

# Protecting, preserving & celebrating our heritage



**Autumn 2021**



Otago Witness 1910

*Rabbits: Once a major source of employment in Alexandra*

# ABOUT US

The Central Otago Heritage Trust, established in 2008, comprises member groups and organisations within the local heritage community. The role of the Trust is to represent the collective interests of these groups in protecting, preserving, and celebrating our unique heritage. It is governed by trustees nominated and elected by members.

The Trust is the founding organisation of **Heritage Central Otago** and all community-focused initiatives of the Trust are represented under the Heritage Central Otago identity.

## TRUSTEES:

David Ritchie (Chair), Greg Bodeker, Russell Garbutt, Lynda Gray, John Kerr, Ross Naylor, Kristy Rusher & Graye Shattky. David Campbell (Council Representative).

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# RABBITS, RABBITS, RABBITS!

**The man who introduced the rabbit to New Zealand was banqueted and lauded, but they would hang him now, if they could get him. In England they fine a poacher, whereas he ought to be banished to New Zealand. New Zealand would pay his way and give him wages.**

*Mark Twain - 1895*

As Central Otago reflects on this year's Great Easter Bunny Hunt, it's timely to reflect on the history of this perpetual pest.

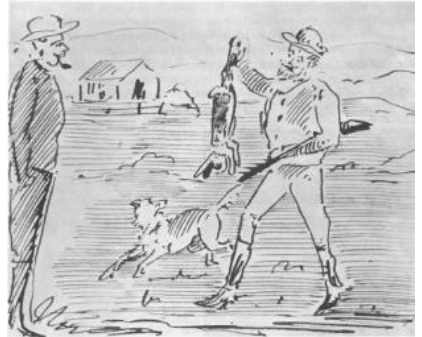
Rabbits were introduced to New Zealand from New South Wales in the 1840s to provide food, fur, and sport for early settlers. Thirty years later, immigrants were still arriving with rabbits on board ships in the hope they could be sold for a profit. Gold prospectors carried them into Otago, releasing them in large numbers around the goldfields, to provide sustenance for diggers and their families. But adding 'underground mutton' to a pot was not enough to control the exploding rabbit population.

In 1876 the 'Rabbit Nuisance Act' was passed, giving the Government inspectors powers to instruct landowners to destroy all rabbits. In the 1880s, the occupation of 'rabbiter' was born with pelts becoming a valuable export commodity. The pelts became so profitable that rabbiters paid farmers for the privilege of eradicating these pests from pastoral land.

Meanwhile rabbits, each one consuming as much feed as a 55kg ewe, wreaked havoc across the countryside. Between 1877 and 1885 about 540ha was chewed bare by rabbits forcing more than 75 farming families off the land. But on the flipside of the devastation was the employment and income that rabbits generated.

During the 1880s rabbits were the greatest source of income in Alexandra. Large gangs of trappers were employed to rid Central Otago of the pest and many were able to make enough to buy and develop their own farm or orchard.

The eradication started with shooting and trapping, and then various poisoning methods were used. A frequently used method was to lace carrots with Strychnine icing sugar (or jam) and baking powder or blocking and fumigating warrens with Cyanogas. During the late 1800s ferrets were introduced and trained to root out rabbits from their burrows; the irony being that they too rapidly bred becoming a threat to the agricultural industry as well as native birds and skinks.



Rabbit skins, packed in 220kg wool press bales, were in hot demand by local and overseas furriers who wholesaled them to fashion houses for coats, hats, and gloves. In 1893 more than 17 million skins were exported to the United Kingdom, demand increased steadily throughout the early 1900s netting nearly £1.5million in 1919. By this time White and Co Freezing Works in Chicago Street, Alexandra (now Hinton Fruit and Wine) was in full swing. The business expanded to include a skinning factory operated by R.S Black which processed tens of thousands of carcasses daily during the height of the rabbiting season, providing a large part of the income in the district. In 1939 Borthwick & Son bought the freezing works and installed a rabbit skin drying room.

The rabbit canning industry also provided much needed employment. The Alexandra, Rabbit Canning Co. employed between eighty and ninety people in various jobs from skinning and preparing the meat to making and labelling the cans.

Many locals growing up in the 1930s have rabbit-related memories. Some remember making pocket money from the selling of trapped rabbits delivered to factories by bike on their way to school. Others, such as the Hinton children recall hanging rabbits on the fence for collection by the school bus driver.



*Hinton family and friends on a rabbit shoot in the late 1940s*

But the income and industry that rabbits generated came to a screeching halt in the 1950s when the government decided that eradication was the only solution to the pest problem and banned the sale of rabbit meat and skins.

Despite the shutdown and subsequent efforts since, most recently the New Zealand goal to be predator-free by 2050, rabbits remain a pest and problem throughout Central Otago. The search for a sustainable method of rabbit control continues and until that happens the annual Great Easter Bunny Shoot will continue to be a Central Otago drawcard.



