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A rural heartland journey - Otago Central Rail Trail

An Interpretation Concept Plan  20 August 2018

1. Introduction

In September 2016 Janet Bathgate and Rebecca Reid (interpretation consultants) were contracted by the OCRTT (Otago Central Rail Trail Trust) to provide an Interpretation Overview document. The resulting Otago Central Rail Trail Interpretation Overview (Oct 2016) provided a framework from which to guide the OCRTT, DOC, communities and other stakeholders along the trail towards progressing and extending story sharing along the 152 kilometre rail corridor. It provided thoughts as to what exists currently, what could be improved, and presented ideas as to how to create an even better rail trail experience in terms of connecting the landscape, the heritage fabric and the living heritage with stories of people and place. While some interpretive themes and ideas were delved into and methods of presenting these stories were suggested at various key points along the trail, it was considered that the Interpretation Concept Plan was the next step bringing about engaging, enlivening and innovative changes to the story sharing along the trial. The following document draws upon the work achieved in the Interpretation Overview of 2016 and builds on the findings to present a more detailed guiding document from which to be able to implement fresh interpretation and story sharing on and off the trail for the future.

The Interpretation Concept Plan, is a working document that presents the key themes of the Otago Central rail trail drawing on natural, cultural and historical threads that combine to create a rich heritage experience through Central Otago's rural heartland. The plan provides some direction as to what story will be told where and how and considers the visitor and the way they are moving through this landscape.

This concept plan puts forward written and illustrative 'concepts' for how the interpretation can provoke and enrich the many thousands of recreationists who experience this trail per season and progresses further towards the preparation for the design and production phase to create a new level of understanding and appreciation of the regions outstanding environs.
2. Interpretation Concept Plan Objectives

- Orientate the visitor to places and sites using clear maps, times, distances and 'what there is to see' information. Include safety, care codes, trail etiquette.

- Highlight the layers of story and the significance of place/s though innovative, thematic based interpretation.

- Understand who the visitor/s are and what their possible level of engagement, responsiveness and learning styles may be and reflect this in the interpretation planning.

- Bring alive some of the natural, cultural, historic stories that interweave through this landscape and create added meaning for visitors through the use of a mix of media including text bites, prose, graphic design, visuals, art works, sculpture and multimedia.

- Create a sense of transition and suspense from one interpretation node to another and entice people to notice and explore the landscape further.

- Connect the visitor to the landscape by directly orienting the interpretive stories to features, views and infrastructure being immediately experienced.

- Create a realistic connection to on-site rail fabric (eg. gates, stations, railway signage, rolling stock, signal features, rail) through the use of interpretation at the points where place, story and heritage or physical features converge.

- Use relevant materials in the design installation/infrastructure of the interpretation that make a connection to, and draw on the rail trail's history and sense of place.
3. Visitors / Audience

The use of the Otago Central rail trail continues to grow and around 15,000 people experience the trail currently in one season. (September to May).

The largest age demographic using the Otago Central Rail trail currently is the over 50 years old group with an average age of trail uses of 41 years. The gender split is around 50/50. Families ride the trail in relatively large groups particularly during school holiday periods and some school groups undertake sections of the trial as part of school camps. Around 60% are domestic uses with around 40% of these from the upper North Island and 20% from the South Island. International visitors make up 40% and are mostly from Australia followed by and Europe.¹

While most people spend at least 3 days + on the trail there are a number of shorter sections used for walking, cycling and horse riding. eg. the Poolburn Gorge section is popular while the Lauder to Wedderburn section is the most used for people choosing to undertake only a section of the trail. Such information could guide the thinking around the concentration of stories or interpretation for example in these places.

See www.otagocentralrailtrail.co.nz/more-info for surveys and reports on the rail trail.

4. Key themes and storylines

There are 6 themes considered in this concept plan for story sharing along the Otago Central Rail trail. These are;

- Ngāi Tahu connections
- Otago Central Railway (OCR)
- Pastoral Farming
- Land (Gold and Biodiversity/landforms)
- Communities
- Solar

View into the Ida Valley and on to South Rough Ridge after emerging from the Poolburn Gorge Tunnel No.1.
Theme: Ngāi Tahu

The following themes are draft only based on research into written sources and archaeological findings. These storylines and any ideas for presentation need to be further developed or altered after full liaison with the local iwi/runangas.

*Ngāi Tahu are tangata whenua in this landscape and have ancient history of resource gathering and trading through the 3 valleys Manuherikia, Ida Valley and Upper Taieri.

*Māori presence in this landscape can, in part, be understood through the many place names they bestowed on rivers, lakes, places and valleys. ¹

*Lost giants - upland moa (once browsed and grazed in Central Otago's lowland, open forest, scrub and grassland habitats and were hunted by Māori travelling these routes. The *Euryapteryx gravis* moa was the main species sought in the area. ²

*Archaeological sites/investigations in and around parts of the rail trail route provide some evidence of past moa hunting camps and/or quarry sites. eg. Clutha watershed, Ida Valley, Hamiltons, Hawkduns, Upper Taieri. ³

*What is silcrete and what was its value to Māori? (Silcrete; Formed as a hard duricrust of siliceously cemented quartz sands and gravels of freshwater origin). ⁴

*Flake tools used in moa hunting sites were often silcrete and porcellanite. A number of silcrete quarries exist within the rail trial area of which the one near Oturehua is the largest in that area extending to 20 hectares and thought to date back to the 13th and 14th century ⁶

*Seasonal use of the Central Otago interior by Māori during the 17th - 19th centuries has been based on cultural materials found in a number of rock shelters and caves in areas such as Strath Taieri, Middlemarch, Sutton, Puketoi Station. These include a kite and harakeke/ flax fibre, flax sandals/ paraerae pieces, dog skin fragments, water bowls and fishing gear to name a few. ⁷

*Weka hunting and eel or lamprey and fibrous resources were sourced in Central Otago by Māori on seasonal expeditions from at least the 18th century.

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²The online, digital Ngāi Tahu Atlas – [www.kahurumanu.co.nz](http://www.kahurumanu.co.nz) – includes over 1,000 traditional Māori place names that have been fully referenced from whānau manuscripts, published books, 19th century maps, newspaper articles, and a vast array of unpublished material.


⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid, p.160.


**Theme: Otago Central Railway (OCR)**

*The fight for the route* - the Otago Central Line gets the final vote out of 7 proposed routes in 1877.  
* The line construction from Wingatui to Cromwell took 42 years in the making, beginning in 1889 and completed in 1921.  
* OCR (Otago Central Rail) was a major 'Branch Line' of New Zealand Rail and opened up the interior of Central Otago connecting rural towns to major ports and markets.  
* Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'.  
* The use of structural stone in bridge and culvert construction met its zenith on the OCR and its consistent high quality and quantity is unsurpassed elsewhere in NZ. and is a distinctive feature along the rail route.  
* Who were these crafty stone masons? Stories of Polish, German and Italian stonemasons who emigrated initially to the NZ goldfields.  
* Railway construction brought new businesses to small towns as it progressed. Some businesses stayed in one place, others moved following the progressive construction.  
* Excursion trains ran over the sections as they were opened and throughout construction to enable Dunedin people to come and see the progress of “this engineering wonder.”  
* Passengers, stock, goods, equipment, gold bearing quartz, rabbits, grain, coal and fruit were all moved along this railway which in effect became Central Otago’s lifeline.  
* Raw materials from Central Otago such as stone, coal, clay and gold were carried on the OCR and were important to the growing economy.  
* Communities and townships clustered around railway stations which became a lifeline for rural people.  
* Train spotters sand the last train - the end of an era and the obsession for some.  
* Bringing up the rails... the deconstruction of the OCR.  
* The eventual birth of the Otago Central Rail trail which opened February 2000 and is known as the 'original great ride' in New Zealand.

