

Protecting, preserving & celebrating our heritage



Winter 2022



Alexandra Bridge turns 140

ABOUT US

The Central Otago Heritage Trust, established in 2008, comprises member groups 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**. 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. Ann Rodgers (CODC Liaison).

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Cover image of Alexandra Bridge courtesy of Shellie Evans

HERITAGE MATTERS

FROM THE CHAIR

It's been hard to miss the throng of cyclists in and around the district over the last six months with over 83,000 cyclists descending on the **Lake Dunstan Trail** alone. In May, this trail was awarded with the NZ 'Great Ride' status by the Government. The Central Otago Heritage Trust (COHT) congratulates the Central Otago Queenstown Trail Network Trust for their vision and hard work to make this ride such a success. In our Summer edition we highlighted the heritage sites documented on the storyboards along the trail. Since then, the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust have undertaken further fieldwork as part of the **Heritage Site Review**, recording many more sites adjacent to the trail.



We are pleased to welcome the **Central Otago Museums' Trust** as a new member. Amanda Griffin started her role as the Museums' Coordinator in June. She brings a wealth of experience in working in and alongside small Museums around the Taranaki region. We look forward to working with Amanda in her new role.

Interviewing in the **Oral History Programme** has recently re-booted after a pause due to the pandemic. We consulted with volunteers on how they would like to operate under the current Orange Traffic Light setting and have developed health and safety protocols for face-to-face contexts. I know many volunteers are excited about getting back into it. Funding for this programme received a further boost. On behalf of COHT, I would like to express our gratitude to Promote Dunstan for their recent \$5000 donation.

As a result of Otago Museum's **Tū Tonu Project** feedback, a region-wide oral history network has been established. This is proving to be a great forum to share ideas and voice challenges. The group, comprising over 20 representatives, are at various stages of developing their oral history repositories. A common challenge across the network, is identifying an affordable online platform from which oral histories can be disseminated. It would make sense for the network to share a region-wide solution. The Tū Tonu project has also recently launched a region-wide programme of events, tailored to meet the needs of the Central Otago heritage sector. We are working closely with the project coordinator, Kimberley Stephenson, to help make these a success.

Central Otago District Council has made considerable progress in developing planning guidelines for our five **Heritage Precincts**. Glen Hazelton, the key author of these guidelines, has attended two COHT Board meetings to present drafts for our feedback. We value the opportunity to work with Council on heritage matters in

the District Plan Review process. We'd also like to thank Council for their ongoing financial support. The confirmation of further funding through the 'Community Fund' ensures that we can continue to achieve tasks set out in our Strategic Plan.

Last month, Maggie Hope, our Heritage Coordinator, attended a **Heritage Hui in Oamaru**, organised by the Timaru Civic Trust and the Mid-Canterbury Historic Places Trust. Maggie was asked to present on how COHT operates to bring the heritage community together. Participants in this hui plainly saw the strengths of a coordinated approach and resolved to meet again to get started on establishing an Oamaru Heritage Network to include representatives from across the sector.

We've teamed up with our local museums to bring in local and regional guest speakers to cover a range of exciting topics in our **Winter Series** events. Our AGM on 20 July will take place immediately before the first event at Clyde Museum, 'Central Otago's pre-historic treescape', with palaeontologist Mike Pole. You can find out more about these events below.

David Ritchie, Chair, Central Otago Heritage Trust

CENTRAL OTAGO HERITAGE TRUST

Join us at our
Annual General Meeting

5:15pm Wednesday 20 July 2022
Clyde Museum

5 Blyth St, Clyde



GUEST SPEAKER IMMEDIATELY AFTER AGM BUSINESS (6:45pm)

Central Otago pre-historic treescape

It's hard to imagine that our dry barren landscape was once largely covered in kowhai trees that provided a valuable food source for moa. Dunedin born palaeontologist Dr. Mike Pole shares his extensive research to provide a fascinating window into a pre-human eco-system which has entirely vanished.



ALL MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME

Light refreshments will be served after AGM business

Scan the QR code or visit www.heritagcentralotago.org.nz to find out more. RSVP for catering purposes.



CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

THE OLD ALEXANDRA BRIDGE TURNS 140

The impressive masonry piers, towers, and abutments of the original Alexandra Bridge have withstood the force of the South Island's longest river for 140 years. Once claimed to be the largest suspension bridge in New Zealand, today the remnants are important landmarks that reference Central Otago's engineering and social history.



