

1901 - 1920

THE NEW CENTURY



Figure 15. Francis Hodgkins, *Ayesha*, 1904, watercolour, 750 x 489 mm (image courtesy of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery).

A few ex students shone brightly, the School's building was remodelled and expanded, and an Art and Craft Department of the School was opened in an adjacent building. David Con Hutton, the first Head of School, retired after 39 years service, and the First World War took a toll on students and staff.

In May of 1901, following the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, the Otago Education Board received a letter from the Assistant Secretary for Education, Wellington, saying that “the Minister has decided to offer your Board £200. The only conditions attached being that the grant must be used for the instruction of public school teachers in manual and technical work as prescribed for school classes, and that those teachers shall be admitted to the course of instruction free of charge. ... The following subjects might constitute a preliminary course. (a) Cardboard work. (b) Modelling in clay or plasticine. (c) Woodwork.” Copies of the letter were forwarded to Mr D. R. White, the Principal of Dunedin Teachers College and Normal School, Mr Hutton, Head of the School of Art, and the Teachers Institute, “... inviting them to give suggestions as to the profitable employment of the money, the subjects to be taught, the instructors, the classes and the times of tuition.”¹

White, who had inspected woodworking and modelling courses in Sydney and South Australia four years prior to this, reported to the Board in June, saying, “I also saw modelling work done in some of the South Australian schools, and it seemed to me preferable to the woodwork course of instruction as part of the ordinary routine work of the public schools. I therefore recommend: 1. That instruction in modelling be given to all the students in training, and that practical lessons in this work be given to the classes of the Model School. 2. That the practical lessons be given for an hour a week. 3. That the requisite sets of tools for each student be obtained and also a supply of material for a series of models and apparatus.”²

Hutton, addressing the same meeting commented that, “With regard to the classes recommended by the inspectors, these could be held in conjunction with the classes already established within the school, and would tend to widen the sphere of usefulness of the school and bring it more in touch with the general forward movement of similar institutions throughout the world. With this expansion in view I would suggest that, at least, part of the grant be used in furnishing the modelling room in the School of Art and one room in the Normal School for Woodwork, with the appliances and materials necessary for the successful carrying on of the classes recommended.”³

Modelling in clay from simple objects, taught by the School’s drawing master, Mr Wall, now became a formal part of the instruction given to Teachers College students. It had been a subject within the School since 1874 and community classes were currently held twice a week with elementary students working from simple casts of ornaments and details of the figure; while the more advanced worked from original designs in low and high relief, from the antique and from life, both draped and nude.⁴

The 1875 purpose built building in Moray Place, which housed the Normal School, the School of Art and the Training College, was by now considerably run down and seriously overcrowded, with the result that calls were being made for its replacement. This was initially reported in a notice of motion put by the Reverend P. B. Fraser at the Otago Education Board’s January meeting in 1901. “That the Normal School, School of Art, and Training College, be pulled down and rebuilt on the present site suitable for the school of art, training college, and primary school, [and that] the Government be asked to assist in the building of the school of art.”⁵

A similar motion was put by the Board in June 1903 and again in July 1905 after receiving further pleas from Hutton for additional teaching space, a plea which he repeated in his end of year report. “Owing to the large number of students who attend the day classes, great inconvenience has been suffered from the want of proper accommodation. This has been particularly the case in regard to the students who devoted their attention to blackboard drawing, model drawing and modelling. The rooms have been found quite inadequate for teaching these subjects, and there has been no available room for moulding and casting, consequently this part of the programme had to be left in abeyance.”⁶ It might be argued that Hutton was not helping the overcrowding situation as eight of his own children were also attending the School in various capacities at this time. Seven were attending as students, (sons, Lorne, Gladstone and Con, and daughters, Caroline, Maude, Pearl and Aletta), and one (Nellie) as a member of staff. They all sat and gained passes in a range of South Kensington examinations, including Nellie.⁷ Unfortunately, improvements to accommodation during Hutton’s tenure did not eventuate.

