

## CHARLES THATCHER IN OTAGO

This is the title of Professor John Drummond's talk, the last in this year's series. It will be held in the Seminar Room at Hocken on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.

'The inimitable Charles Thatcher, with his wife Annie Vitelli, visited Otago and Southland on five tours between 1862 and 1870, spending time in Dunedin, on the Goldfields, Invercargill, and in North Otago. We know of 195 songs he wrote during these visits, in which he describes, celebrates, and mocks the events and personalities of the day. 81 songs survive and they give a vivid portrayal of the life of the times.'

John Drummond introduces Thatcher, his adventures, and the reception he received, and performs a selection of Thatcher's songs.

You are invited to gather at 5.00pm, as usual, for light refreshments. The illustrated talk will begin at about 5.30pm

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## HOCKEN DINNER

We want to improve on the numbers attending the Annual Dinner, but we could hardly improve on the quality of the address given by Dr Sue Bidrose - **DUNEDIN'S NEXT 150 YEARS**. It had just the right mixture of fact and informed opinion to make it thoroughly memorable. And it also had an encouraging stance towards the future, with which the Friends could identify.

Friends will be encouraged to note that this year's unfortunate clash with the NZSO Concert Series in Dunedin will not occur in 2016.

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## WE DROVE HERE

On Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, the Hocken Collections launched its major exhibition on motoring in Otago. Titled "We Drove Here: Hocken Explores Motoring History", it examines our motoring history through the collections of the Hocken, *Otago Daily Times*, Otago Vintage Car Club, Dunedin City Council and the car-owning community.

Funded by the Otago Motor Club Trust, a charitable body which manages the funds and assets of the former AA Otago and supports initiatives such as road safety and motoring heritage in Otago, the exhibition is not concerned with the mechanical intricacies of the motor vehicle or any celebration of specific designs. Instead, "We Drove Here" takes a look at privately owned motor vehicles.

Such an approach touches on a range of cultural intersections: pioneering motorists; road-making, both urban and rural; the infrastructure and industries that sprang up through the 20th century to support and supply demand; car clubs and motor racing; family holidays; and all the financial luggage that car (and motorcycle) ownership requires.

Exhibition curator Michael Findlay has long enjoyed the company of a car. He owns a couple of Italian vehicles (a 1971 Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV and a 1977 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV) as well as a 1966 Triumph Tiger 100 motorcycle. Yet he had to set aside such interests and instead take a dispassionate overview.

"We are not focusing on particular cars. Rather it's a socio-cultural history, a look at social change and experience. These aspects don't often get addressed in motoring exhibitions. Make a point of visiting this Exhibition, at the Hocken Library Gallery as soon as you can.

With thanks to Michael Findlay  
for permission to quote from his background article.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Music must have been part of Dunedin home life from the beginning. For example, advertisements for pianos for sale appear fairly frequently from the early 1850's, and later in the decade a variety of shops were selling sheet music and instruments.

There must have been some music-making early on – individuals wanting to sing together. There's a report of a Soirée at the 'School House', chaired by Thomas Burns. Anthems were sung by 'an amateur band' accompanied by a grand Piano Forte.<sup>1</sup> One boggles at the logistics of hauling a grand piano around the unpaved streets of Dunedin.

The 'School-House' (aka the school room) was the interim (second-version) First Church in Dowling St. As Thomas Burns himself wrote: '... Its proper work was on Sunday, but from Monday to Saturday it held itself ready for any service. It was a schoolroom, it was a public lecture room; it was the humble servant of the Dunedin Land Investment Company; it lent itself to many a stormy political meeting; with patriotic zeal it accommodated the Provincial Council; it lent itself to many a concert, to many a musical party; and then it was without pride, it had no ambition...'. But it did hold well over 200 people, and there was nowhere else in the little town where people could gather in such numbers under one roof.

There was a Harmonic Society from about 1856, but they seem to have functioned more as a private group, meeting to play and sing together, and not so much in front of the public.

Hocken's *Contributions* makes no reference in its chronology to anything remotely like entertainment in Dunedin prior to the gold rush. In 1854 there was another Soirée, this time on the subject of 'education'. For whatever reason it was thought this important matter required some light relief, and a portable organ was borrowed from the Anglican church.