**Theme: Pastoral Farming**

* High country runs and large stations were, and to an extent still are, prominent in Central Otago’s vast landscape.  
* The 1890s land reform act resulted in the breaking up of larger blocks into smaller farms and this created the need for farming tools and equipment. Places such as Hayes Engineering Works (close to the rail trail) went into business to fill this need and their inventions are still a household name in farming circles.  
* This is predominantly sheep and cattle farming country providing an authentic rural snapshot for visitors travelling through it.  
* A series of dams were constructed for irrigation purposes throughout Central Otago to help ensure that farming remained a mainstay occupation.  
* Historically some farmers were involved with labouring work on railway construction, provided horses and drays for carting supplies and/or supplied meat to butchers who were following the rail line.  
* The opening of the OCR in 1921 was a game changer for farmers in Central Otago who could now load stock to wagons and get them to the meat works. Transportation of wool and fruit was also a major development.

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9 Ibid. pp.14-15
*Stock specials* were run from Middlemarch, Ida Valley, Omakau and other stations according to demand. At times trains would pull up to 22 wagons of sheep.

*Rabbits quickly became pests* in Central Otago, favouring grasses and competing with sheep grazing, to the extent that some farmers literally walked off their land.

*Rabbits created a whole industry, and a livelihood for many in Central Otago. Rabbit companies were set up employing locals in factories and canneries. (In the Maniototo 13000 + rabbit carcasses were loaded onto trains daily in the early 1900s and taken to the Burnside freezing works in Green Island, Dunedin).*

*The bubble burst on the rabbit fur trade in the 1920s when London prices dipped and exportation of rabbit fur from New Zealand took a major hit.

*Fruit growing* began early in Central Otago (later 1860s) and orchards and fruit eventually became the new gold.

*Orchardists recognised the need for and value of irrigation drawing on mining races and springs between Clyde and Omakau. One industry grew out of the other in multiple ways.*

*Arrival of the railway to Alexandra around 1906 provided a major boost in the development of the fruit industry allowing fruit to more easily get to market on the East Coast.

*Rhythm of the farm, past and present - This countryside is still a rural heartland and sustains many livelihoods. Farming today still involves mustering, shearing and wool and milk transportation albeit by road, but many rural traditions live on.*

**Theme: Communities**

*Communities formed* as the rail inched inland and especially developed around temporary rail terminus’s. Boarding houses, schools, hotels, blacksmiths all followed the line as it penetrated into Central Otago's heartland.

*Many towns, which originated because of the rail, continued on as rural centres once the railway closed in 1990 servicing farming families and small businesses many of which have been re-invigorated by the opening of the OCRT.*

*Multicultural communities were significant in Central Otago (eg. In the 1890s a quarter of Alexandra’s population was Chinese) involved in mostly gold mining and orcharding in the area.*

*Communities had to pull together* during times of major events such as the Hyde Train disaster that killed 21 people and injured 46 others on June 4, 1943.

*Train stations were a main hub and meeting place for many small towns along the OCR.*

*Alexandra's Blossom festival* began in 1957 and by 1959 special festival trains were being run to Alexandra to take part in this social community event that is still running today.

*It gets into your bones - many artists and writers have been inspired by Central's landscape and this has resulted in artistic expressions of painting, film, poetry and music.*

*Today, strong resilient communities and characters form the backbone of this arid countryside exhibiting a 'can do' attitude and a practical mindset.*

**Theme: Land** (including biodiversity/landforms and gold)

*The discovery of gold in the Dunstan Gorge in 1862 saw thousands of diggers swarm into the area to try to make their fortunes.

*Towns built on gold* along or near the trail include Clyde, , Ophir, Naesby, and Hyde.
*What's in a name?* The OCR and now the Otago Central Rail Trail traverses large scale open landscapes, valleys, and tight rocky gorges. It follows key water courses and a series of parallel mountain ranges (peneplains) whose names reflect their craggy nature. eg Raggedy, Rock and Pillar, Rough Ridge and their Māori heritage. eg. Manuherekia, Matakanui and Moana Haehae (junction of the Clutha/Mataau and Manuherekia)

*A highly modified land* - Once these valley floors were clothed in native forests, and over time a more open tussock rocky outcrop landscape has evolved through human influence and climatic changes.

*Natural remnants* of lakes, native flora and fauna still occur in patchy areas amidst a very modified environment. These include remnant saline ecosystems and associated plant and invertebrates, and wetlands. (eg Upper Taieri)

*Some threatened plant species* have survived in the changing landscape such as native broom/ *Carmichaelia* sp. *olearia* sp., Spaniard/ *Aciphylla* sp.

*Native fauna* such as Karearea/ NZ falcon, freshwater galaxid, skinks still found near the rail trial today are a link to this landscapes more natural past.

* The hottest and the coldest -* climatic extremes and its effect on the land.

Theme: Solar

[content for the Interplanetary cycle way brochure has already been created and brings to attention the planet sculptures on the rail trail. At present there is no further call for interpretive ideas or methods of communicating the meaning of the sculptures of planets now in situ along the trail]

5. Proposed interpretive media

The project has been divided into sections for ease of understanding and presenting the stories and their proposed methods of delivery at various locales along the 152km rail trial corridor.

These sections are divided up using ether different media (proposed style of presentation) or by existing built structures (such as Kiosks and Ganger sheds) and are connected to the key themes (refer above) and sub themes. Each place where interpretation is proposed is noted on the accompanying map and cross references locations and proposed themes using a set of icons for ease of achieving this. [see map p. 13]

**Interpretive media proposed or retained for the Otago Central Rail Trail includes;**

1) **Point of Interest interpretation panels** (permanent structures including succinct text and visuals/maps/images diagrams) which connect a site, scene or object directly with the place where the visitor is at that point. Eg. prior to viaducts, tunnels, /specific points of interest. Bespoke design planned to link to railways era.

2) **Panorama/landscape panels ;** interpret a view or scene using overlay sketches or outlines with named landscape features. May have additional text, verse etc. Three of these already exist, consider adding one more in the Upper Taieri area.

3) **Kiosks/onsite panels** (placed at most but not all railway stations en route between Clyde and Middlemarch) These current structures serve to orientate the visitor using maps and 'you are here' and provide an introduction to the history of the township or place and its role in the community during the operations of the Central Otago railway branch line. Today these serve as a connection
point for recreationists on the trail, and have the potential to set
the scene, give each place an identity and connect visitors to the
past and present use of the trail and the wider community.

4) Ganger shed shelter story sharing; newly constructed ganger
sheds currently provide a 'you are here' map, describe the view
and present the visitor with options for sightseeing in both
directions from the given point. These large interpretation panels
have good information but with up to 2000 words of text they
present the visitor with a fairly overwhelming amount of reading.
Different options for presentation such as artworks and stories/
large visuals immediately connected to place need to be
considered.

5) Digital sound recordings /listening posts; provide ambience and
links to the rail history. eg introduce sound- steam trains, on
tracks, whistles, shoveling coal, filling tanks with water... This idea
may need tempered by alerting users to the possible 'annoyance'
and safety factors for others eg. people gathered in tunnels etc
listening to whistles. More discussion is required.

6) OCRT Trail App.
Consider designing Otago Central Rail trail app which could combine sound,(audio and music) short
film, and visuals to good effect. The trail app would provide an interactive, user friendly digital
platform to inform visitors about a mix of messages from safety, orientation and conservation to
interpreting the natural, cultural, historic points of interest en route. It could become like an e-guide
along the journey. The app could provide targeted 'children's interpretation en route using code
 crackers and quiz for example.

This innovative technology has been used to good effect in the Tongariro National Park for example in
the form of the 'Pocket Ranger' that uses the mobile tool to share safety messages and the stories en
route whilst keeping on -site signage to a minimum. The app also uses the QR (Quick Response)
codes to provide immediate downloads of information for people at points along the way. This means
people can access multimedia and stories relevant to the place where they are at the time.