He gained a further responsibility in 1905 as a visiting teacher to Teachers College students, which meant that “in addition to his delivery of instruction in drawing, he was obliged to visit students during their teaching practice in schools, and assess their progress as teachers of all the subject domains of the primary school curriculum.”⁸ Hutton, who had now been running the School without a break for over thirty five years, was beginning to feel somewhat weary and was overdue for a well-earned break. In early 1906 he applied for a year off to visit England, to which the Board agreed, resolving, “That Mr Hutton be granted 12 months leave of absence on full pay and that the arrangements proposed by Mr Hutton in his absence [that his daughter Nellie be responsible for the School while he was on leave] be agreed to.”⁹ Thus, in mid-1906 he was visiting relations in England and re-exploring old haunts while Nellie was acting Head of School. In her end of year report, she mentions that student numbers had increased to 472, that they gained passes in 18 different South Kensington subjects for Advance Art Drawing Certificates, also that ten works were accepted for the Art Teacher Certificate and three for the Art Masters Certificate, and that students from 43 different occupations were attending evening classes, the majority of whom were carpenters (30) and engineers (16).¹⁰

Hutton had no sooner arrived back in New Zealand, in mid-1907, than he was visited by a newly appointed Government inspector, Mr E. C. Isaac, who strongly criticised the School in his report to the Otago Education Board saying, “The impression left in the mind at the close of the inspection is that the instruction given at the school may enable pupils to pass examinations in subjects which call for the exercise in memory and manipulative skill, but does not help them to use the media in which they work for spontaneous and independent expression. After a course of instruction, students may become good copyists, but the imagination would lie dormant, because there does not appear to be anything in the art atmosphere of the school to stimulate it. The methods of the school generally need to be modernised.”¹¹

These comments were ill met, and on hearing them, a member of the Otago Education Board, the Rev. Mr Fraser, moved, “That as this report is the first ever presented by an inspector of the Department on the Dunedin School of Art, and as the Board would like to know what value to attach to this and subsequent reports, the Board would appreciate information from the Minister as to what specific subjects Mr Isaac is competent to report on, and what was his training and experience in technical education and art prior to his appointment as inspector of technical education and art for the Dominion of New Zealand.” Another Board member, Mr Mitchell, said that, “Mr Isaac was sent round to report on a multiplicity of subjects, and they did not know that he had ever taught or studied one of them; and yet he was set up as the mentor of men and women who had taught these subjects for many years. They had the right to know who the man was who reported on their schools. The Hon. Mr Fergus said he entirely agreed with Mr Fraser in thinking that Mr Isaac had not had experience in all the subjects he criticised. It was a great pity he should have been appointed, especially for the School of Art.” Mr Fraser added, “That he would just again say that this was the first report he had seen laid on the board’s table regarding the Art School and therefore in the interest of the public, the board and the staff, he thought he had a right to know whether Mr Isaac knew anything of the subject. To his mind, they might as well make Mr Isaac military adviser to the Government as inspector of art.” However, it became known that Mr Isaac’s report had not been forwarded to the Minister, and so it was decided to withdraw Mr Fraser’s motion.¹²

By 1908, Hutton, having reached the age of sixty five, contending with increasing ill health, and possibly with the memory of Isaac’s inspectorial report on his mind and the knowledge that the Dunedin School Of Art was no longer pre-eminent in New Zealand with both the Wellington and Christchurch Schools now having more staff and offering a greater variety of subjects than the Dunedin School,¹³ made a decision that it was time for someone younger and more energetic to take over the reins. He forwarded his resignation to the Education Board in May to take effect as from the end of the year, on receipt of which, the Board, at its May meeting, “... resolved to place on record its appreciation of the services of Mr D. C. Hutton, principal of the Dunedin School of Art during a period of forty years, and its regret that owing to failing health he had found it necessary to resign his position.” A rather brief and inadequate, ‘thank you very much,’ for a person’s life’s work.

