



G & T Young may fairly be said to occupy a unique place in the front rank of New Zealand watch-making and jewellery houses. Not only are Messrs. G. and T. Young one of the oldest firms of the kind in the Colony, but their operations are certainly among the most extensive. The business was founded in Dunedin by Mr. George Young soon after the early gold discoveries in Otago, and dates from 1862. The first premises occupied were situated in Rattray Street, adjoining the Shamrock Hotel, and consisted of a small shop and workroom which would now be very diminutive compared with the handsome and well-appointed establishment of the firm. The Princes Street site was first occupied by Messrs. G. and T. Young in 1865, a freehold being acquired subsequently. The present building is constructed of brick and concrete and is two stories in height, with solid concrete cellar. It has a depth of 110 feet with a total floor space of 4,700 square feet. The Princes Street frontage presents a very attractive appearance, the plate-glass show windows and entrance being in keeping with the elegant style of the establishment. A profuse and valuable stock of gold and silver watches, chains and pendants, rings, brooches and necklets, plain or set in precious stones, together with plate of the chastest and most modern patterns, is always displayed to the passer-by. An ornamental iron arch supporting a clock, spans the pavement to an outer lamp-post fitted with two gas-lit globes. There is also a valuable regulator-clock at the street entrance. The show-room is a really splendid apartment, magnificently finished with a tastefully decorated ceiling. No expense has been spared in the internal fittings; plate-glass show cases with mirror-backs surround the visitor, and were specially made to order in Edinburgh. All the counters, together with the centre show-cases, are splendidly furnished with massive plate-glass, so that inspection of the extensive stock can be made without risk of damage. At the back of the show-room there is a large fire-proof strong room, containing three of Milner's best safes. The style and completeness of Messrs G. and T. Young's

premises, together with the character and value of the stock in every line (with the single exception perhaps of diamond goods), are fully up to the standard of the best Australian firms. Messrs. G. and T. Young possess singular advantages as importers, which enable them to offer special facilities to the New Zealand public. The senior partner, who has had a life time's experience in the business, has since 1877 taken up his quarters in the English and Scottish capitals, with the object of rubbing shoulders with the actual manufacturers; and he periodically visits the Colony so as to keep in touch with the requirements of the firm's customers. He is thus enabled while in Britain to select suitable and reliable goods from the most recent and up-to-date stocks, and as Messrs. G. and T. Young are cash buyers they are able to place the goods before their customers at the lowest possible cost. The stock exhibited, not only at the Princes Street shop in Dunedin, but at Timaru, Oamaru, and Wellington, where large branches have been established for many years, embraces watches, jewellery, silver plate, electro-silver plated ware, clocks of all kinds from the simplest to the most elegant, and fancy goods in great variety. Behind the shop in Princes Street are found the offices of the firm, and the various manufacturing departments of the business. The space devoted to watch-making, cleaning, regulating, and repairing is at the extreme end, where there is a specially good side and top-light. The jewellery manufacturing and repairing department is situated between the show-room and watch department; here also an efficient staff is employed making brooches, chains, rings, studs, etc., etc. As opticians, Messrs. G. and T. Young, who have made this branch one of the special features of their business, hold an immense stock of lenses, frames, and optical requisites. Several years ago they sent Mr. W. H. Young, a son of the senior partner, to London and Dublin to learn lens grinding and fitting, and it may be mentioned that since his return to the Colony, the firm have supplied all spectacles, whether spherical, cylindrical, or compound, to the patients of Dr. Lindo Ferguson, the eye-specialist. Formerly the cylindrical and compound work had to be executed in Melbourne, whereby great delay and inconvenience were caused to patients. Now Messrs. G. and T. Young can usually supply these classes of spectacles within twenty-four hours. As exhibitors at the Dunedin Exhibition in 1865, the firm gained first prizes for watches and clocks, and at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition of 1889–90, first class awards were received by them for gold and silver watches, gold and silver jewellery, English and French clocks, silver and electro-silver plated ware and for a collective exhibit. Both the partners, as well as the two brothers who act as branch managers, were born in East Calder, Scotland; both members of the firm partly learned the business with an uncle—Mr. Gray, of Mid Calder. After founding the business under review, Mr. George Young went to Scotland in 1867, and two years later returned to the Colony accompanied by Mr. T. G. Young, and the firm was constituted under its present style in 1876

Sadly, on Monday 26 January 2009 Dunedin jeweller Roy Young failed to stop an application to the High Court in Dunedin seeking to liquidate Dunedin's oldest family business, G & T Young jewellery store. Judge Christianson showed some sympathy to Mr Young's situation.

"It sounds a bit sad, Mr Young, but you appear to accept the inevitability that a liquidation will take your concerns off your hands. And it is about time it was taken off your hands I think."

He then ordered the company be placed in the hands of Dunedin insolvency and liquidation company Insolvency Management Ltd.

Thomas Gray Young died on 29 December 1930 and is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery in his family grave.

Prepared by Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) from information in *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Otago & Southland Provincial Districts]*