7) Augmented reality digital visual development; Augmented reality is a technology that
superimposes a computer-generated image on a user's view of the real world, thus providing a
composite view. eg Using cell phones to depict a train coming through a tunnel, superimposing a train
coming across a viaduct or perhaps a prehistoric scene of Māori travelling the valleys (if appropriate
after and after iwi consultation) overlaid onto today's scene. (needs more research into phone
requirements and setup but is possible and would add another layer of visualization and
understanding of the natural/cultural and human history of the railway and its surrounding
landscape).

8) Sculpture; Sculpture can present opportunities to reveal the story in a more enticing and different
way. eg. broken NZR cups on rail edge, apple cores.. moa grazining in the Ida Valley tussock and
pouwhenua (pou) (in agreement /liaison with Ngāi Tahu ) are examples of possibilities. Start and
finish entry/exit points to trail could use some form of sculpture. (see page 37) Any sculpture would
be of high quality and decisions for development would need to consider the trail as a whole, being
careful not to clutter the trail.
9) **Railway and heritage fabric** (existing / future rolling stock, railway sections, gates, posts, signal stations, good sheds, railway stations) Noting that the authentic fabric IS interpretation in itself.. leave as is and where applicable weave the heritage fabric/remains into the tale to make sense of it. Interpret it! Also aim to accommodate future 'railway furniture' /additions back to the track edges eg. 2017 re-location of Lauder station and community lead restoration and interpretation.

10) **Rail Trail Passport** (existing system of stamps collected at stations. Booklet includes some snippets of station histories and images and is a good interactive activity that encourages stopping as well as creating a take home souvenir of the trail).

11) **Off site interpretive media**, includes websites, maps, brochures, interpretation panels in towns, museums and i-sites, books linked to the subject matter. Mobile apps are being developed by commercial operators. (updates need checked)
Map showing proposed themes and locations of interpretation concepts for the OCR Trail
6. Point of interest panels and panoramas

6 i) Point of interest panels

There are currently approximately 17 'point of interest' interpretation panels. These are mostly on or near the trail with the exception of a few, when a short walk leads to something of interest just off the trail itself. eg. tunnelers camp. Most of these existing 'point of interest panels' have been well placed to interpret the particular feature at the sites, however an upgrade and a fresh look is required. Most of these panels were designed with the rest of the interpretation along the trail in 1999 however some have been upgraded. Some are in a bad state of repair and difficult to read. Basing upgraded interpretation at these key points, (which have been reviewed in the process as to their ongoing place and significance) the proposal is to add in a bespoke design for the panels rather than just the standard panels on a post scenario. Linking the look, structure and materials to the railways theme and character aims to add an extra aesthetic to the rail corridor and help focus in the interest for visitors at the particular feature or place being interpreted. (See design drawing 1).

Travelling direction; Clyde to Middlemarch

Panel 1. Mutton town Viaduct.

Theme/s: Otago Central Railway
* Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km.'
* Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

Sub themes
* This was one of many viaducts that were constructed on the Otago Branch line for the railways.
* Muttontown viaduct has the most spans (18) of all the bridges built to accommodate rail on this line and is the longest trestle bridge on the trail.
* The steel work on the bridge is significant and it was found to be stamped by Dorman Long and Co, Middlesborough who also supplied the Sydney Harbour bridge.
* The only signal light on the actual railway line exists 200 m east of the bridge... thought to control movement across the bridge.
Theme : Land /Communities -
*Gold brought thousands to the Dunstan diggings based near Alexandra and Clyde in 1862.

Sub themes:
*Muttontown was once a gold mining camp dating back to 1862.  
* Station owners responded to the demand for food namely mutton, and the town which was near this point took the name. Later the railway viaduct also took this name.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1, right). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

Location: Placement prior to approach of viaduct at Clyde end and sympathetically out of view for cameras etc.

Right: Design drawing 1

Panel 2 - Manuherikia No 2 bridge

Theme: Otago Central Railway
*Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'
*Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

Sub themes
*This is the 3rd longest bridge on the trail - and the highest of the wooden trestle bridges on the rail trial.  
*It is surprising that its piers were not built in concrete like the other two bridges over the Manuherikia.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

OR
Create a smaller more subtle plaque style design (than drawing one) with embossed words into rustic core ten steel or copper plate. These could be placed on or near the foot of the bridge on the left side entrance. These series of smaller style plaques would be designed to focus on the technical attributes of substantial bridges on the trail that do have planned larger interpretive signage, providing a quick reference to their design, height, materials construction style length etc.

Location: South side of bridge entrance.
Concept 1

Large metal poles inspired by the classic lamp post in the area

3D lettering to mimic the old rail station signage

Strong metal supports

Design inspired from the rail trail website.

Concepts of a possible look for the point of interest panels (note text is a place holder only)
Concept 2

Modern polished metal used to sandwich the boards, bound with heavy bolts.

Old Railway sleepers used for posts.

Double sided boards.

Design inspired from the rail trail website.
Panel 3: Manuherikia Bridge No 1.

**Theme/s: Otago Central Railway**

*Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, ‘an average of one bridge every 2km.
*Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

**Sub themes:**

* A huge amount of energy, design work and skill went into the construction of these bridges that had to cross the Manuherikia River in 3 places along the trail.
* This is the longest bridge on the rail trail (363ft, 110.6m) and the first of the true concrete pier bridges.\(^{10}\)
* It is one of only 2 curved bridges on the OCR.
* The piles were driven using compressed air for the first time on this railway line.\(^ {11}\)

[Describe in brief; Materials, abutments, steel work, time to construct. Key stories about construction and or use]

**Media:**

Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

**Location:** Placement at Lauder end of approach to bridge.

Panel 4: Tunnelers Camp panel (set lower to ground than other panels to be located on the trail)

**Theme: Otago Central Railway**

*Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

**Sub themes**

* Who were the navies and where did they live?

* Life on the line for construction workers was far from easy, hard physical work all day and then home to a shack nudged into the side of a hill.

* A number of construction camps to house the rail builders, platelayers, service men, and tunnelers formed and today the remains of just two are visible - one in the Taieri Gorge and one in the Poolburn Gorge.

* Who were these men and where were they from? Possible stories of Polish, German and Italian stonemasons who emigrated initially to the NZ goldfields.

\(^{10}\) Jill Hamel Archaeological assessment of the Otago Central rail trail: the line today CONSERVATION ADVISORY SCIENCE NOTES: 137, 1996.

*Railway workers worked in a cooperative system rather than as contractors on the line. Was this a social initiative and how well did it work?

*Social life - gambling and drinking were a pastime for many railway workers and the Poolburn Gorge became legendary as regularly reported in the Ida Chronicle - the newspaper of the day.

Existing panel at Tunnelers Camp, Poolburn Gorge

"Should the reader feel at all anxious to make the acquaintance of the Gorge and its denizens, all he need to do on arriving at the railway terminus[Ida Valley] is to follow the line of empty bottles and he can be sure he is on the right track."12

* Archaeologists have provided an insight into the number of huts and their building materials at this site. Please respect these historic sites.

Media:
Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Addition of map layout showing remains of huts found on the hillside. Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panel on one sides. Four clamps spaced with drop sign set at lower height than others on the main trail.

Location: Current placement of sign over-looking the tunnelers camp could be re-used. Final location of new panel to be confirmed and to be placed sympathetically in the environment at a distance from the hut sites.

Panel 5: Tunnel Construction

Theme/s: Otago Central Railway

*OCR (Otago Central Rail) was a major 'Branch Line' of New Zealand Rail and opened up the interior of Central Otago connecting rural towns to major ports and markets.
*The line construction from to Cromwell took 42 years in the making beginning in 1889 and completed in 1921.