*R.S Black Rabbit Skinning Factory, Chicago St, Alexandra (circa 1920s),  
now Hinton Fruit and Wine.*



*The Alexandra Rabbit Canning Co (circa 1919)  
now the Alexandra Holiday Camp.  
PHOTO: HOCKEN,*

*A special thanks to the Hinton family of Alexandra for information and photographs.*

Reference:

Druett, J. (2014). Exotic intruders. [Wellington]: New Zealand Electronic Text Centre



## THE CENTRAL OTAGO BURIAL BUSINESS

The dispatch of the dearly departed became an add-on service for a few enterprising colonial Central Otago builders, joiners and picture framers. Although funeral services seem an unlikely diversification for such businesses nowadays, it was a logical solution back in the 1870s when the influx of settlers and goldminers to the region brought with it a rapid increase in births and deaths. That led to growing demand for funeral related services, starting with the making of caskets which those with carpentry skills took on.

Before government regulation, people were often buried where they died. Several such sites have been identified along the Clutha riverbank where drownings occurred, often children. Goldmining was also a dangerous business, with 'a fall of earth' a common cause of death when sluicing for gold was common practice. Often the bodies of the victims were left entombed under the mud and rubble.

New Zealand's first burials statute was the Burial-Ground Closing Act 1874, followed by the Cemeteries Management Act 1877 which established the roles and powers of cemetery trustees, and included provision for separate denominational areas in public cemeteries.

The Cemeteries Act 1882 consolidated prior legislation and clarified where responsibility lay for the provision of cemeteries. These legislative responses heralded the emergence of the burial business.

The first undertaker to advertise in Central Otago was John Morrison from Hogburn, Mount Ida between 1869-1873. Following in his footsteps were others including William Kinaston (Roxburgh) and J.H. Pearson (Lawrence). As well as casket making these businesses were a one stop funeral shop providing hearse and funeral services.

The deceased were transported on a horse drawn dray, or a purpose-built hearse, depending on the family's financial circumstances. In the Maniototo, during the early 1890s, the dead travelled in style thanks to undertaker James Mitchell's ornate horse-drawn hearse, which led a solemn procession to the Naseby and nearby cemeteries. Rumour has it that in later years this same hearse was used for courting by a member of the Mitchell

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**J. H. PEARSON,**  
ROSS PLACE, LAWRENCE,  
CONTRACTOR, BUILDER,  
AND  
UNDERTAKER.

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Contracts taken for Builders' Work  
of every description.

ESTIMATES PREPARED.

A well-assorted Stock of Furni-  
ture always on hand.

Funerals conducted in all parts of  
the District. Hearse provided if  
required.

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**WM. KINASTON,**  
Hermitage Street,  
ROXBURGH,  
CARPENTER, BUILDER . . .  
. . . PICTURE FRAMER, AND  
Undertaker,

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Picture Mouldings, Glasses, Paints,  
and Paperhangings of all  
descriptions in stock.

Orders taken for supply of Timber  
in any quantities.

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W.K. having secured a First-class

**HEARSE,**  
is prepared to conduct Funerals in  
all parts of the district.

*Mt Benger Mail, 13 August 1897*

family. This hearse is now on display at the Maniototo Early Settlers Museum at Naseby, as shown in the following image.



Former undertaker premises, Les Vercoe and Son, is still standing in Clyde behind the Masonic Lodge. This business operated between the First and Second World Wars, and like the multi-taskers of earlier times also took on carpentry and building projects.



#### *Clyde Undertakers*

Today there are 22 cemeteries throughout Central Otago District. Visiting these historic sites offers great insights into our rich heritage. Use this QR code to find the location of these cemeteries.

*David George, Cromwell*

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Central Otago has its fair share of grim place names such as 'Deadman's Point', 'The Lonely Graves', 'Drybread Cemetery' and the '**Linger and Die**' reserve in Alexandra. We explore the origins of 'Linger and Die' and whether this bleak name is justified.

The Linger and Die is a public reserve on the Manuherekia riverbank in Alexandra. According to the story board at the reserve the exact origins of the name are unknown but assumed to be related to the site's unsuccessful mining history.

Between 1899 and 1902 the area was dredged by the Golden Link Dredging Company (GLDC). In 1901 they struck gold, but then faced disaster when the riverbank collapsed onto the dredge. Recovery of the dredge cost more than £8000 – almost £6000 more than the value of gold dredged by GLDC. Subsequent tunnelling efforts also ended in disaster with miners swamped by waterlogged silt and gravel. The misadventures possibly explain the bleak place name but there are other theories and stories about its origins.



*Golden Link Dredge, Manuherekia, Alexandra  
Photo: Courtesy of the Alexandra Turnbull Library*

One local recalls the story from his teacher at Alexandra Primary School in the 1970s. The story goes that the site was used as a stop-off camp for hopeful goldminers in the 1860s who were warned: "Linger at the camp site too long and you'll miss your chance of securing a claim further up the Clutha river". It's a plausible story but is it true?

