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OTAGO EARLY SETTLERS MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

220 CUMBERLAND ST DUNEDIN

A MESSAGE TO OUR MEMBERS

J S Somerville, President

The Association is on the edge of great advances and wants to share what is happening with all its members.

Your committee, conscious of the need to preserve the Collection which has no peer in this country and probably in Australasia, has taken the following steps so far to redevelop the Museum after its decision to abandon the proposal to move to the Dunedin Railway Station.

(1) It has bought the land on which the Museum stands. This is an exciting and far seeing achievement. Unless this had been done - and it was done at a very reasonable price - the Association had no rights under the lease which runs out in 2015 to renew or rebuild. So we NOW OWN THE LAND. It is valuable land too. This means we can plan for the future. We have begun to do that. A real debt is owed to Mr John Macpherson our Immediate Past President for his advice regarding the purchase.

(2) It has its eyes on further land so that essential extensions to the museum can be planned. It is negotiating with Railcorp for those extra parcels of land. That will be part of our redevelopment costs.

OTAGO EARLY SETTLERS MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

(3) A structure has been set up to put the development plan into action and preliminary discussions have been held. The structure is as follows:

1. A Project Team headed by Mr William Cockerill of OCTA Associates

2. A Finance Team headed by Mr Trevor Scott [Accountant of Dunedin]

3. An Appeal Committee headed by Mr Tony Anderson [Accountant of Dunedin]

These groups are accountable through the Executive to the main Committee.

The project is planned in 3 stages each estimated to cost over $1 million. The total is therefore approximately $4.5 million. The stages may be altered in timing but they are:

1. Refurbishment of the present building
2. Construction of new entrance and Gallery to the north
3. Construction of storage and workroom extensions to the east

The above groups have begun their planning. At present they are co-operating with the Dunedin City Council over a number of issues which may well involve greater participation by the Council. This factor involves a delay in calling a meeting of our members whose approval on the overall proposals will be sought. That meeting will be called as soon as it is possible to do so. The aim is to launch our appeal to the public for funds, as early as February 1991. Until final decisions have been made, the professionals consulted have been assisting the Association without charge and we are most grateful for that.



The decision to stay in our own building and to acquire the freehold of the land on which it stands point to the URGENCY of the whole scheme. Urgent because of space limitations, because of building deficiencies; urgent for the sake of our precious Collection and urgent financially ■

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS

THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN OTAGO

OESM 1990 EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

In 1865 the Provincial Government of Otago was concerned at the falling population of Otago's goldfields and declining gold revenues. In an attempt to counter this trend an invitation was extended to Chinese miners in Victoria to come over to Otago. There was no sudden rush but gradually a Chinese presence was established on Otago's goldfields which in time developed into the most significant non-European group in the colonial population. In certain places at particular times Chinese miners made up at least 40% of the goldfields population and their distinctive looks and practices were a major feature of the Otago landscape in the nineteenth century.

Despite this the Chinese dimension of our past has not generally been appreciated. A major new work "Windows on a Chinese Past" by Dunedin doctor James Ng is set to reverse this and the Museum is collaborating with Dr Ng and other members of the local Chinese community to establish a new Museum display based on the book. The first stage will look at the Chinese of the gold-mining era who were characterised by a "sojourner" attitude to New Zealand as a place to work hard and make good for an eventual return to family and village in China.

The Museum has a small collection of Chinese material for the display but we would appreciate donations of suitable items. This will be a significant development in the Museum's efforts to give a full dimension to the province's social history. ■



The Chinese Camp at Lawrence. The Joss House is the building at the far left.