Sub themes:
* Three tunnels exist on the rail trial section of the original Otago Branch line and these obviously slowed progress of the railway creation.
* The two Poolburn Gorge tunnels (Tunnels 12 and 13) are significant and constructed by blasting, building with schist rock and lined with brick. [Describe technical details, length, curve, etc]
*Fine stone work in the retaining walls required for both ends of the tunnels are notable.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

12 MOUNT IDA CHRONICLE, VOLUME 32, ISSUE 9304, 31 JANUARY 1902
https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MIC19020131.2.14
**Location:** Picnic area site where current panel is, pre tunnel entrance from the Lauder end, would be replaced.

**Panel 6: Poolburn Viaduct**

**Theme:** *Otago Central Railway*

*Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'*  
*Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.*

**Sub themes:**  
*The Poolburn viaduct is the highest on the line (37 m) and when it was built in 1901 it was the 3rd highest railway viaduct in New Zealand.*

*Construction took 3 years and schist rock had to be quarried nearby.*  
*The abutments (36.8m high) are made of beautifully trimmed and bolstered stone all bought perfectly to course.*  
*This was the last of the big masonry bridges built on the OCR and is the one with the longest span (157 feet for one of the centre spans)*

**Media:** Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

**Location:** North side of the viaduct but place on the edge of the trail and consider double siding the panels to be read from both directions.

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Panel 7: Poolburn Viaduct 2

Theme/s:
* Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'
* Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.
* Passengers, stock, goods, equipment, gold bearing quartz, rabbits, grain, coal and fruit were all moved along this railway which in effect became Central Otago’s lifeline.

Media: Large angled image panel and caption to be placed to the right side of the viaduct heading south (on the Auripo end). Create a short walking track to the natural viewing area to the side of the viaduct which really brings its construction into perspective. Present an image on an on-site panel of a train crossing the viaduct from the same orientation. eg. see below from Over the Garden Wall p.57 c. Oct 1972. Construct the posts from either steel or railway sleepers. The access to this proposed area needs clarified with DOC as it may be on private land.

Auripo - As noted in the OCRT Overview Oct 2016, it was suggested ALL station sites have a kiosk. Currently there is a 'point of interest panel at Auripo. Consider removal of point of interest panel here for replacement with a kiosk which interprets its use as a siding and smaller flag station from 1904 OR upgrade the interpretation panel. Further ideas and themes are covered in the Kiosk section below, see page 32.  

Ida Valley Station - Consider Ida Valley interpretation under station kiosks as per Auripo (above). This was a very busy station and a terminus town during the years of construction of the Poolburn gorge section of the railway. A whole community of people, railway workers and businesses were clustered here. Goods shed, turntable, workers cottages, stockyards could be identified using maps and remains nearby such as the turntable. See ideas and themes will be covered in the Kiosk section below p.32. A more substantial shelter may be considered here after further discussion.

14 Note: DOC are not keen to see a kiosk placed at his site. (Rail trail interpretation plan DOC feedback 10 July 2018)
Panel B: Idaburn dam & Bonspiel

Theme: Pastoral Farming
* A series of dams were constructed for irrigation purposes throughout Central Otago which has helped ensure farming remains a mainstay occupation for the future.

Sub themes:
* The Idaburn dam was constructed as part of the Hawkdun Irrigation Scheme in 1931 and supplied water to an additional 500 acres of land in the Ida Valley.
* Dam construction included a 10.7 metre high by 33.8 wide concrete arch and was built to store spring flows.
* Idaburn dam is one of a number of dams including Falls Dam, and Poolburn dam also built during the 1930s Depression years.
* Ice skaters and curlers flock to the dam in winter when the temperature plummets and sometimes a bonspiel is called. Explain.

A special train from Dunedin has brought ice skaters to the Idaburn Dam. Image D. L. Turner from Rails to Cromwell, W.J. Cowan

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

Location: Proposed sitting is on the Oturehua side of the rail trail which has good views onto the dam. Consider suggestion of utilizing a road/railway gate arrangement (refer p.32 Overview 2016) on either side of the road and placing the signage near to this.
Panel 9: Kokonga Stone

Currently there is one interpretation panel about the significance of the Kokonga stone however this is in very poor condition and is virtually unreadable. There is a structure which presumably once held an angled interpretation panel which needs to be removed. The site definitely needs an upgrade and a stronger sense of importance bestowed upon it.

Theme/s:
* OCR (Otago Central Rail) was a major ‘Branch Line’ of New Zealand Rail and opened up the interior of Central Otago connecting rural towns to major ports and markets.
* Raw materials from Central Otago such as stone, coal, clay and gold were carried on the OCR and were important to the growing economy.

Sub themes:
* Taieri Lake or Scale siding (just east of Wapiti) as it was also known, was opened in 1904 to load some 2000+ tons of hard basalt stone destined for the building of the Dunedin Railway Station via the OCR.
* Architect George Troup planned to use bricks but during construction the basalt stone source at Taieri Lake was found and used instead. Also used for some bridges and culverts in the area, the Wapiti Presbyterian Church and the foundations of the statue of Queen Victoria in Queen’s Gardens in Dunedin.
* Stone was carted from the hills by the Williamson family of Daisy Bank who owned the land and had the contract to supply it from 1902-3.
* Stone was lifted using sheer-legs and some hewn blocks with blast holes evident still to tell the story.
* Volcanic origins of the basalt rock that forms the rocky outcrops in this area.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at rider’s height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery. For this site the signs would be turned to face the siding and stone remains of the trail and be set at a lower level than the standard 1.8m from the ground level.

Location: At Eskdale Siding overlooking the stone remains near to the trail.
Panel 10: Taieri Lake

Theme: Land/ Biodiversity
* Natural remnants of lakes, vegetation and animals still occur amidst a heavily modified environment.

Sub themes:
* A large lake filled the area in front of you and to the north for at least 2 miles.
* Known as Tunahaketaka (the dangling of eels)\(^\text{15}\) by Southern Māori.
* Europeans named it Taieri Lake but by the late 19th Century it was silting up caused by the massive movement of silts and gravels from both Hamilton's and Naesby gold diggings.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Taieri lake panel could occupy the left side of the steel cross bar section while Kokonga stone occupies the right side. For this site the signs would be turned to face the siding and stone remains of the trail and be set at a lower level than the standard 1.8 from the ground level.

Location: At Eskdale Siding

Panel 11: Capburn Bridge/ Tiroiti

Theme: Otago Central Railway
* Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'
* Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

Theme: Communities
* Communities formed as the rail inched inland and especially developed around temporary rail terminus's. Boarding houses, schools, hotels, blacksmiths all followed the line as it penetrated into Central Otago's heartland.

Sub themes:
* Capburn is a large 40 m long) masonry and lattice girder bridge.
* The piers are built of brown basalt and may be the largest brought to course basalt structures in Otago.\(^\text{16}\)
* Stock were loaded at Tiroiti station catering for farming at this more southern end of the line.
* A major railway camp existed near here in the late 1890s with its own school and housing for workmen.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at riders height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

Location: Left side of rail trial, coming onto Capburn bridge near Tiroiti station heading towards Hyde.

\(^{15}\) To be checked with Ngāi Tahu iwi.
\(^{16}\) Jill Hamel Archaeological assessment of the Otago Central rail trail: the line today CONSERVATION ADVISORY SCIENCE NOTES: 137, 1996.
Panel 12: Prices Creek

Theme: Otago Central Railway
*Intensive and significant bridging was required along the OCR, 'an average of one bridge every 2km'
*Railway construction was no mean feat on the Otago Central Railway.

