

Protecting, preserving & celebrating our heritage



Winter 2026



'Bandits' panel, by Russell Clark

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www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz

ABOUT US

The Central Otago Heritage Trust, established in 2008, comprises 35 member groups across the 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

Marco Creemers, Jenny Dixon (Chair), Russell Garbutt, Kate Goodfellow, Warwick Hawker, David Hurd, Pene Morris, and Ross Naylor. Ann Rodgers (CODC Liaison). Tania Partridge (Heritage Coordinator).

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Front cover image courtesy of Central Otago Arts

HERITAGE MATTERS

FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a very busy period for the Heritage Trust. Chair Jenny Dixon is currently overseas for work and a well-deserved break, and hence my standing in for her.

The main activity for the Trust over this period has been the appointment of our new Coordinator Tania Partridge. Our previous Coordinator Ann Cowie, recently resigned for family reasons, and it was encouraging and rewarding that we were able to recruit such a well-qualified replacement in Tania. The handover between Ann and Tania has been smooth, and Tania is looking forward to meeting as many of our member organisations as possible in the coming months. Ann was farewelled at our May meeting with a small gift in recognition of the great work completed in her time with the Trust.



Tania resides in Pisa Moorings and has had strong community engagement in Central for some time. Currently, Tania and her family are supporting her son in representing New Zealand at the BMX World Championships in Australia!!

It is fair to say that the Trust overall is moving into a more active role in representing the heritage sector in Central Otago. While it is vital that we are fully engaged in the various policy procedures that involve organisations – such as local Councils, Heritage NZ, and the Department of Conservation – the continued success of the Heritage Talks programme has led to an expansion into podcasts to make the work of the Trust more visible to a wider audience. Such activities have led to a much more hands-on approach from several Trustees, in addition to the stewardship of the Trust.

Oral History is going from strength to strength, and, combined with the close association with the Museums Trust, it is now possible to combine the stories held in the oral history repository with stories of particular importance to our five district museums. The COHT is directly represented on the Museums Trust making this relationship a cooperative and fruitful one. In addition, an excellent relationship has emerged with both *Radio Central* and *The News*. Central Otago is brimming full of stories of our past and it is the view of the COHT that the podcast initiative will, in time, grow significantly. More on this initiative later in this Newsletter (see page 17).

We have had an update from Heritage NZ during a recent visit from the new Otago/Southland Area Manager Eva Forster-Garbutt, and we are doing some significant work on fundamental documents that will define more clearly the role

and interests of the Trust. The Trust is committed to heritage outcomes and being in a position to directly represent the views of its constituent members.

The news is looking increasingly like there will be some form of amalgamation of local territorial land authorities. This is of high interest to the Trust. The history of councils in New Zealand is an interesting one. While researching my recent book on Vincent Pyke, I learned that the Government in its day initially decided there would be 39 councils around the country, but this was increased immediately to 63. By the 1930s there were about 700 independent councils, boroughs, and ad hoc boards. In 1989, the new local government reforms got this staggering number down to 87. With pressure on the cost of living and rising inflation, the Government is now looking at enforced amalgamations for hopefully greater efficiencies. The Trust is committed to advocating the benefits of the heritage sector to whatever entity will result from these changes. Not only is this for altruistic reasons, but also the heritage sector is a major economic force in our region. Put simply, heritage is highly valued by residents and a desired visitor attraction that is appreciated by many who come.

Russell Garbutt – Acting Chair
Central Otago Heritage Trust



Podcast working group meeting

CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

FROM EDINBURGH TO THE GOLDFIELDS

In undertaking a large historical project, the University of Edinburgh's Michael Tracy has been researching his ancestor, Professor John Goodsir (1814–1867). Goodsir was one of the most influential anatomists of the nineteenth century, and many of his students went on to practise medicine throughout Britain and further afield. One of his students was Dr John Duncan Niven (M.D. Edinburgh, 1862), who travelled to New Zealand soon after graduating and practised medicine in the Otago goldfields during the 1860s and 1870s, including in the districts of Blacks and Drybread. Tracy recently shared his research and this remarkable story with the Central Otago Heritage Trust.

John Duncan Niven was born in 1843 in Jamaica and later travelled to Scotland to pursue a medical education at the University of Edinburgh, one of the foremost centres of medical training in the nineteenth century. During the late 1850s, Niven studied anatomy under Professor John Goodsir and, as part of his training, underwent examinations on anatomical structures and physiological relations, an important element of Goodsir's method of instruction. Niven graduated *Doctor of Medicine* from the University of Edinburgh in 1862.