*Alexandra Bridge today
Image courtesy of Shellie Evans*

The junction of the Clutha (known then as the Molyneaux) and Manuherikia Rivers was once a busy intersection for prospectors travelling inland in search of gold. In 1868 a rudimentary ferry punt service transported people and goods across the river. However, this ferry service was only in use for three years before being destroyed by the 1878 flood. This devastating 100-year flood also destroyed the Clyde Bridge and three other Clutha/Mata-Au River bridges, leaving people and goods stranded on either side for miles. Locals campaigned for a new bridge to replace the punt, with a petition including nine hundred signatures presented to the Vincent County.



*Alexandra Bridge 1910
Image courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library*

Vincent County engineer, Leslie Duncan Macgeorge (1854-1939) designed a suspension bridge with two majestic masonry piers and towers, featuring repeating arches and ornamentation. Robert Hay (1847-1928) was a consulting engineer on the project and construction began in 1879 under the direction of local builder, Jeremiah Drummey.

Macgeorge was a master of suspension bridge design, having designed the Taieri River Bridge (1885), the Shaky Suspension Bridge (1879) at Alexandra, and the Daniel O'Connell Bridge at Ophir (1880), all of which are characterised by their impressive schist masonry towers. The Alexandra Bridge would be the largest of Leslie Macgeorge's Central Otago suspension bridges. Contemporary New Zealand architect, engineer and historian Geoffrey Thornton describes it as "one of the most beautiful suspension bridges ever built in New Zealand."

Construction of the bridge took three years to complete with numerous hurdles to overcome along the way. Complicated river geology posed engineering challenges, flooding caused further delays and the 1880s depression saw a halt to Government infrastructure subsidies to local councils. A special appeal was made to Government in 1881 which finally secured funding to proceed.

The Alexandra Bridge was opened on 1 June 1882 amidst much fanfare, with the Mayor James Simmonds declaring the day a public holiday. The event was attended "by the largest gathering that has been seen at Alexandra perhaps since the rush in the early days." The bridge and many buildings in town were decorated for the occasion. There was a long succession of speeches and toasts, with celebrations continuing with an evening dance.

For a community which had recently witnessed the disastrous flood of 1878, the monumental masonry piers and towers were no doubt a reassurance of the structure's strength and performance. The centre arch is close to 80 metres high with the piers rising 27 metres from the bedrock in the river. Eight three-inch cables once supported the structure. The towers and piers are constructed of locally quarried schist stone with a rubble core. There was also a river level marker on the side of one of the piers which was frequently reported upon to inform communities along the river of the rise and fall of its water.

Meetings and Reports.

Opening of the Alexandra Bridge.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The ceremony of opening this important structure took place on the 1st June, and was witnessed by a large concourse of spectators who had assembled from all parts of the district, including Cromwell, Bannockburn, Clyde, Roxburgh, Ophir, Ida Valley, &c. The day was rather cloudy in the morning, and the threatening rain came down just after the naming of the bridge had been performed, when an adjournment was made to the Town Hall. In the early morning and forenoon the various roads leading into the township were black with vehicles and horsemen, and every available corner was needed for the accommodation of the largest gathering that has been seen at Alexandra perhaps since the "rush" in the early days. Had the day kept fine the spectacle would have been a brilliant one, and the visitors would have enjoyed themselves much better. As it turned out, the best that could had to be done, and, as the rain continued, many took an early departure.

About 2 o'clock a procession consisting of the County Council, Borough Council, Foresters' Lodges, Good Templar Lodges, and the school children, accompanied with badges and banners, and headed by the local brass band, assembled in front of the Town Hall, from which place they made a circuit of the township and proceeded to the bridge, where a halt was made.

Otago Witness 10 June 1892

For over 70 years the structure was a key link in the road network of the area and State Highway 8. By the middle of the twentieth century, the increase in road traffic saw the old bridge under pressure as the single lane bridge could not cope with the volume. The Alexandra Bridge was replaced by the "Blue Bridge" in 1958. At this time, the suspension bridge's deck and cables were removed, leaving the majestic remnants to remind us of its important place in our history.



*Alexandra's new "blue" bridge was opened on July 5, 1958
Image courtesy of Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery*

Promote Dunstan - 'I LOVE CLYDE' Heritage Day

'I Love Clyde' Heritage Day is planned for Sunday 25 September, the day after the Blossom Festival parade in Alexandra.

