



In amongst the suburban houses of Sawyers Bay, in Hugh Street, there is to be found a small private cemetery about the size of a normal house section. On this quiet piece of land there is a lovely well-kept granite monument to the McDermid family.

Hugh McDermid was born at Dumbarton on the River Clyde some 15 miles (24 kilometres) downstream from Glasgow. He and his wife Margaret came to Otago on the *Philip Laing* and settled in Sawyers Bay in 1849 where he set up the first proper sawmill (as distinct from sawpits) and established a jetty in the bay from which timber was dispatched.

McDermid was a sawmiller and Sawyers Bay was named for the many sawmills which operated there. He pioneered the use of working bullocks in the infant settlement and in 1854 set up Otago's first water-driven sawmill on Big Burn (McDermid's Creek).

In 1852 he helped establish the Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church, and in 1856, the Port Chalmers School where he served on the committee.

Elected to the Otago Provincial Council in 1869 he served until 1876 and was noted for his 'edifying and scriptural humour'. He was twice elected mayor of Port Chalmers between 1870 and 1874 but his 'rugged personality' prevented him gaining election to the House of Representatives.

His attempt to rename the bay Glendermid in 1874 failed.

However the 'stout Cameronian' sawmiller was remembered in the name of the Glendermid Tannery, which only recently closed, and in Hugh Street and Mill Street in Sawyers Bay. He died on 6 January 1877.