

CHARLES THATCHER IN OTAGO

There was an encouraging attendance at Professor John Drummond's November talk on Charles Thatcher, the entertainer from the gold-rush days of the 1860s. The speaker had undertaken thoroughgoing research, at the Hocken Library and elsewhere, to recover not even half of the songs, both mocking and celebratory, with which Thatcher entertained thousands during those turbulent years.

Aided by illustrations from the time, and by his performance of some of the pieces, John brought to life the personalities and the local politics of the time. It was altogether a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

2016 TALK SERIES

- 16 March: **Dr Elizabeth Whitcombe** – "Education for a lifetime: An Otago alumnus reflects."
- 18 May: **Mike Stevens** – "Bluff 1800 – 2000" Bluffing his way through the Hocken and taking Hakena back to Awarua."
- 20 July (AGM): **Professor Tom Brooking** - Richard Seddon – "Illustrations and Loose Ends"
- 2 September: **Jim Sullivan** – "Among the Archivists". 50 years of digging around in New Zealand's archives, as a writer and broadcaster. (This talk is part of the FOHC Annual Dinner – venue to be advised.)
- 16 November: **Professor Kevin Clements** – "Pacifism in Otago; Exploring Pacifism in the Hocken Collection."

Venue is the Seminar Room, Hocken Library, 90 Anzac Ave, Dunedin. You are invited to gather at 5.15pm, as usual, for light refreshments. The illustrated talk will begin at about 5.30pm

HOCKEN LECTURE

The Hocken Lecture was delivered for a second time at the University of Otago House, Auckland, on 3 December by Prof Tony Ballantyne.

Sharon, Jeanette and Anna travelled to Auckland to set up the lecture, as well as the travelling version of the Whakapono exhibition. This involved organising original items to be displayed in Auckland and the Whakapono travelling exhibition to be shipped there. Alumni assisted in the organisation of the event itself.

The publication of Professor Ballantyne's Lecture is another important milestone in the Library's contribution to New Zealand historiography – illustrating how the use of archives has all the elements of a personal encounter.

Copies of the Lecture are available – contact Hocken Office.

WE DROVE HERE

The exhibition *We Drove Here* successfully opened in early November. This exhibition was created in a new way, with Hocken staff supporting guest curator Michael Findlay in locating and preparing material from such sources as the Hocken itself, *Otago Daily Times*, Otago Vintage Car Club, Dunedin City Council and the car-owning community.

The exhibition was designed by Mark Sharma (who was also responsible for Whakapono) and was supported by the Otago Motor Club Trust.

It was timed to coincide with the International Vintage Car Rally held in Dunedin in January 2016. Promotion in the local newspapers and through the rally resulted in over 600 visitors in January. Such a public response hints at the wide-ranging networks that are created by car-lovers.

THE OTAGO MUSEUM CLASSICAL COLLECTION

From 1877 until 1955 the Otago Museum was under the management of the University of Otago, and from 1949 the Museum has been served by the staff of the University's Department of Classics who have acted as Honorary Keepers of the Classical Collection: J.K. Anderson, J.R. Green, J.G.F. Hind, A.F. Stewart and Robert Hannah.

Prior to 1948 the Museum's collection was described as small but representative. Apart from vases there were also holdings in ancient lamps, terracottas and minor sculpture. Most of these items had been donated by local people such as the Theomin family, and Willie Fels, who donated several hundred fine Greek and Roman coins.

Willie Fels had been Chairman of the Otago Museum Committee 1936-1945, and had always been a generous, and discerning, benefactor. It was the very substantial bequest made by Willie Fels to the Museum that enabled it in 1948 to purchase a large part of the private collection of Professor A.B. Cook of Cambridge University.

Behind the scenes it is thought that Professor Dale Trendall had assisted in seeing the transaction through – he was an OU Classics graduate, a former student under Professor Cook, and by 1948, the professor of Greek Archaeology at Sydney University - the foremost Australian authority on this subject. For years he remained a constant source of encouragement, and a door to the international world of classical antiquities collecting.

There were over 150 pieces in this extraordinary acquisition – the most 'important single gift in its history' so the Annual Report for that year stated. It established, 'our classical collection as one of first-rate importance. It should prove of value to all students of Greek culture.' Because of its size and importance the Greek classical collection was now to stand alone, distinguished from the Middle Eastern collection, which was also growing.