The Promote Dunstan event will include music, children's old-fashioned games on the green at the Clyde Railway Station, a guided tour of the town's historic buildings, entertainment, and a wander down a replica of the historic precinct as it was in 1863-64 (constructed in 2012 for the 150 anniversary of Hartley and Reilly's gold strike in the Cromwell Gorge).

Various historic buildings will be open to visitors and the Clyde Museum will have special displays. Other events are yet to be finalised but (early notice), the wearing of 19th century costumes is definitely encouraged.



WINTER SERIES - LET'S TALK CENTRAL OTAGO HERITAGE

Warm up your winter with a healthy dose of heritage. Central Otago Heritage Trust has teamed up with our local museums to offer three events that put Central Otago's heritage in the spotlight. For the price of a cup of coffee, we'll make sure you're kept cosy and that you leave knowing more about the fascinating place we call Central.

Central Otago's pre-historic treescape



Looking at Central Otago today, it's hard to imagine that our dry barren landscape was once largely covered in kowhai trees that provided a valuable food source for moa. Dunedin born palaeontologist Dr. Mike Pole, shares his extensive research to provide a fascinating window into a pre-human eco-system which has entirely vanished.

Clyde Museum

Wednesday 20 July, 6:45pm

The Central Otago Heritage Trust AGM will take place at 5:15pm, immediately before this event.

Documenting Central Otago's History - Meet John McCraw, our unsung hero



The John McCraw Glacier in Antarctica is named after Dunedin born soil scientist and academic John Davidson McCraw (1925-2014). And yet, little is known about McCraw locally. After retiring from his position of emeritus professor at the University of Waikato, John devoted his time to researching the history of Central Otago.

He went on to publish about a dozen books on the history of the area and the wider Otago region and was acknowledged as the leading authority on the Alexandra district. Russell Garbutt sets the record straight by putting the life and works of John McCraw firmly in the spotlight.

Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery

Wednesday 3 August, 6:30pm

Women in the Otago Goldfields - more than just objects of scandal



It's easy to think that life on the goldfields was completely male dominated. Stories of hard labour, brotherly camaraderie, and lone men in hidden valleys striking it rich are a part of the romanticised popular view of the goldfields. Women are rarely included in this picture. Popular culture would have us believe the majority of them were employed as prostitutes or brothel owners. Dr. Charlotte King shares her research insights that define women in the goldfields as more than just objects of scandal.

Cromwell Museum
Wednesday 24 August, 6:30pm



Book your place at these events by scanning this QR code or at www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz

Entry by koha, with proceeds going to the museums.

Celebrating generations on the land

At the heart of New Zealand's heritage are the stories of the early pioneers who cultivated and transformed the country's untamed wild land into the rich agricultural industry that exists today. The 'New Zealand Century Farm and Station Awards' programme aims to capture and preserve this important rural history, which might otherwise be lost through the generations.



Families who have owned and farmed their land since 1921 submit narratives of their farm history together with copies of related photographs and supporting documents, which will be archived at the Alexandra Turnbull Library.

A formal dinner in Lawrence each May honours the award recipients. Applications close 30 November. More information at www.centuryfarms.co.nz

MEET LYE DONG BOA

Miner, market gardener, orchardist and much more

Heading out from Alexandra towards Roxburgh you'll come across 'Lye Bow Road' which points to a spectacular stand of tall trees on the edge of Butchers Dam. This short no-exit road is named after one of Alexandra's long-time and respected residents, who was renowned for his award-winning orchard and market gardens and his contributions to the local community.



Lye Dong Boa, aka 'Lye Bow', arrived in New Zealand in 1864 under a dark cloud. Legend has it that he fled Guangdong province in China to escape punishment for participating in a murderous duel. Like many of his countrymen at the time, Lye Bow headed for the Otago Goldfields (known to the Chinese as 'New Gold Mountain') in search of a fresh start. Lye Bow's success in mining allowed him to purchase land in Butchers Gully. He established a small market garden supplying local miners who were desperate to add fruit and vegetables to their regular diet of bread, tea, and mutton.

In 1889, two years after becoming naturalized, Lye Bow extended his landholding by a further 13 hectares. Attached to this title was first priority for two heads of water from Butchers Creek. Lye Bow, with the help of his Chinese workers, built a race to take water to his orchard. It was a master stroke and the key to Lye Bow's future success.

Lye Bow's water rights proved to be far more valuable than his land. In 1905, these rights were contested in court by Golden Beach Hydraulic Elevating and Dredging Company. After a detailed examination, the court found in favour of Lye Bow. Two years later, the Alexandra Borough Council offered Lye Bow £500 for his water. A bidding war ensued, with a much higher counteroffer coming forward from a mining interest. But Lye Bow, compelled by his sense of civic duty, preferred his water to go to the Borough which was eager to secure a water supply for the growing township.

