



# the Duntroon DIGGER

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**Next issue:** 3rd June. Please send your contributions to us at [duntroondigger@gmail.com](mailto:duntroondigger@gmail.com) by 28th May. See 'Digger dates' for this year on the last page of this issue.

## Nicol's Blacksmith Update

It has been 10 years since the Nicol's Blacksmith re-opened to the public and it's due for a bit of a spruce up to keep the building in perfect restored condition.

The Nicol's Blacksmith Historic Trust are very grateful to the Oamaru Licensing Trust working alongside the Lion Foundation who have provided funding for the bulk of our project.

We are continuing with our fundraising to raise the shortfall amount. The QR code to our givealittle page is below. Scan it with your phone to take you to the page where you can read more about the project with an option to donate.



We are very close to our targeted fundraising amount. Any additional money raised will go towards the ongoing maintenance of the building and forge.

For this project we are repairing some of the warped weather boards as well as re-staining the exterior and re-oiling the dirt floor. We have this work planned for July-September while we are closed.

We are always on the lookout for anyone who would like to learn the art of blacksmithing and possibly volunteer at the forge during the summer season. If you are interested in having a go with the view to possibly learning more and helping at the blacksmith, call in and chat to any of our volunteers working on the weekends.

Jan Keeling Nicol's Blacksmith Historic Trust.



## Duntroon Sesquicentennial Plans

DDDA members are currently putting their heads together to come up with some planned activities for the sesquicentennial celebration which will mark 150 years since the founding of the Duntroon township. At this stage we have set the date for Monday 27th October, which coincides with the day upon which the surveyed sections were auctioned in 1875. Coincidentally this also falls on Labour weekend. Plans to upgrade the Duntroon Gaol and, most recently, the cemetery sexton shed are coming together. The Nicol's Blacksmith Historic Trust is also undertaking a significant maintenance project on the blacksmith building. Further details will be revealed in future issues.

In addition, a Duntroon Cemetery memorabilia file of information on past Duntroon residents is currently being compiled for display in the sexton shed. The purpose of this is to provide an avenue for those of us who wish to share family history information, stories and photos from the people of Duntroon and district with visitors to the cemetery. The profile page for the file is available for retrieval from the Duntroon Facebook page. Please feel free to copy, complete and return it to us at 'The Digger' or email us directly to obtain a copy. We would love to hear from you.  
Email:duntroondigger@gmail.com



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Power Up Waitaki provides grants for projects in Aoraki/ Mount Cook, Twizel, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Hakataramea, Duntroon, Ikawai, Papakaio, Glenavy.

#### How to apply

Applications for the next funding round are open until midnight on Sunday 20 April 2025.

For more information and to apply:

visit [meridianenergy.co.nz/community-support/fund/waitaki](https://meridianenergy.co.nz/community-support/fund/waitaki)

email [community@meridianenergy.co.nz](mailto:community@meridianenergy.co.nz)

call 021 733 931

Do you know of a community project that's working to reduce carbon emissions?  
Visit [meridian.co.nz](https://meridian.co.nz) and search "Decarb fund" for more information.



## Phyllis Thorby - author of The Clear Stream (see next page)

My name is Phyllis Thorby [nee Hore] and I follow your page on Facebook as well as enjoy reading The Digger as it comes out. I live in a retirement village in Auckland now but I have never forgotten my roots. Beginning with correspondence school up the pass, I then boarded firstly with the Murrays of Tokarahi, then the Bell family in Duntroon where I attended primary school until leaving to board at Waitaki from Form 1. Those two families were so kind to me and I often wonder if I ever expressed my gratitude to them.

We have a writing group here at the village, and I wonder if your readers might like this little piece I wrote for this month's meeting. (see next page) Warmest regards, Phyllis Thorby.

## The Clear Stream by Phyllis Thorby

Towards the end of last year, the pond between our two apartment blocks underwent a transformation, and now as I walk past those newly placed river-stones winking at me through the water, they evoke some memories of long ago..

The river flowing past our place was known as the Clear Stream in my day. Many years later, I discovered it was officially known as the north branch of the Maerewhenua. A mouthful if you ask me. It was and always will be the Clear Stream to me. Springing from its source, Mt Nobbler, high in the Kakanui Mountains that divide North Otago from the Maniototo, merging with its southern sister at the foot of the treacherous Beatties Hill towards the eastern end of Danseys Pass and then to carry on as one to join the Waitaki River near Duntroon..

Our home was situated in a tiny valley on a terrace above the Clear Stream's sparkling waters. Our summer playground where I learned to dive and swim its emerald depths, where I can still hear the under-water chinking of those round grey stones as they were moved and shaped by the current. Floating on my back until the current gently deposited me onto its pebbly shallows.

