

Protecting, preserving & celebrating our heritage



Summer 2021



Exploring heritage along The Lake Dunstan Trail

Published by the Central Otago Heritage Trust
www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz

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 our community-based initiatives are represented under the Heritage Central Otago identity.

OUR TRUSTEES:

David Ritchie (Chair), Russell Garbutt, Lynda Gray, Warwick Hawker, John Kerr, Ross Naylor, Kristy Rusher & Graye Shattky.

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HERITAGE MATTERS

FROM THE CHAIR

As summer approaches it's great to see more heritage events in the calendar. Two recent noteworthy events were the centenary celebrations at Hayes Engineering homestead in Oturehua and Robb's Garage in Roxburgh. You can find out more about the history of Robb's Garage in our story below.



Since our last newsletter, there have been two changes to our Trust Board. Council Representative, David Campbell, has recently left the district for a new role at Waitaki District Council. The Trust has greatly appreciated the support and advice David has given to Trustees over the past year or so. We expect to receive notification from Council regarding David's replacement in the coming weeks.

Also departing is Greg Bodeker, who has been a Trustee since 2018. We thank Greg for his commitment and support for the Trust's endeavours over the last five years. We will miss his perceptive questioning and wise council around the table.

As a result of Greg's departure, we are pleased to announce a new member to the COHT team. Warwick Hawker has been co-opted as Trustee and will be formally elected to the Board at our next AGM. Some will remember Warwick through his role as Business Development Manager at CODC. He is also a current committee member on the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust.

Over the last few months, COHT has prepared several submissions to CODC and the Otago Regional Council where heritage matters have been identified. You can find copies of these submissions in the 'library' section on our website which also provides access to our Board meeting minutes and other key heritage documents.

The Trust, alongside our Central Otago museums, recently attended the Otago Museum Tū Tonu hui in Gore. The Tū Tonu project is taking a region-wide view of the challenges facing our arts, culture and heritage sectors. Find out more about this initiative and how you can get involved in the article below.

We have now almost met the fund-raising target for our Oral History project with confirmation of a further \$9,500 from Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund (LEH). It's great to have continued support from LEH, making it possible for us to progress this program for a further two years.

The Trust wishes our members and wider heritage community a Merry Christmas. We hope you get a chance to enjoy the wonderful heritage offerings on our doorstep with family and friends over the holidays.

David Ritchie, Central Otago Heritage Trust

PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

THE LIFE & TIMES OF HASTIE'S HUT

On the outskirts of Patearoa, on the road to the Styx at the Lusher Rd corner and rarely noticed by the passer by, is Hastie's hut, one of Central Otago's oldest buildings.

It stands at the northern end of the original Patearoa Station which was first taken up in 1858 by William Valpy. As Valpy built up the stock numbers on his property, he needed shepherds at either end of his sprawling 54,000-acre run. Richard Hastie took up the job near the northern boundary of Patearoa Station, possibly in the late 1850s or early 1860s. The Hastie hut would therefore date back to this period.

The original Patearoa Station homestead was not built until 1864 and became a stopping-off place for miners heading to the Dunstan goldfields, allowing them to avoid the rigours of the Old Dunstan Road which opened in 1862. Hastie's hut also provided accommodation for travellers before the rush and one of the two large rooms was set aside for this purpose. To meet the needs of the passing miners Richard Hastie would slaughter sheep from near his hut at the Patearoa Station fattening block (later Willowview farm).



Hastie's hut - Patearoa

Hastie's hut is built of stone as Maniototo was tree-less in the 1860s. It has a small middle room and boasts giant open fires in the larger rooms at each end. Sheltered from the wind beside a rock outcrop and next to a stream meandering down to the Taieri, Hastie's hut would have been an attractive piece of colonial real estate.

Richard Hastie was born in 1844 at Dumfriesshire in Scotland. He was 33 when he married Mary McNab, also from Dumfriesshire, in Dunedin in 1877. They went on to have two sons, John and Dickie. By 1880, the family had taken up land at Eskvale on the Waipiata-Kokonga road. His younger son, Dickie, gained some fame when the *Otago Witness* ran a picture of him beside his apple tree at Eskvale in 1901.