"No said Lye Bow, I promise the Council"

"How much did they offer you?"

"Five hundred pound."

"Well, we'll offer you one thousand pounds."

"No. Council man good fella. Me say they can have the water."

Source: Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery



*Workers' cottage at Lye Bow 1928 (no longer standing)
Source: Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery*

The water from Lye Bow's race continued to supply water to the Borough until the Great Depression when Butchers Dam was built. Construction of the dam in 1937 led to the submerging of Lye Bow's lower lying fields and orchard, the remnants of numerous gold-diggings and the Butchers Dam hotel.

Lye Bow was one of the first to establish a commercial orchard in the district. By 1903, a "thousand apple trees, two thousand apricots, two hundred peach, and two hundred greengage plum trees" were planted inside the extensive 1.8 metre schist walls of the property boundary. The orchard was a highly lucrative business, with Lye Bow boasting that he expected to earn £3000 from his 1903 harvest. The quality of his fruit was well regarded by industry peers, with numerous prizes being awarded, especially for his apples.

Lye Bow was an inaugural member of the Teviot and Alexandra Fruitgrowers Association and was acknowledged at the turn of the century as a 'straight out enthusiast in fruit culture'. His management of the dreaded Codling moth also received commendation from visiting horticulturalists and was attributed to his application of 'Chinese Oil'.

For over 60 years, Lye Bow hawked his fresh fruit and vegetables using horse and cart to travel across the district. He was a welcome and familiar face around Alexandra and Clyde and was respected for his "honesty and fair dealing."



*Lye Bow (right) standing next to his horse and cart
Image courtesy of Hocken Library*

He was a good friend of (Charles Henry) Wong Gye, a district constable and interpreter for the Chinese community. Lye Bow would stop at Mr. Wong's in Clyde to share a story and a tippie before turning his cart home towards Butchers Gully.

Children delighted in entering the gate of the high stone wall into his orchard to visit him. He always had time for a story and gifts of fruit and ginger sweets. Lye Bow was also recognized for his generosity, donating both goods and money to the Dunstan Hospital and other local charities.

Lye Bow died in 1930 as a result of a fall while working his orchard. His high standing in the community was evident at his funeral which was "attended by the mayor, councillors and ex-councillors, who acted as pallbearers." Newspapers claimed his age was "well over 100 years" but this was later amended to 92-years-old. Lye Bow was the last Chinese person to be buried in the Alexandra Cemetery. The exact location of his grave site was discovered in 2017 and a gravestone subsequently erected to mark the resting place of a local legend.



*Lye Bow's headstone at
Alexandra Cemetery*

Several outstanding heritage features remain from Lye Bow's time at Butchers Gully: the magnificent schist wall that once encompassed the property; a handful of 150-year-old apricot trees; and the impressive large stone cool room used to store his fruit and vegetables. These remains are listed on the Heritage New Zealand Register (Category 2). When the water in the dam is low, you can see more of the stone schist wall, fruit tree stumps and the old hotel chimney. There is also an old horse cart, tucked under a tree, which is believed to be Lye Bow's.



Lye Bow's cool store



*A handful of 150-year-old
apricot trees remain*



Lye Bow's old cart?



*Low water in Butchers Dam
reveals the schist wall*



*Lye Bow visiting neighbours at Conroys Gully
Image courtesy of Audrey Southall*

Thank you to Audrey Southall for the tour around Lye Bow in May under glorious Autumn colour.



Community and Promotions Grants

Applications to the Central Otago District Council for the Promotions and Community Grants are now open, closing 5pm on Sunday 31 July 2022.

Promotions grants fund events or activities that enhance the experience of locals and visitors.

Community grants support initiatives which demonstrate a clear connection to community well-being.

Scan the QR code to get more information on funding criteria and to access the online application form.