He had certainly given his all, which was well expressed by his son David Edward Hutton in a speech given after his father's death two years later in 1910, when he said, "The 40 hour week was undreamed of then as he worked from 8am to 9pm four days of the week, from 9am to 5pm on Fridays and until noon on Saturday. I think most of his spare time between 5 and 7 o'clock and on Saturday morning, was directed to assisting his teachers. ...Although he devoted his whole life to his School, he never overlooked his duties to his family."¹⁴

With Hutton's departure in mind the Technical Classes Association sought information from the Board on what changes or rearrangements might be happening within the School. The Association was particularly concerned over the maintenance of the architectural and mechanical drawing, and machine construction classes. It proposed picking up those classes and also offered to take over the management of the School of Art. This was a decidedly unacceptable idea as the Board had no intention of giving up control of the School, which was made clear at its October meeting when the Chairman, the Hon T. Fergus, commented, "The Art School existed not for the Technical Classes alone, but for all the schools in Otago and Southland, and he was opposed to the Board divesting itself of any responsibility in the matter, and giving up something that it might hereafter wish to possess. Mr Mitchell said he thought the Board ought to have some voice, if not in the appointment of the Director of Technical Education, at least in the appointment of the gentleman who was to have the practical control of the School of Art. Mr Scott said the best man possible should be obtained for the position of director, and it might be necessary to advertise for applicants at Home. It was resolved on the motion of the Rev. Mr Fraser, to remit the whole question to a committee of five members of the Board to confer with the Technical Classes Association, the principal of the Training College, and the inspectors, as to the future arrangements for the Art School and its relation to the Technical School; to report to the next meeting of the Board."¹⁵

A conference of interested parties was held on the 25th of November 1908, resulting in the following resolution being forwarded to the Education Board's December meeting, "That, in the opinion of this conference, the Technical School and the School of Art should be amalgamated and placed under the control of the Technical School Board, provision being made to meet the requirements of the Education Board for its teachers." Some members were for amalgamation and some were against. The Rev. Mr Fraser was for the motion and moved that it be adopted, whereas Mr Mitchell was against, saying, "They must consider the school not only in its relation to technical education, but they had to look at it as an institution handed down by the province for the teaching of art in its more perfect sense. They had also to look at it as part of the Training College of Otago and Southland, and therefore he would not consent at any time to the master, who was to instruct their teachers being under any director other than the Board. He must not be answerable to the Director of Technical Education." Surprisingly, Mitchell then moved an amendment which seemed to counter what he had just said and agreed with the Rev. Fraser's motion. "That this board affirms the desirability of the School of Art and the Technical School being amalgamated, and agrees to set up a committee to draw up the terms of such amalgamation." The motion was carried, although the act of setting up another committee was thought by some to be a delaying tactic.¹⁶ History now tells us that it would take a further ten years before this situation was resolved.

Though Hutton had handed in his resignation in May, by the time of the Board's December meeting it had yet to advertise for a replacement, seemingly too involved with the machinations of under whose management the School should be run. The chairman, the Hon. T. Fergus, finally resolved the situation at the Board's last meeting for the year, by moving, "That applications be called for the position of art master for the School of Art at a salary of £350 per annum." The motion was carried, and it was agreed to immediately advertise for applicants in New Zealand and Australian papers.¹⁷ Some thought that the amount offered was unlikely to attract serious interest as it was fifty pounds less than the salary granted to Hutton forty years earlier. Even so, at the Board's next meeting, held on 9th February 1909, it was announced that Robert Hawcridge who had moved to Dunedin from Yorkshire, England in 1889, had been appointed to the position.¹⁸

Robert H. Hawcridge (1866-1920) had trained as a commercial artist in Bradford, England, after which he joined Alfred Cook & Sons in Leeds, becoming the company's principal show card designer and, as an article

in the *Evening Star* many years later reported, "It was not dreams of fame or fortune in a new land which brought Robert Hawcridge to New Zealand. It was love. His fiancée, Jeanette Haigh, had come to Dunedin with her uncle and aunt and he followed as soon as he could. Soon after his arrival they married." In Dunedin he initially worked at the New Zealand Tablet Printing Co as a lithographer, and then obtained employment with J. Wilkie and Co, with whom he remained for twenty years. He enjoyed painting and travelled with James Wilkie on numerous sketching trips around the Southern lakes producing watercolours, many of which were later used in various tourist publications, and became a council member of the Otago Art Society in 1889. The article further commented, "Although first and foremost an artist, Robert Hawcridge gave his time and interest to the life of the community. He was a lay reader in the Anglican Church at Ravensbourne and conductor of the peace celebration choir in 1919. He held the position of Grand Organist of the New Zealand Constitution of Masons, among whom he was recognised as an outstanding orator."¹⁹

He was considered the foremost lithographic artist of his day and one of the outstanding figures in New Zealand printing. In an article written some years later by Alfred O'Keeffe, an ex-student and colleague, he was described as having "... a good working knowledge of several languages. There was very little in the way of painting or drawing that could stick him. In a book or two published in England the illustrations carried his signature. He was also a musician of no mean ability. His good nature and happy smile made friends without number."²⁰



Figure 16. Robert Hawcridge (photo *Evening Star*).