Subthemes:
* This bridge replaced an older wooden version and was the last to be built on the OCR.
* Construction issues with pile formation and post filling as well as a slip at the Hyde end caused delays but it opened in June 1963.
* Technical bridge details.
* The name of the creek and bridge is named after 'Old Price's (William) - an 1860s farmer in the area.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at riders height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

Location: Prices Creek to left of bridge entry (heading towards Hyde)

Panel 13: Prices Tunnel

Theme/s: Otago Central Railway
* OCR (Otago Central Rail) was a major 'Branch Line' of New Zealand Rail and opened up the interior of Central Otago connecting rural towns to major ports and markets.
* The line construction from Wingatui to Cromwell took 42 years in the making beginning in 1889 and completed in 1921.

Sub themes:
* Three tunnels exist on the rail trial section of the original Otago Branch line and these obviously slowed progress of the railway creation.
* One of these was Prices Creek or Hyde tunnel built during the 1890s.
* Lined with brick and filled with schist rubble in a similar fashion to the tunnels at Poolburn Gorge.
* Stories linked to tunnel building and life on living on the rail.

Media: Upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction. (refer design drawing 1). Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels on both sides. Four clamps spaced with drop signs at riders height. Left panel names the feature and right panel provides interpretation and imagery.

Location: Prices Tunnel entry (heading towards Hyde)

Hyde Station panel - Plan to remove the on-site panel and review its replacement along with the interpretation plan for the railway station. Possible idea would be replace it with one located on the outside verandah mimicking an old NZR notice on the platform or keep on the trial itself. This will be covered as part of the Specific projects section. (see Section 10 below)
Hyde Train crash (located in straw cutting)

This forms one of the specific projects (see section 14.0 (interpretation overview Oct 2016) and the existing on-site panel in the cutting and any replacement of it will be dealt with under section 10 below. The proposal to mark the site of the accident with railway style signage holds merit with any on-site interpretation possibly being shifted to the memorial site (in liaison with the Hyde Railway Accident Committee). (refer section 10 Specific projects).

Ngapuna

Consider addition of a kiosk for consistency at stations. Themes and content will be covered under Kiosks. (see p. 34) These could include biodiversity of the Strath Taieri at this point. If no kiosk is desired at this point, consider reviewing the ganger shed interpretation to cover proposed themes.

6 ii) Panorama on-site panels

Panorama/landscape panels; interpret a view or scene using overlay sketches or outlines with named landscape features. May have additional text, or verse etc. Currently there are three panorama/look out panels on the OCRT. Two beside Olrig Station ganger shed and one near Thurlow Road in the Ida Valley. It was considered in the overview that another should be added in the Strath Taieri area to interpret the Rock and Pillar ranges and surrounds.

Existing Panoramas

These feature around 2m wide landscape orientation panels with engraved outlines of mountains ranges and landscape features named. The panels are constructed from flat brass paneling and are well done, if not becoming a little dark and hard to read. They are set into concrete plinths and also have a seat.

Ideas for change:

1) Keep the original set up but look at ways to make the line drawings stand out better. Either by filling the outlines using silver or gold or placing a silver sheet behind and re-engraving the panels so the lines go right through the brass and the colour comes through from the back. Begin by cleaning up and polishing the existing panels and decide on any further change thereafter.

2) Add another panorama between Middlemarch and Hyde Station (at Ngapuna or between Ngapuna and Rock and Pillar stations) to depict the Rock and Pillar landscape features and biodiversity of the upland areas. Show ski hut locations and include historical stories and reference points. Ngāi Tahu theme with regards cultural connections to the Upper Taieri and routes into the interior could be introduced here.
3) Replace all 3 panoramas and change the style to realistic style colour paintings of the landscapes with features names. See example below of a stylized painting to depict and name mountain ranges and lake feature. To ensure that the flat panel is re orientated correctly to the actual mountains (the one at Thurlow road is not quite oriented correctly) look at doing the panorama /landscape drawing in parts so that each piece can be angled to the view it is trying to overlay.

Review Brian Turner poetry and liaise with him re possible poetry/verse to use for the future.

4) Added feature interpreting place names depicted at the panoramas and use of digital/website media to get this across.

An example of a style of painting / panorama to depict natural landscape features on the Lake Matheson walkway.
7. Station sites & kiosks

Existing Kiosks

The original interpretation kiosks were set up along the trail in 1999 mostly at station sites which obviously includes existing rural towns en route between Clyde and Middlemarch. Their existence today have potential to form a key part of the visitor experience at these station sites, where they sit with the cluster of railway fabric nearby be it a goods shed, a railway station building or a ganger shed.

Their main purpose is to provide orientation through a good map showing 'you are here' and provide a brief introduction of the history of the township or place and its role in the community during the operations of the Otago Central railway branch line. Currently these also have a repeating panel of information called 'Bringing the Past into the future' about the building of the railway, its closure and the making of the rail trial. There is also a map and key trail icons and logos.

In the Interpretation Overview document, September 2016, it was noted that as well as repeating the Rail Trail Trusts story, maps were repeated and that there was little visual incentive to stop at the kiosks. Further, it was expressed that, while there was an opportunity to upgrade these curved structures and panels, better connections could be made with the places that they were aiming to interpret by focusing on the 'here and now'. While snippets of history of the stations and images of station openings and scenes are fairly well depicted throughout, more could be done to really bring these scenes to life using larger visuals and effective graphic design that links directly to the main messages at each site.

The Kiosk Structure - to stay or go

The kiosks currently do provide some continuity along the rail trial for people and identify a 'railway station' stop. However not ALL stations have a kiosk. eg. Ida Valley, Tiroiti. Consideration as to whether ALL stations should have a kiosk/shelter is required for consistency along the route. Providing some shelter and combining this with orientation/interpretation at the station sites along the trail is an effective way of creating a gathering point and focusing peoples interest in the past and present station stories.
Possible options;

1) Retain and upgrade the existing structures. Possibly change the shape/roofline and repaint structures and refresh all interpretation panels/maps.

2) Create a new look slightly larger shelter that has a seat and more cover overhead. Within the partially enclosed structure, locate the map and interpretation, combined into the structure walls itself. eg. map printed into a see through window panel and imagery into a bench overlooking the trail. (Above: concept only, showing images/interpretation built into walls of any proposed structure design).

3) Have a combination of both of the above and keep the interpretation panels style and look consistent throughout both the upgrade and the new shelters. (If a new style shelter was placed at Chatto Creek, the existing kiosk could be re used at Ida Valley station).

Kiosk interpretive content proposed

Any future interpretation at the kiosks needs to continue to serve as a connection point for recreationists on the trail, set the town/station scene, give each place an identity and connect visitors to the past and present use of the trail and the wider community.

Key components proposed for kiosk sites;

*Town / station namesake

*Maori and/or European translation and meaning of the town/place as it relates to the name.

*Key Themes could include;

* Communities and townships clustered around railway stations which became a lifeline for rural people.

"Railway stations were the hub of towns ... a high sense of communality prevailed during the golden age of train travel... Trains not only linked communities, they were communities in themselves. The stations were their temples, where every man and his dog, every woman in her finery, every farmer in gumboots, every child in school kit and every trooper in sandpaper-rough uniform gathered either to farewell someone, or take their place on board."

17 Graham Hutchins, Last Train to Paradise, Journeys from the golden age of New Zealand Railways, 2011 Exisle Publishing Ltd. p. 10.
OCR (Otago Central Rail) was a major 'Branch Line' of New Zealand Rail and opened up the interior of Central Otago connecting rural towns to major ports and markets.

* Passengers, stock, goods, equipment, gold bearing quartz, rabbits, grain, wool, coal and fruit were all moved along this railway which in effect became Central Otago's lifeline.

* Many towns, which originated because of the rail, continued on as rural centres once the railway closed in 1990 servicing farming families and small businesses many of which have been re-invigorated by the opening of the OCRT.

* Raw materials from Central Otago such as stone, coal, clay and gold were carried on the OCR and were important to the growing economy.

**2 key points and hero imagery** up large which really reflects the town and station. eg. large depiction of train coming into the station, people gathering at station hubs, or stock/fruit being loaded onto trains.

