

# Protecting, preserving & celebrating our heritage



Spring 2023



*T. Gilchrist and Sons Ltd, Ōtūrēhua  
New Zealand's longest operating general store*

Published by the Central Otago Heritage Trust  
[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

# 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). Maggie Hope (Heritage Coordinator).

# CONTENTS

HERITAGE MATTERS .....	2
FROM THE CHAIR .....	2
CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE .....	3
HAMILTONS - FROM GOLD RUSH TO GHOST TOWN .....	3
THE TALE OF MARYANN.....	7
HERITAGE IN FOCUS - PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION .....	8
MEET EMILY SIEDEBERG .....	9
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GILCHRIST’S STORE.....	12
THEYERS & BECK - MANUHEREKIA BREWERY .....	13
HERITAGE TALKS .....	16
PROTECTING & PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE .....	18
MALCOLM MACPHERSON’S CONTRIBUTION TO HERITAGE .....	18
THERE’S HIDDEN GOLD IN CROMWELL’S HISTORY .....	19
TELLING OUR STORIES - ORAL HISTORY UPDATE .....	21
FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR THE MUSEUMS 100 PROJECT.....	23
CROMWELL MUSEUM PREPARES FOR THE FUTURE .....	24
CONNECT WITH US .....	25

*Cover image courtesy of James Hubb, Otago Central Rail Trail Trust*

# HERITAGE MATTERS

## FROM THE CHAIR

With warmer weather on the horizon, it's a great time to get outdoors and enjoy our heritage offerings. We've teamed up with the Central Otago District Council to tell the stories of our heritage through images. We are running a 'Heritage in Focus' photography competition, where both amateur and professional photographers can submit their best shots of 'all things' heritage.



On behalf of Trustees, I would like to acknowledge the passing of Dr Malcolm Macpherson who will rightly be remembered for his many contributions to the heritage sector and Central Stories Museum.

The Trust has recently been awarded additional funding from Central Lakes Trust for the continuation of our Oral History Project. Operating since 2019, this funding ensures that our volunteer-based project can continue for another two years. We're also very pleased to announce that we have made significant progress in getting our oral histories published online.

In the winter edition of our newsletter, I mentioned two recommendations we included on Council's online brainstorm page for the Long-term Planning process:

1. To develop a shared and connected long-term vision for arts, culture and heritage in our District.
2. To understand community aspirations for heritage to inform our direction.

We are now investigating how we might start progressing these two ideas within the Council's upcoming 'Community Vision' project. The first phase of consultation aims to describe and measure community aspirations associated with cultural, economic, social, and environmental well-being. We see arts, culture and heritage cutting across all four of these Well-being Indicators.

Our 'Heritage Talks' programme continues to receive great interest from the community. Part One of the 'History of Central Otago Viticulture,' with guest speaker Ric Oram, had a large turnout at Central Stories in August. Part Two of this series will be held on 26 September at Bannockburn Hall, with renowned viticulturists Alan Brady and Rudi Bauer talking about our more recent wine-making history. At our AGM on 29 November, Annie Sohler-Snoddy from Otago University, will share her research on 'Children's Health and Well-being on the Otago Goldfields.' We hope to see you at one of these events.

David Ritchie, Chair - Central Otago Heritage Trust

# CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

## HAMILTONS - FROM GOLD RUSH TO GHOST TOWN

Located 10km from Waipiata is the now non-existent settlement of Hamiltons. Like many gold rush towns in Central Otago, Hamiltons Diggings sprang up in a matter of days. Virtually the entire population of Hogburn (Naseby) relocated to the newly discovered goldfield on a sheep station owned by Captain James Hamilton; hence the town and mining area being named Hamiltons.

The discovery of gold was first reported there on 12 December 1863. By the end of that month its population had gone from zero to 2,000. A month later it was 3,000, reaching its peak of 4,000 in 1864. The town boasted 40 stores, 25 liquor outlets, banking facilities and a school. Many of these commercial buildings were rudimentary tin and canvas structures. The miners mostly lived in tents.



*Hamiltons commercial area (circa 1872)  
Image courtesy of Māniototo Settlers Museum*

There was so much interest in the site that claims were granted at half the size of the usual mining rights. Mining claims issued at this time were usually around 53m<sup>2</sup>. With only 26m<sup>2</sup> to work in, miners found themselves working shoulder to shoulder in a race to seek their fortunes.

In the first 18 months, 80,000 ounces of gold were taken out of the alluvial gravels, making Hamiltons one of the richest claims in the Māniototo. This first strike was found mostly by panning, with miners taking their wash dirt (gravel and sand) to the lagoon at the base of Big Hill.