On his arrival, Hawcridge argued that the School, which at this time had a complement of eleven staff, should remain a stand-alone entity and not be amalgamated with the Technical School. It appears that the Education Board agreed as it decided to retain the status quo.

Alfred Henry O'Keeffe (1858-1941) was appointed the same year and an excellent dissertation on him can be found in the 2008 thesis of Ralph Body, from which the following biography was gleaned.²¹ He was the son of Eliza and Edmund O'Keeffe, an amateur artist, who emigrated from Liverpool to Bendigo in 1857, presumably following the discovery of gold there and where Edmund was listed as a miner. Alfred was born in 1858 and in 1863 his family emigrated to New Zealand to settle in Dunedin where Edmund initially worked as a grocer; and later became the proprietor of the Liverpool Arms. His son, Alfred, after attending the Middle School at which Hutton was visiting once a week to give drawing lessons, completed a five year cabinetmaker's apprenticeship, a career which he did not pursue. In 1881 he married Jane Smith, was working as a licensed victualler for his father and began attending classes at the Dunedin School of Art, which he continued to do for the next five years. In 1886 he began exhibiting with the Otago Art Society and in the following year with the Canterbury Society of

Arts. Within a few years he was firmly established as one of Dunedin's most promising young artists and with the encouragement and financial support of many friends he headed off to Paris in April 1894, via Melbourne and London, where he studied at the Julian Academy from June 1894 to April 1895, arriving back in Dunedin in June 1895. For financial reasons he returned to his trade of hotelier while maintaining a high painting profile, and after some years of financial struggle was appointed in 1909 to the staff of the Dunedin School of Art where he was highly regarded, both as a teacher and "... a painter of outstanding ability, particularly of still life, flower studies and portraiture. There are examples of his work in every gallery in New Zealand."²²

As early as 1901, Hutton had expressed concern over the limited accommodation available for the ever increasing number of students attending the School. Now that he had retired, the Board finally resolved the situation by granting approval for the School's remodelling. The School was closed in the latter part of April and for much of May of 1909 while a large body of men, "working at high pressure," made every effort to improve and expand the School's accommodation. The final result was described in the 19th May *Otago Witness*: "The school has been enlarged by the addition of two rooms, and the extensive alterations have produced a cheerful and healthy atmosphere about the whole building such as cannot fail to render it more attractive to students. The new entrance hall is a decided improvement upon its narrow uninviting predecessor. And the rearrangement of the interior of the large classrooms has made them almost unrecognisable."²³

Hawcridge's delight was well expressed in his first end of year report in which he comments, "During the month of May the school was remodelled, renovated and extra accommodation provided, being now in a perfectly sanitary and comfortable state. The work has been much facilitated by the re-arrangement of the rooms, and the provision throughout of individual seats. The lighting, both by day and night, is now exceedingly satisfactory, and is especially appreciated by the students attending the evening classes. The entrance has been widened and improved, and an office has been provided on the ground floor. In the near future, it is hoped that the entrance hall will be furnished with the work of the students in the design, crafts and modelling sections, but, in the meantime, it is convenient and safe compared with the dangerous cramped passage which it replaces."²⁴

In addition to the article on the School's revised accommodation, the 19th May edition of the *Otago Witness* also commented enthusiastically on Hawcridge's syllabus. "A perusal of the new syllabus, which may be had on application at the School of Art, or from any art dealer, shows that the most ample provision has been made for the requirements alike of those employed in the trades and of art students. In these days, when artistic originality is a necessity in home decoration, it is pleasing to see that art needle work is a feature of the programme. This should be particularly attractive to ladies, especially as Wednesday afternoon has been selected for the class. The class for lettering is another of almost universal interest, appealing to everyone from the architect to the shop assistant. Decorative painting, drawing for cabinetmakers, trade geometry, mechanical drawing, machine construction, and building construction form a comprehensive list of trade subjects, and a similar completeness characterises the art section. Special classes for painting from life, under the competent instruction of Mr A. H. O'Keeffe, have been arranged for Wednesday and Saturday afternoons to enable those engaged during other days to obtain the daylight essential to successful colour study. Taken as a whole, it is difficult to see how the director could have arranged a more universally suitable syllabus of instruction, and we hope that our young people will take the fullest advantage of it."²⁵

