

COHT Chair Report

Annual General Meeting

20 July 2022

Clyde Museum



The past 16 months, since our last annual report and meeting in February 2021, has been disruptive for many of our members with all the pandemic related restrictions, but it has also been productive overall for the heritage sector in Central Otago.

Last winter the Central Otago Heritage Trust updated our three-year Strategic Plan. This document helps guide our work programme over the following three-to-five-year period. Conversations with our members confirmed that the community-inspired recommendations set out in '*Towards Better Heritage Outcomes*', were still relevant. In August 2021 the Draft Strategic Plan was sent out to our members for feedback and I'd like to thank them for taking time to review this important document.

Our vision remains the same: that Central Otago's heritage is respected, valued, protected, preserved and celebrated for present and future generations. Our work programme is guided by three overarching goals:

1. Supporting the guardians of Central Otago heritage to identify, record, protect and preserve our heritage
2. Working together to enhance best practice for protecting and managing our heritage
3. Celebrating Central Otago's heritage

The Strategic Plan is available to be reviewed and downloaded from our website.

One of the higher profile "heritage sector" deliverables over the past year was the development of the Central Otago Museum Trust. Working with our five Central Otago Museums, we put forward a joint submission on the council's long-term-plan (LTP) four options for the District Museum Function. Together we proposed an alternative fifth option whereby an independent body be set up to coordinate this function, funded by but sitting outside council. This approach was formally adopted by council in September 2021, with the Central Otago Museums Trust being formed shortly thereafter.

We've been working closely with the Chair and Trustees over the last few months to provide administrative support in getting the Trust established. This has now stopped, with the appointment of a Museums' Trust Coordinator. The Chair of the Museum Trust, Owen Graham, will give us an update tonight on their progress.

Over the year our Trust has also submitted on a number of Council notified resource consents, where heritage matters had been identified. We have also been proactive in submitting to Otago Regional Council's Regional Policy Statements, including recommending that a broader definition of heritage that values cultural intangible aspects of heritage, rather than focusing only on physical and built environments.

Central Otago District Council has made considerable progress in developing and implementing planning guidelines for the five Heritage Precincts within the region. Glen Hazelton, the key author of these guidelines, has attended two of our Board meetings to present drafts for feedback. We value this opportunity to work with Council on heritage matters in the District Plan Review process and welcome the progress being made.

The Oral History programme has had several stop-starts, due to Covid, with interviewing. We developed, early on, health and safety guidelines to help protect our interviewees and interviewers from potential Covid harm. We applied for and have received over \$40,000 in grants and donations in the last few months, which will ensure that this highly valued regional programme can continue for a further two years. Our Oral History Manager Carolyn Squires will give us an update tonight on this successful programme.

As a result of Otago Museum's Tū Tonu Project 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.

Many of our member groups are making great progress in their endeavours.

The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust progresses with its Heritage Site Review project. While Covid slowed the reviews for a while, they have been back to work this winter, recording many sites alongside the new Lake Dunstan Trail and the Kawerau River near Bannockburn. For every known heritage site, an average of a further three, not previously recorded, sites are being identified. We look forward to working with them and Council to map these sites on the District planning maps, and the future inclusion of some of these sites in Schedule 19.4 of the District Plan.

The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust is proceeding with purchasing the former Methodist Church in Cromwell, as its permanent office space. The stone church is currently being considered for a Category 1 Heritage Listing with Heritage NZ.

The Goldfields Cavalcade 2022 to Millers Flat was cancelled due to Covid. The 2023 Cavalcade will be to Millers Flat where there will be celebrations for the 30th holding of this event.

In May this year, the Goldfields Heritage Trust arranged for horses, riders, a coffin-wagon and period-dressed supporters to form a funeral procession to re-enter a forgotten, un-named gold miner, in Cromwell Cemetery. A festive occasion that received significant publicity.

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

Our quarterly heritage publication is eagerly awaited by many in the sector, with a wide-ranging variety of fascinating stories and features. Well done to Maggie, who drives the publication. If you aren't aware of this publication, it is readily available on our website.

We appreciate the funding support we have received from Council over the last three years. Like many other groups, we submitted a funding application under the Council's new contestable Community Fund process. I'm pleased to say we were successful and received funding to October 2023. This funding enables us to continue employing our part-time Heritage Coordinator, which has fostered a more integrated and cohesive approach to identifying, preserving and celebrating Central Otago's heritage.

Over the last 16 months we have had personnel changes at the Trust. Late last year we saw the departure of trustee Greg Bodeker, who had taken on other time-consuming projects, and Council's representative David Campbell, who moved to a new role in the Waitaki District. We thank them both for their experience, skills and commitment to furthering the heritage impact in the region.

We were delighted to co-opt Warwick Hawker onto the Board in late 2021 (he is nominated for election to the Board at this AGM) and we welcome Ann Rogers as our new Central Otago District Council Liaison person.

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.

Times have, and continue, to change. Individuals and communities now, more than ever, recognize that heritage is an important asset - whether it be artifacts in museums, restored early settlement buildings, or Māori customs and traditions.

They contribute to the foundation of our distinctive regional character and are a valued resource, attracting new residents, businesses and visitors to the area. They contribute to the region's prosperity and well-being.

David Ritchie

Chairman

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