**Orientation map** which is easy to view and follow. 'You are here' with wider context of the landscape surrounding that particular point. Nb. if upgraded shelter designs are implemented, maps could be combined into window like this example (right) of a side panel acting also as part of shelter, but allowing a view through and link to the outside environment.

*Building the Central Otago rail* and later, the cycle trail. A generic statement will be placed at Middlemarch and Clyde - the two entrance/farewell towns on the trail. Reducing this repetition in the existing kiosk spaces will allow for other innovative changes and stories at these sites. This information could also be more suited and easily accessed through digital means such as the main web page or a trail app for the OCRT.

Right: existing generic panel at Lauder.
Kiosks - locations and themes

* = possible placement of new shelter design (If option 3 (refer p.29) above is decided upon in the future)

1. Clyde
2. Alexandra
3. Chatto Creek - new shelter
4. Omakau
5. Lauder - new shelter
6. Auripo (proposed new kiosk or shelter)
7. Ida Valley (proposed new kiosk or shelter)
8. Oturehua
9. Wedderburn
10. Ranfurly
11. Waipiata - new shelter
12. Kokonga
13. Tiroiti (No kiosk) however interpretation exists in the ganger shed and an upgraded on-site panel using bespoke design of construction is part of this concept plan.
14. Hyde
15. Rock and Pillar new shelter
16. Ngapuna station exists - new kiosk or upgraded interpretation in existing shelter?
17. Middlemarch

1. Clyde/Upper Dunstan/ Hartley

Welcome / Farewell Tikanga to the Otago Central Rail Trail
Namesakes
From Gold to rail.
Railway official opening in 1907 once reached Clyde.
Clyde to Cromwell section of rail building.
Clyde dam construction and final use of the line.
Closure 1990 and transformation to a rail trail.

2. Alexandra/ Lower Dunstan

Namesake
Gold rush beginnings - Manuherikia.
A fruity business - the era of loading fruit onto trains brought major expansion to the industry.
Blossoming business - blossom festivals since 1957.
Holiday town by train.

3. Chatto Creek

Namesake
Railway construction camp - Tiger hill construction of railway.
Ballast pits and rail laying.
Railway housing and workers accommodation along the rail.
**Location:** Consider moving the kiosk from road carpark to near the concrete loading platform site on the trail. This location could lend itself well to a new style interpretation shelter and be user friendly for those on the trail. Make an historical connection with the original station and platform as well as the remaining rail workers house.

4. Ōmakau

Namesake
Otago Central Express - travellers refreshment stop - 7 minutes.
Major point on the line for stock loading, rabbits and then sheep) getting stock to market and freezing works. (1909- 1977). Boost for farming. Special stock trains and goods shed use
Township built around rail.

5. Lauder

Namesake
A railway town.
Station doubled as a post office for a time. Recreational renaissance - rail trail.

6. Auripo -

Namesake (originally named Poolburn).
Smaller flag stations and their purpose on the railway.
Auripo - a flag station from 1904 -1978.
Sheep yards and loading.

7. Ida Valley Station (proposed new kiosk or shelter)

Namesake (originally named Blackstone Hill Station)
Stagecoach town and busy terminus (railhead) during the three years of challenging construction of the Poolburn Gorge section of the railway. A substantial community of railway workers and businesses were clustered here. First town building - Ida Valley Station Hotel (remains as the only clue as to a township once existing) Off to school by train.
Coal shed, turntable, watering facilities workers cottages, stockyards could be identified using maps/photos and remains nearby such as the turntable. Access to the large stone lined culvert nearby would allow the story of stone work and construction to also be a focus. This would require some track/infrastructure development by DOC.

8. Oturehua / Rough Ridge

Namesake
Railway construction camp - the largest on the railway (Public Works Camp 1890s early 1900s. Ballast pits.
Coal loading from local coal pits.
A railway town and temporary coach meeting place.
9. Wedderburn

Namesake

10. Ranfurly

Namesake

11. Waipiata / Komako

Namesake
A farming service town then railways boosted population. Rabbits galore and factory/processing plant. A diverse passenger list, TB Sanatorium patients and visitors, borstal boys, travellers, duck shooters and farmers. Major stock loading hub for Maniototo plains and largest sheep yards in Central Otago. Flag station but denied stationmaster, eclipsed by Ranfurly.

12. Kokonga

Namesake

13. Tiroiti / Capburn/ Flat Cap Hill

Namesake
Site of construction camp and school 1895-97. Capburn Bridge construction (if not covered by on-site panel).
(NB; Decide whether to place a kiosk here and if so consider putting proposed on site panel interpretation into this combination of story and map. If not, produce an upgraded on-site bespoke panel as suggested on Page 22 above under ‘Point of interest’ panels.)
14. Hyde (township)

Namesake
Original township built on gold.
Railway reached Hyde township 1896 and became railhead.
Where is the station? Reasons for its distance from town.
Pottery Clay transported from Hyde to Christchurch and Auckland (over 5000 tons freighted out in 1974).
Passenger services through time.

15. Rock and Pillar

Namesake
Maloney’s hotel on the coach road, Naseby to Middlemarch.
TB Sanatorium history in hotel.
Mountains, Landscape and biodiversity.
Switch out station 1930s.
Trains taking on the water.

16. Ngapuna

Namesake (once known as Springs)
4 wagons only - on small siding.
Stockyards.
Nor west winds and the ‘Taieri pet’ cloud.
Strath Taieri flood plain and natural springs.
Skiing development on the Rock and Pillar Range 1930s -1950s.
Otago Ski Club and the building of huts, skiers stories, travel to and from Dunedin.
[NB review and refine so it doesn’t repeat the existing ganger shed interpretation]

17. Middlemarch

Welcome / Farewell Tikanga to the Otago Central Rail Trail.
Namesake
12 years to get the rail from Dunedin to Middlemarch why?
Excursions on the line past to present.
An intact station - show function, heritage and rail fabric.
[Reconsider location of kiosk to make the most out of Welcome/farewell to the trail here].
8. Ganger Sheds

It was the job of the gangers to keep the Otago Central Railway clear for train traffic. These tough workers were provided with small corrugated iron shelters, complete with open fires and bench seats, for their smoko breaks by the Railways Department. While a number of good examples of original sheds still exist along the trail, some are in various states of decay. These original ganger sheds (often named) provide a great tangible link to the days when the trains rolled down the tracks and bring a human element into potential stories.

Newly constructed ganger sheds en route have been provided to supply extra shelter for trail users and often have a captive audience of visitors, particularly when the weather is bad.

Ganger shed shelter story sharing on the OCRT

The series of reconstructed ganger sheds (12) have significant information and interpretation which follows a pattern. They contain a 'you are here' map, describe the view outside the shed, provide some relevant narrative on landscape features, history and present the visitor with options for sightseeing off, but relatively near to, the trail. (this can be about 50% of the panel). Two side bars of information provide in effect a running commentary of what features to look out for in either direction.

These large interpretation panels have some good information but with up to 2000 words of text they present the visitor with a fairly overwhelming amount of reading.

Ideas

Retain the existing ganger shed interpretation panels in the interim and build in any changes to them in a staged process once the kiosks, on-site panels and panoramas, use of any digital content, Ngāi Tahu and their related themes and stories become clearer. The Ganger shed interpretation needs to retain a point of difference from the other interpretation along the trail and offer something 'new' (in terms of look, visual layout and refined content) but it needs to be complimentary to the stories being shared in other ways at places in and around these sheds. Currently these panels are effectively guide books on the wall and parts of them could be used in a pocket self guide booklet and/or be included effectively in an interpretive trail app.

