 1893, and can be seen in the *Brought to Light* exhibition.



A Quarter-Millennium Ago

In late February 1770, 250 years ago, the *Endeavour* was off the Otago coast. Joseph Banks was one of the few on board who still thought they might be within sight of a great southern continent. One calm afternoon he shot two Port Egmont hens (a type of skua), but most of the crew had begun 'to sigh for roast beef.' Soon after, the summer struck with its accustomed severity. Banks complained on Monday, 26 February that the 'Thermometer today at noon was 48 [Fahrenheit, or 9° Celsius] which pinch[ed] us a little.' The wind 'blew hard' and 'whiff[ed] all round the compass.' James Cook had recorded in his journal for Sunday, 25 February:

In the PM steer[ed] [south-west] edging in for the land having the advantage of a fresh gale at north which I was over desirous of making the most of and by that means carried away the Main Top g[allan]t mast and Fore topmast studding sail boom, but these were soon replaced by others. Altho we kept at no great distance from the shore yet the weather was so hazy that we could see nothing distinct upon the land only that there were a ridge of pretty high hills lying parallel with and but a little way from the sea-coast ... and seem'd to end in a high bluff point to the Southward which we run the length of by 8 o'clock, when being dark and not knowing which way the Land trended we brought too for the night ... At 4 AM we made sail, but by this time the northerly wind was gone and was succeeded by one from the southward which proved very variable and unsteady —

At day light the point above mention'd bore north distant 3 Leagues and we found that the land trended away from it S[outh] W[est] B[y] W[est] as far as we could see. This point of land I have named Cape Saunders in Honour of S[ir] Charles ... it requir[es] no description to know it by, the Latitude and the Angle made here by the Coast will be found quite sufficient however there is a remarkable Saddle hill laying near the shore 3 or 4 Leagues SW of the Cape.* From one to four Leagues [17-22 km] north of the Cape the shore seem'd to form two or three Bays wherein there appeared to be anchorage and Shelter from SW, westerly and

NW winds. I had some thoughts of bearing up for one of these places in the morning when the wind came to SW, but the fear of looseing time and the desire I had of pushing to the southward in order to see as much of the coast as possible, or if this land s[h]ould prov[e] to be an Island to get round it, prevented me. Being not far from the shore all this morning we had an opportunity of viewing the land pretty distinctly. it is of a moderate height, full of hills which appear'd green and woody, but we saw not the least signs of Inhabitants ...

* by which it may always be known when on that side of it.

(Rear Admiral Sir Charles Saunders had been Cook's commanding officer in the campaign that captured Quebec from the French in 1759.)

This transcription and the quotations come from the Australian National Library's South Seas Voyaging Accounts: http://southseas.nla.gov.au/index_voyaging.html

Peter Entwisle discusses this visit on pages 6–7 of *Behold the Moon: The European Occupation of the Dunedin District 1770–1848* (2010).



Genealogy's Benefactress

As Eleanor Leckie was unable to attend the Association's AGM, the Committee organised a special valedictory afternoon tea in her honour in mid-December. The 'thank-you meeting' marked her two decades of service to the OSA committee and was co-ordinated by Vice President Hilary Allison. The Association is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Eleanor's work over the decades in historical and genealogical research. Hilary recalled that she first encountered Eleanor vicariously through her transcriptions of historical records, which she 'hugely appreciated.' Speakers from a range of local organisations and archives took turns in thanking Eleanor for her many contributions. First, her daughter Belinda remembered the years of typing up transcripts on an old

Left: Captain James Cook's coat of arms granted to his widow Elizabeth in 1785.

Right: Eleanor Leckie

Imperial on the kitchen table, scouring the death notices in the newspaper each day, and family holidays that usually included a visit to a cemetery or two in order to transcribe some more inscriptions. Seán Brosnahan, speaking for the Museum, said Eleanor is 'the backbone to genealogy in this region' and that thousands upon thousands of people have benefited from her work, along with that of her fellow toilers. She has been 'an immense worker for the Museum,' not least for her transcription of the roughly 30,000 Vogel-era assisted immigrant records. Calling her 'a real treasure,' Seán emphasised that Eleanor is selflessly devoted to her work and 'a demon for accuracy.'