Renowned Scottish anatomist, Sir John Goodsir
Source: *Anatomical Memoirs of John Goodsir*
Volume I

After completing his medical studies, Niven emigrated to New Zealand, where he established himself as a physician in Otago. This was when the region was rapidly expanding because of the recent gold discoveries. He practised in Central Otago, including the districts of Blacks and Drybread – communities that were populated largely by miners and settlers drawn to the region during the Otago gold rush. Medical practitioners in such frontier districts were often required to perform a wide range of duties, serving as general physicians and surgeons, and frequently as medical witnesses in judicial proceedings.

One of the most striking episodes of Niven's colonial career occurred in 1870 in connection with a mysterious death in the small

mining settlement of Drybread, remembered locally as the “Drybread Mystery”. The case began when the body of an infant was discovered under suspicious circumstances in the mining district. Because of the uncertainty surrounding the death, the authorities ordered an investigation, and the remains were exhumed for examination. In isolated goldfields communities, such procedures were uncommon and could attract considerable attention among local residents. The exhumation of the grave and the medical examination of the remains therefore formed a central part of the inquiry, as authorities attempted to determine whether the child had been stillborn or whether it died after birth under circumstances that might indicate criminal responsibility.

Dr Niven was called upon to provide medical evidence and to examine the remains to determine the likely cause and circumstances of death. His testimony formed a key element in the investigation. Such cases were particularly delicate in nineteenth-century colonial communities, where accusations of infanticide could have profound social consequences, and where medical testimony was often the most reliable means of determining whether a child had lived after birth. The Drybread investigation thus illustrates the importance of trained physicians in the administration of justice in remote settlements. In a district populated largely by miners and transient labourers, the presence of a medically trained practitioner such as Niven was essential whenever complex medico-legal questions arose.



Follow this QR code to read the deposition of Dr John Niven, and other witnesses, in the Drybread Mystery case of 1870

Niven’s professional activity in Otago brought him into contact with the legal system on several occasions through coroner’s inquiries. In one such investigation held in Dunedin, concerning the death of a newborn child discovered near the Water of Leith, Niven was called to examine the suspected mother, Caroline Young. Upon examination, he concluded that she had recently given birth. He also examined the infant’s body and determined that the child had been alive after birth. In his professional opinion, the death was most likely due to exposure rather than violence. The coroner ultimately directed the jury to return an open verdict, as the available evidence did not establish whether the death had been accidental or intentional. This episode illustrates the important role played by physicians in colonial medico-legal investigations and the careful restraint with which medical testimony was presented in such cases.

Niven’s career also extended into civic and institutional life. At one stage, he was nominated as a candidate for representation of the Dunstan District in the Provincial Council, indicating that he had become a figure of some standing within the Otago goldfields community. He also served as Medical Officer to the Pioneer Lodge of the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of New Zealand, an organisation that provided medical care and financial assistance to its members. Friendly

societies were an important element of nineteenth-century colonial social structure, enabling working people to obtain medical care through collective insurance arrangements.

In addition to his practice in the goldfield settlements, Niven maintained consulting rooms in Dunedin. Contemporary notices advertised him as a physician practising both homoeopathic and allopathic medicine, with consulting hours during the day and additional appointments arranged through a chemist on George Street. Such advertisements illustrate the competitive and entrepreneurial environment in which colonial physicians frequently operated.

Later in his career, Niven settled in Oamaru. It was there that the final and most tragic episode of his life occurred. In August 1899, an inquest was held concerning the circumstances of his death. Evidence presented to the coroner indicated that on the evening of 5 August, Niven had been sitting in a chair in his room near a burning fireplace. It was believed that, while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, he had fallen backwards against the hot grate, sustaining severe burns along his back and arm. Servants and members of the household attempted to assist him, and medical attention was summoned, but the injuries proved extremely serious.

Niven lingered for several days after the accident, suffering from the effects of the burns and the complications that followed them. The jury ultimately concluded that he died on 16 August 1899 from congestion of the lungs resulting from the injuries sustained when he fell against the burning grate. The verdict further stated that there was no evidence showing precisely how the injuries had been inflicted beyond the circumstances described. He was buried in the Oamaru Old Cemetery, where his grave lies in Block 67, plots 38 and 39.

Niven's wife was Netta Stuart Niven, a member of a family among the early settlers of Dunedin. She had arrived at Port Chalmers from Ayr, Scotland, with her parents, Mr and Mrs Kennedy, during the early years of European settlement in Otago. After her marriage to Dr Niven, the couple moved further south in the province and later

Surgeons, &c.