By 1868, only 1,406 ounces were recorded. With no more easy gold to be found, miners moved on to other sites including the nearby Shepherds Hut diggings. In April 1874, the Mount Ida Chronicle estimated the population at just 90.

Many miners had earned enough money to purchase land and turned their hands to farming. Some of those descendants are still farming in the Māniototo today. Those who stayed on built more permanent dwellings. Calico buildings were replaced with sun-dried bricks, iron and schist. The closure of the school in 1906 signalled the end of Hamiltons as a viable settlement.

A young gold prospector, Alexander McKay, wrote about what life was like in Hamiltons during the early 1860s, describing it as noisy and often violent. After-work entertainment in the calico hall was also rowdy. Quarrelsome miners of every nationality would settle disputes with force, often resulting in bloody combat. With that said, Alexander, his uncle and his brother were no strangers to these violent encounters. On one occasion, an Irish claim jumper, who was discovered working their shaft, attacked them with a long-handled shovel. In self-defence, they swiftly knocked him headfirst into the hole.



*Hamiltons Church and School  
Image courtesy of Māniototo Early Settlers Museum*

There was renewed interest in mining at Hamiltons from the late 1800s, when more costly methods of sluicing and hydraulic mining were deployed. Water was delivered by races from Pigburn, near Patearoa and Capburn on the Hyde side of the Rock and Pillar Range. However, these commercial operations were seldom fruitful. A landslide in 1912 at Big Hill saw the end of commercial mining operations.



In 1914, the Waipiata Sanatorium breathed new life into the area. Situated a few kilometres from Hamiltons Diggings, this privately owned health centre was eventually taken over by the Hospital Board and continued as a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients until 1961. The cold harsh climate endured by miners was considered conducive to treating this post-war debilitating lung disease. The sanatorium is now a private religious retreat called 'En Hakkore' - a biblical name meaning a place of refreshment.

All that remains of Hamiltons today are empty paddocks with piles of mining waste rock, stone hut remnants, scarred hills, a dam and water races used for sluicing. However, a few kilometres down the road, Hamiltons Cemetery gives visitors a tangible reminder of those who once lived here. This remarkable cemetery, restored and cared for by the Friends of Hamilton Cemetery Group, is a place of solitude and offers stunning views over the Māniototo plains. It's a perfect spot to reflect on the area's rich gold mining past.



*Remnants at Shepherds Hut diggings*



*Hamiltons Cemetery*

## Captain James Hamilton

Born in Scotland in 1821, James Hamilton served in the Indian Army as an officer in the Bombay Artillery. In 1860, after visiting his brother in Australia, Captain James Hamilton took up 'Run 204' in Sowburn. Three years later, his remote sheep station was transformed into the booming gold mining town of Hamiltons.

The captain played his part in ensuring that it wasn't all rough and tumble in the township. He was respected across the district as a businessman and trader, but also as a community-minded individual. He was a generous benefactor to Hamiltons Church, which also served as the school and community hub. He was also known around the district for his medical talents, tending to the sick and injured on the diggings - skills he likely acquired while serving in the army.

In December 1873, the church filled to overflowing to bid farewell to Captain Hamilton, who was leaving the district to return to Britain. In response to the cheers and speeches, he said, "The people of Hamilton had shown him far too much kindness for any little thing he had ever been able to do." (Mount Ida Chronicle, December 1873).



*Captain James Hamilton (1821- 1892)  
Image courtesy of The National Library*

## From gold to bones

Gold wasn't the only treasure found at Hamiltons. In 1870, miners accidentally unearthed bones near Shepherds Hut diggings. This discovery eventually came to the attention of English scientist, Captain F.W. Hutton, from Otago Museum, who led the 1874 excavations. In an area of about 40m<sup>2</sup>, the remains of hundreds of moa were found beneath the black peat and silt. Their bones weighed more than three and a half tonnes.

Numerous theories were put forward as to why such a large number of moa died at this site. The most likely theory is that they ventured into the swamp to eat new plant shoots, with the unlucky ones sinking into the quicksand of peat and silt.

## THE TALE OF MARYANN

Ongoing collaborations with researchers at the John Crow Research Room at Central Stories have brought to light new and fascinating information on individuals who once lived in Central Otago. Last month, Julia Bradshaw from the Canterbury Museum visited to gather information for her upcoming book, "Women Who Lived and Worked on the Central Otago Goldfields." Julia was particularly interested in learning more about Maryann, the last known Chinese miner who once lived in the Roxburgh Gorge.

Opposite the mouth of Butchers Creek, the Lake Roxburgh Gorge Walk track climbs over a large rocky outcrop and descends to a cluster of stone huts at Coleman's Gully. The largest hut, a three-roomed schist dwelling, incorporating a large schist boulder as one of its walls, is believed to have been Maryann's home. Maryann would have enjoyed magnificent views down the Clutha River towards Roxburgh.