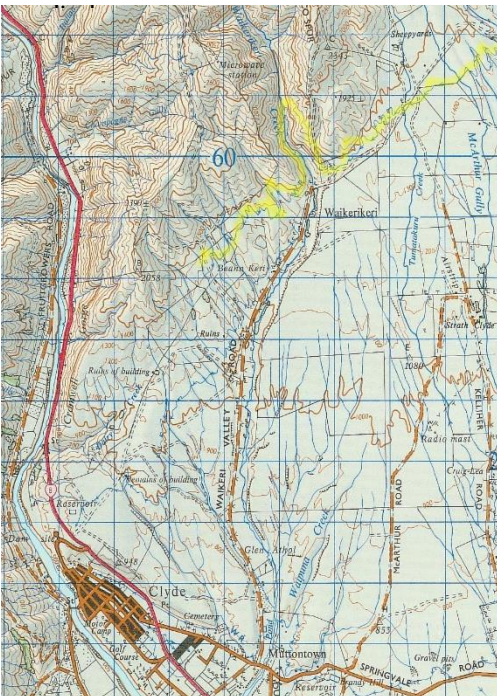
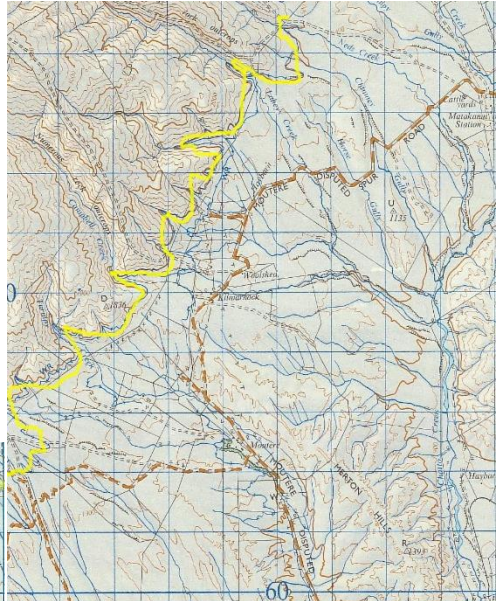


THE GOLDEN GATE - THREE CHRISTMASSES IN THE GORGE

The Golden Gate Mining Company and the tenacity of its founders is an intriguing but overlooked story in Central Otago's gold mining history. That was the opinion expressed by respected local historian John McCraw in a conversation I had with him several years ago. I took on board his comments when delving into the background of two brothers, Patrick and John McNally, and their extraordinary efforts in constructing the Golden Gate water race.

The McNallys had done well around the Blacks diggings and decided in June 1872 to acquire several claims in the Waikerikeri Valley. They did so by forming a number of partnerships and eventually secured about twenty acres of land to be mined. But the problem was that there was no readily available water to service the claims. The solution would prove to be a mammoth three-year undertaking.

The Waikerikeri Creek water rights were held by James Holt who used the water to power his colliery. The McNallys



applied to use some of this water, as well as applying to construct a race to the headwaters of Chatto Creek at Leahys Creek. Their masterplan was to duplicate the scheme they had used at Blacks, which allowed them to sell off surplus water. This would involve the construction of a 25km race, picking up water from various small creeks along the way and terminating near the Dunstan Hospital. The use of the Holt water was predictably declined, but the application for the Leahy creek water, despite opposition, was approved.

Unusually, the McNally brothers started building the race about halfway along the intended route. The normal method was to start a race at the water source to ensure that the levels were consistent. Nonetheless, by the end of 1872, the boys had tapped into some of the creeks and led the water to the start of the Waikerikeri Gorge. At this point of the race, the eastern side of the gorge was 45m above the stream and the other side of the gorge was a mere 200m apart. A simple solution was to pipe the water across this gap, but a lack of money meant that the only way to cross this gap was to continue the race up the eastern side of the gorge until it met the level of the Waikerikeri Stream and then continue down the western side of the gorge.

This was back-breaking work. The gorge is steep, rocky and slippery and in places the race needed rock supports of 8m height. Today, when walking along the remnants of this race, one can only wonder at the skills, perseverance and doggedness of the brothers. And it took a long time. It wasn't until September 1873 that the brothers had completed this 2km engineering masterclass in race building. Tired of the work and financially strained at the £8,000 cost, the brothers tendered for the last simple 10km to the diggings. This work was completed in June 1875.



*Difficult country going up the Waikerikeri Gorge
Image courtesy of Russell Garbutt*

The total amount of water in the race enabled some sluicing to take place, but the grand plan of bringing water from Leahys Creek and selling the surplus was beyond their means. In February 1878, John McNally, worn out and financially crippled, sold his remaining assets and left the district. Borthwick Baird of Cromwell bought these assets and formed a new company which completed construction of the race to Leahys Creek. The full capacity of water was finally delivered to the diggings in 1880.

After all this effort, the returns from the diggings were never consistent and by 1895 most of the water was rented out to nearby miners. Baird, unhappy with the returns on his investment, finally wound up the Golden Gate Mining Company in July 1899.