DR. M'CAMBRIDGE,
SURGEON AND ACCOUCHEUR,
NASEBY,
MOUNT IDA.

DR. J. D. NIVEN
SURGEON AND ACCOUCHEUR,
BLACKS No. 1.

*Advertisement for Dr Niven, Mount Ida Chronicle
Volume II, Issue 101, 20 January 1871
Source: Papers Past*

settled in Oamaru. Mrs Niven subsequently spent many years in Christchurch, where she died in her 95th year and was remembered as one of the early pioneers associated with the founding generation of Dunedin.

The life of Dr John Duncan Niven illustrates the wider influence of Edinburgh medical education across the nineteenth-century British world. Trained under Professor John Goodsir during a formative period in the development of modern medical science, Niven carried the intellectual traditions of the Edinburgh school to the distant mining settlements of New Zealand. In the goldfield communities of Central Otago, he practised medicine under demanding frontier conditions, contributed to civic life, and provided medical expertise in judicial investigations. His career represents one example of the many physicians educated in Edinburgh who helped shape the professional and institutional foundations of medicine in the expanding colonial societies of the nineteenth century.

Story contributed by
Michael Tracy, Honorary Fellow,
Edinburgh Medical School,
University of Edinburgh

A sad accident resulting in the death of a man named James Henderson occurred at Black's No. 3 on Friday, the 24th instant. The deceased, it appears was last seen alive about 10 o'clock on the morning of the day on which the accident occurred, mending a cradle. He said he was going to work some old ground, and was cautioned against doing so, as it was not safe for a man possessing so little mining experience. He disregarded the caution and went to work in the place indicated by him about two hundred yards from the Deep Lead Company's shaft. Deceased was missed in the evening by a man named Gifford, who perceiving there had been a fall of earth, inquired for him, and ascertained he had not been seen since morning. Gifford then proceeded to where the fall of earth had taken place, and found a tub and cradle, and with the assistance of other men removed the fallen earth, finding a pick and bucket. More assistance was then called, and the body of the unfortunate man was disinterred. Deceased was laying on his side, with a shovel along side of him, and a bucket at his feet, as if he had been in the act of filling the bucket when the catastrophe occurred. When found, the body was cold. An inquest on the remains of the unfortunate man was held at Black's on Monday, before Vincent Pyke, Esq., when the facts above stated were elicited. Dr. Niven deposed that death resulted from suffocation, caused by a fall of earth. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

*Example of Dr Niven's medical testimony
Dunstan Times, Issue 467, 31 March 1871
Source: Papers Past*

THE OLD CLYDE BANK

Today the Old Clyde Bank on Sunderland Street is a favourite spot for some of the best dining in Central Otago. However, it has a long and interesting past. As with many aspects of our Central Otago, its origin can be traced to the discovery of gold in the region in the 1860s.

New Zealand's first trading bank opened in 1840 at Petone, Wellington, as the Union Bank of Australia (a precursor to today's Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, ANZ). In 1861, the Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) was established by two Auckland businessmen. It was formally incorporated under an Act of Parliament in July, opened its first office in Auckland in October, and opened its first branch in Dunedin in December.



BNZ Clyde, c.1975

Source: The Old Clyde Bank

The following year, Central Otago was transformed from a region of sleepy settlements into a bustling part of the country, as thousands of fortune-seekers descended upon the quiet towns in search of riches. These miners – or at least the fortunate among them – carried bags of heavy, raw gold dust. They needed somewhere to secure this newfound wealth, and the banking sector was quick to capture this rapidly developing market.

On 1 October 1862, the BNZ opened a small agency in Clyde. The same day this outpost opened, the BNZ also opened its first branch overseas, in London. (During the 1860's, four banks opened for business in Clyde, then Dunstan. The Bank of New Zealand, the Bank of Australasia, the Bank of New South Wales, and the Bank of Otago.)

Joseph Skinner managed Clyde's BNZ agency out of a part-wood, part-canvas structure on Sunderland Street. Inside, he weighed and assayed gold dust on heavy brass scales. Armed escorts routinely accompanied the coaches that transported the gold over the treacherous and unsealed mountain passes to Dunedin.

As the easy surface gold began to dry up, Dunstan started transitioning from the frantic 'canvas town' of the early gold rush to a more permanent settlement. As this initial gold frenzy started to fade, the BNZ closed its Dunstan agency, pushing customers to the nearby Manuherekia Agency (at Alexandra, then Molyneux).