*Maryann's three-roomed dwelling in the Roxburgh Gorge  
Image courtesy of Laurence van der Eb*

This is where the research becomes intriguing. 'Maryann' was, in fact, a man. His uncut hair hung about his shoulders like that of a woman's. His clothes were so patched that the original garments were entirely obscured by bits and pieces of material in various shapes and colours which were sewn on with coloured thread.

Like many of his compatriots, he was an expert gardener and cultivated the most luscious melons on his claim. To surprise his friends, he kept samples from his gardening in the folds of his garments to give away as gifts.

Margaret Jarrold - Volunteer, Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery



# HERITAGE IN FOCUS - PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

To celebrate Central Otago's incredible and diverse heritage, we're inviting professional and amateur photographers to put Heritage in Focus.



## What is heritage?

Heritage will mean different things to different people, so we've taken a wide-angle view of what heritage means. Your photo could focus on tangible things like historical buildings, trees, natural landscapes, streetscapes, signage or historical objects. Or you might have a more intangible interpretation of what Central Otago heritage means. This might include things like cultural heritage, or other personal or social expressions of heritage. The creative boundaries are yours to define!

## What's in it for me?

We have three entry categories with some great cash prizes up for grabs:

1. Professional Photographer: winner \$750, two runners-up \$500 each
2. Amateur Photographer: winner \$500, two runners-up \$300 each
3. Young Photographer: winner \$500, two runners-up \$300 each

The winning photographs in each category, as well as highly commended photographs, will form an exhibition at Clyde Museum in December 2023.

## What's in it for us?

Central Otago Heritage Trust has teamed up with Tourism Central to tell the stories of our heritage through images. We'd like to use your photos - with credit - to help tell these stories on our websites, publications and other media. This is all about showcasing and celebrating our regional identity.

## ENTRIES ARE NOW OPEN!

Grab your phone or camera and get creative!

**Entries close on 1 November 2023.** You'll find all the information on our website: [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/heritage-in-focus/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/heritage-in-focus/) or follow the QR Code.



**CENTRAL  
OTAGO**  
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

## MEET EMILY SIEDEBERG

Emily Siedeberg is probably not a name that most people are familiar with, but she deserves special recognition for her medical achievements.

Emily was born in Clyde on 17 February 1873, and was the third child of Franz David Siedeberg and Anna Thompson. Franz, a German architect, operated the first gold dredge on the Clutha River. He held high expectations for Emily and steered her career aspirations towards the medical profession at a very young age.

Emily attended the Normal School in Moray Place in Dunedin and won a scholarship to attend Otago Girls High School. In March 1891, Emily wrote to the Chancellor of the University of Otago expressing her desire to enter the Medical School to gain a degree in medicine. University staff voted to accept her as a student. However, Trustees at Dunedin Hospital were not convinced that medical school was a place for women, with six out of nine trustees voting against her application. Red-faced at the University's support, the hospital had no option but to accept her.

On 29 April 1891, Emily was added to the register of medical students at the University of Otago. Her mother offered sage advice for prospering in the all-male student cohort - 'Keep men at a distance and never show your feelings.' While she did suffer taunts from some male students, on the whole, she said that 'her fellow students were quite well-behaved young men.'

Emily had no problem keeping up with study demands. She completed two years' work in one and graduated a year earlier than her male peers. In 1896, she became New Zealand's first female graduate, with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB).

Emily worked for a brief period as a locum for Dr Truby King at the Seacliff Lunatic Asylum before traveling to Dublin for postgraduate studies in obstetrics, gynaecology and children's diseases. Ironically, in 1929 Emily delivered renowned author Janet Frame who would later become a patient at Seacliff.

With her father's help, Emily set up a private practice in 1898 which continued until 1938.



*New Zealand's first medical graduate  
Emily Siedeberg (1873 - 1968)  
Image courtesy of Otago Settlers Museum*

In 1905, she was appointed the first medical officer and then superintendent of St. Helens Hospital in Dunedin, a position she held until the hospital's closing in 1938. The hospital provided maternity care to low-income women.

During the First World War, she travelled to the UK and worked as a house surgeon at Sheffield and, after returning to Dunedin, she started the first antenatal clinic at St. Helens and concurrently became an anaesthetist at the Dental School.



*With her broad brimmed hat and white dress, Emily Siedeberg stands out from her male peers at the University of Edinburgh in 1912.  
Image courtesy of Hocken Collections.*

Emily condemned prostitution but offered practical support to 'fallen women' within her own home. She was the foundation member of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. She was also a key advocate and member of the Dunedin branch of the National Council of Women, the New Zealand Medical Women's Association, and the Federation of University Women. She also served as the local President of the Plunket Association.

