OTAGO SETTLERS MUSEUM December 1994 Issue 55

NEWSLETTER

A Rose by any other name:

A New Name For The Museum

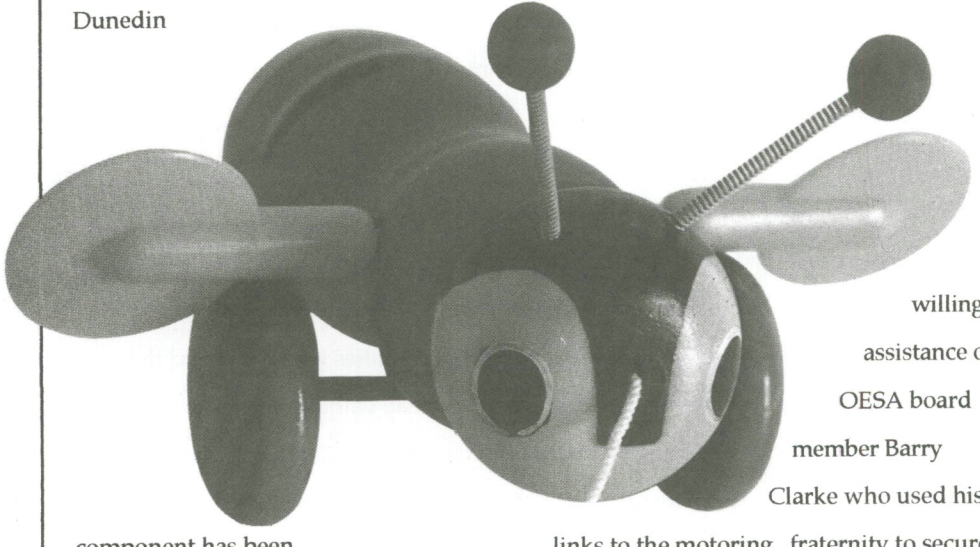
A change of name for the museum has been mooted for some years now, especially as we have been able to demonstrate a commitment to carrying out the statement of purpose drawn up in 1989, that the museum would be '... the museum of social history for Dunedin and Otago ... '. This is a much wider brief than the original terms of reference for the museum which grew from the aims stated in the 1898 constitution of the OESA 'to collect and preserve books, papers, photographs, paintings and articles of historic and artistic interest illustrative of the manners, customs and events of earlier years, and to develop educational, cultural and historic interests.'

Increasingly over the past few years the museum has developed strong links with many sectors of the community, added to the founding collections, and engaged in a wide range of activities both within and beyond the museum. The name Otago Early Settlers Museum, with its focus on paying tribute to the families who pioneered the province and founded the city of Dunedin, was not able to embrace the ideas of including all people in Otago and Dunedin from the late 18th Century to the present, and seemed especially inappropriate in relation to the collections of 20th Century technology, contemporary life and popular culture, and such exhibitions as 'Windows on a Chinese Past', 'Nether*Lands*', and 'Kai Ťahu Whanui Ki Otago 1844 -1994'.

The choice of another name raised a number of issues. Should the name include the place, or the word 'museum', and what about the acronym? The resolution of the name became a matter of practical urgency this year when the newly developed complex was opened which , with its two visitor entrances, could no longer be called the 'Early Settlers Hall'. A short list of three names was considered by members of OESM Board and the decision to use Otago Settlers Museum was made, to be used in conjunction with 'Founded by OESA in 1898'. This will serve us well as an all encompassing title, drawing on the past, referring to our region and its people, and leaving scope for a range of additional titles which can be used to state the main themes of social history, technology, and contemporary life. The graphic design for the new name is being prepared at present and will see the museum move into the Twenty First Century with a flourish.