the flower of Victorian design

The Flower of Victorian Design is a temporary exhibition devoted to decorative objects from the Victorian era which express in some way the use of a naturalistic motif. The Otago Early Settlers Museum collection is very strong in its holdings of the Victorian applied arts, most notably pieces made within Otago during the last century. These will be featured with imported items to show how architecture and the arts combined and developed over the period to produce the varied design environment which we experience in Dunedin. This city's rich supply of Victorian and Edwardian cottages, villas and public buildings provides the ideal setting for many of these objects and the exhibition should be of interest to people restoring or furnishing an older house. The opening of the exhibition has been co-ordinated with the OESM seminar programme, part of which deals with the restoration and conservation of architectural interiors. The exhibition and the follow on programme will offer an in-depth look at buildings and their furnishings. Samples of Victorian wallpapers and friezes have been loaned from the Dowse Art Museum and a number of relics from Dunedin's lost buildings brought together for the exhibition. The subject matter ranges widely across the design field and the contrasts of scale, media and execution make a statement about the diversity of Victorian material culture. **The Flower of Victorian Design** will be opened on November 2 by Professor Peter Stupples of the Russian Department of the University of Otago and will run until February 1991. ■

SALUTE TO OTAGO ARTISTS

Salute to Otago Artists is a series of three exhibitions organised by the Museum to promote the art collection and celebrate 1990.

The art collection contains many works of Otago interest, some by quite obscure artists, while others are widely recognised. The collection as a whole was built up primarily for historical interest to help illustrate the history of Dunedin and Otago.

The three exhibitions include many works which have not been exhibited before and are accompanied by informative catalogues.

The first exhibition of the series featured the works of Christopher Aubrey. 22 watercolours were shown including five borrowed from the Wallace Early Settlers Museum in Riverton.

Aubrey travelled and painted extensively around the Taieri, Tokomairiro Plains, Clutha and Southland in the 1870s. The scenes and buildings depicted remain as familiar to us today as they were to Aubrey when he painted them. He obviously travelled around the countryside painting favourite places, farmhouses and hotels in return for food and lodging. Aubrey the man remains very much a mystery - we have neither records of his birth nor his death.

The exhibition was opened by Roger Collins, who has done a great deal of research on Aubrey and who also assisted with the catalogue.

The second exhibition featured watercolours and drawings by members of the Valpy family. The arts played a very important part in the education of the children of this family and they received tuition from an Italian drawing master. This influence is obvious in their meticulous watercolours and pencil drawings.

Included in the exhibition were biographies and history of the family which helped to complete the picture of how these women settled in Dunedin in the early 1850s. Having come from a very privileged middle class existence in England and Europe they faced what must have been to them considerable hardships here.

Notable New Zealand print maker Marilynn Webb opened the exhibition and spoke from her point of view as an artist 140 years later. She described in some detail her response to their technical sophistication and use of colour, and made us aware of the loneliness and isolation that these women must have experienced. In contrast to the landscapes they would have encountered on their travels to the cities of Europe, here they were surrounded by wide open spaces with no buildings or people.

Their works are amongst the earliest art works in the collection and constitute an important social document about migrating here in the 1850s.

Exhibition number 3, Images of Dunedin, focussed on the Dunedin townscape and landscape. The aim of this exhibition was to present a selection of interesting and early views of Dunedin, covering the years from the early 1850s to the latest dated work of 1924.

Many of the images selected had not been exhibited before and show a mixture of works by professional painters, draughtsmen and amateurs illustrating the richness and diversity of the Otago Early Settlers Museum art collection.
Hal Smith, writer and photographer, opened this third exhibition and part of his colourful and descriptive opening address is available from the Museum.

A unique feature of the exhibitions was that so many descendants of the artists came forward and assisted with biographical material. The Valpy opening was like a family reunion, and although we know little about Aubrey, many who had paintings or lived near where he had painted contributed their knowledge.