Through these organisations, Siedeberg fought 'the wrongs of womankind as she would fight for the life of a patient.' She advocated for raising the age of consent;

strong measures to prevent venereal disease; the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Act 1869; the appointment of women police, hospital, and factory inspectors; and equal opportunities for women in higher education and employment. At the same time, she was a staunch eugenicist and believed in capital punishment.

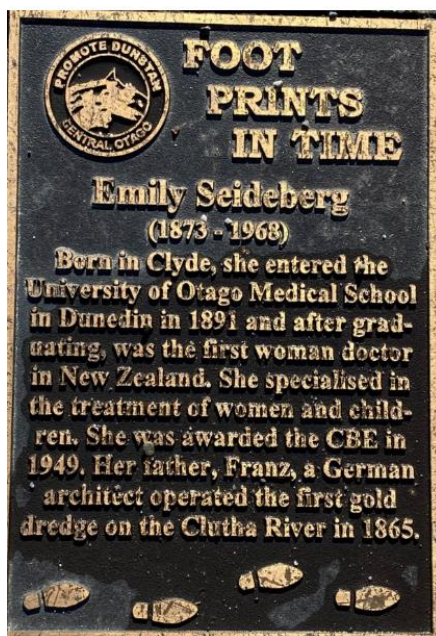
Her numerous medical achievements were acknowledged through her appointment as a Life Member of the New Zealand branch of the British Medical Association (1929), the receipt of the King George V Silver Jubilee Medal (1935) and the conferment of the CBE (1949).

On family issues, in keeping with her Victorian principles, she advocated domestic training for all girls to prepare them for marriage and motherhood, yet she herself did not marry until late middle age. Much to her family's dismay, at the age of 55, Emily married James McKinnon, a retired banker. They lived in Māori Hill in Dunedin until her husband's death when she moved back into her original family home.

Emily was the second woman in Dunedin to own and drive a car and was once charged with driving at a 'furious and dangerous' speed of more than walking pace. She successfully defended this charge. In 1951, Emily took her first trip on a plane and went on safari in Kenya with Joy Adamson, the author of 'Born Free'.

Emily died in Oamaru in June 1968 at 95 and is buried in the Northern Cemetery in Dunedin in the family grave. Her niece, Emily Host established a scholarship in Emily Siedeberg's name for female medical students at the University of Otago. In 1993, 'Emily Siedeberg Place' in Dunedin was named in her honour, as part of the Suffrage Centennial Year.

Russell Garbutt, COHT Trustee



*Emily Siedeberg features in the footsteps in time plaque series on Sunderland St at Clyde.*



## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GILCHRIST'S STORE

When rail-trail cyclists and visitors enter Gilchrist's Store, the first question they often ask is, "What's the history of this place?" The answer to this question has been immortalised in a new book, *Thomas Gilchrist and Sons Ltd of the Māniototo*. It was standing room only at the Ōtūrēhua Hall on the first Sunday of spring when 200 people gathered for the launch of this community-inspired labour of love.

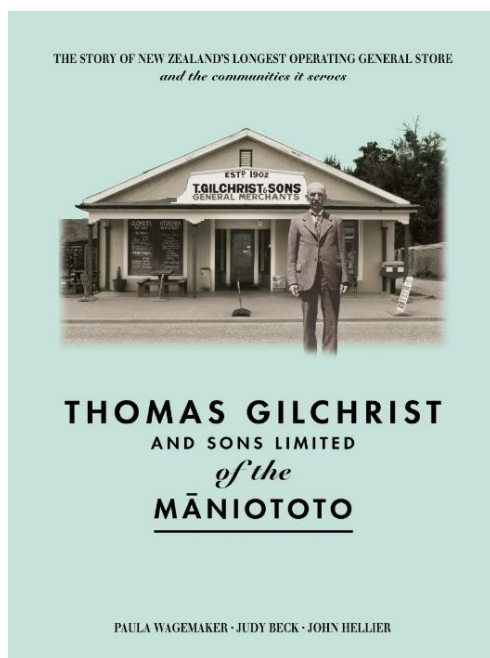
New Zealand's longest continually operating general store has been servicing the area since 1902 when Thomas Gilchrist set up shop in the remote rural area of Rough Ridge (Ōtūrēhua). For decades, Gilchrist's offered everything from bread to bedding, cabbages to cigarettes, dusters to dynamite, fabrics to fencing, garters to gasoline and much, much more, all crammed into one space.

Set against the backdrop of the social, economic and political forces that helped shape the fortunes of Gilchrist's, the book tells us as much about the communities that benefited from the shop as it does about the shop itself.