Hawcridge had added several new subjects to the mix, including a course which covered decorative painting, lettering, stencilling and ticket writing, a winter drawing class for tradesmen, an art needlework class for ladies, classes at the Oamaru Centre for that region's teachers, and one hour instruction each afternoon for pupils of the Technical School.²⁶ And as a result, this expanded teaching programme considerably increased student numbers from around 500 when Hutton retired in 1908, to 800 students in 1911.

A further and significant programme and accommodation addition was approved by the Board in May 1912 upon receiving a report from a subcommittee set up to look at the workings of the School. The report stated

that, "The subject has been examined closely, alike as to the finance and future usefulness of the school, and the committee recommends: That an arts and crafts section be established in connection with the school, and that the lower story of the gymnasium at Moray Place School be utilised for the accommodation of the classes. The committee has ascertained that arrangements can be made for securing the services of a first class teacher for these classes. That the Architect be requested to consult with Mr Hawcridge and report as to the alterations of the building that may be necessary and the cost. That application be made to the Department of Education for a grant for providing the necessary equipment." A list of recommended fees was appended along with the recommendation "that authority be given for the employment of a junior clerk to mark registers, attend to art school office, etc."²⁷ All of which, no doubt, brought a smile to the Director's face.

A smile was probably also evident when he read in the 20th June *Otago Daily Times* that "The [Board] Chairman referred to the good work done by the School of Art, ... and he hoped the country members, when in town, would visit the school and see the grand work that Mr Hawcridge, the director, was doing. When the director took up his position two or three years ago, he had a great task before him. He had worked against many difficulties, and the work he had done was most admirable. He was glad the director's work had been spoken of in laudatory terms outside the Board. He moved, That Mr Hawcridge be thanked for his work, and the Board trusts that the departure he has made for the incoming year may be productive of even more satisfactory results than in the past." The motion was carried unanimously.²⁸

Hawcridge deserved such comments as, like Hutton, he was not adverse to long hours. In his 1912 annual report, he mentions, "To meet the requirements of teachers in the North of Otago residing outside the limits of the concessions permitting attendance at the Dunedin centre, a special course of lectures on the theory and practice of outline, light and shade, and colour representations, including lettering, were given in Oamaru by the director. The attendance was excellent and the interest expressed was most gratifying. On the evening preceding these lectures, local pupil teachers and probationers received instruction specially adapted to their requirements." Also, the School's students were competing most successfully in a range of student competitions throughout New Zealand. "At the New Zealand Academy our students obtained first place in Painting a Head from Life; first place in Drawing in Light and Shade from the Antique; second and third places in Painting from Still Life; and first place in illuminating. At the Canterbury Society of Arts we gained second and third places in Drawing a Head from Life; second place in Drawing in Light and Shade from the Antique; and second place in Painting from Still Life. At the Otago Society we were placed first in Painting from Still Life; first in Landscape; and first in Drawing a Head from Life."²⁹

He further commented that the recent alterations made by the English Education Board to the South Kensington Science and Art examination system and its projected discontinuance, interfered greatly with the interest shown in its examinations by the School's students, and as a result very few choose to sit. This would be the last year in which they did, and Hawcridge sought a New Zealand replacement, suggesting in his 1913 annual report that "The lack of incentive in the way of examination in the less popular, but very necessary branches of their training, especially in model drawing, geometrical drawing and perspective, has greatly interfered with attendance and thoroughness in these subjects ... there is a decided necessity for the substitution of a system of single subject examinations by the Dominion authority."³⁰ A worthy idea which he would return to several times over the next few years, but which continued to be ignored.