Ngairé Ockwell was unable to attend, but her valedictory message was read for her by Hilary. Many people say 'geneology,' she wrote, but the word is correctly spelt 'genealogy' — like many other -alogies/allergies, it is not life-threatening, though it is long-lasting. Ngairé thought she and Eleanor had lived through a 'golden era' for researchers, when they could afford the time and money to travel to archives, and when the advent of portable personal computers transformed the work of transcription. Eleanor's name often crops up, Ngairé wrote, at meetings of taphophiles — that is, lovers of graveyards and tombstones. Robyn Thorburn, the Convenor of the Dunedin Branch of the NZ Society of Genealogists, then 'acknowledged the great contribution' Eleanor has made to genealogical research, mentioning the many awards she has received, not least the Queen's Service Medal in 1998.

Rachel Hurd from the Presbyterian Research Centre said Eleanor's transcriptions of the marriage records at the Hewitson Library is 'an amazing resource,' valuable to researchers both locally and internationally. Anne Jackman, the Regional Archivist at Archives NZ, thanked Eleanor for helping make archival material accessible widely: 'the research community applauds you.' Anna Blackman, the Head Curator of archives at the Hocken Collections, added that Eleanor contributed the lion's share of the transcriptions of the records of nearly a hundred schools held in the library.

OSA President Pete Smith then offered Eleanor 'the right of reply,' and she first thanked her 'very patient' husband Jim. She acknowledged the hard work done by the many people who helped check her transcriptions, and recalled the amusing time spent in the Bailiffs' office while working on probate records, which at the time were still held in the courthouse. Eleanor thanked the organisers of the 'most unexpected' valedictory event, and concluded by busting the myth that our Victorian forebears all had beautiful copperplate handwriting. 'Bunkum!' — headmasters' handwriting was often as bad as any doctor's, and many of them mis-spelled their pupils' names, to boot. They were at least in good company, as Dr Thomas Hocken got the name of Thomas Burns' wife Clementina Grant quite wrong. Eleanor should know, as she is a direct descendant of the Burns, and on behalf of the OSA, President Pete gave her reproductions of the portraits of her ancestors, Thomas Burns' son Arthur and his wife Sarah. To wind up the proceedings, he then read a message from the Mayor, Aaron Hawkins, thanking Eleanor on behalf of the city for which she has done so much over the years.

For Your Diary

Otago Anniversary Day

The Revd Ed Masters of First Church invites all members of the Association to join him in commemorating the 172nd anniversary of the foundation of Otago at 10am on Sunday, 22 March. The guest speaker will be Associate Professor the Revd Christopher Holmes, a theologian with a particular interest in the doctrine of God. He is currently writing a book on Christian existence, exploring the relationship between the names of God and the spiritual life. President Pete Smith will deliver one of the readings at the service, and the OSA will contribute towards the cost of the morning tea.

This year's Anniversary Day dinner will be held on Monday, 23 March at the University Staff Club beside the Union Street bridge (not, as in recent years, at the Dunedin Club). The speaker will be Nicky Page, Director of the City of Literature. The doors will open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start, and there will be a cash bar. Dress: lounge suits. Tickets: \$60 from the Otago Settlers Association or the Scottish Shop at 17 George Street. Since places are limited, early application is advisable.

Summer Outing

There is still time to book your place on the OSA's summer outing on 6 March. We are off to see the sites and scenery of the Catlins region in South Otago, visiting several historical and heritage sites en route, including the Owaka Museum. Several Committee members went on an information-gathering reconnaissance mission in late January to fine-tune the programme, so it should run as smoothly as in previous years. Owaka has a couple of cafes if you do not wish to bring your own food; the bus will have an on-board WC. You can register your interest by contacting our Administrator, Gemma Murphy, at the OSA office. Numbers are limited to 48, unless strong demand causes a need for additional transport.

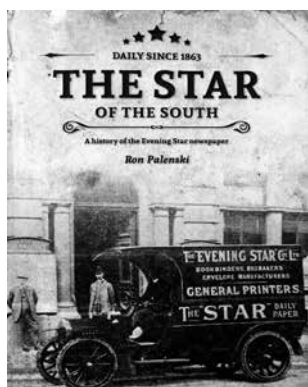
The Remembrance Army Wants You

Our mission starts soon to restore and maintain war veterans' graves and headstones in cemeteries around Dunedin. If you want to volunteer for our working bees or would like more information about what we get up to, please email us at nzradunedin@gmail.com or follow us on the Remembrance Army Facebook page.