The rattle and clatter while walking on the larger stones and the scrunch of gravel beneath my feet, the satisfying splashes as we children threw stones or rocks to test the depths. Our favourite mission was to dive for the disc-shaped stones and stock-pile them for skimming sessions across its more silent pools. Catching cockabullies, dodging the pools where we knew eels lurked - picnics with the neighbours down by the bridge. Riding into and swimming our horses to cool off on a hot day's mustering or going round the sheep.

Did I say the water was cold? Dip a toe in first to test. Gingerly wade in a little further, a little further, feel the circling ring of icy water creeping up your legs, up and up and up - until - Yelp! Dash for the warm stones on the shore, grasp your courage, and try again. Go for it! Splash straight in, plunge deep, feel the tingling, refreshing sensation that no other experience can rival. Oh, how I love those memories of the Clear Stream.

Named so because its sister, the southern branch of the Maerewhenua, was often a dirty yellow colour owing to the gold mining run-off from the old diggings above its waters west of Livingstone and the marked difference in colour at the confluence.

I have a lovely wall-hanging created for me, by master-weaver, Mary McKay, inspired by a black and white photo taken from the bridge where the rivers join. She sourced the colours from artist Colin Wheeler's 'Historic Sheep Stations of the South Island' and named it 'The Clear Stream'.

I understand the probable meaning of Maerewhenua is "The land belonging to Maere". Therefore, I might accept the Maori translation of Clear Stream for the north branch of the Maerewhenua [with the help of Te Aka Maori Dictionary] as Toari Awa. Toari - clear/translucent - Awa stream. It has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Our pond waters chuckle and the river stones wink again at me as I pass.

February 2025



## Around the Village with Karan Lawrence



*Photo: The water is still lying about but the lawns in front of Saint Martin's are nicely mown*

- The rain this "Summer" has kept the lawns growing, and just when it seemed the lawns in front of Saint Martin's Church were going to look ungodly, someone was seen with a hand mower dealing to them. Just another act of community service by Geoff Keeling. Thank you, Geoff.

- Moisture was exactly what was required for the new plantings down beside the information kiosk. The area sustained damage after a fire last year and it was decided to landscape it with the intention of keeping the view to the Duntroon Wetlands.

At the last Wetlands Working Bee Lloyd Grafton, Sarah White and Mel Jones tidied the area up and cut back branches and planted shrubs. Katrina Moffat has added some Kōwhais to the area too. This should create a colourful display in years to come. Many thanks to our volunteers for this work.

- Another person with a penchant for flowers is the Domain caretaker.

Steve has taken it upon himself to put flowers in front of the domain building. These have brightened the place up and inspired many compliments from the campers. His vegetable garden is a focal point for some campers too.

*Photo: Flowers in front of the domain building*



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## Submitting on the Proposed District Plan (see next page)

Submissions for the Proposed District Plan opened on March 1 and run through until May 9. Council has uploaded the entire Proposed District Plan to its online ePlan site, which you can find at <https://waitaki.isoplan.co.nz/review>

The ePlan lets you read the whole plan, or search for properties to see which parts of the plan apply to them. You can also make a submission through the ePlan; suggested changes to wording in the plan, changes to what applies to individual properties, or changes to layers or zones on maps. There are some explainer videos on how to do this at Council's website, <https://www.waitaki.govt.nz/Council/Consultation/proposed-district-plan>.

There's also the Friend of the Submitter. This is a free, independent, service which Council has set up to help people with their submission, or explain the submission process. However, the Friend of the Submitter is not a Council Officer. Their role is to offer you guidance to ensure your submission is correct according to the Resource Management Act.

The Friend of the Submitter is available to everyone can be contacted on 03 434 0537 or by emailing: [fos@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:fos@waitaki.govt.nz) The entire consultation and submission process is guided by the Resource Management Act, and Waitaki District Council must follow the process as laid out in legislation.

**Waitaki District Council**

# PROPOSED Waitaki District Plan

**The Proposed Waitaki District Plan is open for public submissions until 9 May 2025.**

We have been reviewing the District Plan to address:

- housing supply, choice, and affordability
- protecting biodiversity
- growth and infrastructure
- responding to climate change
- managing the risk of natural hazards.

## Key Dates

**1 March 2025** Notification of the Proposed District Plan – submissions open.

**9 May 2025** – submissions close

## More info

**For more information, including FAQs and how to make a submission visit:**

**[www.waitaki.govt.nz/  
proposed-district-plan](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/proposed-district-plan)**

**or email [planreview@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:planreview@waitaki.govt.nz)  
or call our 'hotline' on 03 434 0537.**

## Get help with submissions...

**...from a 'Friend of the Submitter'**

We understand that making a submission can be a complex and daunting process, so we're offering some assistance.