Kiwiana

The exhibition 'Kiwiana' is featuring in the new Bus Station gallery at Otago Settlers Museum over the summer. 'Kiwiana' is a nostalgic look at New Zealand in the '50s and '60s using familiar icons of the period. These have been arranged in a series of 'sets' which include a 1960s house, beach, schoolroom and farm. A special Dunedin



component has been added called 'Going to Town' which recalls the excitement of a trip to the city in the 1960s — a movie at the Century Theatre, shampoo and set at the hairdresser and window shopping in the bright lights of town. The recent partial demolition of the Century Theatre was redeemed by the owner's willingness to donate important items from the cinema's internal decor to the museum. The ticket booths, decorative mirrors and planter boxes from the foyer have been carefully reconstructed inside the museum and form the central element of 'Going to Town'. Also featuring will be the museum's latest acquisition – an Art Deco plywood caravan built by Invercargill engineer Ross Thompson in 1948. "Where is the Otago connection in that ?" I hear you ask. The Thompson family wisely holidayed in Alexandra and used the caravan every summer until recently. The caravan was purchased through the willing assistance of OESA board member Barry Clarke who used his links to the motoring fraternity to secure the necessary funds.

'Kiwiana' started life at the Auckland Museum as a one-off show curated by Richard Wolfe and Steven Barnett. The touring show was packaged by Exhibi*tour* and sponsored by Huttons Kiwi Ltd., QE II Arts Council of New Zealand and Instant Kiwi. Kiwiana is sponsored in Dunedin by Bentley's Hotel, Classic Hits 89 FM, News Talk ZB, Speight's and OESA.

Admission to Kiwiana costs $2 or $1 for schoolchildren.

Kai Tahu Whanui Ki

On July 31 museum staff joined with Kai Tahu Whanui, the Governor General, Otago mayors and invited guests to officially open the exhibition Kai Tahu Whanui Ki Otago 1844-1994. This chronicles the experience of Otago Maori from the 1844 sale of the Otago land block, which set in train large-scale European immigration to the province, right up to the present day. The exhibition succeeds earlier presentations on first contacts between Maori and European in Otago harbour and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in the south.

Museum staff had been planning for such an exhibition for some time. In 1993 initial discussions were held with iwi representatives and a consultative group was developed to co-ordinate exhibition planning with the three papatipu runanga (traditional area councils) of Otago. At the end of 1993 Bill Dacker was appointed the Dunedin City Council 1844 Commemorative Fellow and commissioned to write a history of the iwi in Otago and co-curate the exhibition with museum staff. His appointment as the runanga's representative in display preparation anchored the exhibition in his extensive research.

An important feature of the exhibition is the artwork created by Kai Tahu artists Hine Forsyth, Moana Wesley and Doug

Otago 1844-1994

Ditford. This enlivens the thematic interpretation presented in the format of canvas banners. Each banner is accompanied by a series of stylised figures drawn from Kai Tahu mythology and history and based on actual examples of South Island rock art. The museum would like to acknowledge the financial support of major sponsors Bell Gully Buddle Weir and CS First Boston New Zealand Ltd as well as Moeraki Boulder Park Limited, who sponsored the work of our artists' group.

'From Photo or From Sittings'

John Irvine and Reuben Cole, Portrait Painters in the Photographic Age

In 1894 Reuben Cole, scenic artist, copyist, decorator, art teacher, and odd-job painter to Queen Victoria sent his Royal boss an ultimatum. The pay and conditions which he was currently being offered were unsatisfactory, he stated, and unless the Sovereign could do better, he was resigning his position. Queen Victoria was not even vaguely amused and scrawled her acceptance of Cole's resignation on the back of his letter in purple crayon. "Nothing can be done", she wrote "but the Queen would – she supposed – use him for copying." This suggestion was never followed up and Cole eventually remedied his financial problems by emigrating to New Zealand in 1905 and becoming a portrait painter in Dunedin.