Desk-top research uncovered more nuggets of information. GLDC was taken over by the Linger and Die Mining Company around 1912 and this seems to have been a positive move, at least for J.H. Davidson whose poem was published in a July 1926 edition of the Alexandra Herald (below).



Further research uncovered four Linger and Die mines in Australia: Tasmania; Queensland; Victoria; and Western Australia, the latter dating back to 1900. The Australian Linger and Die mining group is still in operation today.

The trans-tasman flow of miners to the Otago Goldfields has been well documented. It therefore seems plausible that the grim name of this Alexandra reserve originates from Australian mining interests.

The ongoing accidents and flooding associated with this claim after the Linger and Die company moved on could explain why the grim name of the scooped out recess along the Manuherikia has lingered on.

I used to be hard up, old friends passed  
me by.

But I got a few shares in the Linger and  
Die.

Now I am thriving, no longer get stuck.  
Friends come and shake hands, and wish  
me good luck.

On slopes that are sunny, don't prow  
after bunny.

Renounce all trespassing habits.  
With rifle or gun,  
Don't go on our run,  
For we are farming the rabbits,

J. H. Davidson

*Excerpt from Alexandra Herald, 28 July 1926*

#### Mining in the Borough.

An application was received for permission to mine in the Borough, on the old site of the Linger and Die Company, where a reef was believed to exist. The lead was supposed to go through the Council's horse paddock and into the Recreation Ground. The work would be done, with the exception of boring, under ground.

Councillor Hesson moved that leave be granted on the following terms: That the Company be charged £5 per bore, and £200 when the ground is proved, £200 per annum thereafter, and 2½ per cent. of the gold won, the £5 per bore to be refunded when bores are left in satisfactory condition.

#### LATE MINING

The Alexandra Deep Lead, formerly known as the Linger and Die, is likely to be opened in the near future by Mining House, Ltd., of Christchurch. Only a few rights now remain to be obtained along what is believed to be the lead of gold through the Borough. When these have been obtained, we understand that operations will be commenced forthwith.

*Alexandra Herald, 1 Nov 1933*

*Alexandra Herald, 5 July 1933*

## TELLING OUR STORIES

The Central Otago Heritage Trust received funding in 2019 for the [Oral History Project](#). Our goal is to develop a collection of oral histories capturing the unique stores of Central Otago. At the heart of this project is a group of volunteers trained to national and international standards and best practice in oral history.

There were exciting developments in the project over the summer period. We completed the first stage of interviewer training for 13 new volunteers who are now completing practice interviews in readiness for follow up training.

We're fortunate to have been gifted a recording from the Hanrahan family, of John Stewart Hanrahan (1918-1994), a local lad of Ranfurly.

In the interview, undertaken by his granddaughter Lauryn Robertson, John recounts his experiences during active service as a Signaller in World War II. Their mission in northern Greece was to establish and maintain telephone lines from headquarters to the battalions. During this time, the New Zealand and Australian forces were forced back and retreated to southern Greece where evacuation ships were waiting. However, John was captured before the boats were able to pick him up. He was taken to various prisoner of war camps in Greece and Austria over the next four years before release and return to New Zealand.



*Lance Corporal John Hanrahan*

John shares his experiences about conditions in the camps, perspectives on fellow prisoners and the guards, the work prisoners were expected to do, and the joy of receiving letters and parcels from home.

We are very grateful to the Hanrahan family for allowing us to hold such a special recording as part of our repository.

*Carolyn Squires. Oral History Manager*

## MUSEUMS UPDATE

There are five museums in Central Otago, each with unique stories and displays showcasing our rich heritage.

### CENTRALSTORIES MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

We are currently working with Otago Museum curators on a review of museum exhibits, with a view to refreshing some of the current displays and creating new ones, utilising artifacts from the extensive collection held at Central Stories.



#### Exhibitions

We have three new exhibitions in the pipeline:

1. **“Indigo”** (3 April – 2 May): An exhibition of works by well-known artists who exhibit under this banner.
2. **“A Muster of Artists”** (8 May - 27 June): Fifteen Central Otago Artists covering a wide range of fine arts genres.
3. **Winterstella Exhibition** (July - August) featuring an expanded exhibition as part of Matariki.

Central Stories is also the go to place for Intercity bus tickets and Central Cinema tickets, plus general information on Central Otago.

*Brian Budd, Manager*

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### CLYDE HISTORICAL MUSEUMS



The Vincent Community Board decided at a recent meeting to pause progress on plans for a new purpose-built museum at the Briar Herb Museum complex in Fraser St, Clyde.

The Board wishes to wait for completion of the district museum strategy, and await the outcome of the subsequent investment framework, which will look at what Council will

fund in the museum sector and to what level. In the meantime, thanks to our intrepid volunteers, our Blyth St Museum is open Tuesday to Sunday between 2-4pm. Come and find out about our long history in the fruit growing industry.

