

# Social Activities - Sandymount

Although communications were difficult, there was a rich life in the small settlements of Otago which surfaces in the newspapers. I have chosen to demonstrate this using Sandymount as an example, as many of our predecessors will have been involved.

The following photo of the Dick family orchestra illustrates one such activity! William senior is on the left and the next adult is his son, William. The exact location is unknown.



*Figure 1 the Dick family orchestra on the Peninsula*

Unsurprisingly, a major pursuit for men of various ages was shooting! The *Otago Witness* in particular regularly reported shoots such as in this article in 1880.<sup>1</sup> Civic spirit was strong too with Mr Riddell's efforts to benefit the Benevolent Society in 1885 – see bottom left report on the next page.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/OW18800110.2.46?end\\_date=31-12-1880&page=5&query=sandymount&start\\_date=01-01-1839&title=AHCOG%2CBH%2CCL%2CCROMARG%2CDUNST%2CESD%2CLCM%2CLCP%2CLWM%2CME%2CMIC%2CMTBM%2CNOT%2COAM%2CODT%2COW%2COSWCC%2CSOCR%2CST%2CTT%2CWSTAR&type=ARTICLE%2CILLUSTRATION](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/OW18800110.2.46?end_date=31-12-1880&page=5&query=sandymount&start_date=01-01-1839&title=AHCOG%2CBH%2CCL%2CCROMARG%2CDUNST%2CESD%2CLCM%2CLCP%2CLWM%2CME%2CMIC%2CMTBM%2CNOT%2COAM%2CODT%2COW%2COSWCC%2CSOCR%2CST%2CTT%2CWSTAR&type=ARTICLE%2CILLUSTRATION)

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

The above Company fired their first match at their Butte, Sandfly Bay, on Friday, the 26th December last. The day was everything that could be desired, and the range was in capital order. The scoring was very low as a rule, but that is easily accounted for when we consider that very few of the lads had ever fired a shot before. The ranges were 150, 200, 250, and 300 yards; five shots at each range. The names of the prize-takers are as under:—

G. Gordon, 39 points.—A morocco writing case, presented by H. Wise and Co.

J. Williamson, 37 points.—Portable writing case, presented by Brown, Ewing, and Co.

Sergeant Neill, 26 points.—A gold-plated pencil case, presented by Mr Walla.

J. T. Nyhon, 23 points.—A silver pencil case, presented by Mr Hielop.

W. Welbourne, 15 points.—Book of poems, presented by Mr M'Knight.

Sergeant Nyhon, 14 points, money prize.

Sergeant Dick, 13 points, money prize.

Corporal Rodger, 11 points, money prize.

John Dick, 10 points, money prize.

James Riddell, 8 points, money prize.

R. Pemberton, 7 points, money prize.

The money prizes were presented by Mr Walter Riddell, who kindly acted as marker throughout the day.



Figure 2 The first "bus" to Dunedin from Sandymount.

The Lodge of Good Templars was founded Sandymount in 1881:<sup>2</sup> (left below) as were the Primitive Brethren:

was decided that an effort should be made to help a little towards the relief of the poor in our midst, and for this purpose the chairman requested Mr Riddell, of Sandymount, to give an exhibition of magic-lantern views. That gentleman, who is always willing to help in a good cause, at once expressed his willingness to do so. The affair came off on Wednesday night last in the schoolhouse, and though the night was very bad and it blew hard, with heavy showers of rain, still about 50 people put in an appearance on the occasion. The views were evidently enjoyed by those present, and at the conclusion a vote of thanks was tendered to Mr Riddell for his kindness in coming so far to afford pleasure to the people of Hooper's Inlet, as well as to help the cause of the poor. Mr Riddell responded by stating that he thought everyone should help their poorer brethren. It

June 20th.

One of the most successful tea meetings ever held in this district took place in the school-room, Sandymount, on Tuesday, June 14th, the room being tastefully decorated for the occasion. Over 150 persons sat down to tea. After partaking of the good things provided, the chair was taken by Mr W. N. Griggs, who in a few well chosen remarks stated the object of the meeting was to welcome Mr W. B. Hayes, Primitive Methodist missionary, who, at the earnest request of a number of the settlers, has come to reside in the district. During the evening addresses were delivered by Messrs W. B. Hayes, Wilson, Clark, and the Rev. C. E. Barley, of Dunedin; and the choir sang a selection of Moody and Sankey's hymns. Mrs Griggs presided at the harmonium. Votes of thanks were accorded to the speakers, chairman, choir, and the ladies and gentlemen who assisted during the evening.