Richard was in poor health during the last 12 years of his life and died in 1912. He was described as "a successful pastoralist of sterling worth." John took over the farm and his unsuccessful appeal against call-up in 1917 reveals he had 900 sheep to shear and "some lime to put in the ground." (In the end, he went briefly into camp but was medically downgraded and did not serve overseas). In 1928 he married Margaret Wright of Outram. The couple are said to have paid legendary landscape gardener, Alfred Buxton £2000 [\$250,000 in 2021], about the price of a large modern home in Dunedin in the 1930s, to design a fine garden at Eskvale. They were still farming at Kokonga in 1944.



Nearby, a tree is gradually wrapping itself around an old wagon, long abandoned.

In 1904 the property occupied by Hastie's hut became part of the Carr family farm "Alnwick", but the hut was demoted as new homesteads were built. During the tough times of the 1930s, Hastie's hut provided shelter for swaggers and was regularly visited by the police on the trail of stolen sheep.

Now the land on which the hut stands is part of a huge dairy farm. Fencing protects the building from damage by heavy beasts, although signs of animals which once sheltered there still litter the earth floors. Thankfully, the roof and walls are fairly intact. However, some money would be needed to tidy it up, perhaps with some furniture and domestic items inside to illustrate the home life of the 1860s Central Otago sheep farming pioneers. It is said by locals to be the second-oldest building in Maniototo, believed to be pipped only by a building on Longlands Station near Kyeburn. A good project for a heritage-minded organisation?

Written by Jim Sullivan, Historian, Patearoa

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF HASTIE'S HUT

Jim Sullivan's research into Hastie's Hut sparked further interest in the old cottage from the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust. Terry Davis, Heritage Site Review Co-ordinator, took a trip out to Patearoa to meet Jim and undertake a heritage assessment of the dwelling. Terry was immediately fascinated by the size of the cottage. "It's rare to see a stone cottage this large in Central Otago. Many of the remaining stone dwellings are much smaller," Terry says.

The cottage is 11 meters long with an interior wall dividing the cottage into two large rooms. The roof was originally thatched with local reeds and subsequently covered in corrugated iron. A rusted padlock still hangs on the door jamb.

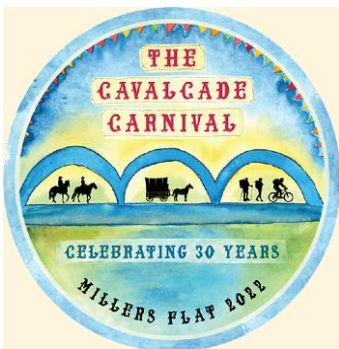


The heritage assessment involved detailed mapping and documentation of the dwelling and its environs, noting any risks and threats to the preservation of the building. This information is then recorded on ArchSite, the online version of the NZ Archaeological Association's Site Recording Scheme. The dwelling is now scheduled for a follow-up review to monitor its condition.

The cottage offers a rare glimpse of pastoral life in the Maniototo during the 1860s. "It would be great to see the cottage preserved to help tell the unique stories of our past and would make a fantastic tourism attraction for locals and visitors to our region."



Terry Davis from Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust taking measurements of Hastie's hut



CAVALCADE CARNIVAL 2022

The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust's Cavalcade marks a 30-year milestone of this iconic event in 2022. Featuring wagon and horse-riding trails, tramping and walking trails and a mountain bike trail, all finishing on the 5 March at Millers Flat. To find out more about getting on one of these trails, head to **www.cavalcade.co.nz**

RECORDING OUR PAST

In late July this year, a group of student archaeologists from Otago University and local volunteers met in Clyde for a week-long project to record heritage sites in and around the township.

It was of course, the coldest week in winter with below zero temperatures - and most of the work was outside. On the first day, the winter woollies along with over-size tape measures and red and white measuring rods waited in readiness while the team, under the leadership of archaeologist Sharlene (Shar) Briden, was briefed on the morning's schedule.