*Andy Ritchie, Chair - Clyde Historical Museums*

## CROMWELL MUSEUM

The Cromwell Museum was recently successful in obtaining a generous grant from The Trust Community Foundation for a technical refit. This grant has enabled the Cromwell Museum to install a camera security system, five new computers for volunteer use and LED lightbulbs for the entire museum. This refit replaces computers installed in 2014, and the security system protects both our visitors and our taonga.



*Jennifer Haye, Museum Director*

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## TEVIOT MUSEUM



Teviot Museum has been focusing resources and energies into compiling and cataloguing the collection into the e-Hive database. To date we have 897 entries which have been photographed and entered by our technician, Carl Street, (Moment of Light) Roxburgh, with the aid of the volunteers.

A call out for help in the local weekly bulletin led to the enlisting of a group of men who are restoring the saddlery, and leather work plus having tools sanded and oiled to working order. Larger items like the drays, ploughs, and waterwheel are hopefully on the agenda soon.

*Annette Watts, Teviot Museum Trust*

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## EARLY SETTLERS MUSEUM ASSOC.INC.

In 2017, a representative from Te Papa alerted the Maniototo Early Settlers Assoc. to the 'Helping Hands Grant' which is available annually. The museum is slowly but surely working on a project to raise the profile of the building.

A consent was obtained from the Central Otago District Council to install historical images of the Maniototo on six of the building's windows, but Covid-19 and lockdown slowed progress. We have completed one window and plan to have the next three windows installed this year. The image below shows a mock-up of how the images will look when completed.





From the left:

Window 1: Procession after the Boer War

Window 2: First Matron and Doctor at the Maniototo Hospital. (This image has been kindly donated by a Naseby family)

Window 3: Upper portion - Mr Jopson of Rough Ridge. Lower portion - Re-enactment of Naseby Miners 1913.

Window 4: Completed - Mr Billy Jacob lighting the lamps for the last time before electricity was switched on in the Naseby village - 1947.

On the south side of the building, images of other Maniototo townships have been discussed for the remaining two windows.

*Maryann Devereux, Curator*



# DRYBREAD CEMETERY TRUST

## Digging up mysteries at Drybread

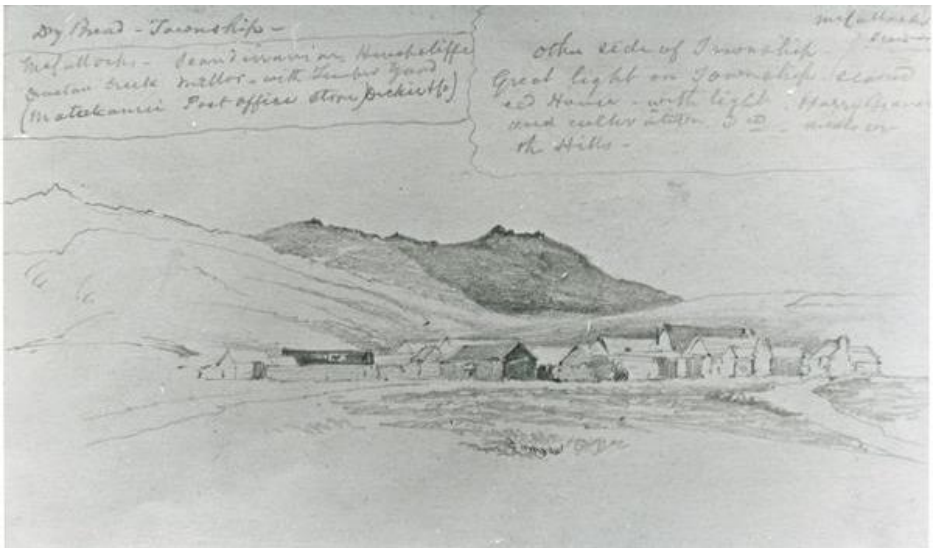
**Professor Hallie Buckley and Dr Peter Petchey presented their insights from their archaeological research at Drybread Cemetery at our AGM on 9 February.**

Drybread was established in the early 1860s as a gold-mining settlement at the northern end of the Manuherekia Valley. Thirty years later Drybread was abandoned as gold diggers moved on to other sites. All that is left now is the cemetery, about 10km north of Omakau, which includes several unmarked graves.

The cemetery is managed by a Trust which includes locals who have a long history of living in the district and/or have family members buried there. The Trust has inconclusive records about who was buried at the cemetery and was eager to fill in these knowledge gaps.

Because the cemetery is not Council owned, the Trust was anxious about the potential legal costs associated with accidentally unearthing and restoring unmarked graves. At the invitation of the Trust, a month-long archaeological dig commenced in November last year, led by University of Otago anatomy Professor Hallie Buckley and Southern Archaeology director Dr Peter Petchey.