General stores in New Zealand, like Gilchrist's, began closing down in the 1970s. In 1989, the third generation of Gilchrists to run the store decided to sell the shop. To help ensure that the shop stayed open, local communities dug deep into their pockets to secure community ownership of the building, its fittings, and numerous items of bygone merchandise. Independent owners continue to run the store and its important grocery and mail delivery services.

Meticulously researched, the book is co-authored by Ōtūrēhua locals Paula Wagemaker, Judy Beck and John Hellier. Its 328 pages are packed with over 400 images and fascinating stories about the successes and hardships of doing business in the Māniototo.

*Thomas Gilchrist and Sons Ltd of the Māniototo* can be purchased from the store ([shop@gilchriststore.co.nz](mailto:shop@gilchriststore.co.nz)) or from [www.nationwidebooks.co.nz/publisher/quentin-wilson-publishing](http://www.nationwidebooks.co.nz/publisher/quentin-wilson-publishing). Revenue from book sales goes towards the upkeep of the heritage-listed store building and its memorabilia.



## THEYERS & BECK - MANUHEREKIA BREWERY

The mud brick shed on the western side of Manuherekia Road, opposite the Alexandra Holiday Park, is the only remaining building of the old Manuherekia Brewery. Billy Theyers and Canute Beck established the brewery there in 1870, crafting high-quality ales that were 'unsurpassed for purity, brilliancy, flavor and wholesomeness'. It was once the furthest inland brewery in Otago.



*The remains of Theyers and Beck Manuherekia Brewery built in 1880  
which was once used as the bottling store.*

The enterprise expanded to accommodate the increasing demand, with its operations spanning both sides of Manuherekia Rd. A basic grain store was built that held 800 – 1,000 bushels of locally grown barley from Ida Valley and Speargrass Flat. The workforce consisted of four men who produced around 800 gallons (3,000 litres) per week using water from the Manuherekia River.

The final fermentation process occurred in wooden 'hogshead' barrels, each with a capacity of 245 litres. The cooling cellar was spacious enough to accommodate 50 hogsheads of their sparkling 'XXXX' branded ale. The 'XXXX' brand reflects a long-standing tradition of using Xs to denote the strength of an ale.

The quality of their brews was credited to their 'first-class' brewmaster, Frederick Joseph Kühtze (1833 - 1901). Kühtze, originally from Cologne, honed his skills in Victoria before arriving in New Zealand in 1867. He joined Theyers and Beck in 1870 and worked for the brewery until he left in 1873 to take over the San Brewery in Cromwell. Interestingly, his grandson, Joseph T. Coutts founded the Waitemata Brewery in Otahuhu in 1929, which later became the flagship of Dominion

Breweries under the brewing direction of another grandson, Morton W. Coutts. Both breweries operated using Joseph Kühtze's original methods. Dominion Breweries later used Kühtze's name for a brand of lager.



*Manuherekia Brewery in its heyday (circa 1870s)  
Image courtesy of Hocken Collections*

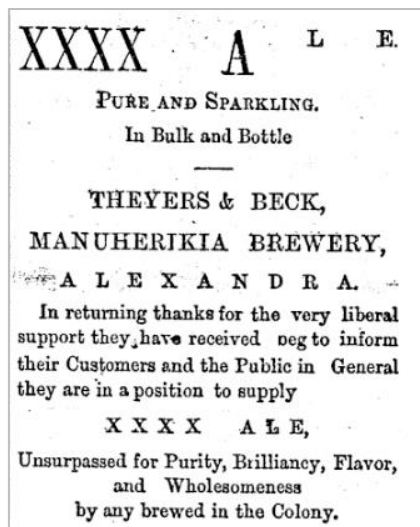
The partnership between Theyers and Beck ended on 11 August 1890. Beck purchased Theyers' share for £1100.00 and continued to make beer and cordials until his death in 1908.

The torpedo-shaped bottle, often known as the Hamilton bottle, was produced by Theyers and Beck. Torpedo bottles have a rounded end, which prevents them from standing upright. This design was effective in keeping the soda in continuous contact with the cork, so it didn't dry out. If the cork shrunk, the bottle would lose pressure.



*Theyers & Beck, Torpedo Bottle*

After Beck's death, the brewery was used as a depot by Dunedin-based Lanes Cordials Ltd. Soon after, Thomas Grant and Walter Maynard, who worked at Speight's in Dunedin, made cordials and non-alcohol temperance drinks for several years. It was then purchased by Stephen Spain from Earnsclough Station, who transformed the business into a rabbit canning factory - Central Otago Preserves Ltd. The basic brewery structures on the eastern side of Manuherekia Rd were replaced with a substantial concrete building where rabbit meat was canned and sent to Britain for the armed forces in World War 1, especially the navy.



*Dunstan Times, 4 July 1873*

The 'Rabbit Factory,' as it was known, closed in 1921. The buildings lay idle until they were purchased in 1939 by G.H. Fox, and eventually became part of the Alexandra Holiday Park.