*Looking towards the entrance to the Waikerikeri Gorge
Image courtesy of Russell Garbutt*

The remnants of this race remain today, and it is a great shame that the names of these hardworking brothers are not commemorated in the area by the naming of features or roads. For them, the Golden Gate led to worn-out bodies and poverty. We are also the poorer if we don't commemorate their efforts.

Russell Garbutt, COHT Trustee

Note: The gorge is on private property and permission to explore this race needs to be obtained from William and Pip Rive.

CELEBRATING MATARIKI

Māori New Year, or Te Mātahi o te Tau, is marked by the rise of Matariki, the group of stars also known as the Pleiades cluster. Our first Matariki public holiday on 24 June 2022 signals a time for acknowledging the past, celebrating the present and looking forward to the promise of a new year.

Matariki is an abbreviation of 'Ngā Mata o te Ariki Tāwhirimātea, meaning the eyes of Tāwhirimātea (the god of the wind). Tāwhirimātea became so angry when his brother Tāne separated their parents, Ranginui the sky father and Papatūānuku the earth mother, that he tore out his own eyes and threw them into the heavens.



Traditionally, Māori would look to Matariki to predict what the year ahead would bring. Bright and clear stars in the cluster indicated warm weather and the promise of a good harvest. The ceremony of Matariki Hunga Nui brought people together to remember and honour those lost since the last rising.

How to find Matariki

From early June, the nine stars of the Matariki cluster are found low on the horizon in the northeast of the sky just before dawn (around 5:30-6:30am). To find Matariki, look for the group of stars known as 'The Pot' or Orion's Belt. From the Pot, keep heading left, down towards the bright star known as Tamata-kuku (Aldebaran). From there, keep looking left a little further to find the small bright cluster of Matariki (Pleiades). Alternatively, scan the QR code to watch the Te Papa video



References

- (i) Online presentation: *Matariki and Māori Astronomy with Rangi Matamua*
- (ii) matariki.net.nz

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

OTAGO MUSEUM - TŪ TONU PROJECT

Otago Museum's Tū Toni Project has developed a comprehensive line-up of events for staff and volunteers working in the museum and heritage sectors. Take a look at the next two events on offer in Central Otago in June and July.



Something's bugging me: managing pests in your collection

Thursday 30 June, 11am - 4pm, Central Stories, Alexandra

Worried about pests in your collection? Struggling with unwanted visitors that just won't leave? Then join us for an in-person workshop looking at the types of pests found in collections and how to create a sustainable and effective approach suitable for your institution.

Governance hui

Thursday 28 July, 11am - 4pm, Central Stories, Alexandra

What are the risks associated with being a Trustee or Director of an arts, culture or heritage organisation? What is a Strategic Plan and why do we need one? What does succession planning look like for your organisation? This session is an opportunity for members of boards, committees and management teams to come together to meet and share their experiences.

For more details, or to book your place in these workshops, visit our website – www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz. If you have any questions about the Tū Toni Project, email Kimberley.Stephenson@otagomuseum.nz.

Also coming up at Central Stories ...

Winterstellar Exhibition - Celebrating Matariki
18 June - 28 August

Rennie Pearson - Music grounded in the Celtic tradition
weaving together tunes and songs and tales.

Wednesday 6 July 7:30pm. Tickets \$20 from www.renniepearsonmusic.com

We wayward divas - Gilly Darbey and Vikki Clayton armed with nothing but their voices charm and prosecco.

Friday 15 July 7:30pm. Tickets \$25 from gillysing@xtra.co.nz



LAKE DUNSTAN - HERITAGE SITE REVIEW

The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust's (OGHT) 'Heritage Site Review' kicked off again in April after a short period of Covid-enforced down time. Assisting OGHT, was a team of Otago University student volunteers and project archaeologist, Shar Briden. The focus of the week-long fieldwork in April was along the shores of Lake Dunstan. The morning boat trips under fabulous Autumn weather were a welcome start to the day. Here's a glimpse of what the team discovered, just metres away from the Lake Dunstan Trail.



1000-year-old moa nest with composted nesting material



Holes in a rock shelter to slot supporting beams for a miner's humble abode!



This hut was relocated to its current position from where it was originally built closer to the river

OGHT Membership

Annual membership is due once again. Membership runs from 1 May to the 30 April. \$50 for a single or \$70 per couple. Apart from the Cavalcade and Heritage Site Review, OGHT also run field trips, working bees and opportunities for all sorts of folk to get involved in our local heritage.