However, the gold fever wasn't entirely over; in the late 1890s, with the advent of new technology, the gold dredging boom took off. Large steam dredges were soon working the banks of the Clutha/Mata-Au, bringing with them another wave of prosperity to the region. Noting the resurgence of wealth in the area, the BNZ returned to Clyde and officially reopened as a full branch in 1901.

Eventually, the dredging boom waned and was replaced by the prosperity resulting from the region's stone fruit orchards. To reflect this ongoing stability, in 1952 the BNZ replaced its older structure with a solid reinforced concrete building.

The historic Clyde branch of the Bank of New Zealand finally closed its doors for good as a financial institution in 1986.

BANK OF NEW ZEALAND.

THE Agency of this Bank] at the Dunstan will be withdrawn on Monday, the 21st June.

All Current Accounts, Fixed Deposits, and Deposit Receipts will be transferred to the Manuhierikia Agency.

L. O. BEAL,
Manager.

Dunedin, June 5, 1869.

Advertisement announcing the closure of the Clyde agency of the BNZ to Alexandra, Dunstan Times, 9 July 1869



'Dunstan in the Early Days', 1860s (note the Bank of New South Wales second building from the right and Hartley Arms Hotel just left of centre)

Source: Hocken Collection

GOLD, GRIT, AND A LITTLE TERRIER: THE CITY HOTEL MURALS AT CENTRAL STORIES

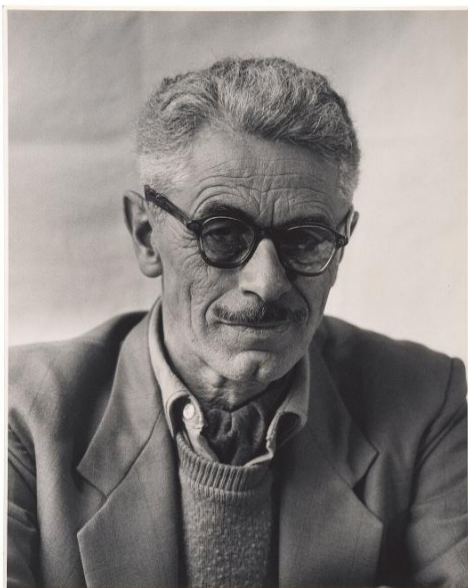
When a set of painted panels ended up tucked away in a vineyard shed on Felton Road in Bannockburn, few would have imagined they would one day be recognised as important works of New Zealand art. Yet that is the exact story of the *City Hotel Gold Rush Murals*, on show at Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery from 1 June to 31 July 2026.

The murals were painted in 1962 by Russell Clark (1905–1966), one of the country's most versatile twentieth-century artists. Commissioned by City Hotel owner Stewart Elms, they were designed to tell a story of the 1860s Central Otago gold rush. Clark was a gifted draughtsman and a natural storyteller, well known for his illustrations in the *New Zealand Listener* and the *New Zealand School Journal*. He brought skill, narrative flair, and a sense of humour to the work.

The panels follow a determined Scotsman and his little terrier into the goldfields, over rivers and mountains, and into the path of rival prospectors. While others give up, he perseveres and finally finds gold at the end of a rainbow, only for bandits to try and snatch it away! The little dog saves the day, and the pair triumphantly make their way back to Dunedin. It is spirited storytelling, painted with bold graphic confidence in a palette that beautifully reflects the landscapes of the South.

The panels' survival is a remarkable story in itself. When Stewart Elms moved from Dunedin to Bannockburn to establish a vineyard, he took the murals with him and displayed them around his winery. Eventually, they were stored in a shed on Felton Road. Realising their importance, Elms asked Central Otago artist Grahame Sydney to view them. Sydney immediately recognised that they belonged in a more suitable place and, through his advocacy, the panels were subsequently acquired by Central Stories.

For visitors, the exhibition offers a distinctive view of Central Otago's gold rush history, interpreted by one of New Zealand's leading artists at the height of his career. Clark's work suggests that by the early 1960s, many of the gold rush's harsher realities had faded from public memory.



Russell Clark Portrait
Source: Central Otago Museums

The panels also survive as an example of mid-century New Zealand mural painting, a form that has largely disappeared.

Clark himself remains a fascinating figure. Warm, observant, and deeply engaged with New Zealand life, he moved easily between illustration, public art, and teaching. In the 1930s, he ran informal art classes in Dunedin, attended by artists including Doris Lusk and Colin McCahon. He later taught at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts. During the Second World War, he served as an Official War Artist in the Pacific, where he spent nine months documenting New Zealand forces in the Solomon Islands.