In 1857 the Otago Witness reported that there was dissatisfaction with the 'want of entertainment' in the town - so a public lecture series, on ineffably earnest and mind-improving topics was initiated on a weekly basis. It could well be that the Sunday-orientation of the building acted as a damper. The word 'concert' didn't appear in the pages of the *Otago Witness* until 1858.

On the *Bosworth*, which arrived in 1858, there was the 'creative' Redmayne family – an elderly widow, Margaret, and four of her children. Thomas (1830-1886) was a talented caricaturist, and an occasional artist represented in the Hocken Collection. Catherine (1832-1869) was a teacher of singing and pianoforte. Another brother, Robert (1822-1884) who came to Dunedin in 1863, and established the Dunedin *Punch* with his brother, was also a cartoonist.



<sup>1</sup> Dr Burns' school-room. S15-382a W.J. Burton, Dr Burns Church, Dowling Street, Album 076, page 12

Within a few months of settling in Catherine (Kate) was advertising concerts, and over the next several years she travelled from Invercargill to Christchurch and Lyttelton offering quality entertainment. Here is the programme for just one of these occasions at the School-room. It began at 8pm and the admission was 3 shillings - 4/- if you wanted a reserved seat. The programme consisted of 15 items - four orchestral pieces – thanks to a ‘large number of amateurs’ who kindly provided their assistance. Mr Begg on the saxhorn, Mr Briscoe on the flute, and Mr T. Richardson on the concertina. Miss Redmayne herself was the principal soloist and accompanist, and Mr Christie was the other singer. Possibly Mr Calcutt assisted on the piano when Miss Redmayne was the soloist. The music came from a variety of sources, Scots, Irish, English, American.

The orchestra comprised flutes, violins, saxhorns (described as having a ‘mellow’ sound), cornepeans (of the cornet family, but more ‘brassy’), and accordeons. A limited palette, maybe, but its sound must have filled the school-room. In so Scottish a town as Dunedin it seems extraordinary that there was an item simply described as ‘imitative bagpipes’ – created by saxhorns and cornepeans. But patriotism was firmly emphasised (the Redmaynes were from Yorkshire) by the singing of ‘*God Save the Queen*’ at the conclusion.

The *Otago Witness* was full of praise: ‘We are glad to see that the Concert was so generally patronised, and we take it as evidence that the community, as well as ourselves, would desire to see such nights of pleasant entertainment more frequent among us. Concerts, if properly conducted, would, we are confident, be countenanced and well supported. They would tend to remove the constant complaint that there is no public amusement to be found in Otago; and by encouraging and cultivating a taste for music to correct a longing for the mischievous excitement of a public house.

In April 1860 Mr James E. Lowe inaugurated a series of weekly Saturday-night ‘Half-Crown’ concerts beginning early in June. James Lowe, who taught ‘Dancing, Deportment and Calisthenics’ at Maclaggan St., also offered tuition in music theory and practice. Quadrilles ‘now so fashionable at home’ and reels and strathspeys featured in his programmes, violin solos were played by Mr Lowe himself, and there were serious and comic songs on the programme, and Kate Redmayne was sometimes the soloist in these. The venue was given as the ‘New Dunedin Hall’, but this probably refers to what was also known as Mr Lowe’s Assembly Room in Maclaggan St.

Initially Mr Lowe didn’t get a good press. The *Otago Witness* referred to some of the performers as ‘amateurs with more enthusiasm than good taste’ and suggested a ‘few good songs to vary and improve the entertainment’. At the beginning of 1860 the newspaper was still bemoaning the ‘paucity of entertainment in Dunedin, and this despite the apparent success of Professor Louis Klaer and his performing dogs currently in town.

The *Otago Daily Times* entered the lists, and at the end of 1861 suggested that visitors would be ‘dispirited by the dullness of the Province’. As it happened just at that time the San Francisco Minstrels appeared on the scene with their ‘select and recherche DRAWING ROOM ENTERTAINMENT’ in the Assembly Rooms on Princes St.

Miss Redmayne returned, after her time in Christchurch, with Mr Hamilton, the comic vocalist. And at the Masonic Hall Shadrach Jones provided the setting for Miss W.H. Foley, ‘Directress’, to stage dramatic performances – ‘the first that ever took place in Otago.’ Shakespeare, Bulwer Lytton and Sheridan Knowles, along with comic opera items were on the programme.