The best place to see all the good things OGHT gets up to is on their Facebook page.

New members are welcomed.
Call 03 4450111 for more info.

TELLING OUR STORIES - THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Reflections on an interview with Roberta Laraman

Listening to the life experiences of others has always been a fascination and I am quick to encourage people to share such experiences. Getting involved in the Oral History Programme therefore seemed like a no-brainer. Taking on the task of recording a person's memories is, for me, both a privilege and a responsibility.

The interview with Roberta Laraman took place over two sessions. Before turning on the recorder, there are a few things that may need to be tackled that cannot be anticipated. These surprises are what makes training and practice important. The digital recorder used in an interview is extremely sensitive to background noise. That means loud ticking clocks need to be moved or a fridge motor turned off for the duration of the interview. So once Roberta and I had dealt with the various background noises, we got underway.

With the recorder light on, it became immediately clear that Roberta was a natural storyteller, and the unfolding of her many adventures was mesmerising. Roberta's tale started long before her involvement in the Cavalcade. She spoke of early adventures and careers in caring, administration, and entrepreneurship. It was not that she went looking for these opportunities, they just seemed to find her. With courage never lacking, she learnt to fly a plane, ride a horse and travelled to far-flung places.

Roberta was instrumental in coordinating the early Cavalcades. She rode the first in 1991, re-tracing the historic journey of Cobb & Co. Coach's journey from Dunedin to the Dunstan Goldfields via the Dunstan Trail. From then on, she was hooked! As Cavalcade co-ordinator for 17 later years, Roberta relished the opportunity to traverse a variety of old trails following in the footsteps of the early gold seekers.



Image courtesy of the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust

Her experiences, both overseas and throughout New Zealand, were told with a warm and adventurous spirit. Roberta is a woman with a big heart who, when seeing a need, does not hesitate to pitch in. Her many good deeds and involvement in the community were recognised in 2019 when she was awarded the N.Z. Order of Merit in the New Year Honours.

The stories flowed, and so did the time. My primary role as 'interviewer' was mostly about listening and to clarify only if needed. When the recorder was switched off, all that was left to do was to sign the paperwork, pack up the equipment and remember to turn the fridge back on, on the way out.

Listen to Roberta's interview by scanning the QR code.

Jenny Stephens, Oral History Programme Volunteer



*Roberta (right) and Fleur Sullivan
at the 2017 Cavalcade*

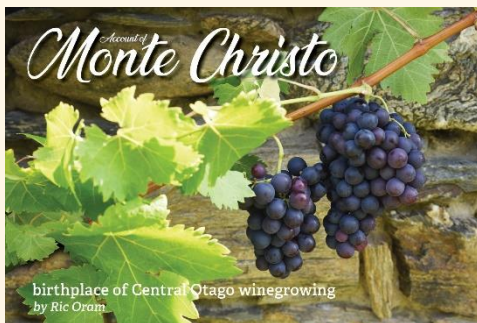


*Roberta awarded the MNZM for service
to tourism and heritage in 2019*

Account of Monte Christo

Ric Oram has published his fourth book on the history of Central Otago vineyards. *Account of Monte Christo* is the first about the life and times of Jean Desire Féraud who, along with his neighbour James Bladier, planted the first vineyard in the region, making wine from 1871. His winery in Clyde is the oldest surviving in New Zealand.

Available at Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery and Wanderlust Books.



CENTRAL OTAGO MUSEUMS TRUST - MEET AMANDA GRIFFIN

Amanda Griffin started her role as the Central Otago Museums' Trust Coordinator on 1 June. In this part-time role, Amanda will work closely with the Trust and the five Central Otago museums to foster greater sharing of resources, consistent policy development and connectivity to the community.



Amanda brings a wealth of experience working with small museums and holds a visual design degree along with a post graduate diploma in museum studies.

Her working life started as a computer engineer fixing technical problems on computers large and small. After bringing up her two children, she changed tack, moving into the arts. "There's a strong arts background in my family, so it was a natural direction for me," Amanda says.

In the mid-2010s, Amanda realised the museum sector was where her love of art, research, display and collecting all came together. After completing her museum studies, Amanda thought she was destined to work in a large museum like most other graduates. As luck would have it, she found her niche working in a much smaller museum in Taranaki.

As sole charge at the Mōkau Museum, Amanda could apply her knowledge and training in the arts and museum studies, rather than be funneled into one specific area of museum management. This included collection management, exhibition development and finding those much-needed funds for museums to stay open.

