

Dunstan News

May/June 2019

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Big Changes in Store for Dunstan Hotel

The large complex that was the Dunstan Hotel will be split into two by new owners after it was sold last February.

The hotel sits on two titles – one, occupied by the original hotel which includes accommodation and the restaurant, has been bought by David and Andy Ritchie who were responsible for the restoration of Olivers, another important heritage landmark. The building on the second title which includes the front and back bars and the bottle store has been bought by Pip Thomas who ran a biking business in Middlemarch.



The Dunstan Hotel in Clyde

Both owners have major plans for their premises but

neither will include a public bar. Ms Thomson says she is concentrating on the front of the building and plans to have two shops there. Plans for the back area where the big bar was, are yet to be worked out.

The building bought by the Ritchies is the site of the original hotel dating back to the 1862 gold rush. The current building dates from 1903 after fire destroyed an earlier wooden hotel. David Ritchie says they intend to continue running the hotel as accommodation which was what it was built for, although it will be substantially upgraded and modernised.

"One thing that will be added is en suites," he says. "People today require them." Andy Ritchie emphasised that they intend to keep as much as possible of its original character, some of which has been covered over.

"Hopefully, it will be full of pleasant surprises," she says. "But maybe there will be other less pleasant surprises. We just don't know yet."

The couple have begun the planning process and the intention is to have it functioning as soon as possible although this depends on regulatory requirements such as resource consent. The building will also need earthquake strengthening but Clyde can be assured the restoration and preservation of the heritage building is in good hands.

The closing of the Dunstan Hotel is the passing of an era that began with the settlement of Clyde in 1862 when a canvas shack selling alcohol to gold miners grew into a substantial stone building, The Port Philip Hotel. It survived its many competitors and was extended over the years. By the 1980s, bigger bar facilities were built to cater for the Clyde Dam construction workers.

Public Meeting in Clyde—see Page 3

Talking It over ... with Community Board member Russell Garbutt

We are heading into winter and, for many people here, their power bill will be a significant part of their spending. While the Government's winter heating grant for those receiving benefits is welcome a huge percentage of a power bill is not for energy but for line charges. I have long been concerned at what Aurora charges because, for well over a decade we have all been paying these charges for what it calls "a period of under-investment". This is corporate speak and the reality is that instead of spending money to maintain our network, Aurora was actually borrowing money to pay the Dunedin City Council dividends to offset the costs of building the Dunedin stadium. One result has been power poles that have fallen over endangering our community.

After a long period of "under-investment" Aurora is now borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars to carry out the maintenance that was neglected. It is in the process of upping the line charges to pay for this borrowing. I think this is unethical and particularly so when we in Central Otago pay much more for line charges than anyone else on the network. Although this is not a responsibility of our local council or board, it affects every resident who uses electricity and so, I feel a responsibility to try and stand up for us all.

If there is anything I can help with, call me on 449 2254 or 020 4039 0424.



An unstable post in Blyth St being supported by metal bands

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Where's Rusty?

Rusty, the large chocolate labrador who was a familiar sight in and around Clyde's historic precinct for a number of years, has been missing now for several weeks.

Concerned residents have been asking after him and the *Dunstan News* can happily report he has a new home. Nine year-old Rusty has been "retired" by his owner, Tony Tohill, to a rural property occupied by his mother, Billie, and his brother Steve.

Rusty was one of a litter of three male puppies bred by Sean Tohill who lives just up the road. He kept one Rusty's brothers, Rogers, who often comes visiting.



Rusty (left) and his brother Rogers



Clyde readers can now enjoy a refreshed and refurbished library after a two-week make-over by the District Council. A pop-up library was set up in the foyer of the Clyde Community Hall so that people could still borrow books.
Photo : Librarian Liz South

Commissioners to Advise On Future of St Michael's Church

The Anglican Diocesan Council in Dunedin has appointed a Properties Commission to advise possible options for the future of Clyde's heritage church, St Michaels and All Angels Church in Matau Street.

The four-person commission is expected to consult other churches in Clyde, the local community and anyone interested in buying the property. The commission is also expected to investigate the likely outcome of selling part of the property.

The diocese intended to sell St Michael's in 2015 because its congregation had dwindled and it was too expensive for the Dunstan Parish to maintain. Instead the property was handed over to the Dunedin Anglican Diocese which looked at turning it into a retreat centre administered by a trust but that fell through last year.

Nineteenth century parishioners raised the money to build the stone church in 1877. The church, one of Clyde's treasures, has a category 2 listing by Heritage New Zealand and is also on the Central Otago District Council register of protected buildings.