The year 1862 saw the first two theatres built in Dunedin. The sale yards and stables of Jones, Bird and Co. were converted into the Princess Theatre which opened on 5 March of that year under the management of the Fawcett brothers, presenting

*The Cramond Brig* and *That Rascal Jack*. On 12 July, Clarence Holt and James Leroy opened the Theatre Royal (also known as the Queen's Theatre) with *The Lady of Lyons*, in a company headed by Mr and Mrs Holt and Marie Duret. But, more significantly, on 1 March 1862, Dunedin greeted for the first time Charles R. Thatcher and his wife Madame Vitelli in the concert room of the Commercial Hotel. Thus the stage was set.

## LIBRARY NEWS

Hocken was audited as part of the Archives NZ Audit of the University of Otago recordkeeping under the provisions of the Public Records Act 2005. This is the first University audit, and was coordinated by Corporate Records and comprised completion of a self-review document earlier in the year and a site visit in May. The focus for the Hocken was on physical storage. The final report gave Hocken an A Plus assessment.

Wifi coverage in the foyer, lunchroom, and pictures research, has been boosted in preparation for the change in service model.

On September 30<sup>th</sup> Hocken had a visit from the whole Ngai Tahu Archives team together with Sir Tipene O'Regan for a day of investigation and discussion. A later visit in October was for further discussion about plans to digitise the Herries Beattie papers, as well as plans for a research intern.

The Hocken Lecture 2015 was delivered on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August. Professor Tony Ballantyne's subject was *Archives, Public Memory and the Work of History*. An audience of about 140 heard this excellent presentation which can now be found at <http://bit.ly/100Ty6L>. It is also now released as a podcast, and will be published, and delivered in Auckland in early December.

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## Dr HOCKEN'S HOME

Exactly 100 years ago this week the doctor's former home on Moray Place, overlooking the First Church grounds, was, largely through the generosity of William Patrick, a Dunedin businessman, converted into the Soldiers' Club House. It was the idea of the some Otago Boys' High School Old Boys to provide a place where the soldiers now returning from Gallipoli would find somewhere that is 'just like being at home.'

Rooms were set apart as a library, a smoking-room, a card room, a billiard-room and a social hall. The existing billiard room had to be enlarged, and the social hall on the upper floor was created by placing a folding door between two large existing rooms. A balcony facing north on that floor was

built, and there was a garden that is a 'delight' and a 'fine resting place.'

It was not a residential club and the management committee was at pains to explain that it was sister club with the YMCA. The committee needed help to furnish the big house, and invited the citizens of Dunedin to show their generosity. This they did, and a newspaper report detailed the many items of furniture, the books, the pictures for the walls, the fittings, and a host of other gifts that helped to make it a welcoming setting.

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## ANNUAL MEETING 2015

The Officers elected for the coming year are:

President: Hon Marian Hobbs  
Immediate Past President: Hon Pete Hodgson  
Vice President: Rev'd Donald Phillipps  
Hon. Secretary: Mark Hughes  
Hon Treasurer: Beryl Maultby  
Membership Secretary: Sara Barham  
Committee: Prof. Tom Brooking, Louise Croot, Gregor Macaulay, Dr Peter Holland  
The Hocken Librarian, Sharon Dell, and Anna Blackman represent the Library on the Committee.

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## 2016 PROGRAMME

Your Committee has nearly completed its planning for next year's speakers and their subjects. It will be as varied as ever, in keeping with the spirit of the Hocken Collection. We view the talk series as a way of illustrating the treasures that the Library holds.

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*Subscriptions: Individual: \$25 per annum; Life Member \$250  
Joint: \$30 per annum; Joint Life Member \$300*

*Cheques to: Friends of the Hocken Collections, PO Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059.*

*Online payment: Westpac 03 0903 0393175 000, including "Subscription" in Particulars field, surname/initials in Code and Reference fields.*

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*Prepared by Donald Phillipps for the Friends of the Hocken Collections  
P.O.Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059*

[donaldphillipps@gmail.com](mailto:donaldphillipps@gmail.com)