Then it was out into the cold.

The project had its beginnings a few years ago when it was suggested the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust undertake a Central Otago heritage review. Such a review had never been done, even though the Government had offered to pay for one in the early 2000s. Every region in the country took up the offer but the Otago Regional Council turned down this opportunity.

The Goldfield's Trust added the project to its five-year plan where it was spotted by the Central Lakes Trust, which believed the project worth funding because of increasing pressure on heritage through land development.

Ophir was selected as the pilot and a small team, with the help of a couple of landowners, started recording sites such as dams, water races, stone huts and even the holes drilled into rock where miners rammed in poles to hold up their tents. It was quite concerning to discover that some of Central Otago's important heritage had not been recorded such as the Daniel O'Connell swing bridge at Ophir, the Hartley Arms Hotel in Clyde and the gold sluicing at Northburn near Cromwell. No property is entered without the owner's permission.

The fieldwork is extremely detailed. The resulting 12-page report contains information such as GPS coordinates, latitude and longitude, site and building measurements, their condition, what threats they face, how often they should be monitored, maps and floor plans, and where possible, the history of the site. Photographs are also taken. All records are uploaded to ArchSite, which stores everything of heritage value to ensure nothing, no matter how insignificant, is lost and everything is recorded for posterity.

So far, fieldwork has been undertaken at Northburn, St Bathans, the Cambrians and Matakanui. The Clyde review is still to be finished. The winter foray managed to cover a few sites. Under Shar's guidance, eight university students and three volunteers split up and spent the week recording sites in and around Clyde such as the banks of the Clutha River, the old Hartley Arms Hotel, the stone cottage in Matau St, several homes and the big wooden barn near Blackman Rd in Earnsclough. The team then came together to record two important heritage buildings which, amazingly, had never been assessed: Jean Desire' Feraud's winery (the oldest

surviving one in the country) in Young Lane, and the Earnsclough Station homestead.

The region has a lot of catching up to do. Over the next few years, the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust will run further week-long efforts to continue the documentation of our rich heritage.

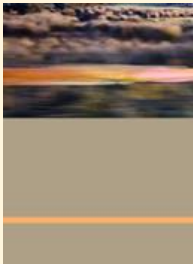
If you are interested in helping (field training is given) please email Terry Davis: terry@cavalcade.co.nz

Written by Louise Joyce, one of the three trained volunteers.



Recording the remains of a wall at the back of the old Hartley Arms Hotel in Clyde

WHAT'S ON AT CENTRAL STORIES MUSEUM & ART GALLERY



Red. Tussock. Line.

A new solo show by Robyn Bardas MFA

Opening 3 December 2021

10-3pm, closed Wednesday

Sundays, Public holidays 11am - 2pm

OTAGO MUSEUM - TŪ TONU PROJECT

In July 2021, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga awarded funds from the Te Tahua Whakakaha Cultural Sector Capability Fund to the Otago Museum to coordinate research into the operational challenges and development needs of arts, culture and heritage organisations across Otago and Southland. The resulting feedback and research will be used to grow and extend the sector support services available in the two regions for a period of fifteen months.

Letters of support for the project were provided by the Gore District Council, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, the Otago Mayoral Forum, and Waitaki Museum and Archive.

What is the project about?

The main aim of the project is to offer participants access to free training, development opportunities, and in-kind support that furthers their ambitions and goals for their organization.

The Otago Museum Trust Board has made a commitment to contribute 1000 formal hours of staff time to support the implementation of this part of the project. These hours can be drawn from any area of the organization - governance, management, finance, design, curatorial, collections care, visitor experience, education and more.

The project is designed to sit alongside the existing support networks that are available, building on capability in this area.



Representatives from the arts, culture and heritage sectors learn about the Tū Tonu Project at a hui in Gore on 6 December.

How do I get involved?

The first phase of the project seeks to find out what training and development goals are held by our various organisations and where the resources of Tū Tonu can be applied to support these goals.