## CENTRAL OTAGO HERITAGE TRUST

### Annual General Meeting

**5:15 pm Wednesday 29 November 2023**

**Clyde Museum**



#### GUEST SPEAKER – AFTER AGM BUSINESS (6:45pm)

##### Children's Health & Well-being on the Otago Goldfields

Dr. Annie Sohler-Snoddy, of the University of Otago, shares research that highlights how the littlest people can have big stories to tell about the past.  
(see details below)

#### ALL MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME

Light refreshments will be served after the AGM business

**For catering purposes**

**RSVP to [info@heritagecentralotago.org.nz](mailto:info@heritagecentralotago.org.nz)**

**or call Maggie on 027 5702485**



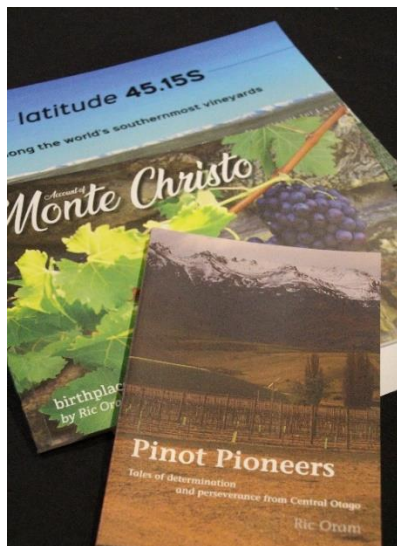
## HERITAGE TALKS

### Grape Expectations - The History of Central Otago Viticulture

Feisty Frenchmen, frost and unreliable water all played a part in shaping the early development of Central Otago's viticulture industry. Ric Oram, accomplished journalist and author of four books on winegrowing in the region, shared his extensive knowledge with an almost capacity crowd at the Central Stories Museum in August.

Ric's presentation focused on the stop-start efforts from the mid-1860s until the late 1970s. Frenchman Jacques Bladier planted the first vines in Springvale in the early 1860s, and his neighbour Jean Desire Féraud produced the first Central Otago wine. However, both were beaten back by frigid weather and a shortage of reliable water. After an almost century-long hiatus, the possibility of grape growing was revisited with vines trialled by the Department of Agriculture in the early 1960s and the DSIR in the early 1970s.

These experiments were pivotal in proving that some vines for wine could tolerate sub-zero temperatures and they paved the way for the handful of never-say-never commercial winegrowing pioneers of the 1970s - the subject of the second presentation on the History of Central Otago Viticulture.



*Three of Ric's books on Central Otago Viticulture*

### The road to producing world-class wine

TUE  
26  
SEPT

The 1970s marked a renewed interest in New Zealand viticulture with a few visionaries disregarding advice that Central Otago and the Gibbston Valley were too cold, too high and too far south to prosper. Alan Brady and Rudi Bauer talk about getting our region's vineyards and wines onto the world stage.

**Tuesday 26 September, 6:30pm**  
**Bannockburn Hall**  
**Booking is essential**

\$10 entry - includes a complimentary glass of wine from Quartz Reef or The Wild Irishman. (Please bring cash to pay on the night)

## Children's Health & Well-being on the Otago Goldfields

WED  
29  
NOV

Dr. Annie Sohler-Snoddy, of the University of Otago, shares research that highlights how the littlest people can have big stories to tell about the past.

The Central Otago Heritage Trust's AGM will take place immediately prior to this presentation, starting at 5:15pm.

**Wednesday 29 November, 6:45pm**  
**Clyde Museum, Blyth St**

Entry by koha to Clyde Museum



Between 2018 - 2020 the University of Otago Department of Anatomy and Southern Archaeology conducted a series of excavations of unmarked graves at the 'old' cemetery at Ardrossan St, in Lawrence (1861-1866), and at Drybread Cemetery near Omakau (mid to late 1800s). The aim of this project was to recover the unidentified dead, learn about their lives through scientific analysis of their remains and rebury them with dignity and recognition.

Some of the more poignant finds from this work have been the graves and remains of babies and young children. Children are not often thought of in the context of the Otago Goldrushes. However, women and children were present on the Otago frontier from the very earliest days and were active members of their communities.



*Image courtesy of Lakes District Museum*

Book your place at these Heritage Talks on our website:

[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/events/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/events/)

# PROTECTING & PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

## RECOGNISING MALCOLM MACPHERSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO HERITAGE

Former Central Otago mayor, Dr Malcolm Macpherson, who died on 24 August after a lengthy illness, will be remembered by Central Otago's heritage community as a strong, and well-placed advocate for the preservation and celebration of our unique legacy of heritage places, historic artifacts and cultural memories.