<sup>2</sup> Papers Past | PENINSULA. (Otago Witness, 1881-04-09)

April 4th.  
I don't know whether we are having our cold spell at present or not, but we are certainly having our rainy spell, for after two weeks of fine weather rain has fallen almost without intermission since Friday afternoon. Farmers, however, are now independent of the weather so far as crops are concerned, harvest being finished. In the grain-growing parts of the Peninsula large stacks are to be seen on every hand well secured.

The Anderson's Bay Presbyterian Church has lately been enlarged, and an addition is now being made to the Central Church.

The Lodge of Good Templars at Sandymount is progressing favourably, although rather slowly as regards numbers. They held their first harmony meeting on the evening of the 23rd ult. The entertainment consisted chiefly of songs.

AUGUST 30.—A very interesting lecture on Maori history, wars, customs, &c., was delivered by Mr J. White, Anderson's Bay, in the Portobello road church, Sandymount, on Wednesday evening, the 23rd. The night being fine, and their being good moonlight there was a large attendance. The lecture was very instructive, and all seemed highly pleased with it. At the close Mr White showed a number of Maori curios, such as a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi with all the names attached, some early land deeds, axes, images, &c.

Schooling was of course important in a Scots community in 1887:<sup>3</sup> the Mr McKay would probably have been from the Andersons Bay McKays.

And in 1893, there was a lecture on Maori history. And the subject of women was not forgotten

The Sandymount school was dismissed for the summer holidays on Friday, 23rd inst. Although in the midst of haymaking, several of the committee were present. The Rev. Mr Greig and a number of ladies were also in attendance. Mr Greig addressed the children in a few appropriate words on the benefits of education, contrasting the present system, with its many aids and encouragements to promote the advancement of mental culture, with the old and obsolete mode of conning by memory without appealing to the reasoning faculties. In concluding his remarks he pointed to the table, on which lay a large number of valuable prizes, as an evidence of what the Sandymount School Committee were doing by way of encouraging that spirit of healthful emulation so beneficial in the acquirement of education. Mr M'Kay, the chairman, also addressed the children, confining himself more especially to remarks on the improvement which the children had made of late, and visibly in the subject of reading. After the distribution of prizes, Mr M'Kay declared the school closed till the first Monday of February. The children then gave three cheers for the liberality of the committee in supplying so many prizes, after which Mr M'Kay led the children in a most enthusiastic cheer for their teachers, who so ably filled their positions and took such an interest in them.

The following is the list of prizetakers:—

MAY 25.—Our Literary and Debating Society held their last meeting on Saturday. Miss Joanna M'Gregor, vice-president, in the chair. The business of the evening was conducted by the lady members, who are indebted to Mr Balgill's for the use of his house and piano. Miss M'Gregor read an article on "Women," which was freely criticised. The rest of the programme consisted of music, vocal and instrumental, readings, recitations, stories, jokes, &c. It was the best attended and most successful of the society's meetings. Thirteen new members were elected. At the conclusion "Auld lang syne" was sung, and all went home well pleased.

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The Boer War raised patriotic fervour<sup>5</sup> and self-improvement flourished.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the wretched weather an enthusiastic patriotic meeting of the settlers of Tomahawk, Highcliff, and Sandymount was held in the Drill Hall, Sandymount, on Saturday last, Mr A. Stuart being in the chair. Piper Fairbairn, of the Dunedin Pipe Band, played a few stirring selections, patriotic songs were sung by Messrs T. and J. Robertson, and animated speeches were delivered suitable to the occasion. Three of the audience had handed in their names as volunteers for the fourth contingent, one of whom provides his own horse. The sum of £45 was collected in the above-named districts to provide horses for the other two volunteers, the horses to be named "Peninsula" and "Tui." The hat was then passed round, and a further sum collected, which will be devoted to sending a small present to Trooper Forsyth, a Peninsula volunteer now serving with the first contingent in South Africa, as a slight token of appreciation of his services to his Queen and country. A concert will be held in the Drill Hall on Friday next to augment the funds already collected.