Research Librarian Tania Connelly first became interested in Reuben Cole when his grandson, R. R. C. McLachlan, donated the artist's Gladstone bag to the museum. "He just put it on the desk and said 'This belonged to Queen Victoria's Art Master !' I felt at once that there was a story behind his claim and I was curious to find out what it was." Discussion with the Curator of Art and Costume, Angela Brenssell, revealed the existence of ten portraits by Cole in the museum but little supporting evidence in the biographical file. After an unsuccessful attempt to discover the material at the local end, Tania Connelly appealed to various institutions in Britain for information about Cole's career. "The Surveyor of the Queen's pictures, Christopher Lloyd, was most interested" she said. "He was aware of Cole as several of his works were in the Royal Collection. However he knew nothing about his emigration to New Zealand, or his work in Dunedin, and was grateful that I was able to fill in the blank."

The idea of an exhibition featuring Reuben Cole was prompted by an invitation, from the Department of Art History and Theory of Otago University, to hold a special display during their forthcoming colloquium 'Provincialism, Prosperity and Patronage'. "It seemed a great opportunity to show off an unpublicised facet of our Art collection," Tania explained, "and as the Cole works were few in number we decided to give Cole dual billing with the better known Dunedin portraitist John Irvine. Cole and Irvine were not contemporaries but they were both immigrants and they both looked for ways of overcoming the threat which the advent of photography posed to their art."

"From Photo or From Sittings", John Irvine and Reuben Cole, Portrait Painters in the Photographic Age opened on August 26 with a Victorian afternoon tea held in the concourse of the museum. Dunedin painter Els Noordhof was the Guest Speaker. Other guests included R. R. C. McLachlan and delegates to the Art History Colloquium.

First and Still Flourishing

An exhibition about the Dunedin Competitions Society, established in 1902 and still going strong.

The very first Competitions Society in New Zealand was inaugurated in Dunedin in 1902 and is the only Competitions Society of major cities to have continued with an unbroken record. It is very appropriate that the Otago Settlers Museum, as Dunedin's Museum of Social History, should mount this exhibition. As co-curator, Audrey Larsen, President of the Dunedin Performing Arts Competitions Society, has been compiling an oral history and researching newspapers. The exhibition records the work and achievements of the Performing Arts Competitions Society in Dunedin, throughout New Zealand and overseas. As an historical and social history research project it provides an important archive and resource about the Society and presents a major exhibition. The archive will provide an important research facility for history and music students.

The exhibition, which is a first for the Society or any other such in New Zealand, presents a survey and evaluation of the Performing Arts Competition Society's functions, aims and achievements. The content of the exhibition includes photographs, trophies, costumes and a recording of notable performers who began with the Dunedin Competitions like Denis Dowling, Patricia Payne, Bryan Drake and Mary Pratt. We hope that the exhibition will offer the opportunity to those people interested in the performing arts to reminisce and to learn of the levels of achievement attained in Dunedin. It also includes an historical account of cultural activities in Dunedin from 1860 up to the twentieth century.

The exhibition was opened by the Governor General Dame Catherine Tizard on November 10.





New Museum Concourse Opened

The new concourse area has drawn much appreciative comment since it was opened in August. Not only has it enhanced reception with a welcoming impression of space and light it has also proved an ideal venue for many diverse events and activities. The Governor General has been guest of honour at two functions: the formal opening of the concourse itself, and the recent opening of the exhibition "First and Still Flourishing", where an audience of over 100 enjoyed a programme of varied items by competition winners, and afterwards reminisced and chatted about the "Comps". Another exhibition opening

took the form of a Victorian afternoon tea with lace tablecloths and fine china setting off the dainty sandwiches, fruit cake and creamed spongedrops — much enjoyed by the guests. Afternoon tea was also a welcome and appreciated ingredient of a museum tour by Rotaryanne; Innerwheel opted for a supper/tour evening; and Probus recently had morning tea with tour. Added to this, the concourse was venue for the unveiling ceremony of the Otago Embroiderer's' Guild Suffrage Banners, and for Dunedin's champagne launch of Lynley Hood's book on Minnie Dean.