The *City Hotel Gold Rush Murals* present a wonderful show of art, history, and place.

RUSSELL CLARK

The City Hotel Gold Rush Murals



Step into the world of Russell Clark and join a Scotsman and his loyal dog as they chase gold, dodge trouble, and win the day.

Exhibition 1 June - 31 July 2026
Central Stories Henderson Gallery

Central Stories Museum & Art Gallery
21 Centennial Avenue, Alexandra
Ph: 03 448 6230
Email: enquiries@centralstories.com



ST BATHANS VILLAGE FETE

The St Bathans Village Fete, held in January, was a resounding success. It brought together locals, visitors, and heritage supporters for a memorable summer day in one of Otago's most historic villages.

Run by the St Bathans Area Community Association, the one-day event attracted over 1000 participants. The village was alive with music, market stalls, food vendors, old-school children's entertainment, and the unmistakable buzz of a thriving rural community.

Most importantly, the Fete raised approximately \$18,000 for the Association, with these funds going towards the ongoing upkeep and restoration of St Bathans' heritage buildings – continuing the Association's long-standing commitment to protecting the character and stories of the village.

The Fete was originally conceived as a fundraiser for restoration work on the historic Post Office building, with aims to create a fun and inclusive community event featuring a wide variety of stalls, food vendors, and entertainment.



Tricia Batkin drawing the raffle using an old butter churn

Source: St Bathans Fete Committee

Get Involved in 2027!

Planning is already underway for the next Village Fete. After the strong interest shown in traditional skills, particularly the stone masonry demonstration, we're excited to lean even further into our heritage theme.

We would love to hear from anyone practising a heritage craft or traditional skill. Whether it's weaving, spinning, sewing and homecrafts, blacksmithing, carpentry, building trades, agricultural skills, or other time-honoured techniques, we're keen to showcase the knowledge and craftsmanship that shaped rural communities like St Bathans.



Tug-of-war during the Fete
Source: St Bathans Fete Committee

If you would like to be involved, please get in touch with the St Bathans Area Community Association at stbathansvillagefete@gmail.com

Save the date: Saturday, 9 January 2027

The team behind the fete look forward to welcoming you back to St Bathans for another wonderful celebration of heritage, creativity, and community spirit.

PROTECTING & PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

ELIZABETH COLEMAN AND THE LEGACY OF THE HYDE RAIL DISASTER

One of the Oral History Project's recently published additions to its online collection is a moving interview with Elizabeth Coleman. Drawing on both memory and research, this conversation offers a deeply human perspective on one of the region's most significant events – the 1943 Hyde rail disaster.

In the interview, Elizabeth recalls how her family's stable farming life was suddenly shattered when she was just four years old. She describes the phone call her mother received informing her of the accident that killed

Elizabeth's father and brother and severely injured her other brother. In sharing vivid memories of her childhood, she details the confusion she felt, the upheaval that followed, and the challenges that she, her younger brother, and her mother faced in rebuilding their lives.



Elizabeth Coleman

A central theme of the interview is the lasting impact of trauma. Elizabeth speaks candidly about grief that remained unresolved for decades, shaping family dynamics and influencing later life experiences. The interview also explores the wider context of the disaster, including its effect on the community and the way it was overshadowed at the time by the Second World War.

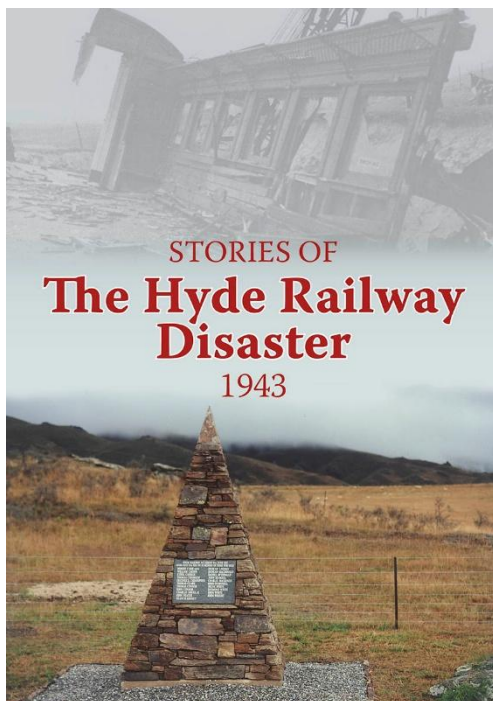
The recording highlights Elizabeth's determination to preserve the history of the Hyde disaster. She discusses her extensive research into the event, including collecting and publishing first-hand accounts that bring these stories together. Her role in establishing a memorial cairn at the crash site is another significant focus, reflecting her commitment to ensuring that those who lost their lives are properly remembered. A number of these booklets are available at Central Stories Museum.