<sup>3</sup> Papers Past | SANDYMOUNT SCHOOL. (*Otago Witness*, 1887-12-30)

<sup>4</sup> Papers Past | SANDYMOUNT. (*Otago Witness*, 1891-05-28)

<sup>5</sup> Papers Past | MEETING AT SANDYMOUNT. (*Otago Daily Times*, 1900-02-13)

<sup>6</sup> Papers Past | SANDYMOUNT. (*Otago Witness*, 1891-10-01)



Of course life had the usual vicissitudes as noted below in 1881.

June 27th.

During the past week the weather has been very changeable. On Saturday, June 25th, snow fell for the first time this season, covering the ground to a depth of two or three inches; next day a thaw set in, and to-day (Monday) it has nearly all disappeared, leaving the roads wet and slushy.

A petition has been circulated in the Sandymount district for the signature of ratepayers who are against the proposed loan intended to be raised by the Portobello Road Board.

The Central Lodge of Good Templars intend during the winter months giving a series of public entertainments. The first of the series will take place on Wednesday, July 6th, when Bro. W. B. Hayes, G.W.C., will deliver a lecture on Good Templars, their duty to one another, duty to the Lodge, and their duty to the public. Mr. Hayes' ability as a lecturer being well known, he is sure to make his subject both instructive and interesting.

Divine service (Methodist) is held in the school-room, Sandymount, every Wednesday evening, and Sunday forenoon and evening, and at Highcliff every Thursday and Sunday evening.

Measles are still prevalent in the district, several families having two and three down at once with them. The Highcliff and Sandymount schools are closed.

A good many of the farmers have started ploughing.

The Hope of Highcliff Lodge I.O.G.T. intend having a concert shortly.

JUNE 15.—The Sandymount Literary and Debating Society held a meeting in the school on Saturday last, Mr. McGregor in the chair. There was a fair attendance, and a good deal of interest was taken in the proceedings. Mr. Dick read a paper on "Elliot's Patent Smoke Annihilator," and showed carbon obtained by the process. Mr. M'Curdy read an essay on "The Working Man," showing a working man's and a common sense view of other classes of society, which was well received. Mr. Rutherford lectured on "Astronomy," describing the moon and Saturn.

SEPTEMBER 28.—Mr O. E. Hugo gave another of his entertaining lectures (by request) in Sandymount school on Thursday, 24th. The subject chosen was "Eyes," the different colours and forms being dealt with and illustrated by means of numerous diagrams. A number of questions were asked and answered, and some readings of character given, several young ladies going to the front, while the gentlemen had theirs delineated from writing on the blackboard. At the close of the lecture Mr. Duthie addressed those present on the benefits of attending a course of lectures such as these, and passed a high encomium on the lecturer's abilities as an exponent of this most useful subject. Mr. Hugo will shortly deliver another lecture on a subject of general interest to all.

The annual social in connection with the Sandymount congregation of the Primitive Methodist Church was held on Wednesday, and proved most successful. The Sandymount Hall was well filled with an attentive and appreciative audience. The chair was occupied by Mr. Balsille, who gave the opening address. An excellent programme was supplied by a number of friends from the town Primitive Methodist Churches. The various items were well received, several of the interesting features of the evening's entertainment was the rendering of a dialogue, entitled 'One Good Turn Deserves Another.' Brief addresses were delivered by the Revs. A. Greig and J. Guy. The meeting terminated with the customary votes of thanks and the singing of the doxology, followed by the benediction.

A smoke concert under the auspices of the Otago Pharmaceutical Association was held on Wednesday evening in the Provincial Hotel. Mr. W. Wardrop (vice-president of the Association) occupied the chair, and there were about thirty members and friends present. The evening was spent in a thoroughly social style. Games of various kinds were engaged in, and songs and recitations were given, the contributors being Messrs De Maus, G. F. Allen, W. Goodlet, W. Moore, D. White, L. Bray, A. Bagley, A. Lothian, and R. A. Palmer. Pianoforte solos were also given by Mr. F. H. Stokes. Before separating the company joined in singing 'Auld lang syne.'

