

# Larnach Castle

## ?! What the...?!

Strange goings-on have been occurring at Larnach Castle for many years. There are stories of several ghosts that walk the halls, including Larnach himself, his first two wives, who were half sisters, his eldest daughter Kate, and a servant who is said to have accidentally drowned a baby in the bath.

## ?! What the...?!

Larnach's residence has been used for multiple purposes since his death, including a home for shell-shocked soldiers, a mental hospital, and the ballroom built for Larnach's eldest daughter Kate as a storage pen for sheep.

## Local lingo

While his home was being built, Larnach and his family lived in an old stone building on the property. He later gave his finished home the name 'The Camp' to reflect the way they had lived for those three years. The name was laid into the kauri floor of the entranceway along with the Larnach crest.

A rich and scandalous history is housed inside Larnach Castle, one of Dunedin's grand old residences. Sitting atop the Otago Peninsula, it is now one of Dunedin's most popular tourist sites. The Castle was built by William J M Larnach who was, at that time, a Dunedin banker. It is perfectly situated, with views of the harbour, the Pacific Ocean, and the beautiful slopes of the Peninsula.

Larnach commissioned R A Lawson as the architect of his home, and construction began in 1873. The shell of the building was completed in 1876, but the elaborate interior took a stunning 12 years to complete. Local materials such as breccia, Oamaru stone and local timber were used to complete the building, as well as imported timber, glass, marble, and tiles. The result was a striking home, set on 95 acres of grounds, in the Gothic revival style. Larnach committed suicide in 1898, possibly as a result of his failing finances and rumours of an affair between his third wife and his second eldest son. The trustees of the estate put the property up for auction in 1900.

Larnach Castle had several different owners between 1900 and 1967 during which time it fell into disrepair. The Barker family has lovingly restored the Castle and grounds to their current state since purchasing it in 1967. Today, the Castle is a bustling tourist site and function venue, and the gardens have achieved national recognition from the New Zealand Gardens Trust.



A view of the Castle from the gardens



'The Camp' was the name Larnach gave to his home