A catalogue for each of these three exhibitions has been produced and copies are available from the Museum shop. ■

Angela Brenssell, Curator

PEOPLE,PEOPLE,PEOPLE



'Lily Aged 10', One of the images from 'PEOPLE, PEOPLE, PEOPLE'

The exhibition **'PEOPLE, PEOPLE, PEOPLE'**, drew from the Museum's photographic portrait collection a wide and varied selection of images, most of which had not been displayed in the past. It was decided to show the portraits in their original formats which meant that many of the older photographs were either cartes de visite or cabinet cards, these being the two most popular sizes for Victorian prints. This requires visitors to look closely at the images to capture the detail and offers a vivid contrast to the large scale portraits which hang elsewhere on the gallery walls.
The museum is fortunate to have

collected a number of examples of early photographic techniques including daguerreotypes, tin-types and ambrotypes, all of which were produced during the 1850s and 60s. Many of these images are of fine quality and are mounted in hinged, leather bound cases, offering an insight into how photography was regarded in the era before the technique was available to everyone.

At the other end of the scale, snap-shots and work by street and fairground photographers show how photography became the hobby or occupation of millions during the 20th century.

One of the most engaging forms of amateur photography is the 8mm home movie and a central part of the exhibition features a videoed selection of 1930s black and white and colour films of family holidays, birthday parties and day trips.

A number of period cameras and ephemera connected with photography have been gathered to provide examples of the equipment used by both amateurs and professionals. One of the most commonly asked questions relating to the collection is the cause of the dour expressions often seen in Victorian portraiture. Exposure times of 10 seconds or more were common in the era of the wet-plate collodian process and this made it difficult to hold a natural smile. A measure of formality was also expected when a trip to the studio to have one's photograph taken was an event. This is not to suggest that early photographic portraits were all stiffness and formality as a great number of delightfully spontaneous images of both children and adult sitters appeared during the selection and it is this aspect of the museum's collection which surfaces in the exhibition. ■

THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI IN THE FAR SOUTH

The opening by the Governor General, Sir Paul Reeves, of the Otago Early Settlers Museum installation marking the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi was both a significant occasion in the Museum's long history and an event enjoyed by the staff and those who took part. The completion of the installation, which looks at events in the Otago region leading up to the signing of the Treaty at Otakou and Ruapuke Island during June 1840, has added an important link to the museum's permanent displays dealing with aspects of Otago's history. Valued assistance was received in the planning stages for the display from representatives of the Otakou ruananga and the presence of Kai Tahu elders and guests from the Otakou marae at the opening greatly honoured the museum. The Curatorial staff spoke at a number of meetings before and after the opening on the significance of the Treaty signings in the south and received valuable feedback from a variety of professional groups. Along with the Otago Museum's superb redeveloped Maori Gallery, Dunedin now has a permanent reminder of the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi to the Otago region. ■

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

During August 1990 Museum staff carried out a survey of the photographic portraits in the Museum's Portrait Gallery.

With a grant from the Cultural Conservation Advisory Council the Museum was able to engage Mark Strange from the photographic department of the National Museum to assess each of the portraits on display to determine the printing process involved and the physical condition of each portrait.

Prior to the survey every portrait was given a unique number and entered onto the Museum's database. Over a four day period all the portraits were removed from the walls, numbered and unframed.

Mark Strange then examined each portrait and at the same time trained three staff members in the identification of the differing photographic processes used in the printing of the photographic portrait collection.

One of the highlights of the survey was the identification of a rare salt paper print, using a microscope at the Otago Museum.

A worksheet was completed for each of the portraits and these will form the



The Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in the Far South display

basis of Mark Strange's conservation report. While the report is being written staff are involved in the reframing and rehanging of the portraits which do not require further conservation work, and this should hopefully be completed by the end of October.

The survey, though primarily focused on the portraits, will also include an assessment of the Museum's glass plate and subject collections.

The survey has been a major project and while it has stretched the resources of the Museum the benefits of this project will be immeasureable. The most important benefit will be the completion of a conservation report which will form the basis of a management plan for the future care and development of this nationally important and unique collection.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION VITAL STATISTICS

Portrait Collection

Storage

Oversize Portraits: 2023
Cabinet & Carte de Visite: 1624
Albums: 6500
Display:
Portraits: 945

Subject Collection

Storage

Glass plates: 2500*
Prints: 8000*
Albums: 3000*
*** estimated**

John Timmins, Registrar

AUGUST SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

With the assistance of a grant from the Civic Arts Council we were able to engage "Gumboot Soup" to entertain children and visitors for a fortnight over the primary school holidays.