In May 1913, the opening of the much anticipated Arts and Crafts Department of the School of Art took place "... in the presence of a large number of distinguished citizens and prominent educationalists." This was located in an adjacent building to the School, and in describing the new accommodation, Hawcridge said, "The extensive alterations to the two story building, formally used as classrooms and gymnasium by the Normal Training College, have converted it into a suitable series of studios, well arranged and handsomely appointed. The daylight arrangements are excellent and, for artificial light as well as power, electricity has been employed throughout. The entrance from Moray Place and the internal planning reflect great credit upon Mr Rodger, the



THE OTAGO SCHOOL OF ART. REORGANISED BY MR R. HAWCRIDGE: THE ANTIQUE ROOM.

Figure 17. Dunedin School of Art's Antiques Room (photo, *Otago Witness*, 4 August 1909).

Board's architect. A complete set of equipment for art metalwork, enamelling, art jewellery, repousse, wood and stone carving, modelling, casting, etc., has been provided, making the large studio one of the best and most convenient in the Dominion. The School was fortunate in securing the services of a brilliant young craftsman, Mr Nelson Isaac, [from the Wellington Technical College] whose all-round training in art combined with his special knowledge and talent in modelling and the art crafts renders the prospects of the special developments of this department most hopeful. The fact that 93 students availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire some knowledge of the art crafts is ample justification for the institution of this department. The most popular crafts were metalwork, enamelling and art jewellery. There will be still a greater increase in the public interest taken in the two latter subjects when it is realised how inexpensive the work really is. The small amount of material used makes enamelling and art jewellery much cheaper hobbies than photography." Hawcridge also mentioned that a darkroom had been designed and furnished and that he was looking forward to courses in photography beginning in the New Year.³¹

In 1914, along with the new subjects of architectural design, and history of architecture, both subjects being taught by Mr R. Newton Vanes, photography was introduced and three part-time staff were employed to teach it. Practical classes were taught by Mr W. Esquilant, theoretical lectures were given by Mr S. C. Hicks and a class in retouching was taught by Miss D. Mackie. Unfortunately, these classes, along with a number of others, lost so many of their students with the declaration of war at the commencement of the third term, that it was found necessary to discontinue them, although it was hoped that they would restart the following year.³²

The war had a major impact on both day and evening student numbers. The roll dropped from 804 in 1913 to 535 in 1915 and Hawcridge commented in his end of year 1915 report, "In some classes the majority of young men enlisted, and others, unable to do so, were too sensitive to attend classes in which the prevailing sentiment was, 'off to the front'. Next to the University, the School of Art has probably suffered most in this respect, since the majority of its students are of ages ranging between 18 and 25. Nor was the effect confined to male students, various Patriotic Associations made an almost greater claim upon the time of the lady students, affecting not only the number joining, but the average attendance of students on the roll. The departure of the [Crafts] Instructor, Mr Nelson Isaac, for the seat of the war, unsettled work in this department during the latter portion of the year and the thanks of your Director are tendered to Miss R. Israel, the daughter of the late Chairman of the Education Board, for assistance in carrying on the work during the period intervening between Mr Isaac's departure and the appointment of a temporary instructor."³³

Although student numbers in 1916 showed a slight increase on the previous year, the war continued to affect enrolments. The architectural course lost 80% of its students, the building trades were seriously depleted of students and it was decided not to reopen the photography classes. Even the attendance of lady students suffered, especially during the day, on account of the demand for office and shop assistants to replace men on active service.³⁴ And in 1917, two further staff left for the war, Newton Vanes, responsible for architectural studies (replaced by Basil Hooper) and Mr Wakefield, who had been teaching evening classes in instrumental drawing for the past eighteen years.

Unfortunately, Robert Hawcridge died in February 1920 at the relatively young age of 54 and his last report was written in February 1919 in which he commented that the School had a roll of 498, of whom 162 were day students attending a large range of classes including free drawing from the flat and round from common objects, plant form, landscape and life. Study of the antique was combined with anatomy, and design, and instrumental drawing and perspective were provided for. Painting classes covered oil, watercolour and pastel from still life, life and landscape, and in addition, an extensive range of craft classes was offered. These included modelling from life and the antique, along with work in leather, wood, pewter, copper and stone, enamelling, jewellery, and stencilling. Students from the University School of Mines were instructed in instrumental drawing, free sketching of mechanical details and a course of drawing leading to sketching from nature. Drawing classes were also held for Otago Boys High School pupils and outdoor sketching was provided for girls at Columba College.

