

Larnach's Tomb



Larnach's Tomb is the most imposing monument in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery. Prominent businessman and politician William Larnach commissioned R.A. Lawson, who had also designed Larnach Castle on Otago Peninsula, to design the tomb for his first wife Eliza Guise who died in 1880. The architecture of the tomb is based on that of Dunedin's First Church, also designed by Lawson.



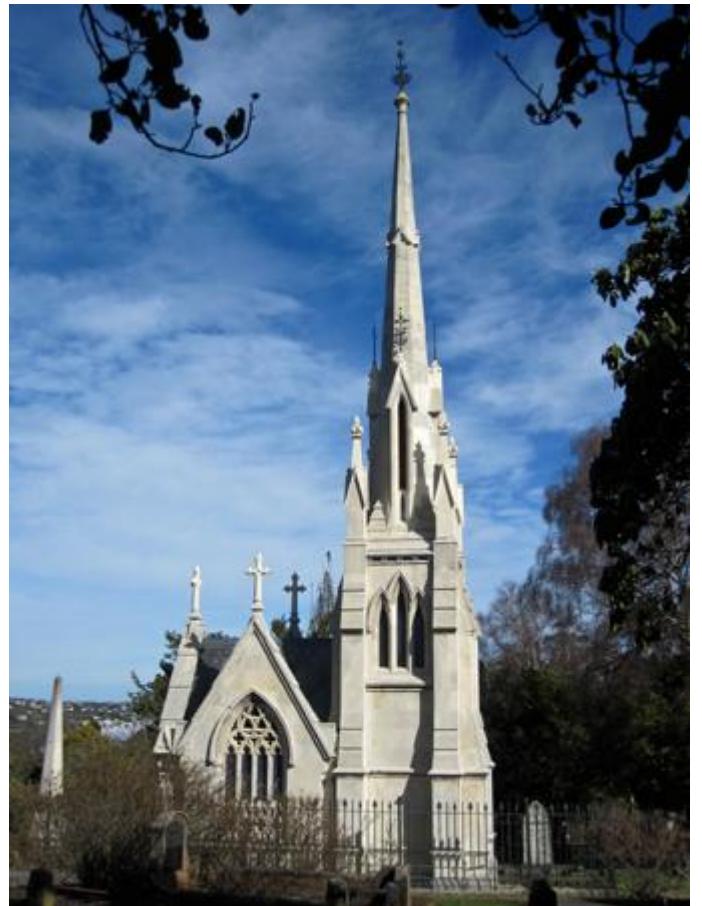
Above left:- Eliza Jane nee Guise, Larnach's first wife

Above right:- Mary, Larnach's second wife, who was a half-sister of Eliza Jane

Right:- William Larnach



Also buried in the tomb are Larnach's second wife Mary, Eliza's half sister, who died in 1887, his favourite daughter Kate who died of typhoid in 1891, William Larnach himself, who sadly committed suicide in his office at the Houses of Parliament by shooting himself in 1898, and one of his sons Donald, the eldest, who also shot himself in 1910.

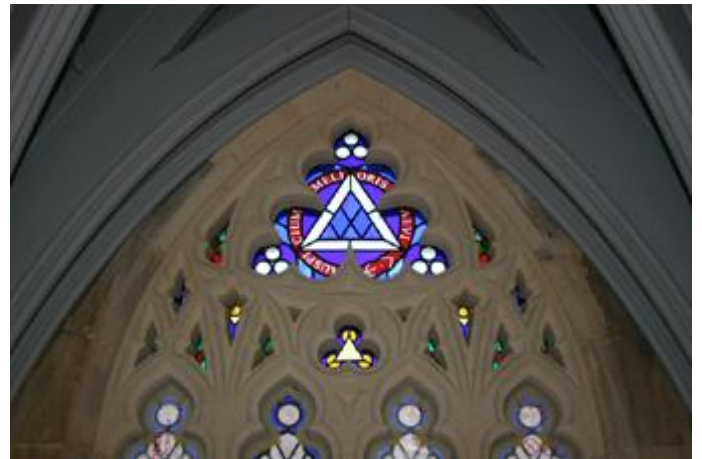




The Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand raised about \$350,000 to restore the tomb building's badly weathered and vandalised structure to its former Gothic elegance.



Stonemason and sculptor Marcus Wainwright spent months shaping Oamaru stone blocks for the project and stained glass artist Peter Mackenzie imported antique stained glass from France to replace smashed windows.



Marcus comments about the restoration:-

"Working on Larnach's Tomb has been a great experience, in that it is a historical monument tying together the history of the Otago early settlers and the story of Larnach's family. It is one of few historic structures I have worked on that was built for a specific purpose and has remained unaltered in use and ownership over the years.

"Whilst the greatest challenge on the project was retrofitting the south tracery window, another challenge was enduring the cold southerlies.

"When working on a cemetery I am always very aware that it is a unique and peaceful place which preserves the memory of the past for future generations. It is sometimes hard to avoid the feeling as a craftsman that you are being carefully observed and that the quality of your workmanship will need to stand the test of time."