In order to gather this information in a confidential manner, a survey has been developed and will be open for organisations to complete until 30 January 2022. The survey can be filled out either digitally, in hardcopy, or in person with the project coordinator.

The findings of the survey will be used to:

- Identify and implement training and development opportunities that will have a meaningful impact for participants.
- Identify where the needs of individual organisations overlap and where there may be opportunities to collaborate or dovetail into other projects.
- Feed into the development of an online portal that can be used to share resources and information.
- Support wider advocacy efforts by providing an overall picture of how arts, culture, and heritage organisations contribute to the wellbeing of our communities, the challenges that we face, and where support is most needed. This part of the project will make use of anonymous and aggregated data and not information about individual institutions without their express permission.

To get involved or to find out more, please get in touch:
kimberley.stephenson@otagomuseum.nz.

Written by Kimberley Stephenson
Project Manager - Tū Tonu Regional Museums Project



MANIOTOTO EARLY SETTLERS MUSEUM PRESENTS

Eden Hore photographic pop-up display

Eight photos of the garment collection

23 Dec - 11 January 2022

Jubilee Building - Level St. Naseby

www.edenhorecentralotago.com

CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

HERITAGE ALONG THE LAKE DUNSTAN TRAIL

New Zealand's newest cycling and walking trail alongside the mighty Clutha Mata-au River reveals the best of Central Otago's natural beauty. It also highlights some unique snippets of trail-related history through six strategically placed story boards developed by the Central Otago Queenstown Trail Network Trust. Each board highlights an aspect of our heritage - from early explorers and the Dunstan gold rush, to pioneering famers and orchardists. Let's take a closer look at these story boards.



A RAGING RIVER AND RAILWAY

14 km

Starting the trail from Cromwell and heading towards Clyde, the first storyboard at Cornish Point refers to the infamous **Cromwell Gap**, the fierce rapids at the confluence of the Kawarau and Clutha Mata-Au rivers.

In 1853, the first European to travel up the Mata-Au was Nathaniel Chalmers with help from Kāi Tahu Chief, Reko, and his guide, Kaikoura. Suffering from a severe bout of dysentery, Nathaniel's two companions constructed a life raft using flax flower stalks to navigate him through the white-water rapids to seek medical help. Nathaniel recounted this treacherous journey - *"My heart was literally in my mouth, but those two old men seemed to care nothing for the current."*

In 1989, NZ Canoeing and Kayaking magazine describes a similar experience of a kayaker traversing the standing waves on the same stretch of water - *"Every nerve in my body was alive, in response to the demands I was making on myself... I had done The Gap."*



The Cromwell Gap was tamed and submerged with the raising of the Clutha River during construction of the dam.

Aerial view of the Cromwell Gap, circa 1980s

A railway and a lifeline

From Cornish Point the Cromwell Rail Station was once clearly visible. The hazards and dangers of getting goods and stock to market by road was aptly summed up in 1907 by the Railway and Progress League: *"The road through the gorge is a narrow one and at the best of times it is dangerous with a considerable amount of horse traffic."* The Clyde-Cromwell gorge line opened in 1921. In its first year, trains carried 360 passengers, 252,000 feet of timber, 524 cattle, 19,279 sheep and 6,553 tons of goods. The railway closed in 1980 to make way for the Clyde Dam.



Cattle yards at the Cromwell Rail Station. RM Collection, Cromwell Museum



HARTLEY & REILLY - A GOLD RUSH IS BORN

16 km

This storyboard stands across the lake from Brewery Creek - the creek where American born Horatio Hartley and Christopher Reilly discovered gold, heralding the beginning of the highly lucrative Dunstan Goldfield. Worried about being discovered, the pair accumulated their gold in secret until one day an old digger surprised them. Hartley and Reilly put the digger off by fabricating a tale of their hardship but took his visit as a warning. They gathered up their hoard and travelled to Dunedin to lodge the 1,000 oz of gold and claim a £2000 reward for divulging the location of their source. The Dunstan Goldfield was born.