Locating the old settlement and cemetery perimeter was always going to be a challenge because the records were destroyed in a fire back in the 1930s. However, pencil sketches drawn in the late 1860s proved to be a valuable resource.



*A sketch by Andrew Hamilton 1869 helped identify where the former goldmining settlement  
Image Courtesy of Lakes District Museum & Gallery.*

So far, the research team has located and investigated 12 unmarked burial sites of 10 adults and two infants. Six of these burial sites appear to be the resting place for Chinese people, one of whom had been previously exhumed, probably for transport back to China on SS Ventnor. Unfortunately, the Ventnor sank near Hokianga Harbour in 1902 along with the remains of 499 Chinese miners.

Based on the Victorian decorative detailing on the Drybread coffins, many of the burials appear to date from the late 19th century.

Samples of remains are now being analysed to determine the ethnicity, age, and sex of these people. An understanding of life in Drybread at this time will be created through evidence of diet, disease, or physical trauma.

*Karen Glassford, Drybread Cemetery Trust*

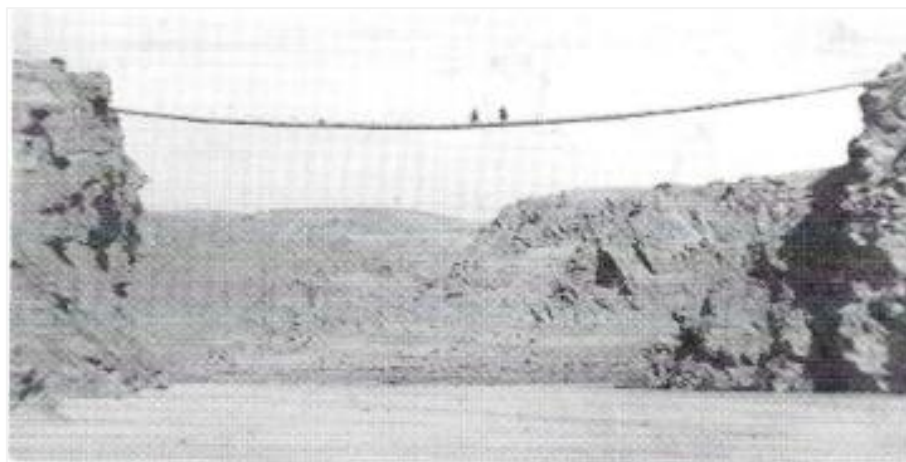


*Drybread Cemetery today: Photo courtesy of Charlotte King*

## HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND



On 20 January 2021 Jane Macknight, Heritage NZ Area Manager Otago Southland, and Nikole Wills, archaeologist travelled to Bannockburn and Clyde. At Bannockburn they met with Matt Sole, archaeology consultant, and Doug Jones, a Trustee of the proposed Bannockburn residential housing development. A tour of the site was undertaken to assess effects of the development which encompasses a mining landscape including water races; several tailing and sluicing remnants; a dam, and a Chinese settlement. The photograph is of the Lauderburn water race fluming across Manuherekia River (*date unknown*).



Jane and Nikole also joined the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust in Clyde to present at a public meeting about archaeological sites. Nikole gave a presentation about the regulatory role of Heritage NZ and archaeological sites pursuant to the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPT Act).

Jane has been working hard on submissions for the Otago Regional Council Regional Policy Statement (RPS). Under the HNZPT Act, Heritage NZ has an advocacy and legislative role in respect of 'historic heritage', defined under the RMA. Examples of RPS issues which might affect historic heritage include natural hazards, climate change and urban growth. This planning framework is under review with the current government planning to repeal the RMA and create three new pieces of legislation.

Jane has since resigned from her role, taking on a position with Toitu Museum, Dunedin. Replacing her until appointment of a new manager is Frank van der Heijden from the Christchurch office.

## VALLANCE COTTAGE WORKING GROUP

The market day at Vallance Cottage over Waitangi weekend saw over 100 people looking through the historic 1880s cottage and surrounding community orchard.

The Vallance Cottage Working Group continues to work on ideas on how we can open this historic gem more often. One idea is to find locals who are keen to volunteer as cottage guides on a rostered basis over weekends. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please email [christina.martin@codc.govt.nz](mailto:christina.martin@codc.govt.nz) to register your interest.

*Christina Martin, CODC*

*Built in the late 1880s by William Vallance, a  
shepherd-goldminer from Scotland.  
It's hard to believe that a family of 11 once  
inhabited this tiny dwelling.  
Located at 2 Samson Street, Alexandra*





# CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Framing our future Long-term plan consultation



Feedback on the Central Otago District Council's Long-term Plan 2021-2031 opened for feedback on Friday 26 March.

The Long-term Plan sets the direction for the next 10 years for Central Otago, and the projects and services that will help get us there. It's as much the community's plan as it is Council's.