Listeners will find this interview compelling not only for its historical insights but also for its emotional honesty. Elizabeth Coleman's voice offers a powerful connection to the past, a testament to loss, endurance, and resilience. It is a reminder of the importance of preserving and sharing stories of events that shaped communities, told through the voices of those who were there.

If you are interested in learning more about the Hyde rail disaster, you'll enjoy listening to the podcast: *Fatal Curve: Rail Disaster at Hyde*, on the COHT website or on Spotify and Apple Podcasts by searching for *Digging Up Central, History and Tales from Central Otago*.

The Oral History Project's other most recently published recordings include interviews with Jim Morgan, Gordon Keyes, and Lesley Forbes. Their fascinating stories cover a wide range of topics from farming at St Bathans, to atmospheric science and research to the development of mental health services in the region.

If you are interested in oral history and would like to find out more about being an interviewer, please email me (Joanna Leigh) at joanna@heritagecentralotago.org.nz. I would love to hear from you!



Elizabeth Coleman's Book

Who should we interview next?



Do you have a suggestion for someone whose story we haven't yet captured but absolutely should? Maybe even yourself? We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please visit our website and go to the **Oral History** page, where you'll find a form to nominate someone. Or use this QR code.



HERITAGE TALK: COAL MINE FIRE, 120 YEARS LATER ...

Early in the morning of 14 July 1906, the sleeping town of Alexandra was awakened by the furious ringing of the fire-bell at the Alexandra Fire Brigade in Skird Street. It was the beginning of a momentous day for the entire town.

Deep down, in a coal seam near the Molyneux River, were four coal miners who soon realised they were trapped. There was only one shaft into the mine, and it was blazing. The miners had no way of extinguishing the fire. Up above, the solitary worker noticed what he thought was steam coming from the shaft and quickly realised it was smoke.

This marked the start of what was probably Alexandra's most concerted community effort. Water was needed to put out the fire – and lots of it – but high-pressure pumps were not part of the Fire Brigade's equipment in those days, so innovation was needed to get a large supply of water to the shaft. Some distance away was the Borough Water Race and a dam. The decision was made to dig a new water race to bring this water to the mine. It was a race against time.



Coal Mine Fire
Source: G F Griffiths, Otago Witness

As the fire below spread, dreaded black damp (an asphyxiating mixture of gases that accumulates in enclosed spaces) filled the myriad of tunnels, but a steam pipe enabled the trapped miners to signal to those above that they were still alive.

Some tried to be lowered down the shaft, but they were hauled back up – more dead than alive. The only hope of rescue was that the new water race could be dug in time for the water to flow down and reach the seat of the fire.

The entire town's population was soon at the scene, with men furiously digging the race, women brewing tea and providing refreshments, and small children digging by hand. Nearly everyone knew the men who were trapped ...

... **Exactly 120 years later** Russell Garbutt of the Central Otago Heritage Trust will speak about the background to this coal mine, the story of the fire, and the community effort to rescue the miners – and a bicycle!

HERITAGE TALK: MOLYNEUX COAL PIT FIRE

Guest Speaker: Russell Garbutt
Hosted by: Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
When: Tuesday, 14 July 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Where: Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
21 Centennial Avenue, Alexandra



BOOK NOW! www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz

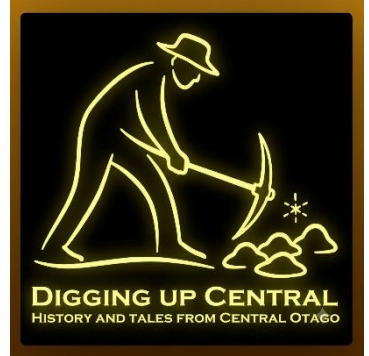
or use the QR Code



Molyneux Coal Pit, Alexandra, c. 1900
Source: Hocken Collections

PODCAST UPDATE

An editorial group has been formed consisting of two representatives of the COHT, Kate Goodfellow and Russell Garbutt; COHT Coordinator, Tania Partridge; COHT Oral History Coordinator, Joanna Leigh; Central Otago Museums Trust Coordinator, Rebekah de Jong; and Shane Norton, owner of Radio Central. The group's main purpose is to produce a series of podcasts based on, but not limited to, stories from the Oral History programme and the five district museums (or elsewhere) that dig up Central's past.