**A 'Friend of the Submitter' will be available to help you. Whether it be how to structure your submission to get your points across clearly, explaining how to make a submission, or explaining the submission process.**

The *Friend of the Submitter* is a free and independent service and is not a Council Officer.

Their role is not to influence the content of your submission, they will only offer guidance to ensure your submission is correct according to the Resource Management Act (RMA).

This service is completely free and available to all.

**Contact a Friend of the Submitter:**

@ **[fos@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:fos@waitaki.govt.nz)**

☎ **03 434 0537**

Your friend will work with you to arrange a way to best support you in making a submission.

**[waitaki.govt.nz](http://waitaki.govt.nz)**



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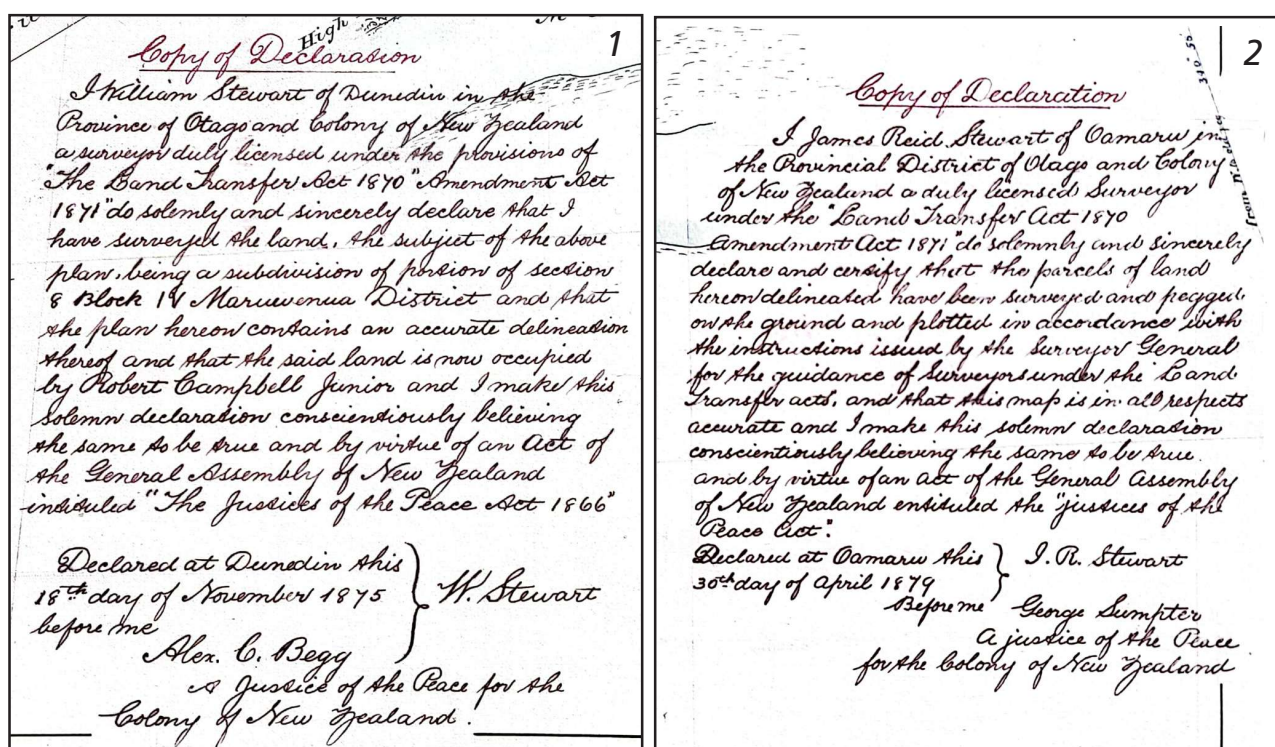
# Historic Duntroon: The Surveyors and the Street Names

by Anne Phillips-Vira

In the last issue I explored the reasons why Robert Campbell may have decided to establish the township of Duntroon and provided some insight into the 1875 survey map of the township. However, I left one of my questions unanswered: who completed the original survey of Duntroon?

When I received the survey map from Archives New Zealand, I learned that the Duntroon surveys were carried out by two brothers, William and James Stewart. Both born in Fifeshire, Scotland they arrived in Port Chalmers with their parents in 1856 as children (Mr J. Reid Stewart, 1934). According to the aforementioned obituary, James carried out a lot of survey work in Central Otago before eventually moving to Whanganui where he married Jane Peat in 1890. The couple had nine children, one of whom married Sir Gordon Hewart, Lord Chief Justice of England from 1922 – 1940 (Lord Hewart, 1943). James died in 1934 and was buried in Aromoho Cemetery, Whanganui (Find a Grave, 2025a).