What is not widely known is that St Michael's was designed by R.A. Lawson, the eminent Victorian architect who designed important buildings in Dunedin including First Church, Knox Church, Otago Boys High School and Larnach's Castle. The Clyde church, built in the Gothic style of the 13th century, is one of only three churches in Central Otago known to have been designed by Lawson. The others are in Lawrence and Naseby.

There is concern in Clyde and further afield about what might happen to St Michael's. A public meeting has been called by Promote Dunstan for May 28 to gauge interest and to discuss the issue.

The chairman of the Central Otago Heritage Trust, David Ritchie, says "The trust would be keen to see St Michael's protected and used as a community asset. We would like to explore with the church how it could be achieved," he says.

The Properties Commission includes a member of the Dunstan Parish and is yet to hold its first meeting. The Bishop of Dunedin, the Rt Rev Steven Benford, says it has "has been encouraged to connect with the local community as part of the process."

The commissioners' report will be handed to the Diocesan Council which will make the final decision regarding the future of St Michael's.



PUBLIC MEETING
The Future of St
Michaels and All Angels
Church in Clyde at
7.30pm
28 May, 2019
St Mungo's Church
Lounge
(corner Sunderland and
Fraser Sts)
Inquiries:
(03) 4492 119

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A Busy Time at Lodge Dunstan

Two new candidates are going through their three degrees to become Master Masons. These degrees are based on the apprenticeship degrees which stone masons attained over hundreds of years. Bro Michael Gard of Clyde has now passed through the second degree and Bro Tim Coleman of Cromwell has been initiated in his first degree. The Cromwell Coronation Royal Arch Chapter, which meets in the same building has also been doing degrees and Malcolm Moore (of Alexandra) and Martin Charleson (of Cromwell) are now Royal Arch Masons. There are two further candidates awaiting their degrees. A busy year indeed. Enquiries : contact Rory Butler at randcbutler@inspire.net.nz

New Plaques Installed

Three further plaques commemorating people who contributed to Clyde's early development have been installed in the historic precinct.

The plaques feature Anthony Brough, the town's first solicitor and a man with a complicated personal life, Charles Attfield, a butcher, and Thomas Bell who owned a biscuit factory which once stood on the site of the former Dunstan Hotel bottle store.

The plaques were funded by Promote Dunstan and it is likely more will be added to the 25 that have now been laid.



From left : Emily Attfield, Hamish Attfield, Daphne Attfield, Kevin Attfield and Jimmy Martin of Fulton Hogan. Daphne is the wife of Fred Attfield, the great-great grandson of Charles Attfield. Emily and Simon are great-great-great grandchildren of Charles.

Clearing Project at Museum

Working bees are underway at Clyde's Briar Herb Museum with volunteers and committee members sorting and packing hundreds of small items. The aim is to clear the areas that will eventually be demolished to make way for a new museum building.

Museum committee chair Clair Higginson says they have to sort the current collection, item by item, because some have been catalogued and others have not been recorded.

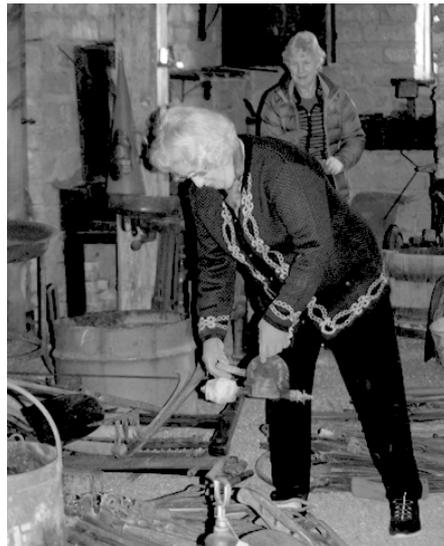
"There is a lot of duplication and we have to make the collection smaller," she says. "We need to de-access the collection and we will be asking people who have donated or loaned items to the museum if they would like to take them back."

The committee is using its recently acquired Collections Report as a guide to ensure items of high significance and items of significance to Clyde are kept. Some items have come from other parts of New Zealand and bear no relevance to Clyde and, where possible, these will be returned. One example is a telephone exchange display which originally came from the Rye Valley in Nelson, and the museum there is keen to have it back.

There is a mass of material to clear and sort and that does not include large items such as machinery, appliances and horse-drawn vehicles.

"We won't move the larger items until we've got a better idea of what our storage capacity will be," Clair says. "It's a long process but the whole idea of this exercise is to have a museum that Clyde will be proud of and will tell stories about Clyde's past."

This is the third working bee at the museum and more are planned. The next one will be about what will be kept and what will be let go.



Museum volunteers Dianne Hansen (front) and Carole Randal.