As already expressed in the OCRT Overview document, 'selected ganger sheds will focus in on a topic most relevant to where it is positioned'. eg. a particular bridge just crossed, a biodiversity story, railway heritage, train spotters and the last train on the line, railway accommodation etc. These
panels would be a mix of more 'light weight' panels using larger mural type images and minimal text OR a mix of images, illustrations, text, poetry etc.

Some of the proposed mural style presentations inside the ganger sheds could feature a series of local artists and their 'interpretation of place, landscape, people, trail, natural, cultural, environmental responses to the place where they live and work. These 'reproduced art works' could feature at every second or third ganger shed which would act like a 'rustic art gallery' and provide interest and a complimentary 'point of difference' to the sheds that contain interpretive texts and imagery.

Historic ganger shed, concept showing John Robinsons artwork from his book 'Parallel Lines' on the rustic corrugated walls.

While the existing ganger shed interpretation is arguably currently providing good information and sharing some interesting story lines, there is definitely potential to add another level of innovation, good design and a fresh approach. Once further discussion and decisions have been made with regards to all the other methods of interpretation along the trail and how these will piece together, in terms of interconnected layers of stories, we should be in a better position to really focus on the detailed changes for some of the ganger shed interpretation.
9. Start / Finish Solution

The point about there being a current lack of scale and drama, sense of reward and photo opportunity upon completing or beginning the OCRT has been discussed. The first idea put forward as part of the Interpretation Overview document, 2016 was that "two oversized railway crossing signs in red and white to match the Trusts logo with one side Welcome/Start and the other Congratulations/Finish would be placed at Clyde and Middlemarch. Between the signs would be large railway gates and posts (authentic to the railways design) with a side gate to pass through as well as the name of the town in railway station font. CLYDE or MIDDLEMARCH.

In a meeting with the OCR TT and DOC in October 2017, Kate Wilson raised the idea of using the railway gate set up but adding in an abacus style set of numbers in which people can set the date. This would be interactive and could be changed by visitors depending on the dates of their starting or finishing the trail. eg. 01 / 06 / 18.

![Image of railway gate set up](image.png)

Concept of gate/signage and date 'look' which would have with movable date numbers

This idea has merit in that the gate is so symbolic throughout the trail, has direct historical linkage to NZR and railways and offers an 'open/ closed mechanism ie. start/finish naturally. It would present an authentic railway heritage gate, posts, latch and side gate set up. The side gate could be left open while the opening of the larger white gate could be optional. It could be latched shut but also opened for larger groups of bikers/walkers/horse riders. The flip over or slideable date numbers would be robust and inset on a horizontal rail on both sides of the gate and the name of the town, arriving at or leaving, could run along the top in old style railway station signage lettering. The railway crossing signs could complete the scene with Welcome and Well done on one side of the gates and Otago Central Rail trail on the other side. (It has been noted that these may present issues in the strong winds experienced, particularly at Middlemarch and special engineering would be required).

This solution would provide for a strong railway themed visual opportunity for trial users as well as 'mark the date' of starting and finishing the trail.
Start/finish concept: Railway crossing signs about 10m distance from railway gates with place name and abacus style movable dates attached. The crossing signs would also read in reverse coming the other way so it says Well done/ Finish Line.

10. Specific Projects

The following projects were identified in the Otago Central Rail Trail Overview at September 2016 as 'examples of a OCRT roadside attraction that enhances the experience for Trail users and also for road users as part of a heartland road trail'.

10i) Ōmaka Goods Shed

The Ōmaka goods shed represents a very good example of a typical goods shed, once much more prolific on the rail trail. The idea is to try to bring the shed to life by depicting a variety of goods being loaded particularly stock, brought in from the surrounding runholds to transport their animals to freezing works and markets. Set amongst original industrial timbers and framed by the rustic interior of the shed, recreate the scene using floor to ceiling image banners.
Complementing these banners on the south t & g lined wall could be rolling images of an edited version of the Pictorial Parade 1962 film footage shot by NZR (series held by National Archives NZ) which shows the busyness of the station with its stock yards and specially designed wagons for stock cartage. This would really come to life if sound was incorporated, using the sound of dogs, whistles, farmers conversations and train noises. (note this would require secured projector in the ceiling of the shed and perhaps could work on a sensor when someone walks into the room and/or be switched on daily.

The Goods shed would cover the themes of stock, wool, fruit and the many consignments that the busy station had to contend with. The 'Goods shed interpretation would complement the kiosk/station interpretation panel and add another layer of the story using imagery and sound utilising the authentic 'railway heritage fabric' still at Ōmakau.

**Theme/s Otago Central railway & Pastoral history**

*Passengers, stock, goods, equipment, gold bearing quartz, rabbits, grain, coal and fruit were all moved along this railway which in effect became Central Otago's lifeline.

*Stock specials* were run from Middlemarch, Ida Valley, Ōmakau and other stations according to demand. At times trains would pull up to 22 wagons of sheep.

These men are working sheep in the stockyards at the Ōmakau railway station in 1953. The yard was built for cattle, but could hold sheep as well. The wagons in the background could carry about 100 sheep each.
10 ii) Wedderburn Station

The Wedderburn station and township is the highest on the line and was once a very busy loading station, particularly the movement of rabbit carcasses coming in from the high country runholds. Lignite coal was also transported from here for domestic use throughout Otago. The remaining goods shed along with the smaller style railway station (last of the Vogel class 5 design) opposite provides a tangible link to these activities as well as potential to really add something to the trail interpretation.

At present the station is open to people to peek inside, and its two rooms plus centre foyer could be utilised to contain some good imagery and interpretation about Wedderburn. This typical intact station building could contain (with permission /liaison with Grahame Sydney) on the right side room, an art room/exhibition (reproduced copies) of Grahame Sydney's work in relation to Central Otago landscapes with some audio and or text bites about his life/inspiration he gets from the landscape where he lives. A copy of his famous painting 'July on the Maniototo' could hang in the room with the story of how it has become so symbolic that the goods shed has remained a green colour rather than the usual railways red. The other side would interpret stories about the station, passengers, the post office and the Wedderburn past and present.

Themes;

Grahame Sydney’s ‘iconic’ painting ‘July on the Maniototo’

* The Wedderburn railway station building rates as New Zealand's only surviving example of the Vogel class 5 which was once a popular design c. 300 built nationwide. 18

* Passengers, stock, goods, equipment, gold bearing quartz, rabbits, grain, coal and fruit were all moved along this railway which in effect became Central Otago's lifeline.

* Raw materials from Central Otago such as stone, coal, clay and gold were carried on the OCR and were important to the growing economy.

* Communities and townships clustered around railway stations which became a lifeline for rural people.

* Artists are inspired by Central Otago’s history and landscape. Grahame Sydney helped put Wedderburn goods shed on the map in more recent times.

18 Otago Central Rail Trail, 1893 Heritage Assessment, Paul Mahoney, Heritage Technical Advisor, Department of Conservation, Hamilton, 28 June 2015, p. 32.
Sub themes;

*Mail by rail*, The left hand room could be set up as a post office as it once was with some memorabilia on display, local stories and anecdotes of the importance of mail in this isolated place and the reliance on the train for this community.

*First dedicated passenger service*  1 August 1900 once the railhead reached Wedderburn - a cause for celebration.

10 iii) Hyde Railway Station

The Hyde railway station is likely the most intact railway station on the rail trail, both inside and out, given its rolling stock in-situ, up and down home signal towers, switch out station levers, and railway tracks. The interior has some important heritage memorabilia in terms furniture, archives/forms/paper work/tickets/consignment notices. The authentic tablet system still remains and this can help visitors understand the functioning of the rail and the need to switch the tracks over for trains.

The Otago Central Rail Trail Trust now own the building and have set up /left the interior very much in situ, with one secured off 'view in area' to see into the ticket office itself. This idea of leaving it set up, staged as it once would have looked and as if there has been a pause in time, provides a realistic view of the NZR and how these small stations looked and ran. This in itself is good interpretation. The furniture and the equipment is presented as it was, in particular the tablet switch out station, which is a curiosity to those whom have n ever seen or worked these, complete with instructions on the wall.