PICKAXE BLUFF BRIDGE

18 km

During the construction of the cantilevered platform at this point in the trail, a remnant of miner activity was discovered - a pickaxe jammed in the rock face below the trail. Chinese miners used pickaxes to break rock ready for sieving, sorting and washing through a sluice box. The Otago Provincial Government encouraged miners, mainly from Guangdong in China, to come here to replace the European miners who, by 1866, were chasing new prospects on the West Coast.

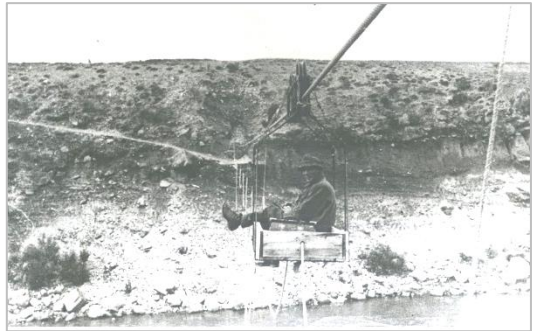


DEPRESSION ERA - LIFE IN THE GORGE

27 km

The storyboard overlooking the reconstructed Halfway Hut, recounts the personal hardships of Joe and Mollie Pilkington who raised their young family here during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

With no work in sight and erratic dole payments, there was barely enough food to put on the table. When the government announced an incentive scheme for men willing to go goldmining, Joe decided things could only get better. The offer was a reliable weekly dole payment, one pick, one shovel, one gold pan and free train travel to Clyde.



*Getting across the Clutha River from Halfway Hut was dangerous on a rope & pulley chair
Photo courtesy of the Hocken Collection*

Like most depression era miners, Joe did not find gold. However, Mollie and Joe did find a way through the depression.



THE INTERTWINED HISTORY OF FARMERS AND MINERS

28 km

At the top of Hyde Spur, this storyboard overviews the intertwined history of the early farmers and miners in the area. By 1858, pastoral farming in Central Otago had expanded steadily and many of these large sheep and cattle runs were also rich in gold. One example is Kawarau Station which once extended from Clyde to Gibbston, and included the Carrick and Cairnmuir Ranges, the Nevis Valley and part of The Old Man Range. The station, like many other runs in the district, provided food to fuel the rush for gold, resulting in a sudden boom in production and trade. Miners were also a useful source of labour for farm work.



The story board near Annan Creek describes how horticulture once thrived beside the river. As the population expanded in the late 1800s, so too did the demand for food. Pioneering families like the Annans, Jacksons and Hintons, established fruit orchards in the Cromwell gorge. They took advantage of the goldminers' water races and the gorge's windy microclimate which helped to keep tender blossoms from freezing in spring. The railway through the gorge linked an overnight delivery of fruit to markets in Dunedin.

FRUIT TRAIN

Last night's fruit train had a heavy load - 20 tons from Clyde and 32 tons from Alexandra.

Dunstan Times, 25 Jan 1932

Flooding the gorge in 1992 destroyed these orchards, causing much debate and division at the time. Today you can see remnants of the Jackson Orchard fruit trees on the opposite side of the lake near the Hugo Suspension Bridge.



A feat of engineering: No other cycling trail in New Zealand has the same type of bridge bolted directly into rock faces.

Acknowledgment: Central Otago Queenstown Trail Network Trust developed and installed the storyboards along the Dunstan Trail which were researched and written by Mary Hinsén.

ABOUT THE TRAIL: The Lake Dunstan Trail opened on 8 May 2021. Since that day, around 50,000 cyclists and walkers have enjoyed the 42 km trail between Cromwell and Clyde. The trail forms part of the 536km planned network connecting Cromwell to other Central Otago, Queenstown and Wanaka trails.