Having built a strong reputation at Mōkau, other museums in the vicinity started to call on Amanda for advice and help with learning techniques. "Empowering others to feel they were making a difference for their museum and to share in their passion for the area's history was such a thrill."

Earlier this year, Amanda made the decision to return to Central Otago to be closer to family. She knew she wanted to continue in the museum sector and took a leap of faith that something would turn up. The role of co-ordinator was advertised the day she arrived in Central. Amanda knew this role would be perfect for her.

"I am enthusiastic about advocating for the smaller museums who often miss out on opportunities. It's also really important that we value the efforts of volunteers who are the lifeblood of small museums. I'm looking forward to working alongside the Central Otago museums, hearing their stories and supporting them in achieving their goals."

You can contact Amanda at amanda@museumscentralotago.org.nz.

A SMALL ROOM WITH A BIG HISTORY

The McArthur room at the rear of the Alexandra library is a treasure trove of Central Otago history.

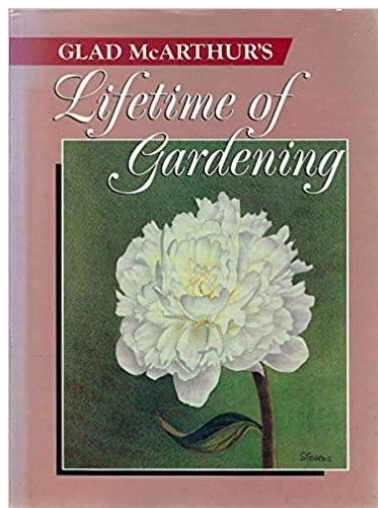
Within its relatively modest confines is a huge collection of official records, registers, books, and maps from days gone by. The McArthur room is the home base for the Alexandra branch of the NZ Society of Genealogists (NZSG) who have collected and administer their archives. The collection includes Birth, Death and Marriage registers from 1840-1990, electoral rolls, school rolls, cemetery records, microfiche of the International Genealogical Index, plus lots of other material to help super sleuth genealogists piece together family trees and histories.

The history within the McArthur room is as interesting as its namesake Gladys (Glad) McArthur, nee Taylor (1905 - 1992), a gardening guru and respected community stalwart whose wide-ranging contributions earned her the British Empire Medal in 1974. From the mid-1950s until the early 1990s, Glad penned a regular column in the Central Otago News, offering practical tips and advice on gardening as well as comment on gardening-related and community activities. She was Central Otago's green-fingered equivalent of Aunt Daisy.

Glad used to say she'd write a book when she stopped gardening, but that didn't happen until she was in her mid-80s. At this stage she agreed to the uplifting and editing of her 2000 published columns into a recipe collection book. Sales from this book raised money for the publication of 'Glad McArthur's Lifetime of Gardening' released a few months after her death in 1992. The book sold 4000 copies, the proceeds of which were distributed by the McArthur Book Committee. This committee organised, with Glad's blessing, the publishing of the book and on her death oversaw distribution of the money to a range of educational and horticultural-based organisations and groups. Several horticultural scholarships were established, and the Alexandra Library received \$26,000 to microfilm all of Central Otago's old newspapers, and \$14,000 for the purchase of a microfilm reader. All up \$135,000 was donated from book sales



Gladys (Glad) McArthur



and other grants the committee successfully applied for. The committee eventually disbanded after distribution of the remaining funds in 2014.

The Alexandra branch of the NZSG, established in the 1980s, moved its resources to the McArthur Room in 1996, and since then has gone from strength to strength, becoming an affiliated member of the NZSG in 2011.

“Over the years we’ve been able to enlarge our holdings by various means including grants from the Central Lakes Trust and running seminars. Our members compiled the Central Otago Family Register from people who made available their family trees in the late 1980s and 1990s,” Margaret Jarrold, group convenor says.

Other records are available to view when volunteers are on duty, or by appointment. The group meets on the first Wednesday of each month in the Alexandra library: February, March, April, September, October and November at 7.30pm; and June, July, August at 2pm.

The group welcomes and is happy to assist researchers and new members keen to delve deeper into their family history.



*Margaret Jarrold,
Convenor Alexandra NZSG*

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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

Our website

Get the latest news and events at:
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We encourage members and interested parties to use our logo in heritage related communications. Download this logo from our website.



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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 Otago Museums' Trust
- Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
- Otago Central Rail Trail Trust
- 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
- Vallance Cottage Working Group

OUR SUPPORTERS

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





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