The aim is to bring the era of rural life and train travel alive for visitors utilising as much as possible the authentic fabric and railway associated artefacts and equipment as possible. These may need to be slightly more staged in the interior space but it needs to be able to read as a functional space also. eg keep the double doors clear to show where goods movement occurred. Events, local stories, anecdotes about passenger services could all form a layer of accessible story using audio/ sound, script and interactive ticketing.

Hyde station themes;

*A rural station on the OCR - its typical set up and function. Passenger services: ticketing waiting rooms, signage.*

*Movement along the rail - the functioning of the tablets and the daily movement of the trains.*

*Tablet machines; How did they work?*

* Communication lifeline - postal, telegraph phones.*

*Source and movement of the local clay - this was one of the raw materials moved on the OCR and were important to the growing economy.*

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19 See Rebecca Ford; *Hyde Station Inventory February 2017,*
*The Hyde railway disaster and its aftermath/ effect on the local community. The last station where passengers got on the train on that fateful day in 1943.

Interpretive media/ideas -Outside the station

1) Remove the existing 'point of interest panel and combine it either as part of station platform or on the side of the trail using the 'Steel cross bar section with hanging clamped panels as per others proposed along the trial. The interpretation would provide a brief history of the station and the nearby town of Newtown that grew up around it. This would enable visitors who happen to be there in times of the station being locked to at least get an overview.

2) Consider combining the passport box into one of the phone boxes on the exterior of the station (see above)

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20 Refer also to Rebecca Ford’s list of themes; in Rebecca Ford, "Hyde Railway Station Visitor Research 2017 Report," (Central Otago: for the OCRRTT, 2017).
3) Create a picture banner, based on the view of the station from each end as you ride into it or at one end only. This would be placed onto the end of one of the rolling stock wagons and be printed onto a canvas style waterproof material. This would provide an instant view into the past and act like a sort of overlay onto the scene. A scene of loading clay work well from the other end of the station.

![Image of Hyde Railway station in 1968](image.png)

**Concept of possible 'look' of a past scene at the Hyde Railway station in 1968. Image; George Emmerson**

4) Consider placing one or two of the old style hoarding signs (designed to promote rail trial companies) on the north and south of the Hyde station building. These were once a common feature on station buildings. Such signs have been re-enacted on the Middlemarch railway station.

![Image of hoarding signs](image2.png)

5) Restore and conserve all railway heritage features so the site can continue to be 'read' with all its parts intact. Eg re-paint the signal tower.

![Image of signal tower](image3.png)
Interpretive media/ideas - Station Interior

1) The 'as is' layout of the office (below) presents a good picture of what the station may have looked like however station masters desk and real layout needs checked to get it as close as possible. Provide more to see on the bench, using consignment notices, and tickets to show passenger excursions and movement of raw materials. Arrange posters, and some postal memorabilia to show connection with its past use.

2) Provide some way of showing how the tablet system worked perhaps a mini 3 D model that could be designed or diagrammatic version on display in the waiting room.

3) Create a self ticketing system in the look through ticket area from the waiting room side, where tickets can be pulled out from a slot and a clicked. Provide a clicker (similar to what they used on trains) that is attached to the bench on a wire and have a sign 'have you clicked your ticket!' These could be reprinted based on the exact ones with different sections along the trail between Middlemarch and Clyde. This would add some interaction in the space and re-enact the train ticketing system and connection with the ticket holder stands seen from the counter as well as provide for a take-home souvenir.
3) Hyde Disaster album/journal. Using a desk in the main waiting room, provide a display with a lamp that spotlights an album that has a leather embossed cover and is printed in the old style 1940s era. The story of the disaster that day 4 June 1943 will unfold in this flip file style book adjoined to the writing desk. This would provide an optional read for visitors with possibly a Hyde Station visitor book alongside it, allowing people to leave their thoughts or names. An old style phone could be part of the desk display and audios of people’s memories of the disaster could be played once this is picked up. Eg Donella Hore talks of her experience of being on that train, and local families memories. Both the audio and the journal will provide an insight into the disaster, the aftermath and the Board of Inquiry, as well as the war time era in which the accident occurred. The Straw cutting location (5km south) and the Memorial site will be referred to in order to make the connection for visitors. While it is not intended that the station become a ‘memorial’ to the disaster as such, it does form an important keystone in the history of the accident and is a significant story from the OCR era.

10iv) Straw Cutting and the Memorial Site.

Currently very little is made of the Hyde train disaster particularly on the trail where the accident actually occurred. While a small panel currently exists in straw cutting, showing a scene from the crash, it does not do the magnitude of the disaster justice. The plan is to remove the on-site panel at this site and instead label the Straw cutting at both ends (small railway style) and provide a tunnel of kowhai and mixed native vegetation leading into the cuttings. The idea is to soften and colour the edges of the cutting and act as a warning that something significant occurred here and affected many local families. Using New Zealand’s national flower would (not only link to Docs Project gold) but help to create a respectful contemplative space. Railway sleepers could be used at a point each side of the trail to date the disaster and signal where the memorial is.

Concept of how the Straw cutting could look using railway sleeper markers and kowhai plantings.
Plants that can survive in this location and the eco-sourcing of particular kowhai and other appropriate accompanying plants need further discussion with DOC and their botanists with regards to survival and maintenance longer term. If this concept was implemented any further explanation of the disaster could become part of the space at the memorial a few hundred metres away (if agreed to by the Hyde Railway Accident Committee) via on site panel/QR code for audio delivery/Interviews of locals who remember the disaster and stories passed through the generations.

10 v) Other considerations

An OCRT smart phone app

Designing and creating a track app for the OCRT would provide a user friendly digital platform to inform visitors about a mix of messages from safety, orientation and conservation to interpreting the natural, cultural, historic points of interest en route. This interpretive media works particularly well in a trail setting, given the desire to keep on-site interpretive signage to a minimum whilst still enabling visitors to engage and interact with notable points of interest in the environment encountered between viewpoints, stations and towns. It would have to be designed around the areas where phone coverage is the best and so a mix of this and QR codes could be a good solution.

This innovative technology has been used to good effect in the Tongariro National Park since 2012 in the form of the 'Pocket Ranger' that uses the mobile tool to share safety messages and the stories en route. The app also uses the QR (Quick Response) codes to provide immediate downloads of information for people at points along the way. This means people can access multimedia and stories relevant to the place where they are at the time.

The OCRT app would be designed to offer an interactive and multi-media experience that provides interpretation, maps and images of the unique natural and heritage features in and around the trail. It could use the existing mile markers in places as key tuning in sites.

In terms of taking visitors on a journey through this landscape and providing a more interactive and informative experience as well as keeping signage 'clutter' to a minimum, this form of interpretive media is more suitable in some areas and arguably less costly in the longer term than interpretive signage and traditional pocket guide books.
11. Summary

This interpretation Concept plan is a working document in progress which aims to guide and shape the Design/production phases of any new and upgraded interpretation on the OCR trail.

This plan has explored the Otago Central Rail Trail themes and story lines that could be expressed in many ways throughout the trail journey of 152 kilometres between Clyde and Middlemarch. The plan has reviewed what exists now and attempts to improve the visitor experience and their engagement by suggesting both thematic story sharing methods and diverse and innovative means of delivering these stories at locations where they make sense. Be it via on-site panels, panoramas, heritage fabric, indoor displays and exhibits at stations sites, sensor audios, phone apps, art works and film in rustic settings, these interpretive layers aim to invigorate and connect people to this stunning heritage landscape and intensify their rural heartland trail experience as a more than memorable moment.

Rebecca Reid
Telltale
Promoting & Interpreting Our Heritage

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