"Gumboot Soup" specializes in theatre for children and the show consisted of two parts: a scripted performance and an improvised performance. The scripted portion of the show, written by the group, lasted for half an hour. The play was centred around monsters and wild life characters, although the actual play underwent many changes.

The improvised performance was made up of many parts and the children began with a variety of theatre warm-ups and games. After this the children designed their own play which they performed at the end of the session.

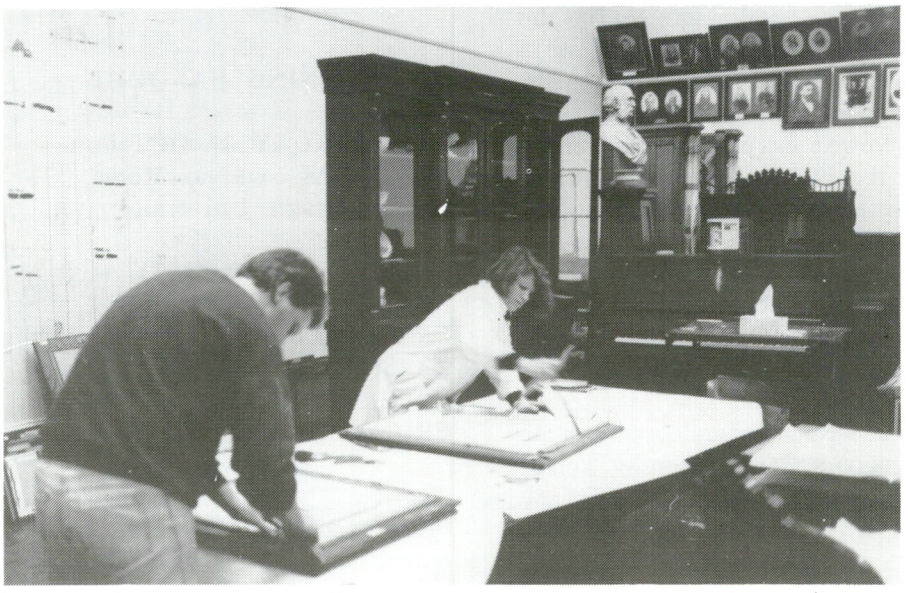
Four drama students from Otago University made up the group called "Gumboot Soup" and their enthusiastic efforts created a highly successful performance enjoyed by children of all ages as well as their parents. ■

ARCHIVAL NEWS

The latest acquisition in the Research area is a microfiche printer, part of the important collection of material held on behalf of the Dunedin Group, New Zealand Society of Genealogists. This now means that any material in microfiche format can be printed out. In line with this a number of new microfiche have been ordered (details in the next newsletter) and our collection of material in this category continues to grow in importance as well as in volume. The print-outs will be charged at 70 cents per page.

The cemetery and marriage register transcripts/indexes referred to in the last newsletter are now bound and available for consultation: Roxburgh cemetery 1867-1988; Marriage Register transcripts/indexes: Central and Eastern Southland Anglican 1880-1923 ; Central Otago Anglican 1872-1920; North Otago Anglican 1862-1921; Gore Presbyterian Marriages 1884-1923; Waiareka Presbyterian Marriages and Christenings Index 1876-1984. ■

Sean Brosnahan, Archivist



Photographic research assistant Shona Cameron and volunteer Matthew Best preparing portraits for inspection

DOMESTIC AND TECHNICAL COLLECTIONS

Planning for the two exhibitions due for completion late this year is well underway. The first of these is **'The Flower of Victorian Design'** which uses the museum's fine collection of Victorian artifacts and has given me an excuse to become better aquainted with parts of the collection I have not yet spent much time with. The exhibition is to be tied in to the seminar programme which will feature two separate sessions on the conservation and restoration of Victorian interiors and furniture. An interesting group of speakers has been arranged and we are greatly looking forward to this series of events.