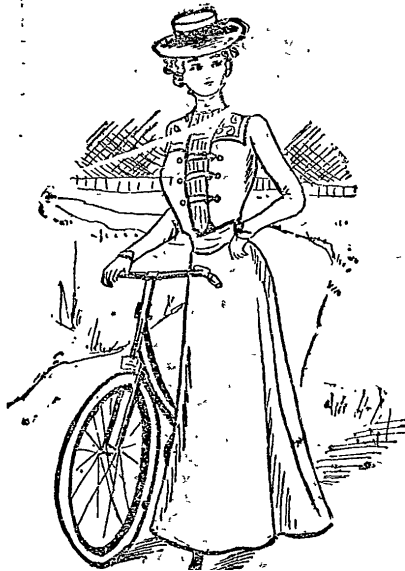
HANDY HINTS FOR WHEEL WOMEN IN 1900

FOR CYCLISTS.

A bath after a bicycle ride is a necessity as well as a most agreeable luxury. Take it warm, not above 98 degrees Fahrenheit nor below 92 degrees. The effect of a warm bath is to raise the temperature of the blood and to quicken the circulation. It is therefore dangerous when one is very warm to take a bath with the water below the temperature of the body. You should never ride so rapidly or so exhaustively as to find a bath at 98 degrees chilling when it comes in contact with your body. A warm scrub with a pure, wholesome, hygienic soap will free the pores from head to feet of all the dust acquired on the way.

There are women who cannot take the cold plunge without inducing a dangerous congestion, and when there is an idiosyncrasy of this nature it should be religiously regarded. Many women who cannot bear the cold plunge—in fact, almost every woman—will derive the greatest benefit from the cold spray down the spine as a finale to her bicycle bath. A few yards of rubber tubing sold for the purpose, with a ball nozzle attached to one end and the other to the water-flow from the faucet, will afford one the spinal spray in perfection.

The bicycle should be the greatest aid to the complexion, and wheelwomen may by this exercise cure themselves of many ordinary forms of skin disease caused, as half the skin diseases are, by imperfect circulation. It is well to avoid sudden changes of temperature, particularly the change from heat to cold. The habit of taking cool or iced drinks while one is warm from riding, is very detrimental to the skin. The pores opened from the heat are suddenly contracted, the circulation receives a shock which is always injurious to the complexion, and this frequently results in an ugly congestion, which all should avoid.



'A smart cycling gown'
Otago Witness, 26 July 1900

Mt Ida Chronicle, 23 February 1900
Source: Naseby Museum

VALLANCE COTTAGE OPEN DAY

Waitangi Weekend
Sunday 6 February 10 am – 2pm

Take a tour of this historic cottage and chat to the hard-working volunteers working to preserve this slice of our pioneering history. Explore the reserve and enjoy the market and live music.



THE TALE OF THE DITTY BOX

A little while ago I was asked to assist with a display at the Clyde Museum. My job was to write a piece regarding an item in the collection called a 'Ditty Box.'

First things first. What is a Ditty Box? It turns out to be a receptacle for odds and ends, especially used by sailors and fishermen dating back to about 1620. They were used to hold personal items that were important to them. Sailors might keep letters, photos, writing instruments, treasures collected from various ports etc. The word itself is a corruption of the tail end of the word "commodity."

The Ditty Box in the Clyde Museum is said to have belonged to Joseph Edward Stevens who was the Head Teacher at Clyde School in the late 1860s along with his wife Dora. Joseph is said to have gone to sea when he was in his early teens and was apparently on board a sailing ship in the Bay of Biscay, off the French Coast, when the crew mutinied and threw the captain of the ship along with the two ship's boys, overboard. Joseph is said to have clutched his Ditty Box, using it to float to the French Coast. The fate of the captain is not mentioned in the story although the second boy is also said to have survived and returned to England.

A fabulous story. But does it stand up to scrutiny?

Let's start with the name of this ship with the mutinous crew. I couldn't find any historical references to any such mutiny which, according to the story, happened when Joseph was in his early teens making it sometime between 1858 and 1862. I asked around the community and thankfully was directed to local Clyde historian Billie Tohill, who is a veritable mine of information.

Sitting down with Billie and poring over the wealth of documentation on the early life of Joseph Edward Stevens revealed some gems.

Joseph Edward was born in Paulton, Somerset in 1845, being the 6th child of Joseph and Celia Stevens who died a year later. Joseph went on to marry Celia's sister, Maria, in 1852. Joseph, Maria and family then immigrated to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) where Joseph senior continued his occupation as a teacher. Joseph Edward, aged 7 at the time, would have resumed his schooling.