As Mayor, Malcolm encouraged the major heritage organisations of that time to look beyond their specific interests and speak out as a single voice on matters of common concern. In later years, he was proud of the fact that his signature witnessed the founding of the Central Otago Heritage Trust (2008).

Later Malcolm served as both Chair of the Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery and as a member of the Central Otago Heritage Trust Board (2013 - 2014) where he advocated strongly for central coordination and support of the district's smaller museums. Despite facing challenges from many directions including the lack of adequate funding, Malcolm remained a steadfast champion for Central Stories; spending many hours of his busy schedule either working at the front desk to keep the doors open or behind the scenes on more strategic matters.

In 2018, Malcolm was rightly recognised for his extensive work in local government and the community, as an 'Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit'. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Susan and their family at this sad time.



*Malcolm Macpherson (2017)  
Photo courtesy of Stuff News*

## THERE'S HIDDEN GOLD IN CROMWELL'S HISTORY

Cromwell's Chinatown housed over 400 Chinese people between 1866 and 1920. A project is set to explore and celebrate the impact they had on the emerging settlement of Cromwell. It will also provide an important resource for young learners, locals and visitors.

Recognising the part Chinese people played in Cromwell's history has been an item in successive Community Plans, and a 2022 survey re-confirmed community support for a Chinese Settlement project. Cromwell and Districts Community Trust (CDCT) is the facilitator of Cromwell's community plans, and Trust chair, Ali Ballantine, says collaboration among community groups is now driving the project forward.

Research into Cromwell's early Chinese residents began with items currently in the Cromwell museum collection, and information from David Wong Hop MNZM, James Ng, Neville Ritchie, James Beattie and the media of the time. Museum director, Jennifer Hay, says the resulting exhibition, showing project progress, is something everyone should see.

"This project is elaborating upon our understanding of Cromwell's Chinese miners, business people and citizens and their contribution to Central Otago."

The exhibition focuses on who our earliest Chinese residents were, why they came to Cromwell, what they achieved and their impact on the developing Cromwell community that still reverberates today. An interesting story is emerging; not about how some Chinese struck it rich, but more about what they did when they **didn't** strike it rich.



*Neville Ritchie: Original Chinatown Hut, 1985.*

Our Chinese residents played a major role in Cromwell's early economic and cultural development. Despite the discrimination rife at that time, our Chinese residents brought us mining technologies, opened stores that catered for all nationalities, turned barren ground into fertile soil and brought a diverse community together through music.

It is a story unique to Cromwell. It is also a key part of the wider history of a 'Golden Highway' ranging from Ōtepoti Dunedin, through Lawrence, Roxburgh, Alexandra, Cromwell and Arrowtown. This story is a valuable strand of our overall gold mining history not often heard.



The project plan is to re-create a dwelling from drawings published by archaeologist Neville Ritchie. The site is directly above the original settlement, linking the new museum and Cromwell Heritage precinct. Technology will be incorporated to make this an immersive experience.

The project will provide hands-on educational resources for learners and an experience for visitors that fits with the wider visitor destination strategy for the region.

Ali says the CDCT is excited to be leading a project that brings to light and celebrates a key part of Cromwell's rich heritage and history.

"This partial recreation of the original Chinese mining settlement, situated near the confluence of the Kawarau and Clutha Mata-au rivers, will provide important tourism and educational benefits for the local and wider community."

*If you have any information or resources to contribute to this project, please email [cromwelldct@gmail.com](mailto:cromwelldct@gmail.com) or drop into the museum and talk to one of the volunteers.*

Mary Hinsen, Cromwell & Districts Community Trust



*Cromwell's Chinatown in the late 1800s.  
Images courtesy of Ron Murray Collection, Cromwell Museum.*

## TELLING OUR STORIES - ORAL HISTORY UPDATE

It's time to celebrate for the volunteers working on the Oral History Project. Central Otago Heritage Trust is delighted to have reached a significant milestone in the project with our oral histories now available for online listening. A launch event was held with volunteers to mark this achievement at Central Stories in late August.

"It's the volunteers who have made this project such a success. They've all committed to intensive training and bring a wealth of expertise and sensitivity to every interview. We're so grateful for the hard work and commitment they have contributed to get the project to this stage, with a significant body of interviews in the collection and many more are currently in the making," says Carolyn Squires, the Oral History Manager.

"It is a privilege to interview these exceptional local people. They give so much of themselves and their memories. Having these stories online is a great milestone and will be really useful for showing future interviewees what we're trying to achieve," says Joan Lawrence, a volunteer on the project.

