



**St John Branigan** was born in Kings County in Ireland. He joined the 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment which was sent to South Africa in 1845. Branigan joined the Cape police and saw active service during frontier warfare and was decorated for gallantry. In 1854, after losing his life savings in a bid to sell merchandise on the Victorian gold fields, Branigan joined Victoria's Police Force, and then in 1861 accepted an invitation to transform Otago's small police force into an armed and disciplined constabulary. Attracting many colleagues from Victoria, Branigan built up a large and expensive but very efficient police force in Otago, with a London-style beat surveillance system in urban areas and mobile reports in rural districts. It was this force – Branigan's Troopers' - which maintained a tight rein on Otago during the gold rushes, Branigan instituting detection work, 'female searchers' at lock-ups, a water police, and New Zealand's first *Police Gazette*. Branigan was of an imperious disposition, ruthless and single-minded to the point of ignoring clear evidence which controverted his prejudices and convictions, and willing to misrepresent matters in order to try to maintain his force. But he also recommended the establishment of a residential industrial school and reformatory for the 'education and training of vagrant and neglected children.' In 1867, the Otago Industrial School, the first in New Zealand, was established at Lookout Point. In 1869, Branigan also implemented his own plan for the 'demilitarisation' of New Zealand's Armed Constabulary following what was believed to be the end of the land wars. The strain of that effort saw Branigan's health deteriorate and he was locked up in an asylum in Auckland. He was eventually transferred to Dunedin – 'as mad as a hatter' it was said - where he died from 'softening of the brain' in 1873. The monument over his grave was erected from funds raised by Otago and Armed Constabulary colleagues. His wife and two of five children are also buried here.

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THE LATE MR ST JOHN BRANIGAN. The monument to Mr St John Branigan, late Commissioner of the Armed Constabulary, now being erected in the I Southern Cemetery, promises to be a beautiful work of art. The style is 1 Gothic. The foundation consists of 6 feet of concrete, and when completed, the monument will be 24 feet high. The basement is of the best Port Chalmers stone, and the following inscription, in Old English will be engraven on a marble panel: — "In memory of St John Branigan, who departed this life, 10th September, 1873; aged 49." The other portions will be composed of Kakanui free-stone, handsomely ornamented. Besides scrolls mentioning the status of the deceased and the subscribers (the members of the Otago Police Force), there is an elegant coat-of-arms, displaying large cap, sword, and scabbard, folded banner, torn banner, four spears, belt and pouch, and spurs. The probable cost will be rather over £200. Mr Ross is the architect, and the sculptor (Mr Munro) anticipates having the work completed about a month hence. We may mention that to Mr Weldon, our respected Commissioner of Police, is principally due the merit of successfully arranging the above affectionate tribute to Mr Branigan's memory.