OCTOBER 19.—A concert in aid of the prize fund was given by the Sandymount School Committee last Friday evening, Mr. Rutherford in the chair. The programme, which was a lengthy one, was in greater part made up of selections by the school children, who acquitted themselves creditably. Songs were given by Mr. Balsille's pupils as follows:—Miss Dora M'Tanish, Misses E. Hall and A. Hutcheons, and the Misses Hall (2) and Davis. Miss Flora Balsille acted as accompanist and played two piano solos. Miss Lizzie Arnott gave a recitation, and Miss Park's pupils gave several action songs in a very pleasing manner, reflecting great credit on their instructress. The ladies and gentleman who contributed songs, musical selections, &c., were—the Misses A. and J. Riddell, Miss Dick, and Miss Weir (accompanist); Messrs Dick, Black, M'Gregor, Robertson, Hutcheons, and Rutherford. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of "Auld lang syne."

December 20.—The annual concert in aid of the school prize fund was held in the Sandymount Hall on Friday, 15th inst. Owing to the prevalence of influenza throughout the district the attendance was not so large as usual. Mr Riddell ably fulfilled the duties of chairman. The school children, trained by Miss Law, contributed three items, the rendering of which reflected great credit on their teacher. The Smaill Band gave three capital selections on violin, cornet, flute, and piano, and were loudly applauded. Throughout the evening the following items were gone through: Selection on piano, cornet, and violin, Mrs Aitken, Miss Law, and Mr J. Dick; Miss Hutcheon, two violin solos; Misses Law and Dick, vocal duet; Miss Stone, pianoforte solo; Miss Riddell, two songs; Misses Law and Balsille, pianoforte duet; Miss Dick, song; Miss Smaill, song and pianoforte solo. Mr W. Riddell also contributed two songs in a very pleasing manner, and Mr G. Balsille, jun., rendered three songs (two comic), for which he was uproariously encouraged. Miss Balsille acted as accompanist. After votes of thanks had been accorded to the performers and the chairman, the concert closed with the singing of the National Anthem. The hall was then cleared, and dancing commenced, the music being supplied by the Clark Brothers. The refreshments were supplied by the ladies of the district. Through some mistake it was omitted to tender thanks to Mrs Black, who kindly lent her piano for the occasion, and to whom the committee's thanks are due.

In 1899 the Primitive Methodists were flourishing.<sup>7</sup> So too was the Otago Peninsula Rifle Club<sup>8</sup>.

DECEMBER 19.—A variety entertainment, followed by a dance, was given by the Ohio Minstrels in the Volunteer Hall, Sandymount, on Friday evening, under the auspices of the Otago Peninsula Rifle Club. Despite the unfavourable state of the weather there was a good attendance, and all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the varied programme of singing, acting, dancing, humorous sketches, conundrums, &c. The first part was opened with an overture, "Ohio," by the minstrels, and had a comic finale entitled "The French Conductor." It also comprised the following songs:—"Mother's old red shawl," "A hundred fathoms deep," "The young brigade," and the comic songs "I was on it," "Sweet Jenny," "Nic-nacs," and a song and dance "Prettiest little song." The second part included a "double long-shoe dance and song," by Messrs Newbury and Hanlon; "Home, sweet home," a duet by Messrs Cottrell and Brookman; a mirth-provoking sketch called "A patent shaving machine"; a ballad introducing "aged life," by Mr Swan; a clog dance, by Mr Newbury; and a farce entitled "The Ohio Screamer," &c., &c. Recalls were given to Mr Swan for his ballad, Messrs Cottrell and Brookman for their duet, and Mr Newbury for his clog dance. Mr A. Yates acted as accompanist on the piano. The other instruments were tambos (Messrs B. Hanlon and W. Irvine) and bones (Messrs D. and C. Pizey), and last but not least a "thundering drum," in the hands of a stalking darkey. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

<sup>7</sup> Papers Past | SOCIAL MEETING. (*Evening Star*, 1899-09-15)

<sup>8</sup> Papers Past | SANDYMOUNT. (*Otago Witness*, 1891-12-22)