

Otago Daily Times



Who's who

Smith family

No family is as intimately connected with the *Otago Daily Times* as the Smiths. Mr Julian Smith is the current chairman and managing director, and the principal shareholder of the ODT's parent company, Allied Press Ltd. His brother Mr Nick Smith is a director and business manager. The brothers trace their connection back to their great-great-grandfather, Mr George Bell, who worked for the ODT in the 1860s before buying the *Evening Star* in 1869.



Top of the class

The *Otago Daily Times* was the first daily newspaper in New Zealand, and so has the longest publication history of any daily paper in the country today.



Local nuggets

The very first edition of the *Otago Daily Times* was issued on a Friday, a fact which superstitious people at the time considered a bad omen. Interestingly, merely two weeks later, the Princes Street premises of the fledgling newspaper were completely destroyed by fire.



What the...?!

April Fool's Pranks

Every year on 1 April, ODT staff delight in publishing a front page prank designed to pull the wool over the eyes of unsuspecting readers. Some of the most memorable from the past few years have included a bright orange albatross nesting on the top of Mitre 10 Mega, a Dunedin-backed Team New Zealand yacht in the harbour, a ploughed-up Carisbrook rugby field and the Speight's water tap offering free beer.

Sitting down at the breakfast table with a steaming cup of coffee and the day's 'ODT' is a morning ritual followed by hundreds of thousands of Otago residents. The *Otago Daily Times* has been part of everyday life in Otago for over 145 years, and its history is as colourful and varied as that of the region itself.

The ODT was born from the new sense of wealth and optimism that arose after the discovery of gold in Otago. Its founder, Sir Julius Vogel, saw the potential for a new daily newspaper to service the needs of a dramatically expanding local population. Vogel entered into a partnership with William Cutten, the publisher of the *Otago Witness*, a weekly newspaper founded in 1851. The first edition of the *Otago Daily Times* came off the press on 15 November 1861. Over the next 100 years the *Otago Daily Times* successfully fended off many different rival dailies to secure its position as the number one Otago newspaper. The strongest of these competitors was the *Evening Star*, a popular afternoon paper which continued until 1978.

Today, the ODT is still one of New Zealand's most highly regarded daily newspapers. It is also the only major New Zealand daily to remain in local ownership – an extraordinary feat, considering the others have all succumbed to overseas ownership. This strong community focus extends to the content of the paper itself, as successive editors have made a conscious effort to keep Otago regional interests at the forefront, with broad supporting coverage of both national and international news, as well as sporting, business and lifestyle sections. This combination has proved to be a winner, and the *Otago Daily Times* is now delivered to homes and businesses right across the Otago region. It has an average print run of 45,000 and is read by an estimated 111,000 people every day.



An *Otago Daily Times* paper boy on his morning rounds



An *Otago Daily Times* rural delivery