Podcasts are an increasingly easy and convenient way to listen to a programme, which might have been previously broadcast on a Sunday night on the National Programme in a slot such as *Sounds Historical*. The problem was that the listener had to be near a radio and had no easy way to listen to it again. Podcasts have changed that. Hosted on sites such as Spotify or Apple, or by visiting the Central Otago Heritage Trust webpage, people can now download or just listen to what used to be a radio programme – any time, anywhere, and as many times as they wish. They can share the story with others – on the other side of the world, or just next door. Radio Central, a popular radio station, also carries the podcasts on its Facebook page.

There are many elements in the production of a podcast; these include identifying the subject, researching it, writing the script (around 5000 words), recording the contributing voices or inserting segments from the stories in the oral history repository, adding music to bridge subjects or voices, editing everything together, and finally, the audio refinement and publishing. The Trust has put a small sum aside as a foundation to get a few episodes online with the intention that some of these more onerous tasks can be paid for rather than, as at present, carried out voluntarily. Currently, three episodes have been published – each increasingly more professional. They cover the vexed problem of rabbits, the Hyde railway disaster, and and Part One of stories about some of Central Otago's more nefarious early settlers which is entitled *Murder, Mayhem and Malcontents*.

The group already has an extensive list of subjects it plans to publish in the upcoming months. The Trust intends to ensure that the initiative is separately funded through various means so that it remains ongoing. Many of the very popular Heritage talks will be adapted for a podcast. If any members are interested in suggesting topics – and we have already had quite a few – then please send such suggestions to our Coordinator, Tania Partridge tania@heritagecentralotago.co.nz

Russell Garbutt and Kate Goodfellow – Trustees

TAKE THREE WITH THE NEW HERITAGE COORDINATOR

What connections do you have to Central Otago?

My many family connections to Central Otago date back to my paternal great-grandparents, my grandparents on both sides, and to my own experiences while holidaying here as a child.

My great-grandfather William Partridge lived in Cromwell and Lowburn, and he was the Mayor of Cromwell from 1944 to 1950. I remember visiting the ruins of the house in Lowburn before it was flooded.

Another great-grandfather wrote a book of poems; some are about the area. Dad put some of these to music. One is about Ida Valley, and another is about Ben Lomond. This is from the poem/song *Mt Ida*:

Oh, beneath its streams gently ripples,
its echoes have thrilled me with joy,
and though now far away
my thoughts often stray
to the mountains I loved as a boy.

My grandparents Ann and Ron Murphy were the publicans at the Dunstan Hotel while the dam was being built. They retired in Clyde, and we have many childhood memories of the area that make me feel connected to where I live and my family history.

What specifically interests you in Central Otago heritage?

As a Mum, and raising my children here, I want my children to know and understand our family connections, as well as learn about the many stories in the area. You don't have to travel for history; we have a unique history in our own backyard.

What is your favourite place in Central Otago?

There are many amazing places I enjoy, the mountains, skiing and exploring with the family and boating on Lake Dunstan.



Tania and family at BMX Nationals

SPOTLIGHT ON: VOLUNTEER ANNE MCAULEY

In May, we spoke to Oral History volunteer Anne McAuley about what drew her to the project and why this work matters.

What first inspired you to get involved with the Oral History Project?

The notice about Oral Histories (OH) came to me at the Cromwell Museum. I thought it was a wonderful idea and was very interested in taking part.

Can you share a particularly memorable moment or story from an interview you've done?

Each one is memorable for the interesting lives people have lived. One of the most memorable would be Royden Thomson, because of his deep involvement as a geologist with the construction of the Clyde Dam.

What do you enjoy most about sitting down with people to record their memories?

The whole aspect of OHs is enjoyable. The life stories reveal fascinating experiences; some are wonderful, some are not. The human element of how people have such different challenges and how “ordinary” people cope and live is very thought-provoking. I'm amazed that people let us into their lives the way they do.

What do you find most challenging about oral history interviews, and how do you approach that challenge?

For me, coping with the recording side is the most challenging. As a physiotherapist, I've worked for many years talking to people about their problems, their lives, and what brought them to me, so this interaction is no problem, but technology is! I'm always nervous until I hear that the interview has worked.

Why do you think oral histories are important for Central Otago's heritage?