The following topics are likely to be the key consultation items that Council will be seeking public feedback on:

1. How we deliver a District Museum function
2. How we progress the Cromwell Masterplan
3. Proposals to support three community-lead projects:
  - Roxburgh Community Pool Upgrade
  - Alexandra Riverside Park Development
  - Omakau Community Hub

There will be opportunities throughout the consultation period for you to engage with staff and Elected Members about Long-term Plan topics and ask questions. These will include drop-in opportunities in each of the wards of our district, an online drop-in and live radio Q&A hours on Radio Central. These will be advertised on our website, Facebook page, in the CODC Noticeboard in The News and local media.

**Submissions close on Sunday 25 April.**

## Council funding

During this year's Long-term Plan process Council will confirm the total budgets for funding grants. Council will not be accepting submissions to the Long-term Plan for grant funding.

All Council-funded grants - promotions grants and community grants – will now go through a contestable application process. The funding round for these will open in early July. Application forms will be available on Council's website and at service centres closer to the time.

Note the process and timelines for Council-administered grants – Creative Communities and Sport NZ grants – have not changed, just Council-funded grants.



# HERITAGE IN THE NEWS

A round-up of news from around our region. View the full stories on our website:  
[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

## Photos store memories

The News, 22 March 2021

Perusing a treasure trove of photographs has been a trip down memory lane for an Alexandra woman, Michelle Davies. The suitcase full of photos of the Alexandra Blossom Festival were taken by Ernest Fort, of Dunedin who later retired to Alexandra.

The photos, which span more than 30 years of the festival, were given to the blossom festival committee. Festival event manager, Martin McPherson, is discussing possibility of using the photos for an exhibition or display at Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery. Another idea was to display the photographs before this year's festival to provide inspiration for anyone planning to decorate shopping trolleys known as "florreys" that feature in the parade. This year's festival is the 65th and will take place from September 24 to 26.



*Two for Tea 1986. Michelle Davies (nee Bradley), of Alexandra on the Catholic Women's League PHOTO: ERNEST FORT*

## Board opts to wait for district museum policy

The News, 11 March 2021

The Vincent Community Board has pushed pause on progress of the Clyde Museum's redevelopment project. At its meeting on March 2, the board decided it wanted to wait for the district museum strategy, at present in development, to be finalised. It also wanted to await the outcome of the subsequent investment framework which would look at what the council will fund in the museum sector and to what level.

Vincent Community Board chairman Martin McPherson said the board felt it was the best decision to "push pause" on the project. "It felt a bit like it would be a bit of a cart-before-horse situation if we weren't to wait to align any future museum work with the funding framework, which will take a holistic view of our museum sector."



Tenderers shortlisted for development of concept plans for the Briar Herb Factory museum site will be informed and put on hold and negotiations will proceed with them at a later date.

## Five of the best small towns to visit in New Zealand in autumn

Stuff, 19 Feb 2021

Clyde makes it to the top five destinations to visit in autumn. “Central Otago’s a spectacular place to be in autumn when deciduous trees in fall finery check their reflections in lakes made mirror-clear by crisp, cloudless mornings and old gold rush towns literally turn to gold.”



## New owners of Clyde heritage church

Dunstan News, Feb/March 2021

The new owners of Clyde’s heritage church, St Michael’s and All Angels, are keen to keep community involvement in the church. Five tenders were made for the property with the successful offer coming from Peter and Anna Weir from Rotorua.

Peter has strong connections with Clyde. His family owned an orchard in the Cromwell Gorge until it was flooded for the Clyde Dam. His parents, Alan and Maureen Weir later ran a contracting business in the town.



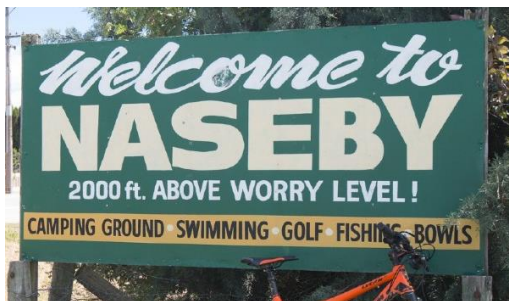
Peter and Anna plan to build a holiday home on the site but have no intention of tampering with the 1877 church which they want to protect. The St Michael’s Clyde Charitable Trust, which also made an offer on the property, has discussed the future of the church with the couple and further discussions are likely.

## Living in the Maniototo a dream, survey finds

The News - 31 January 2021

Nothing .....That is the answer from Maniototo residents regarding what they would change about where they live.

The “Your Place, Your Community” survey garnered 96 responses, which equates to about 6% of the Maniototo population, and 63% of the responses came from Naseby residents.



The Central Otago District Council survey ran from August 2 to September 6, and asked three open-ended questions: “what is the one thing you like about your place?”, “what is the one thing you would change about your place?” and “what is the one thing you would like your place to be known for?”