Evening classes continued to be affected by the war with a further drop in student numbers from 142 to 104, and only three classes maintained good attendance, which were the ever popular life drawing classes, ticket and show-card writing, and art needlework. Three new classes were opened, painting in enamels on china, painting on glass, and lead-light work. City and suburban teachers were provided with instruction twice weekly and classes were held on Saturday mornings for teachers who were resident outside of Dunedin. Hawcridge also mentions that the students' annual exhibition was again held in conjunction with the Otago Art Society's Autumn Exhibition in May, which it had been doing since his arrival in 1909.³⁵

In its report for 1919, the Education Board noted Hawcridge's death, saying, "The Board regrets having to record the death of Mr Robert Hawcridge, the esteemed Director of the School. Highly endowed with artistic qualities, a gifted teacher of art subjects, and a man of the finest character, his loss will be greatly felt in the community." But in saying this, the Board also appears to have taken his demise as an opportune time to state publicly, that it was reluctant to continue subsidising the School of Art. "For many years past, the revenue of the School has been quite inadequate for its maintenance, and at this juncture, when an appointment of a successor to Mr Hawcridge must be faced, the Board is seriously considering the question of the continuance of the School on its present lines. While deeply sensible of the necessity of providing facilities for the systematic study of art in the community, and recognising its own responsibilities for the training in drawing of its own teachers, the Board fails to see that the tuition of the general public in art subjects is comprised within its functions – at any rate, it does not think that it should carry the whole financial liability. It is at present conferring with other organisations interested in art and possibly some satisfactory solution of the difficulty may shortly be found."³⁶

In February 1920, the *Otago Daily Times* reported that the School was costing the Board around £500 per year and that a special committee appointed by the Board, which had been considering the position of the School of Art, including a replacement for Mr Hawcridge, had forwarded to the Board the following recommendations,“(1) That Mr O’Keeffe, Misses Hutton and Zeller be temporarily appointed to teach drawing to the Training College students, pupil-teachers, and probationers, Mr O’Keeffe to be placed in charge, and his salary raised to £275 per annum. (2) That, before taking any step regarding the carrying on of the School of Art, the Board endeavour to arrange a conference between representatives of the Art Society, Technical School Managers, Architects Association, and the Expansion League. ...All members of the committee were agreed that art should be taught, and the only question upon which there was a difference of opinion was, who should shoulder the financial responsibility.”³⁷ The recommendation was carried and Nellie Hutton and Alfred O’Keeffe were appointed in April, however, history shows that Daisy M.White became the third instructor, rather than Miss Zeller.

The School, other than for staff being retained to maintain drawing instruction for training college students, pupil teachers and probationers, had been closed to the public since late November of the previous year due to the national diphtheria outbreak, which killed more than 8500 New Zealanders in just two months, and remained closed throughout 1920 while its continuance was under debate.

The Education Board had first been funded by the Provincial Government and later by the Department of Education based on the region’s number of primary pupils, and the money so granted was spent as the Board chose. Now, payments to the Board were received for ‘stated objects’, and it was not allowed to spend money on any but those stated objects. If the general fund was called upon to make up any deficit, such as the School of Art’s continued annual loss, the amount so paid could not be refunded to the general account.³⁸

A meeting of all parties to discuss the School of Art’s situation was held on Wednesday 17th March 1920 at which it was strongly expressed that on no account should the School be closed. Rather, it was suggested, that selected subjects could be taught in future by the Technical College, which would take some pressure off the School of Art and that the School could perhaps be managed by a special committee set up by the Technical College.³⁹