Over four incredibly exciting days in October, the museum was host to Thomas the Road Train. Four thousand people visited in that time taking the opportunity to ride in the Thomas Troublesome Trucks. It was hard to decide who gained most enjoyment from all this — the children or their parents and grandparents !

Domestic and Technical Collections

The project to restore New Zealand's first electric tram has proceeded steadily over the course of the year. Volunteers for the project have been added to the roster and Graham Patterson has done a fine job of propping up the sagging structure and cleaning out the debris of decades. Conservator Edward Sakowski has been engaged to write a report on the tram's condition. Edward travelled to Christchurch with the Curator of the Domestic and Technical Collections, Michael Findlay, to visit the Tramway Historical Society headquarters in Christchurch and view progress on the trams being prepared for the heritage tramway. Close attention was paid to the group's 1903 Dunedin City Corporation tram which is of a similar type and only a few years later than the museum's 1899 Brill model . Armed with dozens of photographs of the interior and exterior details which are missing from the OSM tram, a detailed series of drawings will be prepared showing the structure and detail of the tram body. The original colour scheme is coming to light with the assistance of the Medical School Electron Microscopy Unit who are analysing the tiny chips of paint which are all that remain of the exterior finish.

Progress after this reporting stage should be more visually exciting and we look forward to the public being able to see restoration work being carried out on the tram over the following year.

Archives News

During 1994 work in Archives has been slowed with the temporary absence of Seán Brosnahan from the Department, firstly to work on the Kai Tahu Whanui exhibition and then to manage the museum in the absence of Elizabeth Hinds. As a result our turn-around time for research enquiries has been considerably extended and work on processing new acquisitions into the collection has ground to a halt. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused but hope to catch up on lost time before too long. We can nonetheless report the completion of a new finding aid, which will be available in the Reading Room by the beginning of the New Year.

This is a new index drawing together information from four extremely important collections of data supplied by or about the earliest Otago settlers. These are biographical records collated by the Otago Early Settlers Association at various times from 1898 to 1932. The details collected vary from record to record but some are very full, providing dates and places of birth, ship and year of arrival, occupations, places of settlement and children's details. They relate exclusively to people who arrived in the province up to the end of 1868 and mostly to arrivals before the goldrushes. While there have been individual indexes to these records before these were found to be incomplete and often inaccurate. They

are now replaced by a single comprehensive index drawing all four sources together and cross-referencing maiden names, second marriage names and so on. This excellent project has been the work of museum volunteer Jane Smallfield.

Director's Study Leave

During a recent study tour to the United Kingdom and Europe I visited Edinburgh to further links between museums. The tour was generously supported by a Marsh and McLennan travel grant awarded by the NZ Society of Local Government Managers, and the British Council.

The most visible museum development at present in Edinburgh is the building of a new Museum of Scotland adjacent to the Chambers Street museum. During my visit it was largely a hole in the ground, but plans and architect's drawings were displayed in the main concourse next door.

The new museum will complement the present museum with its international collections, by telling the Story of Scotland to the World. Beginning in the basement floor, exhibitions will cover the last 3,000 million years of geology and natural history. This will lead to the First Peoples, covering the period of the earliest human settlers 8,000 years ago until the Vikings of 1100 AD. Displays on the ground floor will give insights into life in Scotland during the six centuries to 1707 when it was an independent kingdom. The growth of Scotland into a modern state during the 18th and 19th Centuries, with the contributions made by Scots to culture and science, and in commerce and industry, will be explained in the first and second floor galleries, while the upper galleries will reflect everyday life in Scotland within living memory. The museum's Memory Bank will enable visitors to add to the record of Scotland in the 20th Century.

The emigration from Scotland to Otago, and the founding of the province and City that followed are part of this story. Mark Jones, Director of the Museum of Scotland, is keen to keep in contact with the Otago Settlers Museum and exchange exhibition material, and this is seen as part of an ongoing relationship between sister cities of Edinburgh and Dunedin.