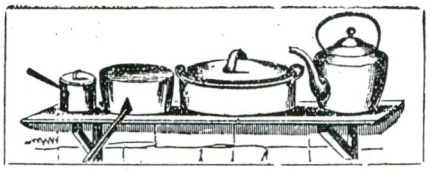
An application has been made for the funding of a conservation survey for the furniture collection and preliminary work is being done on the collection by Laura Beresford, a volunteer staff member who is assisting with the filling out of numerous work-sheets. A photographic record of the furniture collection will be another desirable outcome of the conservation survey.

The second major project in the department is the arranging of a permanent display focussing on the Chinese community in Otago. This will involve the partial reconstruction of the Chinese Joss House. Dimensions have been gained by looking at the crib into which the Joss House was converted after it fell into disuse. The placement of the display at the north end of the Pioneer Hall will mean moving the existing furniture store although I am sure that after we receive the conservator's report on the collection a rearrangement of storage spaces would have been required in any case. ■

Michael Findlay, Curator

OESM □ 1990
SEMINAR
PROGRAMME

VICTORIAN FOOD AND



COOKERY IN DUNEDIN

AFTERNOON SEMINAR

SATURDAY 13 OCT 2-4 pm

Joan Bishop - Adapting early recipes to the modern kitchen. A demonstration

Elizabeth Hinds - Victorian cooking equipment and the coal range

Helen Leach - The Myth of Victorian Cooking - What people ate and when

EVENING BANQUET

SATURDAY 27 OCT 7pm
CAPS Seminar Room
Otago University

MRS BEETON IN OTAGO

Food and wine from a provincial table of the 1880s.

PRICE: $20.00 Seminar
$30.00 Banquet

Please contact the Museum for further information and bookings. Ph 775-052

SATURDAY NOV 10

THE CONSERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL INTERIORS

This one day session will look at practical aspects of the interior renovation and restoration of houses and small public buildings from the Victorian era through to the 1930s. This session will be of great benefit to anyone involved in the care and preservation of older buildings.

Jeremy Salmond is a practising architect with strong links to Dunedin. He is the author of 'Old New Zealand Houses' and specialises in architectural conservation.
Sue Medary is a professional interior designer with the Dunedin firm 'Peacocks of London Street'
Paul Seddon is co-owner of the long established fibrous plaster business A W Seddon and Sons.

SATURDAY NOV 17

FURNITURE CONSERVATION

This session aims to present practical information about the care and conservation of furniture for both institutions and private owners. This is not a hands-on session and will not deal with methods of restoration.

Speakers
Detlef Klein is a German-trained professional furniture conservator who has undertaken work for the NZ Historic Places Trust and the Auckland Museum.
Dr Mervyn Palmer manages the historic house 'Olveston'.
Michael Findlay is the curator of the domestic and technical collections of the OESM.

TIMES: 10:30 - 3:30
PRICE: $20.00 per session
CONTACT: Michael Findlay or John Timmins on 775-052

J O MACPHERSON

John Macpherson, Immediate Past President of the Association, has told me that he does not wish to attend meetings of the Committee in the future but he will continue to assist the Association in ways which he can. He remains, ex officio, a member of the Committee until there is another Immediate Past President.

Mr Macpherson has given long and valuable assistance to the Association as a Committee member, as President, and over the past 11 years as Immediate Past President. His chairmanship was always impartial and discerning; his service went considerably beyond the call of duty as, for examaple, his attendance on Sunday rosters; his gifts as a professional person were always available to the Association often at considerable cost to himself; he had a clear vision of what he believed to be best for the Association and was prepared always to stand by it; his humour and wisdom will be missed round the committee table but we are grateful to be assured that his sound advice and continued service will be available to us.

J S Somerville, President

WANTED

A PLAYER PIANO for the collectionin time for a display during MUSIC WEEK, October 15 - 19.

