



[Mr. William Swan](#) , who was Mayor of Dunedin in the year 1898–99, and had formerly for about ten years been a representative of Leith Ward in the City Council, was born at Prestonpans, Scotland, in

1838. He was educated at Tarnent, and was brought up as a practical miner; afterwards he served three years at the grocery trade, and subsequently worked for his father, who was a contractor.

After arriving at Port Chalmers in 1861 in the ship "Geelong," he experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining employment. On the outbreak of the Dunstan "rush," he went to the diggings, and spent three months on the goldfield without any success.

For six months he was engaged on a farm at the Taieri, and for eighteen months was employed as a carrier to the goldfields, and was very successful in that connection.

In 1865 he went to the New South Wales goldfields, and there spent nine months; returning to Otago, he entered into business as a firewood merchant in George Street, and subsequently in King Street. In this line he met with considerable success, purchasing land containing bush, which was felled and brought to market.

When coal was discovered, Mr. Swan added this branch to his business, and also imported coal from Newcastle, New South Wales, for twenty-eight years. The business was afterwards conducted under the name of Swan and Son, but is now carried on by Mr. Swan's brother. [Coal Merchants were thick on the ground in those days when coal and wood were used by everyone for cooking and heating.]

Mr. Swan purchased "Mosgiel House", Mosgiel, from the trustees of the late Mr. John Hyde Harris, and resided there for two years, and became a member of the Mosgiel Borough Council.

For eight years he was one of the trustees of the Benevolent Institution, and was connected with the Caledonian Society for over a quarter of a century, holding the office of treasurer of that body for eight years, and that of president in 1896.

Mr. Swan was married in 1857 to a daughter of Mr. John Brown, engineer, of Cornwall, and had one son and one daughter. He died on the 28th of January, 1901, and is buried in Dunedin's Northern cemetery and commemorated with an impressive obelisk.

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