Book News

Ron Palenski, *The Star of the South: A history of the Evening Star newspaper. Daily since 1863*

(Dunedin: Allied Press, 2019)
194 pages, paperback. 106 illustrations, some in colour.
\$29.95 (With OSA members' 15% discount, \$25.46 plus \$5 packing and postage. Please make out cheques to the DCC.)



Times may be hard for newspapers, but on the other hand it has been a good time for histories of newspapers. Ian F Grant's *Lasting Impressions: The story of New Zealand's newspapers, 1840-1920* was published in 2018, and now we have Ron Palenski's history of the *Evening Star*. Both show how precarious the existence of many papers was, and how remarkable an achievement it was to sustain a successful one for well over a century. Written by a well-known former *Star* journalist who holds a doctorate in history from Otago, this surprisingly heavy book is full of the interesting personalities that newspaper work attracts. It steers a clear path through the complexities of newspaper rivalries, takeovers and mergers over the decades. The *Star* benefited from a great deal of continuity, with only three editors in the paper's first 84 years: Julius Vogel, George Bell and Willie Alexander. The first was not what we might consider a hands-on editor, leaving much of the work to his deputy Bell: he sometimes even forgot he had a leader to write and had to interrupt a card game at his club to attend to business. Technological changes were significant for the *Star*, as for its rivals: they included the introduction of high-speed rotary presses and Linotype machines, huge typewriter-like devices that replaced the laborious setting of type by hand. Another technological advance, the advent of the trans-Tasman submarine telegraph in 1876, meant reporters no longer had to cadge a ride with the harbour pilot to meet ships at the heads in order to be first with the news.

This book is full of anecdotes, and some of them could have come straight out of Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*: the *Star's* counterpart to 'Boot of the Beast' was Bill Noble, former chairman of the parliamentary press gallery. One evening when he was absorbed in his work, the editor came up to him with a letter in his hand,

asking: 'Mr Noble, what are your initials?' 'WJ,' he said. 'Good Lord, I've given the job to the wrong fellow.' It always pays a journalist to make sure he has got the names correct.

The *Star's* first column specifically for women in 1898 was written by the editor's wife. The paper took a liberal, enlightened attitude towards women's rights, asking in 1914 'Is the Dominion any the better for giving votes to women? ... The general answer must be that no country can permanently suffer for doing right.' Few papers are as lucky as the *Star* to have had an artist of the calibre of Shona McFarlane on the staff, women's editor from 1960 to 1972. Some of her portraits of reporters, subeditors and compositors at work in the 1960s are reproduced in colour here. The *Star* was always a convivial place to work, with singing and jeffing, using instead of dice em quads (type spacers the size of a letter 'm'). The printers kept up the old tradition of the wayzgoose.

The *Star* pioneered the dedicated *Sports Special*, which first appeared in 1907 and was copied by papers throughout the country. It was hugely popular, becoming first the *Star Sports* and then the *Seven O'Clock*. Initially it appeared only in winter, but it became a year-round affair in 1948. The penultimate chapter describes the negotiations in the 1970s that led to the merger with the *ODT*, seeing off corporate raiders. Otago Press and Produce kept the titles in local ownership and won out over an offer from the tourism firm the Mount Cook Group. By the end of the decade, however, dwindling advertising revenue forced the end of the *Star* as a daily publication. The *Star's* handsome building in lower Stuart Street, designed by Edmund Anscombe, is a reminder of its former importance. The first edition to be produced at the new site appeared on Christmas Eve 1928. The *Star's* former premises of 1880-81 survive in Bond Street. Though renamed Central Chambers, a five-pointed star can still be seen in the pediment.

This book includes seven appendices, among them a thoroughly researched timeline of the numerous Otago and Southland newspapers that have appeared since the *Otago Journal* and *Otago News* were first published in 1848, in auld Edinburgh and New Edinburgh respectively. Other appendices discuss the *Star Garden Annuals* and the musical fountain of fond memory, 'Orpheus in the Octagon.'



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.

 **Otago Daily Times**

The Otago Daily Times supports Toitū Otago Settlers Museum

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