Staff News

Diane McKellar: Receptionist

Following the resignation of Anna Cameron, who has moved on to Childrens Television, Diane McKellar was appointed as part-time Receptionist. Welcome Diane.

Mark Trainor: Part-time Gallery Supervisor

With the expansion of the museum operation, it was considered appropriate to increase the service to the public at weekends through the appointment of a part-time gallery supervisor. We welcome Mark Trainor to the museum.

Owen Sinclair: Technician

Owen is on sick-leave until further notice. We wish Owen a speedy recovery.

Stephen Munro: Acting Technician

While Owen is on leave, Stephen is acting as the museum technician.

Elizabeth Sharpe: MONZ Trainee: Collection Management Unit

Elizabeth Sharpe resigned to take up the position of Collections Manager, Porirua Museum. We wish Elizabeth all the best in her new position.

Interested in Becoming a Museum Guide?

There will be a training programme early 1995. For more information contact Dianne Hall, ph. 474-0525 after 5.30 pm.

Otago Anniversary Day Celebration

Thursday March 23, 1995

Members of Otago Early Settlers Association and New Zealand Scottish Heritage Council will dine together in the University Union to celebrate Otago Anniversary Day on Thursday March 23, 1995.

Theme: Maritime.... Getting Here

Guest Speaker: Ian Church

Maritime Historian and Curator, Port Chalmers Museum

Entertainment: Brian Maguire.

Sea Shanties, Folk songs, Tales from shipboard diaries.

Dress:

The wearing of period costume is encouraged.

Price: $30.00 per person.

Join the fun.

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To: The Secretary, Otago Early Settlers Association, P O Box 840, Dunedin.

Please forward ..... tickets @ $30 each for Otago Anniversary Day Dinner 1995.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Cheque is enclosed for $.....

SHOP NEWS

The museum shop stocks a wide range of historical books, a small selection of which is printed below. Price to members is as shown; packing and postage $1.00 per book.

OTAGO'S FIRST BOOK. The Distinctive Dialect of Southern Maori pub. 1994	$ 8.95
SELLING OTAGO. A French Buyer 1840, Maori Sellers 1844 pub. 1994	$17.95
NATIVE PLANTS OF DUNEDIN AND ITS ENVIRONS pub. 1994	$17.95
THE PEOPLE OF THE PLACE: MAHIKA KAI pub. 1990:	$ 8.05
STRPHANGERS AND GRIPPERS pub. 1993	$22.45
NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY AND TRAMWAY ATLAS 4th edition	$15.30
KINGS OF THE IRON ROAD Steam Passenger Trains of New Zealand pub. 1982	$26.95
THE WRECK BOOK Rediscovered New Zealand Shipwrecks pub. 1994	$31.45
NEW ZEALAND GHOST TOWNS AND GLIMPSES OF THE PAST pub. 1994	$31.45
STEWART ISLAND EXPLORED pub. 1994	$35.95
DUNEDIN THEN pub. 1974	$17.95
PORT CHALMERS AND ITS PEOPLE pub. 1994	$44.95
MINNIE DEAN - HER LIFE AND CRIMES pub. 1994	$30.95
TWO CENTURIES OF NEW ZEALAND LANDSCAPE ART pub. 1990	$44.95
NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHY FROM 1840 to THE PRESENT pub. 1993	$35.95

STOCKING FILLERS

Postage: Magnets [for four]	.45c
Calendars	.80c
FRIDGE MAGNETS - Line drawings of Otago Boys High School, Larnach Castle, Dunedin Railway Station, University of Otago and Olveston: each	$ 2.70
CALENDAR - New Zealand Railway & Locomotives:	$ 9.90

Members are always welcome to browse in the shop; or make enquiries by phone.

Merry Christmas and a rich and fruitful New Year from the Museum Staff !!