A letter written by an ex-student to the editor of the local newspaper in June 1920 eloquently expressed the concern felt by many past and present students over the closing of the School, and their appreciation of its staff. “The news that the Art School will close its doors has filled my heart with deep sorrow. Ghosts of the happy times spent within its musty old walls haunt me, crying with sad voices. Pictures float before me. The big rooms upstairs are gay; bright fantastic figures mingle in the mazes of a waltz. Laughter, snatches of song and merry chatter echo through the building. The students are having a fancy dress ball. The scene shifts. It is a quiet evening in the antique room. Everyone is at work putting in lights and shadows; rubbing out false lines, measuring proportions with half closed eyes and standing back to view the work on the easels. I look around at the familiar faces. Some are eager, alight with the joy of creating a likeness upon paper. Others wear a look of dissatisfaction, almost despair. They know what it means to strive in vain for a desired effect. All are searchers after truth and the secrets of beauty. When one thinks of the Art School, two names are inseparable from the thought - those of Mr Hawcridge and Mr O’Keeffe. One might have passed Mr Hawcridge upon the street without special notice, so quiet and unassuming was he. This very gentleness and modesty, however, is the hallmark of the true artist. But once a student of the Art School one could not fail to feel the attractiveness of his personality and admire his wonderful store of knowledge. It was quite customary to remark when any question came up, no matter of what subject – ‘We will ask Mr Hawcridge, he will be sure to know.’ We were never disappointed, and, what is more, he would bring out a book from his private library with enough information to last for several year’s study. If any tiny plant of art, music or poetry poked its head out in the young lives in his care, he fostered and encouraged it with unfailing sympathy and understanding. It will take years to realise what the influence of Mr Hawcridge has been. ... And Mr O’Keeffe. Is there anyone just like Mr O’Keeffe with his characteristic ways, quaint sayings, and frank criticism? He is no respecter of persons as far as art is concerned. If a student

belonged to the Royal Family and did a piece of poor work, that same student would be informed of the fact with little ceremony. On the other hand, Mr O'Keeffe never passed the slightest evidence of talent unnoticed. He was always searching for a genius, someone upon whom he could build his hopes – some budding young artist who would carry out the beautiful dreams of his own youth. From far off Paris, he had brought with him the atmosphere of the Latin Quarter. It permeated the Painting and Life Classes. It leant to the plain, ordinary things of the studio the glamour of romance. There is no tribute too high to pay the central figures of the Art School, but if in future years we behold some flower of genius which had its root in the Dunedin School of Art, we can thank Mr Hawcridge and Mr O'Keeffe for its development and the beauty it gives to the world."⁴⁰

- 1 *Otago Witness*. 29 May 1901: 19.
- 2 *Otago Witness*. 26 June 1901: 19.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 *Otago Education Board, Annual Report for 1901*: 60.
- 5 *Otago Witness*. 23 January 1901: 11.
- 6 *Otago Education Board, Annual Report for 1905*: 56.
- 7 Ibid.: 58-59.
- 8 Bell, David. "Art in Education," *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History. Special Series No 5*. 2000: 12.
- 9 *Otago Witness*. 27 June 1906: 15.
- 10 *Otago Education Board, Annual Report for 1906*: 56-57.
- 11 *Otago Witness*. 25 December 1907: 18.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Nicol, John. *The Technical Schools of New Zealand*. (NZ Council For Educational Research. 1940): 99.
- 14 Text of a speech concerning David Con Hutton by his son. (Hocken Library. MS-3478/001)
- 15 *Otago Witness*. 28 October 1908: 18.
- 16 Ibid. 16 December 1908: 13.
- 17 Ibid.: 18.
- 18 Ibid. 24 February 1909: 12.
- 19 *Evening Star*. 26 September 1970: 8.
- 20 *Art in New Zealand*. March 1940. Vol. XI I. No 3: 161.
- 21 Body, Ralph. Alfred Henry O'Keeffe in Retrospect. MA Thesis. University of Otago. 2008.
- 22 *Art in New Zealand*. September 1941. Vol. XIV. No 1: 47.
- 23 *Otago Witness*. 19 May 1909: 89.
- 24 *Otago Education Board Annual Report for 1909*: 44.
- 25 *Otago Witness*. 19 May 1909: 89.
- 26 *Otago Education Board Annual Report for 1909*: 44-45.
- 27 *Otago Daily Times*. 17 May 1912: 2.
- 28 Ibid. 20 June 1912: 2.
- 29 *Otago Education Board Annual Report for 1912*: 41.
- 30 Ibid.: 1913: 47.
- 31 Ibid. 1913: 47-48.
- 32 Ibid. 1914: 48-49.
- 33 Ibid. 1915: 47.
- 34 Ibid. 1916: 49.
- 35 Ibid. 1918: 52-53.
- 36 Ibid. 1919: 6.
- 37 *Otago Daily Times*. 20 February 1920: 3.
- 38 Ibid. 22 July 1920: 8.

- 39 Ibid. 19 March 1920: 4.
40 Ibid. 23 June 1920: 6.