The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT US, MEMBERS, NEWS, HERITAGE CENTRAL OTAGO (logo), EVENTS, ORAL HISTORY, CONTACT, and a search icon. Below the navigation bar are filters for 'All (13)', 'Locations', and 'Themes'. The main content area displays four oral history interviews as portrait cards:

- Graeme Stewart**: [Listen to the interview](#)
- John Breen**: [Listen to the interview](#)
- Catherine Little**: [Listen to the interview](#)
- Elizabeth Riley**: [Listen to the interview](#)

Oral histories are now published on the Central Otago Heritage Trust's website: [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/heritage-in-focus/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/heritage-in-focus/)

All interviews are carefully checked and edited for sensitivity and privacy considerations. There are currently thirteen recordings uploaded to the website, with many more on the way.

The volunteer-led project aims to collect at least 30 oral histories each year. Each oral history can involve up to 16 or more hours of time, including preparation, pre-

interview meetings, recording and follow-up editing and abstraction. Since 2019, volunteer hours have been estimated at 2,160.



*Volunteers celebrate the launch of the online repository at Central Stories*

The success of the project relies on funding to employ our part-time Oral History Manager. The recent grant received from Central Lakes Trust ensures that the program will continue for a further two years.

# Celebrating Clyde Sunday 24 Sept

Soak up the atmosphere of historic Clyde  
Wander through the 1860s Replica Village

**PROMOTE DUNSTAN  
CENTRAL OTAGO**

Brochures available to  
discover more about this  
gold mining village

Alexandra Pipe Band  
at 11.00

Live music from  
11.30 till 2.00

## FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR THE MUSEUMS 100 PROJECT

There's been a flurry of activity behind the scenes at Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery over the last few weeks. New and existing volunteers have stepped up to participate in the Central Museums 100 project and they are making great progress in the work involved.

Volunteers are currently working on the Central Stories inventory, ensuring that no hidden gems are missed from the 12,000 or so objects that make up their collection. In the process, they've come across several exciting and beautiful items. Once this task is completed, the next step will involve selecting twenty objects that will represent Central Stories' contribution to the Central Museums 100 project.

Funded by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, the project provides an opportunity to foster collaboration, enhance the care of collections and promote each of our five museums and the significant stories they have to share.



*Central Stories Volunteers:  
From left - Islay McDonald, Judy Campbell, Jillian Jopp and Margaret Jarrold*

If you're interested in joining the project volunteer team at one of our five museums, please get in touch with Amanda - [amanda@museumscentralotago.org.nz](mailto:amanda@museumscentralotago.org.nz)

Amanda Griffin  
Central Otago Museums' Trust



## CROMWELL MUSEUM PREPARES FOR THE FUTURE

Cromwell Museum trustees are excited about the possibilities that a new museum will provide. While still some way off, it is encouraging that the old Memorial Hall is scheduled for demolition later this year, thus marking the start of the project. The museum has been involved in planning for its new space in the Cultural Centre to be built at Melmore Terrace.



Cromwell is one of New Zealand's fastest growing small towns. It's therefore appropriate that this new project gives us an opportunity to reflect on our past, focus our cultural needs and other areas of endeavour.

The museum's role is to celebrate and preserve our heritage for future generations through provision of public programmes involving schools, exhibitions, research facilities, the development of collections and provision of a range of visitor experiences.

The trustees are committed to the use of the latest digital technologies to be incorporated into new exhibits. Having said that, it is noticeable that for most visitors to the museum the first thing they do upon entering is to turn left and make straight for the model of old Cromwell town the way it used to be with the new waterline shown on the model. It would be nice to think that one of the new projects will be to somehow represent this as an interactive exhibit.

Other areas we want to explore with new exhibits are the stories of high-country sheep stations, the growth of orcharding and the development of the wine industry. We've already held initial discussions with the Central Otago Winegrowers Association looking at developing a new permanent display.

We welcome feedback on what you'd like to see in the new museum. You can always approach one of our trustees - Jim Walton, Joan Lawrence, Peter Mead, Wayman Roughan, Donna Hipkins or our Director, Jennifer Hay.

Martin Anderson, Chair - Cromwell Museum

# 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, Maggie Hope, for our website or next newsletter: [maggie@heritagecentralotago.org.nz](mailto:maggie@heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

## Our website

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

## Follow us on Facebook

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



*Spring blossoms at Stewart Town, Bannockburn - September 2023.*

## OUR MEMBERS

- Aukaha (*Kai Tahu*)
- Alexandra Miners Village & Riverside Park Trust
- Bodeker Scientific
- Cambrian Valley Trust
- Central Lakes Trust
- Central Otago District Council
- Central Otago Environmental Society
- Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
- Otago Central Rail Trail Trust
- Clyde Historical Museums
- Cromwell Districts and Community Trust
- 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
- Upper Clutha Historical Records Society
- Vallance Cottage Working Group

## OUR SUPPORTERS

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





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