## Former ferry's history revealed

The News, 25 January 2021

Clearing taking place at the Luggate Red Bridge is slowly bringing evidence of the site's settler history back into view. Cutting down wilding pines and clearing the undergrowth revealed the former access track leading to the Luggate punt ferry that from the 1870s to 1915 transported people across the Clutha River. The ferry would have been very busy during the grain harvest, transporting grain from Hawea across to the mill in Luggate.



*Puntman James Smith at work, ferrying a four-horse carriage across the Clutha River in this photograph; Circa 1912. PHOTO: HOCKEN*

The ferry was not without its dangers. In 1888 the Luggate mill wagon and its team of four horses were swept down river. In about 1913, work began on the ‘Grandview Bridge’, now more commonly known as Luggate Red Bridge, which opened officially in October 1915.

# CENTRAL OTAGO HERITAGE TRUST

## CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

It is over two years since our last annual report and meeting. The extended period between the annual reports and meetings is largely due to the disruption from the pandemic. We had proposed to hold an annual meeting in early 2020 and partly due to that, and the delay in replacing our Heritage Co-ordinator, it didn't happen. But I can confirm, and will outline in some detail in this report, that solid progress has been made by the Trust, and a number of our heritage group members, over the period.



*COHT Chairman - David Ritchie*

The Central Otago Heritage Trust (Trust) was established over 12 years ago on behalf of the region's major heritage groups. It has morphed somewhat over time, but its key objectives continue to be to support our members in achieving their objectives and to coordinate the achievement of the region's heritage goals.

Based on community consultation, the Trust was tasked with overseeing a heritage strategy and the delivery of action points within the resulting Central Otago Heritage Plan. In 2018 the Central Otago District Council (Council) resolved to assist the Trust to deliver the objectives and actions set out within the Plan by providing \$40,000 per annum for three years to employ a part-time coordinator. This has successfully fostered a more integrated and cohesive approach to identifying, preserving, and celebrating Central Otago's heritage.

The Trust Board appreciates the support of Council and the community for this funding and advise that we intend to apply to Council's contestable pool of funds in the new financial year, for continued support of a heritage grant. We would also welcome the opportunity for this to be a multi-year grant to provide us with a greater degree of certainty and encourage longer-term heritage planning.

Heritage is important to the community. There is a pride in Central Otago's 'rich history' - from natural landscapes to early Māori settlements, to early pastoral settlers, to the gold-rush era - with a mix of cultures, customs, traditions, and architecture. Heritage is woven in the fabric of our lives and is an integral part of our identity, to be valued, protected, preserved, and celebrated.

On behalf of our membership, we have launched a quarterly Heritage Central Otago newsletter and recently have followed that up with a new website. If you are unaware of these, please let us know and we will add you to the newsletter mailing list. In late 2018



Gary Stewart of The Gas Project very generously developed pro-bono our new logo. This is available to be used by all Central Otago heritage bodies.

The Oral History project has gone from strength to strength, with funding from Central Lakes Trust, NZ Lotteries, and the Otago Community Trust. In addition, a very generous donation of over \$6,500 was received from Historic Places Central Otago, at the time of their winding up. These funds have enabled the appointment of a part-time Oral History Manager, the training of over 20 volunteer interviewers and the purchase of additional recording equipment.

We are committed to maintaining momentum on Oral History and are exploring the possibility of linking this to the MemoryBank project. We have a scoping study on a database tool that combines storage and access to all forms of documentation including audio.

Many of our member groups are making great progress in their endeavours. Two examples are: The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust inventory project, which is identifying and listing heritage sites and have undertaken reviews of Ophir, Northburn and most recently St Bathans area. I understand they are discovering and recording an average of 4 new sites for each site already listed on the Archsite NZ database. And secondly, the Drybread Cemetery Trust that is working closely with the University of Otago and Southern Archaeology. We look forward to hearing shortly about this project.



*Dr Peter Petchey shares insights on Drybread Cemetery research at our AGM.*



The museum sector in Central Otago is facing significant challenge at the moment, with major expenditure being required on buildings, facilities and the protection and display of collections in the near future. Eighteen months ago, the Trust encouraged the Council to undertake a review and provided them with draft guidelines for that purpose. We recognise there is disappointment and concern within the museum community, on the timeliness and quality of the initial output from this Museum Sector Review, with a draft strategy document currently out for feedback.

Our Trust has offered to step-up and take a leadership role in the review, in conjunction with our museum members, to ensure the museum network is robust and fit-for-purpose for future needs. We have advocated for a sharing of resources and a strong cohesive Network approach to managing the museums, and would include areas of policy development, joint exhibition development, data collection platforms and systems, as benefiting from this approach. This would need to be balanced with strong individual-museum identities that would continue to be local community led and run.