CULLEN FAMILY REUNION

On the evening of Friday, August 31, the Museum reverberated to the sound of 150 members of the Cullen family catching up on their family history.

The descendants of James Cullen and Jane Stevenson, who were married by the Rev Dr Thomas Burns in 1850 and who later settled on the Taieri, gathered at the Museum for the start of their weekend reunion. They were welcomed by Dr Somerville and the Director and then spent 2 hours renewing old acquaintances and making new ones.

Family portraits from the Museum collection were on display and food and refreshements were served by the staff.

The Museum was delighted to host this informal gathering and would welcome other family reunion groups who would like to use the Museum's facilities for similar functions.

STOP PRESS

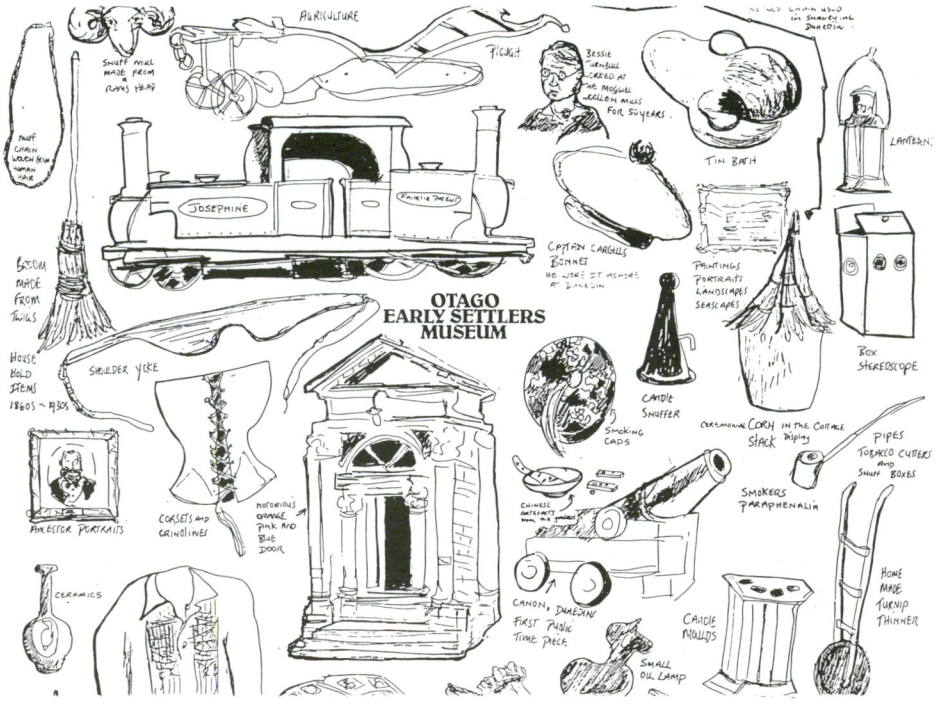
On October 17 the shop will be receiving a limited number of the new book **HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND,** compiled by Lois Galer. This includes photos of all A & B listed buildings, some in colour, and a list of all current C & D listings. The book is indexed, 122 pages.

Price to members $22.45
P & P 1.50

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MERRY CHRISTMAS



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Hardwicke Knight
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"On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me a pukeko in a Ponga Tree" etc.
A charming book for children
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A WALK TO THE BEACH
Chris Gaskin
For all children interested in the world of plants, birds, insects and animals to be found along and near our coastline. Award winning Chris Gaskin is a freelance artist now living in Dunedin.
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WOMEN IN THEIR TIME
A history of the Otago Women's Club 1914-1989
Price to members $18.00 ☐☐
P & P .80

TEASPOONS
We have a new design - the peacock at Glenfalloch Gardens ☐

☐ Josephine	☐ First Church	☐ Coat of Arms
☐ St Pauls	☐ Larnachs Castle	☐ Olveston
☐ Albatross	☐ Railway Station	☐ OESA Logo
☐ Otago University		☐ Star Fountain

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