Also in 1948 the Museum was the recipient of another major benefaction, this time from Lindsay Rogers who had been a "guerrilla surgeon" with Tito's partisans. His donations over the years included Roman glassware, items from Mesopotamia and Persia, clay cuneiform tablets, and, even, a small marble head that was identified as that of Alexander the Great.

Another major series of accessions was the collection amassed by Col. Fred Waite during his time in Cairo during the 2nd World War. While there he was able to obtain a wide variety of Egyptological material. He became the Honorary Keeper of Middle Eastern Arts and Archaeology.

By 1949, when Professor Trendall was cataloguing the Greek vases in the Museum for inclusion in the Australia/New Zealand volume of the international *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, he was able to assert that the Museum's collection ranked third in the Empire, outside of Great Britain itself. An article he wrote for the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* in 1951 on *Attic Vases in Australia and New Zealand* drew further attention to the Museum.

So important to the Museum was this collection that by 1950 they had appointed a London-based expert to advise on future purchases.



**A Paestan Bell Krater
E48.261 Otago Museum, Dunedin, New Zealand
from the Fels Memorial Gift**

The generosity of Willie Fels was not quickly forgotten, and in 1949 a group of his 'friends and admirers' presented a Greek Black-figure Hydria, dating from ca520BC in his memory. The more immediate influence of H.D. Skinner, Director of the Museum from 1927 till 1957, was recognised when, in his honour, friends of the Museum presented in 1952 a Caeretan Hydria, a specimen of a group of great historical significance in the development of Greek

Art. This piece was then the only one of its type outside of Europe.

Around this time, 1948/1949, the Museum had received more important accessions than in any other two-year period in its history. The 1950 Annual Report included for the first time a section specifically under the heading of Greek Art and Archaeology. When did that classical collection begin? As early, or as late, as 1883 the *Otago Daily Times* reported that a Mr Corrigan had presented a Greek coin to the museum. There has to be a first on the list, but whenever that was, and whatever it was, the Otago Museum's classical collection has recently been described as the finest in Australasia.

If further evidence were needed of the Collection's standing it might be found in a transaction entered into in ca1954. A collection of 50 Minoan pieces in pottery and stone were obtained from the Herakleion Archaeological Museum in Crete, in exchange for books – though what the nature of the reading matter was is not stated in the Report.

The Museum's status as a repository of international significance was further enhanced when during 1955 J.K. Anderson published his *Handbook to the Greek Vases in the Otago Museum*. The introduction to this booklet mentions the help Charles Brasch had given the author. As grandson of Willie Fels Brasch had, almost inevitably become involved in the affairs of the Museum on his return to Dunedin in 1947, and he was to continue his grandfather's interest and generosity over many years.

In 1953, the Fels Memorial Fund, with the advice and assistance of Dale Trendall, had presented a considerable collection of Greek and Roman coins to the Museum. The collection had been well publicised during the following year when Dr Harold Mattingly, an expert in this field, was Visiting Professor at the University. His talks on this subject had aroused considerable public interest.

J.R. Hamilton, another of the Honorary Keepers, had an article on the Museum's Roman coin collection published in 1955 in the *New Zealand Numismatic Journal*. He also wrote in the Annual Report of the state of the Museum's coin collection.

There have not been so many recent acquisitions, though during Dr A.F. Stewart's time as lecturer in the Classics Department in the 1970s a number of items were bought by the Department and are on loan to

the Museum. A very recent acquisition (2012) is a wine jar the about 2300 years old and an example of 'Gnathian pottery', from a place in South Italy near modern Taranto. The Museum already had examples of this particular ware, and the purchase enhanced one of the 'areas of strength of the museum's ... classical collection.'

As a conclusion to this brief outline of the development of the Otago Collection, it seems appropriate to quote in full the report made by J.K. Anderson for inclusion in the Museum's 1954/1955 Annual Report. In a sense this report summed up the whole period when the Museum was effectively under the control of the University, and sets out a possible course of action for the now independent institution.

The collection 'covers adequately the general development of Greek Pottery from the Bronze Age to Hellenistic times. The most obvious gap – the want of material from seventh and sixth century Ionia – is unlikely to be filled, and is a weakness of collections much more conveniently placed to the source of supply. In future attention should be paid rather to the acquisition of works of outstanding merit or interest (of which the Museum already possesses an encouraging number) than to the purchase of large numbers of more ordinary pieces, for which companions, if not duplicates, can already be found on our shelves. In view of the great prices commanded by vases of the desired quality, our best hope for the present may be to strengthen the collection of terracottas and small bronzes, to which we may be able to make notable additions at a comparatively small cost.'

But it was in that heady post-war period, when the Collection was so generously augmented, that it became part of the background to the teaching programme of the University's Department of Classics. Professor Guy Manton, the Professor and Head of Department, and an Honorary Keeper of the Museum, referred in 1950 to the considerable use that had been made of the pottery collection by the Greek History, Art and Literature class at the University. It had even been the object of a three-day visit to Dunedin of the equivalent class from the University of Canterbury. How many students, one might wonder, have had their artistic imagination kindled in the Otago Museum's Classical Collection?

(Acknowledgement is made of assistance received from Moira White, Curator, Humanities, Otago Museum, and Emeritus Professor John Barsby, former Chair of Classics, Otago University.)

NOTES OF INTEREST

- The Pickerill Papers on plastic surgery have been inscribed on the NZ Register of UNESCO Memory of the World programme. This is Hocken's third inscription. At the same time the University is managing a Lottery funded project to digitize part of the collection and make it accessible through a website.

- Hocken Librarian Sharon Dell has been appointed chair of the Library Information and Advisory Commission and Anna Blackman is now a member of the Archives Council. These are two statutory bodies that report to and advise the Minister of Internal Affairs.

- The Hocken donors' event was held on 26 November to acknowledge recent contributions to the collections.

- The touring exhibition of Shigeyuki Kihara - *Undressing the Pacific* - opened at the Waikato Museum.

- The new Singapore Art Gallery opened in Singapore in November. Hocken has lent 20 JT Thomson works to be displayed on rotation. Sadly John Hall-Jones, Hocken Fellow and representative of the JT Thomson family, died on the eve of his departure to attend the Singapore event. John Hall-Jones was also a foundation member of the FOHC.

- Work on a major project to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Frances Hodgkins Fellow continues. This is a complex project. The former director of Dunedin Public Library has been engaged as curator. The Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Hocken will jointly host an exhibition opening in November 2016 and a publication produced with Otago University Press will be launched in 2017.

- An exhibition of the work of 2015 Frances Hodgkins Fellow, John Ward Knox, opened on February 26th 2016.

- Friends will notice an increasing number of images being attached to the records for pictures and other items on MINISIS as the new system is bedded down.

- Because it is such a present problem I thought it worthwhile to include in this F&J a warning from the Hocken Blog about Sellotape. All custodians of old documents might read this with profit. For space reasons it has been edited a little.

Since its introduction in the 1930s, Sellotape has been popular for attaching and mending paper and other material. It is a common sight in archives to see first-hand just how much harm this 'quick fix' can do in the long term. A family heirloom (depicted in the article) is a perfect example of how the compounds comprising Sellotape and paper have interacted with each other over time.

Sellotape is comprised of a clear film on top, called the carrier, which is traditionally cellophane. Cellophane is regenerated cellulose. The bottom layer, the sticky part, is traditionally a rubber-based adhesive, made so that it bonds with what it touches when pressure is applied. The rubber adhesive is a long polymer chain, just like the cellulose that makes up paper. Over time, as the paper and the adhesive stay stuck together the two types of polymers will begin to interact and attach to each other in a process called 'cross-linking'.

As this process continues, the adhesive mass will yellow, get very sticky and oily, and more difficult to remove from the paper. In this oily condition the adhesive mass can penetrate the paper entirely and move into adjacent sheets. This staining is almost always impossible to remove: Later on the tape also becomes less effective as an adhesive and eventually the carrier falls off.

However tempting it may be, don't try repairs to your valuable family papers using sticky tape. If you are interested in getting repair work undertaken by a qualified conservator, a list of contacts can be found in the [Directory of New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Material](#)

Debbie Gale, Arrangement and Description Archivist

Friends of the Hocken Collections Membership 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 030903 0393175 000, including "Subscription" in Particulars field, surname/initials in Code and Reference fields.

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

donaldphillipps@gmail.com