Working at the local museum really confirms the importance of ensuring the past is not forgotten. The OHs give the human element even more impact than written material.

What have you personally learned or gained from being part of the project?

Hearing the stories and experiences is fascinating and humbling. That's why I think the collecting and safe preservation of them is so very important. I love being part of it.



Anne McAuley at home

HERITAGE TALK UPDATE: WALLPAPER STORY

Clyde Museum hosted another talk in the Central Otago Heritage Trust series of Heritage Talks, when Dr Eva Forster-Garbutt delivered a fascinating history of wallpaper during the period immediately before and during the gold rush.

It was a full house at the Museum to hear Eva's presentation, which had been drawn from some of her research towards her PhD thesis.

During the very early days of settlement, paper was an effective and cheap means of covering walls to keep out draughts and dust in houses that were anything but airtight.

It came as some considerable surprise to learn about the amount of wallpaper that was imported into Otago – mainly from England. Ships brought in many examples of the patterns of paper that were being produced in the UK. Some passengers even brought rolls of paper as part of their personal luggage when they immigrated to Otago.

Another surprising fact to emerge was that New Zealand didn't start producing wallpaper until the 1950s. Local demand was supplied by imports from the UK, Asia, and the USA.

Shops selling wallpaper quickly sprang up in Dunedin following the establishment of colonial settlement in the 1850s, and outlets also opened in Central Otago following the discovery of gold in the 1860s.



*R. E. Inman & Co's paperhanging shop, Princes Street, Dunedin, January 1864
Source: Toitū Settlers Museum, Album 54/35*

Examples of wallpapers dating from the 1840s to the 1860s were shown by Eva, some of them came from houses in Otago. Local resident Chris Naylor brought along two beautifully framed samples of wallpapers and posters that he had rescued from the restoration of his historic house in Fraser Street, Clyde.

Eva, in her position as Area Manager for the Otago/Southland Regional Office of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga answered many questions from the enthusiastic audience.

Suggestions for future Heritage Talk topics can be made to Tania Partridge, Coordinator for the Central Otago Heritage Trust:
tania@heritagecentralotago.org.nz

The Premises have lately undergone extensive improvements.

The Stock is entirely new and well assorted.

WILLIAM AUCKLAND,

(LATE AUCKLAND & POOLE).

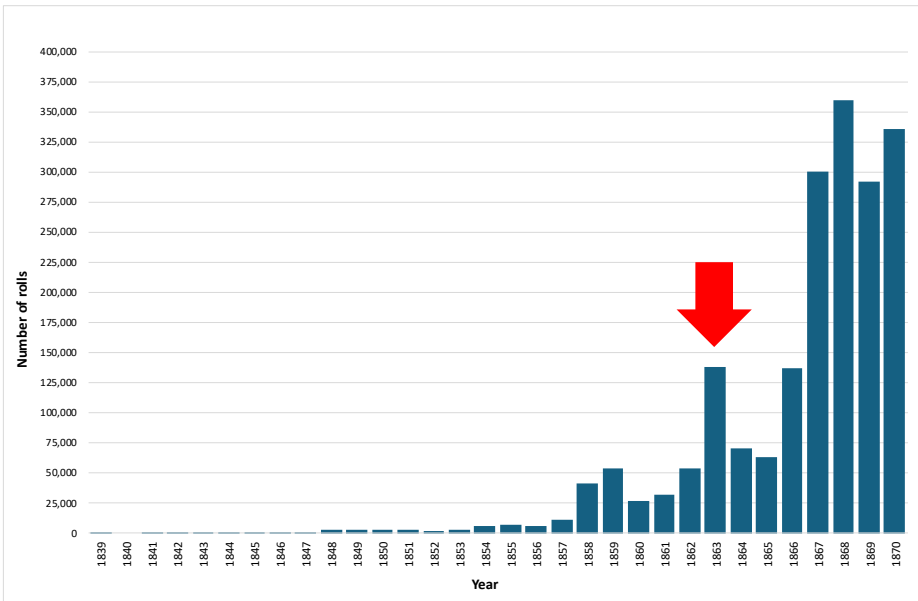
SIGN WRITER, HOUSE PAINTER,

DECORATOR, &c.,

Sunderland-street, Clyde.

A Large Assortment of Paperhangings, Oils, Colors, Window-Glass, &c.

Advertisement by William Auckland, Clyde
 Source: Dunstan Times, December 1866



Graph showing the number of wallpaper rolls imported into NZ 1839–1870
 (Notice the growth during the gold rush)
 Source: Eva Forster Garbutt

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