Joseph senior died in 1858 when Joseph Edward was 13. According to other reliable records, Joseph Edward signed his brother's death certificate in 1863 in Tasmania. His application for a teaching job recorded that he'd been living in Pontville Tasmania for 10 years and had been employed as a teacher for two years at Trinity Hill, Tasmania.

These dates are at odds with the timing of the Ditty Box saga which had Joseph Edward running away to sea for 3 or 4 years and ending up in the Bay of Biscay clutching his Ditty Box as a life raft. Will we ever know the truth? If only the Ditty Box could talk.



Joseph Steven's Ditty Box, Clyde Museum

What we do know is that Joseph Edward Stevens arrived in Clyde after a time in Bluff along with his wife Dora and both taught at Clyde School with Joseph dying in 1919. Their first two children were born in Bluff and a further 12 born to the couple in Clyde.

Written by Russell Garbutt on behalf of Clyde Museum

NEW LOOK FOR CLYDE MUSEUM

Clyde Museum has reopened after its winter break and has undergone a transformation. The committee and its team of volunteers have been busy preparing the entrance area for its much-needed refurbishment project. Nonstructural walls, redundant heating units, old electric plugs have been removed and cabinetry has been repurposed to work more effectively for displays. The work also included repainting, new lighting as well as sanding and polishing the wooden floors.

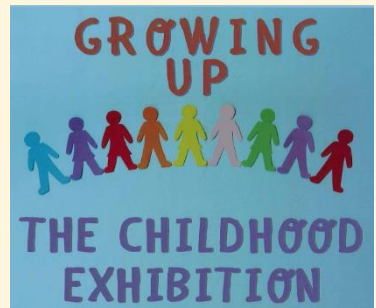
GROWING UP IN CLYDE

The museum is now ready to open its doors and present a new temporary exhibition on childhood. There's a mix of playful, interesting and informative displays with a little joy and nostalgia for everyone in these uncertain times.

1 December - mid February 2022

Open Tuesday - Sunday, 1 - 4pm

Committee Chair, Andy Ritchie

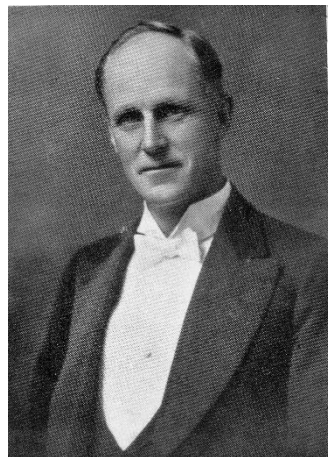


ROBB'S GARAGE TURNS 100

Robb's Garage in Roxburgh recently celebrated its centenary with great flair! At Labour Weekend Scotland Street was lined with a staggering collection of classic cars and, in the Memorial Hall, family members assembled to view an amazing collection of memorabilia from the time the garage opened in 1921.

Janis Robb of Cromwell compiled a comprehensive history of the garage including photos and anecdotes about the generations of Robb family members. Janis was very generous in sharing this family research.

The original owner, Syd Robb, was forward-thinking and set the pace for diversity in the 1920s. He purchased five Studebaker buses for passengers and freight, managed school, taxi and mail runs, added an office and a uniquely designed workshop and became the agency for Dodge, Studebaker, Overlander and Willy's Knight. He also established dealerships with both Ford and Mobil. Despite a brand name change to Alliance in 2008, Robb's Garage holds the record for being the oldest Mobil outlet in New Zealand, and it is impressive that over the century they have remained loyal to both the Ford and Mobil brands.