We have recently met with the Dunedin-based Heritage New Zealand Area Manager, Jane Macknight and her colleagues. In our discussion we noted a number of similar perspectives across the heritage sector. These included the development of the regional museum strategy; the pressing need for Council developed heritage guidelines and rules for our smaller towns and heritage precincts; and the importance of strong working relationships between the different local heritage groups, our Trust, Heritage New Zealand and Council. We have committed to work closely with Heritage New Zealand when there is an alignment of objectives.

Over the last 18 months we have had personnel changes at the Trust. We have seen the departure of Trustee Margaret West, who has headed north, and our first Heritage Coordinator Alice Spiers, who resigned to spend more time with her growing family. We thank them both for their experience, skills and commitment to furthering the heritage impact in the region. We were delighted to co-opt Ross Naylor onto the Board in late 2020 (nominated for election to the Board at this AGM) and in October 2020, after interviewing several excellent candidates, we were pleased to appoint Maggie Hope to the position of Heritage Coordinator.

To conclude, on behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank all our membership groups for their encouragement and support over the past couple of years. We collectively have many challenges ahead and I am confident, after the election of Trustees later this evening, we will have a refreshed and invigorated collective of skilled and capable people working on your behalf, to lead and support the Central Otago heritage community.

*David Ritchie, Central Otago Heritage Trust*

## MEET OUR NEW TRUSTEES

The Trust is pleased to welcome and introduce the four new Trustees elected at our AGM on 9 February 2021.



**Ross Naylor** is as local as it gets. The Naylor's have been farming in Matakanui (near Omakau) for five generations. Today Ross and his wife Honey run Spennymoor Station, which was once part of the larger Matakanui Station. A guardian of local history, Ross was a key player in finishing a comprehensive book (started by Donald Gordan) on the stories of Matakanui Station and the surrounding district. Ross

has been actively involved in the heritage sector. He was board member for Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery for five years and Chair between 2019-2020. Ross is also a Trustee on the Drybread Cemetery Trust.



**Lynda Gray** is a freelance journalist with a special interest in agriculture and primary industry. On shifting to Central Otago with her husband and three kids in 2001 she became involved in a local school, sports, and community groups both at governance and hands-on organisational levels. Her current community interests include the Central Otago Riding for the Disabled Association; a

committee overseeing the funding and development of a new multi-use equestrian facility; and the Alexandra Riverside Park, a community greenspace development and heritage project. Central Otago's rich and colourful heritage is another interest area in which she hopes to make a positive contribution.



**John Kerr** is no stranger to the challenges and rewards of owning heritage buildings in and around the Teviot Valley. In 1980, John and his wife Pat purchased an historic home and stables at Onlsow Downs, over the river from Ettrick. From here they have lived and worked in several heritage buildings including the Cape Broom, Spear Grass, and Mrs Heron's Hotels and the Altenburg cottage. For the

last 20 years, John and Pat have been running the 'Commercial Backpackers Hotel' in Roxburgh. John still finds time to give back to the community, serving ten years on the Teviot Valley Community Board and 12 years with Central Otago Health Incorporated (Dunstan Hospital). John is also a Trustee of the Teviot Museum.



**Kristy Rusher** works at AWS Legal as Special Counsel with a particular expertise in resource management and environmental law. She has been practising in the Southland, Otago, and Canterbury regions since 2003. Kristy has been a member of the St Bathans Heritage and Environment Trust and has assisted on a range of heritage conservation projects.

She has a particular interest in heritage landscapes, buildings and recording oral history.

## OUR MEMBERS

- Aukaha (*formerly Kai Tahu ki Otago*)
- Alexandra Miners Village & Riverside Park Trust
- Bodeker Scientific
- Central Lakes Trust
- Central Otago District Council
- Central Otago Environmental Society
- Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
- Clyde Historical Museums
- Cromwell Museum
- Drybread Cemetery Trust
- Department of Conservation Central Otago Area Office
- Goldfields Mining Centre
- Heritage New Zealand Pohere Taonga
- Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust
- Otago Museum
- Promote Dunstan
- St Bathans Heritage Environment Preservation Trust
- Teviot Valley District Museum Committee
- Teviot Valley Heritage Trust
- Vallance Cottage Working Group

# CONNECT WITH US

## Become a member

We can help you and your heritage organisation with:

- Applying for and accessing funding and grants
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing with other heritage organisations
- Promoting your project and initiative in the community
- Providing advocacy to members through our participation in heritage decision-making forums.

## Share your heritage news and events

Send your news and events to our Heritage Coordinator for our website or next newsletter: [maggie@heritagecentralotago.org.nz](mailto:maggie@heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

## Our website

Get the latest news and events on our website:  
[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

## Use our logo

We encourage members and interested parties to use our logo in heritage related communications. Download this logo from our website.

## Follow us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/heritagecentralotago](http://www.facebook.com/heritagecentralotago)



# OUR SUPPORTERS

Heritage Central Otago acknowledges the generous support from the following organisations:





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