



Alexander McMillan

Duncan and Isabella McMillan were married in Knox Church in Dunedin on 19 January, 1883 when he was 28 and she was 27. They made their home in Bishopscourt in what is now McMillan Street. Their only child, Alexander, was born on 18 November 1884.

Alexander inherited from his Scottish parents a careful regard for saving. His father, Duncan, a coal merchant and carrier, invested every spare penny in property and ended up owning a substantial number of rental properties in Dunedin. On his father's death young 'Sandy' McMillan inherited a large portfolio of investments.

Sandy went to Kaikorai Primary School, and on leaving school in 1899 he joined the firm of N. & E. S. Paterson, on the day the firm opened its doors, as office boy. He attended King Edward technical College at nights studying bookkeeping, penmanship, and correspondence.

Patersons was involved in sharebroking, property sales, and surveying, and young McMillan soon rose through the firm buying shares in it and becoming a director in 1924. As well as investing in property Sandy took a keen interest in shares and despite ups and downs these prospered mightily too.

He never married, and he was a keen and successful gardener who distributed his produce generously. He dabbled in local body politics for some four years, was an enthusiastic sportsman, playing hockey, tennis, badminton, golf, bowls and croquet. He was a member of the Dunedin Burns Club where he was treasurer for 42 years, and motoring was another interest.

McMillan was the bane of many company directors. He regularly attended company annual meetings as a shareholder and, forearmed, proceeded to put the directors on the mat. His driving skills were legendary, with most streets being treated by Sandy as 'one way'. He drove in the middle of the road wherever he went.

Alexander McMillan's generosity was carefully hidden until after his death although he helped various local causes anonymously. He died on Saturday, 8 July 1967, in Dunedin Hospital and is buried in the Andersons bay Cemetery, Dunedin in the family grave.

His send off was low key but he made the headlines in the next few days when it was announced by his lawyer and friend Harry Gibson that he had left all his estate to the people of Dunedin. Once the tax liability was settled some \$950,000 became the capital of the Alexander McMillan Trust. At 2005 the balance in the trust funds had risen to almost \$15m, and distributions had been made for the benefit of Otago to the tune of some \$9m.

Research taken from "Lasting Legacy", by Gordon Parry