Founder Syd Robb



Robb's Garage 1920s



Robb's Garage today

A characteristic that shone through the stories of the Robb owners and their families was a huge passion for their cars and a determination to keep the garage running from generation to generation. Following the early death of Syd in 1934, his son Don was only 20 in 1938 when he took over ownership from his mother Dorothy, whose role was critical in keeping the garage and office running. Her sons Ken and Garry also worked for a time in the business, but tragically Ken was killed aged 21 in a Kawarau Gorge accident in one of their new buses. Don then added tow-truck operations for the AA to the business. Don's son Colin and in turn his son Mike also had oil running in their veins, both leaving school as soon as was possible to become qualified car mechanics and continue the Robb garage tradition.

Robb's Garage has kept abreast of the changes in petrol delivery. The first underground tanks held only 250 gallons. Today the double-skinned tanks serviced by Allied hold 20,000 litres of diesel and 30,000 litres of petrol.

At the centenary celebrations, Colin gave an overview of recent changes and challenges in servicing cars which are now fitted with computer control units. More recently they have received callouts from electric car owners needing a tow to the plug-in charger nearby.



Ben Robb (5th Generation)



One of Teviot District Museum's pop-up display panels of Robb's Centenary

Through all the generations I believe a key to their endurance has been the way each owner has embraced mechanical and technological change. From the early days the garage has catered to a wide range of transport and farming needs in the area, having dealerships for a diversity of tractor and truck brands, and responding to the cartage and petrol requirements of various eras, including the construction of the Roxburgh Hydro Dam in the 1950s. The Robb families have also been very active in the Roxburgh community with their participation in various groups and activities.

Congratulations on reaching the centenary and thanks to the current Robb families and garage staff for sharing their celebrations with the public.

Written by Barbara Fraser - Teviot District Museum

TELLING OUR STORIES - ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The pandemic continues to pose ongoing challenges with undertaking interviews and recordings in our Oral History Project. Nonetheless, over the last few months our volunteers have been busy catching up on abstracting interviews. An abstract is a comprehensive listing of subjects covered in the interview, noting where on the recording the information can be found. The process of abstracting can be as technically involved as the interview itself and is often just as rewarding!

We'd like to finish the year with a gem from our growing oral history repository.

MEET PAULA LOVERING – JAMIE'S JEWELLERS

Founded in 1866, Jamie's Jewellers has now seen five generations of family ownership, believed to be the longest held successional family owned and operated jewellery business in New Zealand, after 155 years trading. Sue MacKenzie recently spent a warm afternoon interviewing Paula Lovering, who, along with her husband was the fourth generation to own Jamie's Jewellers of Alexandra.

Past records indicate that the original John Jamie quickly established himself as a watchmaker in Southland and Otago. Having arrived in 1865, a newspaper article indicates that in 1866 he had the misfortune to have a bag with his watchmaker's tools, a watch and various watch parts stolen. Undeterred, John went on to open a variety of stores, the first in Balclutha in 1867.

In 1916, John Jamie the third opened a large wooden building which later became known as Jamie's Jewellers of Alexandra today. The large building also included a hairdresser, beauty salon, tobacconist, optician, lending library and billiards room. This building was later replaced in 1950 after being destroyed by a fire.



Paula Lovering, 2021

Paula is over the moon to have a fifth generation of the family in the business, now managed by her daughter Rachel and her husband Clyde Vellacot.

In her interview, Paula describes her love for all types of gemstones, her experiences travelling overseas on purchasing trips to Antwerp, and the skill and dedication required to become a trained gemologist and diamond grader. Paula continues to work doing valuations and appraisals, alongside her daughter Rachel.

Paula also describes how the business has developed and grown to encompass fashion focused brands, bespoke jewellery design, online retail and more recently the opening of a new shop in Frankton's Central Shopping Centre, in Queenstown.

We are very grateful to both Paula and Sue, for taking the time to preserve in person this fabulous and significant segment of Alexandra's commercial and family history.



One of the first Jamie's Jewellers shops in Southland or South Otago. John Jamie is thought to be the man wearing the apron.

WHAT'S ON AT CROMWELL MUSEUM

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'Landscapes from my life'
by museum volunteer Norman G Bell

5 January - 26th February

Open Seven Days a Week; 11am - 3pm



Norman G Bell.

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34 Sunderland St Clyde 9330
info@heritagecentralotago.org.nz
www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz