

2019 TALK SERIES PROGRAMME

Finally on 20th November the Friends' AGM will be held. When the business of the AGM is completed – it should not take long - we will celebrate Dunedin chocolate making – past, present & future. Three speakers will address us under the title 'Spilling the beans.' The event will take place in the foyer.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In accordance with the requirements of our Constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Hocken Collections will be held in the foyer of the Hocken Collections at 5.30pm on Thursday, 20th November.

The business of the AGM is to receive the Annual Report of the Committee, adopt its Annual Financial Statements, and to elect the following:

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Committee members

NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the tea-room from 5pm.

HOCKEN LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

At its most recent meeting the Hocken Librarian, Sharon Dell, reported that the University Council members who visited the Library recently had

appreciated the experience. One outcome is that the Council will, in future, receive the Library's Annual Report – in part to honour one of the terms of the original Deed of Trust.

Space constraints continue to be of concern. The Property Services and University Library Staff have met and joint funding for removing a curtain wall and installing mobile plans cabinets and archives shelving has now been agreed upon. The work may be completed by early December.

Hocken is also enmeshed in an administrative review of the University Library as a whole. The Review Panel has been appreciative of the submissions made by the Library, and the Friends Committee has been associated with this process.

FRIENDS OF THE HOCKEN COLLECTIONS RESEARCH PROJECT 2020

Four applications were received by the closing date on 18th October. These are being considered and applicants will be advised of the competition result by 29 November 2019.

THE OTAGO INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCES – BEGINNINGS.

On 3 July 1869 the Otago Daily Times thus carried an advertisement inviting 'gentlemen' desirous of co-operating in the formation of a society — and this is worth stressing — for the promotion of Art, Science, Literature and Philosophy in this Province to attend a meeting to be held at the Athenæum 'today.'

A year earlier the New Zealand Institute, the future Royal Society of New Zealand, a federal body in keeping with the political tendency of the times, had started life in Wellington. Its 'presiding genius' was its first manager, the former director of the Otago Geological Survey and now the director of the Geological Survey - the 'indefatigable Hector.' All this, of course, could hardly be ignored, at least for very long. After all, Otago was still the economic and intellectual centre of the colony.

The use of quotation marks suggests a source for what follows. This editor is honoured to have received permission from Professor Gordon Parsonson to use part of an article of his, first written in March 1997, to mark the founding of the Otago Institute in 1869. Throughout seventy years Gordon has been a leader in the interpretation of New Zealand and South Pacific history, and for all of that time has been a 'friend', in the truest sense of the word, of the Hocken Collections.

Later this month he celebrates his 100th birthday, and FOHC joins with his family and his countless colleagues in honouring his contribution to our national self-understanding. Much more will be said as his anniversary approaches, but we think of him and honour him as a warm and encouraging presence within our community.

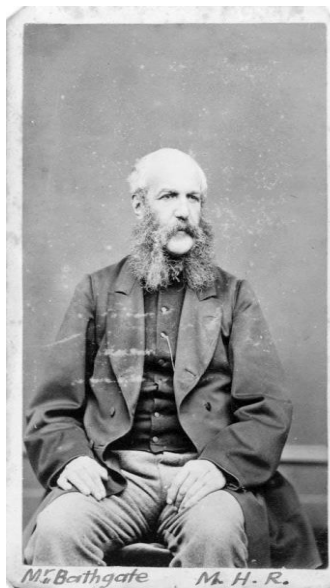
'Surprisingly enough, especially given the shortness of the notice, the response was very gratifying. A later estimate put the number of those present at eighty, among them E.B. Cargill, W.D. Murison, J. Rattray, R. Gillies, J.S. Webb, James Smith, J. Millar, M.P.C., J. Bathgate, S. Hawthorne, J.H. Harris, Dr Eccles, G.B. Barton, A. Chetham Strode, J.T. Thomson, St. John Branigan, R. Oliver, A. Beverly, E. Quick, W.M. Hodgkins, G. Matthews, the Rev D.M. Stuart and Mr Justice Ward, chairman.

'Forming a new institution is, of course, one thing. Deciding how it should be organized and what it might do once started is quite another. The first was simple enough. Every person who joined before 1 September would be entitled to become an original member - a sort of 'old identity'. Anyone seeking to join thereafter was to be proposed in writing at any meeting of the Society and elected by ballot—on

payment of one guinea for the year then current. One might also become a life member on payment of ten guineas in lieu of future annual subscriptions - which perhaps suggests the average age of those involved or likely to be involved. Non-residents might be elected honorary members by the unanimous vote of any meeting of the Society 'in acknowledgment of their contributions to Art, Science, or Literature in general, without payment of any fees.

'The rest of the rules governing the conduct of meetings and the make-up of the governing body or Council of the Society may be passed over here. These remain substantially the same as they are now. The only remaining problem —and it was one of some moment —was whether or not to affiliate with the New Zealand Institute. Various die-hards thought not. Many local people were still sore at Hector's failure to produce an easily accessible account of his journeys around Otago. Others baulked at the proviso in the Institute's constitution that the central body should have the power in certain circumstances to take possession of the property of any regional Institute. Ultra-provincialists in turn rejected the very idea of union with 'Wellington'.

As John Bathgate put it: "Why must we be tacked on



to Wellington? We are going to have a University, we already have a museum, why send our richest specimens and maps to Wellington where they will not be seen by the great body of our people?" Why indeed! The enthusiasts for amalgamation naturally saw no difficulty. Nothing need be sent to Wellington beyond the £50 annual subscription - which would be no

hardship given Otago's wealth.

'The local Institute would moreover be entitled to submit papers for publication in the Transactions and to nominate a Governor. Mr Justice Ward thought that it would be a positive advantage to have the invaluable services of Dr Hector in supervising the development of any laboratory or museum which 'might be entrusted to us', and, secondly, a share of any sum placed on the colonial estimates for the purposes of the New Zealand Institute - a glittering prospect which was in fact never to be realized. In

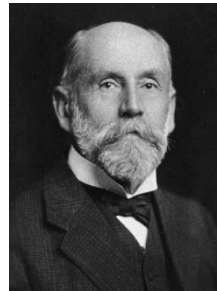
the face of all this, the ultra-provincialists naturally lost. As Justice Ward argued - and the argument seemed unanswerable - co-operation was now essential. The efforts of people like observers of the weather would be utterly wasted if there were no central body to collate the information and make it generally available. In any case, it would be very wrong in such a small country as New Zealand to encourage the formation of too many societies. As he went on to say: 'In all probability the most useful work that at the moment lies before the New Zealand Institute is the compilation of a complete natural history of this colony and to that history the Institute of each province should contribute a chapter.' And so the deed was done. After some bland assurances by Hector a meeting on 24 September 1869 agreed over Macandrew's and [Sir] Robert Stout's strenuous objections to seek immediate incorporation with Wellington. In this way, after several months' debate, the Otago Institute was finally launched on 19 October 1869 — with a complement of 79 original members — as a fully-fledged affiliate of the New Zealand Institute, seven years before the province itself capitulated to the sovereign authority of central government.

'As was perhaps only natural the new body began rather uncertainly. Its first public meeting on 26 August 1869 was to the obvious embarrassment of the speaker, Judge Ward, rather more largely attended by the 'blue ladies, presumably the blue rinse set, than was anticipated or thought natural or desirable. Happily, the lecture — on ancient and modern science — was turgid enough to ensure that there would be no similar invasion for at least some time to come.

'The real difficulty, however, was not so easily cured. The members of the new society were for the most part amateurs, mere collectors of things - Bathgate of moths and butterflies, Webb and Murison of plants, chiefly flax, Peter Thomson (a very notable and indeed learned amateur) of almost everything. But together they produced a wide variety of quite interesting papers:

- *on the contents of rock pools along the Otago coast*
- *on local bird life, notably kiwi caught near Dunedin*
- *on the disappearance of whales from New Zealand waters*
- *on the swallowing of stones by seals as ballast prior to migration*
- *on two - abortive - attempts to introduce Scottish salmon into New Zealand rivers*
- *on the possible discovery of New Zealand by the Arabs*
- *on methods of teaching geometry in New Zealand schools*
- *on the influence of the moon on the weather*

- *on alluvial deposits and glacial action on the goldfields of Otago*
- *on economising the current of large rivers for town water supplies, mill power and gold sluicing — with a sort of marine screw attached to a boom or bridge or barge*
- *on the development of railways in Victoria*
- *on the mechanics and mechanical economy of railways in general*
- *on a smokeless and self-feeding closed furnace to a design well ahead of its time.*



'Some contributions were in their way quite learned, occasionally perhaps above the heads of most of the audience. Among these we may perhaps list various contributions by G.M. Thomson, a new member, on exotic plants which had recently reached Otago and become naturalized,

three by W.N. Blair on the building materials of Otago, and a series by Henry Skey on a wide variety of astronomical and other subjects, notably aeronautics, in one of which the speaker came close to seeing the essential principles behind sustained flight — all very interesting in their way but inclined to be off-putting — hence a scheme before very long to engage the interest of the wider public by a series of popular lectures of a more general kind — on literature, politics and the like — the first and not the last effort to escape the toils of what was already regarded in some circles as an all-enveloping preoccupation with 'pure science'.

'There was, however, to be no escape. After 1874, on the appointment of Captain F.W. Hutton as secretary of the Institute, curator of the Museum, and lecturer in natural science in the University, later professor, matters took an even more serious turn. If the fare became more and more technical, more genuinely scientific to the virtual exclusion of almost everything else, it was largely his doing. After June 1877 when the Institute finally moved into its new home — where it still meets — he seized every opportunity to display some new find or gift of zoological significance — starfishes, plates of baleen, moa remains, tertiary molluscs, earthworms, crabs, sea anemones — to expatiate on some broad subject like the geological formations of New Zealand, one meeting after another, almost without pause for breath, his obvious object to emphasize the true function of the Institute, that is the pursuit of science in all its branches....'

ULTRA-PROVINCIALISM

That's the term Gordon Parsonson uses to describe the attitude of people like John Bathgate, who opposed any suggestion of central control over the activities and property of the newly formed Otago Institute. Given the prevalent concern for a sort of petty nationalism that bedevils our world today it would be interesting to know what were the issues that concerned Dunedin people in the late 1860s. A glance through the editorials in the *Otago Daily Times* for the second week in November 1869 might give us some idea. At least it will tell us what the newspaper thought was important for its readers.

But firstly, a word about John Bathgate himself. He turned 60 in 1869, and had always been a prominent leader in this city. He came from a schoolmaster's family and was an Edinburgh University graduate. He was in turn teacher, surveyor, Procurator Fiscal, newspaperman, and then banker, before he set sail for Dunedin in 1863 to become Colonial Manager of the Bank of Otago. Here he had an extraordinarily wide-ranging series of leadership roles – including being a Member of Parliament, and District Judge. When he spoke he would be listened to, and doubtless the *ODT* Editor had such as him in mind when he wrote his editorials.

On Monday, the main issue was emigration. It was encouraging to know that various schemes were in hand in England to fund skilled tradesmen and assist them to come to the other side of the world. The recent publication of relevant statistics showed that whereas in 1863 14,378 emigrants had come to this country, that figure was now (1868) down to 3,022. The newspaper regretted that the New Zealand Government was, itself, doing so little in the way of promoting this country as a desirable new homeland.

On Tuesday the 28th birthday of the Prince of Wales was to be celebrated. For the Editor this wasn't hugely important - there wasn't too much by way of 'personal approval' for this young man. Loyalty to the throne, though, was not presently in question. But even this 'is a sentiment which will very soon be put away like a faded Court suit by the colonists'. There was a strong feeling in Dunedin that, in fact, the 'Colonies are not valued at home', and the sooner we 'declare our independence, the better.'

On Wednesday the same theme was followed up with remarks on a proposed Colonial Conference. If this was to go ahead then the objective might be to initiate steps towards entire independence for New Zealand. Even the Editor thought that this might be going too far for his readers, and offered a series of alternatives – each colony might put their signature to a 'Treaty of Alliance' with the English Government; all the Colonies might form a league uniting the

Home Government with all its 16 dependencies, forming a 'vast consolidated Empire.' Even the idea of entering the 'American Union' was suggested, though immediately questioned, except that it might be of use 'in time of war'.

On Thursday the chief concern lay much nearer home. The Government in Wellington was proposing measures to prevent the sale of 'auriferous lands'. This, the Editor opined, was a direct interference in private enterprise. Why should the Government think that such sales would prejudice public interest. It didn't happen in respect to coal mining. It sounded too much like the feudalism of the 15th century. And, in any case, nothing like this had been proposed across the Tasman.

On Friday, the focus was on statistics, and there were concerns about their relevance. Apparently collecting and collating the figures had been a problem (not unlike what has been in our newspaper recently). Not all were relevant – what was happening in respect to the Post & Telegraph Department, Court business, Meteorology and Customs returns was all very well, but what mattered more, were the figures relating to social conditions, education, crime, the settlement of new arrivals, and so on.

Finally, on Saturday, a little niggles. The West Coast of the South Island was not a province, it was a District, and the Gold Fields Act didn't apply there in the same way. It all could have been cleared up so easily if the legislation had been more sensibly worded. And this the Editor proceeded to do.

If this was a typical week in the life of the newspaper and its principal concerns then the spirit of healthy independence was alive and well in Dunedin. After all they had now both a University of their own, and the Otago Institute to prove the point.

FOHC MEMBERSHIP:

Subscriptions: Individual: \$30 per annum; Life Member \$250 Joint: \$30 per annum; Joint Life Member \$300
Cheques to: Friends of the Hocken Collections. Online payment: Westpac 030903 0393175 000 - "Subscription" in Particulars field, surname/initials in Code/ Reference fields.

Prepared by Donald Phillipps for the Friends of the Hocken Collections P.O. Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059 - donaldphillipps@gmail.com