William Stewart, the elder of the two brothers, married Janet Brown in Dunedin in 1868 (Marriage Certificate, 1868). His photograph appears in MyHeritage but sadly the clarity is poor and not worth printing. He died at the age of just 31 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery (Find a Grave, 2025b). It was exciting to find the declarations of these men on the Duntroon Survey Map. I hope that you'll enjoy this discovery (see below) as much as I did.



Extracts 1 and 2 sourced from Plan of Duntroon Township R25795743

In the last issue I also mentioned that the street names of Duntroon, (Middleton, Orr, McKellar and Rees), are all named after settlers who had close connections to Campbell (Pinney, 1981), the main street being named after Campbell himself. So, I did a little more 'digging' to learn about how these men were associated with Robert Campbell.

I discovered that Thomas Middleton was born in 1844 in the small community of Blair Drummond, Stirling, Scotland. According to Pinney (1981), he started his working life as a bank clerk then gave up his post and emigrated to New Zealand in 1865. By June 1871 he had married Christina Briggs

Currie, formerly of Fifeshire, at Knox Church in Dunedin (Marriage Certificate, 1871). Middleton was employed by Robert Campbell and William Low in 1873 to take over the management of Benmore Station.

In July 1899 after 26 years of managing Benmore and a disagreement with Robin Campbell (Robert Campbell's nephew and successor after his death), Middleton was transferred to Station Peak (Pinney, 1981). This run is located on the opposite side of the Waitaki River from Duntroon. Tragically, in 1900 while crossing the Waitaki on horseback from Station Peak to the Otekaieke side he was knocked unconscious by the "restive" horse that he was leading and drowned (Death of Mr Thomas Middleton, 1900, p.3).

When Middleton's "gentle reliable horse" (Pinney, 1981, p.42) Reuben returned home alone, his daughter Ceci rode out in search of him and found her father's body on the riverbank. He was just fifty-five. Middleton was survived by his wife, four daughters and two sons. He and his wife are buried in the Oamaru Old Cemetery (Find a Grave, 2025c).



*Middleton Family, 1897. From Early North Otago Runs (illustration 5), by Pinney, R, 1981, Collins.*

Orr Street was presumably named after Robert Roe Orr. He was born in Parramatta, Sydney in 1826 (People Australia, 2012) to Irish parents who emigrated to Australia in 1825. Robert was educated at 'The Kings School' which was "set up and oversighted ... for the government" (Raymond, 2011, para.8) by his father James Orr. Today it is listed as one of the top ten boys' schools in Sydney (Schools360, 2024).

From 1847 – 1851 Robert Orr was the overseer of Robert Tertius Campbell's Broken River Station in New South Wales. Disentangling the connections between the Orrs and the Campbells proved to be quite a task, but I eventually discovered that Robert Tertius Campbell and Robert Roe Orr were brothers-in-law thus making Orr an uncle of our Duntroon Robert Campbell. Robert Orr married Louisa Horsley in Melbourne in @ 1867 (Death Certificate, 1902). According to Pinney (1981) Robert and Louisa sailed to New Zealand with their daughters in 1874 after attending the Melbourne Cup. They travelled from Port Chalmers to Otekaieke by coach where they were greeted

by their nephew Robert Campbell. They were later to stay for a short time at Whitstone, one of Campbell's estates in Oamaru, before Orr took up the management of Station Peak from William Gilbert Rees. He and his family remained there until the Middleton family replaced them in 1899.

It is notable that the cottage in Duntroon where Robert Orr and his wife died bears the same name as the Parramatta house where he first lived with his family as a child (Raymond, 2023). I have yet to determine where exactly it was located as Robert Orr owned several properties in the Duntroon township. According to his obituary (Mr Robert Roe Orr, 1900), Robert died on May 5, 1900, aged 73 years at Erin Cottage, Duntroon. His wife Louisa died there four years later at the age of 77. Both are buried in Duntroon Cemetery.

The next issue will provide some insight into the lives of McKellar and Rees and reveal a little more about the likely origin of Duntroon's street names.

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Orr headstone, Duntroon Cemetery. (Leefield, 2024)

## Duntroon Digger Dates 2025

Please send your content, such as letters, articles and advertisements, to us by the 'Pre-Digger' Deadline dates shown.

Month	Pre-Digger Deadline	Publishing Date
June	28/05/2025	03/06/2025
August	30/07/2025	05/08/2025
October	01/10/2025	07/10/2025
December	26/11/2025	02/12/2025